



Portfolio Task A: Business Communication in the Information Age

Course Code	<i>MBA554</i>
Course Title	<i>Communication and Writing for Accountants</i>
Course Instructor	<i>Dr Anfaal Ahmad-Khan</i>
Coursework format	<i>Part A: Guided Assignment/reflection Part B: Assignment</i>
Weighting	<i>Part A: 5% Part B: 7%</i>
Word limit	<i>Part A: 1200 words Part B: 2000 words (always +/- 10% of the word limit) excluding references</i>
Submission date	<i>3rd March 2024 at 10pm</i>

Overview of Part A and B

Part A: in class we looked at various dimensions of culture, namely how these give rise to various styles and ways of communicating. I mentioned that Geert Hofstede (1982-2020), a famous Dutch philosopher greatly contributed to notion of culture, namely how values and attitude in the workplace are influenced by culture. Hofstede defined culture as the collective “programming of the mind”. Hofstede’s cultural dimension theory identifies six cultural dimensions (Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term Orientation vs. Short-Term Normative Orientation, and Indulgence vs. Restraint influence) which explain variations in values, beliefs, and behaviours among different cultures.

Begin with familiarizing yourself with these 6 dimensions of Hofstede’s culture (some of which we discussed in class). You may want to begin with watching Hofstede’s interview on culture (<https://youtu.be/wdh40kgyYOY>) in order to aid your understanding on his views and dimensions of culture.

Some additional useful websites:

<https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/management/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions-theory/>

<https://www.mindtools.com/a1ecvyx/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions>

Part B: In class we discussed the changing trends of the workplace (gig economy, ad hoc teams etc) and the implications of this on communication styles. We also briefly discussed how disruptive technologies in the information age (such as Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT and advanced technologies) are changing the communication styles (verbal, non-verbal etc). Part B encourages you to explore the communication skill set of future/entry-level accountants/business professionals.

Part A: Guided Assignment/Reflection on Culture

Assignment/Reflection Question:

Using Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory as a framework, critically analyze the impact of cultural differences on communication styles in Saudi Arabia vs a country of your choice.

In your assignment, discuss, compare and contrast how variations in Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term Orientation vs. Short-Term Normative Orientation, and Indulgence vs. Restraint) influence the ways in which individuals from Saudi Arabia and the country of your choice communicate. Provide real-world and personal examples to support your analysis and consider the implications for effective cross-cultural communication between the two countries. Finally, reflect and evaluate on Hofstede's cultural model.

Guidance/ Steps to follow:

- **Briefly define Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions:** Begin by providing a clear and concise explanation of each of Hofstede's cultural dimensions.
- **Select a country of your choice:** In addition to Saudi Arabia, select one other country of your choice. Justify the reason of your selection (e.g., future career move to the country of choice, clients or colleagues from a particular country of origin that you interact with etc)
- **Country comparison tool:** Use the country comparison tool: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool>. Note the value of each dimension for Saudi Arabia and the country of your choice (see **Appendix A** at the end of this document for more guidance).
- **Provide Relevant Examples and Analyse:** Briefly compare and contrast each dimension of culture and the impact that this may have on communication styles between Saudi Arabia and your chosen country. Provide specific examples from business or everyday life to illustrate how cultural dimensions impact communication styles in your chosen countries. These examples can be drawn from your own experiences, case studies, or real-world events. Delve into the implications of these cultural differences on communication. Consider both verbal and non-verbal communication aspects.
- **Evaluate the Culture-based Ethical Conflicts, Challenges and Opportunities:** Assess the challenges that may arise from cross cultural differences in communication between Saudi Arabia and your chosen country. Provide examples of culture-based ethical conflicts. You may also identify opportunities for effective cross-cultural communication between the two countries. **Cohen et al (1993) is an insightful read on culture-based conflicts.*
- **Evaluate Hofstede's model:** Critically evaluate Hofstede's model. Hofstede has been criticized for oversimplifying cultural complexities and reinforcing stereotypes. Despite these criticisms, briefly discuss if you think his cultural dimensions model is a valuable tool for cross-cultural analysis and understanding culture. Is there any aspect that is not captured?

Assessment Criteria:

- Clarity and depth of understanding of Hofstede's cultural dimensions.
- Critical analysis of the impact of cultural differences on communication.
- Effectiveness in providing relevant and well-supported examples.

- Thoughtful consideration of challenges, opportunities, and strategies for cross-cultural communication.
- Coherent structure and clarity of expression in the essay.

