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Analysis of Hofstede dimensions among Colombia, United States, Pakistan and Lebanon family traditions and culture

Lisbeth Díaz Ruiz
Rosa María Siabato Ospina
Robert Ojeda Pérez¹

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Abstract

Around the world there are different practices, traditions at the religious level that can be a challenge for people who are in another culture to understand and even realize it. However, as human beings recognize and understand other cultures, they can see culture as a learning and not as an obstacle. Therefore, in this article we will review the culture and certain religious practices of the countries of Colombia, The United States, Pakistan and Lebanon and also their similarities or differences with the analysis of dimensions of Hofstede at a cultural level to develop an analysis regarding its practice and relationship with Colombia, in addition, see How tradition and culture, specifically religious, can make people think differently and change the perspective of seeing life depending on the country? , showing that despite carrying out different activities at the cultural level, as countries in relation to Colombia connect in certain aspects, where tradition and culture is shown as part of each territory and is a root that marks a history for each country, besides, that everyone has their beliefs and should be respected.

Key words

Tradition, religious practices, dimensions, beliefs, challenge.

¹ Doctor en Educación, Magister en Historia y pregrado en Historia. Correspondencia para el autor. Robert.rojeda@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1227-7854>

Introduction

A culture has been defined in many ways; it is a phenomenon where there are traits, characteristics of a group development for customs, traditions and activities that make a set of people. Also, “culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 3). It is necessary to learn and know about other cultures because the world is more connected with different networks in business, traditions, researching, development etc. There are even groups of people that share practices, activities with other people outside of their social circle.

This article is about the connections between cultures, specifically the United States, Lebanese and Pakistani with respect to Colombia in the traditions and celebrations in each country. It is important to understand that these two regions present a lot of differences between them. However, they can have common aspects to respect and know the other. For this, these relations and differences will be explained through qualitative research with interviews to people in these regions, also based on Hofstede dimensions.

For this article, you can see firstly the context with the specific traditions for this research in each country; second, the problematic and variables, then, a brief explanation of the cultural dimensions and the analysis with the United States, Pakistan, Lebanon and Colombia with respect to the tradition in each country.

Context

Around the world there are many cultures that can be similar to our own culture or very different, in all cases the learned set of traditions and lifestyles, socially acquired, of the members of a society, including their pattern and repetitive ways of thinking, feeling and acting (e.g., their behavior) Marvin (1990, p. 19) come hand in hand with our thoughts and how we view life. Therefore, we decided to choose the theme of Family and cultural traditions to deal with in this article, since it is something essential that we must take into account when comparing countries or want to understand events that we see in the news. So, our problem question is focused on how tradition and culture, specifically religious, can make people think differently and change the perspective of seeing life depending on the country?

We know that as the world enters a state of globalization, cultures become related, but it also allows us to defend our traditions, in both scenarios it is necessary to understand the other as part of the cultural exchange that lives daily for them we have chosen four countries that will be analyzed: Colombia, the United States, Pakistan and Lebanon, from their traditions and differences together with the reading of Hofstede to solve challenges of organizational and intercultural culture that may exist in each.

Problem

The culture problem is an important topic around the world for the different consequences, thoughts, feelings, perceptions of people in a group, and this has an influence on others. In this case, Western and Middle Eastern culture have had clashes between them,

for instance, the practices of each tradition, the religious environment, and more. These types of differences have consequences like the creation of stereotypes, negative feelings, wars, social conflicts and all because some people don't respect and recognize the other.

Theoretical framework

According to Graburn (2001), tradition was the name given to those cultural features which, in situations of change, were to be continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost (p.8).

Religious Culture in U.S.A and Lebanon

The United States of America is a country that is in the north of the American continent and borders countries such as Canada and Mexico, which makes it a very diverse country in the types of religions it included. In recent years the percentage of believers has grown, from 83.65% to 85.18%. As for Christianity, it has also increased, in the previous survey 78.8% professed it and according to the latest data 80.77% of the population professed it.

In the United States, despite being a country that contains many religious women in each of the states where the free will decisions of all people are respected, in recent years groups of people without religion have been appearing due to “trends of secularization detected in the 21st century show no signs of slowing down”.

