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**Work Culture in Japan and Taiwan**

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It is undoubted that culture, which encompasses the social behaviors and norms of a group of people, plays an important role in different countries. Different aspects such as knowledge, manners, beliefs, customs are parts of culture. Among all the aspects of culture, work culture is also a mixture of cultural features. Therefore, there will be a comparison and contrast between Japanese and Taiwanese work culture based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory to support the viewpoints mentioned in the essay.

First of all, Japanese people tend to behave restrained and self-controlled in every aspect of life, not to mention in work culture. According to Hofstede's theory, Japan gets a lower grade on one of the cultural dimensions, Indulgence. It shows the high rate of cultural restraint in Japanese society. Not only does it mean that Japanese people do not emphasize too much on their leisure time, but also in the workplace. They view regulation and discipline as crucial, they show up on time in the office and need to work overtime. They even consider working overtime normal and are willing to do it. Moreover, some studies indicate that Japanese people think that a good employee is determined by the time he spends in the office instead of how much work he actually finished, which shows contradictions. Compared to Taiwan, people are usually not willing to work overtime and try to finish their work as soon as possible. As a result, Taiwan has a very intermediate score on this dimension. Though in

Taiwan people tend to work overtime due to some company culture, people seek for a balance between having leisure time and working, which is different from the extreme attitude toward work of Japanese people.

Another difference between Japanese and Taiwanese work culture is the score on the dimension of masculinity. In fact, Japan is one of the most masculine societies in every sense. There is serious competition between Japanese employees, to be more specific, the competition between Japanese companies is severe. Employees are motivated when they are in a competition fighting against their competitors. Their pursuit of perfection at a much higher standard which makes them become passionate about being the top in their professional fields. In addition to this factor, Japan is a masculine society since it is hard for women in Japan to survive in the office where most positions of superiors are given to men. As for Taiwan, Taiwan is relatively a more feminine society compared to Japan based on the lower score on the dimension of masculinity. In Taiwan, every person has a place and just does what they have to do as long as the capability allows. Besides, the population of women who have their own jobs in Taiwan is way higher than the population of career women in Japan, which explains the reason why Taiwan is a slightly feminine society.

In addition to the different score on the dimension of masculinity, there is a great difference on the dimension of uncertainty of avoidance, which has to do with the attitude toward the unknowing future. At 92 Japan is definitely one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries for the reason that Japanese people are so prudent that they are afraid of encounter changes. Moreover, this characteristic is well presented in their work culture, which is called “lifetime employment.” Not only Japanese companies keep this rule as a tradition, but employees tend to expect that they will

stay in one certain company forever. In another word, Japanese people are loyal to their belonging companies, therefore, it is a hard decision for people to make whether to leave the company in order to seek for a better opportunity or not. Not to mention that lacking ability to evolve and lack of flexibility are also the disadvantages of lifetime employment. Nevertheless, in Taiwan, though it has a high score on this dimension but not that high as in Japan, people easily make a career change once they find the job is too harsh or is not suitable for them. That is, even though Taiwanese people take the uncertainty of avoidance into consideration, they do not have the perspective like people in Japan of being in the same company in their lifetime. However, it is true that both people in Japan and Taiwan still follow the rules and try to control the future in order to ensure the source of finance and stability.

The last one is that Japan has a lower score on the power-distance index which is slightly below the world average. One of the reasons is that in the Japanese workplace, the decisions are made and confirmed by each layer in the company. With the slow decision making finally received by the employment, they have more time to understand the situations, discussing with each other to attain increased productivity. However in Taiwan, the high score on power-distance means that employees rely on the decision made by the top decision maker. When top managers are making decisions, employees just stand by and do whatever they are told to do as the superiors expected.

In conclusion, by importing Hofstede's cultural dimension theory to support the different features of work culture in Japan and Taiwan, it gives a more accurate perspective and explanations of the distinctive cultural aspects of people from these two countries.

## Works Cited

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