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Article

Individual Cultural Orientations in Haier-Related HRM Contexts: An Exploratory Study in China and the United States

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Abstract: This study examines relationships among five individual cultural-orientation constructs in Haier-related human resource management contexts in China and the United States. The analysis uses 430 completed questionnaire responses, with 215 respondents in each country group. Reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, measurement-invariance testing, and score-based regressions were applied. The five-factor measurement model showed inadequate global fit, insufficient convergent validity for masculinity–femininity and power distance, and a lack of configural invariance. The score-based regressions supported H1, H3, H4, and H5; H2 was not statistically significant; and H6 produced a statistically significant negative coefficient, opposite to the hypothesized direction. Because configural invariance was not established, the results are interpreted at the pooled observed-score level. The negative H6 coefficient is reported as an unexpected adjusted association; possible statistical and contextual explanations require further investigation and are not treated as evidence of suppression or distinct national mechanisms. The findings describe associations among individual cultural-orientation scores rather than HRM outcomes, causal effects, or verified differences between Haier's operations in the two countries.

Keywords: individual cultural orientation; cross-cultural HRM; Haier; confirmatory factor analysis; measurement invariance

1. Introduction

National-culture frameworks remain influential in international human resource management (HRM), but their use requires a clear distinction between country-level patterns and individual-level orientations. Hofstede's dimensions were derived to compare national aggregates; they do not imply that every employee within a country holds the same values or that relationships observed between country scores must recur among individuals (Brewer & Venaik, 2014). This distinction is central when employees in two countries work within the same multinational enterprise and encounter a shared corporate philosophy alongside different labor markets, institutions, and local management practices.

Haier provides a particularly informative setting because its management model combines global coordination with decentralized, customer-facing responsibility. Its microenterprise-based Rendanheyi philosophy reduces conventional hierarchy, assigns teams direct market accountability, and emphasizes rapid response to users (Hamel & Zanini, 2018). Employees therefore encounter cultural signals that do not map neatly onto a simple China-versus-United States contrast. A respondent can value long-term relationships and collective responsibility while also exercising local autonomy, or value individual achievement while accepting coordination and performance discipline.

The Chinese and United States settings nevertheless provide different

institutional and social reference points. In China, employment relationships commonly place greater emphasis on relational continuity, collective obligations, and long-horizon organizational development. In the United States, employment relations more strongly foreground individual mobility, explicit performance accountability, and employee discretion. These patterns describe contextual tendencies rather than fixed personal attributes. Within Haier-related settings, the enterprise's decentralized operating model interacts with each environment and produces a blended configuration of values.

The convergence–divergence–crossvergence framework offers a suitable interpretation of this configuration. Crossvergence holds that work values reflect the joint operation of national culture and economic or organizational ideology rather than movement toward one universal profile or the preservation of unchanged national profiles (Ralston et al., 2008). For a multinational enterprise, this perspective predicts that the same cultural-orientation label can acquire different practical meanings across sites. Long-term orientation, for example, can be expressed through relationship continuity and strategic patience in China and through career planning and capability investment in the United States.

This study consequently examines individual cultural orientations without treating national categories as individual traits. It has three objectives: (1) to evaluate the reliability and factorial validity of five proposed cultural-orientation measures; (2) to assess whether the measurement structure is sufficiently comparable across the China and United States groups; and (3) to estimate the hypothesized score-based relationships and explain departures from the hypotheses using statistical evidence and contextually grounded interpretation. The study's contribution lies not in forcing results to conform to national-culture expectations, but in showing where individual-level data in a global-firm context support, qualify, or contradict those expectations.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions

For a long time, culture has been regarded as one of the most important factors influencing human behaviors, organizational practices, and management systems. Geert Hofstede defined culture as 'collective programming of the mind'; this 'collective programming of the mind' distinguishes one group or category of people from another (Hofstede, 1980). He further explained culture as a form of "software of the mind," emphasizing that individuals' values, perceptions, emotions, and behavioral patterns are shaped by the social and cultural environments in which they grow and interact (Hofstede et al., 2010). All in all, viewed from this perspective, culture is not merely a static phenomenon, but also a dynamic system that continually evolves through social interaction, historical development, and institutional change.

Culture has attracted extensive attention from scholars across sociology, psychology, management, and international business because it significantly affects individual attitudes and organizational behavior. Research has shown that cultural values influence communication styles, consumer behavior, leadership preferences, decision-making processes, and workplace relationships (Maheswaran & Shavitt, 2000). Individuals are not born with cultural awareness; rather, they gradually acquire cultural understanding through socialization and adaptation within specific social environments. As a result, cultural background plays an important role in shaping employees' expectations toward leadership, teamwork, authority, and organizational management.

