**Doctoral School of
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THESIS SUMMARY
for

Anda Nóra Milassin

**Interpretation of cultural disparities experienced in cross-cultural interaction in
South Korean culture -- from a Hungarian perspective**

Ph.D. thesis

Supervisor:

Henriett Primecz, Ph.D
Associate professor

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Institute of Management
Department of Organizational Behaviour

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1. Research antecedents and rationale of the topic

1.1 Relevance of the topic

International (economic) activity has been spreading across cultures and borders. Getting in touch with members of other cultures online or personally has become part of everyday life as people work to achieve their personal or corporate goals. Differences in approach and value hierarchy and also conflicts and communication problems may arise when members of two cultures meet. We know from the research of Azevedo (2011) that however smoothly the members of two very different cultures may cooperate, the individuals concerned will always be affected by such encounters. The world has opened up, but it has also become more restricted. Since people meet with alien cultures on a daily basis, the relevant effects, whether individual (value clashes, communication problems, individual learning) or organizational (treatment of diversity, organizational learning, multi-cultural environment), represent a topical and important field of research.

Hungary has long been been treated with special attention politically and also socially by the Republic of Korea as the first socialist country with which they had established diplomatic relations at the end of the 1980s. The diplomatic and economic relations of the two countries developed at a fast pace after the systems change in Hungary, and South Korea has become a key Asian business partner of the country. South Korean FDI to Hungary has been rising since 2010 to EUR1.4 billion at end-2016. This makes the Republic of Korea one of the biggest investors among the non-EU partners of Hungary. At the end of 2016, direct investment from Hungary to the Asian country totaled EUR453 million, and at the end of 2015, there were 59 subsidiaries managed from the Republic of Korea in Hungary (Statisztikai tükör, 2018).

Studying the literature and the empirical aspect of the discrepancies of Hungarian and South Korean culture is a topical research goal, and the relevant research findings will have a gap-filling role. So far only two comprehensive analyses have been released in Hungary on the development and management system of the South Korean economy (Mayer, 1994, Marosi, 1995). The relevant technical literature mostly contrasts Korean culture with that of Western Europe; the (defective) Korean/Hungarian data are missing. The research findings will be of help also to the actors of Korean/Hungarian business relations. They will help the Hungarian business partners develop their business relations with Korean partners and avoid any misunderstandings and conflicts in their business dealings. And help Hungarian workers employed by Korean organizations better understand the culture, way of thinking and motives of their Korean colleagues and managers, and of their organizations.

1.2 Review of the theoretical background and the research questions

In order to interpret discrepancies arising when representatives of Hungarian and Korean culture meet, it was imperative to study first the framework setting of "interpretation of culture". I assumed that "Culture is the complex of those transmitted value patterns, notions and other symbol systems, which affects the behaviour" (Kluckhohn, 1951) and that culture can be observed through patterns of behaviour considered self-evident by its members. Such behaviour patterns become clearly visible when an outsider driven by different cultural norms appears in the cultural community (Hall, 1960). Culture is thus "... a general phenomenon. Everybody lives in a specific culture and develops that further. Culture is a universal orientation system characteristic of a society, organization or group which was created by such specific symbols that are very typical of the society, group or organization and bequeathed from generation to generation..." (Thomas, 1996, 2005). For the person socialized in the same culture the cultural characteristics are natural and ordinary, but if there is an interaction between two individuals from two different cultures, then the encounter of different orientation systems derived from cultural differences can lead to the manifestation and revealing of differences (Thomas, 2005 cited by Topcu, 2005). According to Allaire and Firsirotu (1984), culture is part of the social system and manifests itself in human behaviour, in the way of living and the products of that behaviour. That is, in their opinion, culture is to be investigated at a given place and time, and they look for such basic assumptions and beliefs manifesting themselves in the specifics of culture that influence its representatives subconsciously (Schein, 1985). In my interpretation based on Allarie and Firsirotu (1984), culture is a static phenomenon that is present in its members roughly unchanged in time. Cultural research applying the static approach typically identifies a certain culture by the frontiers of the corresponding national culture; therefore, the scope of my research will be delimited by the South Korean borders.

