

Intercultural Competence Report

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Intercultural Competence Report



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Executive Summary

This report underscores the importance of the cultural and leadership dimensions of Morocco for the manager of 5* Diversity Hotel & Spa. As the hotel prepares for the grand opening of its new branch in Morocco, it becomes imperative to navigate the intricacies of the local culture. Morocco, an Islamic state with over 99% of its population adhering to the Islamic faith, derives its traditions, cultures, and beliefs from Islamic rulings. These factors significantly influence the local business environment, including aspects such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and more.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the relevant cultural dimensions and leadership expectations within the Moroccan context. The recommendations include greeting and initial interaction, building relationships, addressing gender inequalities, and recognising the importance of respecting authority, which aims to guide the manager in establishing a harmonious and culturally sensitive work environment in Morocco.

By adhering to these insights and recommendations, the manager is well-prepared to foster a productive and culturally aligned setting in this middle eastern state. This approach ensures the successful launch of the new hotel in Morocco, underscoring the report's role as a strategic blueprint for the manager to navigate the cultural landscape effectively, thus leading to the creation of a thriving business environment in a culturally rich and diverse city overseas.



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1. Introduction

As Diversity Hotel & Spa expands globally, recognising and respecting local cultures is crucial for success. This report delves into Morocco's cultural and leadership aspects, leveraging insights from the GLOBE Project's research. The report emphasises the importance of cultural intelligence in the hospitality industry, explores Morocco's cultural dimensions through the GLOBE Project, and concludes with recommendations.



2.Main Body

2.1 Cultural Intelligence and Sensitivity

Cultural intelligence and sensitivity are not merely a nicety but a strategic necessity for providing exceptional customer service, building a positive reputation, and staying competitive in a global market, (Christiansen, Branch, and Karmowska, 2020: Maheshkar and Sharma, 2018: Sharma, Singh, and Pathak, 2018).

They enable hotel personnel to serve a diverse customer base effectively, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty, (Christiansen, Branch, and Karmowska, 2020). Culturally intelligent staff can provide tailored and respectful customer service, anticipating preferences and needs, resulting in positive reviews and repeat business. Moreover, cultural awareness helps avoid misunderstandings, offence, and legal issues, by anticipating cultural preferences, dietary restrictions, and other requirements, making guests feel welcomed and valued, (Hofstede, 2011). Hotels excelling in cultural intelligence gain a competitive advantage, attracting a broader customer base and positioning themselves as establishments that value diversity, (Tipper, 2004). Additionally, cultural intelligence promotes a positive workplace culture and protects a hotel's brand reputation in the age of social media, (Jabbour et al. 2011).



2.2 Kingdom of Morocco: Maghrib al-Aqsa (The Western Kingdom)

FACTS	
Capital:	Rabat
Languages:	Arabic, Amazigh, plus Berber, French
Culture:	Blend of Arab, Berber, European and African influences
Religion:	Over 99% Muslims, rest Christians and Jews (expatriates)
Neighbours:	East- Algeria, West- Atlantic, North- Mediterranean
Life expectancy:	72 years (men) 76 years (women)
Population:	37.9 million
LEADERS	
King:	Mohammed VI
Prime minister:	Aziz Akhannouch

(BBC, 2023: Maroc.ac, 2023)

- Morocco, part of the Middle East cluster, borders Algeria to the East, Atlantic to the West, and Mediterranean to the North. Summers bring scorching desert winds, creating arid conditions, while the Atlantic coast enjoys a milder climate with refreshing Canaries breezes.
- Morocco operates as a constitutional monarchy, with a Parliament and judiciary system, although the King has ultimate authority, (Maroc.ma, 2023).
- Morocco's economy relies on agriculture, fishing, light industry, phosphates, tourism, and contributions from Moroccan expatriates working overseas, (ibid).
- Morocco is an Islamic State where “more than 99% of the population is Muslim”, (U.S. Department of State, 2023).
- Greetings are formal and warm with handshakes between same-gender or air kisses. Opposite genders avoid physical contact. Men wait for women to initiate a handshake, (Birtles, 2020).