To systematically measure cultural differences among countries, Hofstede (1980) developed the Theory of Cultural Dimensions based on a large-scale survey of IBM employees across different nations. In the early stages of his

work, the framework he proposed comprised four dimensions: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. As research progressed, Hofstede and Bond (1988), through their study of East Asian societies, introduced a fifth dimension: long-term versus short-term orientation—to explain cultural differences associated with Confucian values and future-oriented ways of thinking. Subsequently, Hofstede et al. (2010) added a sixth dimension—indulgence versus restraint—further expanding the explanatory scope of the model.

Among these dimensions, power distance refers to the extent to which unequal power distribution is accepted within society. Individualism versus collectivism reflects whether people prioritize personal goals or collective interests. Masculinity versus femininity concerns the degree to which societies emphasize competition, achievement, and assertiveness versus cooperation, care, and quality of life. Uncertainty avoidance describes how societies respond to ambiguity, uncertainty, and risk. Long-term versus short-term orientation focuses on whether societies prioritize future rewards, perseverance, and adaptation or emphasize traditions, immediate outcomes, and social stability (Hofstede, 2001).

Hofstede's framework has been widely used in cross-cultural management and international human resource management (HRM) research because it provides a systematic approach for comparing national cultural characteristics and their influence on organizational practices. Previous studies have demonstrated that cultural dimensions significantly affect leadership style, employee motivation, organizational communication, and HRM systems within multinational enterprises (Kirkman et al., 2006). Therefore, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for examining how cultural differences influence the HRM models of Haier Group in China and the United States.

Overall, drawing on Hofstede's theoretical framework, this study focuses on the five cultural dimensions relevant to human resource management practices, namely power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation. By utilizing these dimensions, the study not only examines the cultural factors influencing Haier's human resource management models in China and the United States, but also explores how national cultural differences shape organizational management practices within different institutional contexts.

2.2 Relationships among Cultural Orientations in Haier HRM Contexts

The six hypotheses concern individual score relationships within Haier-related HRM contexts. Cultural orientations are interrelated, but the direction of a relationship established at the national level does not predetermine its direction among employees. The hypotheses therefore test whether established theoretical expectations remain visible after national, organizational, and individual influences are combined in a multinational-firm setting.

H1 links masculinity–femininity with long-term versus short-term orientation. Achievement, persistence, and the pursuit of sustained performance provide a basis for a positive association. In Haier-related contexts, this link is expressed through performance responsibility combined with continued capability and customer development rather than through a fixed national profile.

H2 links masculinity–femininity with uncertainty avoidance. A positive association follows when achievement pressure increases demand for clear targets, procedures, and predictable evaluation. An alternative configuration is also theoretically possible: achievement and entrepreneurial responsibility reward initiative and calculated risk, separating performance orientation from a preference for certainty. Testing H2 therefore establishes which configuration is represented in the observed scores.

H3 links power distance with uncertainty avoidance. Acceptance of unequal authority gives employees a recognized source of direction, while centralized decisions and formal role expectations reduce ambiguity (Hofstede et al., 2010). A positive association is consequently expected even where teams retain operational discretion.

H4 and H5 connect power distance, individualism–collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. Hierarchical accountability can reinforce collective coordination, and group responsibility can create predictable behavioral expectations (Triandis, 1995). The resulting positive paths concern score covariation; they do not imply that all Chinese respondents are collectivist or that all United States respondents are individualist.

H6 links long-term versus short-term orientation with uncertainty avoidance. Strategic planning, continuity, and investment in stable development provide the rationale for a positive association. At the same time, long-term orientation also includes perseverance, learning, and adaptation. These elements support action through uncertainty rather than avoidance of it. The directional hypothesis tests the planning-and-stability expectation, while the competing adaptive meaning provides an interpretive boundary if the result differs.

The study therefore tests six directional associations among the five cultural-orientation constructs. Statistical support is determined by the estimated coefficients; China and United States contexts are used to interpret the resulting pattern without replacing the statistical tests.

2.3 Research framework

2.3.1 Conceptual Model

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework based on Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions. It connects the five study constructs, structured questionnaire data, and the analytical procedures used to estimate the associations among individual cultural-orientation scores in Haier's HRM contexts in China and the United States.

The five constructs are power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation. These constructs are derived from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and are widely used in cross-cultural management and international HRM research.

