Chapter 12
Comparative Analysis of Hofstede’s Culture Dimensions for West African Regions (WAF) and Nigeria

Osarumwense V. Iguisi
University of Benin, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
This research looked at Hofstede’s culture dimensions scores for a single country Nigeria against Hofstede’s scores for the West African Regions (Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone). The theoretical base for this study drew largely from the theoretical discourse on Hofstede’s Dimensions of culture. As a methodology, the study used questionnaire survey to collect data on manager and non-manager employees in Nigerian cement organisations. The survey confirms that the dimension of national cultures of Nigeria as measured by the work-values and desires of the employee population are different from those obtained by Hofstede’s for West African Region. Nigeria is still more collectivistic and become relatively more individualist since Hofstede’s study. Between Hofstede’ IBM study and the present study, there has been no change in the difference in Power Distance. Power Distance is much higher in Nigeria, like elsewhere in Africa, and this is unlikely to change for the foreseeable future. The large Power Distance in Nigeria means that the ideal manager is benevolent paternalistic.

INTRODUCTION
The constituent elements of a culture consist of the whole complex of distinctive features that characterize a society or social group. These features may be spiritual, intellectual, material or emotional. Several well-known studies have addressed questions of how to characterise cultures. For example, Hall (1976) reported that a primary characteristic of a culture is the degree to which they are focused on the individual (individualistic cultures) or on the group (collectivistic cultures).
The concept of culture has received a wide range of academic attention; nevertheless the study considers some definitions given by different authors. According to Taylor (1891) as quoted by (Okoro 2009: 188-189), Culture is ‘that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society’. Culture is “the customary, social and religious structures and intellectual and artistic manifestations that characterize a particular society. According to Iruku (1983: 52) culture is the civilization of a group of people at a given time such as their customs, attitude to arts, music, sports, crafts, recreation and to life generally”.

Stedham and Yamamura (2004) describe culture as stable and enduring but also somewhat changeable due to external forces. Culture constitutes the successful attempt to adapt to the external environment; it presents a social group’s shared strategy for survival (Triandis 1995). Culture can be defined as the repository of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, timing, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a large group of people in the course of the generations through individual and group striving (Valentini, 2005)

Iguisi (2009) defined culture as the pool of rules, beliefs, and values by which individual or group members conceptually order the objects and events in their lives in order to operate in a manner that is acceptable to people identifying with them and people that are negotiating with them in the course of their interaction. Hofstede (2012) defines culture as the “software of the mind”, a collective phenomenon, shared with the people who live in the same social environment. It is the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one social group or category of people from another.

According to the UNESCO Declaration of 2001, culture “should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” What constitutes culture then is the amalgamation of social practices, beliefs, and traditions that shape the outlook of the society.

The core of culture is formed by value. Values are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. According to Hofstede (2011), Values are basic convictions that people have regarding what is right and wrong, good and bad, important or unimportant. Values are among the first thing children learn-not consciously, but implicitly. Values according to Storey (2001) provide more general guidelines. According to Storey, values are beliefs that something is good and desirable by people. Some values are related to relatively specific aspects of life-such as, what is socially appropriate behavior for people in different societies. By this, it is possible to conclude that values define what is important, worthwhile, and worth striving for.