

# The Influence of National Culture on Business Negotiations: An Exploratory Study of Venezuelan and British Managers

Mohamed Haffar, Loredana Perez

**Abstract**—Significant attention has recently been paid to the cross-cultural negotiations due to the growth of international businesses. Despite the substantial body of literature examining the influence of National Culture (NC) dimensions on negotiations, there is a lack of studies comparing the influence of NC in Latin America with a Western European countries. In particular, an extensive review of the literature revealed that a contribution to knowledge would be derived from the comparison of the influence of NC dimensions on negotiations in UK and Venezuela. The primary data was collected through qualitative interviews, to obtain an insight about the perceptions and beliefs of Venezuelan and British business managers about their negotiating styles. The findings of this study indicated that NC has a great influence on the negotiating styles. In particular, Venezuelan and British managers demonstrated to have opposed negotiating styles, affecting the way they communicate, approach people and their willingness to take risks.

**Keywords**—National culture, negotiation, international business, Venezuela, UK.

## I. INTRODUCTION

IN today's economy, the globalization of business and the marketplace have increased and the international businesses are growing like never before, mainly due to the fact that countries cannot be completely autonomous [1]. Therefore, it is crucial for any company to be prepared to interact, efficiently, within the global market [2]. The first interaction that companies have is a negotiation, which happens prior to any commercial agreement [1].

Differences of National Cultures (NC) produce diverse ways of thinking and behaving within a negotiation as each culture has different perceptions and preferences [3]. Therefore, cross-cultural negotiations are very complex and each culture applies different styles, which adhere to their own beliefs and values, impacting on the negotiations' outcome [4].

Venezuela is considered a potential market, despite their economic and political issues as they have the largest proven oil reserves in the world [5]. The United Kingdom (UK) has recently expressed an interest in strengthening existing trade relationships and creating new ones with Venezuela, particularly in the oil sector [5].

Despite the substantial body of previous studies, utilizing Hofstede's model to examine the influence of NC dimensions on negotiations and to explain the diverse negotiating behaviors across countries e.g. [6]-[8], [4] to test the influence of NC dimensions on negotiations. However, there is a lack of studies comparing the influence of NC in Latin America, particularly, Venezuela with a Western European country like Britain. Thus, the primary aim of this paper is to explore and compare the influence of national cultural dimensions on business negotiations in the UK and Venezuela.

## II. NATIONAL CULTURE

Defining NC can be problematic and controversial; therefore, diverse authors have developed a variety of definitions, some of which emphasize it as a 'pattern of thoughts' [9] while others use terminologies such as 'social norms' [9].

Huijser [10] defines NC as a sum of shared values and norms, articulated in the behavior of the members of a group. Conversely, [11] agrees that it is learned from and shared among the people of a society; therefore, he defines NC as the deeply rooted values which distinguish members of one group of people from others.

However, since this study will focus on the influence of NC on BN, it is important to study the way members of a society behave and interpret the behaviors of others, NC is, therefore, defined as:

"The socially transmitted values, beliefs and symbols that are more or less shared by members of a social group, and by means of which members interpret and make meaningful their experience and behavior (including the behavior of 'others')" [12].

In this case, the members of a 'social group' refers to the members of a country and their socially transmitted values are believed to vary across cultures, for example, some societies might emphasize the legal factors of an agreement, while others might just focus on relationships [13].

Many authors developed multidimensional frameworks to allow an in-depth comprehension of NC's differences [14]. Most dimensions are considered to be conceptually alike. Nevertheless, Hofstede's model is considered the most popular as it is widely used across many disciplines like marketing, management, etc. [15] and its scores are available for many nations, facilitating a comparison between countries [16].

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Hofstede [11] developed five NC dimensions to decrease the complexity of cultural studies; his dimensions interpret cultural values and behavior patterns for numerous countries and distinguish the differences between cultures [11]. These dimensions are: Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) and Long-term Orientation (LTO) [11].

