

Culture differences (egypt vs india)

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The aim of this report is to gain an understanding of how two different cultures compared to each other shows us the differences in the countries for example how relationships are maintained, hierarchy, masculinity vs femininity, individualism and how they perceive the future. This research is very interesting because it had some very similarities and very few differences. This report gives a background on the countries that are mentioned below and then it goes on to the differences in both countries and similarities using Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

Overview of cultures

According to (Fathy, 2017) Egypt has a rich history and culture dating back thousands of years, starting with the Pharaonic culture, then Christianity and Islam. Egyptians are very welcoming, warm and friendly, they are open to other cultures and known for their good hospitality. When it comes to family relations, it is very important for Egyptians, so they pay special attention to family values and relationships.

Usually the responsibilities are divided, women tend to stay at home and raise the kids that is their main responsibility, while men are responsible for supporting the family financially. Religion has a significant role in the life of Egyptians, and it is intermingled with daily activities of Muslims and Christians living in Egypt. Egyptians who are Muslim follow Ramadan. Ramadan is the most important month in the year. During this month, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, focusing on praying and doing charity work.

Whereas CITATION Zim17 | 6153 (Zimmermann, 2017) says, Indian culture is one of the world's oldest. Today, India is a very diverse country, with more than 1.2 billion people. Different regions have their own distinct cultures. Language, religion, food and the arts are just some of the various aspects of Indian culture. India has 28 states and seven territories, 41% speaks Hindi while 59% speaks some other language.

The Indian constitution recognizes 23 official languages in India. Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil and Urdu are some other languages spoken in the country. India is identified as the birthplace of Hinduism and Buddhism, the third and fourth largest religions. About 84 percent of the population identifies as Hindu. About 13 percent of Indians are Muslim, making it one of the largest Islamic nations in the world. Indian has a lot of Indian architecture the most well-known example of Indian architecture is the Taj Mahal, built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan to honour his third wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

It combines elements from Islamic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish and Indian architectural styles. India also has many ancient temples. Indians love celebrations and have lots of traditions but the most important one is Diwali it is the largest and most important holiday to India. It is a five-day festival known as the festival of lights because of the lights lit during the celebration to symbolize the inner light that protects them from spiritual darkness. Holi, the festival of colours, also called the festival of love, is popular in the spring. The country also celebrates Republic Day (Jan. 26), Independence Day (Aug. 15) and Gandhi's birthday (Oct. 2).

Culture Differences

Definition: according to (Zimmermann), Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.

To discuss the culture differences between Egypt and India, Hofstede's insights was used to compare and research the two countries and below are the dimensions that was picked:

Power Distance: Referring to (Hofstede, 2001): A high power distance score indicates that a society accepts an unequal, hierarchical distribution of power, and that people understand "their place" in the system. A low power distance score means that power is shared and is widely dispersed. It is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

Egypt:

Egypt has a high-power distance which means that inequality is unavoidable, and everyone has the place they deserve. Hierarchy is an organisation that reflects natural differences. Superior or subordinates are different kinds of people. Powerholders are entitled to privileges and status symbols, and authority is respected. They acknowledge a leader's status. As an outsider, you may try to circumvent his or her power, but don't push back explicitly.

India:

India shows an appreciation for hierarchy and a top-down structure in society and organizations because it also has a high-power distance. Real Power is centralized even though it may not appear to be, and managers count on the obedience of their team members. The manager should be a benevolent autocrat. Hierarchy is an organisation that reflects natural differences, inequality is unavoidable everyone has the place they deserve.

Individualism: Individualism is defined as the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. It has to do with whether people's self-image is defined in terms of " I" or " We". In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. A high individualism score indicates weak interpersonal connection among those who are not part of a core " family." People take less responsibility for others' actions and outcomes.

Egypt:

Egypt is considered a collectivistic society. Collectivist societies have a ' we' mentality. Identity is based on one's social group. Decisions are primarily made according to what's best for the group. Relationships prevail over task. Focus is on belonging to an organisation. Values differ according to the group. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. Maintaining harmony among group members overrides other moral issues.

India:

On the other hand, India is a society with both collectivistic and Individualist traits. The employer/employee relationship is one of expectations based on expectations. Decisions are primarily made according to what's best for the group. Hiring and promotion decisions are often made based on relationships which are the key to everything in a Collectivist society.

