



International Education Systems

An analysis of the core cultural values in the education system from selected countries in comparison to the United States' education system.

Analyzed Terms

Power Distance: the way power is distributed among society, and the way it is perceived by those who are considered unequal.

Collectivism: places a high value on the group structure and less on the individuals in the group.

Individualism: values and encourages individual expression and contribution rather than collectivity.

Context Communication: Categorized as high or low depending on whether the country is collectivist or individualist. It pertains to the style of communication and how much value is placed on the words being said.

Time-Orientation: Varies among different cultures. Places a value on either the past, present, or the future.

Cultural Differences in Education Systems

Case Study: France

- The French educational system developed its academic foundation based on the ideals of the French Revolution and the education acts of the Third Republic: mandatory, free of charge, and secular.
- The French education system is split up into three mandatory stages: primary school, secondary school, and high school. BTS is a two year post-high school program where students can specialize in a certain subject with the option to do one more year of study at a University (equivalent to a four-year bachelors program).
- Classes are generally taught in French, although other languages may be taught at some schools.
- School is mandatory for children between the ages of six and sixteen. After secondary school, students usually pursue higher education in a general or technological high school or a professional high school. At the end, students can pursue further vocational studies or enter the work force. A professional bachelorette entails three years of study, with the guarantee of high quality performance in the workplace.

	U.S.	France
Faculty Teaching Method	Interactive and lecture based classes	Lecture based classes
Instructor Role	Their role is to instruct their classes, as well as provide further help to struggling students via office hours.	Their role is to administer their classes and there are generally no further responsibilities beyond that.
Student Role	Responsibilities include: consistent attendance, coming to class prepared, participate in class, and be attentive.	Students are expected to show up to class and be prepared. Participation is generally not required.
Relationship	Students are informal towards their teachers, may have close relationships, and often use their professors' first names.	Students are formal with their teachers and typically have a large power distance between them.
Grading	Grading is on a scale of 0-100, anything over a 65 is considered passing.	Grading is on a scale from 0-20, and anything over 10 is considered a good grade.
How Grades are Determined	Final grades are determined by several factors and the forms of evaluation are weighted differently.	Typically the final grade consists of one exam or presentation at the end of the semester.
Class Participation	Participation is typically a factor calculated into your final grade.	Participation is typically not mandatory and does not determine your final grade.
Core Cultural Values that May Impact Education System	<p>Power Distance: Heavy emphasis placed on equality for all.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Individualism is highly valued and encouraged at a young age.</p> <p>Communication Style: New ideas, innovation, and willingness, and opinions are widely tolerated.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Emphasis is placed on hard work, yet leisure time is valued.</p> <p>Other important values: Success and achievement is displayed and praised in society.</p>	<p>Power Distance: Children are raised to be dependent on their superiors; parents, teachers, and supervisors.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Individualism is highly valued and encouraged in society.</p> <p>Communication Style: The French are highly innovated in developing new technologies. Society has strong opinions towards new ideas.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Maintaining a high quality of life is the most important factor of life.</p> <p>Other important values: Society is extremely structured and planning and scheduling is almost required.</p>

Cultural Differences in Education Systems

Case Study: China

- Mandatory education took effect in 1986 with the People’s Republic of China Compulsory Education law; children can receive nine years of education and financial support.
- The nine years of compulsory education includes 6 years of primary school and 3 years of secondary school. Admittance to higher education is limited, offering 1-2% of those who pass the entrance exam a spot in the universities. Those who are not admitted study in other countries or must find employment after secondary school. Higher education consists of junior college, bachelor’s degree, master’s program, and doctoral degree.
- Classes are taught in Mandarin or Cantonese depending on your location within China and mastery of the language is extremely valued.
- Emphasis is placed on Chinese and Math which make up 60% of the curriculum for primary and secondary school. They are also the only two subjects students are tested on for their university entrance exam. Teamwork is highly stressed in every curriculum and collectivism is valued.