Lebanon is a country in the Middle East, which is a reflection of the melting pot of races, cultures and religions it represents from the Near East, “the composition population is both a blessing and a disgrace”

At first glance, the main division in Lebanon is between Christians and Muslims, but in turn these two groups are subdivided into an infinity of subgroups with great differences between them. Christians up to the years 90 were the majority group, but today they represent only 39%8 of the population.

One of the areas that has been most affected by religious diversity is political life in Lebanon, where it is fragmented by the Taif agreements in 1943. Existence of this particular political system is nothing more than the consequence of a society religiously very fragmented. . Nevertheless, social inequalities and the interventions of other States turned the example of tolerance into a sample of what should never happen. Much work must be done on coexistence and dialogue between the different confessions religious, since each and every one of them is Lebanese and must remain there so that Let Lebanon go back to what it was. This element enriches Lebanese society but at the same time makes it much more fragile.

Religious Culture in Pakistan and Colombia

Pakistan is a multiethnic country located on the western border of India and the eastern borders of Iran and Afghanistan. Its history has contributed to Pakistan's diversity. The ethnic and religious diversity presents difficulties when trying to identify practices, beliefs, for instance, “today, the proportion of non-Muslims has declined to approximately 3.7% of the population due to the fact that non-Muslims face many challenges, such

as employment discrimination, societal discrimination, forcible conversion to Islam, intimidation, violence” (Mehfooz, 2021).

However, Pakistan has an ever-evolving culture and its people have had to be flexible, they had to adapt with the different practices and cultures in this territory, adaptability, resilience has become important qualities. Also, Pakistan is a collectivist culture because people are deeply interdependent, social connections are essential to daily life and relationships play an important role, there is a concept that describes it. This is understood through the concept of *wasta* (relationship forming). *Wasta* can be observed when, for example, “people turn to a close friend or relative for help, instead of a government institution. This kind of social support network is crucial and gives many Pakistanis a very strong sense of community” (cultural atlas, 2022).

Pakistan has a culture diversity and they have to face the different cultures to accept the changes in the society. This territory has more than 18 ethnics groups, and the practices, beliefs are distinct in each space of the territory.

On the contrary, Colombia has been a country with the domination of the catholic church, since the colony “Until the civil war of the mid-20th century, better known as Violence, the Catholic Church remained the most powerful institution in Colombia” (Cely, 2012). Its influence was in the social, economic, political part of society, and it also extended to private life, guiding and guiding the life of Colombians.

Then, during the first half of the 20th century, radical liberals allied with various social sectors tried to weaken the Catholic cultural monopoly, however, the Catholic Church responded and managed to slow the advance of these sectors. Later in Colombian history modernity and the industrialization of markets, new media, allowed Colombians to seek other social spaces by feeling themselves in a situation of maladaptation, with this they built their existential sense and more that could no longer be controlled by the Catholic church.

For these reasons, Colombia presents religious diversity with spaces like Witnesses of Jehovah and numerous Protestant and Evangelical denominations. “Among these stands out the Pentecostal evangelical movement, which since the end of the twentieth century has proven to be the only rival in ability to dispute the leadership of the Catholic Church in the Colombian religious field” (Cely, 2012).

Traditions of each country

Colombia

- This is one of the most important festivities in the country, and is usually celebrated on December 7 as the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary and beginning of the festivities of December where lanterns, candles are lit in shopping centers, houses and public places.
- Christmas: This feast is celebrated as a commemoration of the birth of the child Jesus where all people go to Mass at the beginning of the day, then at night to celebrate at home with their families, usually eating turkey or pork leg accompanied with *Natilla* and *Buñuelos*, At midnight gifts are given as a token of

gratitude and love for loved ones, there is a lot of gunpowder throughout the day but most takes place at night.

United States

- Saint Patrick’s Day: Saint Patrick is commemorated with his characteristic clover symbolizing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which was used to explain the Holy Trinity during the construction of churches, schools and monasteries. Despite being a holiday of Irish origin, in the United States it has appropriated due to the great impulse of Irish immigrants who settled.
- Thanksgiving Day: This day is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of the month of November. Generally, on this festivity family and friends gather around a table to share a banquet. celebrations are commemorated to give thanks for the harvests of the 17th century. Most people in the United States celebrate this holiday with family gatherings in their homes where they prepare a banquet. In many houses it is common to offer a prayer of thanks. The traditional main course for dinner is a large roasted or baked turkey with a stuffing made of cornbread and sage, with pumpkin pie being the most popular dessert.

