

Empirical Testing of Hofstede's Measures of National Culture: A Study in Four Countries

Authors : Nebojša Janićijević

Abstract : At the end of 1970s, Dutch researcher Geert Hofstede, had conducted an enormous empirical research on the differences between national cultures. In his huge research, he had identified four dimensions of national culture according to which national cultures differ and determined the index for every dimension of national culture for each country that took part in his research. The index showed a country's position on the continuum between the two extreme poles of the cultural dimensions. Since more than 40 years have passed since Hofstede's research, there is a doubt that, due to the changes in national cultures during that period, they are no longer a good basis for research. The aim of this research is to check the validity of Hofstede's indices of national culture. The empirical study conducted in the branches of a multinational company in Serbia, France, the Netherlands and Denmark aimed to determine whether Hofstede's measures of national culture dimensions are still valid. The sample consisted of 155 employees of one multinational company, where 40 employees came from three countries and 35 employees were from Serbia. The questionnaire that analyzed the positions of national cultures according to the Hofstede's four dimensions was formulated on the basis of the initial Hofstede's questionnaire, but it was much shorter and significantly simplified comparing to the original questionnaire. Such instrument had already been used in earlier researches. A statistical analysis of the obtained questionnaire results was done by a simple calculation of the frequency of the provided answers. Due to the limitations in methodology, sample size, instrument, and applied statistical methods, the aim of the study was not to explicitly test the accuracy Hofstede's indexes but to enlighten the general position of the four observed countries in national culture dimensions and their mutual relations. The study results have indicated that the position of the four observed national cultures (Serbia, France, the Netherlands and Denmark) is precisely the same in three out of four dimensions as Hofstede had described in his research. Furthermore, the differences between national cultures and the relative relations between their positions in three dimensions of national culture correspond to Hofstede's results. The only deviation from Hofstede's results is concentrated around the masculinity-femininity dimension. In addition, the study revealed that the degree of power distance is a determinant when choosing leadership style. It has been found that national cultures with high power distance, like Serbia and France, favor one of the two authoritative leadership styles. On the other hand, countries with low power distance, such as the Netherlands and Denmark, prefer one of the forms of democratic leadership styles. This confirms Hofstede's premises about the impact of power distance on leadership style. The key contribution of the study is that Hofstede's national culture indexes are still a reliable tool for measuring the positions of countries in national culture dimensions, and they can be applied in the cross-cultural research in management. That was at least the case with four observed countries: Serbia, France, the Netherlands, and Denmark.

Keywords : national culture, leadership styles, power distance, collectivism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance

Conference Title : ICGIS 2024 : International Conference on Globalization and Internationalization Studies

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : May 02-03, 2024