Many scholars have highly criticized Hofstede's dimensions, claiming they were developed over thirty years ago, implying they may be outdated [15], [17]. Holden [18] agrees and argues that his dimensions were developed before globalization and many technological advances like the Internet, which influence culture, were not in place. In response, Hofstede [7] claims that culture change is slow, and changes would have to be very dramatic to invalidate his dimensions, therefore, they should be valid until 2100 or later. However, many scholars replicated Hofstede's research on different scales producing similar results [15]. Also, Hofstede's dimensions are still considered the best method to explore culture [17]. Therefore, this model is applied in this study.

Britain and Venezuela are believed to have dissimilar NCs based on the scores of Hofstede's dimensions. Concerning PDI, Venezuela and Britain scored differently. Venezuela had one of the highest scores (75), being very hierarchical [1], [7]. In contrast, Britain had a low score (26), resulting in minimal inequalities among the society [7]. In Venezuela power is mainly centralized and inequalities within the society are widely accepted [7]. Unlike Britain, in Venezuela most businesses are family-owned; therefore, decision-makers tend to be the head of the family. Despite being autocratic, the best interests of the organization are considered but very rarely authority is delegated [19]. Conversely, British organizations are rather flat and decision-makers delegate authority to their subordinates [19].

Regarding individualism, Venezuela and the UK have dramatic differences. Venezuela has one of the lowest scores in this category (7), meaning that it is a highly collectivist society, where relationships are essential [20], [7]. This is probably the reason why most Latin Americans prefer to conduct business with close acquaintances as the rapport is already established and the communication style is usually implicit [7]. Conversely, Britain has one of the highest scores (98) resulting in a very individualistic society of private people, where self-interest reigns and only very close family are considered, having an explicit communication style [1], [7].

Masculinity is the only dimension in which Venezuela and the UK scored similarly. Venezuela scored 76 [31] while Britain scored 68 [7] although both societies are masculine, Venezuela is slightly more masculine. According to existing studies, they are very competitive, assertive and success-oriented [21].

Regarding UAI, Venezuela scored 65 [7] being risk averse and emotions are always expressed. They also demand extensive rules although they may not follow them at all times [31]. Romero [21] identifies high UAI as the main reason why

relationship in Venezuela is essential before doing business, as it helps reduce ambiguity. Conversely, Britain scored 26, showing they can easily tolerate uncertainty and find it easy to change plans when required [16]. Concerning LTO, Venezuela scored 16, which illustrates a very STO society, with a very normative nature, feeling the necessity to respect past traditions and placing greater importance on immediate gain when doing business [7]. Similarly, they prioritize the fulfillment of social obligations [7]. While Britain scored 52, which is not extreme, it is considered to have more LTO traits than those of short-term, being very pragmatic and concerned with future rewards [7].

### III. CROSS- CULTURAL BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS

Over time, many definitions of negotiation have been developed. Saeed [4] describes it as a persuasive process that takes place as to reach certain decisions. However, for the purposes of this study, we have adopted Malshe [22] definition of negotiation "a process in which two or more parties are brought together to accomplish mutually beneficial outcomes" [22].

This definition is believed to be more complex. Nevertheless, it is very common for the parties to have different interests, affecting the negotiating process, as the parties may be trying to accomplish individual rather than shared goals [22]. Caputo [23] claims that the main purpose of any negotiation is communication exchange, as to produce an agreement.

When negotiations occur across cultures the complexity increases, different approaches are implemented and processes are followed differently, as culture directs their actions and their perceptions to act in the way they believe is better [24]. Khakhar and Rammal [25] postulate that the negotiation process varies across cultures, mainly due to diverse cultural characteristics. Culture directs the way people think and perceive negotiation processes, making it more profound than business etiquette [24].

Recently, the impact of NC on BN has been researched extensively [25], since success relies on the negotiators' ability to perform in different cultural environments [25] as negotiations can notably change across cultures [4]. Many authors such as [8], [4], and [6] utilize Hofstede's model to explain the diverse negotiating behaviors across countries as it is very comprehensive.