Annually, the Macy’s department store chain holds a grand parade through the streets of Manhattan, New York, attracting millions of people to Broadway Avenue to see the huge giant balloons and witness performances by guest artists.

Pakistan

- Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam; the other four pillars on which it is based are faith (*shahadah*), prayer (*salah*), almsgiving (*zakah*) and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*). During Ramadan, the Night of Destiny or Decree (*Lailat el Qadr*). There is a fast that begins with sunrise, and when it ends, effort and prayer must be increased in order to please God and obtain his forgiveness. It is especially important, on the night of destiny that Muhammad received the holy verses of the Koran.

Ramadan coincides with the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which varies according to the cycle of the moon, and each year it advances a few days,

- Eid-al Fitr, ends the fast. It is a very special holiday for Muslims, who share their joy at having fulfilled Allah’s mandate, not only with their own family but with the entire community. Traditional foods and sweets, visits to friends and relatives, gifts for children, community prayers in the mosques... a great party that usually lasts three days.

Lebanon

- Feast of Mar Maron, Saint Maron was a Christian anchorite, today sanctified, who dedicated himself to praying in absolute poverty. He received with kindness all those who visited him and received the gift of healing the sick. Originally from Syria, he is a saint whose feast day is celebrated in Lebanon on February 9.

The monastery of San Marón, on the border with Syria, has caves carved into the rock where both the saint and his first followers lived.

- Ashura: The Day of Ashura commemorates one of the most important festivities of the Shiite calendar. It commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and processions are held with faithful who flagellate themselves and hit their skulls with swords. In Lebanon, it is celebrated by the Shia Muslim communities and the processions are usually as impressive as those of the faithful Catholics who also flagellate themselves during Holy Week.

Analysis of Hofstede dimensions.

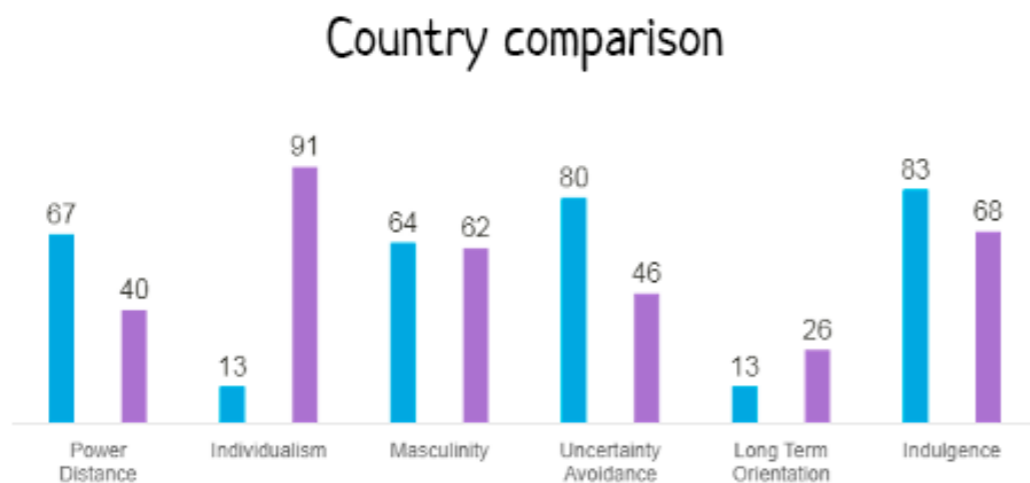
The following comparison is between the dimensions of Hofstede and the traditions chosen to research. The variables are the power, individualism, the role of masculin or feminin tendens, uncertainty, long and short terms and indulgence.

| Variable/Country | United States | Colombia |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Power | <p>Culture is a central aspect in society and everyone is unique, but, with social control, most people will not deviate too much from the norm.</p> <p>All individuals in societies are not equal. it has to do with the fact that a society's inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders.</p> <p>USA has 40%.</p> | <p>Power is unequal, this inequality is a fact of life itself.</p> <p>This inequality is accepted in all layers of society.</p> <p>Colombia has 67%.</p> |
| Individualism-collectivism | <p>At 91% USA It is a highly individualistic country, separating self from us for certain aspects. In business and when interacting if they act professionally to get what they want.</p> | <p>At a score of 13 Colombia is amongst the lowest Individualist scores; in other words, it lies amongst the most collectivistic cultures in the world.</p> <p>Colombians will often go out of their way to help you if they feel there is enough attention given to developing a relationship, or if they perceive an "in-group" connection of some sort, however thin.</p> |

