

Indiana University

SPEA Honors Thesis

Evaluating Employee Engagement Across Cultures: How can an organization connect employee engagement strategies to global cultural competence?

*A thesis submitted to the faculty of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs in the Department of
Human Resource Management*

Author: Lucy Lankford
Faculty Advisor: Professor Daniel Grundmann

Spring 2018

Abstract

This paper aims to evaluate employee engagement across multiple cultures, examining how it impacts the workplace during a time when various companies and industries have a large global presence. The research question at hand is, “*How can an organization connect employee engagement strategies to global cultural competence?*” This research relies heavily on the six dimensions of national culture, as studied by Geert Hofstede and colleagues. These dimensions include; power distance index (PDI), individualism versus collectivism (IDV), masculinity versus femininity (MAS), uncertainty avoidance index (UAI), long term orientation versus short term normative orientation (LTO), and indulgence versus restraint (IND). Additionally, this research also relies on global employee engagement survey data from both Aon Hewitt and Mercer Human Resource Consulting. Evidence from these studies suggests that only 63% of the global workforce is engaged. This paper studies national culture and employee engagement within the United States, China, United Kingdom, India, Nigeria, and Germany.

This paper argues that cultural factors have a significant impact on employee engagement and the workplace as a whole. The outcome of this research shows that companies can increase their employees’ engagement by using culture-focused strategies, thus resulting in a more productive and prosperous global workforce. The results of this research are beneficial to organizations, employees, and business owners alike as they demonstrate the importance of practicing cultural competence in regard to employee engagement and the overall impact of cultural factors on an employee’s engagement. Organizations can use this information to develop strategies that will better fit the needs of their employees in an increasingly globalized economy.

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Introduction

The topic of employee engagement has received considerable attention in recent years, due to an increasingly globalized economy and multicultural workforce. With the knowledge that employee engagement is associated with higher work performance and efficiency, engagement is key to companies remaining competitive in the global economy. In 2013, Gallup found that 68.5% of workers are either actively or passively disengaged in their current jobs and only 13% are actively engaged (Westover, Barrus, Costello, & Beaman, 2016, p. 89). Disengaged workers cause companies to lose revenue and face diminished profit margins. These diminished profit margins and revenue are partially attributed to “costs associated with employee turnover, recruiting, and lost productivity from disengaged workers,” which translates to between \$450 and \$550 billion in lost revenue annually (Westover et al, 2016, p. 90). As a result of high disengagement rates and costs, it is clear that employee engagement is highly important to a company's overall success in the globalized economy. Employee engagement across the globe may be able to experience increases if companies rethink their engagement initiatives to address variations in national culture.

Literature Review

Employee engagement was defined in Mercer’s *What’s Working?* (2007) research as “how employees feel about the overall work experience” (Mercer Limited, 2007, p. 1). In this research, employee engagement is described as mutually beneficial for both employees and organizations, as it creates the basic human need of being connected while also increasing organizational productivity. According to Stankiewicz and Moczulska (2012) an employees’ engagement is “the degree in which individuals are personally involved in helping the

organization, working better than it is expected for keeping the position” (Kowalski, after: Smyth 2009) (Stankiewicz & Moczulska, 2012, p. 73). Another view, from the Institute of Engagement Studies views employee engagement as a strong connection that employees have with all aspects of their work life; their job, people they interact with at work, and the organization they work for (Fletcher et al., 2014, p. 4). These definitions of employee engagement exhibit that employee engagement is a strong connection to the overall work experience and organization.

Exploring comparative employee engagement by Westover et al. uses a case vignette methodology to analyze multiple companies that acknowledge and utilize themes from the Gallup Q12 employee engagement survey. Ultimately, this survey serves as a framework in understanding comparative workplace engagement. This research examines Google, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Bain & Co, and Boston Consulting Group, six companies that have been repeatedly listed as the best places to work according to Forbes, Fortune, Wall Street Journal, and Glassdoor. Seeing as these companies address several common employee engagement drivers, this work aims to find recurring employee engagement trends among these companies.

Exploring comparative employee engagement delves into each of these six companies and examines unique methods within each workplace that increase employee engagement. For example, Google’s employees are given a chance to learn, grow, give feedback, and feel like what they are doing is important through the projects they work on (Westover et al., 2016, 95-96). Similarly, Facebook strives to create a culture that is centered around promoting creativity and developing new ideas in the hopes of creating new products and improving existing products. Twitter places a large emphasis on leadership and is heavily involved in helping their employees learn and grow. In fact, CEO Dick Costolo personally runs management training sessions at least once a quarter (Westover et al, 2016, p. 96). LinkedIn has an extremely

supportive management style that puts their employees first, fostering a culture of continuous learning (Westover et al., 2016, p. 99). They also strive to provide opportunities and a sense of fulfillment that help build a successful and well-cultured company with engaged employees. Bain & Co. has a fast-paced and challenging environment that fuels employee engagement, particularly among those who thrive from utilizing their skill set to produce their best work. Additionally, Bain & Co. places employee success and collaborative teamwork at the forefront of their company, helping to create a culture of kinship and support. Undoubtedly, it is their commitment to employee development and teamwork that makes their success possible.

