International and Intercultural Communication

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Six cultural dimensions by Hofstede is the most eminent framework to distinguish between different cultures globally. These dimensions comprise individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, indulgence, and power distance (Hofstede, 2009). This paper seeks to analyze the cultural differences and similarities between Germany and the United States based on Hofstede's framework of six cultural dimensions.

# Comparison and Contrast

The first dimension of power distance helps to understand the level of differences in power distribution and acceptance of these differences by less powerful. Both the countries, the US and Germany score low on the dimension of power distance as revealed by the scores, 40 and 35. It can be inferred from the scores; both nations promote and encourage cooperation and participative communication than control and competition. Likewise, Germany and the US share a relatively similar score on the dimension of masculinity. Masculine cultures emphasize assertiveness, competition, and material success. The US scores 62 on this dimension while Germany scores 66 and hence both cultures promote competition, accomplishment, and success. The typical American school system also exhibits this behavior where competition begins at the school level. Success is a great motivator and one is always encouraged to perform best.

The third dimension of individualism vs collectivism shows a contrasting picture. The US has a very high score of 91 while Germany scores 67 in individualism. Individual goals and objectives hold a high significance in American culture, though both nations share the ideal of self-actualization, US shows a relatively high individualistic culture (Zha, Walczyk, Griffith-Ross, Tobacyk, & Walczyk, 2006). The family system is Germany also stems from the individualistic culture and the joint family system is not encouraged rather smaller families are preferred. Uncertainty avoidance is reflective of risk-taking behavior and inclination towards the innovation of members of society. Here Americans score less than Germany i.e. 46 as compared to 65. Americans are always welcoming to new ideas and show a high degree of acceptance when it comes to innovation and something different and novel. Germans show a contrasting behavior in this regard.

The dimensions of long-term orientation and indulgence also reveal a distinctive attitude. The US is rated very low on the dimension of long-term orientation i.e. 26 while Germany scores 83. This infers that Germans are ready to hang on a situation; they are very pragmatic. On the other hand, Americans have a can-do attitude and stress on short term results. The dimension of indulgence deals with the gratification of human drives. Here Americans show a high score of 68 while Germans show a relatively low score of 40. Germans are not inclined towards fun and leisure activities like Americans; they are restraint in nature.

Recommendations to Business Organizations

An understanding of cultural differences and similarities helps managers and employees of business organizations participating in global trade and business partnerships. In the case of Germany and the US, a lot of cultural similarities have been observed, thus if organizations participate in business dealing, a little consideration has to be made by managers. Managers can consider immediate families of Germans when it comes to relocation decisions. Training pertaining to dimensions that show a high cultural difference alongside cross-communication training can also be helpful in this regard (Zakaria, 2000). Germans may withdraw from business deals involving high risks owing to their low risk-taking attitude. In such cases, effective communication can play a significant role. Managers of both organizations ought to consider cultural differences in indulgence and long-term orientation while making decisions. Patience and effective communication are pivotal since Americans seek short-term quick results and responses while Germans take their time in planning and making decisions.

# References

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