



The MBA Cultural Map

Measuring the
6 Dimensions of
Business School
Culture

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unimy



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Whitepaper 2020

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Executive summary

What is the MBA Cultural Map?

At present, the MBA Cultural Map is based on 4,850 survey responses by students, alumni, and professors from 115 top business schools.

The Cultural Map compares accredited business schools worldwide. It describes the life inside a school's community in terms of its beliefs and behaviors along 6 basic dimensions.

Culture is becoming an increasingly important factor in candidates' school selection. However, prospective students rely on limited and non-objective information.

The Cultural Map presents a data-based picture of business schools' diversity without assigning positive or negative value to their unique characteristics. In this way, it provides an alternative to school rankings.

The Cultural Map is developed by Unimy, the pioneering MBA selection platform of Advent Group. Unimy combines 16 years of candidate orientation experience with AI technology to match students and business schools.

Researched schools

University of Cambridge: Judge	National University of Singapore Business School	Melbourne Business School	AGSM at UNSW Business School
ESADE Business School	Pennsylvania State University: Smeal	University of Minnesota: Carlson	Technical University of Denmark
HEC Paris	Lancaster University Management School	Texas A&M University: Mays	University of California, San Diego: Rady
IE Business School	Dartmouth College: Tuck	Maastricht School of Management	University of Texas at Dallas: Jindal
IESE Business School	University College Dublin: Smurfit	Georgetown University: McDonough	University of Georgia: Terry
Imperial College Business School	Nanyang Business School	UCLA: Anderson	Antwerp Management School
London Business School	University of Washington: Foster	Carnegie Mellon: Tepper	University of Connecticut School of Business
University of Toronto: Rotman	CUHK Business School	College of William & Mary: Mason	Hult International Business School
Erasmus University: Rotterdam	University of California, Berkeley: Haas	University of Pittsburgh: Katz	EADA Business School
University of Oxford: Saïd	HKU Business School	George Washington University School of Business	EGADE Business School
SDA Bocconi	University of Florida: Warrington	University of North Carolina: Kenan-Flagler	American University of Beirut: Olayan
ESMT Berlin	Boston College: Carroll	University of Michigan: Ross	Copenhagen Business School
Alliance Manchester Business School	Michigan State University: Broad	Western University: Ivey	Fundação Getulio Vargas: Sao Paulo
University of St. Gallen	Ohio State University: Fisher	Emory University: Goizueta	Shanghai University of Finance and Economics
City, University of London: Cass	Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad	Washington University in St. Louis: Olin	Nyenrode Business School
Warwick Business School	Indian Institute of Management Bangalore	Indiana University: Kelley	BI Norwegian Business School
Yale School of Management	Shanghai Jiao Tong University: Antai	University of Texas at Austin: McCombs	University of Wisconsin-Madison
Cranfield School of Management	Vienna University of Economics and Business	Purdue University: Krannert	Aalto University School of Business
Mannheim Business School	HKUST Business School	MIT: Sloan	Vlerick Business School
Duke University: Fuqua	University of Notre Dame: Mendoza	University of Chicago: Booth	University of Lausanne: HEC
University of Geneva	University of Virginia: Darden	SMU: Cox	University of Reading: Henley
Queen's University	University of Southern California: Marshall	McGill University: Desautels	KEDGE Business School
WHU– Otto Beisheim School of Management	Indian Institute of Management Calcutta	Boston University: Questrom	Renmin University of China
University of California, Irvine	Sungkyunkwan University GSB	Columbia Business School	Frankfurt School of Finance and Management
Syracuse University: Whitman School of Management	Georgia Institute of Technology: Scheller	Harvard Business School	Stockholm School of Economics
Durham University Business School	Macquarie Business School	Miami Herbert Business School	ESSEC Business School
The Lisbon MBA	Rice University: Jones	University of Rochester: Simon	NYU Stern School of Business
Arizona State University: Carey	University of Maryland: Smith	Babson College: Olin	
Singapore Management University: Lee Kong Chian	TUM School of Management	Brigham Young University: Marriott	
University of Edinburgh Business School		Stanford Graduate School of Business	

Research methodology

Unimy employs the theoretical framework of the GLOBE project (House et al., 1996; 2004). This international research initiative defines organizational culture as a set of values and beliefs that is stable over time and shapes relationships and processes within a common work environment.