Collectively speaking across all of these cases, “each company has a focused belief that what they are doing makes a difference in the world and that they make a real difference every day” (Westover et al., 2016, p. 102). These companies place a large emphasis on communication and taking the time to know each employee, allowing managers to know when and how to help their employees. By providing a way for individual employees to provide feedback and ideas within the company, companies are able to increase employee buy-in and dedication. With this, employees are able to not only feel heard, but also have a direct say in company decisions. All six of the companies examined in *Exploring comparative employee engagement* have been able to successfully create an environment where employees are able to grow personally and contribute to the growth of their organizations. As a result of these efforts, employees are able to focus their energy and time in the workplace solely on work. The efforts of these companies are all prime examples of how to successfully create an engaged workplace.

On a broader scale, the article “Culture, Values and the Impact at Work” by Sunniva Heggertveit-Aoudia explores the numerous cultural aspects that influence the way humans interact with others and the world around them. Some crucial aspects include national culture,

gender culture, corporate culture, and various communication styles. Both collectively and individually, all of these elements influence how we conduct our work, behavior, style, and use of language. Further examination shows that they also influence how we solve problems, negotiate, and go about creating relationships. Similarly, a SHRM article titled “Culture Always Influences Business” by Aliah D. Wright discusses how cultural dimensions contribute to human perceptions of the world, consequently affecting how they interact with business. The author calls on Dean Foster, a consultant focusing on intercultural and global competency development, whose survey found that “human behavior is premised fundamentally on our cultures” (Wright). Foster stressed the importance of considering cultural values and being considerate of others needs when conducting business.

In reviewing the literature regarding employee engagement drivers, a common theme of diversity and inclusion arose. In the case study *The Role of Diversity Practices and Inclusion in Promoting Trust and Employee Engagement*, Juliet Bourke examines specific research conducted by Downey et al. concerning the role of diversity practices and inclusion in relation to trust and employee engagement. This study investigated the roles that an organization's trust climate and perceptions of inclusion play in providing a platform for diversity practices to drive employee engagement (Bourke, 2015). Research found that diversity practices combined with trust ultimately increase a company's employee engagement. However, Bourke's research also points out that perceptions of diversity are only related to trust when employees perceive high levels of inclusion. Therefore, to achieve an engaged workforce through this combination of diversity and trust climate, perceptions of inclusion are critical to creating trust and therefore driving employee engagement.

An example of increased employee engagement due to diversity practices is the decade-long journey Sodexo has taken to increase employee engagement through a comprehensive commitment to diversity and inclusion (Anand, 2013). A survey given to employees in 2012 showed that diversity is one of the top two key engagement drivers of Sodexo employees. These results clearly demonstrate improved engagement as a result of participation in diversity and inclusion initiatives (Anand, 2013). Diver

Communication and recognition are also consistently discussed as employee engagement drivers. In fact, the University of North Carolina Medical Center increased their employee engagement by focusing on common employee engagement drivers such as communication, recognition, and involvement in decision-making. By studying these factors from 2007 to 2015, the center was able to see a significant improvement in employee engagement scores (Amerine et al., 1318). Similarly, the 2017 Trends in Employee Engagement study by AON Hewitt found that the top engagement opportunities globally are rewards and recognition, employee value proposition (EVP), senior leadership, career opportunities, and enabling infrastructure. This study found that only 63% of employees are engaged globally, down 2% from the prior year (AON Hewitt, 2017, p. 4). A more in-depth breakdown discovered that North American employees were 64% engaged, Africa was 61%, Europe was 58%, and the Asia Pacific was 62%. Latin America surpassed all others with 75% of their employees classified as engaged (AON Hewitt, 2017, p. 4). Above all, this study emphasizes that employee engagement varies significantly across the globe and that some of those variations can be attributed to cultural differences.

Measuring and Managing Engagement in a Cross-Cultural Workforce: New Insights for Global Companies by Sanchez et al. also supports the notion that global cultural variations

contribute to differing levels of employee engagement. Within this research, Sanchez et. al found four global drivers of engagement that employees place in high importance, regardless of their personal culture and work environment. These drivers include: opportunities to develop, confidence and trust in leadership, recognition and rewards, and organizational communication (Sanchez et al., 2006, p. 45). In short, companies that take cultural differences into account while implementing initiatives and management practices tend to increase the overall engagement of their global workforce (Sanchez et al., 2006, p. 50). Sanchez et al. says the multinational organizations with best practices realize that even as they strive for common management approaches to building employee engagement, they must recognize the influence of regional or national cultures on employees' perceptions (Sanchez et al., 2006, p. 49). This approach is also beneficial for interpreting the data to identify issues that are common throughout the organization and then help to narrow down whether the cause is on a country, regional, or local basis.

A helpful model and tool for distinguishing cultures from one another is the six cultural dimensions of national culture developed by Professor Geert Hofstede and his colleagues. The six cultural dimensions are based on an individual's preferences in choosing one state of affairs over another. These include: power distance index, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance index, long term versus short term normative orientation, and indulgence versus restraint.

The first index is referred to as the power distance index, also known as PDI. This expresses the degree to which less powerful members of a society accept/expect that power will be distributed unequally. For example, citizens of a high power distance societies accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a designated place. On the other end of the spectrum,

societies with low power distance strive to equalize the distribution of power and minimize inequality. The second index is called individualism versus collectivism, also known as IDV. This measures the societal preference between a loosely-knit or tightly-knit social framework. Individualism describes a loosely-knit social framework where members of society are expected to take care of themselves and their close family members (Hofstede). Alternatively, collectivism holds the notion that individuals can rely on their relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede). The third dimension, masculinity versus femininity (MAS), measures a society's preference for competition regarding achievement and material rewards for success, or the degree to which the culture is masculine.

