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**Social Factors of People's Republic of China: A study through HOFSTEDE Model**

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**Abstract**

This study aims to understand the social factor of people's republic of china, these factors include religion, festivals, rituals, food habits, and dining culture etc. for any scholar of International Business and for any Businessman planning to foray in foreign markets a proper understanding of these factors is mandatory because these factors shape the culture of any society and culture influences people in decision making process. In order to get better idea of Chinese culture HOFSTEDE model has been used to know the score of china on six dimensions of the model. These six dimensions are Individualism v/s Collectivism, Power distance, Indulgence, Masculinity, long term orientation, and uncertainty avoidance. The model revealed that there are inequalities in Chinese society, people of china believe in collective culture in which the people determine their actions with the interest of their groups and not for themselves, Chinese people find leisure time as least important, where they prioritize work. Also, students in China are exam score and rank driven, Chinese people seem to be in their comfort with ambiguity, especially when it comes to their language, It has a lot of hidden meanings that are obstacles for the Western group of people. China is a restrained society, People with this direction have the belief that their actions are restrained through social norms and they feel that indulging themselves into it is somewhat incorrect.

**Keywords:** Culture, HOFSTEDE, People's Republic of China, Social

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## **Introduction**

According to the data from The Travel China Guide disclose that by the end of 2010 China's population challenge has changed to vanishing of Demographic dividend, an aging society, low birth rate, and a broadened gender disparity. From 2013, an upgraded two-child policy had been progressively applied in some provinces that couples are permissible to have two children if one of the parentages is an only child. Scholar and experts forecast that the two-child policy will replace the one-child policy in China in the near future to come. Chinese people have traits related to being hardworking, industrious, and peace-loving. Today, Chinese appreciate a higher standard of living, with significantly enhanced services for education. In addition, there has also been a distinct advancement in the status for women; at the same time, the rights of elderly citizens and children adore more care and protection. In the recent times, the Chinese society has become more accommodating, open, and self-sustaining. But the people never forget to develop the traditional Chinese integrities while they are keen to accept new notions and in trying innovative approaches. The culture that the Chinese people come from show close conduct with, Taoism in their daily lives. Taoism refers to the simplicity in merely everything. Taoism (Daoism) denotes to the native Chinese philosophical and religious tradition, which has formulated to be an official religion. Moreover, it has also influenced the Western part of the world (Uebel, Michael, 2015).

## **Religion**

A country as vast as China with great amount of population, it is apparent to understand that it will have various ethnic religions. China's culture has been highly influential from the Han Chinese to Mongols and other ethnic groups. The diversity also builds up due to the different religions practiced, from Ancestor worships to Buddhism. China is a Communist, which has no official religion that is followed (Rensselaer W. Lee, 1964). However, the government does identify five religions, which are:

1. Buddhism
2. Taoism
3. Islam
4. Catholicism
5. Protestantism.

According to the data presented in 2010, it was derived that, 52.2% of the population stated that they were not affiliated with any religion. The other side of the population falls under folk religions and minor population towards Judaism and Hindu worshippers.

## **Rituals**

Traditional Chinese people deal with rituals and norms in their daily life everywhere. Some of their rituals are as follow:

Addressing people

Chinese people give respect to their seniority, this also aims to explain those belonging to the equivalent generation are supposed to be called by their name. It is ill-

mannered to state one's seniors by name, such as their teachers, parents, etc. On different social events, when giving introduction to others, people from China prefer to add titles for their family names.

### Walking

In the olden times, a traditional civility called, 'Qu' was generally noticed on a specific occasion, to which people belonging to the lower status should always hang their heads, bend down on their waists and walk in rapid short steps to define humble respect to elders or the senior-most in position. In addition, usually, small steps are essential on significant occasions and pacing spontaneously is allowed only in informal places.

### Greeting amongst each other

Greetings are pronounced as 'han-xuan' in Chinese language, which are the well-mannered expressions used by the Chinese people on meeting others. This greeting is mostly adhered to the conversations related to weather or daily life. In order to depict apprehension, the Chinese, hospitable people will offer some recommendations on their health. The main reason is due to their nature being a part of their Collectivistic approach.

### Festivals

According to RuiXu (2014), the traditional festivals in China form a base on the agricultural culture and are set in context with the lunar calendar. The festivals in China are characterized with food and wine for the most part. In addition, with respect to value, being impacted by Collectivism highly, the festivals focus on the moral traits as well as the activities in group. To mention a few festivals, China has various celebrations as mentioned below:

#### Tomb-sweeping Day

April is a significant month to ghosts, as perceived in China. In this particular month, the ghosts tend to go out from the hell, and people gather to do a ceremony to welcome each and every family's ghosts. On this day, they usually will sweep the tombs for the dead family relations and make ample number of offerings.

#### Dragon Boat Festival

This festival comes every 5<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar month of May, which goes back to the prehistoric time of 2000 years with cultural heritage. They celebrate by eating rice dumplings, drinking wine, and racing with dragon boats.