GLOBE studied organizational culture across different sectors in 63 countries. The collected data was plotted along nine dimensions, some of which were inspired by the early studies of Hofstede (1988), among others.

Building on the GLOBE methodology, Unimy developed a survey comprising 47 items that reflect six cultural dimensions. Four of the dimensions are based on the original GLOBE study, and are used with the GLOBE Project's permission. The other two dimensions were defined based on Unimy's findings. One describes how liberal a given business school's practices and beliefs are. The final dimension measures high versus low communication styles (Hall, 1976; Meyer, 2016).

Unimy used quantitative and qualitative research to validate the dimensions of business school culture. First, the team conducted a series of interviews with alumni and admissions directors from top-ranked schools. That helped identify which psychometrics to test further. Then, a pilot study of 654 student respondents from regional and global institutions confirmed the six key dimensions.

The result is six scales with high internal consistency and concurrent validity which can clearly differentiate among business schools.

Research findings

The 6 cultural dimensions

Unimy's research identified a set of dimensions that reliably describe a given school's culture. They also allow any business school in the world to be compared against any other. Together, the data about all schools makes up the MBA Cultural Map.

The Cultural Map's advantage is that it compares schools without assigning positive or negative value to their differences. It reveals each school's unique profile without creating "rankings". That way, candidates can discover schools that fit their own values and preferences.

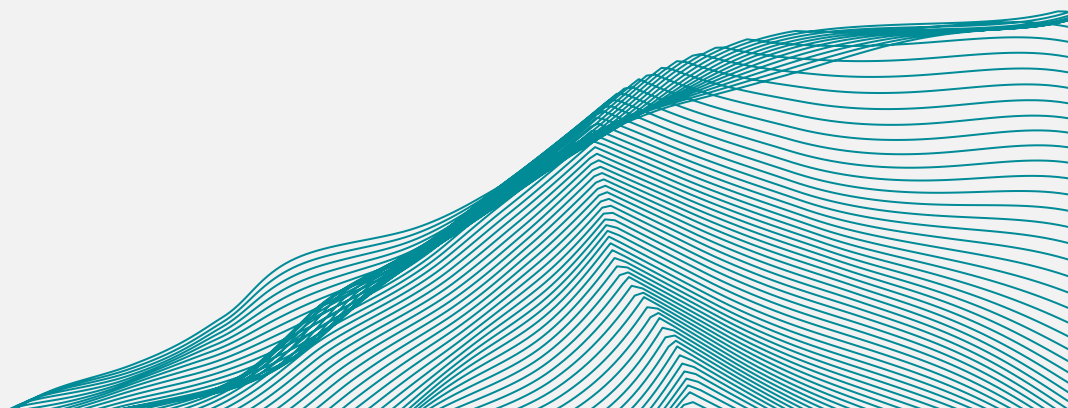
Each school's culture is defined by where it lies along six dimensions or axes:

1. Structured vs flexible organization

This dimension reveals how faculty, staff, and students tend to deal with unfamiliar situations. Organizational processes can be more structured, or more flexible and adaptable.

Does the community consider it appropriate to follow set procedures? Is the freedom to find one's own way tolerated? Formal processes are characteristic of more structured environments. Flexible organizations have fewer generalized guidelines—they embrace adaptability and encourage variation in behavioral responses to the same situation.