| Variable/Country | United States | Colombia |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Uncertainty | <p>There is a fair degree of acceptance for new ideas, innovative products and a willingness to try something new or different, whether it pertains to technology, business practices or food.</p> <p>The Uncertainty is low with 46%, they do not require so many rules and are less expressive. The 11/9 have created fear in society.</p> | <p>Expressions are expressed openly. Moreover, the rules are not necessarily followed, it depends on the group.</p> <p>At 80% Colombia is a country with high uncertainty.</p> |
| Masculinity-Femininity | <p>The society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the "winner" or "best-in-the-field".</p> <p>His value system starts in childhood and continues throughout one's life – both in work and leisure pursuits.</p> <p>At 62%, the USA is a masculine society.</p> | <p>A high score (Masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success.</p> <p>A low score (Feminine) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life.</p> <p>At 64% Colombia is a masculine society.</p> |
| Long- and short-term orientation | <p>At 26, the USA is prone to analyze new information to check whether it is true.</p> <p>Many Americans have very strong ideas about what is "good" and "evil".</p> | <p>At 13 Colombia is a country that maintains traditions and rules and is linked to time and not to social change, they want the absolute truth and high respect for traditions.</p> |
| Indulgence-restraint | <p>The United States scores as an Indulgent (68) society. It is a prudish society, work hard and play hard. The States has waged a war against drugs and is still very busy in doing so, yet drug addiction in the States is higher than in many other wealthy countries</p> | <p>Scoring 83 Colombia is shown to be an Indulgent country. They enjoy life and have fun, provide a positive attitude and it is important to have free time, spend and act as they wish.</p> |

Note. Own elaboration.

Graphic 1.



Note. Dimensions between USA and Colombia.
Elaborated by Hofstede-insights, 2022.

Compared to the previous table, the United States is a country that tends to have more clear that its power is hierarchical and that there are rules to follow, and having a lower percentage, means that with a social control people will not deviate from the norm, From there comes being more individual than Colombia because, act with professionalism in aspects that need to be kept clean and safe. It can be evidenced that there is a great difference in this aspect, since Colombia is characterized by being open to even new relationships and gives opportunity for trust and interaction with people in an easy way.

According to uncertainty, the United States has a fear in society of trying new things or departing from the rule or norm that directs them due to the consequences that this may have. We have to understand that this was due to the attack on the twin towers. On the other hand, the two countries are highly masculine, that is to say that they prefer a society of competition, success to tranquility and calm that is the feminist being.

Although Colombia is a country that follows traditions within its culture, the United States must verify the information provided to check whether it is true or not. It could be said that it is less conservative. Finally, Colombia is a country that considers itself freer to do what they want, unlike the United States that are highly restricted and need to maintain rules and direct society regarding what they do.

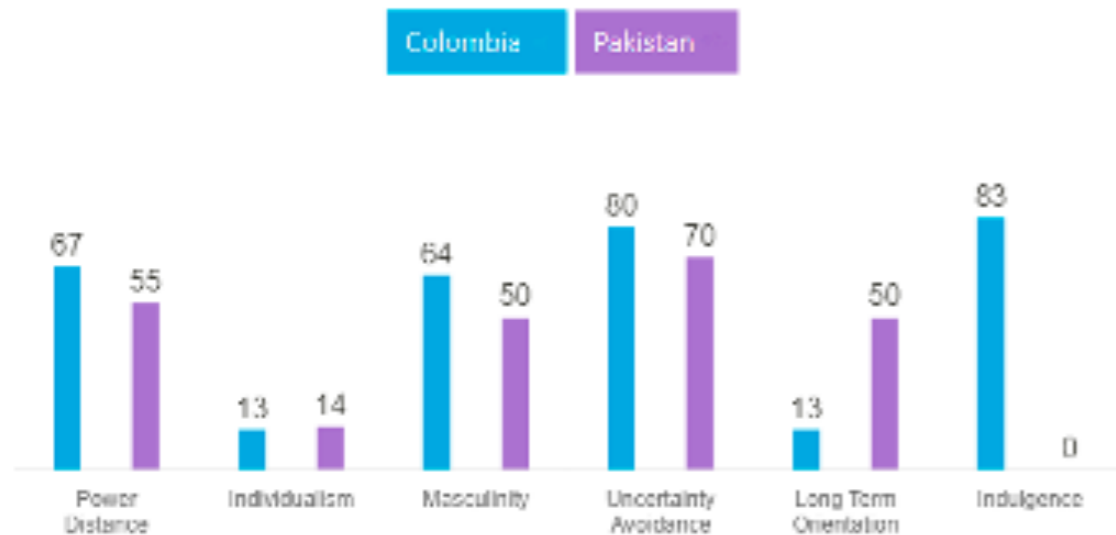
Table. 2 Cultural Dimensions between Pakistan and Colombia.

