WEDDING PRESENT CONFLICT

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DACE company is among the world's leading automotive suppliers. DACE, headquartered in Germany, manufactures in approximately forty different countries, on five continents. The company has a worldwide reputation for its success in product quality and supply chain management. It has established a strong relationship with its suppliers. Before DACE starts to establish a factory in a new country, it determines suppliers that comply with German culture and DACE standards. This process can sometimes take much longer than the establishment of the factory. However, it does not compromise DACE standards in any way. Mr Ludwig, one of the company's most experienced managers, has been appointed as the coordinator of the new factory in Turkey. Mr Ludwig has been working in the field of marketing for the DACE company for nearly twenty years and has been assigned to establish the supplier and customer network of the new factories that the company has opened in different countries over the last ten years. He considers Turkey as a the fifth and final country where he will work before he moves back to Germany to take up a place on the Board of Directors for the entire marketing network of the company.

In Turkey, Mr Ludwig works with Mehmet, who is the Marketing Assistant Manager responsible for suppliers in Turkey. He has been a lot of support to him and as a result Ludwig is considering proposing Mehmet, to the board of the factory in Turkey, as Director of Marketing after finishing his assignment in Turkey.

Mehmet has over ten years of experience as an executive in the field of marketing in automotive supplier companies. During this period, Mehmet has been recognised as a reliable and generous person in the sector. Mehmet has been very careful about mutual trust both in his business and his private life and has always tried to provide financial and moral support to the people around him.

While Ludwig has been satisfied with the work of Mehmet in the past year, he has had difficulty understanding some of Mehmet's behavior. For example, Mehmet's efforts to always pay the bill when they are in a restaurant or pub with his colleagues. Ludwig sees himself as someone who respects and tolerates different cultures, however he has struggled to understand this behaviour. When Ludwig discussed this with Mehmet, he explained that they always pay the bill like this in Turkey. In this case, as Mehmet's senior, Ludwig felt obliged to pay even though it was a meal outside of business and he has offered to pay the bill at several meetings. The situation made him feel uncomfortable when meeting Mehmet outside of work. Turkish colleagues stated that this situation is normal in Turkey, however Ludwig has rarely encountered a situation like this before. He could not decide whether this was a cultural attitude or a personal behavior.

One day, Mehmet arrives with some wedding invitations. The invitations are for the wedding of the son of Mr Emin, the owner of the family business BF, who are the largest supplier of DACE. Ludwig always attaches importance to such events as they help to maintain good relations with suppliers and therefore he thinks that he should attend the wedding. When Ludwig saw that the place where the wedding would be held was "Çırağan Palace" with a view of the Bosporus, he thought of it as "a place exactly suitable for Mr. Emin". While Ludwig gave instructions to prepare a wreath immediately as a wedding gift, Mehmet said that a gold bracelet

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should be bought for the bride. Ludwig asked Mehmet what the gold bracelet meant and why it should be bought.

Mehmet replied with the following comment "A wreath is something we need to buy for a wedding in order to show the company's name, but we need to buy a golden bracelet for the bride also. Because wearing gold to the bride or groom at weddings is very important in Turkish culture. Mr. Emin would not be pleased if only flowers come from DACE. Also, I personally would not want to behave in a way that makes us look stingy".

Ludwig knew that as a matter of company policy it was not possible to make a payment such as a gift of money or gold to any customer or supplier. He thought that it was not possible to meet such an expense from the company's budget. However, if he did not accept this, both Mehmet and Emin would perceive this situation personally. This situation has the potential to cause both the peace within the company and the relationship with the BF supplier to deteriorate.

Questions

1. *What would you do if you were in Ludwig's place? Would you act in accordance with the company's policy or local culture?*
    a) *What kind of consequences may occur if he followed the company's policy?*
    b) *What kind of consequences may occur if he acts in the context of local culture?*
2. *Do you think Ludwig is sensitive to cultural differences?*
3. *What do you think of Mehmet's behaviour? Is it due to cultural context or is it an individual attitude?*
4. *What are the benefits of cultural empathy? Do you think cultural empathy is a learnable skill? Discuss in an intercultural context based on your own experience.*

Recommended Reading

Jolliffe, D., Farrington, D.P., (2004). Empathy and offending: A systematic review and meta-analysis, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 9, 441–476.

Wang, Y.W., Davidson, M.M., Yakushko, O.F., Savoy, H.B., Tan, J.A., & Bleier, J.K. (2003). The scale of ethnocultural empathy: Development, validation, and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(2), 221-234.

Suthakaran, V. (2011). Using Analogies to Enhance Self-Awareness and Cultural Empathy: Implications for Supervision. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 39(1), 206-217.

Yumin, X., & Sijia, C., (2019). A Study on the Cultivation of Cultural Empathy Ability of Russian Majors in Cross-cultural Communication. *5th International Conference on Economics, Management and Humanities Science (ECOMHS 2019)*, 143 - 148.

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WEDDING PRESENT CONFLICT – TEACHING GUIDE

1. Synopsis

Mr. Ludwig has been working in the field of marketing for the DACE company for nearly twenty years and has been assigned to establish the supplier and customer network of new factories the company has opened in different countries for the last ten years. He is stationed in Turkey, at one of the plants that was opened in the past year. Ludwig works with Mehmet, who is the Marketing Assistant Manager responsible for suppliers in Turkey. He has found him to be a source of valuable support and there have been no problems between them during this time. However, they could not agree on what the gift should be at the wedding of the boss of one of the largest suppliers. While Mehmet thinks that the gift of gold is mandatory according to Turkish traditions, Ludwig thinks that they can't give such a gift if they are to comply with the company's standards.