The fourth dimension is the uncertainty avoidance index (UAI), which expresses the degree to which a country "deals with ambiguity or uncertainty" (Hofstede). Traditionally, high UAI countries have rigid codes of belief and behavior, while low UAI countries tend to be more relaxed. The fifth dimension is the long term orientation versus short term normative orientation (LTO), which describes how a country deals with the present and future. "Societies who score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion" (Hofstede). Conversely, countries that receive high scores take a more pragmatic approach, encouraging "thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future" (Hofstede). The sixth and last dimension is indulgence versus restraint (IND), which expresses a culture's degree of indulgence. Those with high scores typically spend their time and money as they please, while those on the restraint end of the spectrum suppress gratification of needs and regulate it by means of societal norms (Hofstede).

The relationship between national cultural identity and employee engagement is discussed in a 2016 article by David Morley for Inside HR Australia titled, "Unlocking the keys

to cross-cultural employee engagement,” Morley draws on the six cultural dimensions of national culture to bridge the connection between culture and employee engagement, using both people and organizational factors. In doing this, he defines the concept of Power Distance as either “involve me” or “tell me” cultures. Within this concept, a higher Power Distance is considered to be a tell me culture and a lower Power Distance is considered an involve me culture (Morley, 2016). Morley explains that tell me cultures tend to have a strong hierarchical structure. Consequently, managers will be less apt to involving their employees with goal-setting or decision-making. He then compares Individualism and Collectivism as either “recognize me” or “acknowledge us” cultures (Morley, 2016). Individualistic cultures tend to be more focused on individual recognition (recognize me), while collectivistic cultures seek to be acknowledged as a group (acknowledge us).

Morley also discusses individualism and collectivism in terms of building organizational trust. Individualistic cultures prefer “task trust,” which involves the demonstration of individual competence and focusing immediately on business (Morley, 2016). In contrast, collectivistic cultures are typically “relationship trust oriented” in which individuals take time to build relationships with their colleagues. Another important societal factor to consider is masculinity. Through his research, Morley concluded that highly masculine societies are “win the game” societies, while less masculine societies are “play the game” societies (Morley, 2016). This masculinity dimension is key to communication and a known driver of engagement, being that “win the game” cultures prefer a “sell and debate” approach, while “play the game” cultures prefer more supportive dialogue (Morley, 2016). Specifically, the dimensions of power distance, individualism, and masculinity are all helpful in determining important cultural values pertaining to motivation, rewards, and recognition when considering employee engagement strategies.

Morley concludes that a basic understanding of culture, derived by utilizing the six dimensions of national culture, is vital to designing sustainable and culture-focused employee engagement strategies.

Along the same lines, Stankiewicz and Moczulska (2012) assert that the factors influencing employees' engagement vary among enterprises operating in countries with different cultures (Stankiewicz & Moczulska, 2012, sec. 1, para. 2). The two of them explain that the level of impact of these factors can be different due to diverse preferences and interpretations of employees among the society. Their contributions demonstrate that there are not only cultural variations between cultures, but within each one as well.

Discussion

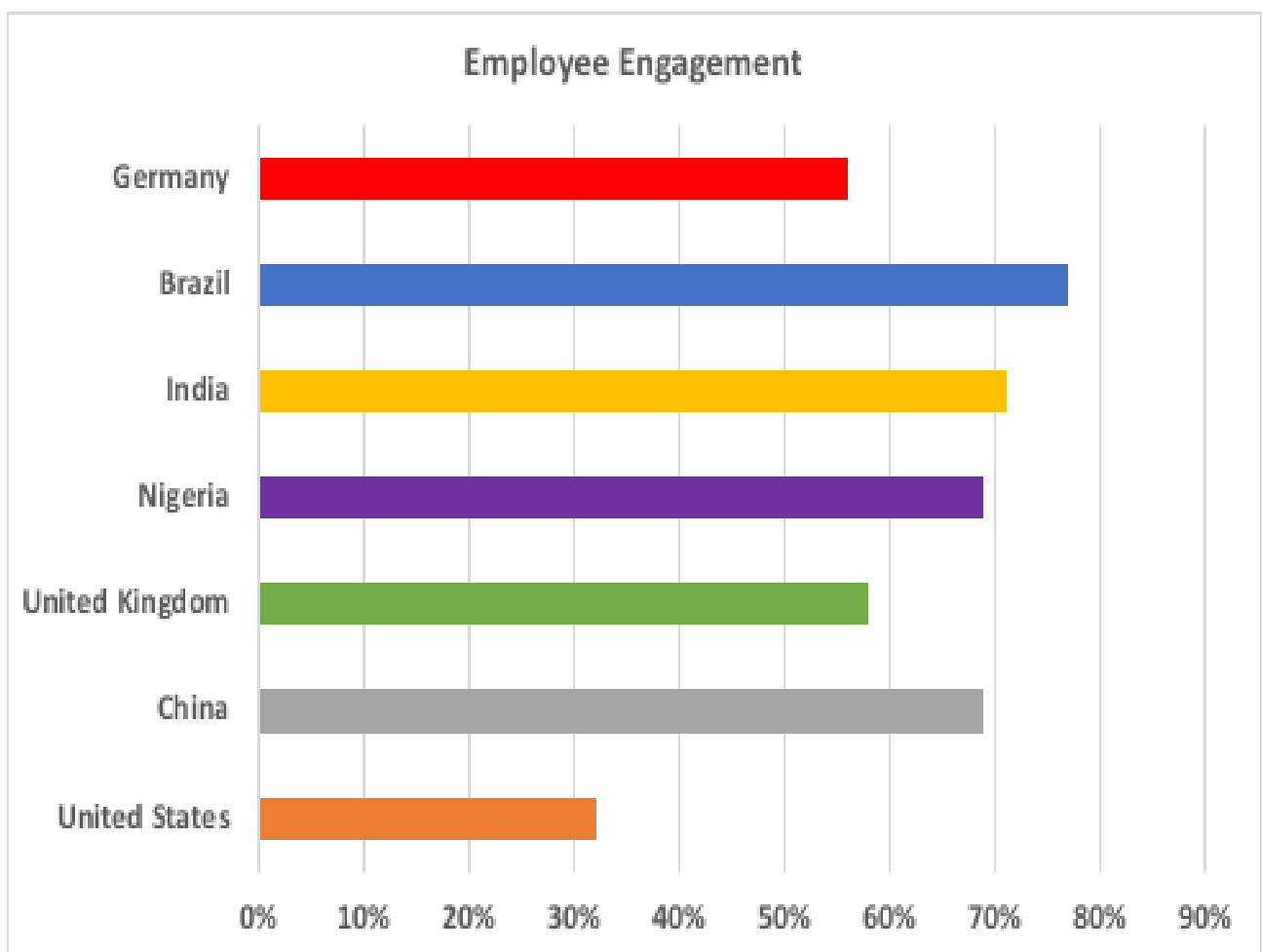
What is employee engagement?

