

## School Artifacts in the Context of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (Germany and Turkey Sample) <sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This study aims to compare the artifacts in German and Turkish schools, using Geert Hofstede's National Cultural Dimensions as a framework. Culture analyzing design and, document examination technique was used to analyze the artifacts such as pictures, photographs, sculptures, busts, models etc. in schools. Initially, the data was categorized under certain themes for each country. The visuals and themes were analyzed according to Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. Despite the fact that the reflection of national culture in schools was consistent with Hofstede's Dimensions to a large extent, the results of our study revealed some considerable differences between the scores of the two countries according to Hofstede's classification. This study offers us an opportunity to discuss the reflection of national culture in educational institutions, and Hofstede's cultural classification provides a basis for a new framework of reference to determine the artifacts used in schools.

**Keywords:** Hofstede's cultural dimensions, school artifacts

### 1. Introduction

Schools are of vital importance as living areas that prepare individuals for life as well as the areas where we experience life itself every day. Some of the target achievements are attempted to fulfill through classes. However, it is also crucial to underpin other components with the specified goals in the school. Not only the reflection of scientific inventions but also inventors and their contribution to humanity through artifact in school corridors (e.g. works of art, paintings, graphics, cartoons, busts, etc.) can be assumed to be effective in making sense of the classroom scientific literacy learning. Artifacts of school culture, the quantity and quality of elements such as furniture, paintings, sculptures, achievement corners, and wall paintings reflected in the visual appearance of school indicate what values and norms dominate school culture. The concept of artifact is defined as "something observed in a scientific investigation or experiment that is not naturally present but occurs as a result of the preparative or investigative procedure" (Oxford Dictionary online dictionary artifact). Kuh and Whitt (1988), Brooks and Gaalema (2012) define physical artifacts as things that surround people physically and provide them with immediate sensory stimuli as they carry out culturally expressive activities. In their study they focused on non-verbal messages pointed out by the physical artifacts conveying the message of culture. Harris (1989) emphasized that an artifact carries a cultural content and therefore is used as a cultural symbol, which distinguishes one culture from other. There is strong evidence that human beings can also learn without awareness. In real life we do not only learn consciously but also unconsciousness plays a notable role in our learning. This can be an important starting point that should be taken into consideration while arranging school environment. Tonbul and Güngör (2017) argued in their recent study that the visuals of the school definitely contribute to education goals by creating a positive learning environment. According to Bollman and Deal (2009), an organizational culture reveals itself through symbols and therefore the symbolic frame plays an important role to project the organizational behavior. Consequently, visuals, as artifact components of the school, may have influence on implicit learning and make the school goals more meaningful. Although the school goals are written in curriculum and they are realized through instructional activities, there is a convention about the role of hidden curriculum on

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this achievement. Eisner (1992) argued that the hidden curriculum meets the expectation of the society and the economic systems and educational policies in a confidential way. Managerial (celebration, commemorating, meetings etc.) and instrumental regulations (architectural design of the school, paintings, photographs, sculptures, furniture etc.) are accepted (Demirel, 1999; Eisner, 1992) as a part of hidden curriculum. And there is consensus in the literature about the role of hidden curriculum during the internalization process of democratic values.

Evaluating from the micro sociology point of view, the visual structure of the school apparently mirrors the cultural characteristics of the society they belong to. In this context, it is possible to evaluate and classify school organizations in terms of cultural dimensions. Culture, emphasized as a complex phenomenon, has been handled in different ways in the literature. Used in multiple disciplines, the concept of culture has more than one definition and aspect. Heffernan and his friends (2010) detected 164 definitions of culture. Samovar and his colleagues (2010) emphasized the complexity of culture and the difficulty of making its clear definition. Furthermore, Hall (2003) underlined a different definition of culture and handled the issue as a circuit with the context of media, representation, language and identity. Hall (1990) answered the question of what culture is by focusing on the communication dimension of culture. He defined culture as a common system of shared meanings that creates a framework to solve problems. According to him, individuals communicate through their prior attitudes, beliefs and values every day. It also means that people from different cultures have different attitudes, beliefs and values. Another scholar Geert Hofstede has deeply influenced the cultural studies in many fields ranging from management to education with his national cultural classification. The Dutch social psychologist and management scholar Geert Hofstede conducted the most widely used cultural framework. It was derived from data coming from IBM employee surveys between 1967 and 1973 in more than 70 countries. Based on empirical researches, he focused on the national and organizational culture in a way that assumes culture as “a collective programming of mind-one’s mental software”. On the other hand, the software that originates from social environments and experiences cannot be modified like computer software (Mintu, 1992). Hofstede also emphasized that this term can be attributed to different nations, regions, ethnical groups, occupations, organizations (Hofstede et al., 2010). When he published the book “Culture Consequences”, it opened a wide door to comparative cultural analysis in many disciplines as a tool for academics and experts, as Hoppe (2004) pointed out in his interview with Hofstede. In 2010, Hofstede edited the study and added the last dimension based on the data from 93 countries including Germany and Turkey (Hofstede, et. al., 2010; Geert Hofstede web page). Hofstede defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another”. Hofstede defined six cultural dimensions (6-D Model): Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation and Indulgence versus Restraint. His basic argument was to show that “cultural differences between modern nations could be meaningfully measured and ordered along a discrete set of dimensions, representing different answers to universal problems of human societies.” (Hofstede et al., 2006 pp. 883). A more detailed view of dimensions within the context of two countries, the subject of this study, is as follows:

