

The Fourth Dimension: The Next Level Of Personal And Organizational Achievement

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323

Hofstede and learning in higher level education: an empirical study

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Abstract: Although the academic community (largely) seems to place a considerable degree of trust in Hofstede's claims regarding cultural differences and education, there has been relatively very little research conducted to test his claims. Where (valuable) critiques have been made, they have been based on rhetoric and references to other similar studies. To help fill this gap, this paper tests Hofstede's claims regarding his five dimensional cultural model and resulting pedagogical values using Likert-scales surveys on a sample of 327 students from 37 nationalities studying at a third level institute in Ireland. The results did not support the validity of any of the five dimension cultural values in an educational context. These findings are particularly relevant to HE management interested in the training and development of teaching staff working with international students and in general HE institute communication with those students.

Keywords: Hofstede; cross-cultural education; cross-cultural management; higher level education; globalisation; Ireland; power distance; uncertainty avoidance; individualist; collectivist; masculinity; long-term orientation; cultural clusters; GLOBE; management in education.

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Biographical notes: Edward Dennehy is a Lecturer of Management in Institute of Technology Carlow in Ireland. He has published on matters related to Higher Education, Employee Cynicism and Corporate Governance.

1 Introduction

Given that many 'Western' (and non-'Western') Higher Education (HE) institutes have seen a drop in revenue from traditional sources, HE management have been 'encouraged' to find new alternative revenue sources (Biggs and Tang, 2007; Horta, 2009; Vergier, 2010; Marginson, 2013). Similar to the business world, many HE institutes have looked to foreign 'markets' to increase revenue through the attraction of non-national students. However in much the same way as businesses faces international cultural challenges when dealing with foreign clients, HE institutes may face similar challenges with non-

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