

МІЖКУЛЬТУРНІ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ І СУЧАСНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ У ДІЛОВОМУ СПІЛКУВАННІ

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HOFSTEDE'S THEORY OF CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions is a useful starting point for researchers interested in exploring national cultures. According to Hofstede et al (2010), culture is 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another'.

In his theory of cultural dimensions, the Dutch sociologist proposed a set of indicators that determine the cultural characteristics of different peoples. The study consisted of a survey of a large number of employees of a transnational corporation in more than 100 countries in terms of their attitude to work and behavior in the workplace. As a result, five indicators were formulated, according to which the researcher distinguished cultures:

- 1) power distance (low to high);
- 2) isolation (collectivism – individualism);
- 3) assertiveness (masculinity – femininity);
- 4) avoidance of uncertainty (aversion to uncertainty);
- 5) strategic thinking (short-term or long-term orientation towards the future) [1].

Power distance is defined as 'the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally' (Hofstede et al, 2010). People in large power distance societies accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place that needs no further justification. Those in small power distance societies strive for power equalization and demand justification for power inequalities.

Individualism pertains to 'societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty' (Hofstede et al, 2010, p. 92). The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among individuals.

Uncertainty avoidance is defined as 'the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations' (Hofstede et al, 2010, p. 191). Strong uncertainty avoidance societies maintain rigid codes of belief and

behavior and are intolerant towards deviant persons and ideas, but weak uncertainty avoidance societies maintain a more relaxed atmosphere in which practice counts more than principles and deviance is more easily tolerated

Masculinity stands for 'a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life' (Hofstede et al, 2010, p.297). Femininity, as the opposite of masculinity, stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap.

Indulgence has been added as a new dimension. The high indulgence society's people can freely fulfill their basic needs and desires as there are no strict social norms. On the other hand, restraint societies have stricter social norms and the gratifications of drives are suppressed and regulated.

However, in his articles, Hofstede emphasized that his measurements are not a ready-made recipe or formula, but only a concept for further development. They are an analytical tool for understanding intercultural differences and can be useful if used rationally. The international business is intensively developing, which is related to the management of people and groups from other cultures. The management of multinational companies can use the insights from Hofstede and his followers to understand the meaning of cultural differences they face in practice. Measurements are also a convenient method for identifying the cultural characteristics of a particular organization or country. For example, if a country has a high femininity index, this means that its residents value good relations with their boss and colleagues, living in a place convenient for themselves and their families, and safe work. Knowing these differences helps to avoid management conflicts and improve performance.

References:

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