Employee engagement is a term used to describe an employee's attitudes and feelings regarding their work. Further, it defines an employees level of psychological investment in their organization and their willingness to help it achieve its goals and objectives (Aon Hewitt, 2017, p. 2). In short, high employee engagement is characterized by positive and fulfilling feelings from work, while low employee engagement consists of negative and unfulfilling feelings from work. However, employee engagement varies among individuals due to one's personal cultural values. Factors such as communication style, power distribution, gender roles, and definitions of success are examples of cultural values that can come into play in the workplace, and thus affect an employee's engagement. Sanchez et al. asserted that "national culture shapes the reality of employee engagement" (Sanchez et al., 2006, p. 44). Ultimately, employee engagement varies

across cultures, countries, economies, religions, and lifestyles due to the fact that employee attitudes are shaped by their culture and surroundings.

Below is a graph depicting most recent percentage of employee engagement for selected countries; Germany, Brazil, India, Nigeria, United Kingdom, China, and United States.

Figure 1.1: Employee Engagement of Selected Countries



Graph derived from data collected from AON Hewitt (2017), Gallup (2017), Ponte Valle (2016), HR in Asia (2017), Ang (2018)

Figure 1.1 shows 32% engagement for the United States, 69% for China, 58% for United Kingdom, 69% for Nigeria, 71% for India, and 56% for Germany.

Drivers of Employee Engagement

AON Hewitt, the Gallup Q12, and Mercer discuss several drivers of employee engagement. AON Hewitt found rewards and recognition, employee value proposition (EVP), senior leadership, career opportunities, and enabling infrastructure to be drivers of employee engagement. The Gallup Q12 demonstrates the importance of face-to-face communication, deeming it one of the largest driving forces for increasing employee engagement. According to Westover et al, this form of communication has “the greatest potential for resolving ambiguity and uncertainty,” making it an extremely important tool in the realm of employee engagement (Westover et al., 2016, p. 91). Similarly, giving an employee the ability to express their “ideas, feelings, and opinions” has been shown to have a positive influence on employee engagement. Communication and feedback are described as two of the most important employee engagement drivers. This supports the notion that employees who are able to share their thoughts with their superiors will also have a desire to engage in their work more fully.

The six companies analyzed in *Exploring comparative employee engagement* all offer effective communication, the opportunity to give feedback, autonomy, access to leadership, et cetera (Westover et al., 2016, p. 101-102). For example, Google employees are given the chance to learn and grow, give feedback, and feel like what they do is important. Google and the rest of the companies discussed in the paper are perfect examples of companies that intentionally address drivers of employee engagement and thus have more engaged and productive employees.

Recurring themes in the subject literature regarding engagement drivers were found to be communication, recognition, diversity, access to leadership, sense of personal accomplishment,

feedback, and learning and growth opportunities. The examples from Westover et al. (2016), Sodexo, and the University of North Carolina Medical Center focused on several of the employee engagement drivers in their initiatives and were successful increasing employee engagement.

Drivers of Employee Engagement by Country

The drivers of engagement vary considerably by country due to cultural variations. Of course, there are global trends that are important to address, for example communication, but digging deeper to the national level allows global companies to tailor their employee engagement initiatives. Mercer Limited (2007) concluded the top engagement driver for the United Kingdom, China, and Brazil is a sense of personal accomplishment. A sense of personal accomplishment was second on the list for the United States as well. On the other hand, the top engagement driver for the United States was employees being confident they can achieve their career objectives. Evidently, engagement drivers vary among cultures as different cultures value aspects of life differently. The differences between countries may ultimately correlate with their scores for each of the six dimensions of national culture, a framework used to compare countries based on preferences of one state over another.