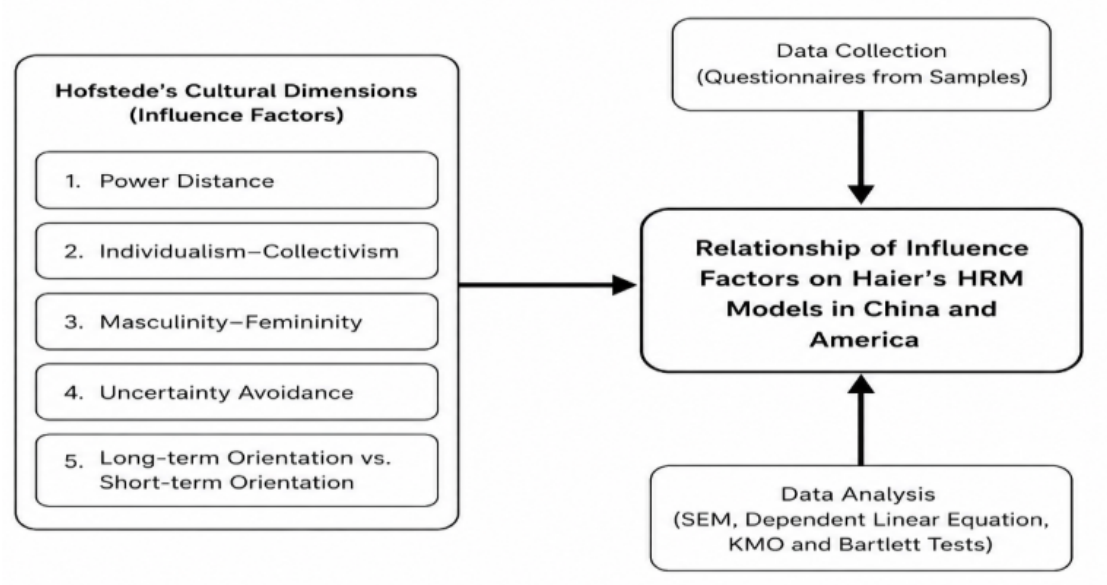


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

The framework centers on the directional associations among the five cultural-orientation constructs. These associations constitute the six hypotheses tested in the study and are interpreted at the individual score level.

The upper section of the framework represents data collection. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents associated with Haier's HRM contexts in China and the United States. The lower section represents data analysis. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, KMO and Bartlett's tests, confirmatory factor analysis, measurement-invariance tests, and score-based regressions were used to evaluate measurement quality and test the six directional associations. **Figure 1** therefore shows the sequence from theoretical constructs and questionnaire data to measurement testing and score-based regression analysis.

2.3.2 Measurement Model

Figure 2 presents the hypothesized measurement and association model. The model contains five latent constructs, their observed indicators, and the six directional associations evaluated in the study.

In the model, the oval shapes represent latent variables, while the rectangular shapes represent observed variables or measurement items. The latent variables include masculinity–femininity (V1), power distance (V2), uncertainty avoidance (V3), individualism and collectivism (V4), and long-term versus short-term orientation (V5). These constructs were adapted from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and previous cross-cultural management studies. Each latent variable is measured using multiple observed indicators to improve construct validity and reliability.

Masculinity–femininity (V1) is measured by five observed variables labeled MF1–MF5. This construct reflects employees' perceptions regarding leadership characteristics, competitiveness, interpersonal relationships, and gender-related management expectations within Haier's HRM system. Power distance (V2) is measured by five indicators labeled PD1–PD5, representing employees' perceptions of hierarchy, authority, participation in decision-making, and organizational equality. Individualism and collectivism (V4) are measured through indicators IC1–IC4, which assess teamwork orientation, collective responsibility, communication, and personal development. Long-term versus short-term orientation (V5) is represented by indicators LS1–LS5, reflecting organizational emphasis on future planning, employee development, immediate performance, and strategic goals. Finally, uncertainty avoidance (V3) is measured by indicators UA1–UA5, which capture employees' attitudes toward organizational stability, risk reduction, communication, and management support under uncertain conditions.

