

Can Hofstede's theory on national culture explain similarities and differences between contributors to open projects?

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This study examines the motivations of people who contribute to open content projects such as Wikipedia and Wikibooks and open software projects such as SourceForge. Human behaviour is said to be determined by human motivation (Deci & Flaste 1996), and is regulated by the self in relation to others (Markus & Kitayama 1991). Extending McClelland's (1985) theory of needs achievement, Hofstede (2001) identifies five sets of cultural values: individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, high/low power distance, high/low uncertainty avoidance and long/short term orientation. He suggests that the intensity and direction of these values differ from one national culture to another. Hofstede's theory has been applied to the study of cultural differences between contributors to Wikipedia (Pfeil 2006). Hertel (2003) and Nov (2007) studied the motivations of contributors to Linux and Wikipedia and found that some contributors to open software/content projects are stimulated and motivated by self interests such as enjoyment, while others are motivated by altruistic interests such as providing people with access to free software or free information. This paper draws on the findings of these studies and proposes a series of indicators that can be used to further investigate the cross-cultural motivational differences of contributors to open content projects.



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What are 'Open Content' and 'Open Software' projects?

Why we do what we do?

Are there cultural differences?

Why do people volunteer?

Why do people contribute to open content/open software projects?

How can we explore the cultural differences in motivation?



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Why we do what we do?

Maslow (1943) identified five sets of goals, of which he called '*Hierarchy of Needs*'. These needs are physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization.

There are usually available various cultural paths to the same goal. Therefore conscious, specific, local-cultural desires are not as fundamental in motivation theory as the more basic, unconscious goals

McClelland (1967) explained that the individual's needs can be acquired (learned) over time and are shaped by one's life experience. Most of these needs can be classified as either achievement, affiliation or power.

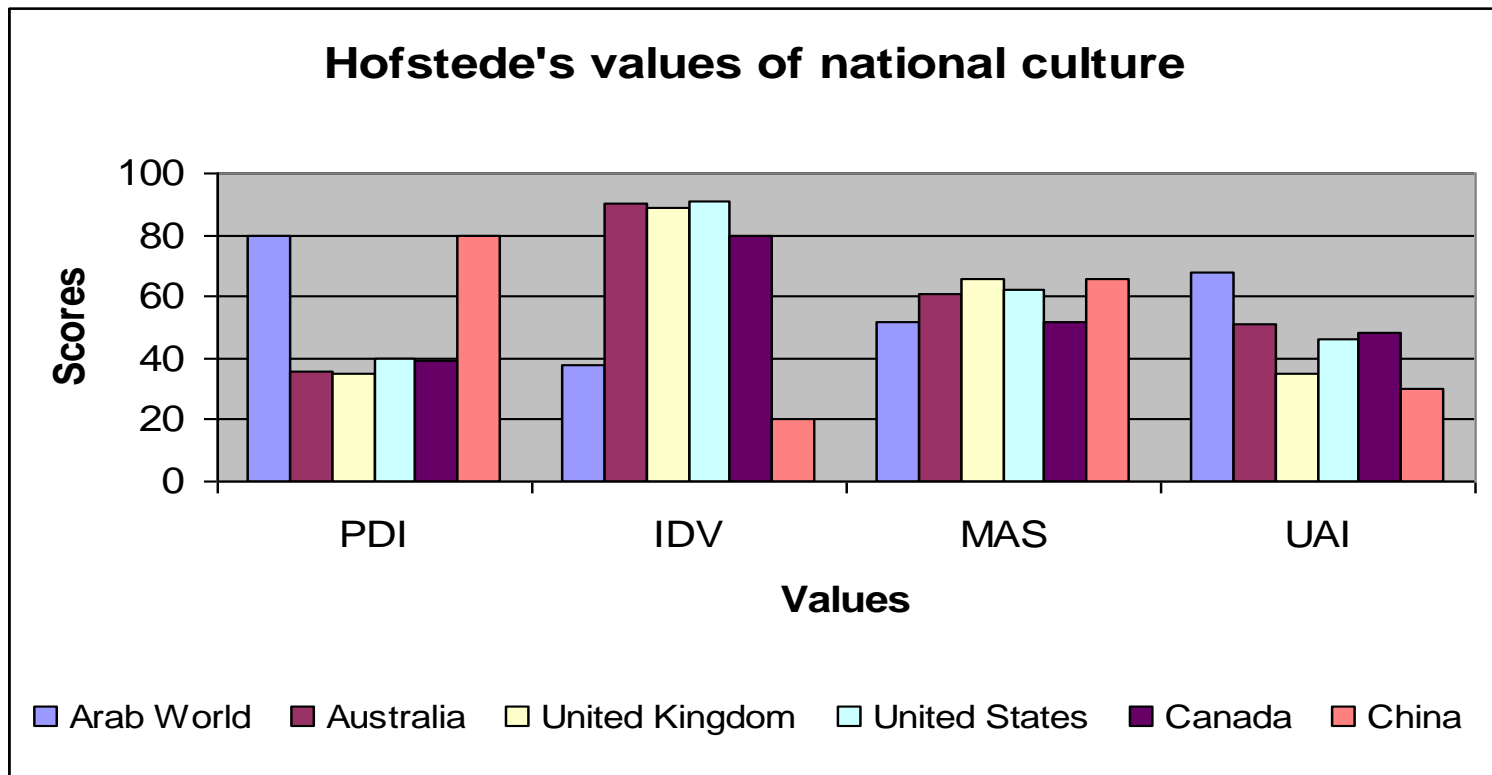
Deci & Ryan (1985) explored that the basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs) are necessary for intrinsic motivation; and pressure and/or rewards are needed for internalization of extrinsic motivation.



