

Specificities of the Cultural Adaptation of French and German Firms to the Tunisian Context

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Abstract

With the growth of the phenomenon of internationalization of firms, we are becoming more aware that the needs of the firm abroad are not always financial. The cultural aspect that has long been neglected is hitting hard and causes in case of ignorance or disrespect a source of challenge to social cohesion and good functioning of the foreign firm.

The present work highlights the need for foreign firms to demonstrate a particular sensitivity towards cultural differences and an adaptation faculty to such differences when it comes to surviving in countries where they exist.

To show that there is neither single solution to achieve this adaptation nor standard responses to problems that may arise; we conducted a comparison between the specificities of the adaptation of French and German firms in the Tunisian cultural context.

Keywords: Culture, Organizational behavior, Cultural adaptation, International mobility, Management, Marketing

1. Introduction

Since very ancient times, people have sought to conquer new territories to increase their resources and to expand their field of power. After the colonization and later the first associations of merchants, we witness another form of conquest of markets which was the international diversification (Kadjar, 1999). Undoubtedly, this new form aims at exploiting new resources and searching for new opportunities. In addition, it has other reasons that depend on the one hand on the host country and on the other hand the objectives pursued by the company in its decision of establishment (Lemaire, 1997).

In many cases, the phenomenon of internationalization of firms goes through exportation, the creation of commercial subsidiaries, and the creation of manufacturing subsidiaries before ending for some of them, in the multi-nationalization of the company (Urban, 1993). In implementation Markets, these firms are faced with various forms of cooperation that appear as strategic policy options, even inevitable (Mayrhofer, 2005).

According to the culturalist approach (Demorgon, 2005; D'Iribarne, 2000; Hofstede, 1994) firms are facing early in the process of internationalization cultural differences which separate their country of origin of country of location. Thus, if from the beginning, we take into consideration at the level of marketing (Usunier, 1992) and negotiation, it is the human resource management which will then be faced with problems of expatriation (Gauthey, 1994), even multicultural team management (Désiré, 2009). In view of the fact that, if national cultures influence people's perceptions about what shocks them and what motivates them (D'Iribarne, 1989), it is essential to take into account when deciding to invest in a foreign country.

This exploratory study, aims at better identifying the specificities of the cultural adaptation of French and German firms in the Tunisian context.

The comparison between the French and Germans is not an end in itself but rather forms a powerful means of enriching the knowledge (Barmeyer, 2007).

To achieve this objective, a survey was conducted with a sample of fifteen French and German firms deemed very successful on our domestic and the international market. The comparison has allowed us to observe heterogeneity of representations and an inequality of interactions in the concept of cultural adaptation.

Starting by an incursion into the field on the theoretical question of cultural adaptation of foreign subsidiaries to the context of the host country, we are going to present, as a first step, the methodology used and describe the surveyed firms and then in a second step, we are going to analyze the survey data.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational behavior face to Cultural diversity

The globalization of trade has led organizations to be more and more aware of the inevitable character of cultural diversity, considered as a need for survival, including foreign firms. But diversity does not represent only advantages: it can also cause serious communication problems (Gillert, 2001), intercultural conflict (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2004) and impede the smooth flow of business, as evidenced by numerous failures in international negotiations (Datsi, 2001), international joint projects, technical assistance between countries, etc...

Before presenting the various organizational behaviors face to cultural diversity of host countries, we consider it essential to define the concept culture.

Culture is understood as "a set of learned patterns of behavior shared and interconnected and that distinguish one society from another. These modes of behavior reflect shared values, attitudes, customs, manners, beliefs, practices, a language, aesthetics and an education "(Paveau, et al., 2005).

In a broad way, culture is conceived as a system of meanings learned and shared by members of a group.

Below, we present three ways of conceiving culture. These three designs are complementary; they refer not only to societies but also to firms.

- Culture is a system of interpretation.

It is considered of hypotheses of base, hopes, conceptions and common meanings, perceived as obvious and natural, which facilitates in the group clarity, the sharing of knowledge, communication and cooperation (Chanlat, 2005). In a monocultural context, rules of interpretation are shared, which facilitates exchanges and collaboration; in a multicultural context, expectations, rules and patterns of interpretation are rarely the same and can lead to misunderstandings and to inconsistency. Add to that the implications connected to the use foreign languages.

-Culture is a system of values acquired through socialization.