Six Dimensions of National Culture

The Six Dimensions of National Culture, by Professor Geert Hofstede and members of his research team, is a model for distinguishing countries from each other based on cultural values. Below is a summary of the six dimensions:

- Power Distance Index (PDI)- The power distance index addresses how any given society handles inequality. Those with high scores have more of a hierarchical structure, whereas low scores are more focused on equalization of power and addressing inequality in society.
- Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)- Individualism versus collectivism gauges the preference in society for a tightly-knit versus loosely-knit framework among individuals. Tightly-knit societies are collectivist and have low scores in the range. Loosely-knit societies are individualistic in nature and score high in the range.
- Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)- The masculinity versus femininity dimension measures a society's preference for achievement and success. Those with higher scores are masculine cultures that are characterized as competitive. Feminine cultures are more caring and tend to cooperate instead of compete.
- Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)- The uncertainty avoidance index measures the extent to which a society is uncomfortable with uncertain or ambiguous situations. Those with high uncertainty avoidance oppose unorthodox behavior and ideas. Those with low uncertainty avoidance have a much more relaxed attitude in regard to uncertain situations.
- Long versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO)- The long versus short term normative orientation dimension addresses how a society handles the present and future. Low scores classify as short term orientation, in which members of society honor traditions and are skeptical of societal change. High scores classify as long term orientation in which members of society focus on preparing for the future.

- Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)- The indulgence versus restraint dimension measures a society's preference for gratification of needs and desires. Societies with high scores are more indulgent and view the gratification of desires freely when it comes to leisure. Conversely, restrained societies suppress and regulate gratification of needs.

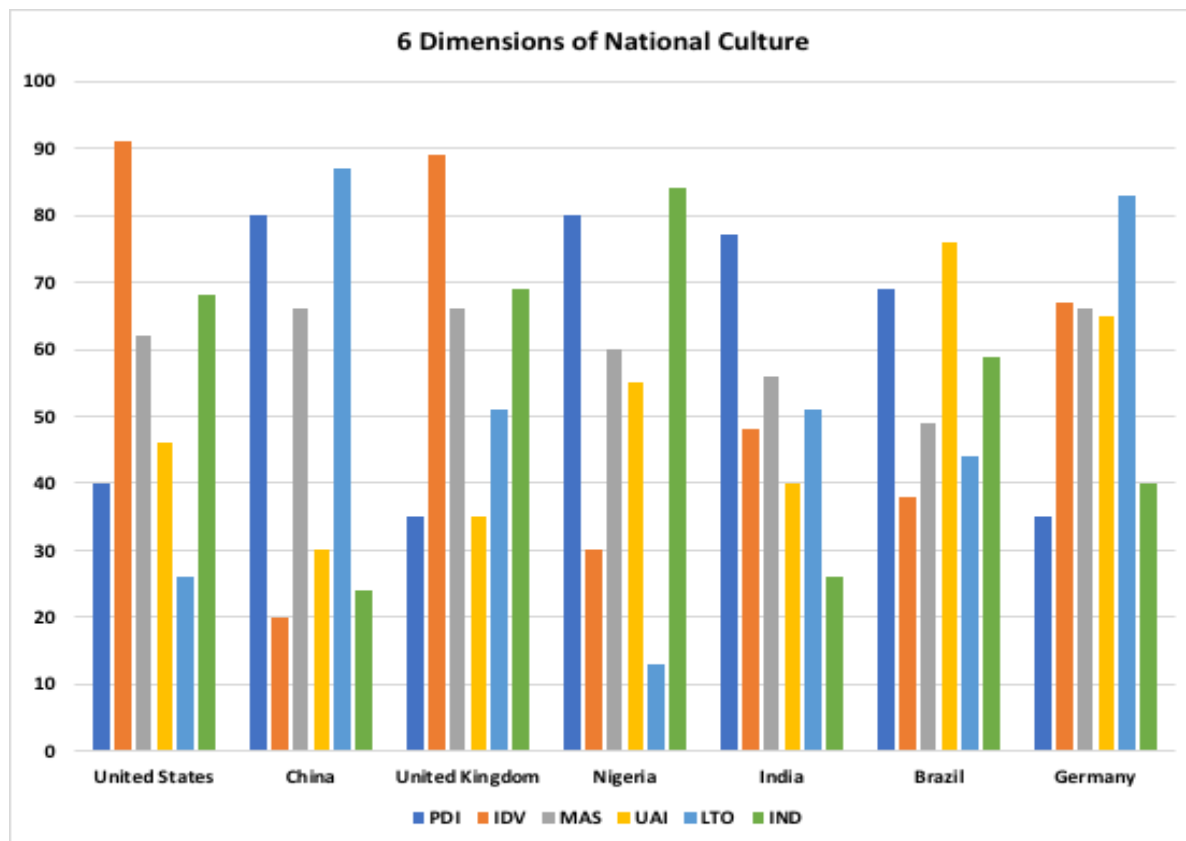
In the following research, the six dimensions of national culture will be used to examine employee engagement in the globalized economy focusing on the cultural dimensions of various cultures. Table 1.1 and Figure 1.2 below summarize the six dimensions of national culture for the United States, China, United Kingdom, Nigeria, India, Brazil, and Germany.