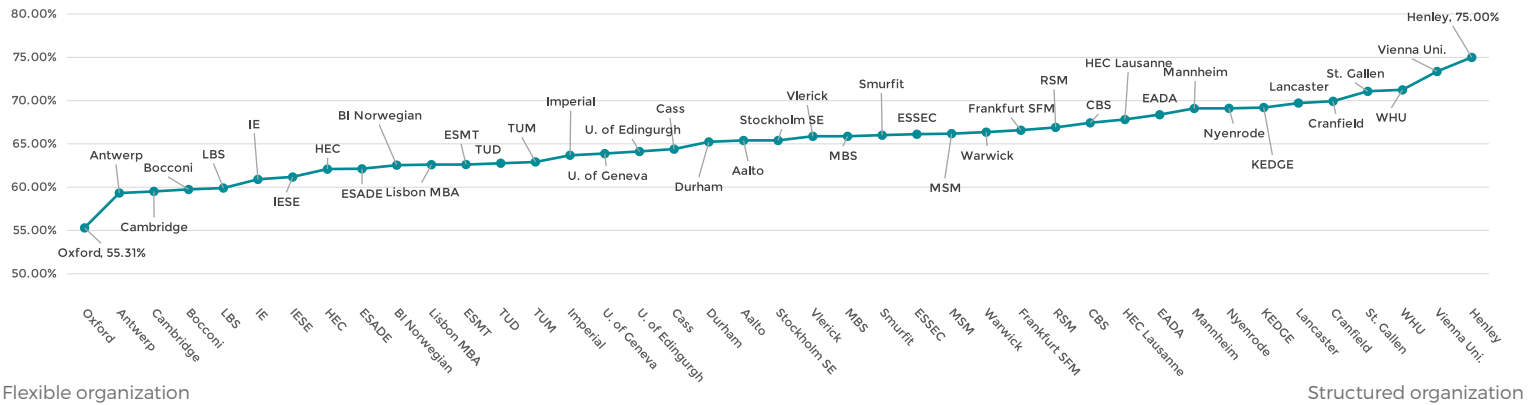
In organizational theory, this concept is referred to as uncertainty avoidance.



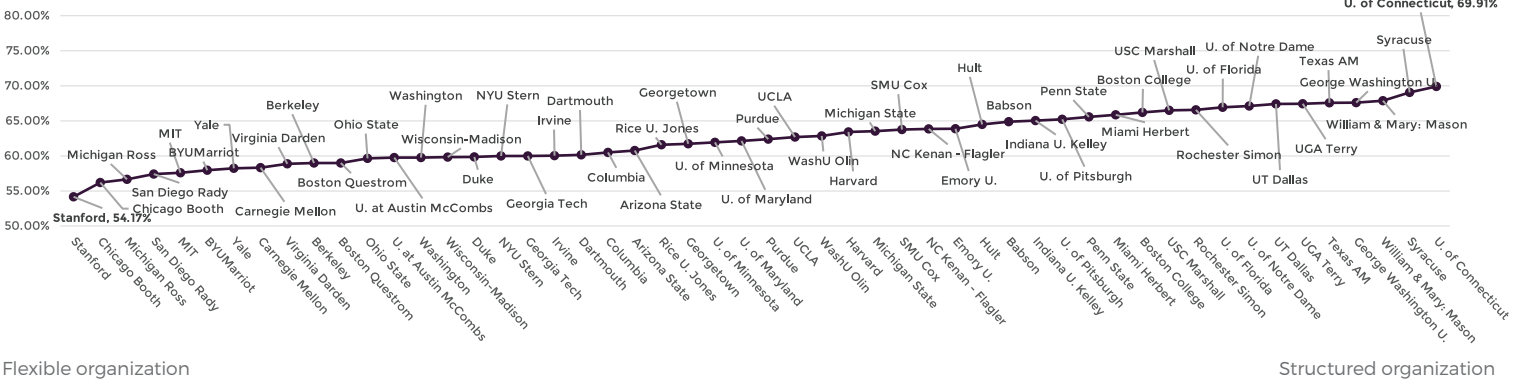
Flexible vs structured organization

Fig. 1. This graph illustrates how structured or flexible business schools around the world are, compared to their peers. It shows the percentage value of structuredness/flexibility assigned to each institution.