| Variable/Country | Pakistan | Colombia |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Power | This country has 55%. It means that it's not possible to recognize that the power has to develop in an unequal way. | Power is unequal, this inequality is a fact of life itself. This inequality is accepted in all layers of society. Colombia has 67%. |
| Individualism-collectivism | At 14%, Pakistan is a collectivist country. For them, the family, friends, and external relations are important and they have to be loyals and the different relations are considered like family ties. | At a score of 13 Colombia is amongst the lowest Individualist scores; in other words, it lies amongst the most collectivistic cultures in the world. Colombians will often go out of their way to help you if they feel there is enough attention given to developing a relationship, or if they perceive an "in-group" connection of some sort, however thin. |
| Uncertainty | At 70, it has a great preference for uncertainty. This means that they hold rigid codes of beliefs and behaviors and are intolerant of unorthodox ideas and behavior. In this culture there is a necessity for rules, it is important the time, the punctuality. | Expressions are expressed openly. Moreover, the rules are not necessarily followed, it depends on the group. At 80% Colombia is a country with high uncertainty. |
| Masculinity-Femininity | At 50 on this dimension, and since this is exactly in between, it cannot be said whether Pakistan has a preference for masculinity or femininity. | At 64% Colombia is a masculine society. This indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success. |
| Long- and short-term orientation | At 50, it's not possible to determine the preference for the past or living about the present moments. They can get to use the traditions and rules for some things and modernism for others. | At 13 Colombia is a country that maintains traditions and rules and is linked to time and not to social change, they want the absolute truth and high respect for traditions. |
| Indulgence-restraint | With an extremely low score of 0 on this dimension, Pakistan is a restricted society, they have cynicism and pessimism, besides, they aren't interested in free time and they control the gratification of their desires. | Scoring 83 Colombia is shown to be an Indulgent country. They enjoy life and have fun, provide a positive attitude and it is important to have free time, spend and act as they wish. |

Note. Own elaboration.

Graphic 2.

Country comparison



Note. Dimensions between Colombia and Pakistan. Elaborated by Hofstede-insights, 2022.

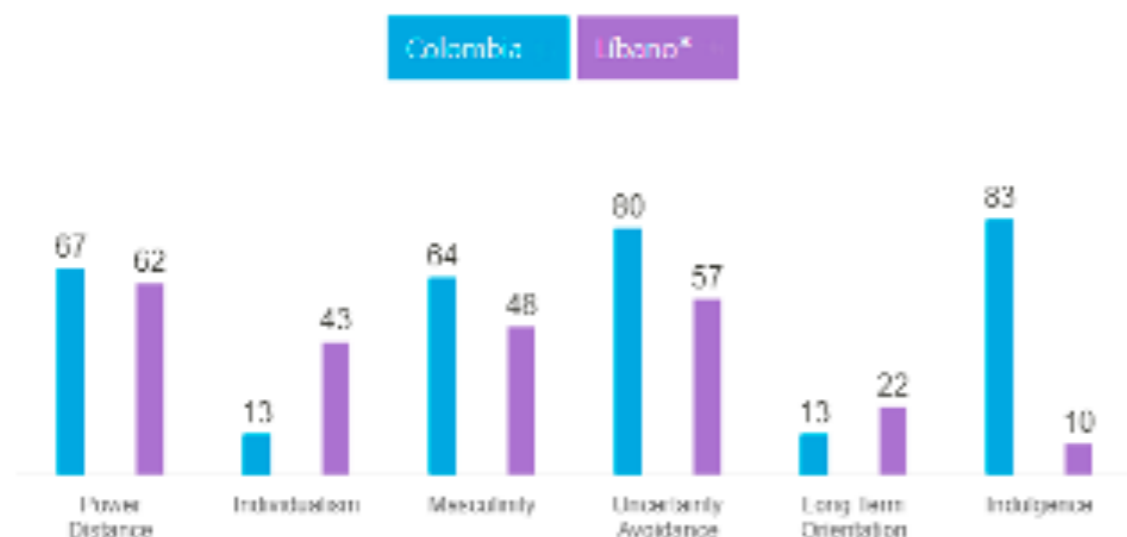
It is evident that Pakistan is a country that does not address a dimension, simply take a partial value of these, for example, in power it is not possible to determine whether they think it is for a few and that they should lead and also, which is unevenly distributed, unlike Colombia, which tends to be clear that power is unequal. The same happens with whether it is male or female, you might think that, using the two aspects, however, it is not possible to determine it.