Word limit: 1200 words

Part B: Communication skills, Disruptive Technologies, and the Future Accountant Assignment

Question

Critically evaluate the following:

“Employees are important organizational stakeholders and the ability to attract prospective trainee accountants is crucial for accounting firms, especially in a context of a shrinking market of qualified accountants and high turnover rates in accounting firms). This situation is nowadays exacerbated given the higher propensity of members of the current generation – that is to say Millennials – to readily quit their jobs if they do not get what they want). We are in a context where competition among accounting firms to attract good candidates is fierce.” (Durocher et al, 2013, p.1)

In your assignment, you should conclude by explaining whether you **agree** or **disagree** with this statement. In arguing your view, discuss how the current information age and disruptive technologies are shaping the identity and communication skills of the future accountants.

In researching and writing your assignment, you should draw on a range of readings from, for example, journal articles, books, newspaper articles and reports by professional bodies. Where possible, you should also draw on real-world examples. Note, you must draw on the essential reading listed below.

Word limit: 2000 words

Essential reading

Durocher, S., Bujaki, M. and Brouard, F., 2016. Attracting millennials: Legitimacy management and bottom-up socialization processes within accounting firms. *Critical perspectives on Accounting*, 39, pp.1-24.

Additional Readings

Wells, P., Gerbic, P., Kranenburg, I. and Bygrave, J., 2009. Professional skills and capabilities of accounting graduates: The New Zealand expectation gap?. *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 18(4-5), pp.403-420.

Jackson, D., Michelson, G. and Munir, R., 2022. New technology and desired skills of early career accountants. *Pacific Accounting Review*, 34(4), pp.548-568.

Other reading

Credit will be given for other referenced reading.

Assessment criteria (you may refer to the rubric in the Portfolio Guidance document)

Assignment should feature the following:

Structure

- Clear introduction that provides an overview of the essay
- Logical conclusions that relate to and stem from previous discussion

Content

- Balanced discussion of different perspectives on implications of disruptive technologies in the information age and their implications on the communication skills of the future accountant
- Clear conclusion explaining whether you agree or disagree with the statement about the future job market of accountants
- Use of published works to support arguments
- Use of real-world examples to support argument

Reading

- Engagement with essential reading
- Evidence of further reading

Presentation

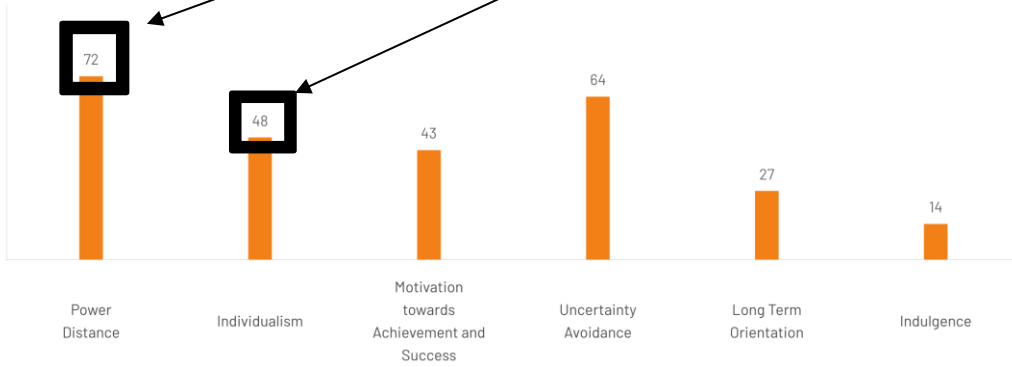
- Care taken over spelling, grammar, and referencing

Refer to the Portfolio guidance document for formatting, referencing and bibliography, submitting your Portfolio task and Turnitin etc.

Appendix A

Values to compare (72, 48, 43, 64, 27 and 14)

Saudi Arabia ✕



Click on the dimension titles below the chart to switch between dimension descriptions.



Solutions | Resources | Insights | Network | About us



CONTACT US

Power Distance

Individualism

Motivation towards Achievement and Success

Uncertainty Avoidance

Long Term Orientation

Indulgence

Click on the dimension titles below the chart to switch between dimension descriptions.

SAUDI ARABIA 72

Saudi Arabia scores high on this dimension (score of 72) which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat

[Overview >](#)

Click overview to see more details on each of the dimensions.