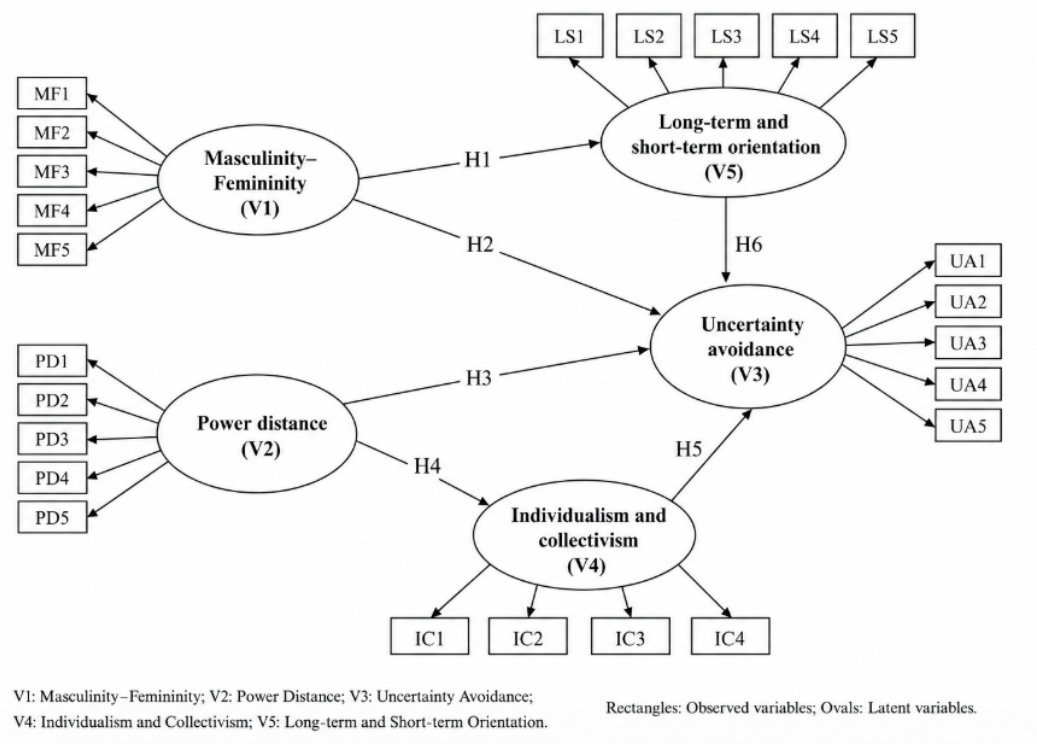


Figure 2 Measurement Model.

The directional arrows represent the six hypothesized associations. H1 specifies a positive association between masculinity-femininity and long-term versus short-term orientation. H2 specifies a positive association between masculinity-femininity and uncertainty avoidance. H3 specifies a positive association between power distance and uncertainty avoidance. H4 specifies a positive association between power distance and individualism-collectivism. H5 specifies a positive association between individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. H6 specifies a positive association between long-term versus short-term orientation and uncertainty avoidance.

Confirmatory factor analysis evaluated the measurement relationships between the constructs and their indicators. Score-based regressions then estimated the six hypothesized associations. This sequence separates measurement quality from observed-score relationships.

H1: Masculinity-femininity is positively associated with long-term versus short-term orientation.

H2: Masculinity-femininity is positively associated with uncertainty avoidance.

H3: Power distance is positively associated with uncertainty avoidance.

H4: Power distance is positively associated with individualism-collectivism.

H5: Individualism-collectivism is positively associated with uncertainty avoidance.

H6: Long-term versus short-term orientation is positively associated with uncertainty avoidance.

2.4 Methods

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine relationships among five individual cultural-orientation constructs in Haier's HRM contexts in China and the United States. The research framework was derived from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and prior cross-cultural management and international HRM research.

2.4.1 Sample and recruitment

The final sample comprised 430 respondents: 215 from China and 215 from the United States. Each country group included 172 employees and 43 managers. Data screening confirmed 24 questionnaire items, complete responses for all items, unique respondent records, and values within the defined 1-5 Likert range. **Table 1** summarises the sample composition.

Table 1. Sample composition and data-screening results

Group	Employee	Manager	Total
China	172	43	215
United States	172	43	215
Total	344	86	430

2.4.2 Research instrument

The study used a structured questionnaire developed from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and prior research on cross-cultural management and HRM. Twenty-four items measured respondents' perceptions across five constructs. All items used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The section on 'the contrast between masculine and feminine traits' draws on Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework and relevant theories of cross-cultural leadership (Hofstede, 2001; Ma, 2019). This dimension was measured using five items reflecting employees' perceptions of leadership characteristics, gender-related expectations, professionalism, authority, and interpersonal sensitivity within organizational management. The measurement items emphasized the balance between assertiveness, competitiveness, cooperation, and employee care in Haier's HRM practices across Chinese and American cultural contexts.

Long-term versus short-term orientation was developed from Hofstede et al. (2010). Five items addressed organizational planning, employee career development, long-term strategic goals, short-term performance evaluation, and learning opportunities.

Before data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed for content validity and clarity. The finalized survey was administered to respondents engaged in organizational and HRM-related activities. Participation was voluntary, all respondents received information about the study purpose and confidentiality, and informed consent was obtained before questionnaire completion. The analytical dataset contains no personally identifiable information.

The five construct scores were computed as unweighted means of their recorded items: MF1-MF5, PD1-PD5, UA1-UA5, IC1-IC4, and LS1-LS5. **Table 2** reports the indicators and scoring interpretation.

Table 2. Constructs, indicators, and provisional coding

Construct	Indicators	Higher score provisionally indicates
Masculinity–femininity (MF)	MF1–MF5	Achievement, assertiveness, and competitive emphasis
Power distance (PD)	PD1–PD5	Acceptance of hierarchy and unequal authority
Uncertainty avoidance (UA)	UA1–UA5	Preference for rules, stability, and predictability
Individualism–collectivism (IC)	IC1–IC4	Collectivism and group-oriented responsibility
Time orientation (LS)	LS1–LS5	Long-term planning and future-oriented development

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive statistics and reliability

The overall KMO statistic was .867, and Bartlett's test was significant, $\chi^2(276) = 6564.282$, $p < .001$, confirming the factorability of the correlation matrix. Reliability was acceptable for MF, UA, IC, and LS. PD showed marginal internal consistency (alpha = .635) and lower sampling adequacy (KMO = .601). **Table 3** presents the descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients, and factorability diagnostics for the five constructs.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, reliability, and factorability