On the other hand, the two countries are collectivists, they are clear that family, friends and their relationships are important within society and that we have to take care of them because it is something very valuable, also, in the development of a relationship where there is freedom and solidarity with new people. What is striking is the low level of indulgence which means that Pakistan is a very restricted country, they think that they should not be based on the desire of things because it ends up being something of the bodies so they control these desires. Finally, the citizens of Pakistan share traditions but at the same time, they give way to modernity and the changes that this has, on the side of Colombia, follows traditions by its trajectory and meaning rather than by a change that must be taken.

| Variable/Country | Lebanon | Colombia |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Power | Lebanon obtains a punctuation high with 62, it means that people accept a hierarchy order. There are inequalities and subordinates expect to be told what to do. | Power is unequal, this inequality is a fact of life itself. This inequality is accepted in all layers of society. Colombia has 67%. |
| Individualism-collectivism | At 43, Lebanon is an individualist society, there is a compromise with the different relations. Besides, Society fosters strong relationships in which everyone takes responsibility for the other members of their group. | At a score of 13 Colombia is amongst the lowest Individualist scores; in other words, it lies amongst the most collectivistic cultures in the world. Colombians will often go out of their way to help you if they feel there is enough attention given to developing a relationship, or if they perceive an “in-group” connection of some sort, however thin. |
| Uncertainty | At 57, they evite uncertainty, it means that they organize everything with rules and norms within society. | Expressions are expressed openly. Moreover, the rules are not necessarily followed, it depends on the group. At 80% Colombia is a country with high uncertainty. |
| Masculinity-Femininity | At 48, Lebanon prefers femininity. Society dominates the values orientated to caring for others and quality of life, also, they have the possibility to be the better version of masculinity or femininity. | At 64% Colombia is a masculine society. This indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success. |
| Long- and short-term orientation | The punctuation is low with 22, so Lebanon is opening to still with the traditions and they want to achieve the goals in a short time. | At 13 Colombia is a country that maintains traditions and rules and is linked to time and not to social change, they want the absolute truth and high respect for traditions. |
| Indulgence-restraint | At 10, Lebanon is restrained. They have the perspective that their actions are restricted by social precepts and they feel that indulging is wrong. | Scoring 83 Colombia is shown to be an Indulgent country. They enjoy life and have fun, provide a positive attitude and it is important to have free time, spend and act as they wish. |

Note. Own elaboration.

Country comparison



Note. Dimensions between Colombia and Pakistan.
Elaborated by Hofstede-insights, 2022.

Lebanon and Colombia are highly different in dimensions except for power, both are clear that it is unequal and that some direct and must maintain order over the others. But, the rest if it changes, for example, individualism is high in Lebanon and keep distance when necessary and it comes to the protection of their closest beings and so, take responsibility for their care.

Unlike Colombia, they prefer to be a female society where they dominate values oriented to care and protection, but also, give the possibility of being the best version of each. However, they organize everything according to rules and rules that must be followed to maintain a balance.

Finally, they maintain traditions over time, which means achieving short-term goals. Colombia, on the other hand, maintains its traditions as a matter of history and respect, but they give way to expressing social change. This is why Pakistan ends up seeing its actions as restricted before the precepts of society and they feel that the indulgence is wrong, it is an aspect where it can collide quite a lot with Colombia, because, it is one more country to accept certain rules and norms but it will not necessarily govern the actions of individuals for every development of their life.

Results

Christmas

According to the table and comparing the different traditions, Christmas for Colombia is very important and despite the inequalities of order, they enjoy everything, so many times do not make class rules such as for example, gunpowder to want to see and do something different all year. In addition, they are very collective with the needy, who even share food in these spaces.

