
Hofstede's cultural dimensions

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Geert Hofstede

Geert Hofstede, (born 2 October 1928 in Haarlem, Netherlands) is an influential Dutch researcher in the fields of organisational studies, organisational culture, cultural economics and management. He is a well-known pioneer in his research of cross-cultural groups and organisations.



High vs Low context cultures

- This division, which stems from E. T. Hall's¹ research, applies to the reliance on the immediate physical context in communication.
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High vs. Low power distance

Features of high power distance cultures	Features of low power distance cultures
Members accept power distance as part of social order, it determines what is right and wrong.	Power is exerted only where it is necessary.
More powerful members of society perceive their subordinates as unequal.	People are equal, they consider social inequalities obsolete.
Subordinates fear the more powerful members.	Cooperation should be based on the principle of solidarity.
There is not much trust among co-workers	Subordinates are considered as older, more experienced colleagues.
Majority of people are dependent on others.	Co-workers are prone to trust one another.
Subordinates are blamed for mistakes.	The system is blamed for mistakes.
There is a strong conflict between the strong and the weak members	Everyone should have equal rights
Social inequalities are accepted; every person has a high or low place in the social order and is protected by law	Strong and weak members coexist in harmony

Power distance

- This dimension applies to the perception of power and authority by the less influential members of a given community. It is the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.



Individualism vs Collectivism

- It is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. In individualistic societies, the stress is put on personal achievements and individual rights. In collectivist societies, individuals act predominantly as members of a lifelong and cohesive group.



Individualism vs Collectivism

Features of individualistic cultures	Features of collectivistic cultures
Everyone has the right to have their own opinions.	Opinions are shaped by the group.
A person's commitments include: their own interest, self-education, their own debts.	Commitments towards the family: harmony, respect, family honor and loyalty.
Education is a lifelong process, one learns how to learn and acquire useful information and skills.	Education is for young people, one learns how to behave.
People are expected to care for themselves and their immediate family.	Everyone is a part of a larger group and is expected to be loyal and care for its well-being.
People have high self-awareness and are independent.	Group awareness precedes, mutual relationships and ties are emphasized.
Friendship is a basic human need.	Friendships are determined by group membership.
Decisions are made individually and are influenced by people's beliefs and opinions	The group makes all decisions.



Masculinity vs Femininity

- Masculine cultures value success, money and material possessions, whereas feminine cultures place more value on relationships and quality of life. In masculine cultures, the differences between gender roles are more rigid and less fluid than in feminine cultures.
- Interestingly, masculine cultures are those that used to be at war often, while feminine cultures are those in which men and women had to support each other in order to persevere in harsh life conditions.



Masculinity vs Femininity

Typical opinions of people from a masculine culture	Typical opinions of people from a feminine culture
Men's role is to rule, women's role is to raise up children.	Men are also involved in children's upbringing.
Gender roles are explicit and concrete.	Gender roles are interchangeable.
Men should dominate in a society.	Genders should be treated equally.
Independence is the highest ideal.	Mutual dependence is the highest ideal.
People who achieve success are worthy of admiration.	People who handle adversity deserve appreciation.
Ambitions lead to action.	Service is the greatest motivator to action.
The great and the fast are beautiful.	The little and the slow are beautiful.
You live to work.	You work to live.



Uncertainty Avoidance

- High uncertainty avoidance stems from striving for truth and the belief that it is in fact cognizable. This conviction is important in the Western rationalistic tradition. It can be juxtaposed with the Eastern pursuit of virtues stemming from Confucius' philosophy.



Uncertainty Avoidance

Typical opinions of people in a high uncertainty avoidance culture	Typical opinions of people in a low uncertainty avoidance culture
Uncertainty is an inevitable; therefore it is a constant threat of life.	Life's uncertainty is inevitable; therefore, accepting it should be easier.
I feel anxious and stressed.	I feel peaceful. I do not experience stress.
I feel an inner imperative to work.	Hard work is not a value in itself.
I find people's deviant tendencies and ideas threatening – lack of tolerance.	I do not treat deviance as a threat - tolerance.
I do not trust young people.	I am friendly to young people.
I am unwilling to take risks.	I am ready to take risks.
I need strict rules and regulations.	The fewer rules, the better.
Experts' knowledge is the source of my convictions.	My convictions are shaped by my own common sense.



Long vs Short Term Orientation

- This distinction was added as the last one to Hofstede's typology. It describes societies' time perspective. Long term oriented societies attach more importance to the future. In short term oriented societies, the past and the present are more valued.



Long vs Short Term Orientation

Typical opinions of people from long term orientation culture	Typical opinions of people from short term orientation culture
Tradition needs to be adjusted to the present conditions.	Respect for tradition
Frugality, even meanness	A need to behave as others do regardless of consequences
Expecting delayed gratification	Expecting immediate gratification
Importance of preserving one's own face	Do anything to achieve a goal
Saving for future investments	No money saved for investments
Fulfilling social obligations within reason	Fulfilling social obligations no matter the cost