Table 1. Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions: Germany and Turkey

Dimensions	Indicators	Ger	Tur
Power Distance (PDI)	<u>Low</u> : Co-determination rights: Direct communication. The use of power should be legitimized and is subject to criteria of good and evil. Student centered education.	35	66
	<u>High</u> : centralized power: Rules that means control is expected, formal and indirect communication. The legitimacy of power is irrelevant. Teacher centered education.		

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)	<p><u>Individualism</u>: self-actualization, personal preference loyalty, sense of duty and responsibility. “I” consciousness. Purpose of education is learning how to learn.</p>	67	37
	<p><u>Collectivism</u>: Belonging to a group, the sense of ‘we’, maintaining the harmony of the group and avoiding conflicts. “We” consciousness. Purpose of education is learning how to do.</p>		
Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)	<p><u>Masculinity</u>: “live in order to work” and expect managers to be decisive and assertive. Maximum emotional and social differentiation between the genders. Teachers use best students as norm. System rewards academic performance.</p>	66	45
	<p><u>Feminity</u>: Consensus, sympathy are valued. Conflicts are avoided both in private and work life. Minimum emotional and social differentiation between the genders. Teachers use average students as norm. System rewards students’ social adaptation.</p>		
Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)	<p><u>Low</u>: Thinking, presenting, and planning, details are major components to create certainty”.</p>	65	85
	<p><u>High</u>: Need intense laws and rules and people use rituals, some of which are religious or traditional. Higher anxiety and intolerance of deviant persons and ideas. Teachers supposed to have all the answers.</p>		
Long Short Orientation Term Normative Orientation (LTO)	<p><u>Short time</u>: Maintaining time-honored traditions and norms, viewing societal change with suspicion. Supposed to be proud of one’s country. Focusing on asking “why”. Students attribute success and failure to luck.</p>	83	46
	<p><u>Long time</u>: Taking a more pragmatic approach, encouraging thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future. What is good and evil depends upon circumstances. Focusing on asking “how”.</p>		
Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)	<p><u>Indulgence</u>: Allowing free gratification of basic and natural human drives, enjoying life and having fun. Freedom of speech seen important. Higher importance of leisure.</p>	40	49
	<p><u>Restraint</u>: Suppressing gratification, strict social norms. Freedom of speech is not a primary concern. Lower importance of leisure.</p>		

Source: Wursten and Jacobs, 2013, 8-12.

The dimensions have been mainly applied for the workplace samples, as an institution highly bounded with society and culture. However, education, in particular school, has been another field of cultural research based on Hofstede's dimensions. Eldridge and Cranston (2009) examined the effect of national culture on the management of Australia's provision of transnational higher education in Thailand. Istrate (2015) applied the Hofstede dimensions in her study aiming to understand the cultural differences while developing online courses. Yoo (2014) is also one of the researchers that attempted to understand student-teacher relationships within the framework of Hofstede's dimensions. Some scholars have used some specific dimensions linked with their research. For instance, Schwab (2013) studied the influence of Individualism-Collectivism and Power Distance cultural dimensions on parental disciplinary methods. When the whole literature, including Turkish and German is examined, researches about the artifacts that constitute the school culture's symbolic dimension refer to topics as architecture of school (Berg, 2015; Deal & Peterson, 1990; Karasolak, 2009;), the physical environment of the classroom (Barett and other, 2015; Karaküçük, 2008; Türedi, 2008); the effects on student's learning (Udo, 2007; Veznedaroğlu, 2007) and classroom visuals (Peterson & Deal, 2009; Schratz & Löffler, 2005; Sosnuoski, 2003). Some studies are limited by only visuals about the subjects like history (Bal & Yiğittir, 2012) or physical arrangement of a classroom such as in the pre-school stage (Aksoy, 2009). There are also studies about visuals on school hall boards (Woolner, Clark & Hall, 2010); visuals about certain days and weeks and educational club activities (Çubukçu, 2012) and the change of artifacts in the school history (DIPF, 2018). This study examines the effects of national culture of the societies on the institutions. More specifically, the school as a social institution is under investigation by using Hofstede's cultural classification as an analytical leading framework. The school culture dimensions are analyzed through artifacts in schools by comparing German and Turkish schools. In contrast to many researches, a holistic approach has been implemented by applying all the dimensions as a whole. Furthermore, in comparison to the visual studies, analysis is expanded through categorization of the artifacts for each country. In this way, it is anticipated that the present study will contribute to experts and researchers by showing them how to interpret the dimensions through artifacts at schools. Deal and Peterson (1990) expressed that a school principal must have the knowledge of school culture and its symbolic dimension that affects the internal and external stakeholders while improving the school. Wursten and Jacobs (2013) also argued that Hofstede's cultural dimensions provide an analytic tool to understand educational policies and teaching methods. Thus, school administrators and teachers will be offered a distinct perspective and evaluation model while determining the artifacts at schools. At the same time, this study may also enable us to make some practical suggestions within the context of school and culture. Based on the Hofstede's cultural framework, the main question of the study is: How do school organizations reflect national cultures? The following sub-questions are addressed to the examining of culture in the context of visuals at schools by trying to make a contribution to the field:

- 1- How are the permanent visuals in German and Turkish schools distributed under certain themes?
- 2- How could permanent visuals be examined in terms of Hofstede Cultural dimensions?

## 2. Method

The study has been planned according to culture analysis design, one of the qualitative research approaches. Document examination technique has been applied to analyze the artifacts in schools. Ethnography research uses various approaches to obtain a holistic picture of a particular society, group, institution, settings, or situation. (Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyud, 2012). Schools as institutions are the topic of this research. Culture analysis is used in describing and analysis of perception and behaviors of a person and also social structure, their functionality, values, and norms. The data can be collected from a person or groups affecting the culture and from *documents* reflecting the culture as well (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). In this study, we examined the artifacts in schools according to Hofstede's culture dimension, with the assumption that artifacts such as pictures, photographs, sculptures, busts, models etc. reflect the culture. Hofstede culture dimensions are appropriate for such an analysis.

### 2.1. Data Collection and Analyzing

The data of this study consists of photos from various schools in two different countries -Germany and Turkey. The permanent visuals such as pictures, awards, wall paintings, texts, sculptures on every corner of the schools were recorded. Temporary and periodical visual elements such as homework, visuals related to special occasions and clubs or communities were not included in this study. The analysis of data was approached in two phases. First, thematic analysis was applied by coding and identifying themes

emerging from the raw data. Thus, the collected photos were divided into categories according to data coding instrument by two different researchers.

After coding, the findings were used to create themes and sub-themes. The themes were reduced, renamed and compared according to the feedbacks from different researchers. In the end, eleven themes, six of which are common (e.g. social values, nature and environment) and five of which differ, (national leaders for Turkey and multiculturalism and international for Germany) were determined for both countries. The constructed themes were used in the content analysis. For instance, in the category of social values, featured kind of values were detected. Furthermore, in the category of scientists and thinkers, famous scientists and thinkers for each country were identified. The common and uncommon themes were evaluated, compared and contrasted. In the second phase, the descriptive analysis technique was applied in order to analyze the visuals and themes according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions by comparing the two countries. The descriptive analysis was performed to check the list of cultural dimensions created by researchers.

### 2.2. Validity and Reliability

The separate encodings made by two different researchers were compared and reevaluated in order to analyze the data and define the main themes. One of the researchers has published a study about permanent visuals in schools and is an instructor of school culture subject at post grade level. The other researcher is a teacher in Germany who graduated from educational management department.

The opinion of an expert who has studied Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions were consulted so as to supply internal reliability of the research. By including relevant visuals for each analysis, the content of analysis was opened to the others. Moreover, the diversification of data was conducted by collecting data from a large number of schools of different types and levels. In the literature, it is stated that expert opinion giving direct examples of data and diversification of working sample can increase the reliability of the research (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992; Shenton, 2004). Finally, the raw data and analysis were kept for further researches.

### 2.3. Subjects

The research was conducted by the purposive sampling method at different level of schools. From Germany and Turkey: Primary (Grundschule/İlkokul), secondary (Realschule/Ortaokul) and high school (Gymnasium/Lise). In addition, socio-economic status of public schools in Turkey (low, medium, high) were taken into consideration. Thus, in scope of the research, 397 pictures from 23 schools in Germany (6 Gymnasium, 4 Gesamtschule, 3 Realschule, 10 Grundschule) and 378 pictures from 21 schools in Turkey (8 primary schools, 7 secondary schools and 6 high schools) were obtained in 2016-2017 academic year. what is the number of photos per school?

## 3. Findings

1. The first sub-problem was 'How are the permanent visuals in German and Turkish schools distributed under certain themes?' The permanent visuals were categorized in 10 thematic captions for Turkish and German schools. These are as follows:

Table 2. The Common and differentiated themes of Turkish and German schools

Common	Social values
	Culture- Arts- Literature
	Scientists and thinkers
	Environment and Nature
	Directions and warnings
	Rewards
Turkey	Turkish History and National Leaders
	Philanthropists
Germany	Multiculturalism, international dimension
	Legal children rights and independence , individualism



After analyzing the visuals from both countries, six common themes were created from the data. Although listed under the same title, obviously some certain cultural differences were required to be commented for common categories:

*Social values.* Both in German and Turkish schools, the visuals that represent social values are identical. Interestingly, Turkish visuals mostly emphasize general social rules and tradition with the implication of respect, solidarity, patriotism, responsibility, tolerance, mercy. On the other hand, German visuals indicate more specific personal and interpersonal relationships, and they are more direct and concrete about common behavior in society (e.g. greeting).



