Cross-cultural understanding between the western and arab world dissertation prop...

History, Middle East

Culture is the acquired knowledge that is used by people to interpret experience and generate social behavior (Hofstede, 2010). This knowledge forms their values, attitudes and influences their behaviors. Greet Hofstede defines culture as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one human group from another. He further describes culture as any group, family, neighborhood, classroom, work unit, nation-state or religion. Societal culture has an influence on all human activities (Boeing, 2012). Throughout the life, family, workplace school, community, and mass media people continually acquire and modify values, beliefs, and behaviors when they are interact with a new culture (Nader 2013). They may acculturate to a higher or lower level, they may adopt or adapt to local patterns. Cultural similarities and differences exist between various communities and nations. Nations may have cultural differences because of differences in their ways of life (Peterson, 2008).

Western countries include countries of Western Europe and America. Norway and Switzerland are included. Other countries are like Denmark France, Belgium, and U. S. A. Arab Countries are mainly Islamic countries from Middle East. They are oil-producing countries and include Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The Far Eastern countries are countries of eastern part Asia continent. They include countries such as Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, and Taiwan. My essay will highlight cultural differences between Arab countries and Western countries.

A Dutch researcher known as Greet Hofstede came up with four dimensions of culture that support why people from various cultures have different behaviors. The dimensions that Hofstede examined were power distance,

uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. Power Distance

Hofstede argues that the extent to which less powerful members of institutions belief that power is distributed unequally. He argued that countries in which citizens follow orders unwillingly have high power distance. Uncertainty Avoidance

This is the degree in which people feel endangered by ambiguous situations and have developed beliefs that try to avoid them (Hofstede, 2010). Citizens who dislike " uncertainty" have the high tendency of demanding security and rely on experts and their knowledge. Individualism

It is the way people care themselves and their immediate families. Individualism reduces interaction between people. Collectivism makes to belong to groups or collectives and take care of each other. Masculinity

It is the situation in which success, money, and things become dominant values in the society. (Hofstede, 2010). Femininity is used to describe a situation in which caring for others and the good quality of life become dominant values in the society. Countries with high masculinity index, such as the European countries place great importance on earnings, recognitions, and advancements (Hofstede, 2010) Individuals in these countries are encouraged to make decisions on their own. Recognition and wealth determine their achievement. Countries with low masculinity index such as Taiwan places great importance on cooperation. The states create a friendly atmosphere. Individuals are are motivated to work in groups when making decisions. Arabs (Islamic) countries have minimal individualism, more uncertainty avoidance, the high degree of power distance, and medium

masculinity. Each country in the western part have different dimensions some are similar to Arab countries while other differ.

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