

Hotel Handbook for Intercultural Competence

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Executive Summary

This report will analyse the different cultures and customs of two different countries, being the UK and France. This analysis will use the Hofstede Insight's tool to determine how both countries fall on the cultural dimension's scale.

Analysing the cultures of a different country is widely beneficial to a hotel's staff, when said country's population take trips to their hotel. It will help staff better interact with their guests in a respectful and polite manner, taking their special customs into account that may be different than their own. This kind of careful consideration is what guests remember when leaving the hotel, and will often make them consider it for a future trip or influence them to leave a good review.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory	3
Country A – United Kingdom.....	4
United Kingdom – Hofstede Insight.....	4
Country B - France.....	4
France – Hofstede Insight.....	5
Comparison of the UK and France's Cultures – Critical Analysis	5
Do's and Don'ts: An Employee's Guide	6
Conclusion.....	7
Bibliography	8

Introduction

In this report, the cultures of two separate countries will be explored. Said countries will be the United Kingdom as Country A, and the location of the hotel, and France as Country B, the origin of the tourists. Given that French tourists make up for a large percentile of the UK's incoming tourist demographic, it would be natural for hotels to want to be more receptive of their culture. This report will aim to highlight the differences between these two cultures using the Hofstede model, and to create a handbook for employees to use as a guide to use during a customer's stay.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Geert Hofstede was a Dutch social psychologist, who came up with six 'cultural dimensions' for society to organise itself, each dimension being on a scale from zero to one hundred.

These dimensions are:

- Individualism – The extent to which people feel independent.
- Power Distance – The extent to which less powerful people accept that power is unequal in their society.
- Masculinity – The extent to which the use of force is accepted.
- Uncertainty Avoidance – The extent to which a society tolerates uncertainty.
- Long-Term Orientation – How much a society responds and adapts to change.
- Indulgence – The extent to which a society believes in freedom and doing what one wants.

(GeertHofstede, n.d)

These dimensions can be presented in the diagram shown in Figure 1.

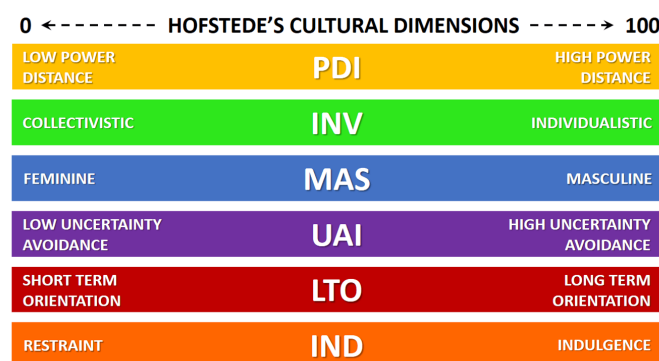


Figure 1: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (Bruin, 2017)

Country A – United Kingdom

Historically, the UK has been guided by a class system, following an aristocracy, with an upper, middle and working class. This was usually dependant on people's backgrounds, with people in the upper class being born into wealth and privilege, while those in the lower class were born into labourer families with lower educations. Despite there still being a great divide between the upper class and the rest, recently the lower and middle class have become less distinguishable. (Commisceo Global, n.d)

United Kingdom – Hofstede Insight

Applying the Hofstede's Insight online tool to the UK displays Figure 2.

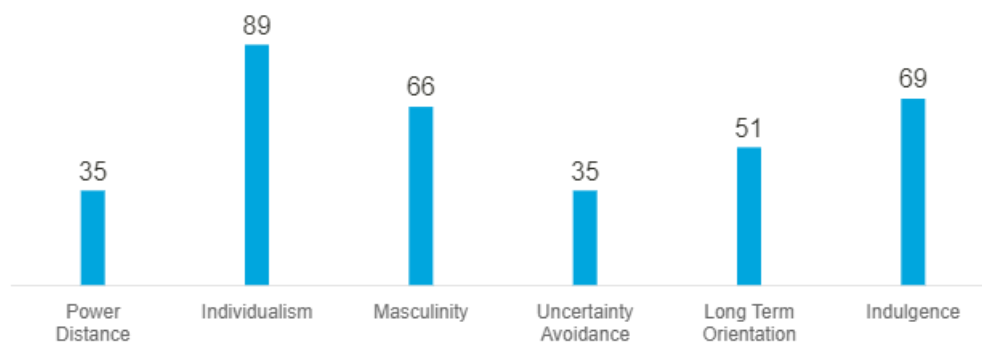


Figure 2: Hofstede's Insight Tool on the UK. (Hofstede Insights, n.d)

According to the model, the UK is fairly average in terms of Masculinity and Indulgence, only slightly leaning to one side. With a score of 51, the UK's stance on Long Term Orientation can't be determined by the script.

The UK does have low scores for Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance, meaning that, in general, more people believe the gap should be reduced, and are happier to be in ambiguous situations respectively.

The UK has an incredibly high score for Individualism, meaning it is one of the most individualistic countries, behind the USA and Australia.

Country B - France

At face value, being both European Countries with similar backgrounds, France and the UK have similar cultures, in terms of diversity and class. With both being predominantly Christian countries, both have similar customs. France is a country that's largely involved in the arts and cuisine. (Weber, 1991)

France – Hofstede Insight

Applying the Hofstede's Insight online tool to France displays Figure 3.