Construct	Overall M (SD)	China M (SD)	US M (SD)	α	KMO	Bartlett χ^2 (df)
MF	3.275 (0.828)	3.487 (0.761)	3.062 (0.839)	0.769	0.675	751.011 (10)
PD	3.263 (0.727)	3.473 (0.700)	3.054 (0.694)	0.635	0.601	364.607 (10)
UA	3.258 (0.895)	3.466 (0.850)	3.050 (0.893)	0.822	0.717	1009.982 (10)
IC	3.253 (1.050)	3.573 (0.994)	2.933 (1.009)	0.926	0.764	1569.729 (6)
LS	3.253 (0.905)	3.550 (0.811)	2.957 (0.899)	0.843	0.732	1137.790 (10)

Note. N = 430; n = 215 per country label. All Bartlett tests p < .001.

3.2 Measurement model, convergent validity, and discriminant validity

Standardized loadings ranged from .604 to .691 for MF, .513 to .568 for PD, .536 to .849 for UA, .849 to .903 for IC, and .654 to .824 for LS. CR exceeded .70 for all constructs except PD (CR = .677). AVE was below .50 for MF (.421) and PD (.296), indicating inadequate convergent validity for those constructs. **Table 4** presents the standardized CFA loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted for each construct.

Table 4. Standardized CFA loadings and convergent-validity indices

Construct	Item	Standardized loading	CR	AVE
MF	MF1	0.629	0.784	0.421
MF	MF2	0.667		
MF	MF3	0.691		
MF	MF4	0.650		
MF	MF5	0.604		
PD	PD1	0.536	0.677	0.296
PD	PD2	0.568		
PD	PD3	0.548		
PD	PD4	0.553		
PD	PD5	0.513		
UA	UA1	0.536	0.832	0.504
UA	UA2	0.716		
UA	UA3	0.849		
UA	UA4	0.780		
UA	UA5	0.624		
IC	IC1	0.849	0.930	0.769
IC	IC2	0.900		
IC	IC3	0.903		
IC	IC4	0.856		
LS	LS1	0.658	0.854	0.542

Continued table:

Construct	Item	Standardized loading	CR	AVE
LS	LS2	0.780		
LS	LS3	0.824		
LS	LS4	0.751		
LS	LS5	0.654		

Note. CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. The indices are interpreted together with the inadequate overall CFA model fit.

Table 5 reports the factor correlations and HTMT values used to assess discriminant validity.

Table 5. Discriminant-validity diagnostics

Construct pair	Factor correlation	HTMT	Assessment
MF-PD	0.270	0.271	No flagged concern
MF-UA	0.444	0.489	No flagged concern
MF-IC	0.940	0.989	Fails both criteria
MF-LS	0.295	0.325	No flagged concern
PD-UA	0.622	0.735	Fornell–Larcker concern
PD-IC	0.580	0.638	Fornell–Larcker concern
PD-LS	0.973	1.116	Fails both criteria
UA-IC	0.584	0.636	No flagged concern
UA-LS	0.448	0.513	No flagged concern
IC-LS	0.596	0.637	No flagged concern

Note. Square roots of AVE were MF = .649, PD = .544, UA = .710, IC = .877, and LS = .736. HTMT ≥ .90 was treated as a clear concern. The most serious overlap involved MF–IC and PD–LS.

3.3 Multigroup Measurement Assessment Across the Chinese and U.S. Samples

A multigroup confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using the Chinese ($n = 215$) and U.S. ($n = 215$) samples. The unconstrained configural model showed inadequate fit, $\chi^2(484) = 1943.891$, CFI $= .756$, TLI $= .722$, RMSEA $= .084$, and SRMR $= .077$. The metric model yielded $\chi^2(503) = 1953.336$. **Table 6** summarises the configural and metric measurement-model results for the Chinese and U.S. samples. Although imposing equality constraints on the factor loadings did not worsen model fit, measurement invariance could not be established because the configural model did not meet acceptable fit criteria. Consequently, scalar invariance, latent-mean comparisons, and country-specific structural-path comparisons were not used for substantive inference. References to the Chinese and U.S. contexts therefore provide theoretically grounded interpretations of the pooled-sample findings rather than evidence of statistically established differences between the two countries.

Table 6. Multigroup CFA results for the Chinese and U.S. samples

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	Comparison
Configural	1943.891	484	4.016	0.756	0.722	0.084	Baseline fit inadequate
Metric	1953.336	503	3.883	0.758	0.734	0.082	$\Delta\chi^2(19) = 9.445$, $p = 0.965$; ΔCFI $= +0.002$

Continued table:

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	Comparison

Note. The Chinese and U.S. samples each included 215 respondents. Although the equality constraints imposed in the metric model did not significantly worsen model fit, metric invariance was not concluded because the configural model showed inadequate fit. Scalar invariance and latent-mean comparisons were therefore not pursued.

