



## Compare and Contrast Essay: Full Writing Guide

### Comparison Between the United Kingdom and China

Different countries across the world have diverse cultural practices, and this has an effect on work relationships and development. Geert Hofstede came up with a structured way of comparing cultural dimensions of different countries. The theory explains the impacts of a community's culture on the values of the community members, and the way these values relate to their behaviors. He gives scores as a way to help distinguish people from different nations using the following dimensions: long-term orientation, individualism, power distance, indulgence, necessity avoidance, and masculinity. Let us examine comparisons between two countries: the United Kingdom and China — based on Hofstede's Six Dimensions of Culture.

#### **Power Distance**

Power distance refers to the level in which individuals with less power, working in a given organization or institutions in a state, accept or expect that power is not equally distributed. The dimension insinuates that people are not equal. Consequently, it indicates cultural attitudes about the inequalities among individuals (Hofstede, 2011). There is a broad gap in Power Distance levels between the United Kingdom and China. The UK has a score of 35, while China has a high of 80. If you are not aware, the lower the number the better. As reinforced by the study, it suggests that most individuals in the UK believe people should be treated equally within society. There, it is believed that this is a good quality to have, as it enhances good performance; people, especially those with less power, get a chance to actively participate within their firms — and are well-respected. Contrarily, Chinese citizens believe that those in authority should get special respect and attention.

The Chinese system may seem to have its benefits, but it has some adverse effects — especially on the performance of a company. Employees have no chance to



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speak freely, or to participate in decision-making procedures. Additionally, organizations in China do not challenge any form of abuse of power, as the powerless are perceived to have no voice and are not expected to do any task beyond their rank.

#### **Individualism**

Individualism implies the extent of interdependence between a community and its members. This dimension explains whether people act as individuals or work as groups. In individualist communities, members are expected to value themselves and their families only, not other members of their community. On the other hand, Collectivism is a scenario whereby members of a society work in consideration and with the opinion of the group, regardless of whether they have a close blood relationship (Hofstede, 2011). They act in a way that shows their loyalty to the group.

China has an individualism score of 20, which means that the individuals are more collectivists than individualists. They act in line with the interests of a group, not just individuals'. Collectivism has adverse effects on promotion and hiring, since collectivists consider the ideas of team members, or consider them when hiring or promoting, more frequently. Additionally, a Chinese employee is likely to have little employee commitment to the firm. Instead, they value relationships more than their given tasks, which leads to the poor performance of their business firms (Greif & Tabellini, 2010). On the other hand, the United Kingdom has an individualism score of 89. This implies that most people in the country act more with regard to their personal thoughts. Many believe that personal fulfillment is the key to their happiness. Therefore, the people of this country are more oriented towards the achievement of their own individual goals, which is a good quality in reference to job performance.



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#### **Masculinity**

This dimension specifies whether a community is driven by competition, success, and the achievement of goals, or by the need to care for other members of their society and ensure a good quality of life. In this case, a high score indicates competitive behaviours, while a low score indicates a lack of drive. In a nutshell, this dimension focuses on how motivated people are in a society (Hofstede, 2011).

Both the United Kingdom and China have a masculinity score of 66. This reveals that individuals in both countries are success oriented. In both nations, the citizens are willing to sacrifice leisure and family for work, and they are satisfied when they succeed. It is a popular practice among cultures, as it helps in the quick development of the country — and it applies in all sectors. Both the young in schools and the adults at work strive to do their best.

#### **Uncertainty Avoidance**

Uncertainty avoidance refers to the level in which people fear what is in the future — as the future is unknown at present. People high on the uncertainty avoidance scale therefore come up with beliefs that attempt to evade this fear. The dimension explains how societies handle the fact that what is in the future is not known, whether they have an idea of how to control unknown situations, or they have just let things happen.

The United Kingdom qualifies for a score of 35 in uncertainty avoidance, while China has a score of 30. This means that the level at which UK citizens fear the ambiguity of what the future holds is lower than in China. Chinese, to some extent, try to avoid risks in the present so that the future will be better than today (Greif & Tabellini, 2010). This is similar to the United Kingdom, whereby they also prefer to develop new



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plans with the rise of an issue. However, the scores give an implication that individuals in the UK may not perform as well at work, as they are not as detail oriented planners as the Chinese. Additionally, they cannot forecast as effectively.

#### **Long-term Orientation**

This dimension explains whether a society considers their past experiences when addressing present challenges. A low score, in this case, indicates a normative culture, which prefers to maintain traditions and use the previous procedures to solve their current problems. On the other hand, a high score indicates a pragmatic community, one which promotes the use of new efforts with advanced education to address their current challenges (Hofstede, 2011). China has a high score of 87, while the UK has an average rating of 51. This implies that Chinese people depend more on advanced procedures to solve their present problems than the United Kingdom. In this case, Chinese workers are likely to perform well at work because they have more of an opportunity to be increasingly at the forefront of new innovations than individuals from the UK.

#### **Indulgence**

Indulgence refers to the level at which people attempt to regulate their impulses and desires within a consumerist society. Less ability to control is known as indulgence, whereas a stronger capability of regulating desires and impulses is referred to as restraint (Hofstede, 2011). In this case, the UK has a higher indulgence score of 69, while China has a low score of 24. This indicates that China is more of a restraint society, while the UK is composed of a more indulgent community. People in the United Kingdom believe that they should have fun and enjoy life, and so they engage in more leisurely activities — of which they spend much of their finances on. Therefore, it is safe



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to assume that citizens of the UK are more likely to work harder to earn extra money for entertainment and to fulfill their desires.

Hofstede's Six Dimensions of Culture helps to identify how societies differ. From our discussion, it is clear that the two countries – the United Kingdom and China – have notable differences in the five dimensions: individualism, power distance, long term orientation, indulgence, and uncertainty avoidance. Both countries have similar scores in the masculinity dimension. In both cases, citizens of both countries and cultures are success oriented. These different dimensions show the different effects on an individual's performance and the general development of their nations.

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Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online readings in psychology and culture*, 2(1), 8.