

Cultural brief of taiwan

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INTRODUCTION POLITICAL, LEGAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSIONS Geert Hofstede is a Dutch researcher who identified five dimensions of culture to help understand how and why people from various cultures behave the way they do. The five Hofstede's cultural dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity vs. femininity, and time orientation. Taiwan has a high power distance meaning that people blindly obey the orders of their superiors, and strict obedience is found.

Taiwan ranked high in uncertainty avoidance meaning that the people do not like uncertainty and tend to have a high need for security and a strong belief in experts. In individualism Taiwan ranked as a low individualistic country meaning that people look after themselves and their immediate family members. In regards to masculinity Taiwan ranked as a high masculinity country meaning that they place great importance on earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge. In this type of culture people are encouraged to be decision makers, and have high performance levels.

On the last dimension Taiwan ranked high in long term orientation meaning that they focus more on long range goals.

TROMPENAAR'S DIMENSIONS

Although Hofstede's dimensions are the most recognized cultural dimension a more recent research is gaining attention. This research was made over a period of ten years by another Dutch researcher Fons Trompenaar.

Trompenaar's dimensions are Universalism vs. Particularism, Individualism vs. Communitarianism, Neutral vs. Emotional, Specific vs. Diffuse, Achievement vs. Ascription, Sequential vs.

Synchronous, and Internal vs. External. GLOBE DIMENSIONS The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) research project is another study to measure cultural difference. This research is an extensive analysis that integrates previous analysis. Countries were selected very carefully so that every major geographic in the world was represented. This project or research is considered one of the most sophisticated studies because it was made by a multicultural team of researchers that had and broad knowledge and experience in those fields.

The GLOBE project can be use to foresee the most appropriate, effective, and suitable organizational and leader practices within a culture. The GLOBE is a more extensive research and includes more dimensions than Hofstede's and Trompenaars's research. The GLOBE project identified nine cultural dimensions Uncertainty avoidance, Power distance, Collectivism I, Collectivism II, Gender egalitarianism, Assertiveness, Future orientation, Performance orientation, and Humane orientation. CULTURAL NORMS, VALUES, AND BELIEFS

Taiwan's population is generally Han Chinese and is divided into three groups based on their language: Taiwanese, Hakka, and Mandarin. The official language of Taiwan is Mandarin Chinese, but Min-nan dialect is also widely spoken. English is the most popular foreign language which makes it part of their regular school curriculum. Most people in Taiwan have traditional values based on Confucian ethics, but industrialization is making them change their values. Some traditional values such as piety towards parents, ancestor worship, and emphasis on education and work remain strong.

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Taiwanese values are based on Confucianism which describes the position of the individual in society. This system of behaviors and ethics put emphasis on the obligation of people towards one another based on their relationship, and stresses duty, loyalty, honor, respect for age and sincerity. There are five classifications of relationship: ruler and subject, husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and friend and friend. Taiwan's culture is collective which means they are willing to suppress their own feelings for the good of the group.

Taiwanese have a very important concept of the face called " Mien-Tzu". They believe the face reflects a person's reputation, dignity, and prestige. This concept is not only applied to individuals but also to businesses. " Guanxi" is another term related to the connections and types of relationships Taiwanese use to conduct business. Businesses are conducted among friends, friends of friends, family, and people of your own level or higher status. This concept is believed to open doors, smooth problems, and open more connections. Taiwan's religion is based on the " three teachings"; Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

Each religion has its own temples, priest, and sacred texts, but most people practice a blend of the " three teachings" referred to as popular or folk religion. Family is very important in the Taiwanese culture and one thing that brings family together every day is food. Dinner is the most important meal of the day because it reinforces family relationships. The exchange of food means equality and people of higher ranks are never invited to dine at one's home. Fish is the favorite food, and food is mostly cooked in soups, stews, and

deep fry. Taiwan is famous for its tea and it can be found in almost every corner of Taiwan.

Tea is the most famous drink because it is considered stimulating, conducive to conversation, and beneficial to health. EXPECTATIONS REGARDING DRESS APPOINTMENTS Taiwanese are very punctual and they expect to be always on time for an appointment. They are very easy in scheduling appointments and the best way to set an appointment is by telephone or email. Most firms have business hours from 9AM to 5: 30PM Monday to Friday, so contact them between those times if you want to be contacted in a timely manner.

Punctuality is very important but they understand and respect when late, but if previous notice is given.

Holidays are a very hard time to set appointments because they do not work specially during the holidays of Chinese New Year, Tuan-Wu (or Dragon Boat Festival) and Mid-Autumn holiday, therefore; it is very hard to get a hold of anyone during this time of the year. BUSINESS ENTERTAINING Taiwanese pay very close to business entertaining because they consider it essential in creating a successful business relationship. Business entertaining should never be considered a waste of time since Taiwanese pay very close attention and dedicate a lot of time to this activity.

The most popular type of business entertaining is having dinner and drinking a great amount of alcohol until very late. During dinner make sure not to talk about business unless the host brings it up. This time should be use to learn more about Taiwan's people, culture, and the host interest. Taiwanese are food lovers so expect about twenty dishes during dinner. The tradition is that

the host serves the guest in their plates a little food, but they are free to take more food. It is recommended that you leave a little bit of food in your plate when done because leaving your plate empty signifies that you are still hungry.

