**Hofstede’s national cultures**

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| **Meet the author** |
| Geert Hofstede was born in 1928 and is a Dutch organisational psychologist. He graduated from Delft University of Technology with a degree in Mechanical Engineering before obtaining a PhD in Psychology from the University of Groningen in 1967. He became Professor of Comparative Culture Studies of Organisations at Maastricht University and is currently Professor Emeritus at the university. |

‘Culture is the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others’

*Source: http://geert-hofstede.com*

Professor Geert Hofstede designed and implemented one of the largest and most comprehensive studies ever undertaken to discover how employee values in the workplace are influenced by national culture. His study involved over 100,000 employees of IBM, the computer company. He began his study in 1967 and completed it in 1973. In total, the data covered over 70 countries, although Hofstede only used the data from 40 counties with the largest data sets. Later in the study, the range of countries was widened to 50.

**Dimensions of national culture**

The values that differentiate people by national culture are classified into four sub-groups:

* Power distance
* Individualism versus collectivism
* Masculinity versus femininity
* Uncertainty avoidance

Later research, undertaken by other academics, has added to this list, including:

* Long-term orientation (Michael Harris Bond, 1991)
* Pragmatic versus normative (Michael Minkov, 2010)
* Indulgence versus restraint (based on Michael Minkov’s analysis, 2010)

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| Hofstede’s original four dimensions |
| **Dimension** | **Explanation** |
| Power distance | The degree to which the less powerful in society are willing to accept that the power is distributed unequally. Therefore, this dimension examines how society handles inequalities amongst the indigenous population.  |
| Individualism versus collectivism | Individualism looks at a situation where individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families. Collectivism represents a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular group to look after them. |
| Masculinity versus femininity | Masculinity represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards. Femininity suggests a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. |
| Uncertainty avoidance | This measures the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainly and ambiguity. |

**Further reading**

http://geert-hofstede.com/

www.geerthofstede.nl/