Figure 1. Social values

*Culture-Art-Literature.* Culture-art-literature is one of the most obvious themes that was strongly observed in schools in both countries. However, some distinctive features were observed in connection with culture. Within the context of Germany, it was the most remarkable theme that can be frequently observed at each level of the school. These are usually sculptures, designed objects, drawings, wall paintings and pictures. In terms of numbers, the art pieces are much more common and various in German schools. In Turkey, however, the existence of such visuals is different in private and public schools, with a higher rate in private schools. In addition, the local art figures are more common in private schools. Unlike Germany, the visuals in Turkish schools mostly tend to be pictures and drawings rather than designed objects or sculptures.

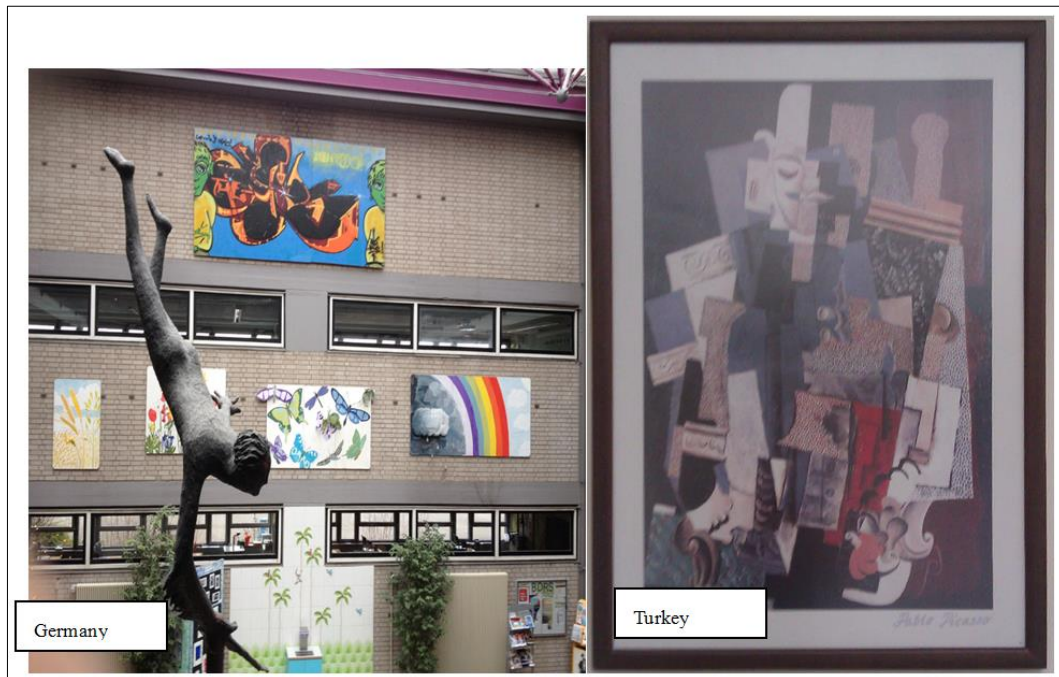
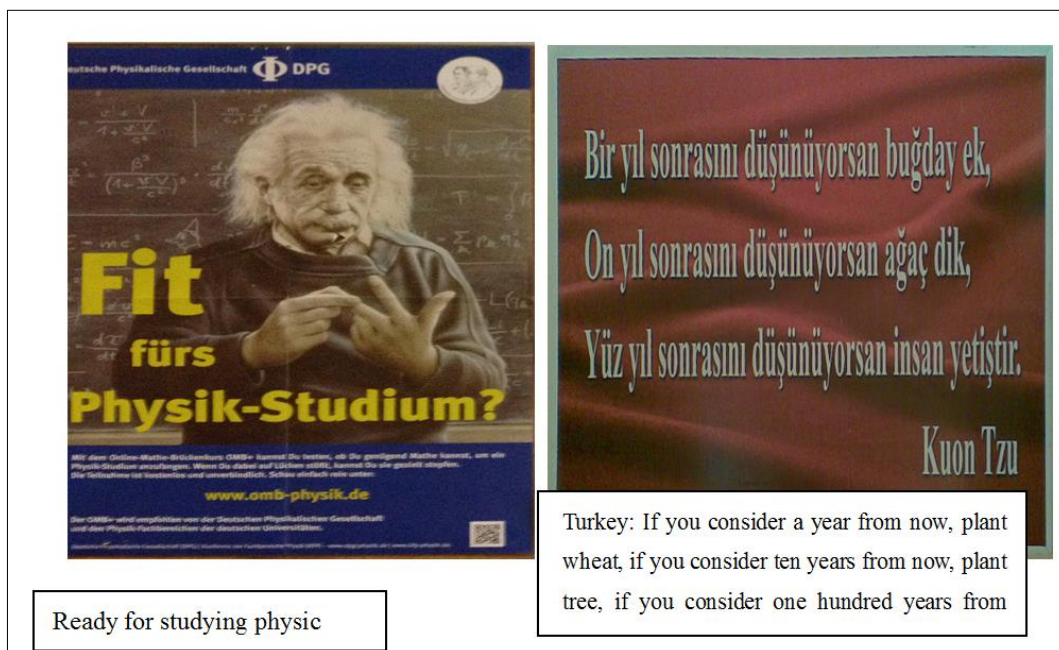


