

Cultural differences

Business



Cultural differences between United States and Philippines In many ways, United States and Philippines are alike the latter having been colony of the US and became westernized in the process. There are still however some fundamental differences between the value system of these two countries which can be gleaned from power distance, individuality and long-term index .

I. Individuality

Unlike United States which is a highly individualistic society, Philippines is a collectivist society with a score of 32. It is a closed knit society where there is a strong emphasis on extended relationships and loyalty. This translates to workplace where hiring and promotion are still done via kinship or membership of an employee's in group. American workplace however differs that individuals are expected to rely on its own merit where hiring and promotion depends on what one have done or can do.

It will not be offensive to impose professionalism at work. While kinship is valued in Philippine society in general, its professional class understands the virtue of performance and results as a basis for hiring and promotion.

II. Power distance index

The perspective about power has the biggest disparity between United States and the Philippines. US scored 40 on this and this is reflective of American values of equality, liberty and justice for all compared to the Philippines which is a younger society and thus still feudalistic scoring 94 manifesting its hierarchial society which is reflective of its society's inherent inequalities. Unlike in the US workplace where both managers and employees share information frequently in a manner that is informal, direct and participative, it is quite the opposite in the Philippines where subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is the

benevolent autocrat. While American workplace requires little structure and little rules, these are emphasized in the Philippine workplace. Subordinates know their places and are generally accepting of this structure.

This difference in perspective of the workplace can easily be resolved as a new manager in the Philippine context by clearly stating what is expected of its employees or subordinates. It can initiate a new culture of being more “egalitarian” in the workplace making it more flat which Philippine society is generally accepting of any initiative from the management as long as it does not threaten them.

III. Long-term orientation

Both countries scored low on long-term orientation with the Philippines scoring 19 while the US scored 29. This does not however mean that both countries share all the characteristic of short sightedness. US short term orientation is more emphasize in the workplace where immediate result is expected such that performance is measured every quarterly. Philippine society differs in this aspect as this short sightedness is more reflective in its society than in the workplace. Its society has a strong social pressure to “keep up with the Joneses”. This characteristic is tied up with its collectivist nature where loss of face is also associated with the inability to keep up with its peers. In the workplace, a new manager will not have difficulty adjusting because both want quick results and have a strong concern with establishing the truth. In this regard, Philippine workplace shares the trait of an American society.