

Valuing differences **creates a work environment where people can and want to do their best.** Working effectively in this diverse world starts with self-awareness—considering how you handle bias, poor treatment, and conflict, and demonstrating that you value others.

Nine national cultural value differences

National values are shared ideas of what is good, right, and desirable in a society. They are a national society's preferences for managing [external adaptation and internal integration challenges](#) that threaten its survival. National values sit on a continuum between two contrasting approaches to a societal problem. Every nation sits somewhere between the opposing alternatives.

1. Individualism vs. Collectivism

In Individualistic societies, people define themselves in terms of 'I' and their unique attributes. Autonomy and independent thought are valued and the interests and goals of the individual prevail over group welfare. Personal attitudes and needs are important determinants of behavior. Ties between members are loose. Nuclear families are more common than extended families. Love carries greater weight in marriage decisions and divorce rates are higher. Members of Individualistic cultures are likely to engage in activities alone and social interactions are shorter and less intimate, although they are more frequent.

In Collectivistic societies, people define themselves in terms of 'we' and their group memberships. Members are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups. Social interdependence and collective harmony are valued. Relational ties and obligations are important determinants of behavior; group goals take precedence over individual goals. Shared living is emphasized. Extended families (with uncles, aunts, and grandparents) provide protection in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. There are lower divorce rates yet love carries less weight in marriage decisions. Members of Collectivistic cultures are likely to prefer group activities. Social interactions are longer and more intimate.

2. Power Distance

In high Power Distance societies, hierarchical systems of assigned roles organize behavior. Power Distance is defined from below rather than above. In high Power Distance cultures, the less powerful members expect and accept inequalities. Power is perceived to provide social order, relational harmony, and role stability. The social hierarchy needs no further justification.

High Power Distance societies are differentiated into classes. They have stable and scarce power bases (for example, land ownership). Upward social mobility is limited. Only a few people have access to resources, knowledge, and skills. Different social groups have differential involvement in governance.

In low Power Distance societies, members believe that inequalities should be minimized. Power is seen as a source of corruption, coercion, and dominance. People recognize one another as moral

equals with shared basic human interests. Members care about the welfare of others and cooperate with one another.

Low Power Distance societies have large middle classes. They have transient and shareable power bases (for example, skill, and knowledge). There is high upward social mobility and a mass availability of resources and capabilities. Different social groups enjoy equal involvement in governance.

3. Uncertainty Avoidance

In weak Uncertainty Avoidance societies, members are comfortable with ambiguous and unknown situations. They are tolerant of change. Members hold multiple ideas as valid and accept different viewpoints. They are contemplative, emotionally stable, and relaxed.

Members of weak Uncertainty Avoidance societies prefer fewer rules. Rule-breaking is allowed. Exchanges are informal. Members prefer to rely on the word of others they trust rather than enter into contractual relationships. They are not concerned with orderliness and keeping written records.

In strong Uncertainty Avoidance societies, members are threatened by uncertainty, have an emotional need for predictability, and exhibit a high resistance to change. This resistance is expressed through nervousness, stress, and attempts to control the environment. Members formalise their interactions with others, verify communications in writing, and take more relatively more moderate and calculated risks.

In strong Uncertainty Avoidance societies, members hold rigid beliefs. There are strict behavioral norms, formal rules and law, and an intolerance of rule-breaking or unorthodox ideas or behaviours.

4. Orientation to Time

Cultures with a Future Orientation have a strong tendency and willingness to imagine future possibilities. Members set long-term goals, develop plans, and work hard and persevere to achieve their ambitions. They delay gratification and display a strong propensity to save and invest.

Members of Future Orientated societies are psychologically healthy and socially well adjusted because they feel in control of their lives, but they may neglect current social relationships and obligations, and can fail to 'stop and smell the roses'.

Members of Short-Term Orientated societies are more focused on the present and past than on the future. They value instant satisfaction. Members spend now rather than save for the future. They live in the moment and are not concerned with past or future anxieties.

On the flip side, members of Short-Term Orientated societies may engage in risky, pleasure-seeking pursuits and fail to recognize the negative longer-term implications of their indulgences.

5. Gender Egalitarianism

Biological constraints in childbearing have long dictated societal norms about the roles of men and women in many societies. But outside childbearing, sex-role distinctions are purely social constructions. Societies differ with respect to the extent to which they define different social and emotional roles for males and females.