	U.S.	China
Faculty Teaching Method	Interactive and lecture based classes	Collaborative work environment. Teachers and parents are highly involved in the learning process.
Instructor Role	Their role is to instruct their classes, as well as provide further help to struggling students via office hours.	Their goal is to encourage team work, selflessness, and respect. Extra help is provided and parent-teacher relationships are necessary for success.
Student Role	Responsibilities include: consistent attendance, coming to class prepared, and to be attentive.	Students have a hard work ethic and it is their responsibility to keep up with their classmates.
Relationship	Students are informal towards their teachers and have close relationships.	Formal relationships with their instructor and questioning an instructor’s teaching method or information provided is not encouraged. Relationships are based off of a hierarchy with students at the bottom.
Grading	Grading is on a scale of 0-100, anything over a 65 is considered passing.	Grading is on a scale of 0-100, anything over 60 is considered passing.
How Grades are Determined	Final grades are determined off of several factors and the forms of evaluation are weighted differently.	Final grades are based off of different forms of evaluation: quizzes, homework, and exams.
Class Participation	Participation is typically a factor calculated into your final grade.	Participation in class is valued and encouraged in the classroom at a young age. Participation at the university level is not customary.
Core Cultural Values that May Impact Education System	<p>Power Distance: Heavy emphasis placed on equality for all.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Individualism is highly valued and encouraged at a young age.</p> <p>Communication Style: New ideas, innovation, and willingness, and opinions are widely tolerated.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Emphasis is placed on hard work, yet leisure time is valued.</p> <p>Other important values: Success and achievement is displayed and praised in society.</p>	<p>Power Distance: Not all people are equal and inequalities are accepted among society.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Collectivism is highly valued. Personal relationships are held at a higher importance than tasks or commitments.</p> <p>Communication Style: Society is driven by competition, achievement, and success.</p> <p>Time Orientation: There is little emphasis placed on leisure time.</p> <p>Other important values: Gratification is controlled and even sometimes looked down upon.</p>

Cultural Differences in Education Systems

Case Study: India

- For centuries, India placed a high importance on education and the development of higher learning institutions. India's education system is strongly influenced by the British education system.
- Education is mandatory for children ages 6-14. Education is funded by the public and private sector and children have the right to free education during the compulsory years.
- Many universities teach in English and emphasis is placed on language perfection. There are many English universities which were built during British rule and English knowledge is highly valued, whereas other language studies are an independent effort.

	U.S.	India
Faculty Teaching Method	Interactive and lecture based classes	Lecture and paper-based classes.
Instructor Role	Their role is to instruct their classes, as well as provide further support to struggling students via office hours.	Professors are expected to teach the national curriculum and follow the syllabus provided by the school.
Student Role	Responsibilities include; consistent attendance, coming to class prepared, and to be attentive.	It is the responsibility of the student to put in effort to increase their intellectual capacity.
Relationship	Students are informal towards their teachers and have close relationships.	Students are disciplined and respect their teachers.
Grading	Grading is on a scale of 0-100, anything over a 65 is considered passing.	Grading systems can vary according to the school. Typically a scale of 0-10 is used, 4 and above is considered passing.
How Grades are Determined	Final grades are determined off of several factors and the forms of evaluation are weighted differently.	General exam at the end of the semester conducted by the school, rather than the professor.
Class Participation	Participation is typically a factor calculated into your final grade.	Little time for discussion and debate due to a strict syllabus.
Core Cultural Values that May Impact Education System	<p>Power Distance: Heavy emphasis placed on equality for all.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Individualism is highly valued and encouraged at a young age.</p> <p>Communication Style: New ideas, innovation, and willingness, and opinions are widely tolerated.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Emphasis is placed on hard work, yet leisure time is valued.</p> <p>Other important values: Success and achievement is displayed and praised in society.</p>	<p>Power Distance: Society is based off of a hierarchy.</p> <p>Collectivism and Individualism: Individualism is valued among those who are religious, whereas collectivism is valued in the workplace.</p> <p>Communication Style: India has a high tolerance of other views.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Lack of punctuality is often forgiven and there is little time for leisure.</p> <p>Other important values: Societal success and power is displayed. Indulgence is looked down upon.</p>