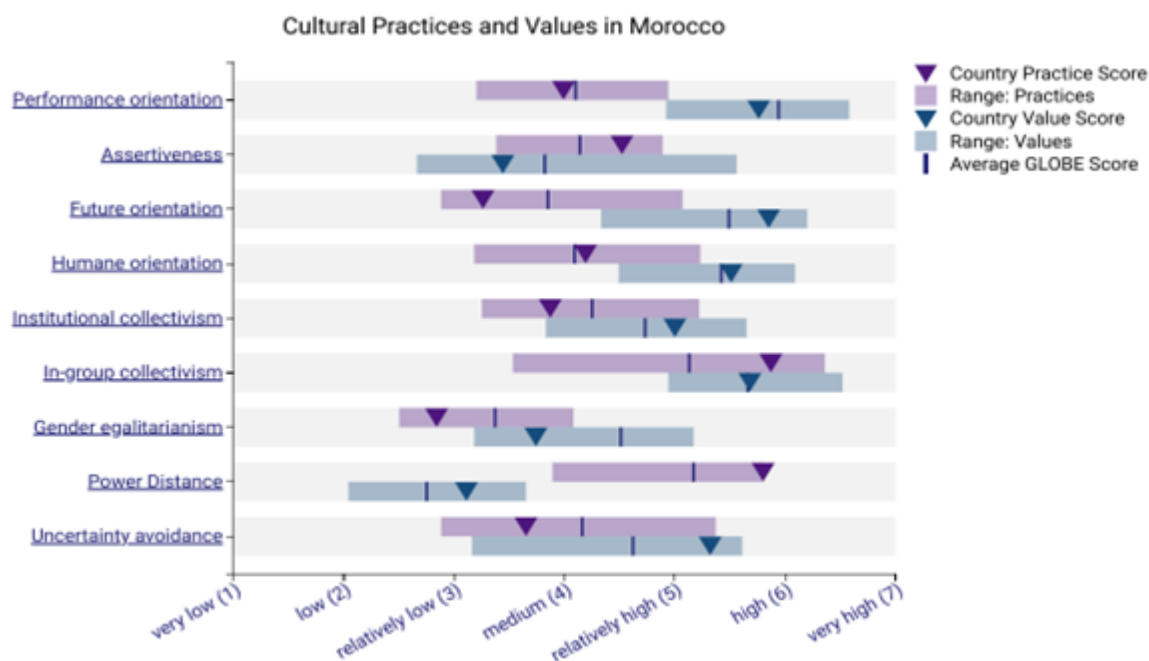


2.3 Country Analysis based on the GLOBE Project

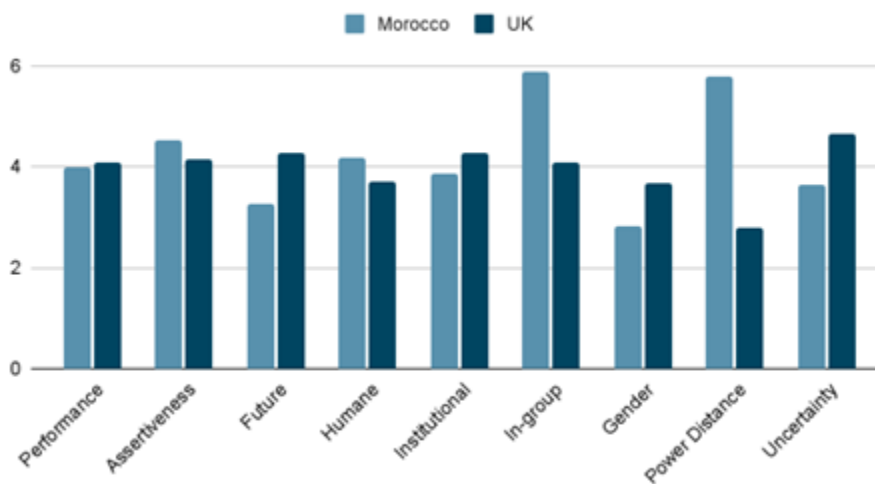
The GLOBE Project, led by Robert House in 2004, is a significant cross-cultural communication study, delving into the impact of cultural differences and organisational culture on leadership processes, via nine cultural dimensions. In contrast, Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions model (2011), featuring six dimensions, is another famous framework, offering broader perspectives on societal and national cultural values.