3.4 Overall measurement-model fit

The five-factor CFA produced $\chi^2(242) = 1698.825$, CFI $= .773$, TLI $= .741$, RMSEA $= .118$, and SRMR $= .069$. CFI and TLI were below .90, RMSEA exceeded .10, and χ^2/df exceeded 7. SRMR was acceptable in isolation. Taken together, the indices demonstrate inadequate fit for the specified measurement model. **Table 7** presents the fit indices for the five-factor CFA model.

Table 7. Fit indices for the five-factor CFA

Index	Verified value	Common guideline	Interpretation
χ^2	1698.825	Smaller is preferable	Significant; poor exact fit
df	242	—	Based on 24 indicators
χ^2/df	7.020	< 3.00	Poor
CFI	0.773	$\geq .90$	Poor
TLI	0.741	$\geq .90$	Poor
RMSEA	0.118	$\leq .08$	Poor
SRMR	0.069	$\leq .08$	Acceptable in isolation

Note. Fit indices were reproduced from the item-level data using maximum-likelihood covariance-structure estimation. Overall fit is inadequate despite the acceptable SRMR.

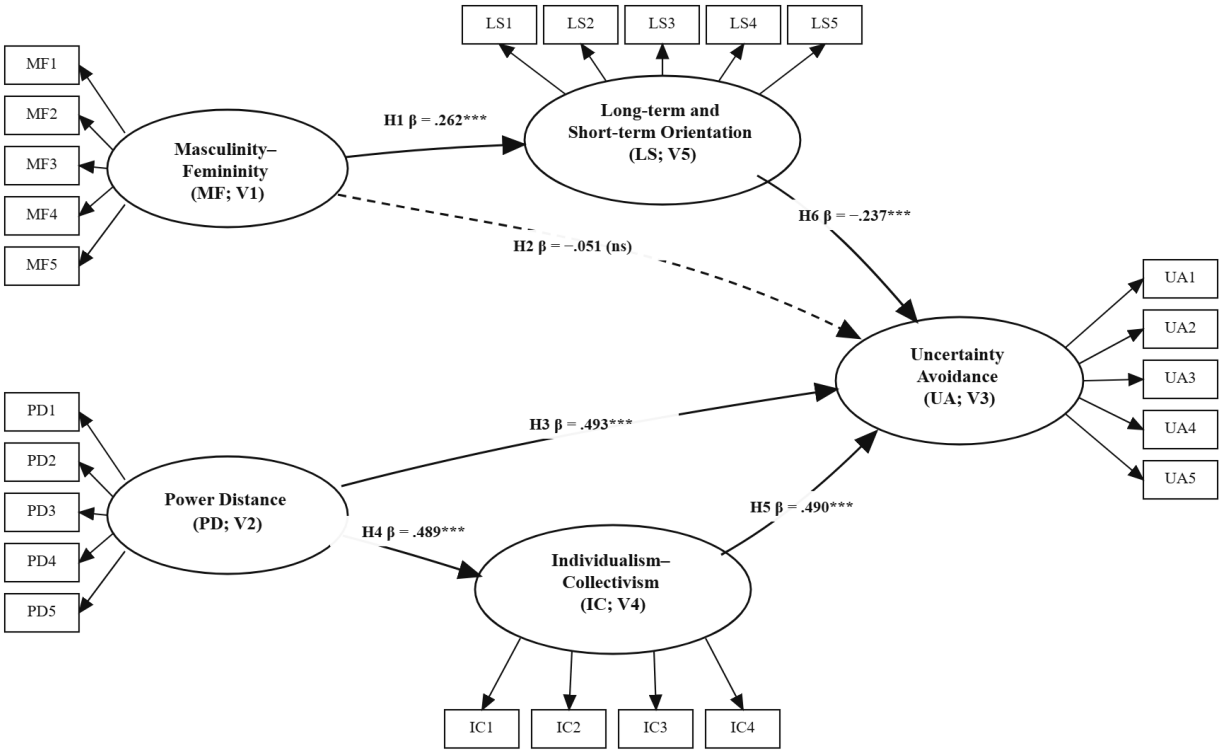
3.5 Score-based regression results

The score-based regressions produced internally consistent coefficients and standard errors. H1, H3, H4, and H5 were supported. H2 was not statistically significant. H6 was statistically significant and negative, opposite to the hypothesized positive direction. The models explained 6.8% of the variance in LS, 23.9% in IC, and 41.2% in UA. **Figure 3** presents the standardized coefficients. **Table 8** reports the score-based regression estimates, while **Figure 3** presents the standardized coefficients.