It is a country that does not leave traditions, always follow the same, the manager, novenas, food and, also, very connected to the religious. “Each country has been positioned relative to other countries through a score on each dimension. The dimensions are statistically distinct and do occur in all possible combinations, although some combinations are more frequent than others” (Hofstede, 2011, p.8). With this, it is possible to see the differences with the United States, where they are more individualists or segment their group to celebrate Christmas, being only family members.

Day of the candles.

This celebration, like Christmas, is very important for Colombia due to the religious level that the Virgin Mary represents in her life. It is a day where Colombians show their ability to share with others and provide a relationship of trust with all the people around them. According to Hofstede’s graph, Colombia, being a country with a high level of indulgence, openly expresses its emotions and more on special dates like this one, having a positive attitude.

Saint Patrick’s Day and Thanksgiving Day

It is a specific tradition for the USA, but according to Hofstede, “Older people are both respected and feared” (2011, p.9). And in this case, it is a celebration in commemoration of the patron saint of the island, Saint Patrick, is also evidenced when it is said that the United States are prudish, they search for some religion. The masculinity is in the Father Saint Patrick, although they represent the leprechauns both feminine and masculine, all in the direction of man and their orientation towards what is good and bad led them to that they could drink beer and eat even though before, they were periods of fasting in the population.

On the other hand, Thanksgiving is the biggest holiday that the United States has after Independence Day, commemorating giving thanks for everything that was given during the year, through prayers. With Hofstede’s graphs we realize that individualism is evidenced in that it is shared with relatives and not with people outside your family nucleus.

In addition, the United States and Colombia are related to indulgence since both societies evolve in a way where the culture at the time changes very traditional aspects of each celebration directing new precepts.

Ramadan and Eid-al Fitr

In both religious traditions, they focus on the importance of sharing with family and friends, maintaining the bonds of respect and protection between them, being, as Hofstede says, a highly collectivist country. Unlike Colombia, it is a country that must follow the rules and in this sense with tradition, they observe the times of prayers and meals according to what is established by the Koran, aspects that cannot be separated from their daily lives. Also, it is a society that seeks good living combining success and feminine values of care. On the Colombian side, being masculine, sometimes they lose the importance of the precepts in each tradition by focusing on certain aspects of success and only competitiveness.

Feast of Mar Maron and Ashura

They are celebrations that are guided towards complying with the norms and rules that they demand, for example with Ashura, no matter the physical pain that this causes them because this religious community will prefer to accept this tradition because it focuses on a religious aspect. On the other hand, in Lebanon it tends to be a society of caring for the other and protection of the social group to which they belong, that is why in the case of the Feast of Mar Maron, they take it as a being that reflects charity and care towards others. Others for the benefit of achieving health for those who need it through the religious aspect, therefore, society chooses to continue being feminine or to obtain the best version of themselves by being competitive and successful. Finally, it could be said that, unlike Colombia, they tend to follow their religious traditions completely without skipping steps or changes in said tradition, as is often the case in Colombia. For example, a celebration cannot be the same as last year, they are open to carrying out other activities and sharing with other people outside their social nucleus.

Conclusions

The cultural problem is an important topic of discussion because it highlights challenges at the level of territories to work in respect and recognition of each culture. Specifically, the article was based on discussing and comparing the cultures of Pakistan, the United States and Lebanon in relation to Colombia in the field of religious practices, showing great differences, but at the same time relating in the dimensions of Hofstede.

Between Colombia, the United States, Lebanon and Pakistan, they prefer to maintain the rules and norms when creating ties, following agreements, processes due to the history they have developed and affecting the construction of their culture, Unlike Colombia that although there are rules, in several it does not see them necessary, rather they are free in the sense of following them or not, in addition, although it is a secular territory, there is freedom in different thoughts.

At the level of religious freedom and its practices, they are countries that allow cultural diversity and have accepted changes according to their religious culture, but implying respect and recognition to different activities that are developed at the level of territory by the work that has made globalization and the flow of people from one territory to another.

Finally, it is important to understand that cultural diversity must be understood and although they differ and specifically in the religious part, territories have the opportunity to take advantage of their similarities regarding power, level of female or male society, be indulgent or not, have uncertainty or not so, evolve as territories and learn from each other for progress and stability in each culture.

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