Cultural Practices and Values in Morocco according to the GLOBE Project:



Cultural Practice Comparisons between Morocco and UK



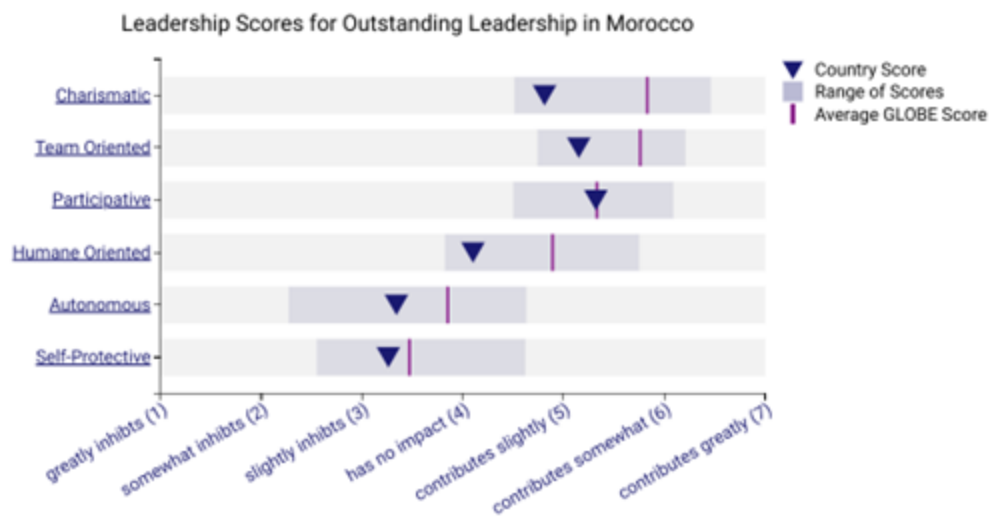
Morocco's score on performance orientation, indicates a strong work ethic and a pursuit of excellence, similar to United-Kingdom. In terms of future orientation, Morocco prioritises the present and immediate future over long-term planning, influenced by Islamic principles "tawakkul" (Islamic-relief.org.uk, 2023). This perspective shapes attitudes towards the future, indicating a preference for stability and established norms. Morocco's scores on Humane Orientation, Institutional Collectivism, and In-Group Collectivism, resonates with Islamic principles "zakat" (Islamic-relief.org.uk, 2023; Lahjouji and Rouggani, 2016), underscoring empathy, charity and support for others. They reflect a strong commitment to collective efforts and responsibility, where institutions and organisations play a pivotal role in fostering societal cohesiveness. This orientation extends to the significance placed on family and close social bonds within Moroccan society, resulting in minimal presence of elderly care-homes in Morocco, (Misachi, 2018). In contrast, United-Kingdom scores lower in these groups, reflecting a more individualistic society.

Morocco's gender-egalitarianism score suggests traditional gender roles and inequalities, despite Islamic beliefs promoting gender equity, (Errazzouki, 2014; Islamic-relief.org.uk, 2023). According to Moroccan law, children belong to their fathers. In contrast, United-Kingdom scores higher on gender-egalitarianism, indicating a progressive approach to gender equality.

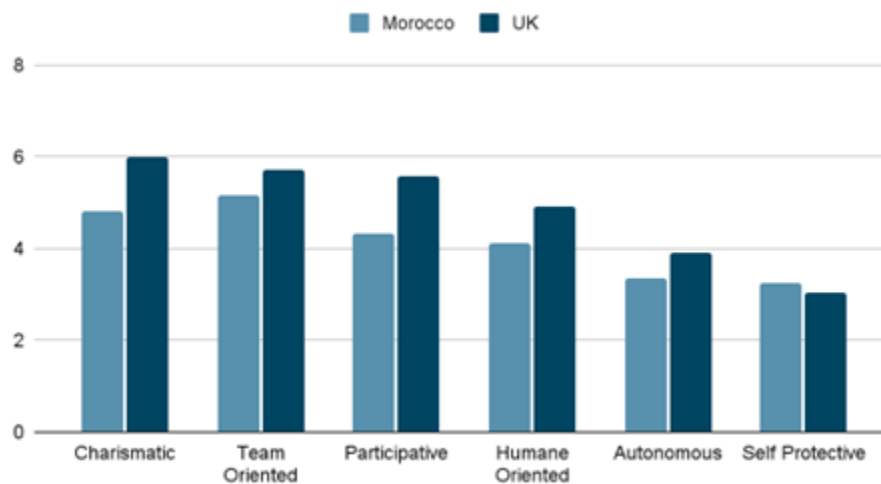
Morocco exhibits a high-power distance, accepting hierarchy and centralised authority. This aligns with Moroccan cultural and traditional norms influenced by Islamic principles that respect authority and leadership, with clear expectations for those in higher positions. Contrastingly, United-Kingdom reflects preferences for minimising inequalities and treating individuals equally.



