

Example of cultural differences theorists essay

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Cultural Differences Theorists

The Geert Hofstede Dimensions of Culture

According to Hofstede, culture refers to the collective programming of people's minds, which sets them apart from the category of other people. As much as culture is collective, it is possible to connect it to different collectives.

The term has a primary use where it refers to ethnic groups in the field of anthropology. However, culture also finds meaning when referring to nations (political science, management, and sociology) and when referring to organizations in the context of management and sociology. Hofstede developed five dimensions to the definition and understanding of culture.

Hofstede's Five Dimensions

Power/Distance

The first dimension of culture is the power/distance (PD). Power or distance refers to the extent of inequality that exists between people who have the power and those who do not have the power. When the power distance is high, it indicates that a society does not object unequal distribution of power (Hofstede, n. d). The people accept to be powerless. On the other hand, a low PD indicates that the society disperses power well in the whole society.

Individualism (IDV)

Individualism refers to the close ties and connections that people have with each other in the community. A high level of individualism in the community indicates that people do not value social connections as much as they value

their personal time (Hofstede, 1980). The culture is common in areas where people do not share a common identity or origin, for example, capital cities.

Masculinity (MAS)

Masculinity and femininity refer to the extent that a society values the traditional roles of both males and females. Gender-specific roles are the basis for the prevalence of this culture. In countries with high MAS, the society expects men to be tough, assertive and provide for their families. On the other hand, a low MAS does not lead to a reversal of the roles. In cultures where there is a low MAS, men, and women work together on an equal platform in all the professions. The roles blur rather than reversed (Hofstede, 2001).

Uncertainty/Avoidance Index (UAI)

The UAI index indicates the level of anxiety that occurs in the society whenever an unknown circumstance happens. Nations that score highly on this scale always attempt to eliminate the occurrence of unknown situations. The countries have strict rules and order hence they always seek the absolute truth (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010).

Long Term Orientation (LTO)

LTO refers to how much a certain society values long-term values and traditions rather than short-term traditions. The dimension came into light in the 1990s after Hofstede realized that some Asian countries behaved differently from the Western cultures (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede, 2002). The Asian countries had close links with the Confucian philosophy. In

countries where the LTO is very high, fulfilling the social obligations and preventing shameful circumstances is very important.

Insights on Organizational Life

Hofstede gives an insight on the balance of power in an organization using the power/distance dimension of culture. In an organization, there are individuals who have more power than other individuals do. Consequently, the less powerful individuals fall into the subordinate nature of within the organization.

Secondly, the theorist also hints on gender imbalance in the workplace through the masculinity dimension. In a culture with high MAS, the male individuals dominate the professional field. Women fall into a submissive role as their male counterparts share the prime positions in the offices.

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