

**EAIE  
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Toulouse

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Welcome to session (S3.10)

# Embracing diversity for a better student experience: The role of individual culture

# Introduction



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# Presentation outline

- Culture and student expectations
- Hofstede dimensions explained
- Research findings
- Roundtable discussion
- Group reflections

# The importance of culture on student expectations

- Exploring students individual culture profile allows to understand student service quality expectations.
- The traditional and unstructured, country level profiling is not the best way to evaluate and predict student service quality expectations.
- Each student is different. They have their own individual cultural values which forms a unique cultural profile.

# Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede's model is a powerful tool to understand cultural differences.

## Dimensions

- **Power Distance (PD):** Degree to which students accept hierarchical structures.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance (UA):** Comfort with uncertainty and ambiguity.
- **Collectivism vs. Individualism (Coll):** Preference for group versus individual goals.
- **Long-Term Orientation (LTO):** Focus on future rewards versus immediate results.

Two more – not included in the research

- **Masculinity vs Femininity:** distinguishing competitive, assertive traits (masculinity) from nurturing, expressive ones (femininity).
- **Indulgence vs Restraint:** explores the balance between the pursuit of enjoyment and the regulation of desires.

# SERVQUAL Model for Service Quality

A model measuring service quality based on the gap between customer expectations and perceptions.

## Key Dimensions:

- **Tangibility:** Physical infrastructure (i.e., modern campus facilities).
- **Reliability:** Consistency in service (i.e., regularly academic advising).
- **Responsiveness:** Timely and effective service (i.e., prompt responses to student inquiries).
- **Assurance:** Trustworthiness and competence of staff (i.e., qualified faculty members with relevant experience)
- **Empathy:** Personal attention given to students (i.e., one-on-one mentoring programmes)

# Detailed Findings by Dimension

- **Power Distance (PD):** Students with **low PD** expect more personalised and collaborative services. Overall students with **low PD have higher service quality expectations.**
- **Uncertainty Avoidance (UA):** students with **high UA** have high expectations for **structured and tangible services** (e.g., access to modern technology, clear communication of services, consistency). Overall students with **high UA have higher service quality expectations.**
- **Long-Term Orientation (LTO):** Students with high LTO have a strong focus on employability, academic success, and career development. Expect comprehensive career support and a clear value proposition from their education. Overall students with **high LTO have higher service quality expectations**
- **Collectivism vs individualism:** no statistical significance with service quality expectations. However, some useful information about the learning and engagement preferences of students.

# Practical Applications for Higher Education Institutions

**Pre-arrival Diagnostics:** Collect cultural profiles via surveys to predict service needs.

## **Low PD Students:**

- Increase direct interaction with staff, ensure responsiveness, and focus on personalised services.

## **High UA Students:**

- Ensure the availability of tangible, visible services like modern IT infrastructure, well-organized courses.
- Emphasise the reliability and structure of support systems (e.g., guaranteed office hours, accessible staff).

## **High LTO Students:**

- Focus on career services and employability.
- Emphasise long-term student success and progression.

**Continuous Feedback:** Use student feedback to adapt services dynamically.



# Activity and roundtable discussion

1. Use the individual culture questionnaire to score your own individual culture
2. Work in pairs and exchange your completed questionnaires
3. Discuss how your individual culture score describes your service quality expectation as if you were both students
4. Is it accurate?
5. What are your observations?
6. In your table, summarise your key observations
7. Assign one member of your table to act as the spokesperson to present the observations

# Group reflections

## Further research

- We are looking to expand our research by integrating additional evidence from the application of this tool across different universities and countries.
- Our aim is to strengthen the validity, and therefore the applicability, of our model by using broader data
- If you are planning to use this tool, we would be happy to provide technical and research support
- We only ask to share anonymous data from the completion of the questionnaire at your institution
- If you are willing to engage in this, **please complete the form in the next slide**

Piloting the individual student culture service quality expectations tool



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Thank you



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