#### A. Power Distance

Hofstede et al. [7] proposes that in high PDI societies, the negotiating parties' status is an important factor. For instance, a powerful negotiator will establish the conditions and expect them to be accepted by the lower-ranking counterpart [6]. Low PDI negotiators with a lower status might not allow this to happen and may either disregard the pressure or have a negative reaction and break the negotiation [7]. In hierarchical countries, negotiators triumph more frequently when there are ranking differences between the parties as the lower-status party is forced to accept their conditions [7]. However, when

trading with foreigners and/or negotiators of similar ranking, the negotiation frequently ends in a power conflict [7].

Docherty [12] agrees that low PDI negotiators are less concerned about status and rank than those from high PDI societies, emphasizing experience over authority and using a participative instead of autocratic approach [26]. In large PDI societies negotiators are generally older, with some level of seniority and are status-conscious, while low PDI negotiators are usually younger [4]. Similarly, it is claimed that low PDI negotiators are usually allowed to make quick decisions regardless of age or status, while in high PDI cultures they may take longer as they consult a superior about possible agreements before formal decisions are made [3], [4]. Moreover, appearance and titles are important aspects of PDI, as they can determine status. In high PDI societies, the use of titles like Mr, Mrs, or Miss are vital, while in low PDI societies this is unnecessary as everyone is equally perceived and only addressed by their first names [7].

### *B. Individualism*

Cai et al. [27] state that the extent to which a society is individualistic can affect any negotiation, as some cultures may perceive different aspects of the process as more important than others. Individualist negotiators mainly aim at directing the process according to their own interests and get straight down to business [26]. Collectivist negotiators take the necessary time to build a relationship before talking business, which is mainly done to create and verify the levels of trust between the parties. If this goes wrong they will not reach an agreement, and in negotiations they will always benefit their in-group not just themselves [28], [4], [7].

Collectivists, unlike individualist negotiators prefer face-to-face negotiations to develop trust and long-lasting relationships. Consequently, most collectivist cultures prefer to conduct business with close friends where rapport already exists [29].

Chang [6] and Sae [4] agree that collectivist cultures usually have bigger negotiating teams and consider everyone involved in the decision-making, while individualistic cultures, generally, send only one person to be in charge of the negotiation and decision-making. The approach and outcome of a negotiation varies between cultures. Barron [8] claims that in individualist countries, it is common to implement a distributive approach, where they only seek their own benefit. In collectivist societies integrative approaches are more common that allows negotiators to bond and build a rapport for future businesses. This is further supported by [27].

Individualist cultures usually have an explicit communication style, characterized by directness [30]. Conversely, collectivists possess an implicit and subtle style where non-verbal communication is critical as it says more than words. This mainly happens due to the collectivist culture where they prefer to preserve relationships and be indirect rather than oppose a proposal [30], [12], [26].

Since masculine cultures emphasize achievement and success [16], Hofstede [7] comment that masculine negotiators are performance-oriented and usually impatient, complying

with the conditions of the contract and expecting their counterpart to do the same. By contrast, feminine cultures are co-operation-orientated, preferring to develop relationships and build trust with their counterparts [7].

Sae [4] suggests that in masculine societies it is essential to preserve ego and any concessions are seen as an indication of weakness. Ghauri and Usunier [3] agree and claim that any conflicts are resolved aggressively due to their competitiveness and assertiveness [6], [17]. Metcalf and Bird [28] argue that feminine cultures are believed to accentuate nurturing within a negotiation, seeking consensus to resolve conflicts in a co-operative manner.

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### *C. Uncertainty Avoidance*

Fernandez et al. [31] suggests that negotiators from high UAI cultures have an emotional approach, expect their feelings to be understood by their counterpart and will not modify their behavior. Conversely, low UAI cultures have a more relaxed style and will change their behavior to that of their opponent where necessary, but never show their emotions [7].

Metcalf and Bird [28] argue that this dimension is, clearly, interrelated with negotiating strategies chosen by negotiators from different cultures. For instance, Metcalf and Bird [28] indicate from their findings that high UAI cultures usually prefer the discussion of general aspects of the overall negotiation before talking about specific factors (deductive). While low UAI negotiators prefer to discuss specific aspects first (inductive), like costs [26] high UAI societies are only willing to take a certain amount of risk when negotiating with well-known and trustworthy partners but not with people they do not know. However, low UAI societies will make a more balanced judgment of the value and risks of the transaction [7]. Since high UAI cultures evade ambiguous situations and do not trust strangers [11], they value the well-known more than the unknown, focusing on good long-term relationships to avoid future uncertainties [26].

