# Hofstede’s Cultural Analysis: Japan, Ghana, and the United States

Hofstede uses a set of six dimensions, which he views as a standard measure since they can be mainly visible in all cultural settings. The dimensions, which he ranks within a scale of 1-100 demystifies the workings of all cultures. For instance, there is power distance; an aspect that captures how people view the fairness or lack thereof regarding the distribution of wealth. Secondly, there is the dimension of the unification of culture. Here the focus is on either individualism or collectivism. It is a concept that revolves around the ‘WE’ or ‘I’ mentality. Then, there is the issue of gender and the attitude and roles that people apportion either gender. Also, uncertainty is also a critical dimension of the framework as it defines liberalism and conservativeness. On the other hand, Hofstede introduced both the long-term and short-term dimensions. The scale measures the responsiveness of people towards innovations. Finally, the theory invokes the indulgence versus restraint dimension where humans respond to needs through either enjoyment or control. The six dimensions are intertwined since they influence each other. The present paper offers a comparative analysis of Japan, United States, and Ghana using the Hofstede framework.

## Japan, United States, and Ghana

The United States, Japan, and Ghana form a relatively different and diverse cultural formation considering that the countries come from the American, Asian, and African continents respectively. Both Japan and Ghana are highly masculine countries. Often, the countries employ stringent values albeit from different dimensions (Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Boyle, 2013). In Ghana, for instance, the character can be attributed to the gender roles and the fact that the society is generally patriarchal. As such, men are expected to be assertive while women are apportioned lighter duties – such as domestic roles (Hofstede, 2010). The United States paints quite a contrary picture on that dimension. Notably, the feminist movement has its roots there. Consequently, the gender roles in the United States are flexible.

Both men and women care about the quality of life and can switch familial roles while working. However, based on their history of liberty and cultural teachings, the case countries are different as regards individualism and collectivism (Yang et al., 2016). In Ghana, for instance, due to the influences of the Ubuntu and Pan African cultures, people often assume collectiveness. Similarly, Japan takes the stance perhaps due to the Confucian teachings of the East (Hofstede, 2010). The United States, on the other hand, has continually exhibited individualism. However, unlike Ghana, the US challenges inequalities since there is almost absolute freedom of expression. High power distances depend on the democratic nature of the society. The US thus tops on that category.

It is apparent that culture and tradition play a critical role in influencing how business is conducted. For instance, using the Hofstede framework, one can manage to understand the Japanese traditions, which largely influence the business environment (Yang et al., 2016). An understanding of the existence of the traditions helps expatriates familiarize with the territory. The Hofstede theory is critical in shaping the ethical values during the conduct of international business. The United States, for instance, exhibits individualism on a higher scale than their Japanese counterparts do (Hofstede, 2010). Using the dimensions of uncertainty avoidance, higher power distance, and masculinity, the US scores lower than both Ghana and Japan. However, that does not necessary place the US in a lower ethical hierarchy. Thus, history and tradition becomes the major determinant of the differences.

The conduct of business in the three countries differs significantly. While the Japanese are consciously aware of the status differences, the Americans are relatively indifferent of the values (Yang et al., 2016). Most people in the American society strive to establish interpersonal equality regardless of the status and position. However, in a country like Ghana, classes are very distinct and elaborate. Most of the heads are educated males and relatively the rules of equality, although existent are not strictly followed. A significant distinction in roles, behaviors, and responsibilities exists in both Japan and Ghana unlike in the US (Robbins et al., 2013). Thus, traditions in the US have created an environment for horizontal interactions, while in Japan and Ghana vertical ones are present.

## Conclusion

Therefore, the history of the country has a significant influence on their culture. The Hofstede’s dimensions form a standard and practical framework that is applicable in all cultures. The scale offers a comprehensive insight into how business people can understand the cultural values of people within various countries. The United States, for instance, is a pro-liberal country where either gender can assume any role. Ghana and Japan are somehow different from the US since they engender strict roles, which are ideally assigned to the males. Besides, the two countries demonstrate collectivism unlike the US, which ranks as more individualistic. The characteristics are rooted in the historical influence of the country – both religious and political. Ultimately, scrutiny of the Hofstede framework offers an interpretive and insightful understanding of people.

## References

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