

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Individualism and Collectivism

This dimension identifies the ways in which people of a society relate to each other, in living arrangements, decision making processes and values. Some societies, such as the U.S., strongly value the individual. We value making our own personal choices about what we study, what we say, what religion we practice, and how we choose to live. This does not mean that family and communities are not important, but we are personally responsible to make decisions for ourselves that we believe best meet our own needs. There are other cultures that put much more emphasis on the group. The decisions one makes are made with the group in mind. What major you take in college may be taken because it is something that is needed in your country, for instance. In some of those cultures, shame is a concept that is learned from childhood and drives behavioral traits within the individual. "[M]any Asians will do everything in their power not to show any negative emotions or feelings for fear of going against the cultural norm of collectivism. Anger, disappointment, sadness, and issues related to shame such as poor grades, relational difficulties, bankruptcy, sexual issues, and addictions remain hidden in secrecy and shame" (Louie).

Classroom Implications (Hofstede, p. 237)

Collectivism	Individualism
(Much of Asia and Africa)	(United States)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers deal with pupils as a group • Pupils' individual initiatives discouraged • Students associate according to preexisting in-group ties • Students expect preferential treatment by teachers from their in-group • Harmony, saving face, and shaming may be expected in class • Students may not speak up in class or large groups • Purpose of education is learning how to do • Diplomas provide entry to higher-status groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers deal with individual pupils • Pupils' individual initiatives encouraged • Students associate according to tasks and current needs • In-group membership no reason to expect preferential treatment • Students expect to be respected • Students expected to speak up in class or large groups • Purpose of education is learning how to think • Diplomas increase economic worth and/or self-respect

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. 3rd Edition. USA: McGraw-Hill