After the great meal tea is served which signifies that the event is finished, and it is polite if you leave after finishing the tea even if the host invites you to stay. **BUSINESS CARDS** Taiwanese people are very friendly and courteous, and social relations are very important. They believe in creating strong relationships because their belief is that one cannot do anything alone without help from others. The use of business cards is used at the first meeting. Business cards are exchanged and it is considered an easy way to overcome initial shyness and start forming a connection.

The exchange of business cards also represents or demonstrates a person's name and reputation. **TITLES AND FORMS OF ADDRESS** Title and status of authority are very important in Taiwanese culture. When meeting a person for the first time it is important that you address the person by their academic, professional, or honorific title and their surname. People pay very close attention to status of authority such as age, education, occupation, and gender. Age is one of the factors taken seriously because they expect to show the greatest respect. This is a problem whenever a younger expatriate comes to manage older people.

It is difficult for them to accept the fact that a younger person manages them. Taiwanese traditionally have three names. The surname or last name, and two personal names. An interesting thing about their personal names is

that their names usually have some significant meaning. Asking about the meaning of their names is a good way for breaking the ice. GREETINGS Greeting in Taiwan are also very important and they have a different types of greetings depending on the person being greeted when greeting someone in Taiwan the oldest person in the group is greeted first.

Taiwanese use a handshake as the most common type of greeting with foreigners. In the Chinese culture they have a sign that represents respect, looking towards the ground. Taiwanese do not expect for foreigners to greet the same way because they know we have different greeting styles, so to be on the safe side a firm handshake and a warm smile is the best choice.

GESTURES Everywhere in the world no matter what language you speak people or cultures always have gestures that have a significant meaning. In Taiwan there are four types of gestures: greeting gestures, touching gestures, beckoning gestures, and nonverbal gestures.

We will start first with the greeting gestures, handshaking has become popular and its spreading rapidly, but a bow is the most traditional form of greeting. Hugging and kissing when greeting is very rare and uncommon. A special gesture for elders is to cover your left fist with your right hand, or put your hands together and bring them to your heart. Touching gestures are not very welcomed in Taiwan they are not a touch oriented society. Public signs of affection are rare, but it's normal for same sex persons to hold hands in public.

Beckoning gestures are done with an open hand facing downward and never use your index finger to point at someone. Never use your hand to beckon

someone facing upward because that gesture is only used for animals. Avoid touching or moving objects with your feet, and never put your feet on top of furniture because feet are considered lowly and dirty. There are a lot of nonverbal gestures but these are a few of the most common. In respect to elders always open the door for them, give up your seat if no other seats are available, talk to them first when you enter a room, and take off your glasses when you talk to them.

Posture should be straight, so do not slouch. Having a loud and rude behavior is not acceptable when doing business but it is acceptable in restaurants. Being able to read gestures will help you understand people even if you do not speak the same language, so make sure you know the most important one in order to create the right impression and business relationship. GIFT GIVING Gift giving is one of the things you need to pay really close attention since a lot of gifts have a very significant meaning, and you might give the wrong impression.

Taiwanese are food lovers and a good choice for a gift is a nice food basket or a good quality bottle of alcohol. Taiwanese culture has a sign of politeness by refusing a gift the first time offered and it is ok to offer the gift again, but not force it. Some of the things that should not be given as gifts are: Scissors, knives or cutting utensils because they represent to sever the relationship. Clock, handkerchiefs or straw sandals because they are associated with funerals and death. White flowers or chrysanthemums because they signify death. Never wrap gifts in white, blue, or black paper.

Never wrap gifts in red, pink or yellow because they are considered auspicious colors. The number four is considered a bad luck number so never give anything in groups of four. On the other hand; the number eight is a lucky number so giving groups of eights is giving good luck to the recipient. Avoid giving anything made in Taiwan. Presents should be given using both hands, and gifts are not open when received. So make sure that when giving a gift you take in consideration the gift giving etiquette, so you can make a successful gift and the right impression.

LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS (COMMUNICATIONSTYLES) It is very important that people who want to make business in Taiwan speak Mandarin Chinese, so negotiation is more fluent. It is important to speak the official language of Taiwan because the levels of English of multinational and major MNC's based in the country are low. The use of translators is employ but it slows down a process that it's already slow. INTERACTION STYLES NEGOTIATION ISSUES Taiwan is a collective society so they believe in having very strong business relationships before making a negotiation.

They spend a great amount of time trying to know the company before considering any type of negotiation. When foreigners want to make negotiations in Taiwan they get frustrated because of the process being too slow. Managers have an authoritarian point of view and expect to be obeyed by their subordinates 100%. Their decisions are accepted without being question and in rare cases subordinates have something to say. They expect to be asked first before any actions are taken in their absence, therefore very little initiative in taken in the lower side of the chain.

Any decisions taken when the manager is not there they are considered suspicious. VIEW OF WOMEN EXECUTIVES Taiwan is a male-dominated society and women play a small part in business. Women in the business field usually have the lowest levels in the organization even if they are high qualified. Equality is progressing very slowly and it may take years before equality is reached. Even though males are considered the decision makers foreign business women will be treated with great respect and courtesy.