

International management essay sample

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



Another aspect of culture is the phenomenon called 'ethnocentricity'. Lewis (1996) defines this as: beliefs and habits are regarded as strange, because they are different" It is important for international managers to understand that cultures can vary drastically; there is no universal culture. Cross-cultural discrepancies in managerial behaviour arise from a variety of historical, political and cultural factors. If these differences are ignored, the results can be disastrous especially in a business scenario.

As you can see there are a lot of definitions of culture however in theory there is one name which stands out which is Geert Hofstede who has actually produced major research about different cultures in different countries and his research will be used to compare Japan and Spain as well as other authors whom underpin his work.

Culture as defined by theory: Hofstede (1983) proposes that national culture and values of a country affect the work environment and management of that country, due to culture being is " software of the mind". From this statement and Hofstede (1983) research the following variables which categorises this are: Hofstede (1983) research found the average or mean for countries used in his research is 51.

Relating this back to the report countries this means that Japan with a rating of 54 and Spain with a rating of 57 are placed in moderate power distance cultures. Specifically to the organisation context, members of high power distance cultures are more likely to be accepting of, and comfortable with, structured authority relationships. Whereas individuals in low power distance cultures do not tolerate highly centralised power and at least expect to be

consulted in decision-making (Adler, 2001). For an in-depth view of low and high power differences look at Appendix one and two.

Attitude Toward Power In Japan Loyalty in Japan is normally directed toward institutional power rather than personal power (Hill, 2001). Which means in the Japanese society there is a strong hierarchical structure and a strict chain of command throughout (Hofstede, 1991). The organisation gives the individual an identity by providing security, a source of income, and a pecking order in the vertical hierarchy. Their jobs take precedence over monetary returns. There is a more associated group emphasis than individual. Simply inequality is accepted in Japan. However the power of the superior is not absolute (Herbing and Jacobs, 1998).

Attitude Toward Power In Spain The power distance of Spain is considered to be high. Until recent years the Spanish have been under a dictatorship, which has influenced the power distance of the country. Even though Spain now has a democracy, this distance between the employee and employer are still high but are slowly changing (Cheney, 1999. p. 20-25). One reason that Spain is considered to have a high power distance is because there is a type of business hierarchy in the business culture of the country. Other factors that creates the high power distance of Spain is how the employees view their employers as superiors ([www. a-zofetiquette. com](http://www.a-zofetiquette.com)), as well as how much input the employees are allowed to give in a decision (Hofstede, 1991. p33)

Hofstede (1983) research found the average or mean for countries used in his research is 64. Hofstede (1983) associates Japan (92) and Spain (86) with

strong uncertainty avoidance. With higher uncertainty avoidance comes the belief that dissidence is dangerous, time is money and a need for written rules and regulations along with a belief in experts. Lower uncertainty avoidance indicates an acceptance of dissent, time is free, few rules, more risk, belief in generalist and common sense (cyborlink. com).

Attitude Toward Uncertainty In Japan Japanese managers are generally conservative and risk averse. Japanese are trained not to make a mistake, even if this means that nothing spectacular is achieved. Open debate is nearly impossible. Actions that cause enmity and break social ties are dangerous to everyone and threaten the peace, the Wa, and the harmony of the group (Herbig, P. and Jacobs, L., 1998). The Japanese place high priority for things such as steady, life-long employment and loyalty to the network (hsb. baylor. edu).

Attitude Toward Uncertainty In Spain Spanish managers freely (and repeatedly) present their own views, but will rarely be convinced by another person's arguments during negotiations. Confrontation should be avoided at all costs, as the Spanish consider publicly admitting an error as one of the worst mistakes you can make. Better to "agree to disagree" and take the point up later (igo. com).

Hofstede (1983) research found the average or mean for countries used in his research is 51. Hofstede classifies both Spain (51) and Japan (46) as collectivist societies. The more individualistic people are, the more they believe they are responsible for themselves and their immediate family, the more their identity is based in the individual rather than the group, the more

autonomy, variety, pleasure and individual security they prefer and the move they prefer individual decisions.

The collectivist is more like to believe their responsibility, loyalty and protection extends to the extended family, the more they rely on expertise, order, duty and the security provided by the group and the more they prefer group rather than individual decisions. Attitude Toward Individualism vs. Collectivism In Japan The group is the primary unit of social organisation in Japan. Corporate success and company goals are achieved through the result of group effort and not through the exceptional activities of individuals (Herbig, P. and Jacobs, L., 1998). Japan avoids risks and shows little value for personal freedom (cyborlink. com), people expect 'in-groups' to look after their members, protect them and give them security in exchange for members' loyalty (Kadir, A., 1991).

Attitude Toward Individualism vs. Collectivism In Spain For many Spaniards, the family is effectively a substitute for the state (Corr, D., 2004). The familial nature of Spanish business has extended itself to the decision making process of even the most non-family oriented firm. Sharing the burden of decision-making is seen as a sign of weakness. Spaniards are generally conservative and will resist making decisions on " risky" topics. Better no decision than a bad one (igo. com).

Hofstede (1983) research found the average or mean for countries used in his research is 51. Hofstede classifies Japan as a masculine dominated society with a rating of 95 and Spain as a feministic society with a rating of 42. The more masculine societies believe that women should be the

nurtures; performance is what counts, the more they live to work, are ambitious and admire the achiever. (Kadir, A., 1991)

The more feminine societies believe that men as well as women should be the nurturers; the more they focus on the quality of life. They work in order to live rather than live for their work. Giving service to others is their motivation for working. They sympathise more with the unfortunates. (Kadir, A., 1991) Attitude Toward Masculine Society In Japan A highly masculine society such as Japan experiences a high degree of gender differentiation.

Males dominate a significant proportion of the society and power structure, with females being controlled by male domination; they are not expected to rise to senior positions in business or society (Corr, D., 2004 & cyborlink.com). To work and advance many career women have been forced to work for foreign companies or to move out of Japan altogether (Herbig, P. and Jacobs, L., 1998).

Attitude Toward Feministic Society In Spain Feministic societies such as Spain indicate that it has a low level of differentiation and discrimination between genders in society. Women have made quite a bit of progress since Franco's era, but men still hold the majority of positions within companies (cyborlink.com). Many women in Spain are career oriented. Social and educational status often determines the role women eventually play in business (igo.com).