Hofstede (2001) refers to culture as "mental software". Thanks to socialization within a certain experimental space, the individual acquires in his family, school, university, working in his circle of friends and relations, some models of thoughts, actions and constituting a system of feelings, emotional and cognitive characteristics of its society. They are "saved" unconsciously; the individual does not become aware of "his" culture. Values which recognize certain objects or behavior patterns of meaning and valence are different from one culture to another where they can be very important in a society can be much less in another.

-Culture is a system for achieving goals and solving problems.

All individuals must solve similar and fundamental challenges and difficulties.

Although if there are many possible solutions, preferred, solutions will be those that are in harmony with the corresponding values in the society in question (Schein, 1986). Due to value orientations relatively different, each cultural group (national, regional, socio-cultural, organizational) develops models of different solutions.

Any time the concept of culture and especially that of national culture, which should help differentiate from each other in various groups or societies (Nath, 1988) and aims at the same time at reducing the complexity of a heterogeneous society, should not lead to Schematic generalization. Societies are in fact never hermetically isolated, they represent dynamical systems and for the most of them, multicultural systems (Calpiá-Valladon & Mannoni, 1991). Given this diversity, foreign firms may have different organizational behavior.

The study of Cox (1994) is one of the studies that come to explore these behaviors. It presents a theoretical model of dynamics of acculturation for firms of various cultures while devoting valuable comments on cultural diversity within the organizational framework, and with particular emphasis on the process of acculturation as a way of recognizing diversity. He distinguishes four types of possible behaviors adopted by firms: assimilation, separation, deculturation and pluralism.

2.1.1 Assimilation

It is a one-way adaptation process in which the culture of the company becomes the mode of behavior. The assimilation seeks to absorb all other cultures in the organization, the aim is to eliminate cultural differences by obliging groups of minority culture holders to meet the needs and standards of the dominant culture.

This adaptation of unilateral minority implies a kind of cultural mutilation, as is the case for minorities to move forward, must adopt certain values of the company.

2.1.2 Separation

It limits the exchanges between people of different culture and, thereby promotes partitioning both spatially, culturally and technically. One reason is that the formation of a person is made easier in the cultural proximity. In

other words, it is easier to train someone if the other service members speak fluently his common language. This compartmentalization of services causes problems of Communication, isolates services and promotes the tendency to speak mother tongues.

The separation can also come from minority groups and explains their willingness to translate their belonging to another culture or to mitigate the difficulties of adapting to their new place. Such separation leads to remarks such as "these people are still between them."

2.1.3 Deculturation

This third approach proposed by Cox, describes a situation where no present cultures are preferred where the culture of the company has no significant weight. In fact, no cultural influence weighs on members of such an organization.

The deculturation could be the result of hiring policy that consists of minimizing cultural diversity to criteria that emphasize the proximity of candidates. In doing so, the risks of cultural misunderstandings become fewer.

2.1.4 Pluralism

According to Cox, pluralism appears to be the key to the success of firms of different cultures. This approach refers to a cultural symbiosis, we feel that present cultures are recognized and even valued. Cultural pluralism has its origins in the works of Kallen (1924) based on the following postulations: 1. Nobody chooses his ancestors, 2. Each minority culture makes a positive contribution to the U.S society, 3. The democratic idea and the passion for equality presuppose differences between individuals and groups who must find the way to express themselves.

In this organizational context, pluralism should lead to an appreciation of different cultures and their contributions to the smooth functioning of the company.

Increasingly, the mode of acculturation that constitutes pluralism began to be perceived as a strategic tool by some organizations.

2.2 *Elements of cultural adaptation of foreign firms*

Cultural differences require a degree of cultural adjustment on the part of the foreign company. It can make the necessary adjustment thanks to adjusting individuals, management and marketing functions.

2.2.1 The adaptation of individuals

Increased trade and investment has resulted in increasing the mobility of people. This context is characterized by an acute shortage of highly qualified manpower.

Executives are in fact the most exposed population to the international mobility.

They are at the heart of the internationalization of enterprises (Cerdin, 1996). The needs of these executives are changing and increasingly focus on the nature of sought skills in an environment where understanding of international standards and issues is a competitive advantage.