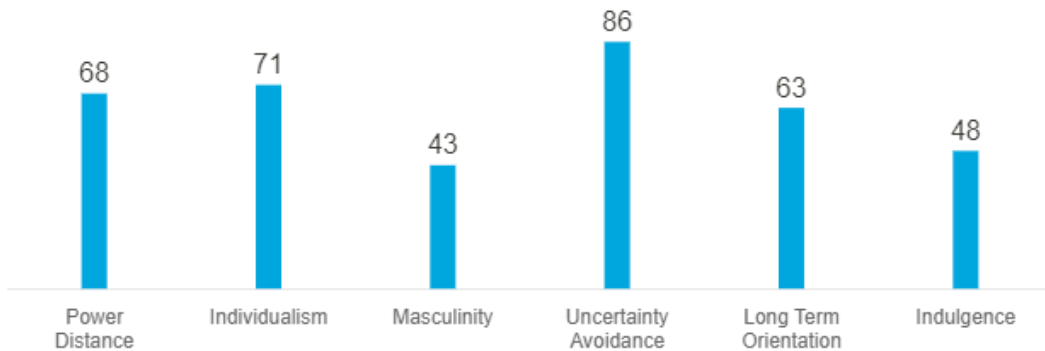


Figure 3: Hofstede's Insight Tool on France.

Comparison of the UK and France's Cultures – Critical Analysis

Figure 4, shown below is a graph comparing both Figure 2 and Figure 3.

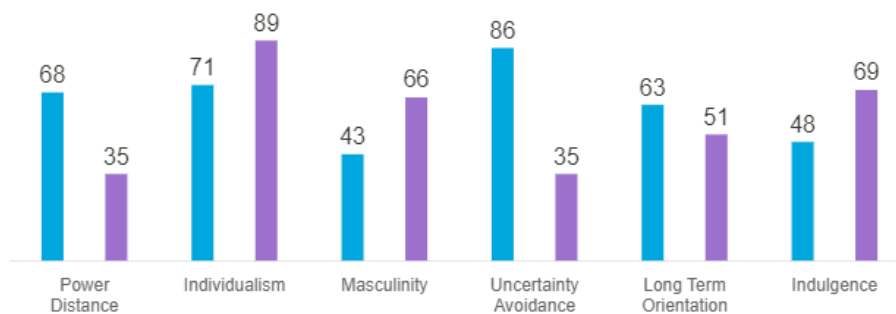


Figure 4: Hofstede Insight Tool on France and the UK

- Blue: France
- Purple: UK

This graph illustrates the similarities and differences in the UK's and France's society.

Firstly, both the UK and France are similar in terms of Long-Term Orientation, with average scores, with France being just slightly higher, as the French are generally more pragmatic.

This similarity can also be found in indulgence, with France being neutral, and the UK being somewhat high, meaning that the UK are more likely to choose actions and options that they desire.

One definite similarity is that both countries share an Individualistic society. Children are raised in both societies to be independent and rely on themselves.

This creates an interesting scenario when looking at both countries' Power Distance. With the UK's low power distance and high individualism, it is easily shown that this country favours independence and sociability, which wants the gaps between the people to be reduced (Romie F. Littrell, 2005). However, with France having a high Power Distance score, believing that the gap should remain as is would seem to prefer individualism and sociability within classes, rather than intermingling with others.

Do's and Don'ts: An Employee's Guide

Table 1 shown below is a list on what one should and shouldn't do in terms of customs and mannerisms when dealing with someone from the UK. These customs should be considered to appear polite and respectful to one's culture.

Table 2 below is similar, but it deals with the customs and mannerisms of people from France, and how employees should behave around visitors from France.

Do	Don't
Arrive at dates and meetings at the agreed upon time.	Stand too close
Give a firm handshake or a nod upon meeting (Nagy E, 2019)	Hug or be overly intimate upon meeting.
Look someone in the eye when speaking	Maintain prolonged eye contact for too long
Eat with utensils and maintain table manners (Mandrell, 2012)	Speak whilst eating
Speak in a calm, reserved manner.	Speak or call at someone loudly
Dress smartly and fashionably – dress for the occasion (David Keane, 2019)	Wear exaggerated or disrespectful clothing.

Table 1: Do's and Don'ts for interacting with people from the UK (Harper, 1997).

Do	Don't
Shake hands upon a first meeting, kiss on cheek for someone already known	Hug or be overtly intimate upon meeting.

Use good manners; 'please's and 'thank you's on everything, as well as 'hello's and 'goodbye's.	Be colloquial or overly friendly.
Arrive later than agreed upon for dates and dinners – It is the golden rule in France. (Marisy, 2017)	Show up late to business meetings or scheduled appointments.
Dress sensibly – less is more is the usual.	Be disrespectful in clothing choices.
Show sensible table manners – compliment chef and host	Speak whilst eating.
Respect silence – A long silence is favoured, especially amongst strangers when nothing is needed to be said.	Try to force conversation and small talk.

Table 2: Do's and Don'ts for interacting with people from France.

Conclusion

To conclude, whilst different countries' cultures may be difficult to understand at first glance, it is easy to learn and adapt the mannerisms and customs of people all over the world. Whilst the countries chosen for this study had more similarities than other countries, for example if the UK and an Asian country were compared, by adopting a similar way of thinking, these obstructions can easily be overcome, and a respectful work environment and stay abroad can be maintained.

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