Leadership Styles in Morocco according to the GLOBE Project:



Leadership Style Scores comparisons between Morocco and UK:



Leadership styles in both Morocco and the UK feature charismatic and value-based elements, emphasising inspiration and leading by example with a strong integration of moral and ethical values. Demonstrate a participative and humane-oriented leadership, valuing input from subordinates, underscoring the importance of a caring and empathetic approach that fosters strong social bonds within the organisation.

Despite the emphasis on participation, leaders in Morocco maintain autonomy and make final decisions when necessary. Additionally, low self-protective score suggests that leaders may exhibit behaviours, which focus on the preservation and protection of their interests.



3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this report underscores the paramount importance of cultural intelligence and sensitivity in preparing the manager for training hotel personnel in Morocco, a country where cultural dynamics are intricately intertwined with Islamic principles. Drawing insights from the GLOBE Project, the report illuminates fundamental cultural characteristics such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism within the local business landscape.

The recommendations presented, encompassing Greeting and Initial Interaction, Building Relationships, Gender Inequalities, and Respect for Authority, provide a strategic framework for the manager to navigate this cultural journey effectively. By embracing these insights and implementing the recommendations, the manager is well-positioned to establish a harmonious and culturally sensitive work environment in Morocco that aligns with both local customs and Islamic guidance.



4.Recommendations

1. Greeting and Initial Interaction:

- Warm handshakes are generally appropriate, with colleagues of the same gender. When interacting with the opposite gender, wait for them to initiate a handshake.
- Use common courtesy phrase, "Asalamu-alaykum" (Peace be upon you) as a greeting. Respond with "Wa-alaykum-asalam" (And upon you be peace) when greeted.
- Show a genuine interest. Inquire about their well-being, families, and any special occasions or events recently celebrated.

2. Building Relationships:

- In building relationships within the workplace, consider the daily schedule of the five prayers and the significance of Islamic events like Ramadan (Islamic-relief.org.uk. 2023).
- Foster a team-oriented approach, placing emphasis on collaboration and teamwork. Ensure accessibility and receptiveness to feedback, promoting an environment where personnel feel encouraged to express their ideas and concerns, in line with the principles of participative leadership.

3. Gender Inequalities:

- Maintain vigilant awareness of gender dynamics within the workplace, acknowledging the potential for inequalities. Advocate for a forward-thinking stance on gender equality. Recognise that while Islam encourages female empowerment and equity, these principles may intersect with cultural beliefs. Aspire to discern and champion gender equality in alignment with both Islamic values and modern ideals.

4. Respect for Authority:

- Recognise that in Moroccan culture, high regard for authority and hierarchy is emphasised, so if staff maintains a formal distance, it should not be interpreted as a lack of warmth or friendliness but rather as a sign of cultural respect, (Maroc.ac, 2023).



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Appendices



(Yahoo Travel, 2023)



Prime minister: Aziz Akhannouch (Maroc.ma, 2023)



King: Mohammed VI (Maroc.ma, 2023)



Comparisons between Morocco and the United Kingdom using Hofstede's dimensions

	Morocco
	United Kingdom



(The Culture Factor, 2023)



Some dates may vary slightly as they are determined by the lunar calendar.

List of Religious Holidays of Islam in 2024

DAY	DATE	HOLIDAY
Wednesday	Feb 07, 2024	Lailat al Miraj
Sunday	Feb 25, 2024	Lailat al Bara'ah
Monday	Mar 11, 2024	Ramadan (start)
Saturday	Apr 06, 2024	Laylat al Qadr
Wednesday	Apr 10, 2024	Eid-al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)
Saturday	Jun 15, 2024	Waqf al Arafa - Hajj
Sunday	Jun 16, 2024	Eid-al-Adha
Sunday	Jul 07, 2024	Hijra - Islamic New Year
Wednesday	Jul 17, 2024	Day of Ashura / Muharram
Monday	Sep 16, 2024	Milad un Nabi

The Islamic 5 daily prayers

- Fajr (prayed at dawn)
- Dhuhr (prayed at midday)
- Asr (prayed in the afternoon)
- Maghrib (prayed at sunset)
- Isha (prayed at night)

Times are dictated by local time of the city one is praying in.

(Islamic-relief.org.uk, 2023)