Technical literature on integration into a foreign culture typically considers it crucial that employees in a foreign environment possess such traits and competencies that help them integrate into the new environment and consequently guarantee their efficiency (also) there. Fülöp and Sebestyén (2011) collected what obstacles and challenges individuals residing in a foreign culture in the long term must face: (1) permanent overload due to the changes they experience, i.e. everything is changing at once, giving you the impression of your legs being cut from under you (Hess-Linderman, 2002); (2) language and communication difficulties (Ward-Kennedy, 1996); (3)unknown customs and norms (Church, 1982); (4) possible financial difficulties (Opper et al., 1990); (5) perceived and actual racial discrimination (Church, 1982); (6) different climate (McLachlan-Justice, 2009). In his study of expatriate workers, Tung (1987) identified seven potential causes of failure: (1) expatriate's inability to adapt to the new environment (because of the geographic, climatic, cultural

differences); (2) his personality or the emotional immaturity, (3) inability to cope with responsibilities posed by the new job; (4) lack of technical competence; (5) lack of motivation; (6) inability of spouse to adjust to the new environment, or (7) other family-related problems. According to Black and Gregersen (1999), failure is seldom due to lack of knowledge and skill; psychological factors such as inability to handle stressful situation, to communicate with people coming from a different culture or the low ability of the family to adapt to a new environment are more likely causes. In his researches analyzing the key factors of success of expatriate staff, Flynn (1995) came to the conclusion that it is determined by three important factors: (1) intercultural adjustment skills; (2) professional, technical and managerial capabilities, skills, and (3) stability and adjustment capacity of the family.

The research problem determines the research question and, consequently, the research paradigm (Végh - Primecz, 2016). Research in terms of paradigms is the most widespread organization theory framework. Its basis is provided by the concept of the paradigm as defined by Kuhn (1970, 1984, 2002), i.e. a general approach and typical theoretical framework reflecting fundamental beliefs and convictions about the essence of organizational reality (ontology), the nature of organizational knowledge (epistemology), human nature and the feasibility of studying these phenomena (methodology) (Gelei, 2002). I chose critical realism, existing side by side with mainstream paradigm-based research, as the theoretical framework of my research. Critical realism focuses on the exploration of the hidden, non-observable mechanisms that drive the operation of the world. The goal is to understand and explain how and why things happen as they do and not in some other way. That is, the ontological objectivism of critical realism assumes that there are hidden underlying structures and relationships with causal power and a potential for shaping the phenomena on the surface. The position of critical realism is that research findings are inevitably influenced by the subjectivity of the researcher which, in turn, produces many different versions of the social reality that exists independent of the researcher (Reed, 2009 quoted by Hidegh, 2015). Building a theory based on newly observed phenomena starts by intuition, by understanding what mechanisms the actual plane of reality is governed by, and argumentation relies on analogues and metaphors, mainly such as are already known to the audience (or the readers) (Peters, 1997 quoted by Primecz, 1999). Critical realists therefore assume that the subject matter of the research acts independent of the researcher; the structures of social reality are objectively given and affect his identity and behaviour, but social-economic systems are being created in a social (collective) construction process (Duberley – Johnson, 2009 quoted by Hidegh, 2015).

