**Intercultural Index**

**Directions:** You receive your community’s culture, its norms and values, in many ways—from television and movies, music, talking with your friends, and guidance from older people. Think about these messages and decide how an ideal member of your culture would rate the following statements. Select 1 if your ideal cultural representative would totally agree with the statement on the left; select 5 if they would totally agree with the statement on the right. Select 3 if they would agree with both equally. Do this alone and then compare your answers with the other participants. Discuss why your answers might be different.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | If you have a problem with someone, you should go to authorities, like teachers, parents, or even police, to solve it. | 1 2 3 4 5 | People should solve their own conflicts; it’s embarrassing if it must go to the authorities. |
| 2 | As long as most members of a group agree with a decision, the people who disagree should go along with it. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Everyone in a group must agree with a decision before it is made. |
| 3 | Being totally honest is always best in the end. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Sometimes, protecting peoples' feelings is better than being completely honest. |
| 4 | You shouldn’t take a telephone call or acknowledge a visitor when you are meeting with another person. | 1 2 3 4 5 | It would be rude not to take a phone call if you're in, or to ignore visitor who drops by. |
| 5 | It's more important to complete a task on time, even if that means it is not perfect. Other things will get held up if not. | 1 2 3 4 5 | It’s more important to complete a task as best as possible, even if that means being late. Other things can wait. |
| 6 | Everything happens for a reason. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Many things happen because of random chance. |
| 7 | In general, people can be trusted, until they prove otherwise. | 1 2 3 4 5 | My friends and family can be trusted absolutely; everyone else must prove themselves. |
| 8 | People should be judged only by their individual achievements and actions. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The best way to judge a person is to look at their family, friends, and other people they are connected to. |
| 9 | If I try hard enough and want something bad enough, nothing can stop me from getting it. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Some things are beyond my reach, no matter what I do. |
| 10 | There are certain absolutes which always apply; right and wrong is always right and wrong | 1 2 3 4 5 | There are no absolutes in life; you must always look at the particular situation. |
| 11 | Unexpected events are poor planning and should be avoided. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Unexpected events usually cannot be avoided and are often good. |
| 12 | What is new is usually better. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Things are the way they are for a reason; new things are suspect. |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Participant Name | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Part II Directions:** Go around the room and gather the scores from other participants for each question. Record the answers in the table below.

**What’s it all Mean?**

The questions you just answered relate to how different cultures see four different things. These four things ae

**1. The Concept of Self.** Some cultures see people primarily as **individuals** who are independent and wholly self-sufficient, and whose identity is an internal matter. Other cultures take a **collectivist** approach, where people’s membership in families, friendships, religions, or other groups defines who they are. **Questions that define the Concept of Self**: **2, 3, 8**

**2.** **Social Obligation.** Some cultures are **universalist:** rules apply to everyone regardless of who they are, and people should treat each other the same way regardless of circumstance. Other cultures are **particularistic**: there are no hard and fast rules, and right and wrong depends on the situation and people involved. **Questions that define Social Obligation: 1, 7, 10**

**3. Time—**Some cultures are **Monochronic**: time is finite, and tasks must be accomplished. They value punctuality,schedules, and deadlines as methods to maximize their time usage. Other cultures are **polychronic**: time is more fluid, so schedules and deadlines are less important than completing tasks well (things take as long as they take!) or maintaining relationships (you’re never too busy to say hello!). **Questions that define Time: 4, 5, 11**

**4. Control**—This has to do with how much power people think they have over the world and their own lives. Some cultures believe in an **internal** locus of control: your destiny depends on your hard work, motivation, and skill. Other cultures emphasize an **external** locus of control: many things are out of your control, and your success has as much to do with luck and other people as it does with you. **Questions that define Locus of Control:** **6, 9, 12**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Participant Name | Self | Obligation | Time | Control |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Directions for the next session:** Look at the scores for each question you recorded for your peer participants. Write the total score each person had for questions dealing with Self, Obligation, Time, and Control. Then, review the table “Decoding your Answers” to see what each score means about their community conception of these four aspects. Write down which of the two approaches of each cultural aspect a community takes. For example, decide if a community takes a Monochronic or Polychronic approach to time based on its score, and write that in the “Time” column below.

**Decoding the Answers:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Self** |  |
| The “self” is **individualistic**. Looking after and taking care of oneself, being self-sufficient, guarantees the wellbeing of the group, and the group is meant to serve individuals. Independence and self-reliance are greatly stressed and valued. One may choose to join groups, but group membership is not essential to one’s identity or success. | 1-8 |
| The “self” is **collectivist**. One’s identity is in large part a function of one’s membership and role in a group, e.g., the family or work team. The survival and success of the group ensures the well-being of the individual, so that by considering the needs and feelings of others, one protects oneself. Harmony and the interdependence of group members are stressed and valued. | 10-15 |
| **Obligation** |  |
| Obligations are **universal**. Certain absolutes apply across the board, regardless of circumstances or the particular situation. To be fair is to treat everyone alike and not make exceptions for family, friends, or members of your in-group. Where possible, you should lay your personal feelings aside and look at the situation objectively. While life isn’t necessarily fair, we can make it fairer by treating people the same way. | 1-8 |
| Obligations are **particular**; how you behave in a given situation depends on the circumstances. You treat family, friends, and your in-group the best you can, and you let the rest of the world take care of itself. There can’t be absolutes because everything depends on whom you’re dealing with. No one expects life to be fair. Exceptions will always be made for certain people. | 10-15 |
| **Time** |  |
| Time is **Monochronic**. The needs of people are adjusted to suit the demands of time—schedules, deadlines, etc. Time is quantifiable, and a limited amount of it is available. People do one thing at a time and finish it before starting something else, regardless of circumstances. | 1-8 |
| Time is **Polychronic**. Time is adjusted to suit the needs of people. More time is always available, and you are never too busy. People often have to do several things simultaneously, as required by circumstances. It’s not necessary to finish one thing before starting another, nor to finish your business with one person before starting in with another. | 10-15 |
| **Control** |  |
| Control of one’s life is largely **inside** the individual. There are very few circumstances that have to be accepted as they are, that cannot be changed. There are no limits on what I can do or become, so long as I set my mind to it and make the necessary effort. Life is what I do. | 1-8 |
| Control of one’s life is largely **outside** the individual. Some aspects of life are predetermined, built into the nature of things. There are limits beyond which we cannot go and certain givens that cannot be changed and must be accepted. Life is in large part what happens to me. | 10-15 |