#### Spring Festival

This is the most important festive amongst the Chinese people. The sacrifice made from the Kitchen God, they celebrate this occasion by sweeping, shopping, create new cloths, and make sacrifices for their ancestors. Also, before the festival begins, the families stick, "福", which resembles happiness.

## Food Habits

In the Chinese society, the people generally indulge others with meal to make friends or even enhance their relationships. The Chinese culture evidently shows that the service of rare and expensive food for the most part portrays the respect to their guests. Their dinner includes, 8-10 hot dishes, 4-6 cold dishes, fruits, and soup (Guansheng Ma, 2015). Ma also discovered that rice is generally the food for the people living in China. He also states that the Chinese people living in the foreign countries still maintain the consistency in their food habits. Various members in the household are responsible for food purchase. Guansheng Ma depicts a survey, which was done in 4 cities of China that showed that 69.8% of mothers in the home were for the most part responsible for the food purchase, but for the father the percentage was 26.3%. Their food traditions also go hand in hand with the festivals, such as: Having rice dumplings on the Dragon Boat Festival Day and eating moon cakes on autumn festivals.

## Dining Culture

An online travel agency, Top China Travel (2004), posted an article as to the dining culture in China. They mentioned how the typical Chinese meal in a banquet is different from the meals at home. For an everyday meal, the adult of the home may just consume 2 bowls of rice (steamed) or noodles or steamed breads with various meats and vegetable dishes. Majority of the meals in China have approximately 65% of its calories coming from different sources of grains instead of the vegetables or meat dishes. As a result, the Chinese cuisine is also known as one of the healthiest types of food to consume in the world.

The article mentions little etiquette that they follow while dining, such as:

### Toasting one another

They usually raise their wine glasses (or) liquor glass for the toast and drink it all the way, so that the utensil is empty. This action of toasting is known as, 'GanBei'. This action communicates that the people around the table are joyful and honest.

### Chopsticks

This utensil is the most vital part of the Chinese cuisine culture. It is made up of varieties of materials, such as: Silver, Gold, Bronze, Ivory, Bamboo (or) Wood. They believe that by using the chopsticks, it makes people become more skilful. Few things that should be considered when using the chopsticks is that, it should now be inserted upright in the bowl of rice, because it involves the custom of sacrifice. One should not cling into other's chopsticks, while picking up food with it, as it leaves an impression of desirous.

### Dishes Serve as the Centerpieces

Customarily, at the Chinese dining table everybody has his or her own bowl of staple food, while the saucers are placed in the middle of the dinner table to be shared by all. This old custom is one appearance of the significance of food in the Chinese civilization. For them, it is the cooked dishes, rather than the flowers for attraction, that assist as centerpieces

on a Chinese table. The various texture and color of the dishes fulfill the needs of aesthetic in their cutleries. There is also a ritual which includes sharing the food from same plates, resulting it as an act of conductive to a family's friendship and togetherness.

## Corporate Culture

The corporate culture is defined as not just beliefs, but the elements of patterns of behaviour, values, and narratives and accounts that support those values (Christine Raynaud et al., 2013). The Chinese government specifies a five-day workweek and also the hours for business are structured as not more than 8 hours a day and 44 hours a week with context to their Labour Law of the People's Republic of China. Their systematic working time normally is from the week days, Monday to Friday, with Saturday and Sunday being the days off. The Chinese people generally work between the timings 08:00 (am) and 18:00 (pm) each day, with the lunch break from 12:00 (pm) to 14:00 (pm). But resident differences may happen due to the time alteration or policy in diverse cities. For example: the working days in Xinjiang regularly start from 09:00 (am) or 10:00 (am), because of its longitude.

With context to the corporate culture, specifically genders roles, women in China are for the most part are anticipated to be with family and child duties. Although there are a lot of female successful entrepreneurs, there are few females who have adhered to the importance of family and are standing as presidents and CEOs, due to their fathers passing away. A small group of female entrepreneurs have also created a vast success of their careers, but there is still scope of improvement in terms of equality in the corporate workplace and towards the acceptability of women in the management system.

## Material and Method

### HOFSTEDE Model

It is very important to understand the different areas of cultures with respect to a nationalistic approach, aiming at different dimensions as well. In 1980, Geert Hofstede, a Dutch researcher created the 'Cultural Dimension Theory', in which he aimed at determining the various dimensions in context with cultures that vary.

