

CONVERGERS AND DIVERGERS: A DIMENSION OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE

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A study was done of how U.S. and Russian managers respond to a list of stimulus words. The Associated Group Analysis method presents subjects with stimulus words such as manager, bank, innovation, corporation, and labor union. Each subject then writes down what other words the stimulus word brings to mind. The results reveal the meanings of the stimulus word to two groups of people, in this case managers in the U.S. and Russia.

A finding of the research is that Americans tend to “look down” to specifics to find meaning, whereas Russians tend to “look up” to more general categories. For example, for the stimulus word “labor union,” Americans list such secondary words as wages, pensions, strikes, and boycotts. Russians list such secondary words as nation, economy and society. This paper will present about 15 out of 80 stimulus words that best illustrate this different way of establishing meaning.

This different approach to understanding in the U.S. and Europe has been found on several occasions to explain different approaches to the construction of science.