The goal of the present research is to answer the research questions raised by the researcher in advance. One research question promoting analysis was assigned to each research area. The questions are mappings of the research goals (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Research questions can be

answered with the help of conclusions based on data obtained from the research interviews (Krippendorff, 2003). A qualitative, exploratory method is applied to explore and explain cross-cultural discrepancies. The general goal of the research is to examine the processes of the encounter of Hungarian and South-Korean culture. To explore the differences, presumably of cultural origin, in the thinking and interpretation patterns of members of Hungarian culture, based on their actual interaction with members of South-Korean culture. Research is conducted at the level of the individual, so it examines reality as it is perceived locally, but the level of the conclusions is distanced from that of the individual. The present research applies an emic approach; it strives to explain the general by using local concepts, so it formulates conclusions at the national level (for Hungarian and South-Korean culture, respectively), because it accepts the fact that members of a national culture always relate their interpretations to their own national (cultural) categories (Chevrier, 2009). It aims to explore and explain cultural discrepancies manifesting themselves through actions of members of South Korean culture from a Hungarian perspective, in order to enhance the efficiency of cooperation between these two cultures. The research areas, research goals and research questions are shown in Table 1.

Research area	Research goal	Research question
South Korean and Hungarian cultural discrepancies.	To explore the (presumably cultural) differences experienced by Hungarians interacting with South-Koreans. To collect and classify their types.	What cultural differences do members of Hungarian culture perceive in their interaction with members of South Korean culture?
Interpretation of cultural discrepancies.	To explore and understand how cultural differences experienced by the interviewees in interactive situations are interpreted, and the factors and values they attribute them to.	How can cultural discrepancies be interpreted?
The effect of South Korean culture on the interpretation framework of members of Hungarian culture.	To explore through the retrospective approach of the narrative interviews what interviewees think they had learned from interactions with South Koreans in their own interpretation, and how that may influence their cooperation with South Koreans in the present and in the future.	How does their experience of South Korean culture alter the interpretation framework of members of Hungarian culture?
The relationship of South Korean and Hungarian culture in the life of the organization.	Interpretation of the identified cultural differences in the life of the organization, especially their potential use for the purpose more efficient cooperation.	What are the conditions of efficient South Korean/Hungarian cooperation in the organizational environment?

Table 1: Research areas, research goals and the associated research questions

2. Methods used

2.1 Population studied and data collection

The research questions and research goals designate the prospective observation units used for sampling during the research. Identifying the observation units is the process whereby the analytical units, the cases, are defined (Krippendorff, 1989). The research covers members of Hungarian culture (i.e. persons born and raised in Hungary) in daily contact with members of South Korean culture. I considered daily contact (at the workplace organization, university) and the defined minimum amount of time indispensable conditions to ensure that Hungarians involved in the research have more-than-superficial knowledge of South Korean culture. So it was a precondition to have expatriate interviewees living and working in the researched culture, with opportunities for personal contacts with the members of the local culture (Romani et al. (2004). The bottom limit of the time constraint was set based on the cultural alignment model (Oberg, 1960). In addition to setting up timeframes, sampling was to be limited also geographically. I had to define in which culture the interviewee had to live at the time of the interview. The sample included persons having their habitual residence in the foreign culture and persons living in their own culture, but working with representatives of the foreign culture on a permanent basis (Topcu, 2005).The interviews were conducted between the 31st March and 17th December, 2015; in 10 cases via Skype and in 8 cases personally. The sample included 13 women and 5 men, of whom 9 people lived in Korea, and 9 in Hungary at the time of the interview. I assumed that interviewees in different life situations probably got acquainted with South Korean culture in different situations, so the research material would be enriched by asking interviewees with heterogeneous characteristics about their experiences. Sampling produced audio recordings of around 16 hours and some 350 pages of interview transcripts.

2.2 Data analysis

I chose content analysis examining the narratives of the interviewees by quantitative analyses as the method of my research. The qualitative content analysis method applies a systematic coding system to analyse the content of text data, and makes it possible to identify the topics in the text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005 cited by Kovács, 2017). It can be used to make replicable and valid interferences from texts; content is brought to the surface by the analysis. The coding system makes it possible for the researcher to arrange the data into an analyzable system (Krippendorff, 1989). In the research, codes were assigned primarily to paragraphs and secondarily to sentences. The goal was to define actions and behaviours originating from cultural disparities, and to distinguish them from factors generated by conflicts of interest or by the context (Neyer-Köllnig, 2003). The Nvivo software assisting qualitative research was of great help to me during coding. The software supports data coding, the

interpretation of information gathered, the identification and assessment of theories and the visual representation of results. The key phase of qualitative content analysis is the drawing of conclusions regarding the relationship between the established codes and the phenomenon under study (Krippendorf, 1989). I illustrated the main codes identified by the analysis by Korean proverbs serving as metaphors.