Within the negotiating process structure, high UAI societies require a high structure so they know what to expect, even if they do not follow it. However, in low UAI cultures it is not as significant [3]. Concerning new ideas and innovation, it is hard to persuade high UAI negotiators as they prefer

traditional ways and avoid taking risks, whereas low UAI negotiators are always open to new projects to innovate [7]. Salacuse [32] supports this and suggests that some cultures are more risk tolerant than others, affecting their capacity to innovate.

#### *D. Long-Term Orientation*

In LTO cultures, negotiators are considered to be pragmatic; therefore, they put a bigger emphasis on the benefits of the agreement in the long-run, and are more patient [6]. Inversely, STO societies are more concerned about moral principles involved in the process, being very reliable, following the relevant rules [7]. It is claimed that STO cultures are more past and present-orientated, therefore, leisure time is important for them, and they do not perceive being late for a business meeting as a negative factor, meetings always need to be reconfirmed. In contrast, LTO societies focus on the future and for them 'time is money', valuing their own and other people's time [7].

It is suggested that STO people will commonly handle multiple conversations or tasks, simultaneously, without considering it to be rude, but negotiators may neglect important details of the negotiation [29], [7]. However, [3] claims that in LTO cultures this does not happen as they only perform one task at a time and are very committed to the negotiating process. Saeed [4] argues that LTO negotiators are more strategically focused, to obtain long-term benefits, while STO negotiators spend less time considering strategic issues and focus only on immediate benefits.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

For this study's purpose individual semi-structured in-depth interviews were implemented. Interviews are considered one of the most common methods of qualitative data collection [38], being very useful for obtaining detailed information from interviewees on the research's subject. To implement this type of interview a number of questions were developed and unlike structured interviews, this method allows the order of questions to be changed, extra questions to be asked and clarification be provided where necessary, so the direction of the interview is led in an appropriate way to collect good-quality data. Open-ended questions were used as they allow the researcher to obtain more in-depth information and are, particularly, useful for exposing attitudes and opinions [38].

Sixteen semi-structured in-depth interviews were performed over a two-week period to accomplish the aim of the study; eight respondents were British and eight Venezuelans to explore the influence of NC on BN. The British managers were interviewed in their own offices, which were familiar and to avoid disruption in the process [38] whereas the Venezuelan managers' interviews were performed through Skype. Both methods provided the same benefits and allowed the interviewer to interpret non-verbal forms of communication such as gestures [33]. The interviews of the Venezuelan respondents were conducted in Spanish (the researcher's and respondents' mother-tongue) to give them more confidence to speak openly about the topic. These semi-

structured interviews helped the researcher to further investigate any unexpected attitudes to enrich the research. The interview structure was fairly open and flexible as the interviewer had a list of questions to allow for clarifications or extra questions if required [38]. In-depth interviews were implemented to investigate further and answer the research question. Since the study sought to evaluate the influence of the British and Venezuelan NC on BN, questions were developed to cover each of Hofstede's dimensions.

To improve the reliability and validity of the method and reduce possible bias, the interviews were audio-recorded and notes were taken to aid further analysis [33]. Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes, allowing sufficient time to explore the topic. For the purposes of this study, a qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data collected from the interviews. This method is the most popular for the analysis of semi-structured interviews [35] as it creates codes and categories in a systematic manner, to explore large amounts of textual data unobtrusively and interpret and identify trends, meanings and patterns [35]. To achieve this, all the interviews were then transcribed, coded and carefully analyzed.

#### V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

##### *A. The Influence of Power Distance on Business Negotiations in Venezuela and the UK*

Our results show that Venezuela has a high PDI, as most respondents use titles, reinforcing the inequalities among the society. Also, a special emphasis was noticed on some respondents that implied they were owed respect, due to their status.

