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Intellectual Output No 8

English Medium Instruction

Guide for Administrative Staff

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Introduction to EMI

English Medium Instruction (EMI) has received a lot of attention in recent years because of the potential benefits for students. EMI is seen to give students a double advantage: both knowledge of their subject and an improvement in their English proficiency. The reasons for the popularity of EMI in higher education vary depending on the country. However, despite the results of some studies indicating that students understand more content when learning in their first language compared to studying in English, the move towards teaching in English is becoming increasingly common at many European Universities.

How should the Guide for Administrative Staff be used?
The Guide for Administrative Staff can be read as a whole document or in chapters.

Who should read the Guide for Administrative Staff?
The Guide for Administrative Staff is prepared for staff working with students in different offices at university: e.g. IRO (International Relations Office), Dean's office, etc.

Could an administrative officer implement the ideas from the Guide?
Yes, administrative officers can adopt any theoretical knowledge and information about cultures while working with international students.

1. What is EMI

There are many definitions of what English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) is. This Guide will mention the most common:

> *The use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English* (Macaro et al., 2018).

> or
> *An educational system where content is taught through English in contexts where English is not used as the primary, first, or official language* (Rose and McKinley, 2018).

The following question may be considered, taking into account the above definitions: Is there a difference between teaching a subject through EMI and teaching it through your native language? It should be emphasized that teaching in English requires not only changing the language, but also the method of teaching, and this change helps academic teachers to accommodate the diversity they may have in the classroom.

It may not be possible to design the course and classes given in EMI in the same way as a native language course or classes. There are numerous and often predictable challenges and limitations when delivering lessons in English: the language proficiency of the lecturers, an inadequate level of English language proficiency of domestic and international students, a lack of interest and motivation among students and staff, a lack of confidence to learn in a foreign language, the additional workload for lecturers and students, a lower quality of teaching and lower transfer of knowledge, and the unwillingness of lecturers to teach in a foreign language.

One might ask why universities offer courses in English if they have to face so many challenges. There are many different reasons for this. Firstly, English has become a *Lingua Franca* and the globalization of higher education is taking place in English. Most experts and researchers tend to agree on the main advantages and benefits of EMI in a globalized and increasingly interconnected world. These include the internationalization of curricula in higher education, the attraction of international partner universities and expansion of international networks, student and staff mobility, participation in international projects and research, access to teaching and research materials, graduate employability worldwide, cultural diversity, intercultural competences, foreign language proficiency and an international reputation and visibility.

Internationalization of higher education remains a priority for universities worldwide, and movements are inextricably linked with increasing the role of English in the university setting (Galloway and Rose, 2015).

2. Intercultural Communication in International Groups

Once the decision has been made to switch to English due to course requirements, the majority of teachers fear that their language skills may turn out to be worse than those of the students. Therefore, teachers are inclined to either fully concentrate on refreshing their English, i.e. fluency, speaking, etc. or to revise some methodological aspects. However, the cultural aspect is usually forgotten despite it being so crucial in communication in a foreign language. Since English has become the language of instruction, simultaneously, it has also become the tool for intercultural communication, and a failure to understand cultural differences in an international group may result in serious consequences. A lack of cultural competence may cause offense, usually unintentional, may lead to conflicts between particular group members or between the teacher and the group, may give rise to misunderstanding, or even result in a complete breakdown in communication, which could have been avoided easily. The Guide for Administrative Staff introduces three important names in intercultural communication that academic teachers should know when teaching international groups.

2.1. Geert Hofstede

Following G. Hofstede, culture is "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others". Certainly, a representative of one group does not necessarily reflect the characteristics of the entire group, and we do find distinctive features among particular individuals in a given culture. However, it is still the cultural setting and cultural background that is common to a given group of people, and it does influence our mindset at least at the early stages of our lives.

G. Hofstede went even further and based his model of culture on six dimensions. These dimensions are defined as "independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries (rather than individuals) from each other".

2.1.1. Geert Hofstede Dimensions

A. POWER DISTANCE

This dimension concerns, in a broad sense, the distribution of power in a given society and the social acceptance of the status quo. Societies may usually display a high or low degree of acceptance of the hierarchy in a society, although the medium degree is also an option. Here let's concentrate on the two extremes.

High power distance societies
Power in such societies is a crucial component of social life. Subordinates in the workplace consider themselves different from their supervisors and usually exhibit fear towards them. The level of trust is often low and it is the authority which dictates what is right and wrong. Those in power may enjoy privileges whereas any faults or failures are assigned to those lower in the hierarchy. In terms of education, the process of teaching concentrates more on teachers rather than students since it is the teacher who has power in the classroom and the students who need to listen and observe, but usually have no possibility to ask questions.

Low power distance societies
Such societies enjoy a more equal approach to power. In the workplace, supervisors are considered senior colleagues and people treat each other as partners. There is a strong tendency to diminish any social inequalities or hierarchy. The law is equal to all citizens. People exhibit more trust, solidarity and harmony. Education concentrates on students, who are encouraged to express their opinions and ask questions.

B. INDIVIDUALISM VS COLLECTIVISM

This index shows the extent to which people integrate in a given society.

The low extreme is referred to as *Collectivism*. Such societies exhibit eagerness to be closely related and form big families. People tend to take care of each other more. Identity is defined by the social system and the group one belongs to, whether it be a family, work group or group of friends. Hence the "we" aspect and perspective is

emphasized. People tend to join different organizations to have a sense of belonging and collectivism. They may enjoy rather stable social relations and individual opinions are usually determined by the will of others. People are most often relation-oriented.

