

## Motivation and leadership in different cultures

The experiment done by Geert Hofstede shows that environmental conditioning does affect people in ways of perceiving an object. It implied that how strong the environment factors influenced the ways of thinking among people from different cultures.

(Geert Hofstede, 1980) defines culture as the collective mental programming of the people in an environment. This definition emphasizes the people who share the same education and life experience. Here culture is a concept that describes collective not individual characteristic. And the mental programming is unique so that it can be separated from other groups'.

One reason why cultures are seldom change is that it crystallized in the institutions people have built, such as structures of family, organization, religion and government etc.

According to Geert Hofstede's research, national culture can be described by four criteria: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism-Collectivism, and Masculinity-Femininity.

Power Distance measures the degree of inequality of power distribution in organizations.

Uncertainty Avoidance shows the extent to which the society can tolerate uncertain situations and tries to avoid them by taking some corresponding measures.

Individualism-Collectivism indicates the relationships between people and their family members. They are called loose and tight social frameworks.

Masculinity-Femininity dimension measures the extent to which the dominant social values are labeled masculinity or femininity.

Geert Hofstede's research suggests that large power distance associates closely with collectivism, while small power distance often relates with individualism. His survey also shows that Small Power Distance and Individualism go together with greater national wealth. The relationship between Individualism and Wealth is quite strong.

Now use the Hofstede framework to analyze two typical nations: the United States and Japan. Though the United States and Japan are both wealthy countries that feature similar democratic institutions, the two countries have significant different cultures.

On Power Distance .the United States is below average level, that means its society is comparatively equals in the field of power distribution.

On Uncertainty Avoidance .it is weak, which suggests the society is capable of coping with high level of uncertainty.

On Individualism, it is the single most individualist country among the counties surveyed.

On Masculinity .it is well above average.

Japan culture is a combination of large power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and masculinity dimensions.

Different theories about motivation: Sigmund Frued theory about unconscious forces. McClelland's theory (we perform because we have a need to achieve), Maslow has postulated a hierarchy of human needs, from more "basic" to "higher".Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation distinguishes between hygienic factors and motivators. Vroomhas formalized the role of "expectancy" in motivation.

Different leadership theories

Machiavelli (1468-1527) described certain effective techniques for manipulation.

In the United States there are Theory X versus Theory Y and System 4 management and so on.

Geert Hofstede used his framework to explain the different managerial theories. Take an example,

Geert Hofstede pointed out that it is the Austria culture featuring high uncertainty avoidance that forms frued's theory about motivation. Geert Hofstede also used it to explain the popularity of expectation theory in the United States.

His research method enables us to think the different theories of motivation, leadership and organization in the general culture environment.

Regardless of the effectiveness of Geert Hofstede's framework which was used to explain the differences between managerial theories. It does remind us of the culture factors when considering introduce a new theory that works well in one culture into another new environment. Managers should know that a theory works well in western countries will fail in eastern countries like China , Japan and India. General speaking, the cultures of these countries feature large power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and Masculinity. The western cultures have the opposite characteristics.

So for the managers from multinational companies, analyzing the four dimensions in the targeted markets will be important for the company's success in the global context.

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