1. One tiger by family, and you will have order.
2. Korean people are industrious ants.
3. Whatever the boss says is true.
4. Even a sheet of paper is lighter when two people lift it.
5. Shame will accompany you through life.
6. Even if you know the way, ask one more time.
7. Good clothes are like growing wings.

Several sub-codes are legible under each of the identified seven collective main codes. I enriched the analysis with interview excerpts.

3. Thesis findings

3.1 Research context

Due to geographical proximity, Chinese culture had had a powerful effect on the emerging culture -- language, customs and way of thinking -- of the Korean peninsula. Confucianism, of Chinese origin, became the organising principle of social and economic developments in Korea and the spiritual resource accessible to all (Keum, 2000). Since Koreans embraced the Confucian tenets while also adding what served their own national needs, this high-level ethic and social regulatory system has profoundly marked their way of thinking (de Bary, 1988). The specifics of the world view carried by a culture define its values. Family, school and religious groups all contribute to transmitting the typical world view of a culture from one generation to another (Park, 1999). According to Confucius, founder of the spiritual school of Confucianism, everything has its proper order in human society as in the universe. To achieve social order, and peace and harmony within it, each individual should know his proper place in society and assume the relevant responsibilities. Social harmony is maintained by benevolence, justice, knowledge of the etiquette, wisdom and sincerity. Human relationships are determined by a person's attitude to these values and to each other. Confucius named the halo underlying the social roles and society the "five relationships (or bonds)" reflecting reciprocity and a sense of responsibility. In the (1) ruler and subject relationship, the ruler must set an example to his subordinates by his just, benevolent and virtuous conduct; in return, the servant must be loyal. In the (2) father and son relationship the child has to respect and obey the parent,

whereas the parent must provide for the child and raise him in love. Confucius extended this category also to the parents of others and to the ruler as father of the people. He projected the role of the father as strict leader also to the school, the workplace and other groups. Thus according to the Confucian tenets, the state is no other but an extended family. In the (3) husband and wife relationship, the wife is to give birth to children and care for the family, whereas the husband must take decisions and provide an adequate financial background. Confucianism thus considers the husband the active and the wife the passive, subordinated, party. (4) The elder brother is responsible for the younger one and, in return, the younger brother respects his elder brother and must obey him. The (5) friendship is a deep relationship based on trust. A friend will fulfill any request made by his friend by all means (Osváth, 2003). Thus the basic Confucian social principles included separation by gender, age hierarchy, the unity of the family, the continuity of descent and veneration of the dead. According to Confucian teachings, family relationships represent the basis in social relationships and family values are also the values of society (Kim, 1969). Confucius assigned high importance to preserving the traditions. i.e. performing the rituals. This spiritual behaviour consisted of respect, courtesy, self-control and avoiding uneducated behaviour on the one hand and observing the forms of politeness, rituals and customs developed by morality on the other (Park, 1999). In the early period of modernisation, Confucianism was regarded as an obstacle hindering social development (Lee, 1997). Traditional Korean society driven by a vertical arrangement and the subordination of the individual to a superior power may easily come into conflict with horizontally structured democracy and the emphasis on the freedom of the individual. At the level of values and hierarchies, one experiences a mixing of the modern and the traditional elements, and the steady replacement of the traditional value hierarchy by the Western elements (Lee, 1999).

