

A comparison of the uk and iceland

Countries



With the development of our society, the world we set our feet on has now experiencing fundamental changes, the importance of intercultural communication is increasing daily. Due to globalization, a growing number of people leave their countries for different purposes, such as business, traveling and education. In order to promote the efficient of work or study, people need to understand host culture well. There are 6 culture dimensions researched by Geert Hofstede (2018), which are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, individualism, long-term orientation and indulgence. This essay will compare and contrast the differences and similarities between Iceland and the UK, based on 2 dimensions of culture for masculinity and individualism. It will also discuss some possible methods to help Icelanders adapt to the UK culture under the two cultures.

The first dimension that will be discussed is individualism. " Individualism is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members." (Hofstede, et al. 2010, p. 69) There is a relatively large gap in the score of individualism between the UK and Iceland, the UK has a higher score at 89, which illustrates that the British people are more independent than Icelanders. They may tend to pay much attention to themselves and their direct family. Lam, Chen and Schaubroeck (2002, cited in Merkina, et al. 2014) seem to demonstrate that the British people prefer to have greater abilities in taking care of themselves, and put less emphasis on others, thus they may not so enthusiastic about interacting with others (Gomez, Shapiro and Kirkman, 2000, cited in Merkina, et al. 2014). Furthermore, personal fulfillment is the common way for the British people to be happy, they focus on their own voice, and give the point of view of the self to do all their things

(Samover, Porter and Jain, 1991, cited in Trenholm, 2016). Looking at the area of work, they may often solve problems by themselves. It could be the case that they might often keep and promote self-esteem by hardworking to be more outstanding or superior than others (De Mooij, 2005 cited in Merkina, et al. 2014), which can bring them a sense of happiness.

However, from figure 2 it can be shown that Iceland has a lower score than the UK in terms of individualism at 60. Iceland is also an individualist society, Hofstede insights (2018) shows that Icelanders tend to look after themselves and their immediate families, but comparing with the British people, they may be more kindness. Secondly, in the business world, they also tend to value individual achievement. Although the employees' position and salary is based on their independent abilities, and the more active the employees are, the more appreciated the leaders will be, after analyzing the gap between the UK and Iceland, it might be suggested that Icelanders are less self-reliant than the British people in the work.

On the other hand, there is a dramatic difference in masculinity index between the UK and Iceland. According to Hofstede's study, masculine cultures may lead to " independent ideal", and feminine cultures may lead to " interdependent ideal". " The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what you do (Feminine)." (Hofstede, et al. 2010, p. 69) From the chart, while the UK has a high score of 66 for this dimension, Iceland score is quite low at only 10, which means people from the UK might be more competitive, focus more on achievement and success. Merkin (2005, cited in Merkina, et al. 2014) claimed that the British people tend to express confidence to be more competitive, they want

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to be the winner in fired, thus, self-promotion is common in their society. Besides, people in the UK attach great importance to work, they also have a clear life goal and the conduct ambition, and they may care much about work or self-fulfillment rather than some trivial things in life, it may be suggested that they are impolite and talk more directly (Tosi & Greckhamer, 2004 cited in Merkina, et al. 2014).

On the contrary, Iceland is a feminine society, with an extraordinarily low score of 10. Hofstede insights (2018) illustrated the focus in this society is on “ working in order to live”. “ A feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable” (Hofstede, et al. 2010, p. 69), which appears that they may focus on their real life and consider more about others. Moreover, managers try to reach a consensus, people may have more equality and agreement in the work. Comparing with masculinity society, this society is harmony, and interpersonal relationships are valued (Hofstede, 2001 cited in Merkina, et al. 2014). Lastly, Icelanders prefer to have free time and flexibility, and they focus more on happiness, rather than status.

Nowadays, the awareness of globalization is stronger than before, therefore the speed of intercultural communication is increasing. However, Intercultural competence is not an easy way to obtain, which acquired a persistent process through learning and teaching. There are some ways that can help people receive the information more efficiently. “ Ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions” (Deardorff. 2006. p. 32 cited in UNESCO and Mckinnon 2013, p. <https://assignbuster.com/a-comparison-of-the-uk-and-iceland/>

72). In order to adapt to British society, Icelanders need to have a positive attitude to accept the significant cultural difference between these two countries. According to UNESCO and Mckinnon (2013), it can be concluded that Icelanders need to understand more basic information about British culture by analyzing and thinking why the British people can achieve their goals in terms of self-worth, and regard it is important to cultivate their independence. Also, they need to be patient to observe and recognize how the British people thinking and acting. As for individualism, although the score is similar, they also need to become more independent in their life, which can help them integrate into British society more effectively. Besides the above, interaction is an essential behavior to receive the intercultural capabilities, they can gain more useful information from the British people though the conversation and cooperation.

In conclusion, the UK is an individualistic and masculine society, the British people are independent and have clear goals in both life and work, but Icelanders pay more attention to the happiness of life. For achieve the culture globalization, Icelanders need to adapt themselves to the gaps by various ways. While there are some similarities and differences between these two cultures, for there are still some interesting factors left us to explore on the cross-cultural communication.