The high side of the index, *Individualism*, emphasizes looser ties between society members. There is the tendency that everyone takes care of themselves and close family. The "I" perspective is crucial since one's identity is based on self-awareness. Everyone may enjoy the right to privacy, and autonomy, to make one's own decisions determined by only one's own mindset. Such societies are also most often task-oriented.

C. MASCULINITY VS FEMININITY

The *masculine* element of this dimension emphasizes the dominance of men in a given culture. Women nurture rather than rule and the gender roles seem to be clearly divided. Life goals are usually subordinated to work, money, and ambition, which is the driving force. People tend to be independent individuals in terms of mindset and finances. The notion of success plays a crucial role and a successful person is admired for his/her achievements. The popular phenomenon of the rat race can also be observed. Interestingly, the suicide rate seems to be on the increase in such masculine societies.

Feminine cultures exhibit more empathy, cooperation and agreement within a society. Commonly known gender roles seem to be equally distributed and do not depend so much on gender. People work to live rather than live to work, and the emphasis is on relations, compromise and negotiation.

D. UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

This dimension shows how societies feel when they face uncertainty and ambiguity. Since the future is unknown, it may evoke either fear or present a challenge.

Low tolerance towards uncertainty
In other words, high uncertainty avoidance characterizes societies which consider the future and any sort of uncertainty more as a danger rather than a challenge. Hence, there is the necessity to form some rules and laws that will give clear instructions to follow. Any

deviation from the commonly perceived norm is not tolerated. Such societies avoid anything that may change the status quo, they constantly worry about the future, and are less eager to take risk. The proverb 'better safe than sorry' applies in this case. In the workplace, people are mostly loyal and do not change their jobs so often, avoiding competition and conflict.

High tolerance towards uncertainty
In other words, low uncertainty avoidance characterizes societies that feel pretty comfortable with any ambiguity or uncertainty. Working hard is not a value in itself and changing one's job is a natural course of life. However, any sort of competition or conflict should be conducted according to the rules of fair play. People of different opinions are usually welcomed and well-tolerated. Interestingly, any form of nationalism is strongly disapproved of.

E. INDULGENCE VS RESTRAINT

Indulgence is typical of societies which are eager to enjoy life and entertainment, whereas *restraint* characterizes societies that have rather strict social norms which may not necessarily allow them to enjoy the joy of life.

F. LONG-TERM VS SHORT-TERM ORIENTATION

This dimension concentrates on the link between the past and present or future actions and challenges.

Short-term orientation
A low degree achieved in this aspect indicates that a given society has huge respect for tradition. Social norms and duties are most important and people pay attention to being right. They usually have no money to invest and expect fast results.

Long-term orientation
Tradition is adjusted to modern times. People exhibit patience for slow effects and build up substantial savings. Social duties are fulfilled rationally.

Let us now look at an analysis of selected cultures with reference to Hofstede's cultural dimensions: the maximum score is 100 points in each category; the higher the score, the stronger the tendency a

given culture displays. Remember, this is only an estimation and you will surely find representatives of a given culture who exhibit individual characteristics far from the average.
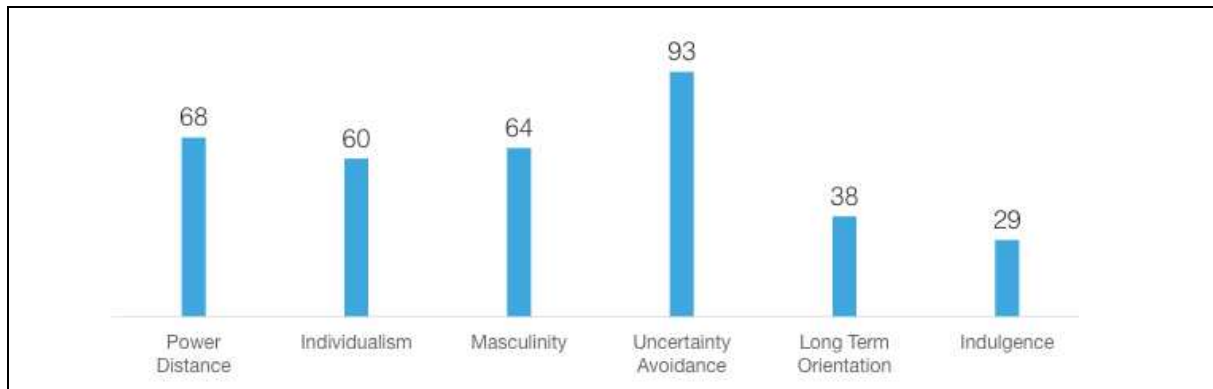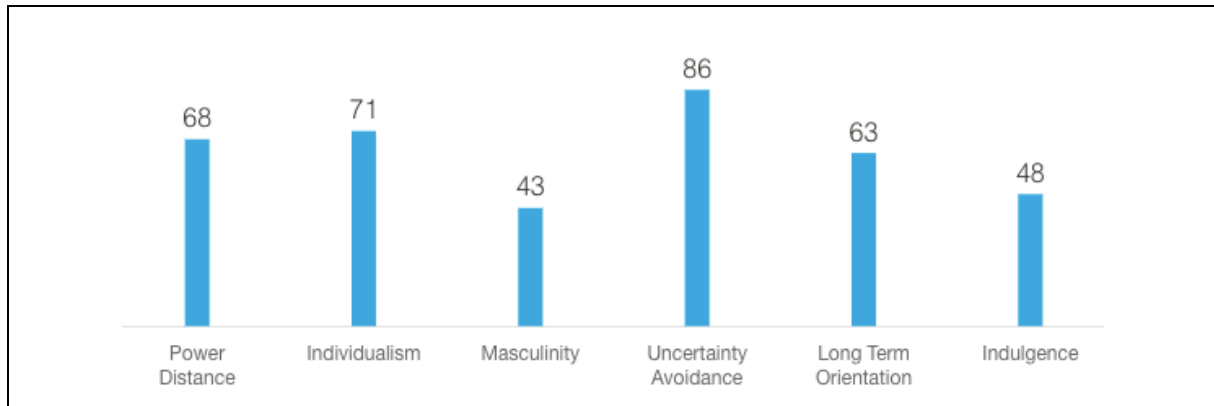

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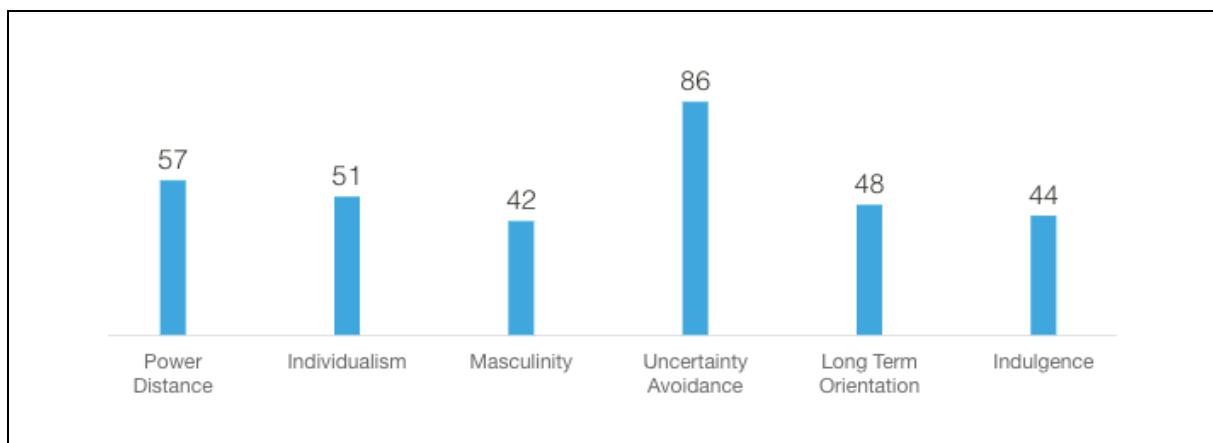
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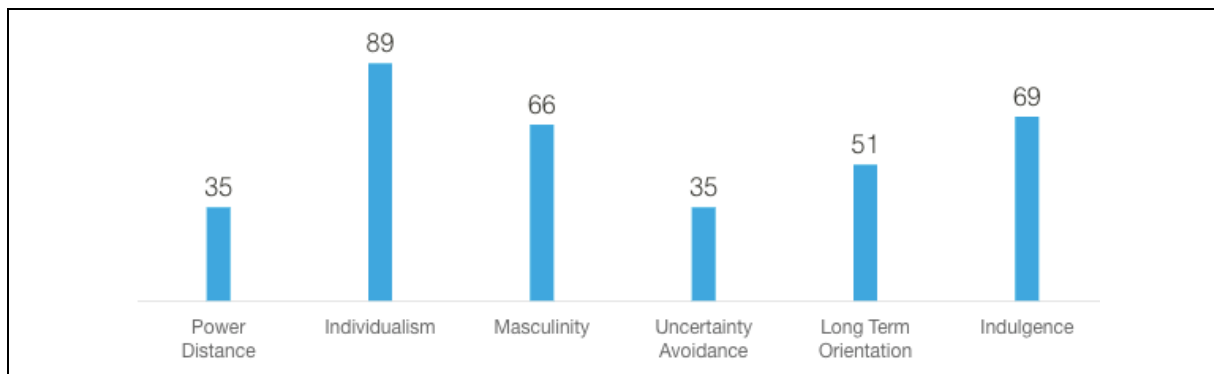
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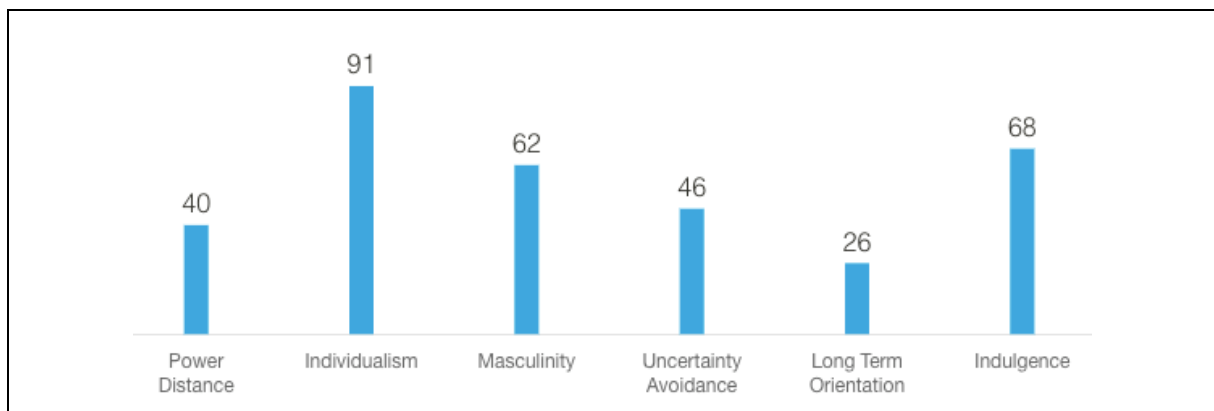
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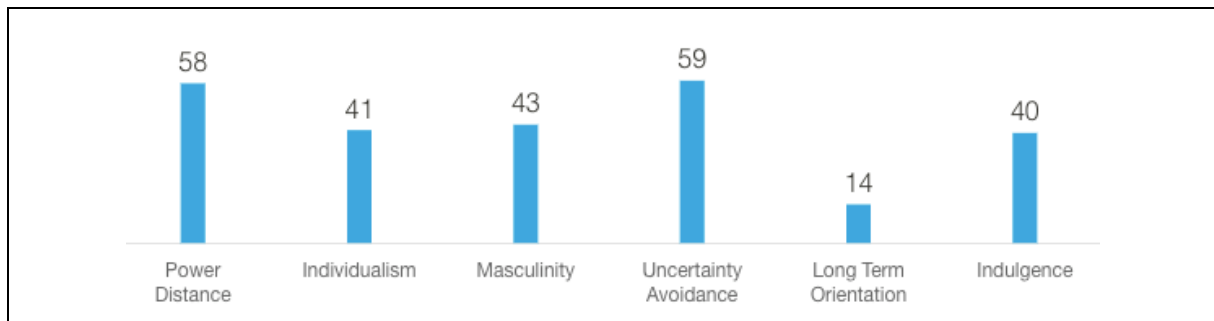
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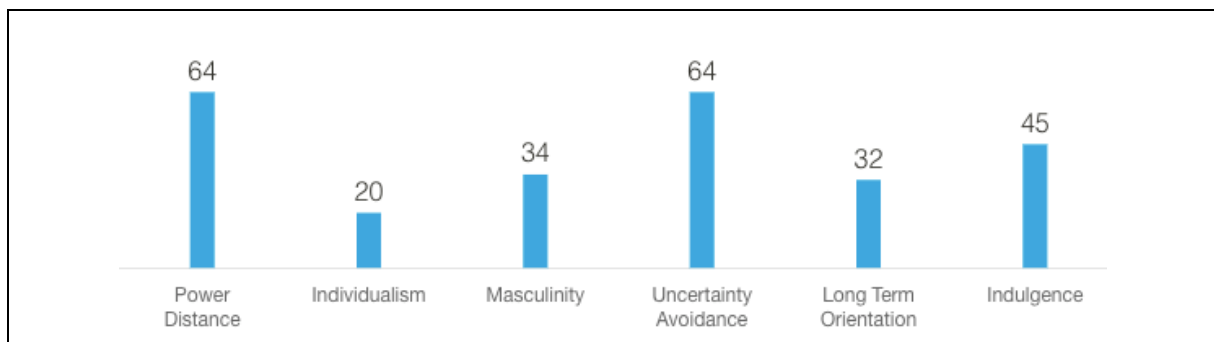
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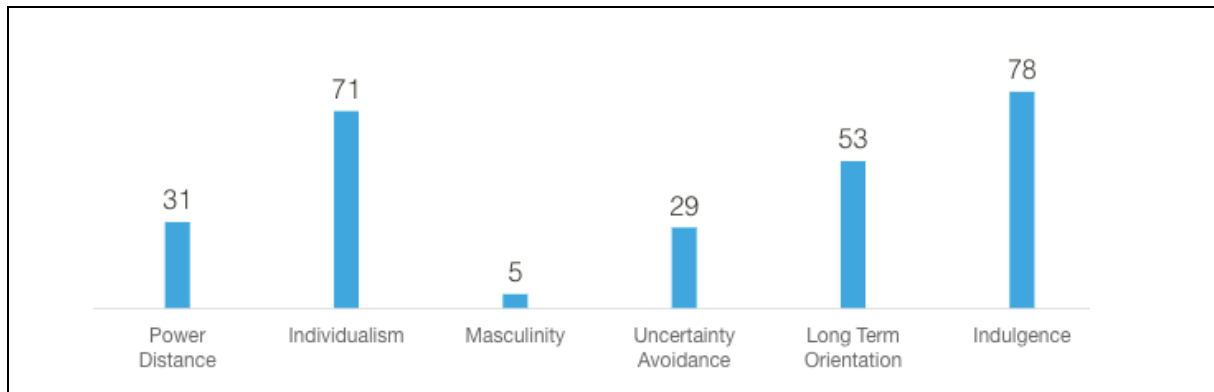
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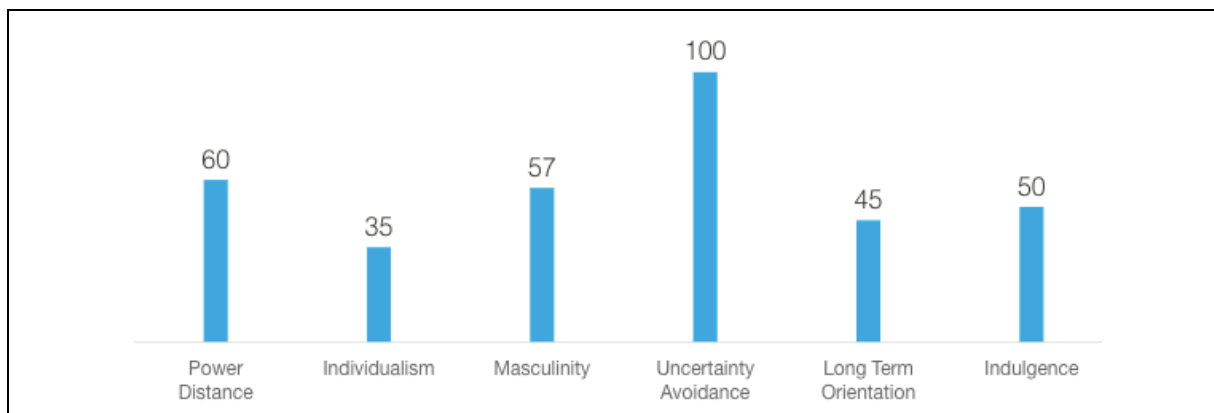
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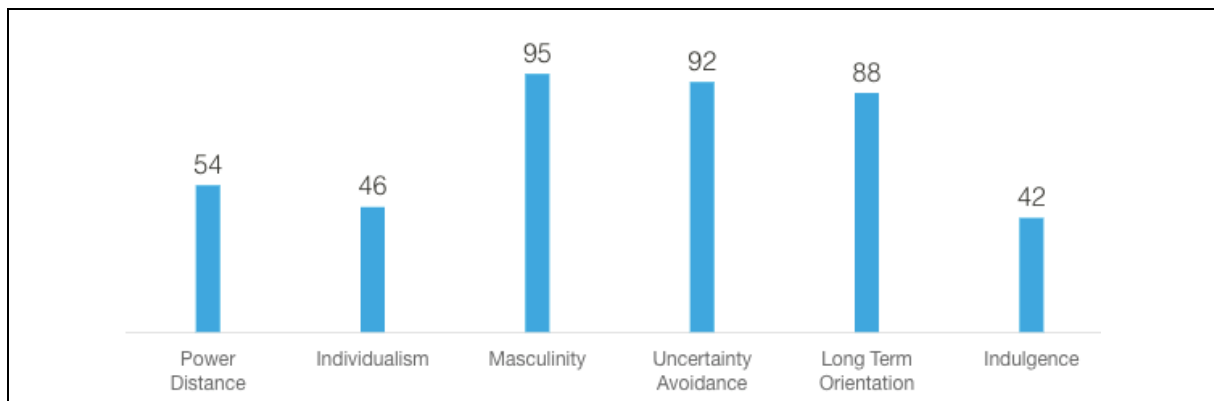
Japan

For a more detailed analysis, go to https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/. All quotations in this section come from https://hi.hofstede-insights.com/national-culture.

2.2. Edward Hall

G. Hofstede, however, is not the only individual who has analysed cultures. Apart from G. Hofstede's six dimensions of culture, the notion of personal space should also be mentioned, which was developed by anthropologist E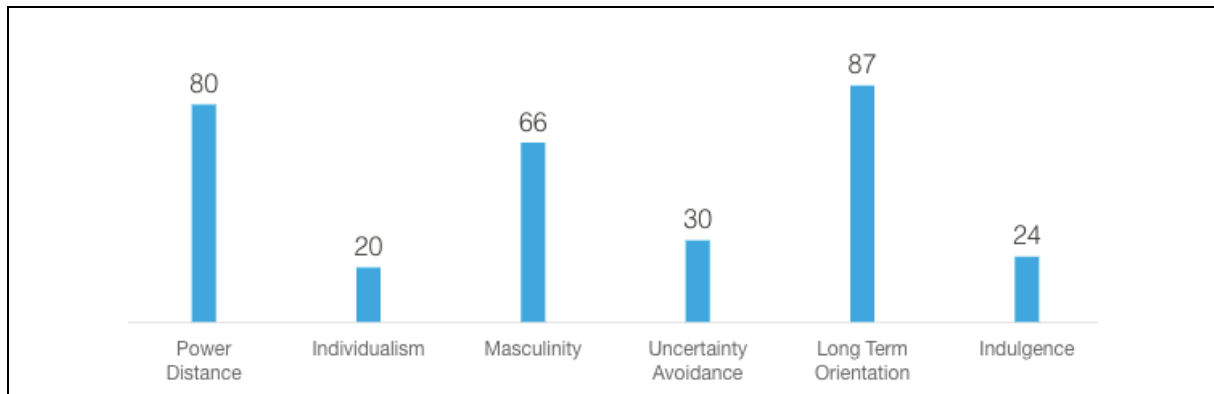dward Hall, the father of proxemics. E. Hall came up with the idea of personal reaction bubbles, which show the distance in meters that people maintain between themselves and others in different social situations. Interestingly, the distance between interlocutors differs not only in terms of the social situations people are in, but is also culture-specific. Following E. Hall, as many as four such bubbles can be distinguished, each specifying the type of space. They are presented below:
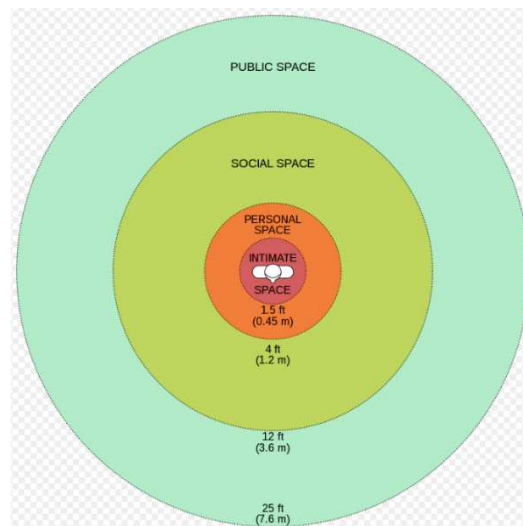
source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proxemics#/media/File:Personal_Space.svg

2.2.1. Edward Hall Dimensions

The *intimate space* is the closest type of a distance people may leave between each other. It is reserved for extremely private and close relations. This is the sphere in which hugging, kissing or whispering may take place. It usually amounts to 45 cm.

The *personal space* comprises between 45 cm - 1.2 m, which is still most often reserved for close friends or family members. Moreover, it is more or less the distance people take to shake hands.

The *social space*, between 1.2-3.6 m, is usually maintained by people who do not necessarily know each other, e.g. in a shop, among colleagues or during business meetings.

The *public space*, which is more than 3.6 m, is the distance that requires very loud speaking. If teachers deliver a lecture to students, they are bound to do it while preserving the social distance.

As can be seen, proxemics, i.e. the use of space, was used by E. Hall as a communication factor (Mikułowski, 2003), which is culture specific.

There are cultures where members coexist with each other by maintaining a pretty close distance even in everyday situations. In Middle Eastern countries, social distance is relatively small. Therefore, when someone from another culture, such as an American or German, interacts with an individual from a Middle Eastern country, a kind of dance may ensue between the interlocutors, during which one person comes up closer while the other one draws back one step to enlarge the distance. The point is to realize that close distance is sometimes not a sign of aggression or harassment, but results simply from one's cultural background.

Not only is space important for E. Hall in terms of intercultural communication, but so too are time and context.

Apart from the fact that time may be, for instance, biological or physical, E. Hall also distinguished polychronic and monochronic time which are culture specific. Monochronic time is defined by only one action whereas polychronic time is characterized by simultaneous attention paid to different actions.

E. Hall divides cultures into those of high and low context, too. It means that they differ in terms of the extent to which communication is precise. Hence, cultures of low context are characterized by clear gestures and definite answers, people tend to act on their own, and represent a rather individualistic approach. Communication in high context cultures is more intuitive and strong collective tendencies may be observed.

2.3. Richard Gesteland

Intercultural communication may also provide another perspective, immersed more in the corporate environment. Here, Richard Gesteland emerges with his cross-cultural business behaviour patterns. After conducting research of different cultures, he came up with the idea of four dimensions of culture, which once understood and recognized, may help one to avoid clashes and misunderstandings.

2.3.1. Richard Gesteland Dimensions

A. *Deal-focused vs relationship-focused cultures*
Those cultures that are business or deal-focused are usually task-oriented. What counts for them is the result of the deal or negotiations. They tend to solve the problems quickly, by phone or via email, and whenever a conflict arises, they usually solve it in writing rather than in person. Scandinavian or Germanic countries or the USA represent this pattern.

For relationship-oriented cultures, the talks and negotiations count more than their result. They concentrate first on establishing proper relations and then business may be done. Therefore, patience is necessary when dealing with relationship-oriented cultures since it may take a long time before everybody sits around the negotiating table, let alone reach any reasonable conclusion.

B. *Formal cultures vs informal cultures*
This concerns the way people communicate with each other. Formal cultures focus on respect, hierarchy and status. In the academic world, they tend to use ranks and titles to address one another. Informal cultures act quite to the contrary, although this does not mean that they do not respect their interlocutor. It is just a matter of treating everybody equally.

C. *Rigid vs fluid cultures*
Rigid cultures tend to act strictly according to the plan established earlier. They arrive on time, do not miss deadlines and always stick to the schedule of a meeting. For such cultures, time is money. In the

case of fluid cultures, people perceive time slightly differently. They consider relations in business to be more crucial than schedules, deadlines and time in general.

D. *Expressive vs reserved cultures*
Expressive cultures usually talk loudly and use a lot of gestures. Its representatives tend to minimize the space between interlocutors and touch each other during a conversation. Reserved cultures do quite the opposite. The distance is slightly greater, gestures are not the preferred method of enriching the conversation, and eye contact is also avoided.

Please familiarize with the following tips while dealing with international students.

No.	Tips
1.	If you do not know or you are not sure of which type of culture you are dealing with, just be polite and clear. This should have the desired effect. Those cultures which are more relation-oriented will certainly appreciate small talk and interest in off-topic conversation, whereas those which are more task-oriented will be happy to be given the information they are looking for.
2.	Be aware of political tensions or historically-based conflicts between particular countries/cultures. This may help explain why some students in your group do not want to cooperate with one another.
3.	Try to broaden your understanding of particular cultures beyond the existing stereotypes. They may distort and interfere with proper intercultural communication.
4.	The position of women in a given society may be a sensitive issue, so if you sense that a student is "ignoring" you, consider that it may be due to a different cultural background. If so, try to resort to diplomacy, your position or a male colleague.
5.	Collective cultures always come in groups. If there is a group, there must always be a leader. In case of a problem, talk to the leader instead of an individual group member. The leader will discipline the rest.

6.	There are cultures in which women are not supposed to remain alone in the company of a stranger. Do not be surprised if she appears accompanied by a friend. One suggestion is to keep the door open during consultations.
7.	We are constantly learning, therefore if you make a mistake, simply apologize, learn from it, and move on.
8.	Be aware of the distance between you and your interlocutor. We all share public space, but cultures differ in terms of contact. In non-contact cultures, e.g. in Asia and Northern Europe, people tend to stand farther from each other than in contact-cultures such as those in Southern Europe or the Middle East.
9.	Take care using humour. Whatever is funny in your culture, may not necessarily be funny in another.
10.	Learn about cultures other than your own, learn languages, at least some basic phrases, and most importantly, stay open-minded.
11.	Remember that different cultures perceive the distance between interlocutors differently, and the violation of one's personal space may bring with it some negative consequences.
12.	Try not to invade anyone's personal space. Be respectful.
13.	Remember that while touching and kissing in public may be typical in one culture (e.g. in southern Europe and Mediterranean countries), it may not necessarily be acceptable in another (e.g. in northern Europe).
14.	Make sure you learn the rules of a given culture before a meeting. You will avoid misunderstandings, mistakes and conflict.

Table 1. Tips on intercultural communication

3. EMI Scenarios for Administrative Staff

The following scenarios could help administrative staff dealing with students in international context.

Scenario 1

Staff:	Hello. How can I help you?
Student:	Hello. I have a problem with my ID card. It does not work.
Staff:	What's wrong with it?
Student:	I cannot open my dorm door.
Staff:	Ok. I understand. What is your ID card number? Can I see it?
Student:	Yes, here you are.
Staff:	Thank you. Let me check it. I will have to call the department responsible for ID cards. It will take a while. Can you come back in the afternoon?
Student:	Sure, no problem. Thank you.

Scenario 2

Staff:	Hello. Can I help you?
Student:	Yes, I got an email which says I haven't paid for my dorm room.
Staff:	Ok. What's your name and your student ID number?
Student:	I am Maria Gonzales-Juanes, and my student ID number is 12345.
Staff:	Yes, that's right. You need to pay your monthly fee. Here is the bank account number.
Student:	Yes, but I did it last week.
Staff:	Do you have any confirmation of the payment?
Student:	Yes, here it is.
Staff:	Ok. Let me check. Well, it seems to be fine. You have made the payment and it is already in our system. The email was sent automatically.
Student:	Oh, I see. Thank you. Bye.
Staff:	Bye.

Scenario 3

Staff:	Hello. Can I help you?
Student:	Yes, please.
Staff:	What's the problem?
Student:	I did not manage to take all my exams because I was sick. I have my doctor's note with me. The exam session is over tomorrow. What can I do?
Staff:	Ok. Well, you need to write a formal letter to our Dean asking for an extension of the exam session. Here is the form. Please fill it in with your data and sign it.
Student:	Ok. Thank you.

Scenario 4

Student:	Excuse me, where is the Dean's office?
Staff:	It's room 123, on the first floor.

Scenario 5

Student:	Hello. I have a problem. The wifi in my room does not work.
Staff:	Ok. I understand. Which room are you in?
Student:	123.
Staff:	Right. Well, I've made a note of it, so somebody will check it later.
Student:	Ok. Thank you.

Scenario 6

Student:	Excuse me, where is room 34F?
Staff:	Oh, it's in another building. Leave this building, and turn left. You will see a blue four-storey building. The room is in the blue building on the first floor.
Student:	Thank you.

Scenario 7

Staff:	Please be quiet. From 10pm until 6am we have quiet hours. You cannot listen to loud music during this time.
Student:	Oh, I'm sorry. I will turn off the music.

Scenario 8

Staff:	Hello. Can I help you?
Student:	Yes, please. I need to choose two extra classes and one lecture and I do not know which ones I can choose.
Staff:	Well, it depends on your study agreement. Please contact your exchange coordinator for information.
Student:	Thank you.

Scenario 9

Staff:	Hello. Can I help you?
Student:	Yes. I've just arrived and I have a room in this dorm.
Staff:	Ok. What's your name, please?
Student:	Johan Kreutz.
Staff:	Yes, you are on the list. Before I give you the keys, please complete this form. It is in English.
Student:	Ok. Thank you.

Scenario 10

Student:	Hello. I have a problem. I did not enroll for the course.
Staff:	Don't worry. You can still do it. Contact the course coordinator. Here is his/her email.
Student:	Ok. Thank you.

4. Glossary Terms

The following glossary represents a list of the various terms and definitions that administrative staff may encounter at university.

Term	Definition
Academic calendar	the academic calendar shows important semester-specific dates and deadlines for students officially registered for courses on the schedule
Academic credit	a unit or point awarded to a student following the successful completion of a course component or academic program; a student usually needs to collect a specified number of credits in order to be awarded a degree
Academic year	an annual period of instruction (covering courses, tutorials, lectures, laboratories, etc.) composed of semesters
Accreditation	an external review process by which experts recognise or certify that standards and expectations have been met by academic programs or institutions
Authorities	*Dean* - the head of a faculty; an academic leader who has academic, programmatic, managerial, and fiscal responsibilities for a faculty; he/she verifies the adequacy of instruction, the implementation of policies and procedures, monitors academic integrity, confers degrees, and is responsible for student recruitment, admission, and academic progress; he/she is responsible for the ethical conduct of research and for establishing and maintaining a culture of compliance and integrity among faculty, staff, and students. *Rector* - the Rector is the academic head of the university and in this role chairs the Senate (the highest academic body of the university); the Rector holds all the authority required to fulfill this role in accordance with university law

	Chancellor - a university chancellor is the highest official position available in a university setting; this person is responsible for the entire faculty and student body as well as the financial health and well-being of the university; a university chancellor oversees all programs run by the university, and the heads of each department must report to the chancellor; a chancellor acts as the chief executive officer in the university he or she works for
Course catalog	the complete and entire list of courses offered by a university
Course schedule	the list of courses offered for a specific semester, including information such as when and where the courses take place
Deficiency	courses, coursework, test scores, documents, etc. that are incomplete or missing but are required before a student can be cleared for graduation, be granted full admission, etc.
Degree	*Bachelor's degree*: an academic degree conferred by a university or college (on graduation from first-cycle studies)
	Master's degree: an academic degree conferred by a university or college (on graduation from second-cycle studies); a Master's degree is awarded on completion of a Master's-level degree program
	Doctoral degree: an academic degree conferred by a university or college (on graduation from third-cycle studies); the title is awarded to students after the successful completion of third-cycle studies, which include an original investigation that is formalized in an approved thesis
	Assistant Professor / Adjunct- beginning-level professors at university; an assistant professor position typically requires a Ph.D. and experience in teaching and research in a specific field; an assistant professor's duties usually include research, teaching, and giving

	academic advice
	Associate Professor - a mid-level professor who usually has a doctorate or other professional degree and teaches classes related to their studies; the responsibilities of an associate professor are similar to those of an assistant professor; one key difference is that associate professors have more experience
	Professor - the highest academic title held at university; professors are accomplished and recognized academics — and usually considered experts in their areas of interest; a professor teaches upper-level classes as well as graduate or PhD courses; they are also likely to be involved in leadership positions in their faculty or department, and they typically conduct ongoing research in their fields
Degree requirements	the completed courses and ECTS points required to be eligible for a degree; in addition to these requirements, students must complete all other university requirements before they can receive their degrees
Department	an academic unit within a university representing a discipline or related disciplines; departments conduct education and research in one or several closely related subjects
Diploma	a formal document issued by the university to symbolize that a degree has been conferred and awarded by the institution
Discipline	a specific area of study
Dismissal	the status given to students who fail to make adequate progress toward completion of a program of study or whose academic performance indicates little chance of obtaining the minimum grades required for graduation
Dual studies	a dual study program combines academic studies with experience in a company and vocational training; combining theory and practice resulting in a practical

	orientation
ECTS points / ECTS credits	these indicate the required workload to complete a study program, or a module within a study program; ECTS points only indicate workload, that is they do not indicate a grade; generally, each year of study (or apprenticeship, where applicable) is worth a specific number of ECTS points
Elective	a course not specifically required but chosen voluntarily by a student
Faculty	a group of related university departments; the people who teach in a university
Financial aid	financial assistance for an eligible student which is available in the form of grants, loans, scholarships, etc.
Form of studying	*on-site* - studying that takes place on the premises of a university or at the location indicated by the university *on-line / distance* – a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors, and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place (via internet connected communication platforms); one-way and two-way transmissions through communication devices (audio / video conferences, e-mail, electronic forums, video conferencing or another form of computer-based communication, rather than through face-to-face interaction) *on-line / distance (synchronous)* – although studying takes place from a distance, the student attends a class session or lecture virtually, at the same time as his/her instructor and other students; the tutorial or lecture is at a fixed time that cannot be rescheduled *on-line / distance (asynchronous)* – allows a student to learn according to his/her own schedule, within a

	certain and flexible time frame; a student can access and complete lectures, reading, homework and other learning materials at any time during an indicated period *hybrid* - the method of delivery for a particular course that includes both online and in-class participation
General announcement	an official document from the university authorities stating academic policies and procedures, etc.
Matriculation	the process of formally becoming a student or being admitted into a group, especially at university
Public defense	a public defence of a thesis / dissertation is the occasion on which a doctoral student defends his/her PhD thesis and demonstrates a good understanding of their field and focus area
Registration	the process of enrolling for classes or a course
Scholarship	a non-repayable award to an eligible student based upon academic achievement and / or determined financial need or, in some cases, based upon academic achievement alone
Semester	one of the two periods into which the university year is divided and which is made up of instruction periods followed by a final exam period / session
Student	*enrolled student* – a student that is registered *admitted student* – a student that has been accepted by the university into a degree-seeking program and who has confirmed his/her acceptance *full-time / regular student* - a student who is registered as having full-time status *undergraduate student* - a student that has matriculated in and is enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program

	graduate student- a student that has matriculated in and is enrolled in a Master's or Doctoral degree program *postgraduate student* - a student who has obtained a degree from a university, etc, and is pursuing studies for a more advanced qualification
Student account	a student account is used to access many of a university's electronic services; using the login details that you receive when you are registered as a student, you can, for example, log in to your email account, view your study results, etc.
Transcript	the academic transcript represents the official record of a student's academic history at the university; grades and associated points received; declared academic credits, awarded academic credits for students who have completed their degree, and university honours awarded by the institution upon the conferral of the degree

Table 2. Glossary terms

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