These responses highlight the inequalities in Venezuela and show that status is ascribed, depending on factors like age, job title and university studies, etc. This supports the findings of [37] and those of [7] who acknowledge Venezuela as a high PDI culture where the use of titles is a characteristic as it reinforces status. Hui et al. [36] consider that high PDI cultures accentuate hierarchies and the centralization of power. This was confirmed by responses from Venezuelan managers as a desire for status was expressed, contributing to a very stratified society.

Most Venezuelan respondents expressed concern about the ranking of their counterpart and mostly articulated they would not be happy to negotiate with someone of a lower-rank than themselves. For example:

*"...Sometimes it gets uncomfortable if I have to negotiate with someone of a lower rank because they never have the right expertise and autonomy to make decisions"* (Respondent 8).

They, mainly, agreed that they would prefer to negotiate with a counterpart of similar ranking to themselves that is powerful enough to make decisions. This may be because a counterpart of lower-rank may diminish the status of the Venezuelan counterpart, which could even be considered as a humiliation. Also, as in Venezuela, most decision-makers have some level of seniority, usually manage their own businesses and unconsciously interpret that a lower-ranked

counterpart may not possess the autonomy to make quick decisions. However, in low PDI societies it is very common that subordinates are given the autonomy to make decisions, regardless of their rank [4]. This was confirmed in the British participants' responses that mostly said that the negotiating framework is discussed with their superiors, prior to any negotiation, which allows them to make quick decisions, without delaying the process:

*"For a meeting to be successful it is better to be empowered to make decisions by a boss or partner before the meeting, if necessary within certain parameters. My boss will provide me with the autonomy and parameters before any negotiation"* (Respondent 14).

Similarly, the British respondents agreed that the ranking of the counterpart was not of any importance to them and they are only concerned with the ability to make decisions as they do not have the same status-consciousness as the Venezuelans demonstrated. Overall, these findings comply with those of [7] who identify status as a key factor, which differentiates the negotiating processes, and behaviors of cultures, in terms of PDI.

#### *B. The Influence of Individualism on Business Negotiations in Venezuela and the UK*

According to [7] and [20], Venezuela is a highly collectivist society, where relationships are crucial. This was verified by enquiring the Venezuelan respondents about the importance of relationships in doing business, where there was a strong agreement, implying that relationships are fundamental. For example:

*"It is crucial to have a good relationship with whomever I am doing business with because it leads to a more comfortable environment."*(Respondent6).

In contrast, most British respondents demonstrated to be towards the other end of the spectrum, as they implied relationships were not a priority for them, when doing business:

*"When doing business no sort of relationship is required... knowing the other person is not a necessity."* (Respondent 16).

It seems that in Britain it is not necessary to belong to groups and people act as a self rather than part of a group and is reward-oriented, unlike the Venezuelan culture that is relationship-orientated. This confirms the high individualism of the UK suggested by [1] and [7].

Many authors such as [6] and [7] argue that collectivist negotiators emphasize relationships. This was further confirmed, as most Venezuelans implied the importance of consulting their bosses or partners about any possible decision to keep harmony. They favored a consensus in important decision-making as it maintains a good relationship and avoids hostility, across the organization:

*"I would not make big decisions all by myself. I have to consult the other 2 directors of the company so we will definitely reach a consensus between us to keep the peace across the company"* (Respondent 5).

Similarly, Venezuelan negotiating teams are often big, in comparison to Britain, and all respondents agreed that at least three people were required in a negotiation to show a better representation of the company. For example:

*"5 or at least 3... to have a better representation of the company in case big decisions need to be made"* (Respondent 15).

This is because the more people in a negotiation, the quicker their decision-making would be as they would build consensus during the negotiation, without delaying the process. Additionally, due to the high PDI, this provided a perception that the more people involved the more status provided which portrayed power, as suggested by [28]. Likewise, all the Venezuelan participants expressed it was crucial to consider all the organization members when evaluating the impact of their decisions, showing the great importance of relationships in Venezuela. However, their caring attitude is not only towards their in-groups, but also to keep good relationships with their counterparts and seek mutual benefits. When negotiating them implement an integrative approach showing a collectivist trait since they seek an extended relationship and the happiness of both parties:

*"My approach towards a negotiation or management in general is very positive, where both parties leave the negotiating table happy, and none of them feel they lost, which is vital to facilitate future strong relationships"* (Respondent 2).

