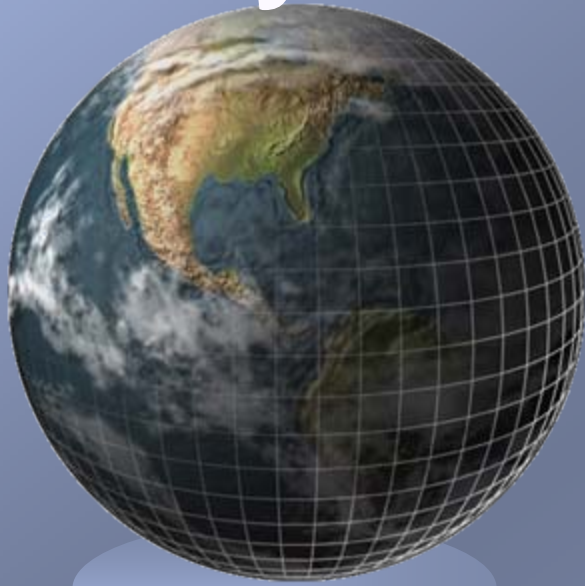


Cultural factors behind the adoption of e-learning in Turkey



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Introduction

- The widespread use of online technologies in higher education internationally.
- Online learning environments transforms the education practice by teachers and learners.
- Previous studies investigated cultural factors in influencing learners' experience in online learning.

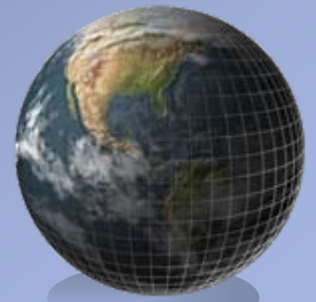
(Djojoputro et al., 2005; Campbell 2004)

- Little is known about teachers' experiences in online teaching and learning.



Research Question

How do cultural factors shape the adoption and use of information technology for online teaching?



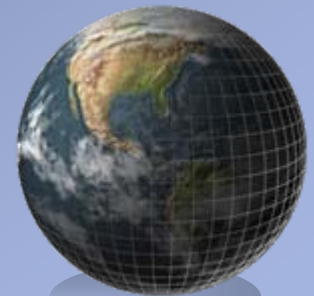
Key concepts in understanding cultural factors

- Hofstede (1991) five dimensions:
 - Power distance
 - Uncertainty avoidance
 - Individualism versus collectivism
 - Masculinity versus femininity
 - Long-term versus short-term orientation
- Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (2003)
 - Universalism versus Particularism
 - Individualism versus Communitarianism
 - Specificity versus Diffusion
 - Achievement versus Ascription
 - Inner direction versus Outer direction
 - Sequential time versus Synchronous time
- Guanxi (Davies, 1995; Corbitt & Thanasankit, 2001)
 - A Chinese term for networking
 - High trust & long-term relationships
 - Guanxi dynamics play an important role in motivation and change management in Asian academic context.



Research Approach

- Ethnographic study (*Hammersley, 1995*)
- Setting:
 - Organisation: Turkish university
 - Participants: academics adopting online teaching and learning
- Data collection 2004-2005
 - Observations
 - Interviews
 - Notes
 - Documentation
- Inductive data analysis
 - Meaning condensation method (*Kvale, 1996*)
- Two vignettes



Vignette 1: Naili's story: Making an effort to reach out and engage

- Unique story in bringing the east west - representation of developing culture in bringing technology in on-line teaching
- Teaching eMBA Program – Using IT Technology
 - Develops & establishes the eMBA online program – constantly initiates online discussions with her students
 - Earnestly encourages her students to participate in online communication
 - Regularly seeks feedback from students & counterparts
 - Uses her heritage to build her network and influence her students & colleagues to use online technology in teaching

Sample quote:

“...my students will email me 24/7 ... because I'm often online.”

“...good friends here are hard to come by. So I very often have a cup of coffee with my good trusted friend...”



Vignette 1 (cont)

Drinking *Çai* – Establishing good friendship

- Establishes good friendships and networks
- Builds a network of her students and colleagues, an academic *guanxi*, to support her early adoption of online technologies in her teaching practice.

Sample quote:

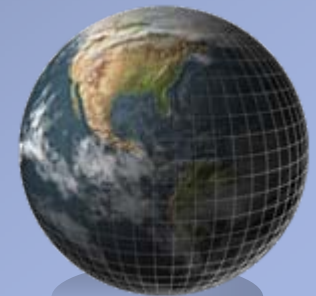
“...Drinking çai together is a good way of establishing friendship here.”

“..good friends here are hard to come by. So I very often have a cup of coffee with my good trusted friend..”



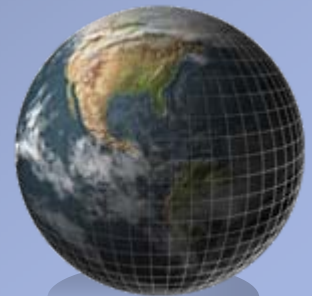
Vignette 2: Basir's Story: Building Trust to build network of support

- Using technology and building trust in teaching the eMBA
 - believes that trust was very much an individual thing and is generally not given easily.
 - builds his trust and network with his students.
 - builds on the “power” – *power-distance* online relationship with his students.
 - communicates and gives feedback frequently using discussion groups and instant messaging with his students.
 - believes that information and knowledge are powerful & feels the need for caution with many of his peers and colleagues.



Vignette 2: cont.

- Building trust through leadership and experience sharing
 - shares with his colleagues other ways of using IT tools for online learning.
 - persuades many of his colleagues to use different online technologies.
 - believes that establishing trust and building sound relationships with his students helps him and his students in online teaching and learning.



Conclusion

- Actual take up of technology must be from the ground-root level.
- Not by brute economic force - a crude top-down approach does not work in this country.
- Emphasises the need for a community of trust, relationship and raising up champions.
- Emphasises the need to reach out and engage with people and to build trust.



Thank you

Any questions?