In fact, the concept of international mobility, which constitutes for the international framework a factor of career progression and skills development; constitutes even now a source of knowledge transfer (Inkson, Arthur, Barry, & Pringle, 1997) and expertise (Cerdin, 2004). Firms have realized that to be so performing in this environment of scarcity, they have a strong interest in attracting international executives and adapting them in order to retain them. Indeed, the performance of the company depends on its ability to reconcile adequate levels of international integration of its employees compared to the constraints and opportunities in the international environment.

Several studies in intercultural psychology and management science have shown the beneficial effect of intercultural training on expatriate adaptation (Peter, 2007; Rakotomena, 2005; Waxin & Panaccio, 2004). However, in most foreign firms, the intercultural preparation of expatriates is superficial, incomplete or even nonexistent (Brewster, 1995; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005).

As part of their work on intercultural training Morace & Schulze (2005), prefer the collective training that targets expatriates and some of their collaborators, within the framework of inter-enterprise training as not to a single individual. They add that the presented material for each course must be defined according to negotiated and fixed objectives, of intercultural skills that would be developed.

2.2.2 The adaptation of management

The notion of cultural superiority defends the superiority of a model over another and allows the use of the concept "One best way" in the field of management.

But although it has been adapted for several years, this design shows its shortcomings and was subsequently criticized even in a wider framework than that of corporate management. The management is, in general, to bring

together individuals who may have different expectations and interests, to seek to have them agree on issues of strategy, decision making, coordination, communication, animation, hierarchy, etc.. Therefore, when dealing with human populations with different cultural backgrounds and we want to avoid the phenomena of rejection or even in the worst cases of Full failure (Chevrier, 2003) to ensure that differences become complementaries and mutual enrichment, it is essential to give more importance to the cultural factor (Unternehmer, 2004). We talk about intercultural management that has developed in the United States in the late 1970s on the basis of international management and comparative management (Moran, Harris & Moran, 2007). Intercultural management focuses on the organizational behavior and human resources (Adler, 1991) is a means to raise the awareness of the reality of cultural differences that are reinforced by the globalization and on the other hand the construction and implementation of tools and approaches helping enterprises manage these differences (Loth, 2006). More specifically, it examines the influence of culture (national and organizational) on the perceptions, interpretations and actions of actors (Barmeyer & Mayrhofer, 2002).

2.2.3 The adaptation of marketing

International marketing is at the forefront in the confrontation with foreign cultures

(Dupriez & Simons, 2002). Starting from the postulate that marketing is a set of attitudes and techniques by which the company seeks to anticipate the needs of its customers to sell products or programs that give them optimal satisfaction in the short and medium term without alienating provided societal long-term well-being (Henault, 1987), what does it become when it is operating in an international context?

Indeed, this is an activity field of the expanded enterprise into more than one country and it forces to make decisions on how they are entering foreign markets, developing international business strategies, their implementation and monitoring (Cateora & Graham, 2007). In opposition to the universalist approach of marketing which is based on the postulate of planetary motion representations and lifestyles for individuals and thus enabling and the enterprise to make an offer of almost standardized products and services backed by icons that encourage mimicry (Croué, 2002; Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2007) several studies have called for the adaptation of marketing to cultural, ethnic and communicational specificities of the host country (Bennett & Blythe, 2002; Dupriez & Simons, 2002; Herbig, 1998).

In fact, products and services are designed for consumers whose cultural patterns are increasingly diverse and evolving. The observation and understanding of mechanisms of value judgments concerning a product or service abroad become the most important issues for marketing managers to build a winning marketing and differentiating strategy. The culture of a country and its expressions in terms of judgments and perceived images of prospects and customers are very different from one country to another. The marketing policies must impregnate this cultural context (Petrof, 1993).

As a proof, we find that firms, even smaller ones, which knew how to develop a relationship of trust between their various stakeholders, adapt to the needs of customers regardless of their origin without undermining their effectiveness, which held their promises in an ethical manner while continually delivering in question those which survived the political and economic turmoil in recent decades (Henault & Spence, 2006).

3. Methodology

The objective of this part is to present the criteria for choosing foreign firms, the means of collecting and analyzing data and finally the presentation and discussion of results.