3.2 Research metaphors

The most frequently mentioned experience of Hungarian interviewees relates to hierarchy as it is discernible and present in Korean society. In their opinion, in communication and in everyday situations, Koreans always consider first of all their (hierarchical) relationship to each other. In line with the Confucian values, interpersonal relationships exist in the framework of a hierarchical relationship. In Confucian cultures, social inequality is not only expected, but actually desirable. The stability of Asian society derives from the respect shown by the younger to the older and the obligation of the older to advise to the younger (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). Female interviewees were more sensitive to the differences in the male and female roles experienced in Korea culture. The interviewees said that, as women and youngsters, they were multiply underprivileged even in such everyday business dealings as going to a shop or the bank. *"Here in Korea, younger persons and women are, how should I say, to put it bluntly, looked down. Whatever you do, it is totally irrelevant*

what you have and where you graduated from, if you are young, say younger than the boss or your colleagues, or anyone, you are not equal." According to Confucian tradition, women owe obedience to three men during their life: their father from birth to marriage, their husband in marriage and their son in widowhood (Park, 1999). Hierarchy is intensively present also in the family relationships. In addition to age, behaviour and respect within the family is determined by the relationship of the family members to each other. Parents bring up their children who then provide for and support them in old age. Parents do everything to care for their children, and the responsibilities of the child include, in addition to obedience, also good learning results and coping at school. *"As the child grows up, he will see he must do what his parents and teachers tell him. If he does not, he will be punished harshly. You obviously do not want to be punished, so you do it. But then you also experience the amount of power you are given as you ascend and become older than someone. So, as my husband said, you simply have to grow up."* Social status, so important in South Korea, as well as educational attainment and career prospects, play a prominent role in choosing your partner. A well-chosen partnership/marriage is important for Koreans as a means to improve the future of the family financially and also in terms of social status. I refer to the main code describing the strong hierarchy present among the members of society and of an organization, manifesting itself along the dimensions of old/young, man/woman and mother-in-law/daughter-in-law **One tiger by family, and you will have order.**

Hungarians asked in the interviews spoke of workplace performance expected by the Korean organizations and of the expected employee behaviour. They were surprised by overtime and weekend work being taken for granted after a daily 14-15 hours of work. As shown by the quotation "Hard work to the point of exhaustion is required to be able to avoid the risks of the unpredictable world" (Kim, 1969), in Korean culture hard work is the means of avoiding uncertainty among other things. In the opinion of the interviewees, the Koran organization considers not only the number of hours spent at work, but also the dedication of the employee, keeping the interests of the company in mind, highly desirable. *"I cannot put it better than it is a most humble attitude to work. That is, some kind of dedication, self-sacrifice, or I don't know what, for success, some kind of sacrifice for success."* Hungarian interviewees expressed differing views on whether the high number of working hours actually meant efficiency in practice. Long hours of work did not mean for them that time was actually spent by uninterrupted work. In many examples, what really mattered was compulsory presence and appearances. They considered the impetus experienced in Korean workers and their individual sacrifices for the organization strange. Korean employees sacrificed their rest period, family time, for building their Korean company. *"Work comes first, not the family. A Hungarian colleague of mine was sacked by being told he considered the family the first, not the workplace. And he said yes, to me, it's the family. This does not work like that here. Work must be the first."*

In their little free time after lots of work, Korean employees keep acting like they do at work, according to the Hungarians. They do not relax, but keep "being busy" as if someone would hold them accountable for spending that time usefully. *"If someone goes on holiday, for example, they would not lay on the beach, as we do, but would come over to Europe and visit eight cities in a week. What's the point of that? I don't think they remember anything, but at least they have photos of it. Then they return to slaving without any rest, but can at least show the pictures."* One of the discrepancies that Hungarians found most difficult to accept was thus the number of hours spent at work, that did not always imply efficiency and productivity, but sometimes insistence on a daily routine, a type of behaviour expected by society and by the organization. I refer to the main code describing a work ethic that is very different from the Hungarian one in summary **Korean people are industrious ants.**