Cultural Differences in Education Systems

Case Study: Saudi Arabia

- Saudi Arabia’s school systems have transformed vastly in the past 80 years. Previously, only children who came from wealthy families were the ones that could afford to be educated.
- Today, education is free to all citizens, and there are many institutions available for all levels of education.
- The importance of education is detailed in the Qur’an and religion is at the center of the education system.
- In the 1960’s, the first school for girls was built and now women make up over half of those attending educational institutions. On the contrary, women are still not allowed to study certain topics, making it difficult for them to join the labor market. Today, some Saudi companies are starting to create a ‘women’s only’ work environment because women have been more driven in their endeavors than Saudi men.
- Saudi Arabia is the only country where gender-segregation still takes place at all levels of education.
- Kindergarten, six years of primary school, and three years each of intermediate and high school.
- Primarily taught in Arabic but English is valued

	U.S.	Saudi Arabia
Faculty Teaching Method	Interactive and lecture based classes	Emphasis on academic discipline within the classroom. Culture is incorporated into everyday lecture, and syllabi are not common.
Instructor Role	Their role is to instruct their classes, as well as provide further support to struggling students via office hours.	Role is to instruct classes, provide additional help outside of the classroom, and participate in school committees.
Student Role	Responsibilities include; consistent attendance, coming to class prepared, and to be attentive.	Schedules are mapped out on the first day, and their responsibility is to follow the curriculum and pass their classes.
Relationship	Students are informal towards their teachers and have close relationships.	Students have a great respect for their teachers and have formal relationships.
Grading	Grading is on a scale of 0-100, anything over a 65 is considered passing.	It is based on a 0-5.0 scale with 0 considered failing.
How Grades are Determined	Final grades are determined off of several factors and the forms of evaluation are weighted differently.	General exam at the end of the semester, administered by the school. Follows national curriculum. Syllabi may not be used widely.
Class Participation	Participation is typically a factor calculated into your final grade.	Participation is optional and not a factor in your grade.
Core Cultural Values that May Impact Education System	<p>Power Distance: Heavy emphasis placed on equality for all.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Individualism is highly valued and encouraged at a young age.</p> <p>Communication Style: New ideas, innovation, and willingness, and opinions are widely tolerated.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Emphasis is placed on hard work, yet leisure time is valued.</p> <p>Other important values: Success and achievement is displayed and praised in society.</p>	<p>Power Distance: High hierarchical order in society.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Collectivist society that places value on the family unit.</p> <p>Communication Style: They are normative thinkers, and value their cultural traditions.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Scheduling is very important and time is typically compared with money.</p> <p>Other important values: Emphasis is placed on equity, competition, and performance.</p>

Cultural Differences in Education Systems

Case Study: Russia

- Compulsory education lasts for nine years. After this, they have the choice to further their education to secondary school, which lasts two years. From here, they can attend a higher educational institute in which they can achieve a specialized degree in a subject of their choosing.
- Higher education started in Russia in the middle of the 18th century. Education has always been highly valued and over 50% of Russia's citizens have a higher education.
- Universities are currently transitioning to resemble American and British educational systems, consisting of a four year degree and a two year master's program.
- Primarily taught in Russian