Figure 2. Culture-Art-Literature

*Scientists and thinkers.* Private and public schools in Turkey are different in terms of this theme, too. The gap between public and private schools in this category can be observed through the lack of visuals of scientists and thinkers in public schools. Some sayings can be seen on the walls of public schools. In Germany, except for some thinkers after whom the schools are named, it is almost impossible to find a portrait of German scientists or thinkers. For instance, some visuals of Albert Einstein as a universal figure of science don't state him as a German scientist. Overall, in both countries scientists and thinkers are not ranked enough in schools. In Germany with a low number of such visuals, in fact, the German figures are preferred rather than the ones from all over the world.



Ready for studying physic

Turkey: If you consider a year from now, plant wheat, if you consider ten years from now, plant tree, if you consider one hundred years from

Figure 3. Scientists and thinkers

*Nature and environment.* Nature and environment are widely used themes in both countries. In Turkey, an ideal environmental world is described through visuals. Environmental problems, environmental protection, concrete illustrations from surroundings, animal rights and human environmental destruction are not sufficiently visualized. In Germany, on the other hand, instead of visualizing the problems, the visuals that illustrate nature, animals and species can be seen everywhere. For example, there are some small gardens in which the students can cultivate plants themselves. In the buildings, there are dead battery recycling boxes and trash separation bins supported with texts and visuals to encourage the students to use them. Nevertheless, the role of industry and the responsibilities of the governments to protect the environment can be barely identified through the visuals in Turkey and Germany in figure 4.

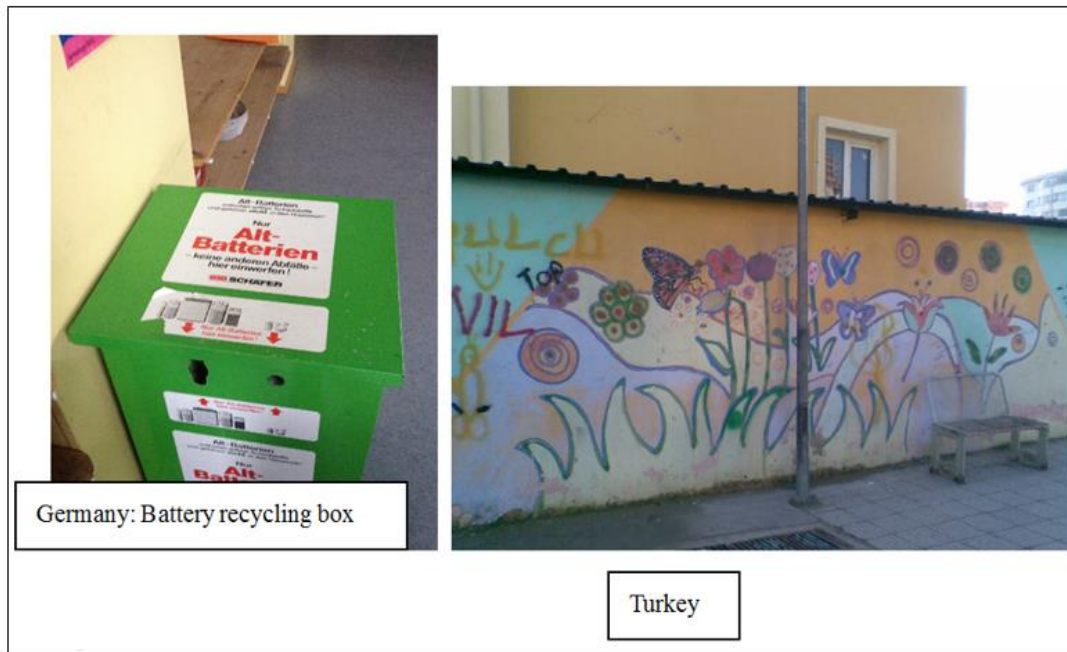


Figure 4. Nature and environment

*Directions and warnings.* Similar to German schools, signs and warnings showing what to do in case of danger, the telephone number of police, emergency and fire department are common in Turkish schools as well.





Figure.5. Directions and warnings

*Rewards.* In Turkey, there is a designated area for rewards in each school that can be easily seen by everyone, and this can be regarded as an emphasis on success of the school. In Germany, a quite similar area in some schools also exists.

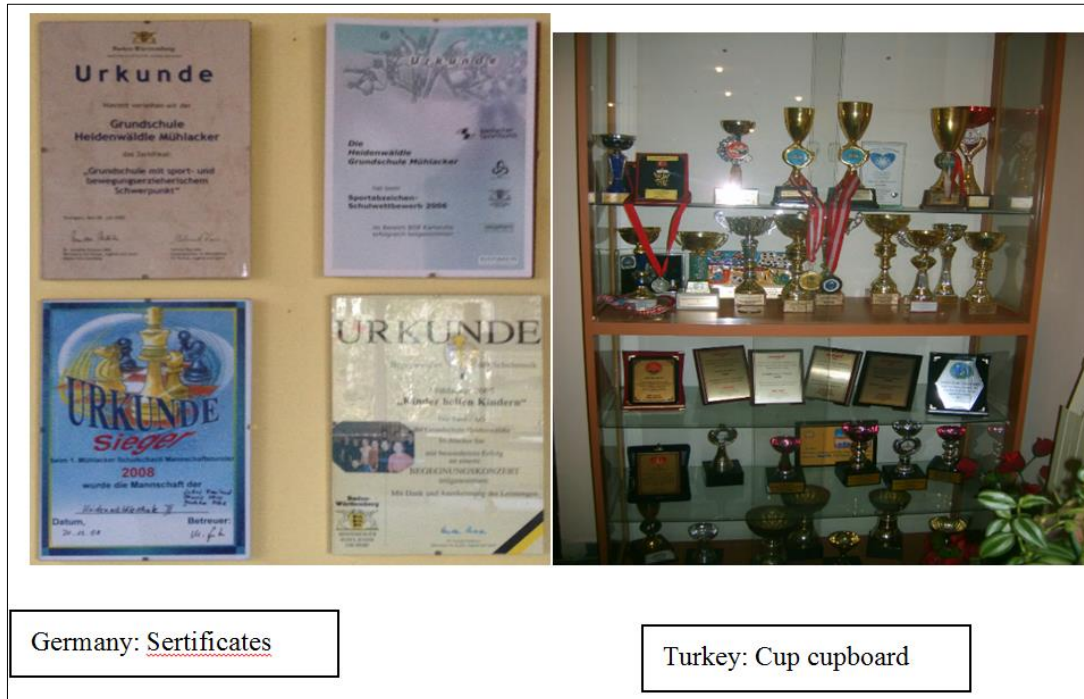


Figure 6. Rewards

Some differences found between the two countries are below.

### **Germany**

*Multiculturalism and international dimension.* One of the most significant differences in themes is the multiculturalism issue between the two countries. In all schools in the German sample, the visuals include the multicultural and international aspects with the connection of multicultural structure of German society. Flags of other nations, some words and expressions in other languages representing the minority groups and languages in Germany, some slogans and visuals that promote the planet as home to all human can be easily seen. However, such an aspect has not been shown through visuals in any Turkish schools in our sample.



Figure 7. Multiculturalism and international dimension

*Legal, children rights and independence.* In the context of Germany, an implication of independence and individualism can be derived through the visuals. Works, finger prints and handprints of students can be regarded as a stress on independence and individualism. At some certain parts of schools, the visuals that illustrate children rights or mobbing can also be assumed to support this theme.



Figure 8. Legal, children rights and independence

### Turkey

*Turkish History and National Leaders.* In Turkish education system, the picture of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and other great Turks is obligatory as a law. Therefore, in every school and each grade, there has to be some certain visuals of this theme. It is also common to use such visuals other than the compulsory ones. In contrast to Turkey, in German schools, there are almost no visuals of German history or leaders.

In our sample of 23 schools, no historical figures or political leaders have been identified. The only exception was Theodor Heuss, a former German president, in Theodor Heuss Gymnasium.



Figure 9. Turkish History and National Leaders

*Philanthropists.* Portraits and texts about them can be seen in Turkish schools. These are the people who have donated to establish the school. In our example, one of every four schools in Izmir has been founded with donations from some philanthropists whose portraits are displayed in schools as a sign of appreciation.



Figure 10. Philanthropists

*Second research question.* How could the visuals be examined in terms of Hofstede’s Cultural dimensions?’ In this section, the themes have been evaluated according to Hofstede’s dimensions.

*Power Distance (PDI):* Power distance is also defined as unequal versus equal. In this dimension, visuals were not sufficient to be identified in both countries. In Germany, visuals are based on individualism and equality comes into prominence; whereas, in Turkey, both equality and supremacy messages are tried to convey through historical authority figures. These findings coincide with Hofstede’s dimension scores identifying Turkey as power distant and Germany as low power distant in terms of national culture. Almost no visual that supporting personal freedom and rights and the right for criticizing has been detected in the sample of Turkey. Consequently, the visuals, themes and the rate of them show that the distance in schools in Germany is much lower than the ones in Turkey in terms of power distance as stated in Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. The existence of visuals that refer to children rights, the vast majority of international and multiculturalism supports the low power distance position of Germany compared to Turkey.