As is discernible from the earlier interview excerpts, hierarchical relations play a decisive role in Korean culture, and loyalty to the family is also important. A similar phenomenon is observable in the organization when the employee is expected to show full loyalty and allegiance by his superiors. Employees must follow the requests and instructions of their managers without showing any resistance. In the culture of the Far East, the leader must be a good educator, benevolent, nice, likeable, and the subordinates must demonstrate commitment, devotion and complaisance (Pye, 1985). Employees do what the leader says and in return the leader supervises the subordinates and cares for them. Most interviewees found it frustrating that Korean leaders communicated decisions and tasks without any reasoning. One could not express objection or even ask questions when the leader assigned such tasks. The interviewees came to the conclusion that whatever the boss said had to be accepted unconditionally. *"I cannot explain anything to a Korean boss in order to show that I am right, because that is not like that. The boss will either realise that or, if he does not, he will proceed and make a mistake, but you must keep silent always, listen, say yes to everything, you must not say no."* The experience of the Hungarian interviewees was that it was expected and considered desirable in Korean organizational life for employees to fulfill the tasks their superiors assigned them without any further questions, by the specified deadline, and strive to make the best of it. If necessary, finish the work after working hours and by using own solutions, in the interest of the organization and the leader. I refer to the main code describing the organizational incidents experienced by the Hungarian interviewees **Whatever the boss says is true.**

When they came in contact with Korean culture, the interviewees were pleasantly surprised by the fact that Koreans seemed very sociable. In most cases they eat their meals and go out together. Apparently, they would not let you be lonely. The group-organizing principles were not always clear to the interviewees, nor the behaviour expected from a group member by the group itself or the "price"

of belonging to a group. They learned the advantages and disadvantages of group membership in Korean culture through strange and unpleasant situations. *"European cultures are highly focused on the individual, and the individuals are also distinct entities. So I can have my own identity, I can be myself. I connect to the family, friends, the workplace that I chose, but I may also exit (these groups), no big deal. For Koreans, the group will be stronger than the individual. Who you are, what you are is defined by the group."* Confucianism conceives of man as a member of the community, not as an individual on his own (Osváth, 2003). He is bound to the others by moral bonds: he is defined by his relationships to others (Hahn, 1997). Collectivist cultures subordinate individual goals to group goals, whereas individual cultures put considerable emphasis on the individual goals. The priority of the community, the groups, is a typical feature of collectivist societies. It assumes a system of mutual dependency between the individual and the group: in return for human loyalty, the group provides lifelong protection (Koh, 1986). Most interviewees mentioned eating together as an example of being obliged to give up individual needs to have peace in the group. In restaurants, those at the table always order together and the dishes are served on common plates. Everyone has a small bowl to pick whatever they like from the plates. *"I did not want to eat meat that day, I wasn't in the mood. I said I would order something for myself separately. Those faces... Then my friend told me in a low voice that I should not act like that, be so selfish as to want to eat from a separate plate there."* Sharing time with colleagues and managers after official working hours is an integral part of life at the workplace in Korea. The purpose of such time together is team building, strengthening team spirit and the feeling that they are one big family. This generally means shared meals and in most cases drinks. The leader demonstrates caring for the others by inviting them and the subordinates show their loyalty and team player role. If the leader invites the subordinates for such an occasion after work, they must not say no. Hungarians said it was commendable not to make any specific evening program in advance, as a leader could come up with the idea of organizing an evening program any time. *"It is compulsory to participate. Often the boss alone has a good time, we did not have a good time. Never. We only went once a month, on payment day. We could hardly wait for it to end and to be over with it."*

According to the interviewees, Koreans showed an ambiguous behaviour when they met a member of a foreign culture, not a Korean. On the one hand, Koreans are reluctant to let aliens (in the sense of extra-terrestrial to Korea) among themselves, but they can be infinitely nice and affectionate with outsiders in the context of some superficial acquaintance. Hungarians are of the opinion that it takes a long time for Koreans to let someone among themselves, firmly convinced as they are that the best is always what is made in Korea, what belongs to Korean culture. They are most reluctant to let aliens in, to give them an insight into their own inner life. There are differences in their judgment of various cultures in the opinion of Hungarians. They like Hungarians and those

coming from European countries, and in particular tall, lean and bespectacled people at once. They are not so very hospitable with people coming from the poorer parts of Asia. The typical Koran identifies with the group he belongs to, and his every step is guided by the requirements in effect of that group. Koreans are a highly situation-dependent people (Gudykunst-Kim, 1997). I refer to the main code describing behaviour within and without a group by **Even a sheet of paper is lighter when two people lift it**.

