

Similarities and differences between the uk and singapore for the hofstede's cult...

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The recent decades have witnessed the rapid development of transportation and telecommunications technology, it has narrowed the gap between different cultures and different countries, which makes us to be aware of the importance of intercultural communication. When we have the opportunity to make contact with the people from other countries, we may probably find that they have different faith, life style or sense of worth compare to us. Therefore, it is required capacities to improve our ability to acknowledge other cultures and also be aware of the diversity between people with different backgrounds. According to the 6 dimensions proposed by Hofstede, which are “ power distance”, “ individualism/collectivism”, “ uncertainty avoidance”, “ masculinity/femininity”, “ long-term short-term orientation” and “ indulgence”, these can identify the cultural differences between two or more countries. In this essay, I will discuss the similarities and differences between the UK and Singapore for the cultural dimensions of Individualism and Masculinity, then, give some advices to people who from Singapore need to adjust to living in the UK culture.

Cultural dimension 1: Individualism/Collectivism

As Ting-Toomey claimed, individualism-collectivism is the most popular dimension and the most importance of cross-cultural communication depends on this dimension. Thus, this dimension is defined as the state of interdependence a society preserves among its units. To some extent, an individualist country with high score will have a high level of independence and selfishness for individuals. A collectivist country has a score of lower

than 50 which means that “ shared identity is more important than personal identity”.

An incredibly low score of 20 means that Singapore is believed to be a collectivistic society. This means that the “ WE” culture is important to Singaporeans; people in Singapore may prefer to have a more collective shared identity group mind rather than focus on their individual personalities. A high score of 89 means that Britain certainly is an individualistic country. Trenholm (2016) pointed out that it is believed that people is the most essential social unit, acting in their own interest. In contrast, Britain and Singapore show two extreme data on this dimension.

As Hofstede (2018) claims, the UK parents teach their children to think about themselves and determine what their exceptional ambition in life is and how they can contribute to their country. On the other hand, Hofstede (2018) explains that Singapore’s children are educated that the family is the basic unit of their society and an individual person belongs to a family.

Furthermore, according to Triandis, individualists believe that freedom, honesty, social identity are the most important values, conversely, harmony, face-saving are the top values for collectivists.

Cultural dimension 2: Masculinity/Femininity

In the dimension of masculinity and femininity, the fundamental point is what drives people. People in individuals from masculine countries tend to want to be the best, however in a feminine society, members usually attach importance to what they like to do. Hofstede pointed out the high score

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(Masculine) means that “ the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by winners / the best in the field.” On the other hand, the feminine society gets a low score which means the most important values in a community is looking after others and the standard of life in general.

At 66, the UK has a high score on masculinity/femininity, which means that the UK is a Masculine society with deeply achievement oriented and motivated. 48 of Singapore is a middle level score but more tend to feminine side, thus, Hofstede defines Singaporeans appear to keep in step with others, in harmony with the other and feel compassion for underdog. The scores for Singapore and the UK seem to be very similar, with only a difference of 18 points. They also have numerous similar features. For example, both British and Singaporeans are often humble and modesty which are very important for them. Also, they are usually willing to prevent conflicts and achieve harmony in their own life or work life.

Advice for Adaptation

A person who come to an alien environment or country and leave their home countries will feel anxiety and pressure. Therefore the ability of an individual to accept other cultures depends on not only the person has an open mind but also self-cultural awareness. Also, according to Trenholm (2016), there are three significant factors for Singaporean to achieve successful adjustment which are the nature of the host culture, the individual attitude and disposition, and, the most essential, the types of communication links they makes.

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The most important and initial step in cross-cultural dialogue is how to listen and learn from others. As a result, first, I suggest that Singaporeans should try to communicate and make friends with local people when they come to Britain. Because through teaching and interacting with others will enhance their competence in intercultural interaction. Secondly, for instance, individualists prefer direct communication because they usually think that is a way to reduce conflict. Therefore, Singaporeans, as collectivists, should try to communicate directly rather than indirectly. Thirdly, Singaporeans come from a collective society where attach importance to “ WE” culture. If they can find a group or organization associated with Singapore culture and joining it then will help them get some sense of belonging. Besides, most British people (Individualists) may be better at self-promotion. Consequently, self-transcendent collectivists (Singaporeans) should pay more attention to themselves, as individuals, strive to improve their personal values and learn to sell themselves. Lastly, more respect, more openness, more discovery and more curiosity will help Singaporeans acclimatized the UK society better.

Conclusion

In conclusion, inevitably, intercultural communication is becoming more frequent. The UK is a very independent and masculine country, but Singapore is a country with “ We” culture and tend to femininity. However, we can see many similar aspects between these 2 countries, for example, both the British and Singaporeans are willing to be humble and modest. And there must be some different places in two different countries with different culture and history. People from Singapore would strive to adapting the

strange environment, even though it is too hard to change their mind and habits. If newcomer can learn and think with critical thinking, find similar aspects and accept different aspects with openness and curiosity, they certainly will be better adapted to the UK.