

Good example of essay on hofstede five dimensions

[Business](#), [Employee](#)



The cultural dimension theory proposed by Geert Hofstede, a Dutch cultural psychologist, has laid down a detailed structure for cross-cultural communications between distinct societies using five different dimensions. This essay will attempt to draw a comparison of the cultural differences between the United States and India and discuss the impact of these differences on leadership in the two countries.

Power Distance - This factor refers to the extent, importance and acceptance of hierarchical relationships in an institution. From the graph in the Appendix, one can see that the US has a low power distance score of 40 compared to India with a score of 77. From a leadership perspective, this means that a leader in an Indian institution would expect his juniors in the hierarchy to acknowledge his position as well as communicate with him on a regular basis for advice. (Mind Tools, 2007) Therefore, in India, top-down communication is the norm as compared to bottom-up communication that most bosses consider a negative. (Hofstede Centre, 2014) From a leadership perspective, a leader must ensure that this aspect of power distance in an Indian workplace is adhered to, especially if such a person hails from a US workplace. However, one must also note that most Indian workplaces are slowly changing to incorporate flat hierarchical structures and as a leader one could also consider this an important direction towards change.

Individualism - This factor examines the extent of a society's cultural preference for viewing interests in an individual or a collective manner. (Mind Tools, 2007) With a score of 91 for the US and 48 for India, the US is highly individualist in its approach. On the other hand, Indian society seems to be culturally mixed since its score shows an equal preference for both. While US

management and leaders are informal and hierarchy is informal in nature, the opposite is seen in Indian corporate leaders. From a leadership perspective, therefore, it would do well for a leader in India to have an adaptable leadership style depending on the particular organizational culture rather than adopt a flat individualistic style.

Masculinity - This dimension examines the traditional masculine and feminine value roles. Due to the high scores in this dimension, both the US (62) and India (56) are relatively masculine societies characterized by competition, success display and individual achievements. In both countries, these value systems are reinforced early beginning with the school years and through corporate life. In the US and India, the leadership of a particular organization, therefore, focuses on these attributes when motivating employees and contributing to organizational growth. A leader would do well, therefore, to adopt similar motivational and leadership styles in both the US as well as India with minor variations in order to have a smoothly functioning workplace.

Uncertainty Avoidance - This factor examines the ability of the individuals within a culture to handle situations that are unknown and ambiguous. Both the US and India have a low score of 46 and 40 respectively on this count, possibly since both countries have similar free democratic systems. While, in case of the US, this indicates the country's preference for informal attitudes, more concern with long term strategy and acceptance of risk. On the other hand, India has a low score for a different reason for the citizens of the country are highly informal and with an extremely high tolerance for imperfection and settling into roles and routines without protest. Further,

most Indian workplaces also see flouting of norms or circumvention of rules and procedures to a higher extent than US workplaces. (The Hofstede Centre, 2014) An efficient leader must, therefore, take into account this nature of employees when taking up a role in that country. If one applies the low tolerance towards imperfection seen in the US towards Indian workplaces, it would be a disaster. Hence, this change in leadership style becomes essential for a leader due to this dimensional aspect.

Long Term Orientation (LTO) - This dimension examines the extent to which society values long-established traditions and values as well as the social fabric that forces individuals to perform well in order to avoid a loss of social standing. The United States has a low score of 26 while India has a score of 51 in this case. This score is in conformance with the culture of equality, individualism and self-actualization that is prevalent in the US. On the contrary, in India, concepts such as prevalence of family culture, strong work ethics, respect for older employees in an organization and strong emphasis on training and education ensure a high LTO score. Leaders must consider the fact that the US and India differ widely on this parameter and must endeavor to conform to these social norms when working in an Indian environment.

In conclusion, based on the five dimensions, one can understand that leadership must assign a higher level of organizational flexibility to its US employees as compared to those in India. On certain parameters such as individualism and masculinity a leader should be adaptable in countries such as India that have a mixed work and social ethic as compared to the US where these parameters are far more distinct and visible. Further, leadership

in India is also based on factors such as higher tolerance for mistakes, respect for seniors in the organization and such factors. Lastly, strong social, cultural and religious ties ensure that Indian workplaces would be extremely distinct from those of their US counterparts due to strong traditional beliefs, enhanced family ties and such other factors. All these factors would lead one to conclude that leading an organization in India would require a much higher level of tolerance, adaptability and understanding as compared to leading an organization in the US, where things are far more streamlined.

Reference

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions - Understanding Workplace Values Around the World. (2007) Mind Tools. Retrieved from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_66.htm

Cultural Tools - Country Comparison. (2014) The Hofstede Centre. Retrieved from <http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html>

Appendix: Graph of the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions comparing the United States and India

Source: The Hofstede Centre, Country Comparison