3.1 The choice of surveyed foreign firms

Our research concentrates on a qualitative analysis (Hlady Rispoli, 2002) focuses on a sample of fifteen foreign firms studied in depth. Within the framework of a research of a small sample, the choice of surveyed firms must be carried out with particular care. To do so, we relied primarily on the recommendations of the Tunisian-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CTFCI), the Tunisian-German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (CTAIC) and the Agency of the Promotion of Industry (API). The criteria for selection of these firms are essentially:

- Performance on global and Tunisian markets.
- Level of cooperation with local firms.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

This exploratory research (Van der Maren, 1996) is seeking to develop a vision as complete as possible of the cultural adaptation specificities of French and German firms to the Tunisian context. In this context, the semi-directive interview was recommended for the collection of information as this investigative is a ready tool for the qualitative nature of our survey (Bonami & Bajoit, 2002; Blanchet, 1987).

We developed an interview guide that consists of four main themes. The first is devoted to information on foreign firms (implementation date, sector activity, number of foreign staff and local motivations of the firms). The second is interested in information on interviewed expatriates. The third theme revolves around management methods within these firms. The fourth focuses on the specificities of their marketing function. We interviewed 20 French expatriates and 15 Germany expatriates.

Interviews are conducted on the dates and times chosen by the interviewed individuals and for an average duration of one hour. With the agreement of the interviewees, the interviews are registered to maintain the entire content. The interviews were conducted following four stages (Giannelloni & Vernet, 2002): presentation (explanation and interaction), development (conventional speech), depth (more personal speech) and conclusion (collection the last talks).

After each interview, we developed a summary sheet including key information and a research log gathering impressions and details observed during the interview. At the same time, the addressed topics are expanding, which would allow to develop a dictionary of themes related to the progressive control of qualitative data (Frimousse & Peretti, 2006). The collected material gives rise to a content analysis. The analysis aims at reducing information in order to categorize them and look for the relationships between them before achieving a description or an explanation (Aktouf 1992; Wacheux, 1996).

4. Presentation and discussion of results

First, we are interested in the manifest contents of the reflections of French and German respondents. Subsequently, the study of the contents of the collected content identified some major themes that have helped define the specifics of adaptation of these two nationalities in the local context.

4.1 Description of surveyed firms

Most firms participating in this survey belong to the textile industry sector, followed by the electricity sector. The others come from other industrial branches. All these firms are multinational and have several production sites outside Tunisia. Whereas half of them have the advantage of from an age of implantation more than fifteen years, Tunisia is a strategic site of implantation which encourages them to have more than a location in Tunisia.

In addition, (40%) of these firms employ 100 persons, (33%) of them employ between 100 and 300 whilst (27%) have over 500 employees.

The number of foreign personnel is less than 5 in more than half of them then for others; the number exceeds 5 in each foreign company. Almost the majority of surveyed firms consider the political and social stability as the first factor of Tunisia's attraction. Geographical proximity to Europe is the second motivation of firms. The third factor is the tax benefits that were mentioned by two-thirds of these settlements. The other factors are the competitive production costs, productivity and the effective level of training of the workforce.

4.2 The adaptation of individuals

At the main characteristics of interviewed expatriates, the survey reveals that the population is male-dominated (4 women and 31 men), two third of them aged more than 40 years. They have a level of academic training (between Baccalaureate +3 and Baccalaureate + 5) of a technical area of expertise and have responsibilities spread across the different corporate functions (mainly management).

The first variable we studied at the level of expatriate adaptation is language. We adhere here to the thinking of several authors (Billeau, 1996; Gohard-Radenkovic, 2004) According to them the degree of language proficiency in the host country should facilitate the adaptation and transfer of skills.

Analysis of French expatriates reveals that ignorance of the Arabic language is not an obstacle. In fact, Tunisia is a resolutely francophone country where French is not a foreign language but a real second language, vehicular language, a language of culture and science. We found that even at the level of production departments (execution staff), where the Tunisians do not speak French, the language problem can be neutralized by mastering the French language by local Tunisian officials who serve as a hinge to the transmission of information between the two partners. Therefore, French expatriates are less interested in learning the Arab language and consider that this behavior has no negative effect on their adaptation or the competence of their company. At the level of German expatriates, the language problem is more crucial. In fact, English is considered the first foreign language of Germans they also have less control of the French language. For their part, the second foreign language of Tunisians is English and they have a less mastery of the German language. Hence the majority of German expatriates communicates in English and use less French and German. Unlike French expatriates, some German expatriates make an effort to learn words in Arabic often used in the exercise of their function.

