

Cross cultural comparative analysis uk vs mexico



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Introduction

In today's global economies communication is the power house of all businesses. Due to globalization the buying, selling and working with in the different cultural is inevitable. It is necessary to understand the International management cross cultural dimensions and its impact on leadership and communication in the business. Just to have a over edge than the competitors the businesses have leaned that in order to grow in today's market cross cultural management skills are very critical. The communication between the different cultures both internally and externally has to be effective and there need to be a good understanding of cross cultural dimensions because they can influence success, by being ahead in the overseas market with greater cross cultural understanding which includes a better cultural diversity management too.

In this essay the author discusses the cultural dimensions, and international management practices in both United Kingdom and Mexico. This is a guide for the managers of those countries who have not yet thought of these countries as part of business. Author shows Hofstede's Five Dimensions of Culture and Fons Trompenaars cultural dimensions.

Hofstede Cultural Dimensions

According to Hofstede, each culture must deal with questions that can be resolved according to a series of dimensions, which results in a unique gestalt for each society, depending on the intensity of its tendency towards one or another end of each culture dimension spectrum (Longatan, 2008).

Prof. Geert Hofstede did most comprehensive study on the culture and how it may influence the workplace.

From 1967 to 1973, he has been collecting and analyzing large amount of data from over 100, 000 individuals from 50 countries and 3 regions.

Originally there were four dimensions fifth dimension came on later, after him conducting an international study with a survey instrument developed with Chinese employees and managers (Professor H. Michael Boyd, 2004).

There were five cultural dimensions that were identified by Hofstede are:

Power Distance

Individualism Collectivism

Uncertainty Avoidance

Masculinity versus Femininity

Long term versus Short term Orientation (Clearly Cultural, 2009).

Power Distance: Power distance(PDI) is related to the unequal distribution of power, There is big gap between the people (unequal) in the society. Power and inequality, are the fundamental facts of the society and any one can tell a difference between a equal or unequal power distance society generally, power distance is the way the society addresses inequalities among people . Power distance norms are reflected in the economic and cultural lives of humans as in parent-child relations, husband-wife relations, politics, religion and economics (Tian, 2004).

Individualism-Collectivism: Individualism-Collectivism(IDV) describes the degree to which individuals is open to other members of group regardless of race ethnicity religion or gender. (Hofstede, 2009). This Dimension shows the dependency in group, work or part played in group(team) and other side it is opposite, individual is active and independent and not like the individual who is dependent on the organization or society or group. In words of Adler and Gundersen, individualism versus collectivism is how the employee address them self , is it him/herself primarily as a separate human being or it is different the opposite being collective part of a group whose needs should determine behaviour (Kohl, 2007).

Uncertainty Avoidance: Uncertainty avoidance(UAI) deals with a society's acceptance for uncertainty and doubt. Businesses and companies establish formal rules , accept the real facts and provide employees with greater career stability and rejecting deviant ideas and behaviour.

Masculinity versus Femininity: This dimension relates to gender differentiation. In some countries women are quite ambitious assertive in some men are more competitive and willing to take risks in order to attain their goals. It is the overall performance result which makes the country Masculine or femininity driven. In countries where women values don't differ much as compared to the men from different countries, men are very assertive and competitive whereas women's values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women's values.

Long term versus Short term Orientation: Long-Term Orientation is the fifth dimension of Hofstede, it was added after the previous four cultural

dimensions to distinguish the difference in thinking between the East and West. This dimension measures the person's devotion towards his/her work ethic and the respect for the tradition.

Hofstede Cultural Dimensions in UK and Mexico

Figure : Comparison of cultural dimensions in UK and Mexico (Adapted from: (Hofstede, 2009))

United Kingdom consists of four countries Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England but England alone is more effected by the feelings towards individualism and masculinity. The rest three dimensions are considerably on lowest rank in England. This tendency of looking after self and immediate family(Individualism) and least botheration for society is seen in UK. The UK shows score of 85 (Sims, 2006). It is observed that Mexico shows the score of 30 (IDV) in individualist cultural dimension, which is some what higher than other Latin countries who have score of 21 (Hofstede, 2009).

The desire for materialistic things and money the man depicted as a super hero or saviour of family where as women deals with the emotional concerns and family needs, Male dominant society, UK seem to be on more or so similar ranking regarding gender differentiation (MAS cultural dimension), it has the score of 66 where as in Latin America, Mexico has the second highest Masculinity (MAS) which is 69. In Mexico male dominates a major portion of the society (Geert Hofstede, 2009).

The power distance(PDI) in Mexico score much more than the UK , Mexico power distance rank is 81, which exhibits a more unequal distribution of wealth compared to United Kingdom society (Taylor, 1998-2008). The United
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Kingdom on the cultural scale indicate large degree of equality between various societal levels and organisations holding the score of 35 (Clearly Cultural, 2009).

Uncertainty avoidance in the Mexico is relatively high, which can clearly be viewed through the national cultures. The highest score of 82 indicates that society has continuous threat and anxiety and precision and punctuality is strong. United Kingdom scores 35 on this cultural dimension. United Kingdom has become a country with diverse population which makes it more flexible to the changes, more open to innovative ideas even if they involve risk (International Business, 2008).

Fons Trompenaars Cultural Dimension

Trompenaars, a European researcher conducted an extensive research with 15,000 managers from 28 countries representing 47 national cultures. His system had seven dimensions the first five were related to relationship between people the rest two deals with are about orientations toward time and the environment.

Universalism vs. Particularism

Individualism-collectivism

Neutral-affective

Specific-diffuse

Achievement-ascription

Internal vs. External Control

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Lewis Monochronic and Polychronic People

Fons Trompennars Cultural Dimension in UK and Mexico

Universalism-particularism: The setting up the universal standards and rules which helps in the economic activities of country on both Macro social level as well as micro-social level makes a country universal (Nawojczyk, 2006).

United Kingdom is a Universalist country, when it comes to business negotiation they apply the rules (Universal dimension) and see to it that everything goes according to rules . There is no modification needed in the rules as they are universal and accepted by all. Countries like Mexico do as there superiors dictate them without any opinion, they take the orders and implement them, there is a particularistic approach (Aswathappa, 2008).

Individualism-collectivism: The emphasis is in groups, the actions taken by individual are collective or more of single benefit individual, individual benefits versus the group. UK is an individualistic society and tends to have lesser number of bonds; they stand in as an individual. Family or groups are not that relevant or of that significance in society, each person fights for self (Handy, 2010). Mexico ranked 29 of 39 is the Lowest in individualism; they are high on collectivism (Yates, 2010).

Neutral-affective: Related to excitement, emotions control of feelings.

Neutral (self control) hold back while affective, feel it is natural to express emotions. Some Cultures show their emotions some subdue their emotions.

In United Kingdom people, try to keep there relationships and work separate . they don't share their emotions and try to repress there emotions and feelings they prefer more solitude when it comes to emotions One

cannot mix personal matters with business, as it might hinder the progress (Mate, 2010). Mexico is an affective country because there emotions are natural and openly expressed. Being a collective culture they express and share their emotions and talk about it (Williams, 2005).

Specific-diffuse: In United Kingdom there is no mixing of the private life of person with the work or business life, Private life is separated from general public in order to achieve healthy working environment they believe in more specific culture. Mexico has more of diffuse culture because there is not much distinction in between private and public space (Workman, 2008).

Achievement-ascription: This dimension is about how status and power are determined in the society. Uk is a achievement oriented culture, in UK the position or status are given on basis of the individual achievement of how well they perform , they have achievement dimension as there base. Mexico is an ascription oriented society where the status is approved on who and what (age, class, gender and education) position is the person holding.

Internal vs. External Control: This dimension relates to nature. Country that follows the internalistic culture tends to over power and control the nature and environment. They take them self to be superior to the environment. Externalistic culture lives in harmony with nature, community and accepts nature as it is. United Kingdom (internalistic culture) is always on the look for ideas and measures to be taken in order to reduce the air and water pollution. Most of the countries are opting to much greener options in order to conserve the natural resources.

Time orientation/Sequential vs. Synchronic: Each country has got its own response time, some are Synchronic culture where many things are done simultaneously whereas in Sequential there is a step by step instruction for work, they believe in planning. In Mexico, people usually do multiple things at the same time which makes it a synchronic country (Workman, 2008). UK has Sequential culture as the people give attention to one work at a time they consider time as tangible and divisible (Carol Kinsey Goman, 2010).

Guidance for the Manager

Building connections in different countries is also in a way a cultural dimension of diversity in the culture. Managers always face problems with the motivation, structure and strategy developing according to the countries cultural differences. Some thing that works for United Kingdom might not exactly work for Mexico. Using the Hofstede model can provide the managers with a starting point. They can put the cultural dimensions against the country and evaluate their approach, decisions, and actions, how the society might respond to them. Managers always consider both cultural dimensions when they design sales strategies where both the buyers and sellers come from different cultures.

Trompenaars cultural model and Hofstede cultural model share many similarities which can easily confuse the manager and can interfere in the success of the projects. Out of Trompenaars seven dimensions two of the dimensions are just further broken down from Hofstede dimensions, which are Collectivism/Individualism and power distance. Trompenaars collectivism is identical to Hofstede's Collectivism/Individualism. Trompenaars

achievement/ascription, which deals with status, is also linked to Hofstede's power distance index.

Both models put forward a set of cultural dimensions along which the central value systems can be disciplined. Trompenaars model is just a one step ahead in some of the Hofstede model, it help managers understand better the trans-national projects and which reduces the number of cultural misunderstandings. From Trompenaars model (Individualism-collectivism) managers need to see that if the country is individualistic or collective whether reward has to be given to the individual in team or to the whole team.

The Managers need to do research on the national culture along with both the cultural dimensions and check that whether the country utilises these cultural dimensions or not. The managers need to acknowledge and recognize the differences between the cultures because certain cultures may or may not fit into the culture. They need to understand that certain dimensions can overlapped and this might need more work . The managers need to keep in consideration certain cultural dimensions, large versus Small Power Distance; unequal distribution of power, this affects the behaviour of both less powerful and more powerful members. Strong versus Weak Uncertainty Avoidance; to what limit a certain society or country would feel comfortable. Masculinity and Femininity; the gender differentiation and their role they play according to the culture and last dimension, the Long versus Short Term Orientation, time orientation , individualism and collectivism. Managing the cultural differences in a diverse business environment is a

major challenge for international managers; these two models are mere guidelines.

Conclusion

There is no best way, straight way to manage the cultural differences; the managers need to be aware of how these differences affect the business. They need to think strategically as both the countries Mexico and UK have different cultural dimensions. The importance of the cultural dimensions is catching up, due to the increase in the multinational business activities.