Conversely, most British negotiators acknowledged they do not usually bring a team to negotiations and often go alone, as mentioned before they are usually given the autonomy to make decisions:

*"I tend to go all by myself to any negotiations as I have been given full responsibility to make any decisions regarding my job"* (Respondent 14).

It was confirmed that this dimension could even impact the communication styles implemented, as suggested by [7]. Although both groups of respondents mentioned the increased use of gestures (e.g. nodding) when communicating, most Britons followed gestures with a verbal opinion for clarity. Similarly, they stated that transparency was vital, when communicating and when asked about the extent of explicitness in their communication, they mostly agreed they would communicate in a very direct way, but, always, with diplomacy:

*"Diplomacy is always preferable so as not to cause offence, but it is better to be honest and say whatever you think in a polite manner"* (Respondent 9).

Conversely, in Venezuela, implicitness dominated respondents' answers where it was openly stated they would be careful in expressing their opinions, especially if the counterpart could be affected, so as to keep harmony and preserve relationships. Therefore, they may not really mean what they are verbally saying, but just be showing respect. The use of gestures was identified as a way of showing interest:

*"I think it is normal to use gestures, unconsciously. I believe nodding is, probably, the most common but I also think the movements of the eyes can express more than words. Those gestures are important to show that I am paying attention and I am committed to the negotiation"*(Respondent 1).

These findings comply with those of [4] who suggests that individualistic societies consider verbal communication as vital, while collectivists favour non-verbal and implicit tactics, during negotiations.

### *C. The Influence of Masculinity on Business Negotiations in Venezuela and the UK*

One of the main differences between masculine and feminine societies is whether they are performance or cooperation-orientated [7], as the main goal of a negotiation can be perceived differently. Although Venezuela and Britain are both masculine societies, different answers were recorded in the enquiries about the importance of having a general conversation prior to a negotiation to build rapport or whether it was preferable to talk business straightaway to reach an agreement quickly. Most British respondents expressed their preference to get down to business quickly, as they are performance-orientated, prefer to reach agreements rapidly and avoid talking about personal matters:

*"I prefer to go straight to business as I don't see that your personal life should have any bearing on it and I don't have time for that"*(Respondent 10).

*"I like having a general conversation, usually on general business or news issues. But very brief, as it is just to break the ice in order to reach an agreement quickly"* (Respondent 13).

Conversely, the preference for a general conversation to build rapport, dominated the Venezuelan participants' answers. However, this does not mean they are not masculine, but shows the influence of their high collectivism, as they feel the need to know their counterparts, to build trust so as to have a better negotiation later and conversations about personal facts are common:

*"I always think it's better to negotiate with someone I know, so I would encourage my counterpart to have a conversation first and family is always a good topic to talk about as you can know more about the person and build trust"* (Respondent 6).

These findings confirm that different cultures may have different goals in negotiating, as postulated by [32]. However, both groups of respondents agree that aggressiveness and assertiveness, characteristics of masculine negotiators, driven by success and achievement, are required to portray strength as [7] mentioned:

*"...It is not a competition but when doing business you still have to be assertive throughout the process and certainly, occasionally, it is required to be a bit aggressive..."*(Respondent 6).

*"...You have to be assertive if you want to benefit from it"* (Respondent 10).

Since both groups of respondents implied the importance of portraying themselves as strong when negotiating, their interpretation of concessions in a negotiation was also examined. Regarding this, most Venezuelan respondents agreed that giving concessions could be perceived as a sign of weakness. However, there was also some correlation with collectivism as some degree of concessions is expected, to reach a win-win agreement and maintain a good relationship with the counterpart:

*"With the win-win goal in a negotiation you can compromise on some aspects but stand firm on others, defending the interests of your organization. So I believe that a certain amount of concessions are normal and acceptable but if they are too many concessions then it could be seen as a sign of weakness"* (Respondent 2).

This means that despite being collectivists, they are not willing to give many concessions, only a small fraction, to enrich the rapport. As they are a masculine society they need to stand firm, avoid looking weak and preserve their ego. British respondents showed themselves to be completely masculine as they mostly agreed concessions could show a lack of preparation for the negotiation, resulting in a loss-of-face and showing weakness:

*"Concessions maybe seen as a sign of weakness because that shows that they had not prepared a good counterproposal"* (Respondent 8).