The Individualist aspect of Indian society is seen as a result of its dominant religion/philosophy- Hinduism. The Hindus believe in a cycle of death and rebirth, with the manner of each rebirth being dependent upon how the individual lived the preceding life. This focus on individualism interacts with the otherwise collectivist tendencies of the Indian society. Individualist society has an ' I ' mentality. Identity is based on individual. Task prevails over relationships. Focus is on individual initiative and achievement. Value standards apply to all. High value placed on people's time and their need for privacy and freedom.

Masculinity: Masculinity indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success. A value system that starts in school and continues throughout organisational life.

Femininity means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A Feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable.

Egypt:

Egypt is considered a Feminine society. In Feminine countries the focus is on " working in order to live", managers strive for consensus, people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are

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resolved by compromise and negotiation. Focus is on well-being. An effective manager is a supportive one, and decision making is achieved through involvement. Men and women are in nurturing roles. Feminine society are more relationship oriented/consensual. There's more focus on quality of life. Success is more likely to be achieved through negotiation, collaboration and input from all levels.

India:

India considered a Masculine society. India is actually very Masculine in terms of visual display of success and power. India is also a spiritual country with millions of deities and various religious philosophies. In more Masculine countries the focus is on success and achievements, validated by material gains. Work is the centre of one's life and visible symbols of success in the workplace are very important. Men are considered assertive, women are nurturing. They have acquisition of wealth and live to work. Sympathy for the successful achiever. Managers are expected to be decisive and assertive. Strong egos – feelings of pride and importance are attributed to status. Money and achievement are important.

Uncertainty Avoidance: Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known. This ambiguity brings with it anxiety and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways.

Egypt:

Egypt has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. Countries exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. In these cultures, there is an emotional need for rules, precision and punctuality are the norm, security is an important element in individual motivation. Uncertainty in life is threatening and must be reduced. According to Egypt predictability and clarity are preferred. Formal rules and regulations are necessary, there is an inner urge to work hard, belief in expert and their knowledge, and consensus is better than conflict. It is a high energy society, if people feel that they are in control of their life instead of feeling overwhelmed by life's vagaries.

India:

India has a low preference for avoiding uncertainty. In India, there is acceptance of imperfection; nothing has to be perfect nor has to go exactly as planned. India is traditionally a patient country where tolerance for the unexpected is high. A word used often is “adjust” and means a wide range of things, from turning a blind eye to rules being flouted to finding a unique and inventive solution to a seemingly insurmountable problem.

It is this attitude that is both the cause of misery as well as the most empowering aspect of the country. Uncertainty is a fact of life: take things as they come. According to India ambiguity is tolerated, there needs to be a readiness to take risk. The fewer rules there are the better, competition and conflict can be constructive. They have a belief in generalists and common sense. There is an openness to change or innovation, and generally

inclusive. (Team, 2016) More inclined to open-ended learning or decision making.

Long Term Orientation: This dimension describes how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future, and societies prioritise these two existential goals differently. A culture which score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Those with a culture which scores high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

Egypt:

Egypt's very low indicating that its culture is very normative. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results.

India:

Whereas India has a dominant preference in Indian culture. In India the concept of " karma" dominates religious and philosophical thought.

Countries like India have a great tolerance for religious views from all over the world. Hinduism is often considered a philosophy more than even a religion; an amalgamation of ideas, views, practices and esoteric beliefs. In India there is an acceptance that there are many truths and often depends

on the seeker. Societies that have a high score on pragmatism typically forgive a lack of punctuality, a changing game-plan based on changing reality and a general comfort with discovering the fated path as one goes along rather than playing to an exact plan.

Conclusion

In conclusion this report shows how Hofstede's five Dimensions of Culture are brought about in today's world by our surroundings and society. The five dimensions that was talked about in this report was power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. The countries that were compared was Egypt and India using Hofstede's Dimensions.

Each of these cultural differences between Egypt and India impacts their work relationships as well due to their ability to work in groups, distribution of power, and level of competitiveness. In Egypt they have a power distance, uncertainty avoidance while scoring a low long-term orientation and is considered a feminine and collectivist country.

Whereas India has a high-power distance and long-term orientation they score low in uncertainty avoidance and is considered a masculine and both an individualist and collectivist country. While they were both similar in the power distance and collectivist dimension, they were opposites on each of the other dimensions. The importance of the comparison between Egypt and India is so that one can understand why these cultures are different and how they each have their own strengths and weaknesses.

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