

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of cross-cultural differences on Italian firms' internationalization in Algeria, and to determine if performance orientation and assertiveness are perceived by Italian managers of local subsidiaries as important cultural dimensions.

Design/methodology/approach: This paper is a qualitative analysis based on a semi-structured questionnaire and three case studies. All the questionnaires are submitted during an interview in order to clearly explain their purpose and the terms used.

Findings: Cultural differences are strongly perceived by Italian managers operating in Algeria. Algerian culture seems to be characterized by a low degree of performance orientation and a low degree of assertiveness, with strong implications for Italian managers.

Research limitations/implications: The sample is still limited and in the future a quantitative analysis on a larger sample should be done in order to evaluate the relationship between family and religious values, on one hand, and performance orientation and assertiveness, on the other.

Practical implications: While entering Algeria, Italian firms have to be aware of cross-cultural differences. Algerians' low performance orientation and assertiveness discourage local workers to reach higher standards and to improve performance, and they impact on Italian managers' capability to give instructions and to motivate local workers. The involvement of local managers is crucial in overcoming these problems.

Originality/value: While interest towards Southern Mediterranean countries is increasing, there is little written on this topic. The impact of performance orientation and assertiveness on firms' internationalization has not been investigated so far