	U.S.	Russia
Faculty Teaching Method	Interactive and lecture based classes	Lecture, seminar, independent work, and classroom tutorials.
Instructor Role	Their role is to instruct their classes, as well as provide further support to struggling students via office hours.	Their role is to instruct the class, challenge the students, and occasionally help struggling students.
Student Role	Responsibilities include; consistent attendance, coming to class prepared, and to be attentive.	Student's role is to actively keep up with the class and all its requirements.
Relationship	Students are informal towards their teachers and have close relationships.	Impersonal relationships
Grading	Grading is on a scale of 0-100, anything over a 65 is considered passing.	Grading is on a 5.0 scale, anything below a 3.0 is considered failing.
How Grades are Determined	Final grades are determined off of several factors and the forms of evaluation are weighted differently.	Oral exams conducted by the professor at the end of each semester, determine your final grade.
Class Participation	Participation is typically a factor calculated into your final grade.	Participation like note taking is mandatory.
Core Cultural Values that May Impact Education System	<p>Power Distance: Heavy emphasis placed on equality for all.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Individualism is highly valued and encouraged at a young age.</p> <p>Communication Style: New ideas, innovation, and willingness, and opinions are widely tolerated.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Emphasis is placed on hard work, yet leisure time is valued.</p> <p>Other important values: Success and achievement is displayed and praised in society.</p>	<p>Power Distance: An extremely centralized country where power is unequally distributed.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Collectivist society that places high importance on relationships and the group unit.</p> <p>Communication Style: Formality and distance is a sign of respect.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Leisure time is not valued.</p> <p>Other important values: and achievements are not typically praised. Modesty is highly valued in society. Organization and knowledge is extremely important.</p>

Cultural Differences in Education Systems

Case Study: Brazil

- Brazil has faced a shortage of professionals. This has greatly threatened the legitimacy of laborers in certain fields, especially at educational institutions.
- 78% of the Brazilian population is functionally illiterate. A majority of these people have attended school, but with inexperienced teachers and the fact that students cannot fail, students wind up graduating without learning the basics.
- Public schools in Brazil face issues of large class rooms, lack of staff, and poor infrastructure. They also have insufficient funds to build libraries or provide basic classroom essentials. Families that are rich send their children to private schools which provide better education.
- Elementary and Secondary school is somewhat mandatory and higher education is optional.
- Only 10% of the Brazilian population has a higher level degree. Those seeking a higher level degree are eligible for Brazil's new Scientific Mobility Program which allows the top 100,000 students to study abroad at a highly recognized institute in the United States. This program encourages academic and research exchange between both countries, and guarantees highly educated and globally aware graduates from the program.

	U.S.	Brazil
Faculty Teaching Method	Interactive and lecture based classes	Structured teaching methods are starting to become more common.
Instructor Role	Their role is to instruct their classes, as well as provide further support to struggling students via office hours.	Professors are typically preoccupied with outside research and it is up to the student to keep up with material.
Student Role	Responsibilities include; consistent attendance, coming to class prepared, and to be attentive.	Their responsibilities include keeping up with the class and handing in all assignments.
Relationship	Students are informal towards their teachers and have close relationships.	A close relationship is valued between the students and teachers.
Grading	Grading is on a scale of 0-100, anything over a 65 is considered passing.	Based on a 0-10 scale, anything below a 3 is considered failing.
How Grades are Determined	Final grades are determined off of several factors and the forms of evaluation are weighted differently.	Final grades are based off a series of quizzes, participation, and the final exam.
Class Participation	Participation is typically a factor calculated into your final grade.	Participation is highly valued and encouraged in the classroom.
Core Cultural Values that May Impact Education System	<p>Power Distance: Heavy emphasis placed on equality for all.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Individualism is highly valued and encouraged at a young age.</p> <p>Communication Style: New ideas, innovation, and willingness, and opinions are widely tolerated.</p> <p>Time Orientation: Emphasis is placed on hard work, yet leisure time is valued.</p> <p>Other important values: Success and achievement is displayed and praised in society.</p>	<p>Power Distance: Hierarchies are valued, and inequality is common.</p> <p>Collectivism vs. Individualism: Society is rather collectivist, and close relationships are valued.</p> <p>Communication Style: People are very passionate and demonstrative in their actions and emotions are easily displayed during interactions.</p> <p>Time Orientation: They value their leisure time and have a typically carefree attitude when it comes to punctuality.</p> <p>Other important values: They are a very optimistic society driven by close relationships.</p>

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