The second variable we examined at the level of expatriates adaptation is that intercultural training. Although studies in intercultural psychology and management science show the beneficial effect of cross-cultural training on expatriate adjustment (high self-confidence, improvement of relationships with individuals of the host country), our investigation has shown that firms surveyed do not give enough importance to this variable. In fact, the majority of surveyed expatriates (80%) did not follow a cross-cultural training before departure. Others followed a training oriented to general culture of the host country. That causes several weaknesses in the control of different behaviors and attitudes that foster their integration into their new environment.

Any time, we have found that expatriates mostly of German nationality are oriented to the individual intercultural training. They use new technologies of information and primarily the Internet to gain the maximum information on the specificities of the Tunisian economic, political, social and cultural context.

At this level, they noted the significant efforts of the Tunisian government in creating several specialized sites offering necessary information needed by the expatriate to better acclimatize to its new context.

4.3 The adaptation of management

The objective of this part is to test the validity degree of the thesis of culturalist modes of organization and functioning in French and German firms. We began by determining the French and German management hallmarks. Subsequently, we have specified the degree of adaptation of these modes in the local cultural context.

Several publications (Crosier, 1963; Gordon, 1996) dealing with the French working style and management, characterized it by a codified structure, bureaucratic and attached on a power center. D'Iribarne (1989) considers that this specificity of the French management comes mainly from "the logic of honour". In fact this term reflects the cultural constancy of social classification into "noble" and "vile" and justifies usual categorization for professional status ("executives", "non- executives", "noble jobs"). In French firms the rights and duties of collaborators need less official documents such as the employment contract and job description, as a code latent value. This greatly influences the hierarchy within firms.

Between persons of the same rank, relationships are collegial and informal, as between the different levels, attitudes become more authoritarian and formal and influence the decision-making process and the delegation of responsibilities.

In Germany, we see a marked need to avoid uncertainty (Barmeyer, 2007). This need manifests itself in the privacy in the workplace under many formal laws and informal rules and is also manifested in the emphasis on technology and expertise. In firms, uncertainty control leads to the agreements fixing in writing and contracts and provide great care with reports of meetings and schedules. The respect of the chain of command and the importance of face-to-face interviews take part also on uncertainty control. The German manager is an expert in his field, must have all the answers and focuses on details and quality. In terms of adapting management style to the specific local analysis, results of this survey showed several differences between the firms of French and German origin.

The variable that has most preoccupied us in this research is that of autonomy subsidiaries or dependence compared to the mother company. By dependence; we mean the weight of the influence of the mother company on the development of the subsidiary (Durand, 1997). We unveiled the specifics of this dependence on financial, technical and decision-making levels.

For the French and Unlike the Germans, the setting goals escapes prerogatives of the subsidiary that is, at best, associated with decisions and, more often dependent to development policy defined by the group. Consistently, the same situation of dependence is found for financial decisions: investors might be proposed in a particular sector, but they are decided by the center and not by subsidiary. For the technical side, we found that for the majority of French firms technical managers come regularly to monitor the operations which increases the weight guidelines and creates a strict hierarchy in these locations.

However, the Germans believe they are able to solve daily problems whether technical, organizational and financial independently.

The essential causes of this independence are the high professionalism and excellent training that distinguishes German managers. The second variable that has preoccupied us is that of human resource management. This variable includes all methods and techniques of direction, organization and management. It also includes how the company monitors its staff and motivates them to achieve its objectives (Waxin & Barmeyer, 2008). Similarly for human resources management variable, the survey showed that German settlements are more independent than French ones. In fact, contrary to French firms, the situation of German personnel indicates a high degree of autonomy: Decisions concerning the personnel policy are taken independently from the mother firms and key positions are also occupied by Germans and locals.

The French have shown a high rigidity in wage policy. In fact, they practice their policy based on the principle of linking compensation to contribution of employees. This is the remuneration mode of rewarding effort. This policy applies even at the level of managers in the form of the individualization of wages. The rigidity of the Germans was seen earlier at the employment policy. It is, actually to use the job insecurity (fear of losing his job) to create a stress which tightens the discipline of work and encourages conformity and productivity.

4.4 The adaptation of marketing

In the field of marketing, the surveyed firms showed a higher adaptation to the cultural specificities of the host country. These firms consider that the time of the standard marketing is over.

In order to better understand the specifics of the adaptation of both nationalities, we have studied the four variables of marketing mix (product, price, communication, distribution). The French believe that their products reflect the image of their country such as freedom and human rights, good eating and good living. This philosophy translates into a policy of standardization of products. In fact, the majority of French respondents believe that their product has a certain prestige and socially values its buyer so they gain an advantage in not adapting it. However, they tend to adapt to the product related services (opening time of shops, advice, time), as well as colours and shapes.