Therefore, these findings support those of [4] who argues that in masculine societies any concessions can be seen as a potential weakness, and, therefore, some aggressiveness is required.

### *D. The Influence of Uncertainty Avoidance on Business Negotiations in Venezuela and the UK*

Venezuela is a risk adverse society and will only take measured amounts of risk. It was expressed that to make any important decisions, excessive background information was required, to lower ambiguities, so they knew what to expect:

*"I can't imagine making a decision without having background information because this is my way of predicting what to expect if I take certain decisions"* (Respondent 8).

Therefore, this may add to the lengthy decision-making as sufficient time to explore the topic is required. Conversely, these negotiations may require a lot more preparation than those in Britain as they involve obtaining more information, if they are to be persuaded to take certain risks.

Regarding written agreements, most Venezuelans highlighted they required loads of details to ensure they could predict the future, avoiding uncertainties. It was emphasised when negotiating with unknown counterparts and where the counterparts required a detailed agreement, it was interpreted as a lack of trust:

*"...as much details as possible. But if the other person is the one asking for loads of details I might think he or she doesn't trust me"*.(Respondent 4).

*"I think a detailed written agreement is the right way to do business. Even if people don't request it, it should*

*be done, even though it can sometimes come across as lack of trust".* (Respondent 7).

However, most British respondents perceived detailed agreements as a normal business necessity, but not as a crucial aspect to predict future expectations:

*"Detail in an agreement is not so important as most aspects tend to be obvious"* (Respondent 8).

These results are consistent with those suggested by [32] and [7] who advise that NC affects the negotiating process as many issues arise if the negotiating parties perceive risks differently and have different requirements, when preparing for important decisions.

Fernandez et al. [31] propose that Venezuela has an emotional negotiating approach due to their high UAI. This was confirmed as several Venezuelan respondents agreed that they are quite expressive, perceiving the expression of emotions as acceptable as long as respect is maintained:

*"...I believe negotiations in Venezuela are loaded with emotions because we are very expressive. I think they are acceptable but there should be equilibrium, not too extreme, if it is extreme it could be rude and disturb the harmony of the negotiation. So I think it is acceptable as long as there is respect"* (Respondent 2).

While in Britain due to their low UAI the use of emotions when negotiating was perceived as inappropriate as it might negatively interfere:

*"Anything more than subtle expressions of emotion in negotiations are not applicable in business as it can damage the process"* (Respondent 9).

These results comply with those of [7] who indicates that in low UAI societies the expression of emotions is usually avoided.

#### *E. The Influence of Time Orientation on Business Negotiations in Venezuela and the UK*

Time orientation has proved to be different, across cultures. As mentioned before, Venezuela is STO, affecting their negotiating practices. Concerning meetings, they, mostly, expressed they are usually unpunctual but if their counterpart is, they never make assumptions, until they hear their reasons, as there may have been important and unexpected family matters:

*"I am often unpunctual but I usually notify my counterpart the reasons of my unpunctuality. If my counterpart is unpunctual I can only interpret the event depending on the reasons they provide as they may have had some unexpected personal issues"* (Respondent 5).

In contrast, Britain as a LTO society, proved to be future-oriented, mentioning that punctuality is vital for them and consider it rude if the counterpart is late:

*"Punctuality is important, as it is a mark of respect to your counterpart. If I or the other party are unavoidably delayed then a message should be sent explaining the delay and asking if the meeting is still convenient or whether the other party prefers to reschedule"* (Respondent 11).

This supports the findings of [7] who claim that long-term-orientated societies think 'time is money' and by being punctual they intended to make the most of their and the counterpart's time, while short-term-orientated societies value leisure and present time more and do not think being late is rude. Similarly, most Venezuelan participants showed they seek immediate gratification, when negotiating; indicating that their priorities are to be fulfilled today, the future is unknown, confirming their present-orientation:

*"I mainly look for short-term benefits, because I think life should be lived today as we don't know what will happen tomorrow..."* (Respondent 4).

