Culture Work Preference Paper

[Author Name(s), First M. Last, Omit Titles and Degrees]

[Institutional Affiliation(s)]

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Geert Hofstede, the Dutch academic provided a framework to model the difference between the nations based on culture. The popular five dimensions of culture comprise Individualism versus Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity versus Femininity, Long-Term Orientation, Power Distance, and indulgence (Hofstede, 2009). According to him, the organizational members share a system defined as the organizational culture. After his unique research, he was able to distinguish between the cultures of different nations. Later one more dimension was added to the five dimensions of culture i.e. indulgence. Sometimes personal preferences may differ from the national culture, but generally huge differences are not observed. Here is an outlook on the five key dimensions given by Hofstede along with the personal preferences in each dimension.

The first dimension is the power distance, emphasize the degree to which power distribution is done on the equality principles, and the degree to which such distribution is accepted by the people of society. A society where high power distance culture is preferred is characterized by hierarchical bureaucracies and high respect for authorities. On the other hand, the culture opposite to that favors autonomy and responsibility. Since everybody is unique in a society, and there is a probability that the cultural preferences of one are different from that of the whole society. As part of reflecting on personal preference in terms of power distance, I prefer a decentralized working environment where employees are empowered and everyone takes part in decision making.

In addition, I believe a good working environment offers some level of autonomy of decision making to each individual (Mulki, Caemmerer, & Heggde, 2015). In this way, every individual is involved in the decisions taken by an organization. The cultural preference has a huge impact on the behavior in an organization and how others perceive one as an organizational member. Being an advocate of a decentralized culture and empowered environment, I always try to incorporate my ideas in my work. I want others to give importance to my opinion and I never refrain from making a constructive addition to the work I am required to do. For instance, if I were assigned a report to compile, I would always strive to do my best putting my knowledge and expertise. In my organization, I am generally perceived competent due to this behavior, except for those people who like to simply take orders and please bosses.

The second dimension is uncertainty avoidance, which deals with the degree to which people of a society are willing to take the risk (Hofstede, 2009). The society low on the scores of uncertainty avoidance prefers a high level of standardization. I always prefer and encourage calculated risks. Though I have a fair degree of acceptance for novel ideas I believe in taking calculated risks and I am sometimes anxious about unknown situations and unknown outcomes of decisions. Fear of unknown plays a part in my decisions and hence I evaluate all the aspects before reaching a conclusion. American society is generally scored low on this dimension which means they are daring, risk-takers and always willing to welcome new ideas or innovations. Taking calculated risk is a good approach in business decisions, and I never try to hesitate in making well-informed decisions whether it is about doing a job or a small decision as part of my work routine. This attitude is not all the time appreciated since our society believes avoiding risks makes one settle for ordinary.

The third dimension of Individualism versus Collectivism is based on the idea, degree to which members of a society prefers self-interests over their collective interests. Group needs and preferences are important than personal needs, and on the contrary free will is favored in the individual culture. It also impacts what role state has to play in the matters of the nation. American culture is one of the most individualist cultures, and people do not rely a lot on others for support. Self-interests are preferred over group-interests, however, I find myself a little low individualistic culture. I believe that the success and achievement of the group is the success of the individual belonging to that group, but the individual interests must not be hurt over group interests. Same goes with a person working in an organization, organizational goals must be proffered to the personal goals. Such an attitude has resulted in good relationships with the peers and bosses and mostly other organizational members also perceive this behavior as admirable.

The next dimension deals with the masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is associated with liking for heroism, accomplishment, assertiveness and material reward for success (Hofstede, 2009). On the other hand, femininity is linked with modesty, cooperation, quality of life. My value system also supports the idea of competition, achievement and success. Success is a high motivator for me and I also “live to work” to get success in whatever I do, but I prefer not to attain success based on inequality and bias. Achievement and accomplishment give a sense of pride and also improves one standing in an organization. Others perceive one as diligent and it also improved my working relationship with others, since they liked to work with me when I attained the title of being the best employee based on monthly performance. I believe it also encourages one to behave in accordance with the work demands and job requirements efficiently.

The last dimension is long-term vs short-term orientation. A society characterized by the long-term orientation focuses on the forward-thinking values and embraces long-term devotion. Long-term rewards and relationships are expected in such societies. On the other hand, a short-term oriented society relies on quick turnaround. Employees in such societies also change their jobs more frequently. I am very practical when it comes to decision making, but I always consider the short-term results of my actions. I believe in striving for the quick results and outcomes of decisions in my personal and professional life. Such an approach encourages one to work best to obtain quick results and outcomes. Eventually, it creates a behavior of being a workaholic, working hard to obtain the optimal results. Other organizational members also consider such a person competent and overachiever.

One more dimension has been added to the model and that is termed as an indulgence (Hofstede, 2011). This emphasizes a free culture, in which one does everything as per choice and what feels good to him or her. Opposite to that is a restrained culture. Cultural preferences and norms play a huge role in interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Hofstede cultural dimension is a guide on developing an understanding of the culture of different dimensions. Furthermore, knowledge of these dimensions helps understand the national and organizational cultural values in contrast to one’s own. I believe the strengths and weaknesses of each of my preferences for each cultural dimension differs from situation to situation. Each situation must be analyzed carefully can leverage the strength of my own preferences and reduce the weaknesses associated with it. Moreover, relying merely on personal preferences in case of decision making in each scenario may not be helpful. Careful and informed decisions can reduce any risks and can enhance the probability of positive outcomes.

# References

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