Table 8. Score-based regression estimates

Hyp.	Path	B (SE)	t	β	95% CI for B	p	Conclusion
H1	LS ← MF	0.2860 (0.0510)	5.608	0.262	[0.186, 0.386]	$< .001$	Supported
H2	UA ← MF	-0.0550 (0.0835)	-0.659	-0.051	[-0.219, 0.109]	.510	Not supported
H3	UA ← PD	0.6068 (0.0806)	7.526	0.493	[0.448, 0.765]	$< .001$	Supported
H4	IC ← PD	0.7058 (0.0609)	11.590	0.489	[0.586, 0.826]	$< .001$	Supported
H5	UA ← IC	0.4175 (0.0769)	5.431	0.490	[0.266, 0.569]	$< .001$	Supported
H6	UA ← LS	-0.2347 (0.0685)	-3.429	-0.237	[-0.369, -0.100]	$< .001$	Not supported; opposite direction

Note. For every row, t = B/SE before rounding. H1 uses LS as the dependent variable; H4 uses IC; H2, H3, H5, and H6 are estimated simultaneously with UA as the dependent variable. These are observed-score regressions and are not interpreted as latent structural effects because the measurement model fit was inadequate.



Note. Standardized score-based regression coefficients are reported (N = 430). Solid paths are significant at p < .001; the dashed H2 path is nonsignificant (p = .510).
Items define the constructs visually; the structural coefficients come from score-based regressions rather than a latent-variable SEM.

Figure 3. Exploratory score-based path results.

Note. Standardized coefficients are shown. The dashed path is nonsignificant. H6 is significant in the direction opposite to the hypothesis.

4. Discussion

4.1 Measurement quality and interpretive scope

The first substantive finding is a limit on measurement rather than a failure to obtain data. The questionnaire responses are real observations from 430 participants, but real data do not guarantee that a proposed measurement structure is adequate. The five-factor CFA showed inadequate global fit, masculinity–femininity and power distance did not reach acceptable average variance extracted, power distance reliability was marginal, and the configural model did not fit adequately across the two country groups. These results require the score-based regressions to be interpreted as associations among composite scores rather than as a validated latent structural model.

The measurement overlap is also theoretically informative. The factor correlation between power distance and long-term orientation was .973, while the correlation between masculinity–femininity and individualism–collectivism was .940. In these Haier-related settings, respondents did not sharply separate hierarchy from temporal orientation or achievement orientation from self–group orientation. This pattern is consistent with research showing that national-level cultural dimensions cannot automatically be transferred to individual-level measurement (Brewer & Venaik, 2014) and that individualism and collectivism vary substantially within national populations (Oyserman et al., 2002).

4.2 Interpretation of the supported relationships

Four hypothesized score relationships were supported. Masculinity–femininity was positively associated with long-term orientation (H1), and power distance was positively associated with individualism–collectivism (H4). In the simultaneous uncertainty-avoidance model, power distance (H3) and individualism–collectivism (H5) had positive coefficients. These results show that respondents who endorsed stronger hierarchy-related or self–group orientation

scores also reported a stronger preference for predictability and structured expectations after the other predictors were held constant. They do not demonstrate that one orientation causes another, and the measurement limitations preclude a claim that the same latent mechanism operates identically in both countries.

From an HRM perspective, the supported paths fit environments in which responsibility is decentralized but performance remains visible. Clear authority, team obligations, and explicit accountability can coexist with entrepreneurial autonomy. Haier's organizational design therefore provides a more realistic interpretive frame than a binary contrast between a hierarchical China and an individualistic United States. Employees can experience both market-facing discretion and strong performance coordination within the same organization.

4.3 Why H2 was not supported

H2 predicted a positive relationship between masculinity–femininity and uncertainty avoidance, but the adjusted coefficient was small and nonsignificant ($B = -.0550$, $\beta = -.051$, $p = .510$). The result indicates that achievement and competition orientation contributed no unique explanatory information for uncertainty avoidance after power distance, individualism–collectivism, and long-term orientation were included. It does not show that achievement values are absent; it shows that achievement orientation and preference for certainty are empirically distinct in this sample.

In the Chinese setting, performance striving operates alongside relationship-based coordination, collective accountability, and long-term organizational commitments. These mechanisms provide guidance under uncertainty without requiring achievement orientation itself to predict a preference for rules. In the United States setting, performance striving is commonly linked to individual initiative, mobility, and calculated risk taking. Under that configuration, strong achievement orientation is compatible with either higher or lower uncertainty avoidance. When both settings are analyzed together, these different practical meanings produce a near-zero unique coefficient. This explanation is consistent with the observed result, but it is not a tested country interaction because acceptable configural invariance was not established.

4.4 Interpretation of the H6 result

H6 predicted a positive relationship between long-term orientation and uncertainty avoidance, whereas the simultaneous regression produced a negative coefficient ($B = -.2347$, $\beta = -.237$, $p < .001$). The coefficient must be interpreted in relation to the correlation structure. Long-term orientation had a positive factor correlation with uncertainty avoidance (.448), yet power distance and long-term orientation correlated at .973. This coefficient indicates that, in the pooled sample, long-term orientation was negatively associated with uncertainty avoidance after masculinity–femininity, power distance, and individualism–collectivism were held constant.