*"...present time is more important; therefore, short-term benefits are vital to keep the company active"* (Respondent 2).

Therefore, when negotiating, Venezuelans need to be shown they can gain quick benefits, supporting Saeed's [4] findings, which claim STO societies, place emphasis on gaining immediate benefits. Conversely, Britain acknowledged seeking long-term benefits when negotiating, showing a pragmatic trait, mentioning that long-term benefits are crucial to long-term success:

*"Always long-term benefits are preferred. Short term gratification has much less impact on business, as is hard to quantify in a business plan"* (Respondent 13).

*"I work more around long-term benefits than short-term gains, because in a business, future stability and rewards are always vital"* (Respondent 10).

This indicates that British negotiators are usually patient when expecting the results from a negotiation outcome, supporting Hollensen's [17] findings, which considers Britain to be a persistent society, due to their LTO.

#### VI. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

An analysis of existing literature on the influence of NC on BN indicates that most of the existing research refers to the cultural attributes of Venezuela and Britain in general terms of management, failing to identify specific characteristics of behavior and the underlying reasons, which encourage this behavior within a negotiation context. The implications of Hofstede's dimensions on BN established that cross-cultural negotiations could be very complex as time attitudes, communication styles, and behavior patterns differ across cultures [4]. However, the specific impact that NC has on negotiations in Britain and Venezuela was very scarce.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that Venezuela and Britain are very distinct countries that implement diverse negotiating practices. This is because NC has a strong impact on BN since it can influence the way people interpret and behave in different situations, which can be perceived by individuals from other cultures as abnormal.

Besides, Britain was found to be a risk tolerant culture that feels the need to innovate always, requiring less information for decision making and preferring to accelerate the process, by implementing an inductive approach. Conversely, Venezuela is risk averse, resulting in fewer innovations and preferring to do business with people they know to lessen

uncertainties, favoring deductive negotiations to gain more insights on the topic. Regarding time orientation, Venezuela was shown to be present-orientated, favoring social obligations over business, emphasizing quick gratification when negotiating. In Britain 'time is money', due to their future-orientation they always plan ahead, preferring long-term benefits to short-term ones. These findings served to explore and understand the NC differences between British and Venezuelan managers and reveal an understanding of the great influence of NC on BN in Britain and Venezuela, proving that all the objectives of the study were successfully met.

For cross-cultural negotiations to succeed, practitioners should have a high cultural sensitivity, to respond, appropriately, to the negotiating process. For example, business practitioners desiring to perform business negotiation, effectively in Venezuela should be:

- Patient and allow plenty of time for decision-making, as Venezuelans tend to consult with their superiors in order to reach a consensus;
- Prepared to negotiate with big negotiating teams and bring a good representation from your side to avoid any underestimations;
- Prepared to negotiate on an integrative (win-win) basis and avoid individualistic attitudes;
- Prepared to show the immediate benefits from the negotiation or agreement as Venezuela is a short-term oriented society.

Although this study provided valuable insights on the influence of NC dimensions on BN in Britain and Venezuela, there are some shortcomings that lead to avenues for future research, as follows:

The researchers conducted 16 semi-structured exploratory interviews as an initial pilot study and supporting method. The findings of our current study can't be generalized. However, this initial stage has helped us to make sure that the research problem exists and the research questions were worth investigating. This is because it is strongly advisable not to rush into detailed surveys before less expensive and more readily available sources of information have been exhausted [34]. Therefore, quantitative questionnaire survey will be conducted at the subsequent stage, over a larger sample of Venezuelan and British managers to overcome the subjectivity of qualitative research and to further validate and generalize the findings. The findings obtained will be reported in a future paper. Mixed or hybrid research methods, by using quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures either at the same time or one after the other, is increasingly advocated within business research [38]. Triangulation methods provide more viewpoints and perspective as well as deeper and broader information on the phenomenon being studied [38] and to increase the quality, validity and reliability of the findings and decrease the degree of bias. Lastly, since personality may also play a key role when negotiating, it is advisable that this is considered, to increase accuracy and avoid generalizations or stereotypes.

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