Figure 11. Power Distance (PDI)

*Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV):* Individualism versus Collectivism is also defined as alone versus together. Visuals intended for individual and social dimensions were identified in both countries. In Turkey the social dimension is apparent while in Germany the visuals mostly reflect individualism. Social visuals influence the unity and the well-being of the society. However, in Germany, the sense of unity is emphasized as being unified with different people. Both the themes and as a whole the visuals underscore the main difference between two societies that also demonstrates the compliance with Hofstede's dimension score of both countries. The visuals in Germany give a variety of messages to promote individualism. On the other hand, in Turkey the visuals in schools tend to convey the message upholding society or nation in a collectivistic society approach. Hofstede (2006) also stated that national wealth supports individualism. In our sample, Germany, as a western cluster country, has an advantageous position. However, as Hofstede himself added, individualism is related to not only national wealth but also some other dimensions.



Figure 12. Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

*Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS):* Masculinity versus femininity is also defined as tough versus tender. Germany is considered to be a masculine society; whereas, Turkey stands out with her femininity with a score in this dimension. Although femininity is observed through visuals in Turkey, it is possible to find some masculine elements. Actually, both cultures have masculine elements. For instance, displaying the rewards in schools in both countries can be regarded as a visual code of success, competition and high goals which are signs of masculine culture. Overall, in contrast to Hofstede dimensions, the visuals in schools reflect neither feminine nor masculine dominance for the countries.



Mai (2014) highlighted that some scores of Hofstede do not seem to be correct according to our common sense of that culture. He exemplifies this reality with very different cultures; Japanese, Pakistani and Canadian which have almost the same score on the power distance scale. Hofstede (1998) himself also pointed out that masculine and feminine differences may be hidden behind different factors such as deep historical roots and national wealth.

Figure 13. Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS )



Uncertainty avoidance Index (UAI): Uncertainty can be defined as rigid versus flexible. Both Germany and Turkey are countries avoiding uncertainty in the framework of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. In other words, people are not comfortable with ambiguity. It means they need rules and norms and stability against taking risk. Although both countries are at the same side of scale, there are still some differences depending on the culture which can be relatively observed through visuals. More examples pointing innovation can be found in Germany. Yet, the visuals from the Turkish schools are more compatible with the high avoidance score of the society. In other words, the high level of uncertainty of both countries was supported through the visuals in schools in spite of cultural differences, as scored by Hofstede. It is not so easy to see Germany as more uncertainty avoidant than Turkey, though.



Figure 14. Uncertainty avoidance Index (UAI)

*Long Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO).* Having an extremely high score, Germany is a long term oriented pragmatic country. This can be realized from the school visuals emphasizing future goals and encouraging students for higher education. However, in spite of showing no dominant culture according to Hofstede’s dimensions, Turkey can be regarded as a low oriented normative society from the findings of the present study. The visuals that represent longing for the past, respect to the traditions, loyalty to the society, sovereignty and supremacy such as the portraits of national heroes, flag and language and historical myths that represent and glorify Turkish nation are the indirect messages of a strong short term oriented culture.



Figure 15. Long Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO)

*Indulgence versus Restraint (IND):* The visual codes of this dimension do not support the low score of Germany, which normally means the tendency of pessimism and lack of interest for leisure times and controlling the personal desires. In contrast, a great deal of the visuals such as pieces of art, pictures and game corners, encouragement for sport and activities can be regarded as a point of indulgence in Germany. But the findings for Turkey support the middle position of the society in this dimension. In spite of visuals that can be linked to indulgence, the usual tendency seems to support a restrained level rather than an indulgent one. Although there is no direct visual supporting a restrained culture in Turkey, there are numerous visuals illustrating how Turkish nation suffered in the past, which send non-verbal messages of deserving the native land.



Figure 16. Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

### Results, Discussion and Suggestions

In the light of the results mainly based on the analysis of the visuals in schools in both countries, it is apparent that common and distinct elements can be derived in the relation of their culture. Categories such as environment, art, thinkers, rewards, warnings and social values were found through the visuals in different forms in both countries. The theme of nationalism in Turkish schools is represented intensely

with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, historical events and figures, paintings, busts, sculptures, and sayings. The dominance of nationalism and patriotism in the visuals in Turkish schools were also identified by previous studies (Bal and Yiğittir, 2012; Tonbul and Güngör, 2017). In Germany, on the other hand, the visuals in schools are mainly prone to represent cultural diversity instead of nationalism. In addition to the current political stability in Germany, as it has been frequently highlighted, nothing can be evaluated without considering some distinctive historical events in the country. Therefore, German society are avoiding analogies that can be linked to any sort of nationalism and that can remind the past. Similarly, the history and current circumstances of Turkey may also be considered as a reflection of national culture in schools.

As for Hofstede's classification point of view, the findings of the study are highly compatible with the score of the countries in the Hofstede's dimensions on one hand. However, our findings do not fully support the scores of the countries in each dimension. Since our findings support the reality that the majority of visuals in Turkey emphasize authority, power, Turkish patriotism and glorifying Turkish society to a great extent, it can be argued that the illustration of cultural awareness could be negative. Indeed, such a strong and constant emphasis of national history with the visuals of wars and conquests may create problems in shaping a common future of the society. The balance between individual and society should be reached by creating an emphasis on freedom as well as the importance of social awareness. Hofstede et al. pointed out the cultural awareness with different exercises (Hofstede et al., 2002). In Germany, there is different tendency unlike Turkey. Struggling against injustice has not been adequately represented in Germany as well as in Turkey in spite of democracy, equality, freedom, equal participation in government, and society in visuals in Germany. Furthermore, feminine values such as compromise, tolerance visuals, and masculine values such as competition, conflict, victory, sultan images, and military visuals are emphasized in every school in Turkey. Common existence of such images could be evaluated as a sign of high power distance in Turkish culture. Yaman and Irmak (2010) also implied the high power distance of Turkish society and power distance between teachers and school principals. However, as Schwab (2013) stated, inconsiderable amount of studies on Turkey prevents us from reaching certain conclusions. In addition, the expectation of a more stable life far from ambiguity has a strong and obvious influence on the visuals. The strong emphasis of conventionalism and boasting about the past are often reflected in the visuals. It is also possible to see visuals that remind the tough times of Turkish Independence War in every school. However, referring to joy of life is rarely seen in Turkey.

Although German visuals are mostly categorized under the common themes as in Turkey, the notable differences that can be derived from her distinguishing culture should be stated. For instance, as for social values theme, Turkish visuals typically emphasize traditions implying respect, solidarity, patriotism, responsibility, tolerance and mercy. On the contrary, German visuals, instead of generalization and traditions, tend to focus on interpersonal relationships. As expected, there are some non-common themes in the sample of Germany, too. Multiculturalism and children rights are the most distinctive themes that are rarely found in Turkey. Moreover, national history and leaders which is the most common theme of Turkish sample wasn't identified in Germany. In this regard, Germany values other cultures and rights due to a more democratic approach in aspect of school visuals.

In terms of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Germany shows strong similarities with its recorded scores in the context of school. However, some significant differences were detected as a result of the current study. Even though scored as a masculine and restrained culture, these dimensions weren't observed intensely in the sample of the schools. Some reasons may explain this opposition. For instance, schools are places where the ideal normative situation is tried to be given. In other words, negative examples of society culture may not be reflected from schools.

Overall, children book writers from different countries (e.g Aziz Nesin, Erich Kaestner, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry), children's plays, folk dances, fairy tale heroes (e.g. Keloglan, Nasreddin Hoca, Till Eulenspiegel) aren't effectively displayed in neither countries. Moreover, presenting scientists with their science fields with visuals in schools will contribute to multiculturalism and creativity. Rinne et al. (2013) found relation between Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and creativity to some extent. Wursten and Jacobs (2013) also argued that Hofstede's cultural dimensions provide an analytic tool to understand educational policies and teaching methods.

Hofstede's cultural classification provides us with a new framework of reference to determine the visuals used in schools. The limitation of this study is the amount of investigated countries. Therefore, further researches with larger samples of countries are needed to develop a better understanding of other cultural classifications in the context of school. The issue can be held with a wider range of countries. In teacher education and training programs, importance of the artifacts that are exhibited in schools in terms of



Hofstede's culture dimension and other culture classifications may be emphasized. In a school setting, existence of creative, contemporary, various visual images may enable students to take part in the decision making process. In presentation of the visual objects, exhibition technologies (digital advertisement board) may also be applied.

### **The Role of Researchers and the Limitation of the Study**

As Hofstede himself stated in one of his interviews, "if culture is as pervasive as we believe it is, the national culture of the researchers will affect the outcome of the research" (Hodgetts, 1993). Thus, it can be assumed the cultural backgrounds of the researchers have an important role in this study. However, we should also state that in spite of possible bias, both of the researchers have some experiences and they are very familiar with the culture and education system of both countries. Another limitation of the study is the sample and literature. This study is limited to the Baden Württemberg State of Germany and Izmir Province of Turkey. Although Hofstede's cultural dimensions have been largely applied in the literature in different disciplines, the way we use is not so common and almost no equivalent example has been detected. Despite the limitations, the system approach (Katz and Kahn, 1978) and the learning organizations (Senge, 1990) theory show that all the objects exhibited in schools give some hints about both social culture and educational perspective, which is also primary objective of this study.

Since, school organization, as a characteristic open social system, is composed of input, process, output and feedback mechanisms like other systems, all the stages affect each other. Furthermore, the approach of learning organizations reveals that each part of the school carries constantly interacting traces of school and social structure. Nevertheless, it is clear that more researches with wider sample are needed in order to gain deeper understanding of particularly visibility of national culture in educational institutions.

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