In Low Gender Egalitarianism cultures, male social and emotional roles are different from females. Men are assertive, tough, competitive, and focused on material success. Women are modest, tender, and concerned with quality of life.

Low Gender Egalitarianism societies have few women in positions of authority, a low percentage of women in the labor force, and occupational sex segregation. In these societies, females have lower levels of education and literacy relative to males. In addition, women hold a lower status in society and play a smaller role in community decision-making compared with men.

In high Gender Egalitarianism cultures, male social and emotional roles are similar to female roles. Both men and women are modest, cooperative, tender, and concerned with quality of life and caring for the weak.

Compared to low Gender Egalitarianism societies, there are more women in positions of authority, a higher percentage of women participating in the labor force, and less occupational sex segregation. In addition, in high Gender Egalitarian cultures, females and males have similar levels of education and literacy. Women hold higher status and play a greater role in community decision-making compared with low Gender Egalitarianism cultures.

6. Assertiveness

Societies with low Gender Egalitarianism typically display high Assertiveness. These societies value assertive, dominant, and 'tough' behavior in both genders. Strength is admired. Aggression is viewed positively (for example, aggression is associated with winning).

Members of high Assertiveness societies value competition and success. They expect demanding and challenging targets. Performance is rewarded and results are stressed over relationships. Members of high Assertiveness societies value what you do more than who you are. Members think of others as opportunistic. In communication, members of high Assertiveness cultures are direct and value expressing true thoughts and feelings.

In contrast, high Gender Egalitarianism overlaps with low Assertiveness. These societies view assertiveness as socially unacceptable. Members of low Assertiveness cultures emphasize modesty and tenderness. They associate competition with defeat and punishment. They stress equality and social solidarity. Low Assertiveness cultures value people, warm relationships, and cooperation.

Members care more about who you are than what you do. In these societies, integrity, loyalty, and cooperation are stressed. People think of others as inherently worthy of trust.

In the workplace, low Assertiveness cultures emphasize seniority and experience. Merit pay is destructive to harmony.

Members from low Assertiveness cultures speak indirectly; they prefer 'face-saving' and subtlety, and value detached and self-possessed conduct.

7. Being vs. Doing

High Doing Orientated societies believe that people have control over their destiny—anyone can succeed if they try hard enough. A Doing Orientation encourages self-assertion to master, direct, and change the natural and social environment to achieve group or individual goals.

High Doing Orientated societies value initiative; members display a 'can-do' attitude. Societies with a Doing Orientation stress performance and encourage and reward innovation and excellence. These societies have a monochromatic (linear and limited) view of time and a high sense of urgency.

High Doing Orientated societies believe that schooling and education are critical for success. They value training and development.

A Being Orientation stresses fitting into the world as it is. Members focus on appreciating and understanding the world rather than trying to change, direct, or exploit it. Important values include world peace, unity with nature, and protecting the environment.

Members of Being Orientated societies have a high regard for quality of life and feel being motivated by money is inappropriate. These societies have a polychromic approach to time (unending and circular) and a low sense of urgency.

8. Humane Orientation

Members of high Humane Orientation societies believe that others are important. That concern extends to all people and all nature. High priority is given to altruism, benevolence, and love. Members are urged to be sensitive to all forms of racial discrimination. The need for belonging and affiliation motivates.

Members of high Humane Orientation societies are responsible for promoting the well-being of others. Personal and family relationships offer protection; the close social circle receives material, financial and social support and the state does not provide welfare. The children of high Humane Orientation societies participate in the labor force to help out their families. Children are expected to be obedient and parents closely control them.

As a general rule, members of high Humane Orientation societies are psychologically healthy.

Members of low Humane Orientation societies believe the self is important. They feel a predominant concern for self-enhancement and a high priority is given to personal pleasure and comfort.

Members of low Humane Orientation societies are less sensitive to racial discrimination and are motivated by power and possessions.

Individual members of low Humane Orientated cultures do not support others. Individuals are expected to solve personal problems on their own and the state (rather than friends or family) provides economic protection when needed.

The children of low Humane Orientation societies do not support their parents in their old age. In these societies, children are autonomous and family members independent.

Members of low Humane Orientation societies report more psychological and pathological problems than members of high Humane Orientation societies.

9. Indulgence vs. Restraint

Indulgence orientated societies encourage pleasure-seeking. Members pursue fun activities for the sake of personal enjoyment.

In contrast, Restraint societies believe that hedonistic pleasure needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms