Trompenaars Hampden-Turner
Connecting Viewpoints

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Intercultural Awareness Profiler

Reading your Intercultural Awareness Profile

Your personal cross-cultural profile (shown below) is based on the Trompenaars' 7 dimension model of culture.

In order to interpret your scores, please refer to the seven dark blue bars, each labelled as one of the 7 dimensions. Your score on each dimension is shown by the position of the light blue bar at the top of the dimension. The closer you are to one extreme or the other, the more your orientation resembles the extreme end of that dimension.

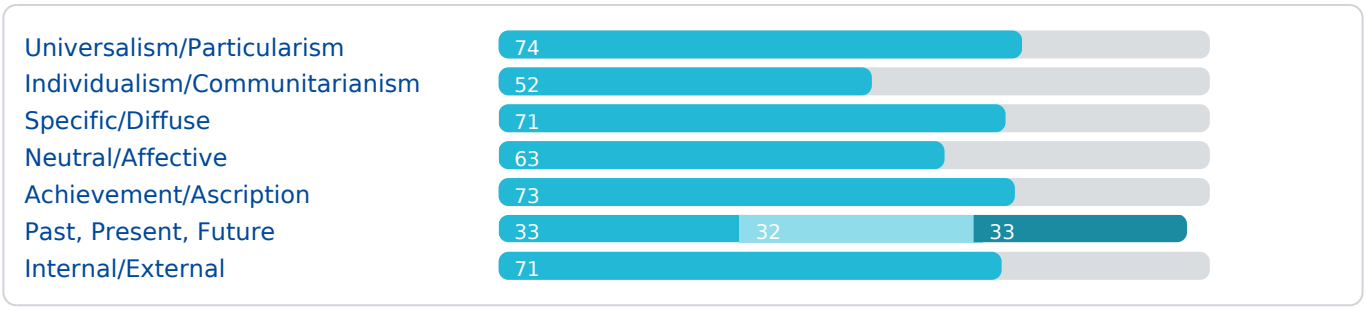
For example: if your score is more towards the right of the second dimension, (this dimension is about individualism-communitarianism), you have a more communitarian orientation.

The dimension for 'time' consists of three different zones: past, present and future. The larger the zone, the more important it is to you.

Using your personal profile

Understanding your profile and thereby your own personal cross-cultural orientation, is the first step to developing your cross-cultural competence. Ask yourself what your orientation means for doing business and managing. How can you work better with people with a different cultural orientation to you?

This is your most recent profile



Your score on dimension 1

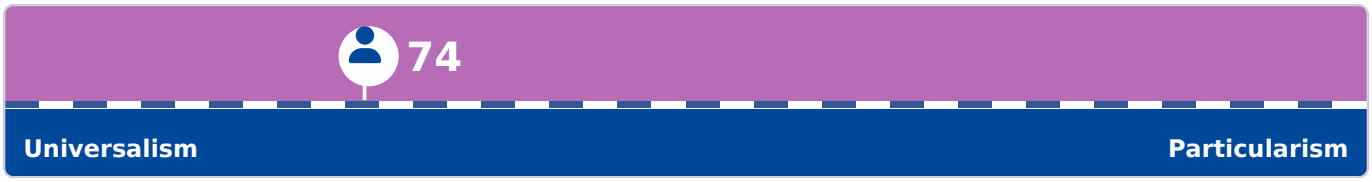
Universalism-Particularism

What is this dimension about?

The dimension universalism-particularism concerns the standards by which relationships are measured.

Universalist societies are based on rules: their members tend to feel that general rules and obligations are a strong source of moral reference. Universalists are inclined to follow the rules and look for "the one best way" of dealing equally and fairly with all cases (even when friends are involved). They assume that their standards are the right standards, and they attempt to change the attitudes of others to match theirs.

Particularist societies are predominantly based on relationships: particular circumstances that lead to exceptions are more important than rules. Bonds of particular relationships (family, friends) are stronger than any abstract rules, therefore the response to a situation may change according to the circumstances and the people involved. Particularists often argue that "it all depends".



The way you have described yourself indicates that you are among the 23% of the 140,000 respondents in our database with a high universalistic approach.

People with a universalistic orientation tend to see themselves as consistent. This may be expressed in the value they attach to contracts, standards, adherence to rules without exceptions, and a “one best way” of managing.

Potential traps

Remember that taking universalism to the extreme might lead to rigidness and bureaucracy.

Different viewpoints

Universalists tend to see people with a particularistic orientation as undisciplined or as inclined to apply “situational ethics”. Remember that these people might consider themselves to be pragmatic and flexible. In their eyes, you (as a universalist) may appear to have a very strict, rigid, and disciplined view of life, which they might find difficult to deal with.