Table 1.1: Six Dimensions of National Culture by Country

Country	Power Distance	Individualism vs. Collectivism	Masculinity vs. Femininity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long vs. Short Term Orientation	Indulgence vs. Restraint
United States	40 (Low)	91 (Individualist)	62 (Masculine)	46 (Low)	26 (Short Term)	68 (Indulgent)
China	80 (High)	20 (Collectivist)	66 (Masculine)	30 (Low)	87 (Long Term)	24 (Restrained)
United Kingdom	35 (Low)	89 (Individualist)	66 (Masculine)	35 (Low)	51 (Cannot be determined)	69 (Indulgent)
Nigeria	80 (High)	30 (Collectivist)	60 (Masculine)	55 (Intermediate)	13 (Short Term)	84 (Indulgent)
India	77 (High)	48 (Collectivist and Individualist)	56 (Masculine)	40 (Medium)	51 (Cannot be determined)	26 (Restrained)
Brazil	69 (High)	38 (Collectivist)	49 (Intermediate)	76 (High)	44 (Intermediate)	59 (Indulgent)
Germany	35 (Low)	67 (Individualist)	66 (Masculine)	65 (High)	83 (Long Term)	40 (Restrained)

Table generated with data from Hofstede Insights- National Culture, Hofstede Insights- Country Comparison.

Figure 1.2: Graph of Six Dimensions of National Culture by Country



Graph generated utilizing data from Hofstede Insights- Country Comparison.

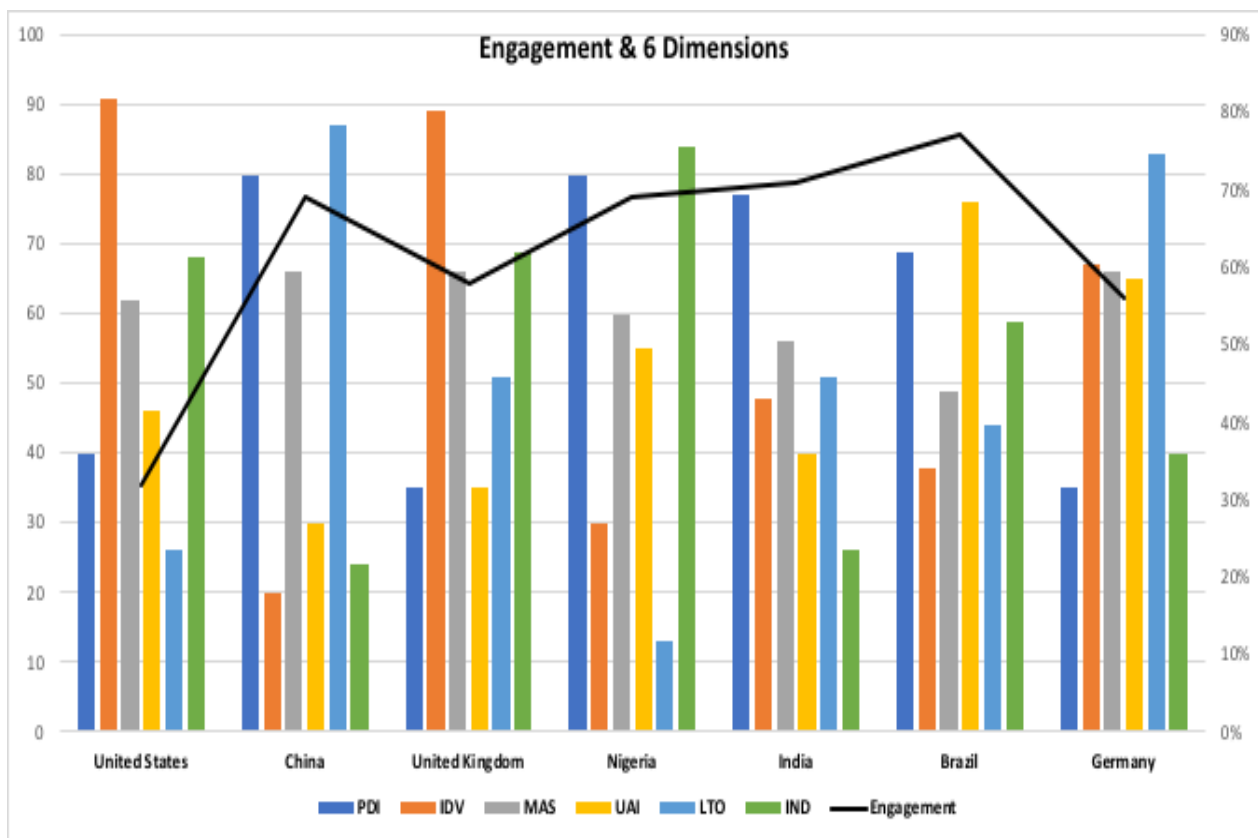
Employee Engagement and the Six Dimensions of National Culture

Discussed in the subject literature was that cultural values come into play in all aspects of life, including the workplace. As a result, cultural values play a key role in determining employee engagement. As explained by Mercer Limited (2007), “national culture shapes the reality of the employee experience and, therefore, engagement” (Mercer Limited, 2007, p. 5). Depending on national cultural norms, for instance, employees may prefer, and thus be more engaged in, a more individual-focused workplace over a collaborative workplace or vice versa. Other preferences related to cultural values include autonomy, communication styles, access to

leadership, goal setting, recognition, rewards, et cetera. Another example of cultural values coming into play in the workplace is regarding leadership; those from hierarchical societies with distinct division of power might be uncomfortable in a work setting where employees are equal and leadership is highly accessible and the reverse. Simply put, employees will be more engaged in work settings that align with their own cultural values pertaining to work.