Koreans hold social status in high esteem, as it provides social standing and may secure the future of even a whole family. Therefore, they fear that social rank and position awarded by others may be jeopardised. "Face" in the Asian sense is social status and moral character in one; Western languages could cover it best by the concepts of "humility", "status", "reputation" and "social acceptance" (Carr, 1993). According to Choi and Kim (2000) there are two fundamental factors behind this term: self-fulfillment and the desire of social success and acceptance. By loss of face, Korean people mean they do not meet the expectations of society and are therefore considered less desirable in society (Kim-Yang, 2013). Saving your face is thus equally about one's social position, reputation, influence, dignity and honour. Koreans consider their (social) face important; they guard it carefully and take it very badly if that face, that image, suffers any negative effect; they are definitely sensitive to public humiliation (Lias, 2015). Those at higher hierarchical levels do not want to make themselves uncomfortable by (explicitly) not knowing something or being wrong. As indicated already, the older is also the wiser in Korean culture; the one in possession of knowledge who will teach the younger. A Far Eastern person expects other properties, capabilities and behaviour from his boss than a Western one. It must not be that he is humiliated by someone who is at a lower level in the hierarchy. *"They do not confess anything, they shun things completely. At our place the boss has committed several errors, simply because he is also human, but he has simply blamed others. For example, he blames me, because now this is the simplest thing to do and he cannot afford to have a subordinate who does something better. I, on the other hand, must tolerate that."* Hungarians came across two types of conduct in the conflict management strategies of Koreans. Depending on the quality of the conflict, Koreans will get angry easily and will even scold you in loud voice. Sometimes they even use physical gestures to emphasize their anger, hitting the other's shoulder or back. *"Well, yes that can be disconcerting at first. But it does not mean they are as angry as that also internally. It is just their way of expressing what is happening. To someone not accustomed to that, this may be rather strange on the first occasion, they will be wondering whether the boss is really as angry as that or they actually did something as bad as that."* In the opposite Korean conflict management behaviour, you will not even know that the other is angry or a conflict is emerging at all. *"If you can interpret the way he is speaking, or his body language or the situation itself. That is, if you interpret it well, you will know you are likely to be in trouble. But if you cannot read these signs well, you may land*

in most unpleasant situations." Hungarians are of the opinion that Koreans do their utmost to avoid any situation where they could be humiliated explicitly or their mistakes would be disclosed. Nevertheless, there are situations where the individual is nevertheless humiliated or, as those in the Asian countries would put it, lose face in front of others. Group cohesion introduced above means that not only the individual, but the family, the given group will also share that feeling, they will share responsibility for the shame. This perceptibly implies huge expectations and pressure for the behaviour of Koreans. The Hungarians interviewees have also referred to the daily newspaper articles on suicides. Most youth jump from sky-scrapers at examination time, because they feel they did not prepare for their exams well enough or the results do not meet the requirements they are supposed to fulfill. There are pieces of news about businessmen and fathers of families who take such decision due to some business failure, to avoid shame. The relevant statistics confirm this phenomenon: Korea ranks 10th in the world list of suicides. This characteristic of Korean culture is referred to by the main code called **Shame will accompany you through life**.