Your score on dimension 2

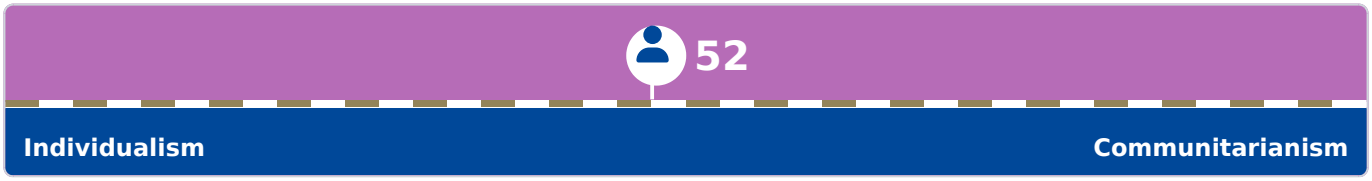
Individualism-Communitarianism

What is this dimension about?

The dimension individualism versus communitarianism is about the conflict between an individual's desire and the interests of the group one belongs to. Do people primarily regard themselves as individuals or as part of a group?

In a predominantly **individualistic** culture, people are expected to make their own decisions and to only take care of themselves and their immediate family. Personal freedom and individual development are fundamental to get a higher quality of life. Decisions are often made on the spot, without consultation, and deadlocks may be resolved by voting.

In contrast to this, members of a predominantly **communitarian** society place the interest of the community before the individual, whose main responsibility is to serve the group. By doing so, individual needs will be taken care of naturally. The quality of life for the individual is seen as directly dependent on the degree to which he or she takes care of fellow members, even at the cost of individual freedom. People are are mainly oriented towards common goals and objectives. They are judged by the extent to which they serve the interest of the community, that provides help and protection in exchange for a strong sense of loyalty. Negotiation is often carried out by teams, who may withdraw in order to consult with reference groups. In the decision making process, discussion is used to reach consensus.



The way you have described yourself indicates that you position close to the average in our 140,000 respondents' database on this dimension.

Those with a more individualistic orientation than you tend to see themselves as people who show initiative and take responsibility, while people with a more communitarian orientation than you may put a different emphasis on the importance of specific group affiliations..

Potential traps

Remember that taking individualism to the extreme might lead to a lack of commitment to common goals and objectives, while taking communitarianism to the extreme might lead to a lack of personal initiative, ambition, and personal responsibility.

Different viewpoints

Individualists tend to see people with an orientation on the more communitarian side of the dimension as conformists without initiative, ambition, and drive. On the other hands, these people might consider themselves to be loyal to the organization, committed to common goals and objectives, and taking responsibility as a group.

Some caution is necessary. Does “we” refer to the immediate or extended family? Or does it indicate the team collaborating on the business project, who have developed a strong group identity? Or does “we” refer to the company as a whole?

In the eyes of group oriented people, individualistic ones may appear to be unreliable and egocentric, only using teams to pursue their personal own goals.

Your score on dimension 3

Specific-Diffuse

What is this dimension about?

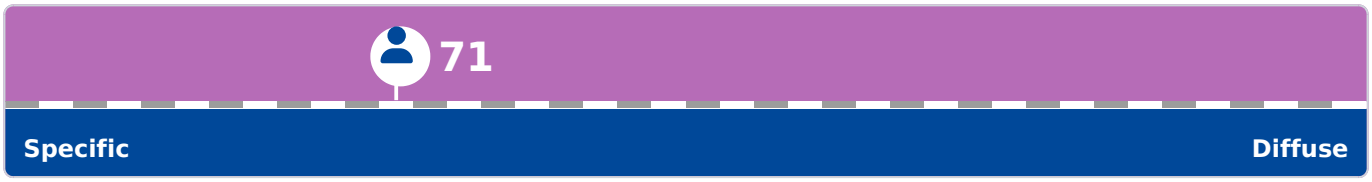
Generally, people from **specifically** oriented cultures begin by looking at each element of a situation. They concentrate on hard facts, analyze the elements separately, then put them back together again - viewing the whole is the sum of its parts.

People from **diffusely** oriented cultures see each element in the perspective of the complete picture. All elements are related to each other. The elements are synthesized into a whole which is more than simply the sum of its parts.

This dimension also concerns the degree to which we involve others in relationships: do we engage them in specific areas of life and single levels of personality or do we involve them in multiple areas of our lives and several levels of personality at the same time?

Specifically oriented individuals are "low involvement": they engage others in specific areas of life, affecting single levels of personality. In such cultures, a manager separates the task relationship with a subordinate from the private sphere.

Diffusely oriented individuals are "high involvement": they engage others diffusely in multiple areas of life, displaying several levels of personality at the same time. In these cultures, every life space and every level of personality tends to be interwoven.



The way you have described yourself indicates that you are among the 25% of the 140,000 respondents in our database with a high “specific” orientation.

People with a specific orientation tend to see themselves as people who segregate their task or business relationships from personal relationships. This may be expressed in the value they attach to being direct, open, and extroverted, and in giving their work life priority over your private life.

Potential traps

Remember that taking specificity to the extreme might lead to a lack of true personal involvement.

Different viewpoints

People with a specific orientation tend to initially see people with a more diffuse orientation as indirect, reserved, and evasive, and find it hard to make initial contact with them. Remember that these more diffuse people might consider themselves to be modest, initially reserved with new relationships, but in the end warm and much more personally involved in the business relationship. In their eyes, you may appear to be superficial

and blunt, and your directness might make people with a diffuse orientation "lose face".

Your score on dimension 4

Neutral-Affective

What is this dimension about?

This dimension focuses on the degree to which people express emotions, and the interplay between reason and emotion in human relationships.

In **affective cultures**, emotions are spontanously displayed: moods and feelings aren't hidden or bottled up. On the contrary, the expression of emotions is acceptable or even required, as a sign of sincerity, attachment to what you are doing and a factor of trust.

In the so called **neutral cultures**, people are more reserved and don't openly display emotions as they are taught that it is incorrect to overtly show them. Not expressing emotions is seen as a positive sign of self-control and reason dominates one's interaction with others

The way you have described yourself indicates that you are among the 30% of the 140,000 respondents in our database with a predominantly neutral orientation.

People with a neutral orientation value being able to not expressing what they think or feel and tend to see themselves as people who are able to control their emotions. They think that showing emotions in a business environment is unprofessional, therefore when communicating they tend to display a cool and self-possessed conduct that may lead to showing a face devoid of expression (e.g. during negotiations or meetings).

Potential traps

Remember that taking neutrality to the extreme may lead to monotony when speaking and might be perceived as coldness, lack of spontaneity or low engagement. People with a neutral orientation might often need a “safety valve“ to relieve emotions (e.g. in the bar).

Different viewpoints

People with a neutral orientation tend to see people who are more emotionally expressive as unprofessional and untrustworthy because they do not seem to be in control of their emotions and are easily insulted. Remember that affective people might consider themselves spontaneous, expressive, vital, and animated. In their eyes, you may appear to be a detached person who does not show passion in what you do or interest in them. They may feel neglected by you.

Your score on dimension 5

Achievement-Ascription

What is this dimension about?

The dimension achievement-ascription focuses on how personal status is assigned.

In **"achievement-oriented"** societies the status is a reflection of performance, of what an individual does and has accomplished. In short, "you are what you do."

On the other hand, in the so called **"ascribed"** cultures, status is a reflection of what you are and how the other individual within a group (community and/or organization) relate to you. Factors like age, class, gender, education, etcetera are fundamental in attributing status. In short, taking it to the extreme, in this type of culture "you are what you are from birth."

The way you have described yourself indicates that you are among the 25% of the 140, 000 respondents in our database with a high achievement orientation on this dimension.

Those with this orientation tend to see themselves as people looking only at competence and achievement.The status is assigned basing on what people do,regardless of background.This may be expressed through ignoring differences in personal power and authority(e.g.hierarchical status, formal titles, educational or family background, gender, age).They may also prefer to delegate authority.

Potential traps

Remember that taking an achievement orientation to the extreme might lead to instability in the organization and to judging people based on their last performance.

Different viewpoints

People with an achievement orientation tend to see people with an ascriptive orientation as not challenging the status quo and sustaining a rigid organization.Remember that these people might consider themselves to be fostering stability by showing respect to people who acquired positions of power, status, and authority.In their eyes, your lack of showing respect may appear to threaten the stability of the organization.