Possible explanations may involve different meanings of long-term orientation, including strategic patience, adaptability, career planning, or capability development. However, these interpretations were not directly measured, and the pooled analysis did not estimate country-specific coefficients. They should therefore be treated as propositions for future research rather than as established mechanisms in China or the United States.

In China, long-term orientation in a rapidly changing business environment is expressed through strategic patience, continuous learning, relationship continuity, and adjustment to changing market conditions. Haier's decentralized microenterprises reinforce long-horizon customer value while requiring quick local decisions. Once hierarchy-related variance is controlled, this adaptive aspect of

long-term orientation aligns with greater tolerance for ambiguity rather than stronger rule dependence.

In the United States, long-term orientation is expressed through career planning, investment in transferable capabilities, and sustained customer or business development. These practices increase an employee's capacity to act under uncertain conditions. Combined with lower acceptance of concentrated authority and stronger expectations of discretion, future orientation is separated from reliance on formal control. The negative residual coefficient is therefore consistent with a form of future orientation centered on preparedness and adaptability. Because the pooled model does not estimate country-specific slopes, this interpretation defines a plausible mechanism for future testing rather than a verified difference between the two countries.

4.5 Integrating the China and United States contexts

The Chinese and United States settings provide relevant contextual background, but the present analysis does not establish distinct country-specific mechanisms. Configural invariance was not established, and the pooled regressions did not estimate country-specific slopes or country-by-predictor interactions. Crossvergence may provide a useful framework for future studies using invariant measures and formal multigroup tests. In the present study, the defensible interpretation is limited to pooled associations among observed composite scores.

The findings are best understood through crossvergence. Chinese institutional and relational traditions, United States norms of autonomy and mobility, and Haier's shared management system operate simultaneously rather than independently. Employees in both settings encounter customer-centered accountability, decentralized units, and performance pressure, but they interpret those practices through different employment and social environments. This combination explains why some associations match the hypotheses while others do not: the measured orientations are reconstructed within a global organization instead of reproducing fixed country profiles (Ralston et al., 2008).

Country context is therefore used as an explanatory lens, not as a substitute for direct evidence. The failed configural model means that latent mean comparisons and country-specific structural paths are not defensible with the present instrument. The strongest conclusion is that the pooled observed-score pattern is compatible with distinct contextual meanings in China and the United States and that those meanings require a redesigned, invariant measure and formal country-by-predictor tests in future research.

4.6 Implications for HRM research and practice

For cross-cultural HRM research, the findings show that hypothesis-inconsistent coefficients should be examined rather than relabeled as support. Researchers should report zero-order relationships alongside adjusted coefficients, assess collinearity and suppression, and establish measurement invariance before comparing countries. Cultural dimensions should be operationalized at the level on which claims are made, with locally validated items and cognitive pretesting in each language and employment setting.

For practice, the results caution against designing HRM systems from national stereotypes. In China, managers should distinguish relationship continuity and long-term commitment from a blanket preference for rigid control. In the United States, they should distinguish individual achievement from automatic comfort with ambiguity. Across both settings, Haier-related units can combine clear accountability with local discretion, use stable long-term goals with flexible implementation, and evaluate employee needs directly rather than infer them from nationality.

The instrument measures individual cultural orientations rather than

recruitment, reward, appraisal, training, participation, or career-development practices. The findings should therefore inform the design of HRM inquiry and local diagnosis, not be presented as direct evidence that a particular HRM intervention is effective. A subsequent study should measure those practices explicitly and test whether they mediate or moderate the relationships reported here.

5. Conclusion

This study examined associations among five individual cultural-orientation scores using 430 questionnaire responses from respondents in China and the United States. H1, H3, H4, and H5 were supported; H2 was not statistically significant; and H6 produced a statistically significant negative coefficient, opposite to the hypothesized direction.

The H6 result indicates that long-term orientation was negatively associated with uncertainty avoidance after the other predictors were held constant. Because the analysis does not report composite-score zero-order correlations and collinearity diagnostics, the result is not interpreted as a suppression effect. Explanations involving adaptability, preparedness, or country-specific meanings remain possible directions for future research.

Interpretation is further limited by inadequate CFA fit, convergent- and discriminant-validity concerns, failure to establish configural invariance, and the cross-sectional design. Future research should refine the scales, document respondent recruitment and organizational affiliation, report composite-score correlations and collinearity diagnostics, and test country-specific relationships using an invariant measurement model. Within these boundaries, the study demonstrates the importance of reporting hypothesis-inconsistent associations transparently and interpreting them cautiously.

Within these boundaries, the study offers a realistic conclusion: hypothesis-inconsistent findings are not statistical inconveniences but evidence that individual cultural orientations in multinational firms are more context dependent than national-level theories imply. HRM scholarship and practice gain accuracy when they preserve that complexity rather than force employees into fixed national profiles.

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