Below is a graph illustrating where each country lies on the spectrum for each dimension and the percentage of engaged employees in the workforce.

Figure 1.3 Engagement and Six Dimensions of National Culture



Graph generated using information from Hofstede Insights- Country Comparison, AON Hewitt (2017), Gallup (2017), Ponte Valle (2016), HR in Asia (2017), Ang (2018)

Culture-Focused Employee Engagement Strategies

The underlying issue at hand is that global business leaders cannot assume that the global economy will have a homogeneous workforce. Given the evidence that national culture is a factor in determining employee engagement, engagement strategies that are culture-focused have maximum impact on the diverse workforce. Minimal research was found combining national culture and employee engagement strategies, however abundant evidence express the impact of national culture on an employee's values and their engagement. Thus, it is evident there is an opportunity to increase global employee engagement with culture-focused engagement strategies.

Upon analysis of the Mercer Limited (2007) and AON Hewitt (2017) study and referring to the six dimensions of national culture, several connections became apparent between the six dimensions of national culture and engagement. First, the top engagement driver for United Kingdom, China, and Brazil and second for United States called "sense of personal accomplishment," is reflective of the masculinity versus femininity and individualism versus collectivism dimensions of culture (Mercer Limited, 2007, p. 5). Employees in these countries are engaged by a sense of accomplishment from their work. Secondly, the United Kingdom and Brazil share their number two driver of engagement of "confidence in senior management," which is related to the power distance index and uncertainty avoidance index dimensions of national culture (Mercer Limited, 2007, p. 5). These kind of connections can be made with the remaining dimensions and will be analyzed below.

Of the countries selected for analysis, the countries with the highest power distance are China and Nigeria, and the lowest power distance represented comes from Germany and the United Kingdom. As an example, in China, an opportunity for increased engagement is the

implementation of training and development opportunities. Only about half of all employees in China report that their “managers actively encourage them to participate in training opportunities” (Mercer Limited, 2007, p. 15). Since there is such high power distance, the society and workplace are consequently more hierarchical and allow for less interaction on a more personal level between management and employees than in lower power distance societies. From Mercer Limited (2007), China’s employee engagement percentage could benefit from being offered more training and development opportunities from management. Chinese managers might try to communicate these opportunities more frequently with their employees. On the other hand, for the cases of the United Kingdom and Germany, the low power distance supports a more equal environment. This means leadership involvement and open communication with subordinates in the workplace. A culture-focused strategy for increasing engagement in relation to power distance is the degree of involvement of leadership depending on the society’s power structure, hierarchical or equalized.

In comparing individualism versus collectivism, the United States and United Kingdom are highly individualistic, while Brazil and China are collectivistic societies. Employees in the United States and United Kingdom place great importance on career advancement and personal accomplishment. A strategy to address these values of “the members of the organization, who appreciate freedom, independence and respect” is to provide opportunity for them to complete tasks of interest to them, “so they can perform them in a suitable range of autonomy” and be adequately engaged (Stankiewicz and Moczulska, 2012, p. 81). Autonomy is an approach to increasing engagement in individualistic societies. On the other hand, in countries that are more collectivistic in nature, organizations should look to approaches like collaboration or information sharing as those align more with the values of the culture. Stankiewicz and Moczulska (2012)

described China, a collectivist country, as having weak avoidance of uncertainty and that employees will value “the conditions of performing work and the atmosphere in a team” (Stankiewicz and Moczulska, 2012, p. 83). In short, culture-focused strategies of individualistic or collaborative workplace environments may be derived from looking at a culture’s preference for individualism or collectivism.

In regard to masculinity versus femininity, India is ranked right in the middle at 56 meaning it leans toward the masculine side and Brazil has an intermediate score of 49. Mercer Limited (2007) found promotion opportunities to be the greatest opportunity for increased engagement in India because employees responded that promotion opportunities were low (Mercer Limited, 2007, p. 15). Masculine cultures value competition and recognition from others. Aon Hewitt’s 2017 research found that in Brazil, the country with the highest engagement rate, the greatest opportunity for increased engagement is rewards and recognition (Aon Hewitt, 2017, p. 5). Although India and Brazil do not score as masculine as other societies in the table, there is evidence that supports their values of promotion, rewards, and recognition are driving forces lowering the country’s percentage of engaged workers. An engagement initiative derived from delving into the masculinity versus femininity dimension that addresses these factors could increase the engagement in India and Brazil.

The uncertainty avoidance index measures how threatened those in the culture feel in unknown or unfamiliar situations and their institutions to avoid those situations. China, India and United Kingdom have low uncertainty avoidance scores. Brazil and Germany had the highest scores of uncertainty avoidance at 76 and 65 respectively. A strategy for high uncertainty avoidance is leadership involvement in daily work and goal setting as employees in these cultures are seek great support with understanding how their goals and success will be achieved.