2.Teaching Strategy and Teaching Objectives

Students /learners will be able to:

- ✓ Learn what cultural empathy means and how important it can be when working with people from different cultures.
- ✓ Understand the different values from different cultures.

3.Target Audience

- ✓ Undergraduate students in all business-related disciplines
- ✓ Postgraduate students in all business-related disciplines

4. Questions & Answers for Case Analysis and Teaching

- ✓ **Open the discussion**
  What is the main problem in the case?

- ✓ **Advance the discussion**

5. *What would you do if you were in Ludwig's place? Would you act in accordance with the company's policy or local culture?*
   a) *What kind of consequences may occur if he followed the company's policy?*
   b) *What kind of consequences may occur if he acts in the context of local culture?*
6. *Do you think Ludwig is sensitive to cultural differences?*
7. *What do you think of Mehmet's behaviour? Is it due to cultural context or is it an individual attitude?*

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✓ **Close the discussion**

What are the benefits of cultural empathy? Do you think cultural empathy is a learnable skill? Discuss in an intercultural context based on your own experience.

5. Recommended Reading

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Wang, Y.W., Davidson, M.M., Yakushko, O.F., Savoy, H.B., Tan, J.A., & Bleier, J.K. (2003). The scale of ethnocultural empathy: Development, validation, and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(2), 221-234.

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WEDDING PRESENT CONFLICT – TEACHING NOTES

1. Summary of case study

Mr. Ludwig has been working in the field of marketing for the DACE company for nearly twenty years and has been assigned to establish the supplier and customer network of new factories the company has opened in different countries for the last ten years. He is stationed in Turkey, at one of the plants that was opened in the past year. Ludwig works with Mehmet, who is the Marketing Assistant Manager responsible for suppliers in Turkey. He has found him to be a source of valuable support and there have been no problems between them during this time. However, they could not agree on what the gift should be at the wedding of the boss of one of the largest suppliers. While Mehmet thinks that the gift of gold is mandatory according to Turkish traditions, Ludwig thinks that they can't give such a gift if they are to comply with the company's standards.

2. Suggested methodology for 'solving' case study

✓ **Before the discussion,** some warm-up questions may prepare students for the discussion (Assignment questions before the case)

- What is the main problem in the case?

✓ **Open the discussion (15 min)**

The discussion can be started with the following questions.

- What would you do if you were in Ludwig's place? Would you act in accordance with the company's policy or local culture?

-What kind of consequences may occur if he followed the company's policy?

-What kind of consequences may occur if he acts in the context of local culture?

With the help of these questions, students can be given basic information about being sensitive to different cultures and cultural empathy.

✓ **Advance the discussion (45 min)**

The discussion can be deepened by following questions.

-Do you think Ludwig is sensitive to cultural differences?

-What do you think of Mehmet's behaviour? Is it due to cultural context or is it an individual attitude?

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It can be emphasized that managers should take cultural differences into account when interpreting the behaviour of individuals from different cultures. In addition, with these questions, the dimensions of the concept of cultural empathy can be examined.

✓ **Close the discussion (15 min)**

At the end of the discussion, participants can be encouraged to reflect on themselves. How well do they have the skill of cultural empathy and how can they develop this skill?

-What are the benefits of cultural empathy? Do you think cultural empathy is a learnable skill? Discuss in an intercultural context based on your own experience.

3. Possible answers

What would you do if you were in Ludwig's place? Would you act in accordance with the company's policy or local culture? What kind of consequences may occur if he acts in the context of local culture?

First of all, he should check whether giving gold gifts at weddings is commonplace in Turkish culture. If it is a common behaviour, Ludwig may consider accepting Mehmet's request. Afterwards, he should explain in detail to the top management in Germany that the situation has an important place in Turkish culture. It is important to inform the top management in this case because in the next similar situation, it is necessary to take a decision that is in line with the company policy. At the end of the process, he may request a change in the company's policy to allow some differences in practice according to cultural values. If it is not common behaviour in Turkish culture, Ludwig should act in accordance with the accepted company policy.

What kind of consequences may occur if he followed the company's policy?

Although giving gold gifts has a place in Turkish culture, to act in accordance with company policy would be to act contrary to Turkish culture and Mehmet's view of life. In the short term, it may cause Mehmet to be unhappy and lose motivation. In the long run, it may adversely affect the Company's behaviours in respect of cultural values.

Do you think Ludwig is sensitive to cultural differences? What do you think of Mehmet's behaviour? Is it due to cultural context or is it an individual attitude?

Ludwig considers himself sensitive in this regard. *"Ludwig sees himself as someone who respects and tolerates different cultures".* Mehmet is known as a generous person to those around him. Mehmet's character makes it difficult for Ludwig to understand and solve the wedding problem. It is very important for Mehmet to understand whether his request is individual or cultural. This is the main point that makes it difficult for Ludwig to decide. It will be easier to find solutions after accepting that the situation in question is cultural.

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What are the benefits of cultural empathy? Do you think cultural empathy is a learnable skill? Discuss in an intercultural context based on your own experience.

Cultural empathy is the learned ability to accurately understand and respond appropriately to the cultural context [including ethnicity, class, gender, disability, and sexual orientation], both in its similarities and differences. [1] Cultural empathy expands on that definition to include the need to understand a frame of reference as it relates to cultural components regarding self-experience and self-awareness.

[1] Betty Garcia, Yuhwa Eva Lu, Katherine Maure, "Cultural Empathy: Implications of Findings from Social Work Objective-Structured Clinical Observation for Field Education", *Field Educator*, Volume 2.2 , Fall 2012, 1-9.

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