

# Cross cultural management essay samples

[Business](#), [Management](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Cultural Variations](#) \n \t
3. [Hofstede’s Model](#) \n \t
4. [Schwartz Model of Value Types](#) \n \t
5. [Criticisms of Hofstede’s Model](#) \n \t
6. [Stereotyping](#) \n \t
7. [Implications](#) \n \t
8. [Conclusion](#) \n \t
9. [List of References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

## **Introduction**

According to Kreiser, Marino, Dickson, & Weaver (2010, p. 959), international businesses have existed for centuries and the world is entering into an era of unprecedented global economic activity. Economists predict growing prosperity of economically developing countries. The current business era is about worldwide production and distribution, as well as multinational mergers, acquisitions, and global strategic alliances. Globalization in the business environment is contributed by technological and economic factors, and has led to increase in the number of cross cultural interactions in the workplace (Kalliny, Cruthirds, & Minor 2006, p. 123). Culture creates relational patterns. Relational patterns affect international cross cultural management through creating styles of interaction between people, their

decision making process, and human relationships in business matters (Jamali & Sidani 2008, p. 330). Managers and organizations need to understand the potential of culture in influencing interpersonal interactions in organizational settings to establish effective management (Ulrich, Zenger, & Smallwood 1999, p. 74).

Cross cultural management explains in the existence of different behavior of people across the world. Cross cultural management is described as an organizational behavior within different countries and cultures. It seeks to improve understanding and interaction between workers, managers, clients, suppliers and alliance partners from different cultures and countries across the world. Researchers, such as Geert Hofstede and Schwartz have made advanced studies on the values of people in different countries and cultures (Hsu, Woodside, & Marshall 2013, p. 684). They developed cross cultural management to help managers establish global strategies that can help their organizations survive the new era of increased competition and need for financial diversification. However, cross cultural management remains a challenge for most managers and organizations (Judge 2001, p. 64).

## **Cultural Variations**

Fischer and Poortinga (2012, p. 164) identified that the study of human behavior in cultural context has evolved rapidly and led to the inauguration of several influential models enlightening on cultural differences. Different models describe measures of cultural values. An understanding of cultural value systems can help identify similarities and differences between people from different cultures. Research by Hoppe (2004, p. 76) shows that a

person's values can impact corporate strategy as they develop to managerial values that have the potential of influencing forms of organizational behavior. This is evident by management practices, such as training and development, employee recruitment and selection processes, policy decisions, and performance review and appraisal. Researchers argue that cultural differences can enhance people and promote organizational productivity. This has made understanding of cultural differences important for management and development of opportunities. Examples of models that focus on cultural differences includes Schwartz value types and Hofstede's cultural dimension (Pohlman & Gardiner 2000, p. 52).

## **Hofstede's Model**

Hofstede (1993, p. 82) restricts culture to national borders. He compared more than 50 national cultures and three regions in his influential and comprehensive study. Such as approach led to the conception of culture in three categories that include language, time, and place. Hofstede developed five dimensions to differentiate cultures.

**Individualism vs. Collectivism**-This dimension explains why people in a culture view themselves as individuals or as members of a group. In an individualistic culture, people are likely to focus on independence, privacy, and individual achievements. On the other hand, in collectivism cultures, people tend to prefer being part of a group to take care and protect each other in exchange for loyalty and devotion (Hoppe 2004, p. 77).

**Masculinity vs. femininity**- This dimension describes whether success and the assertive acquisition of money and power are highly valued or whether

people do focus on quality of life, such as good relationships with co-workers. Hofstede identifies that in most cultures across the world adopted masculine culture where men are viewed as best suited for power and are ideal for achieving high performance (Jackson 2011, p. 548).

Power distance- It reflects the extent to which people in a culture can deal with inequalities. Hofstede identifies that some cultures promote unequal distribution of power, prestige, and wealth (Johnson & Golembiewski 1992, p. 76).

Uncertainty avoidance-It describes the extent to which people in a culture feel vulnerable to uncertain and unknown situations. This feeling is expressed through nervous stress and a high need for predictability, written, and unwritten rules.

Long term vs. Short term orientation-This dimension includes such values as thrift, persistence, having a sense of shame, and ordering relationships. It refers to dedicated, motivated, responsible, and educated individuals with a sense of commitment and organizational identity and loyalty.

## **Schwartz Model of Value Types**

According to Schwartz (1994, p. 20), values are expressions of different motivational goals. Schwartz postulates the existence of ten types of values namely power, achievements, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. His value model provides a clear idea of how values can be related to each other and their existence in every culture. In a circular structure, values expressing similar motivational goals are positioned close to each other in the circle.

Values that are expressions of incompatible motivational goals are positioned at a greater distance from each other (Schwartz & Bilsky 1990, p. 879). Schwartz (1994, p. 23) further postulates a reduction of the ten types of values to two bipolar dimensions named openness to change vs. conservation and self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence. Openness to change emphasizes on independent thought and action and endorsement of change while conservation emphasizes on security, conformity, and tradition. Self-enhancement emphasizes on power and achievement while self-transcendence emphasizes on universalism and benevolence. Schwartz Model assesses dimensions of the 10 value types across nations and the relations between value types and culture (Schwartz & Bilsky 1987, p. 552).

### **Criticisms of Hofstede's Model**

Hofstede's model neglects both multicultural territory and cross border cultures. It assumes that, on a given administrative territory, all members of a nation have a shared understanding of values. His models do not grasp the richness of culture hence neglects other cultural dimensions that can be extremely insightful. Hofstede's model should be used carefully and selectively as its dimensions are not systematic and should only be applied only when pertinent.

### **Stereotyping**

Osland and Bird (2000, p. 65) point out that most of training on cross culture occurs within the framework of bipolar cultural dimensions. Adopting a sophisticated stereotyping is helpful to a certain extent, but this does not convey the complexity found within cultures. People working across cultures

are in most cases surprised by cultural paradoxes that do not match what they have learned. People need to be aware of sources of cultural paradoxes and idea of value trumping. Certain cultural values take precedent over others. The context of culture is complex and this means that immense consideration is necessary to understand it fully. A model of cultural sense making can be useful to interpret cultural paradoxes. The model links schemas to contexts (Jacob 2000, p. 78).

## **Implications**

Cross cultural management expands the scope of domestic management to encompass international and multicultural dynamics (Gopalan & Stahl 1998, p. 30). The evolution of the business environment has developed a new understanding of international organizational behavior and management of global human resource systems. A corporation must develop global strategies to survive in the new economic era (James 1994, p. 132). The focus on management approaches and global strategies from the angle of people and culture allows business managers to become aware and understand the influence of national and ethnic cultures on organizational functioning. Global competition requires cross cultural organizations to become highly innovative and productive. Predictors of stress perceptions in an organizational setting have been widespread, and this establishes the need to value organizational justice. This calls for managers and organizations to take cross cultural management seriously (Dbaibo, Harb, & Van Meurs 2010, p. 710).

## **Conclusion**

Cultural differences have been found to improve decision making of work groups and top management teams. It appears to provide managers and organizations with alternative views that can challenge assumptions, promote exploration of issues, and create quality decisions through strengthening relationships and commitment. However, Schwartz and Hofstede propose skillful use of cultural differences that can contribute to strong relationships and effective collaboration. Their models help managers and organizations understand the attitude and behavior of employees, partners, suppliers, and clients. This helps create improved performance in a competitive business environment.

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