According to the reports of the interviewees, members of Korean culture do not like to depart from the established and habitual ways. They are embarrassed or become frustrated in any situation that is unpredictable and requires a solution differing from the usual one. The majority of Hungarians in the sample had experienced a situation where they were explained what the desirable solution algorithm was at the workplace or at school. Whenever the solution was not as expected by the Koreans, they often said that things were not like that in Korea and other methods were "nonsense". *"I have the feeling that they think the really good things are Korean, whereas what comes from the outside is a bit suspicious, and cannot be that good. They would say 'that is very good, very good, but not like the Korean (solution)'."* Cultures with a strong tendency to avoid uncertainty are characterised by high stress levels, rigid formal rules and fear from anything unusual (Gudykunst-Kim, 1997). "What is different, is dangerous" -- this is how Hofstede summarizes the approach of uncertainty avoidance cultures. To reduce their sense of uncertainty, the members of Korean culture resign themselves to the existing natural and social order and adjust to it. For the same reason, they avoid verbal confrontation and conflicts. I refer tothe main code describing the behaviour characterised by uncertainty avoidance and adherence to rules and rituals as **Even if you know the way, ask one more time**.

The stories presented on the basis of the perception and explanations of respondent Hungarians clearly showed how important appearance was to members of Korean culture. The image made of them counts; the opinion of others is more important than that of the individual. This is due to the desire for external beauty, and also to the realization that well-dressed, beautiful, shame-free people can be more successful whether in terms of placement or marriage. External appearance is

therefore a key component in the contest for social status and it comprises, in addition to appearance in the strict sense, also the opinion of others. "Koreans are more concerned by what others think of them than their own opinion of themselves" (Sohn, 1986). The appearance of their culture, their country is an important factor for Koreans. No coincidence that Korean culture as presented abroad is somewhat different from that experienced in real life. South Korea is keen on showing its best face to the outside world. The interviewees did not see anything wrong with that, they only mentioned that the world portrayed in Korean drama and the feeling suggested by Korean pop culture are different in everyday life, when someone is living there. *"Korea loves to show a good picture of itself, one that is highly ideal, very beautiful and exciting so, obviously, the quality of grey everyday life is very difficult to see. Neither do they wish to show that to foreigners."* All interviewees found that beauty, external appearance and neatness were important for Koreans. *"In my opinion, this is a social requirement. They have ideas as to who is beautiful. Everyone wants to look the same, everyone wants to conform to this ideal."* I refer to the main code describing the importance of external things and to appearance **Good clothes are like growing wings.**

3.3 Theoretical and empirical usability of the research findings

The present research has produced added value for both theory and practice.

The theoretical results fill a gap: previously, no data had been available on the discrepancies of South Korean and Hungarian culture as seen by Hungarians. In the relevant literature, information on these two cultures used to originate from the results of models including a cultural dimension, with some research results on the specifics of Korean or Hungarian culture. The goal of the research was to explore and understand how the cultural discrepancies experienced by the interviewees in interactive situations were interpreted by them and what factors and values they attributed them to. This research will hopefully provide us a deeper understanding of the discrepancies of these two cultures, as seen by Hungarians. That is, the research conducted for the thesis has enriched the technical literature on these two cultures by new theoretical findings.

The values of Korean national culture are present also in Korean organizational life. Steers-Shin-Ungson (1989) studied Korean organizations and identified seven features defining the work environment. (1) Korean work ethic, (2) group harmony and social relations, (3) career bases, (4) hierarchical relationships, (5) importance of personal relationships, (6) decision-making mechanism and (7) the role of women at the workplace. The thesis research has revealed the drivers underlying the typical features of highly collectivist Korean organizational culture characterised by a great distance between those with the least and most power and by masculine properties, for the sake of contributing to the more efficient cooperation of organizational actors.

After revision, the research findings will be suitable to serve as the theoretical basis for an inter-cultural training program. That training would strive to introduce the participants to the cultural discrepancies, to differences in behaviour attributable to the cultural relations that are typical of the destination country. This type of training may provide considerable help to develop the cultural sensitivity of expatriates (Harzing – Ruysseveldt, 1995).

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