

Intercultural Communication Podcast

The purpose of this podcast is to analyse a culture of choice using Hofstede's theory of Cultural Dimension. The specific culture that will be discussed is Albania. In addition to this, the definition of culture and Hofstede's scores on 6 values will be discussed which are Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long Term Orientation and Indulgence. A final conclusion will follow and criticism on the theory will be provided.

1. Definition of culture/ Hofstede

According to Moran et al (2007) Culture gives individuals a sense of belonging and is a guideline on how to behave as culture impacts an individual's behaviour, beliefs and productivity. However, Hofstede has stated that "Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster"

2. Power Distance

Hofstede scores Albania 90 on power distance. Hofstede explains that Albania is a hierarchical society meaning that individuals accept their position in the workplace and society and see no reason to question it. Eurofound created a survey in 2015 which asked Albanians "Does your job give you a feeling of work well done?" The average of Albanians who answered yes was 5% lower than the average of Europeans. Additionally, the same people were asked "How often in the past year has your job prevented you from being with family?". The percentage that answered rarely or never was significantly lower than the European average, at 22%. Both of these questions compliment Hofstede's score as Albanians are more than likely to only have formal relationships with colleagues and have a worse work life balance.

3. Individualism

According to Hofstede, Albania has scored 20 on individualism, this suggests that it is more of a collectivist society. Hofstede then goes on to discuss that loyalty in a collectivist society is prioritised. According to Eurofound, (2018) A variety of Europeans were asked a question relating about feeling safe alone in public during the night. 48% of Albanians stated that this was not a problem beating the EU average of 35% proving that there is trust within the communities in Albania. In addition according to Massotti (2018) if someone is in need of help, Albanians will do whatever they can in order to help an individual. This goes to show that Hofstede's scoring on individualism is accurate and Albania is more of a we society than I.

4. Masculinity

Hofstede has scored Albania high on masculinity with a score of 80. Hofstede states that the traits of high masculinity within a culture include an ego orientated society, a high priority in economic growth. However, according to UN Women (2017), after the 2017 elections in Albania the country hit a new record of the percentage of women representation in Parliament at 28%. In addition to this UN Women have stated a gender balance in local elections is a main priority. This suggests that the score given by Hofstede may start to become outdated as males within Albania becoming less dominant as there is an increase of gender equality.

5. Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede has scored Albania a total of 70 for uncertainty avoidance. As this is fairly high, Hofstede states that Albania, rules and codes of beliefs are followed and alternative behaviour. An example of this within Albania is with the Kanun. According to Cook (2001) the Kanun is a traditional law that was created in the fifteenth century and covers a variety of topics on all aspects of life and is still used today. This goes to show that Albanians may have a high uncertainty score as older rules and laws are used even in today's society.

6. Long Term Orientation

Albania has scored 61 for long term orientation which is relatively high. Therefore Hofstede believes that the culture is pragmatic and should show signs of investment for the future and perseverance in order to achieve a goal. According to France24 (2019), Albanian youth have a desire to emigrate to other countries. It is stated that the urge to leave is due to low monthly wages and high unemployability. This therefore proves that Hofstede's score was accurate as Albanian youth want to leave the country for better opportunities and better futures.

7. Indulgence

Hofstede has given Albania the score of 15 suggesting that the culture is restraint. Hofstede suggests that Albanians have a strong control over desires and do not prioritise time for leisure and this could be because of how they have been raised. However, statistics provided by the Republic of Albania Institute of statistics prove otherwise as it is stated that in 2018 Albanians travelling outbound increased by 4.4% and 59% of these departures were for leisure. These statistics contradict Hofstede's low score of 15 especially as outbound tourism is increasing within the country and more Albanians are going on leisure holidays.

8. Criticism

Hofstede's scores on the country of Albania seem to be accurate on evidence provided other than masculinity and indulgence. However, Hofstede's theory could be criticised for a variety of reasons. Firstly, Hofstede's culture definition could be challenged as he describes cultural differences as a nuisance. However, According to the World Tourism Organisation there were 1.4 billion international tourists who travelled in 2018 and wanted to experience the difference in culture rather than disagree over it. Furthermore, it is important to remember how Hofstede researched in order to gain the results. According to Majlergaard (2014), Hofstede's research was conducted on white, male, IBM employees in the 1960's. Therefore Hofstede's theory is outdated and lacks diversity not just on the individuals but within the workplace.

9. Conclusion

To conclude, Hofstede's theory may be accurate for a minority of cultures and values. However, the theory is not the most appropriate for intercultural communications and may result in an increase of ethnocentrism.

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