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Are there cultural differences?

Hofstede (2001) identifies four (and later five) cultural values: individualism, masculinity, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance (and later long term orientation). **He suggests that the intensity and direction of these values differ from one national culture to another.**



Why do people volunteer?

Clary et al (1998) identified six main reasons that motivate people to volunteer in physical projects:

Personal reasons → Forget bad feelings; avoid loneliness

Values → Help others in needs; own belief

Career → Work experience; developing business contacts

Social → People I know contribute; people ask me to contribute

Understanding → Learning; discover strengths and weaknesses

Enhancement → Self-esteem; feel needed (important)



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Why do people volunteer?

Hars and Ou (2001) identified six main reasons that motivate people to volunteer in ***open software projects***:

Self-determination

Altruism (help others)

Community identify

Selling products

Human capital (learning)

Self-marketing

Peer recognition

Personal need



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Why do you write to Wikipedia?

Nov (2007) identified some reasons that motivate people to volunteer in ***Open content projects like Wikipedia:***

Protective (personal needs)

Values

Career

Social

Understanding

Enhancement

Fun

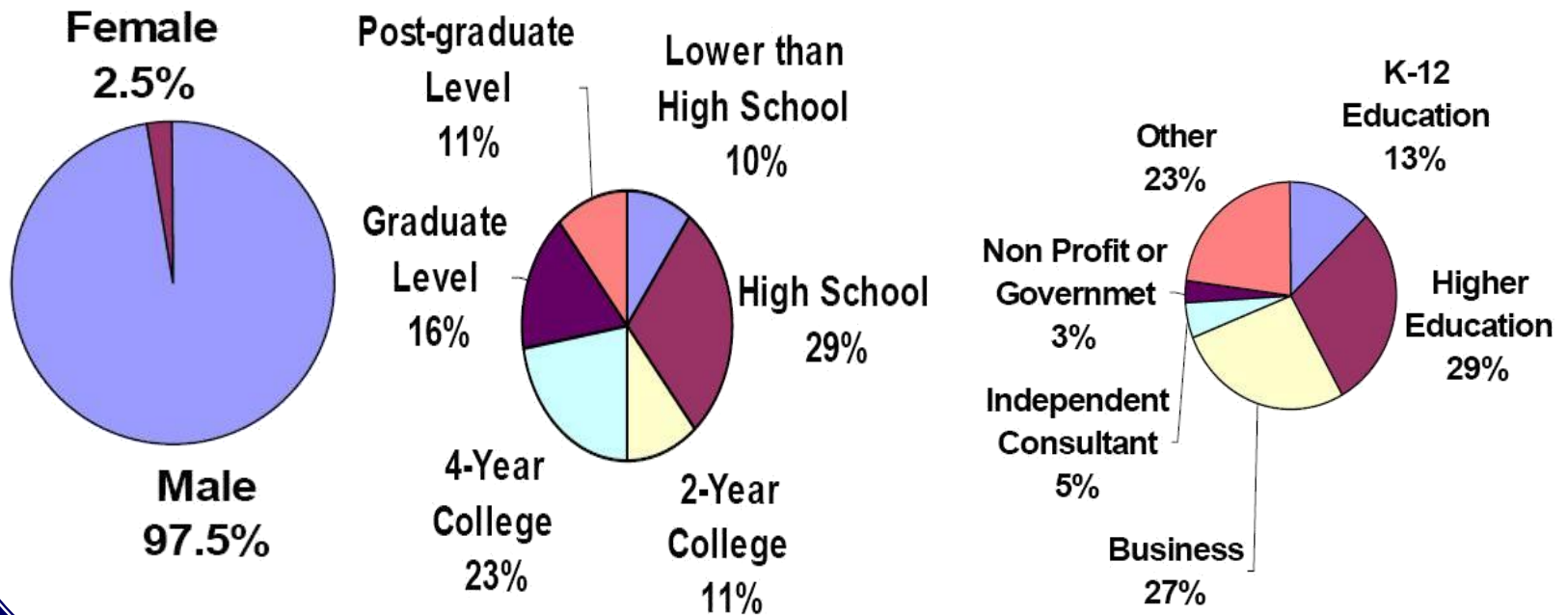
Ideology



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Who are the Wikibookians?

Sajjapanroj & Bonk (2008) concerned to explore who are the Wikibookians (age, gender, occupation and their educational backgrounds).