Conversely, those with low uncertainty avoidance enjoy autonomy and the ability to be spontaneous in their work with less leadership oversight. A culture-focused engagement strategy regarding this dimension is the degree of leadership involvement in daily work and goal setting, with the result of high uncertainty avoidance having more leadership oversight and low uncertainty avoidance having less. Another point to mention is that an apparent link appeared between uncertainty avoidance and power distance during this research. Those with high power distance seem to have more rigid and hierarchical structures and higher degrees of uncertainty avoidance. On the other hand, low power distance allows for more flexibility and autonomy in work which is characteristic of low uncertainty avoidance.

The long term orientation versus short term normative orientation measures a culture's perspective on time including how they deal with the past, present, and future. The three cultures with scores worth discussion are the Nigeria at 13, United States at 26, and Germany at 83. Engagement initiatives for those with short term normative orientation like Nigeria and the United States should allow for quick employee learning and growth as concluded from the subject literature because short term societies focus more on achievement in the short term. Whereas those strategies for cultures with long term outlooks should include training and development initiatives promoting long term learning and growth to meet the employee's value of preparing for the future. The culture-focused strategy for the long term orientation dimension includes differing degrees of learning and growth; utilizing short term oriented learning and growth for short term outlooks and a long term focus of learning and growth for long term outlooks.

A question arose when conducting this research about the relationship between the level of indulgence in society and the level of employee engagement. A hypothesis was that more

indulgent societies would be more engaged in their work because they want to be able to spend their money as they please, whereas restrained societies would have lower engagement. Looking at the United States and Germany in Figure 1.3, this hypothesis is proven to be partly false. The United States is highly indulgent, however has low engagement at 32%. Germany, China, and Nigeria are restrained societies with 56%, 69%, and 69% engagement percentages, respectively. This suggests the second part of the hypothesis might be correct, as China and Nigeria are restrained societies with the highest percentages of engagement in the sample. It is inconclusive whether the indulgence versus restraint dimension is worth analyzing in relation to engagement of the selected countries. Further research on trends across a larger sample of countries might conclude a different result.

The table below summarizes the preceding discussion about culture-focused engagement strategies.

Table 1.2 Engagement Approaches by Country and Dimension

Country	Power Distance	Individualism vs. Collectivism	Masculinity vs. Femininity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long vs. Short Term Outlook	Engagement Approach
United States	Low	Individualist	Masculine	Low	Short	Rewards, recognition, career advancement, autonomy, goal setting
China	High	Collectivist	Masculine	Low	Long	Information sharing, training and development, communication, career development opportunities
United Kingdom	Low	Individualist	Masculine	Low	Short	Recognition, autonomy, goal setting
Nigeria	High	Collectivist	Masculine	Mid	Short	Information sharing, communication
India	High	Collectivist	Masculine	Mid	Mid	Collaboration, information sharing, career advancement, autonomy

Brazil	High	Collectivist	Masculine	High	Mid	Collaboration, information sharing, leadership involvement in goal setting/daily work
Germany	Low	Individualist	Masculine	High	Long	Leadership involvement, autonomy, career advancement, communication

Table derived from Hofstede Insights- Country Comparison, Ponte Valle (2016), AON Hewitt (2017), Mercer Limited (2007)

Limitations and Confounding Factors

The arguments presented in this paper act as a solid foundation for understanding employee engagement in a global environment. The limitation to these arguments is that these six dimensions are broad characterizations and that there can be cultural variations within countries. Referring to Stankiewicz and Moczulska (2012), there are diverse preferences within a society's culture. Some other critical elements to employee engagement are employee attitudes within the organization, especially in regard to internal demographics like age, income, education, and ethnicity. Finally, it is important that cultural value variations are remembered when designing and implementing employee engagement strategies in order to align with the organization's mission, vision, values, goals, and culture.

Implications

The implication of this research is simple: global organizational leaders cannot assume that what engages people in the United States will engage those across the globe. This is especially important for businesses to remain competitive in the global marketplace. This is a struggle for human resources departments because there is no one-size-fits-all approach to employee engagement because it is influenced by national culture. Thus, for employers expanding their operations around the globe, the question of what drives engagement takes on both increasing complexity and importance as their workforces become more culturally diverse (Mercer Limited, 2007, p. 5). Global organizations greatly benefit from gaining an understanding of typical engagement drivers across the globe by country or region like communication, recognition and rewards, autonomy, feedback, et cetera. This understanding helps provide the framework for engagement strategies around the world that are culturally-focused based on the six dimensions of national culture.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research concludes with a recommendation to remember that employees create value for organizations, so their cultural values must be remembered when designing and implementing engagement strategies. Surveying employees to find out what engages them and what does not while practicing cultural competence is one way to take cultural values into account when designing strategies. It is recommended to design surveys that address the six dimensions of national culture, while also conducting research at a national level. Additionally, taking a further look at the practices of Facebook, Google, Twitter, and others discussed is a good way for organizations to come up with engagement strategies that will align with the values

of their employees and the organization's mission, vision, values, and goals. This research has proven there is an opportunity to increase global employee engagement with culture-focused strategies. The future of employee engagement begins with considering cultural variations at a national level to develop culture-focused engagement strategies that will allow organizations to have more engaged employees and stay competitive in the globalized economy.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Professor Daniel Grundmann from the Human Resources Department in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University. I thank you for your insight, expertise, and patience that greatly impacted the research and presentation of this paper.

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