Your score on dimension 6

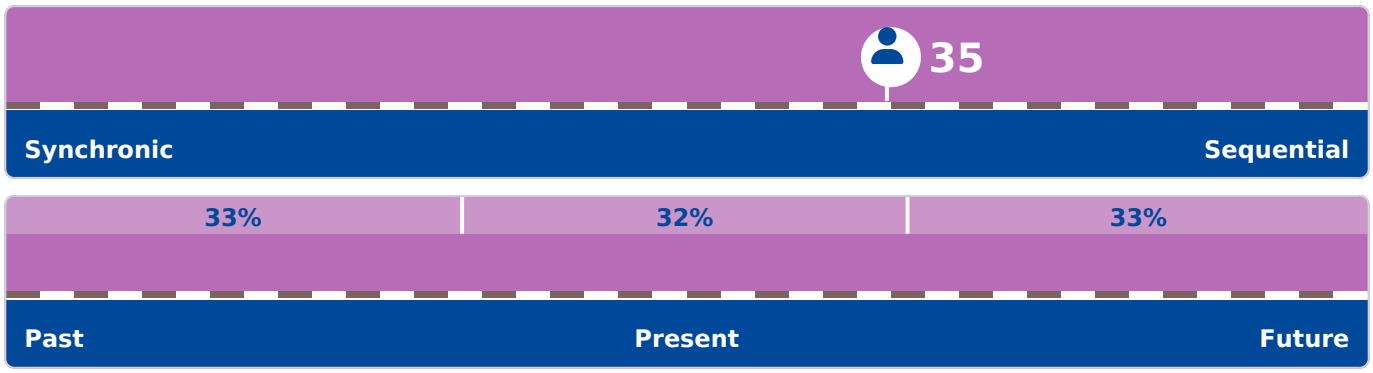
Time Orientation

What is this dimension about?

Sequentialism and synchronism form the different approaches to structuring time. In business, how people structure time is important with how we plan, strategize and co-ordinate our activities with others.

People who structure time **sequentially** view time as a series of passing events. They tend to do one thing at a time, and prefer planning and keeping to plans once they have been made. Time commitments are taken seriously and staying on schedule is a must.

On the other hand, people structuring time **synchronically** view past, present, and future as being interrelated. They have a "multi-tasking" approach and usually do several things at once. For them, time is flexible and intangilble, therefore they are less concerned about what single-tasking cultures define as punctuality. Time commitments are desirable rather than absolute and plans are easily changed as more value is placed on the satisfactory completion of interaction with others.



From your circles drawing it seems that neither your past, nor your present, nor your future orientation is dominant.

People with a such a balanced set of time tend to see the present as connecting a rich history with a promising future. This may be expressed in your inclination to speak as well as in a historical context, a relevant present and often referring to a promising future.

Your score on dimension 7

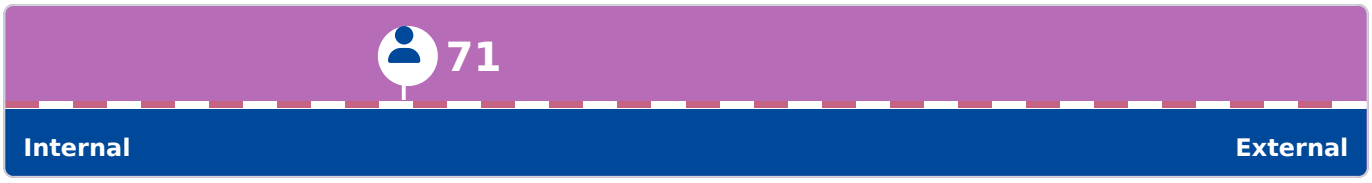
Internal-External

What is this dimension about?

This dimension concerns how people relate to the environment and the perceived degree of control over it.

Internally controlled people have a mechanistic view of nature: it can be dominated once one has understood how it functions by developing suitable instruments for influencing it. This mechanicistic view of the environment favors a feeling of internal control: people seek to take control of their lives and see their own internal perspective as the starting point for determining the "right" action. In business this translates into a "technology push" attitude.

In contrast to this, cultures with an **externally** controlled (or organic) view of nature assume that human beings are controlled by nature and unpredictable external forces such as fate, chance and the power of others. For this reason, they tend to "go with the flow" and orient their actions towards others. In business, this attitude leads to a "market pull" approach, that implies focusing on and responding to the environment and the need of the customers.



The way you have described yourself indicates that you are among the 25% of the 140,000 respondents in our database with a high orientation towards internal control.

People with an internal control orientation tend to see themselves as strong and in control of their environment. This may be expressed in the value you attach to taking initiative, being able to persuade others, and to risking conflict in order to improve your bargaining position.

Potential traps

Remember that taking an internal control orientation to the extreme might lead to reluctance to accept innovations from outside: the “not invented here” syndrome.

Different viewpoints

People with an internal orientation tend to see outer-directed people as weak and using fate as an excuse for not accomplishing results.

Remember that these people might consider themselves to be adaptive to the environment by waiting for the right moment and taking advantage of existing forces (such as market pull). In their eyes, you may appear to be arrogant and looking for conflict.