

Hofstede's dimensions: background and application



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In this paper, I will look at China, Mexico and the USA, to compare ratings on Geert Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture Index. It is my intention to use ratings on this index to assist me in understanding Mexican cultural orientation, as I expect to be managing a team of Mexican workers in Mexico. I know that my cultural orientation different, and Hofstede's index gives me a way to examine those differences, to gain clues about what I can expect, and to consider strategies for challenges I might face. China is included because I have gained some understanding of doing business in that cultural context, making comparison beneficial. Below is a table, showing values assigned to each of Hofstede's dimensions (Tamas, 2007).

Table 1. Dimensions by Country PDI Power Distance Index IDV Individualism UAI Uncertainty Avoidance Index MAS Masculinity LTO Long-Term Orientation

Country	PDI	IDV	UAI	MAS	LTO
China	80	20	40	66	118
Mexico	81	30	82	69	
USA	40	91	46	62	29

Since China and Mexico share similar ratings with respect to PDI, I can expect that my Mexican labor force will accept unequal power distribution, as is the case in China (Krym, 2008). I can anticipate that my Mexican team members will be cautious about volunteering creative ideas; that they may expect me to tell them what to do, instead of taking the initiative; that they may not trust a US bonus or commission system that rewards peers who add to projects in exceptional ways; that they will treat me as a boss and not trust me as a friend. Solutions include assigning committees to generate creative ideas and recommend initiatives; awarding commissions or bonuses to the team and not to individuals; making friends among managers. As Mexico has a rating of 30, on the Individualist (IDV) continuum, I can expect them to be collectivist, like China, unlike highly individualistic Americans. In line with a suggestion that location can influence values and practice (McSweeney,

2002), I may find them to be more influenced by individualistic values if our project is near a US border town. I would anticipate that there will be a low attrition rate, as is the case among workers in China (Krym, 2008), and that, unlike Americans, Mexicans will not be focused on leaping through careers but on building skills and demonstrating loyalty to the company. I can anticipate high loyalty to the team. They might cover for a less competent worker, preferring to handle it in a group way rather than coming to me. I can first allow the team a chance to deal with it, stepping in only in emergencies or where the team is not handling it successfully. China and the US have a more similar index rating, 40 and 46 respectively, on the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance. Mexico's rating, at 82, is radically different. This indicates that my Mexican workers will want more rules and regulations, and structured clarity than I am used to. On the other hand, we cannot assume that these ratings will remain constant over time, given social change (McSweeney, 2002). I suspect that the USA's post-9/11 rating will actually be much higher now. The World economic crisis may have raised everyone's index rating, and the war on drug terrorism in Mexico may have boosted their rating even higher. This would be a ripe area for the additional research Hofstede welcomed (Hofstede, 2002). Based on the Masculinity ratings, I anticipate that Mexicans, like Chinese and Americans, like to balance their commitments to work, self and family. They like to make money, but not at the expense of life balance. They will probably not be supportive of consistent overtime or taking work home. They might appreciate Flex-Time, and a management style balancing firmness and gentleness. I will try to be sensitive to this balance in meeting these challenges. As Mexico apparently has no rating on the dimension of Long-

term Orientation, it is difficult to comment. It is not surprising that China and the USA are on polarized extremes of this spectrum, particularly since this dimension was formerly known as Confucian Dynamism (Tamas, 2007).

Based on what I personally know about Mexican cultural values and practice, I expect that Mexico's rating should fall in between China's and the USA. A consequent challenge might be to familiarize myself with holidays and rites of passage, so that I will not offend them with schedule expectations and cultural ignorance. I have used Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Index ratings for China, Mexico and the USA, as a way to situate my understanding of Mexican cultural orientations by comparison with cultures familiar to me. I can anticipate challenges in managing a Mexican team of workers in Mexico, and consider solutions. I will patiently refocus my own cultural inclinations to adjust to theirs.

References Hofstede, G. (2002, November). Dimensions Do Not Exist: A Reply to Brendan McSweeney. *Human Relations*; 55: 11 ; ABI/INFORM Global, p. 1355. Krym, N. (2008, September 2). Pros and Cons of Doing Business in China. Retrieved May 30, 2011, from Pragmatic Outsourcing: <http://pragmaticoutsourcing.com/2008/09/02/pros-and-cons-of-doing-business-in-china/> McSweeney, D. B. (2002). Hofstede's Model of National Cultural Differences and Their Consequences: A Triumph of Faith-A Failure of Analysis (abridged). Retrieved June 5, 2011, from The International Business Center: <http://geert-hofstede.international-business-center.com/mcsweeney.shtml> Tamas, A. (2007). Geert Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture and Edward T. Hall's Time Orientationws: adapted from <http://spectrum.troy.edu/~vorism/hofstede.htm> and <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/culture2.html>. Retrieved June 5, 2011, from www.tamas.com: http://www.tamas.com/samples/source-docs/Hofstede_Hall <https://assignbuster.com/hofstedes-dimensions-background-and-application/>