

# Cultural difference: hofstede framework

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Culture, in my own opinion, is a unique system of values and norms that are believed by a group of people who live in the same society. Since culture is unique, Geert Hofstede tried to study the differences. After the study, he proposed five dimensions to measure the cultural difference between nations. The following parts will explain Hofstede Framework briefly. The first dimension is Power Distance. It is a tool to measure the power difference between levels in organization. In a group with high power distance, the majority of people would tend to respect authority and establish hierarchy.

When observing their behavior, they would have a great esteem on the class of social level. By contrary, a society with a low power distance would not fear authority and view themselves as equal with equal rights. Generally, the power distance in Oriental is higher than that in Occidental. The second dimension is Individualism vs. Collectivism. This index measures the preference of a group of people in considering self-benefit or group-benefit. In a society of collectivism, the society would have strong group cohesion and have higher responsibility on others well-being.

Besides, the management level would tend to discuss with their subordinates before making a decision. By contrary, people will have loose ties and lack of interpersonal connection when a society prefers individualism. Generally, the Oriental prefer to focus on collectivism; the Occidental prefer to focus on the individualism. The third dimension is Achievement vs. Nurturing. This index reflects a society that sticks with and values traditional male and female roles. If the score is high, the society tends to value like traditionally male which is competitive, assertive and ambitious.

They would be less emotional and would not make any emotional-based decision or argument. On the other hand, a nurturing-oriented society will respect and admire powerful women and they would tend to emphasize consideration and personal feelings. Next dimension is Uncertainty Avoidance. The score reflects the attitude of the group when it faced risk and ambiguity. If the score of uncertainty avoidance is high, the management of the group would prefer to set more rules to avoid the uncertainty situation during the daily operation. By contrast, society with a low score has a higher willingness in accepting risk and changes.

Also, the management of the group would impose less rules and structure when unnecessary. The last one is Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation. It measures the group of people prefer to consider the short-term-benefit or the long-term-benefit. If the group prefers short-term-benefit means the management may seek for the quick success and the instant benefits. They would consider personal stability and respect for tradition. By contrast, the group prefers long-term-benefit means they concern the future, advocate saving and reserve. They believe that progressive effect is more important.

With the Hofstede framework, we can separate and understand the difference of managing culture through these five dimensions. On the other hand, when we talk about "Culture", somebody would say that "Culture is something easy to build up, but hard to break". However, in my opinion, this is not a one-sided statement. We would not state that culture is either easy or difficult to build up or break down, as we could adopt a new cultural environment or re-build a culture in a micro-environment by understanding the cultural norms and behavior of that society.

<https://assignbuster.com/cultural-difference-hofstede-framework/>

For example, to change the beliefs and values in an organization, we should adopt different approaches based on the culture in that nation. I would explain my contention using the Hofstede's framework in the following parts. The first angle is Power Distance. The majority of people would obey their boss if the index is high. By contrary, they would view themselves as equal with equal rights. For this, there are two different reactions when they meet the change of culture, included buildup and break down.

From the angle of higher-index nation, they will accept the changes always; most likely they will not refuse the changes, include the break down. So, management can change the culture easily in this situation. However, in the low-index nation, it will not only hard to build up, but also hard to break down the culture as they emphasize to view themselves as equal with equal, especially to rebuild. Therefore, management should follow these three advices when they change to culture. Firstly, form a discuss group and invite staff to show their views and concern before decision making.

Secondly, try to use more statistics to seek their support within the discussion. The most important is the management must keep the eyes on the behaviors and emotion of the staff the change started. If the negative reaction was found, the management should stop the change and review. If the management follows it, it is easy to change the culture. The second angle is Individualism vs. Collectivism. As the said before, the society would have strong group concept if there is Collectivism. On the other hand, they would emphasize the self-benefit when they prefer Individualism.

For this, the main focus should be "Benefit", there are two different reactions when they meet the change of culture. In the Individualism society, "Self-Benefit" is their main focus. If changing the culture will bring the "Self-Benefit", they will support the change. Then, Culture is something easy to build up and break down. However, if changing the culture will cut the "Self-Benefit" down, they will be against the change. Then, Culture is something hard to build up and break down. By contrast, in the Collectivism society, "Group-Benefit" is their main focus.

If changing the culture will be an advantage to "Group-Benefit", they will support the change. So, Culture is something easy to build up and break down in this moment. However, if changing the culture is a disadvantage to "Group-Benefit", they will be against the change. Then, Culture is something hard to build up and break down in this moment. As a role of management, we should try to guide them to focus the viewpoint to positive. For example, when we would like to change the culture of late, some supporter of the Individualism may think it is damage to their "Self-Benefit".

But we should change their mind-set to it is benefit for them, it is a chance for them to strive for promotion. For the support of Collectivism, we also can try a similar approach. For example, when we would like to change the culture of talking gossip, some supporter of the Collectivism may think it is damage to their "Group-Benefit". We should change their mind-set to it is an advantage to them; it will be an increase in productivity after stopping talking. All of them can get the team bonus if the productivity increases. Try to divert their attention and get their support, then the change of culture will be easier.

If we can not divert their attention, the management should stop the change and review it immediately. The next angle is Achievement vs. Nurturing. If the score is high, the group of people will more competitive, assertive and ambitious. However, they would tend to emphasizing consideration and personal feelings if the score is low. In this situation, they will only support the change if it is fit with their character and oppose it if it can not. After we got their support, we can change the culture easily. But, it is hard to change the culture if we only got their objection.

In the Achievement society, we should avoid discussing emotions or making emotionally-based decisions or arguments. By contrary, Ensure Job design and practices are not discriminatory to either gender. And treat men and women equally. By doing so, we will build up or break down easily. When we go the wrong way, then we will hard to build up and break down. The fourth angle is Uncertainty Avoidance. The group would prefer to set more rules if the score of uncertainty avoidance is high. If the score of uncertainty avoidance is low, they have higher willingness in accepting risk.

If the score of uncertainty avoidance is low, that means they love to support the change of culture, it is easy to rebuild and break down the culture. On the other hand, they are not the fans of the change if the score of uncertainty avoidance is high, because they have not confidence for the future. For this, we should give more plans and preparation to the staff, communicate with them often and early, provide detailed plans of change. Through the guide line, we can lead the people to rebuild or break the culture step-by-step. After that, they will support the change as they got he confidence.

The last angle is Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation. If the group prefers short-term-benefit means the management may seek for the quick success and the instant benefits. By contrary, the group prefers long-term-benefit means they believe that progressive effect is more important. In Long-term society, we should avoid letting them lose the face, emphasize and benefit of future, then they will support. Otherwise they will oppose the change. By contrary, in Short-term society, we should emphasize the quick benefit, then they will support. Otherwise they will oppose the change.