

Culture and Nonverbal Communication

Definition of culture

- Code: systems of symbols, rules, meanings, beliefs, values, and images of the ideal. It is a world view or source of order
- Conversation: patterns of verbal and nonverbal interactions
- Community: grouping, shared identities, sense of membership, who “we” are.
- Example: Eastern European Jewish American
 - Code: Hebrew/Yiddish, Knowledge, religion
 - Conversation: expressive, aggressive, politics
 - Community: Temple, other Jews
 - Practice: holidays, kosher food
- Example: PSU Cultures

Dimensions of Culture

Power Distance

- *Expectations about power distribution: who has it, who doesn't*
 - Low Power Distance
 - Expect equality among people
 - High Power Distance
 - Expect inequalities among people
- *US now has large power distances*
 - Growing gap between (super) rich and everyone else
 - Pay for top executives versus other workers
- *Nonverbal communication*
 - Office and home size
 - Rights to touch and be touched
 - High power people are looked at more

Dimensions of Culture

Uncertainty

- *How threatened members of a culture feel by unknown or uncertain situations.*
 - Strong Uncertainty Avoidance
 - Different is dangerous
 - Weak Uncertainty Avoidance
 - Different is curious
- *Nonverbal communication*
 - How cultures treat silence – high uncertainty cultures react to uncertainty with silence
 - Rigidity of rules such as greeting rituals and dress

Dimensions of Culture

Role Differentiation

How rigid are a culture's expectations about social roles such as gender?

- Femininity
 - Gender roles overlap
 - Women and Men may share roles
 - The eight countries highest in feminine values, respectively, are Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Chile, Portugal, and Thailand, all Scandinavian or South American cultures with exception of Thailand.
- Masculinity
 - Distinct social roles based on gender
 - Women have specific characteristics as do men
 - The nine countries with the highest masculinity index scores, respectively, are Japan, Australia, Venezuela, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico, Ireland, Great Britain, and Germany. These countries lie in Central Europe and the Caribbean, with the exception of Japan.

Dimensions of Culture

Role Differentiation.2

- *Nonverbal communication*
 - Occupational status of teacher, nurse, housewife, judge, coach, executive
 - Ability to interact with members of the “opposite” sex (e.g., in Saudi Arabia and Iran)
 - Androgyny/Metrosexual – link to esteem, health, competence

Dimensions of Culture

Individualism - Collectivism

How does a culture balance the needs of the individual and the group?

- Individualism (Western cultures)
 - Cultures expect members to look out for themselves and their immediate families.
 - The nine most individualistic (respectively) were the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Italy, Belgium, and Denmark, all of which are Western or European countries.
- Collectivism (Eastern and tribal cultures)
 - Cultures expect members to be a part of a strong cohesive group, that they remain loyal to for life.
 - The ten least individualistic (respectively) Venezuela, Colombia, Pakistan, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, Chile, and Hong Kong - all Asian or South American cultures.

Dimensions of Culture

Individualism – Collectivism.2

● ***Nonverbal Communication***

- Privacy rules – collectivist cultures have less privacy
- Do people live alone or in groups
- Emotional expression – less in collectivist cultures
- Amount of physical contact and space – collectivist cultures have more close contact

Accommodation processes

- Convergence
- Divergence
- Maintenance

Accommodation processes

Short Assignments – examples of these dimensions