By contrast, the Germans are more flexible and show a great incentive to adaptation. The majority of surveyed firms have a strategy to launch the same product with changes in position while remaining open, if necessary, changes to the creation of specific products for the local market strategy. With the exception of quality variable which is the essence of the German product, the adaptation of the latter can take several forms. German firms adjust labelling, packaging, technical specifications, affiliated services and even name of the product to the needs of local consumers.

For the pricing policy, the French consider that the variables that determine its fixation are essentially competition and cost. Some of them prefer to conduct a policy of alignment with the price competition to prevent price wars and postpone the competition on product quality. While others consider that pricing must take into account the cost prices of products whose level depends on the conditions of production and supplier power and taxation.

The Germans take into consideration more than two variables competition and cost; the variable sensitivity of the consumer is involved in fixing prices. They consider that whatever the level of product quality is; the consumer is not willing to pay an exaggerated price. Therefore the price must meet the income levels of consumers.

In terms of distribution, adaptation predominates at both nationalities. The surveyed firms consider that the choice of a mode of distribution is very depending on the characteristics of the host country. In fact, several variables interfere such as the number and types of outlets, the distribution channels, and type of intermediate market participants as well as services provided by different vendors. Our investigation indicated that the specificity of the distribution policy depends on the sector of activity of the company more than its nationality.

Finally, for the fourth variable, the analysis of empirical results confirmed that the surveyed firms are aware of the need to analyze in detail the manner of implement their communication actions. For the French, the main objective of marketing communication is to project the image of the company brand image and its national origin in a clear and uniform manner. Their willingness to intervene always in a stronger manner on local markets encourages leaders to surround themselves with international communication professionals capable of coordinating and controlling internal networks and put into action large-scale communication programs. For the Germans, the goal of communication is rather enhance the quality of products rather than the degree of professionalism of firms. To better reach the local consumer and unlike the French, the Germans may have recourse to local communication agencies to be alerted about the forms of communication that should be avoided. Concerning the amount of budgets, German subsidiaries are more autonomous than French ones for actions to implement on the local market. Those firms benefit in terms of best sharing conditions of decisions according to their nature and strategic issues that are likely to mislead. In terms of advertising, the respondents and especially those of German nationality tend to adapt in order to avoid linguistic translation errors. This adaptation has yet to address the dress code (avoiding nudity) and the specific habits and behavior patterns of local consumers.

On the other hand, the survey indicated that for some variables of the marketing function, firms show a high rigidity. The French opted mostly for standardization structures and ways of cutting of responsibilities in marketing departments what again makes appeal to the importance granted by the French to the hierarchical distance variable.

For the Germans, they were directed toward standardizing procedures for product launches and market research approaches to show their great incentive to risk control.

4.5 Discussion of results

The comparison between the specificities of the cultural adaptation of foreign French and German firms, revealed several interesting conclusions.

On the one hand, it allowed us to determine the characteristics of the working style of managers of both nationalities. The German style is characterized by an object-oriented approach, a direct and an explicit communication and decisions that are made and executed in a democratic way. The French style is marked by a focus on people, an implicit communication and decisions taken and implemented in an authoritarian and individualistic way. The second conclusion we have drawn is that French firms are less interested in adapting to local cultural context. This result is explained by the nature of the relationship between Tunisia and France. Tunisia is a francophone country that has very strong economic, cultural, scientific, technical and educational ties with France. Consequently, the French believe that the cultural rapprochement between the two countries allows them to neglect the consideration of the cultural factor while taking the decision of investing in Tunisia. In the contrary, the Germans who consider themselves "foreigners" in the Tunisian context seek to better respect its specifications to cope with unexpected situations and avoid the every cultural shock.

5. Conclusion

Throughout this research we have highlighted the need for foreign firms to demonstrate a particular sensitivity towards cultural differences when it comes to survival in countries where they exist. No company has the right to hope that changes are made to the local culture to meet its needs and expectations. One way to guarantee a certain success among different cultures is to create a program of cultural adaptation at the individual level as well as management and marketing functions. At any time there is no standard formula for such a program since each company should design a program of cultural adaptation to meet its own needs, national culture and the contextual specificities of the host country.

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