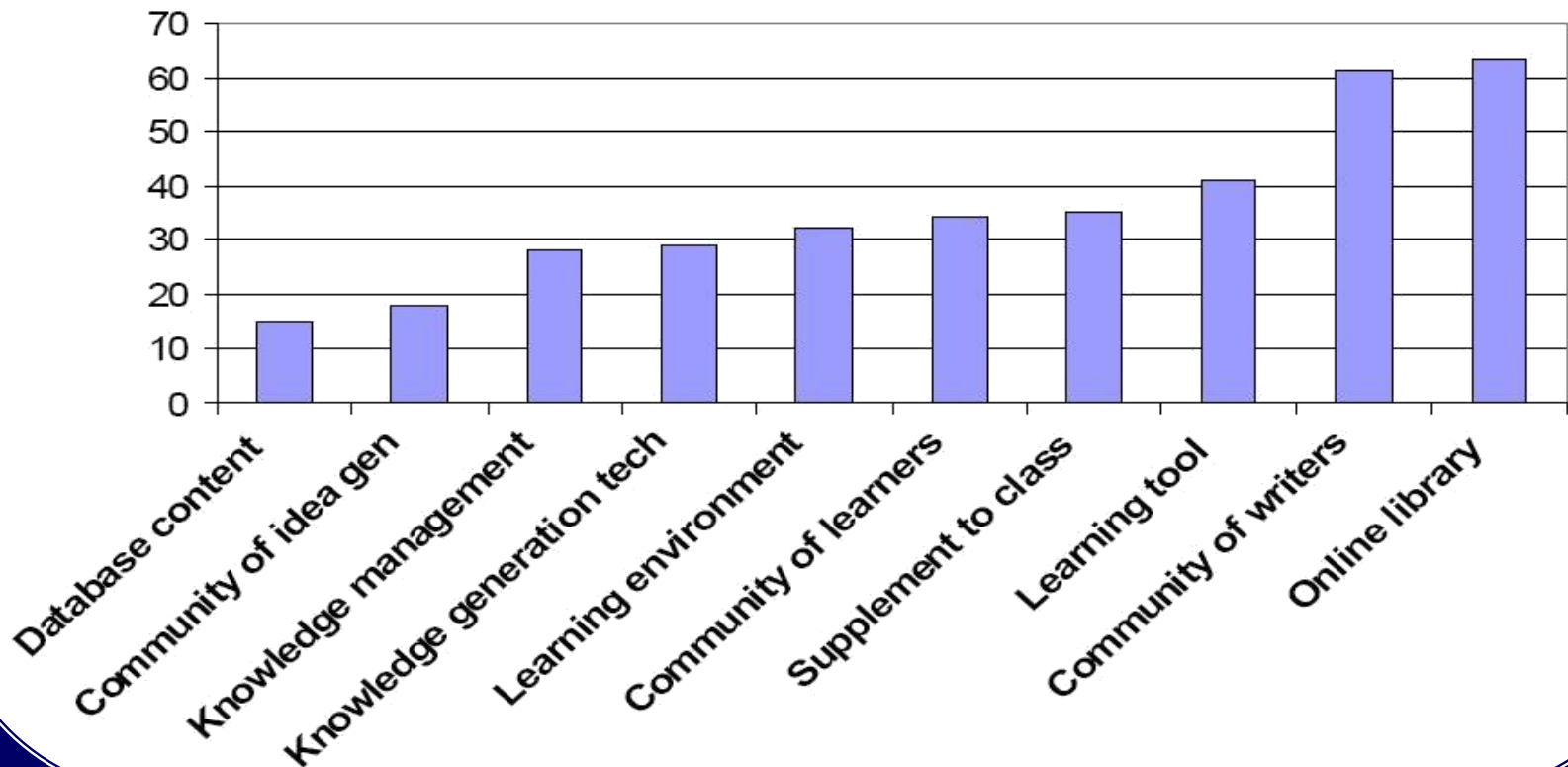


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What are Wikibookians' perceptions of Wikibooks?

Sajjanroj & Bonk (2008) concerned to explore Wikibookians' perceptions about Wikibooks:



Do the behaviour patterns of Wikipedians differ from one culture to another?

Pfiel (2006) traced IPs of contributors to French, German, Japanese, and Dutch Wikipedia websites.

The findings show cultural differences in the style of contributions across cultures:

Power Distance Index (PDI) correlates negatively with the category delete information.

Negative correlation between the Individualism (IDV) and the number of adding actions.

The higher masculinity MAS of a country, the more contributions in the categories Add Information and Clarify Information.



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How we can explore the differences in motivation?

Indicators:

Individualism vs collectivism

Enjoyment: I want to have fun

Help others: people can use these free books

Masculinity vs femininity

Assertiveness: I want to express my personal opinions

Quality by accurate writing: Logical and grammatical errors have to be corrected

High vs low power distance:

Dependence: My teacher asked me to do so

Information democracy: I believe that information should be free

High vs low uncertainty avoidance:

Time is wealth: I'm lonely and have free time

Creative (routine) solutions: I can not find other places to publish my work

Thank You



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