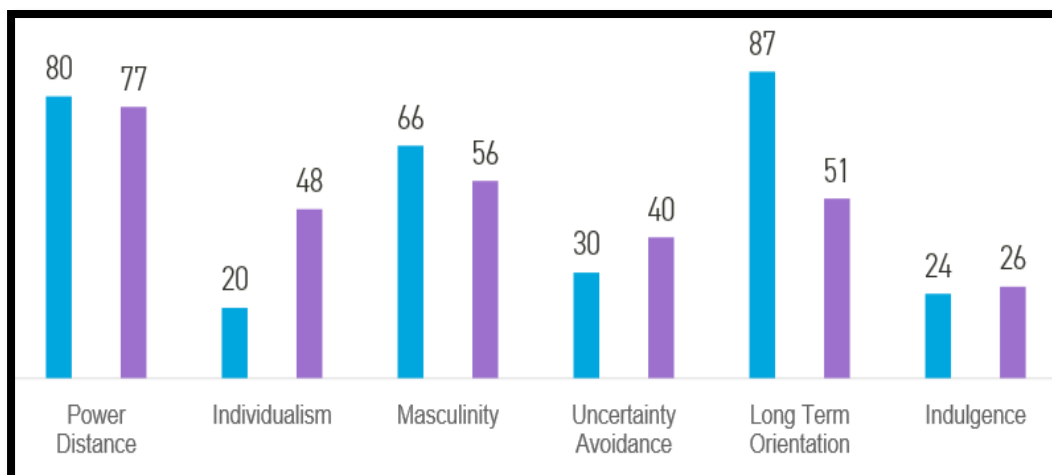


Figure I- (Source: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/china>)

## Result and Discussion

This model includes 6 dimensions, which characterize independent likings for one state of situations over another that discriminate countries (besides individuals) from each other.

### 1. Power Distance

This dimension portrays that individuals in societies are not equal. It also shows the attitude of the particular culture towards these disparities amongst us. In other words, power distance takes in consideration the degree to which the low-powerful members of the organizations and institutions within the parameters of the country accept and expect that the power is divided unequally amongst them. According to the power distance index below, China is at 80, which directly indicates that the inequalities between the people are accepted. It can also be interpreted that the individuals are impelled by the formal authority.

### 2. Individualism

This dimension focuses on the extent to which the interdependency a society consistently maintains amongst each other. It also means as to how they define self-image through in terms of 'I' or 'We'. If the country is prevalent in an Individualistic society, they only look after the family (or) themselves. On the contrary, a Collective society looks after their 'groups' for loyalty. China's score is 20, portraying that it is has exceedingly a collectivistic culture, in which the people determine their actions with the interest of their groups and not for themselves. Their considerations within the groups definitely have an impact on promoting and hiring people closer (family). It also affects the Personal relationships by prevailing over tasks and company.

### 3. Masculinity

If a country gets a high score on this aspect, it shows that the community is going to be driven through competition, success, and achievement. The success factor in this is well-defined by the values built from schools to one's organizational way of life. On the other hand, having a low score would determine the concept of Feminine, in which the values centre around caring for other people and a quality-based life, resulting it to be the success factor for the Feminine society, but standing out of the crowd is not as admirable. China is at 66 (Masculine societal success oriented), Chinese people find leisure time as least important, where they prioritize work. Also, students in China are exam score and rank driven, which will get them success.

### 4. Uncertainty Avoidance

The dimension defines the degree to which the individuals of a particular culture feel endangered by unknown scenarios and have developed beliefs (or) institutions that makes the effort to avoid them. China is at 30, which is a low score. Chinese people seem to be in their comfort with ambiguity, especially when it comes to their language. It has a lot of hidden meanings that are obstacles for the Western group of people.

## 5. Long Term Orientation

This part elaborates on how each society has to uphold some networks with their past, while at the same time dealing with the various challenges of the current situation as well as the future. China has been given the score of 87, because of the belief of truth being dependent on the time, context, and situation. This portrays their ability to adapt to their tradition anywhere with great perseverance in achieving their predicted outcome.

## 6. Indulgence

The last dimension focuses on the degree to which the people try to take in control their impulses and desires, as a result of how they were raised. If its control system is relatively weak, it is known as, 'Indulgence'. But if it is strong, it is called 'Restraint'. China is prominently a society, which is Restrained (score of 24). As mentioned earlier as to how the Chinese culture does not believe in leisure time, hence it is a restrained society. People with this direction have the belief that their actions are restrained through social norms and they feel that indulging themselves into it is somewhat incorrect.

## Conclusions

China is the most populated nation with a complete populace of roughly 1.4 billion (BBC, 2018). This is a gigantic market for many multinational corporations. However, China is extremely concerned about its population growth and has endeavored with blended outcomes to implement a strict birth limitation policy. Chinese culture is profoundly connected to its Communist political setting, an understanding of Chinese culture through HOFSTEDE model revealed that there are inequalities in Chinese society, people of china believe in collective culture in which the people determine their actions with the interest of their groups and not for themselves, Chinese people find leisure time as least important, where they prioritize work. Also, students in China are exam score and rank driven, Chinese people seem to be in their comfort with ambiguity, especially when it comes to their language, It has a lot of hidden meanings that are obstacles for the Western group of people. China is a restrained society. People with this direction have the belief that their actions are restrained through social norms and they feel that indulging themselves into it is somewhat incorrect.

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