

Venezuela culture

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In all cultures, there are different dimensions that can be categorized into a continuum. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck have functions of cultural patterns such as common human problems, preferred solutions and most importantly, a continuum. A continuum is how things are rated by percentages. For example, happiness. It could be either more or less in certain situations. In Hofstede's dimensions of culture, there are two topics and only one can be higher in certain cultures than others. The country I chose to do is the culture of Venezuela.

Venezuela is very similar to the rest of the Latin American countries but has exceptional characteristics when it comes to the dimensions that Hofstede describes. The dimensions of culture that will be discussed fall into the four common ones: collectivism, power distance, masculinity and low uncertainty avoidance. Venezuela is a unique country with many different ideas that relate to their culture. Venezuela falls into the collectivism category. This means that the country unites as one, focusing on the needs of groups rather than the individual themselves. The other side of the dimension is individualism.

Individualism, as its name says, focuses on the individual where they have to stand up for themselves. Collectivists tend to have large, extended families which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Individualism 2009). Also, they work on becoming very skilled at something they are interested in. Venezuelan people are all about being loyal to each other. They see more good in a group, than good in the individual. In Venezuela, the labor force has grown a lot over the past few

decades. The unemployment rate has been very low and even woman have been getting jobs.

The government has worked together so that almost everyone is employed. Labor relations in Venezuela were consultative rather than confrontational, and the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers had good working relationships with the major business group, the Federation of Chambers and Associations of Commerce and Production (Haggerty, 1993). Compared to other Latin American countries, there wasn't a bad case of labor relations. The government wanted to make sure everyone in Venezuela was working. It's good to be a collectivism culture because everyone comes and works together as a group.

Power distance is another dimension that can be classified as either high or low. This is determined by how much a culture has respect for authority. High power distance focuses more on higher status of power. Teachers, parents and supervisors are treated with respect and are expected to show authority. Low power distance is a little more laid back. People can talk to whomever they want about anything. For example, an employee is able to talk to their manager about comments for the company or business they work for. Venezuela falls into the high power distance category.

People with elite status are more educated and focus mainly on their business and professions. Venezuela was one of the very few countries in Latin America where a number of elite-supported scholarly and community welfare foundations provided support for an imaginative variety of programs and scholarships (Haggerty 1993). People in middle class respect the elite. Thought it is possible to move up from middle class to elite, this can only

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happen through successful business deals or by marriage. Either way, Venezuelans know to respect the authority wherever they are. Venezuela has a president and vice president who serve five year terms.

The president chooses his cabinet and determines the number of ministries. The president is the main leader in charge whom everyone looks up to. He commands the armed forces, calls special sessions of the Congress, and exercises sole control of foreign policy (Haggerty 1993). Venezuela follows a governmental policy where the president has the highest status, followed by the vice president, then it gets lower from then on. Having high power distance does not necessarily undermine the population, but is accepted by the whole Venezuelan culture as one. Masculinity versus femininity, contrary to it's name, has more to do than just gender roles.

Some masculine characteristics focus on a competitive economy, working hard to get by, and fighting as a result of conflicts. Cultures with this dimension are more aggressive. Femininity on the other hand focuses on more calming features. For example, negotiating to resolve conflicts, women are representing in the government and working to live a good life. Venezuela in this case is more masculine. They are more aggressive than other cultures. Violence and crime increased appreciably in the last decades of the twentieth century and have become major issues of popular concern (Dinneen 2003).

Having higher crime rates, though that's not always a good thing, shows the masculinity in the culture. Men take the majority of the power when it comes to government. Although the Constitution of 1960 declared that men and women were formally equal under the law, women who had been active in

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the struggle for democracy found themselves devoid of its privileges and marginalized from politics (Wagner 2005). Though it said women were just as equal as men, that didn't live up to its word. Women were still not allowed to participate in higher politics and businesses.

They were expected to stay at home and take care of the house and children. Venezuela is ranked higher in the masculine dimension among all of the other Latin American countries. Venezuela's uncertainty avoidance is considered lower than the other Latin American countries. Some traits of low uncertainty avoidance include openness to change, tolerance of diversity and hold back emotions. Where as in high uncertainty avoidance, they tend to follow strict rules, express emotions, and have a weak interest in politics. The goal of the culture is to control almost everything in order to avoid the unexpected.

Thanks to their need for security, Venezuelan managers take fewer risks, govern with more written rules and experience lower labor turnover (Workman 2008). There have been processes of social and political changes. These processes have attracted more international attention over the years and for more to come. Venezuela was the world's leading exporter of oil. Venezuelan's leaders wanted to concentrate on the oil industry as the main source of financing for their reformist economic and social policies (Haggerty 1993). They weren't afraid to find new non cabinet ministries and form new policies to expand their economy.

Even with the economic crises that occurred with the collapse of the financial system in 1994, the government worked to get it back up. When it comes to differences, Venezuelans try to explore the issue. They are curious to what is

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going on. If they need to make a change, they will do so and take the risk. For example, during the 1980's Venezuela had a huge foreign-exchange revenue from oil. Because of this, they developed a voracious demand for imported luxury goods that persisted even as oil prices ebbed in the mid to late 1980's (Haggerty 1993).

This resulted in a weakness in the Venezuelan economy. Even though this happened, the government wasn't afraid to take the risk. In conclusion, Venezuela has many different characteristics that make them a unique culture. Being a collective culture, they unite as one. They like to focus on everyone as a group to make sure everyone is satisfied. They also fall into the high power distance category. Venezuela has high power authority that is respected by everyone. If they have questions, the people with high status will have all the answers.

Venezuela is also a masculine culture. Men dominate over women for occupations and power. Also, this makes the country more aggressive than others. They stand up for themselves and aren't afraid of anything that comes in contact with them. Finally, Venezuela has low uncertainty avoidance. They will take a risk if they want to and they aren't afraid to show emotion. This shows they are a strong country that will make changes if it is a concern. Venezuela is a very well-rounded culture with many great qualities about them.