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Cultural Awareness

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Introduction

There is no exact definition of culture. Many authors use only characteristics that are observable for contrasting their definitions. Some of the authors say that culture is not tangible but it is subjective or implicit. Hofstede describes culture as "mental programming". It is how things should be done. Culture enables a person to build up an unconscious infrastructure of basic assumptions and beliefs that will be operated unconsciously. National culture is the composition of cultural value, cultural form, routines, proposition, symbol, routine, ritual etc. Evaluation of a national culture or definition of a reference model for a national culture is a tough task. Hofstede's classification of culture was adopted broadly for the large number of countries that he measured in his research. In this document, we will be discussing and evaluating the major dimension of the national culture of the UK by using Hofstede's national culture model.

Hofstede's Approach to National Culture

In the early 1980s, a model to approach national culture is developed by Gerard H. Hofstede. He defined culture as a collective programming of the mind which distinguished the member of a single group or category of the people to another culture. Hofstede's definition of culture was aligned to the theory of culture and with the personality culture. Under this theory members of a definite culture will be initializing the communal characteristic and will be able to develop a corresponding personality culture. The classic theory also says that personality shapes culture. The nature of an individual varies from culture to culture.

Hofstede said that society has four major dimensions. Those are- individualism, power distance, masculinity and uncertainty- avoidance. The model of Hofstede's is being criticised highly. The constraints of Hofstede are summed up in four major points-

- Long collection period of data
- The IMB Sample
- Insufficient instrument
- Limitations of dimension

Individualism or Collectivism

Individualism or collectivism measure the strength of the people who are ties have to others in the community. A big score of individualism indicates they have less connection with other people. A high score means they do have not enough interpersonal connection and a small number of sharing responsibilities with family or perhaps with some close friend. A society that has lower individualism or collectivism means they have a strong bonding with other people or groups of the society, they have enough loyalty, enough respect for another group. Here people take more responsibility for other people's well-being.

Hofstede's analysis says that the United Kingdom has a mark of 90 in the dimension their global rank is three. The society of the United Kingdom will have a higher valuation of time of people as well as their need for freedom. They also have the challenge of enjoyment, they expect a reward for their hard work and for privacy they need higher respect.

The individualism of the UK should be observed in the single-occupancy property number. As per the government of the UK during the last 25 years, the number has increased by 15%. Individualism also created a culture that is highly oriented toward rewarding hard work. An example is the UK's banking sector is known for motivating their employee by giving them bonuses as per their accomplishment of the object. Bonus is a way of paying a tribute to people's time.

Masculinity or Feminism

This culture determines how much a society should stick with, how much they should give value to traditional male and female roles. Where men are expected to be rough, they are the provider, this means the country has a high score. If there is a low score, a low score does not reverse the role of gender. If a society has a low score of Masculinity or feminism, simple the role will be blurred. We will see men and women are working equally in any kind of profession. Here men will be sensitive and women work hard to be successful in their professional life.

UK's mark in this dimension is 65 in the whole world their position is ninth. The author says that the UK government offers equal rights and opportunities for both men and women. They assured this by the law of equality and the equity office of government. Even in the family women plays a traditional role still. The women receive the same education as men but they are also told to look after their children. This combination of all of the conditions explains the reason for the UK's being in the middle of the scale.

Power Distance

It measures the degree of equality which is existing in the society and that is accepted toward the people with or without power. A higher score in power distance says that society is accepting an unequal distribution of power and their tasks within the system. The lower score means the power is shared within all people and it is well dispersed. A lower score also means that the member of society sees themselves equally.

In this, the score of the UK is thirty-five, and their position is 45. This marks shows us that the organisation of the UK has a flat structure and bureaucracy will be reduced to an optimal level. The employee of the higher position and lower position are almost equal. An example of this power distribution is found in the government dependencies that are being spread in the country.

Uncertainty Avoidance

This culture evaluates when people fall into an uncertain or unknown situation the degree of anxiety the members of society feels. The nation that has a high score trying to avoid the situation that is ambiguous if it is possible. They are ruled by order and rules and regulations.

The UK has scored thirty-five in this dimension and they have ranked 48th position in this. A proper example of long term vision will be the identification of a governmental program that has proposed action for coping up with the national program. Instantly legislation and development have been planned. Reformation of banking and well-fare is the example of their strategy.

Long and Short Term Orientation

This orientation estimate how much society valued long term opposing to short term tradition and short term values. Hofstede had added this dimension in the 1990s after finding out that Asian countries were in a strong link with the Confucian democracy and they have acted differently from the western culture.

The index value of the UK is 25 and among all countries, it places 29th position. A society with a lower score promotes equality, higher creativity and individualism. UK's society is plenty pf example of if there will be constant innovation and change.

Conclusion

Hofstede's model is providing us with a simple and easy manner for comparing 2 different societies. These five dimensions are outlining the general characteristics of the country that are analysed. Some authors said that this analysis is based on biasness. There is a social researcher who argues that culture cannot be compared. However, globalization required these studies. The result of Hofstede might be understood as the generalization of society and it does not encourage stereotype creation.

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