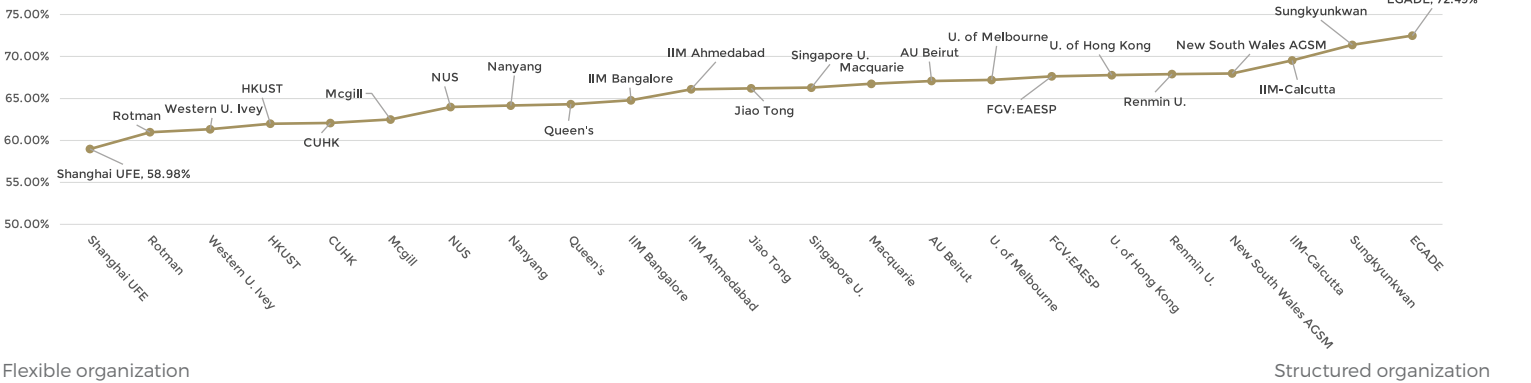
Europe: Flexible vs structured organization



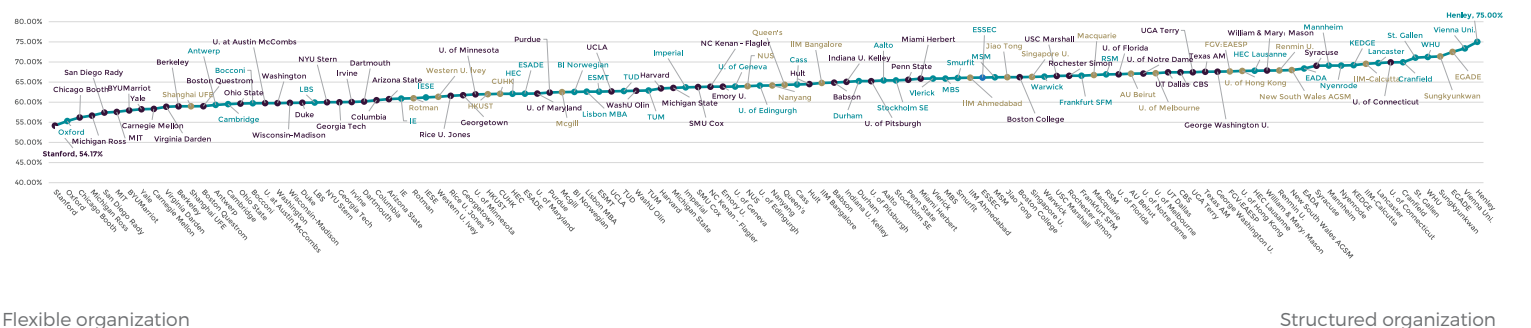
USA: Flexible vs structured organization



Asia, Australia, Latin America and Canada: Flexible vs structured organization



World: Flexible vs structured organization





Full report

I. Introduction: Culture as a way to compare schools and a predictor of student success

II. Research methodology

III. The 6 cultural dimensions

Structured vs flexible organization

Explicit vs intuitive communication

Personal contribution vs collective accomplishment

Long-term vs ad hoc orientation

Formal vs informal relationship

Liberal vs classical style

V. Diving deeper: Plotting dimensions against each other

VI. How it all comes together: Your school's unique cultural profile

VII. Conclusion: Your school compared to others

Get the full report

Reach out to hello@unimy.com and we will be happy to send you the full research report right away.

Credits

The Unimy project was initiated in 2017 by Christophe Coutat, Founder and CEO, Advent Group. The lead researcher and author of the methodology is Kalin Yanev, Ph.D. At different stages, the project has received advising and feedback from Prof. Dr. Edvard Konrad, Ljubljana University, and Prof. Dr. Ivaylo Dichev, Sofia University. The project was completed by Kalin Yanev and his team at Unimy.

The team is grateful to all the students, alumni, and faculty at international business schools who participated in surveys about cultural fit and provided invaluable data to make Unimy a beneficial tool for all.

About Unimy

Unimy makes MBA selection effortless for candidates while streamlining recruitment for business schools. The platform uses psychometric evaluation of schools and candidates to offer precise, AI-powered matching. It also evaluates students' likelihood of applying and enrolling at a school. Schools discover their most promising leads and can reach out to them instantly via a simple dashboard.

Find out more at unimy.com

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