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**Learning Hubs: Are they spaces that enhance academic outcomes for students from low uncertainty avoidance cultures?**

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*seek* LIGHT



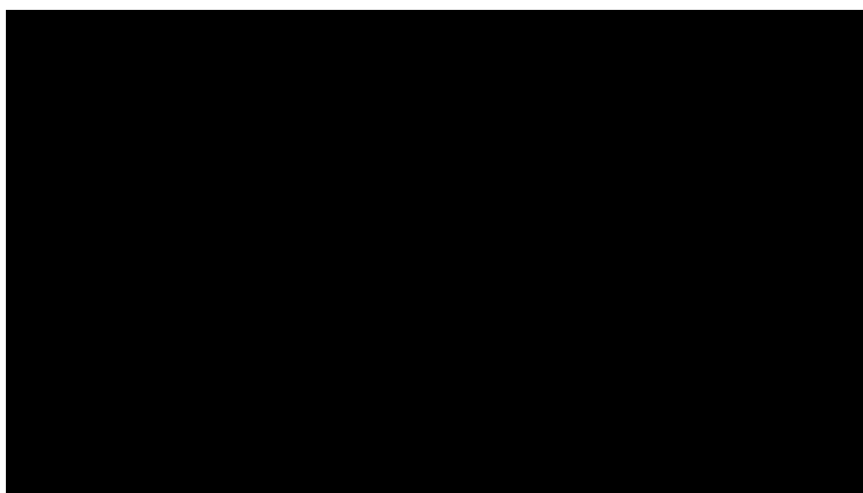
**Theme of paper**

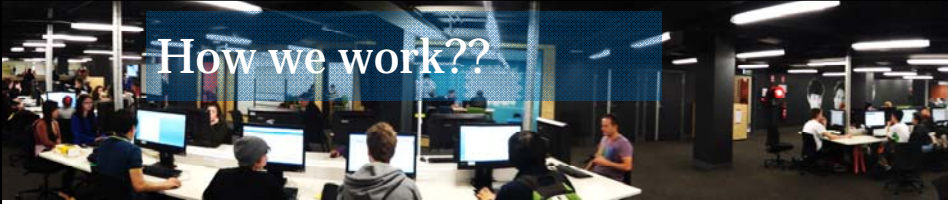
- Hub Central as an example to encourage discussion of how 'space' can be designed and utilised for fostering a sense of belonging for students from diverse backgrounds.
- to provoke thought and to challenge the application of theoretical models (using uncertainty avoidance as an example) and their application in student learning spaces



- **Comfortable environment for exploring and sharing**
- **A link between the physical boundaries of the classroom and the new virtual boundaries of technology**
- **A space that encourages knowledge generation by students or the active construction of knowledge by the learner**

## **Hub Central - Many things to many people!**






## How we work??

- Practice in the workplace is guided by a number of conceptual models of 'impact'<sup>1</sup>
- Accept that student outcome is the result of multiple influences
- Observation - students from all cultural backgrounds tend to work collaborative in the 'Hub' space towards shared academic goals

1. (e.g., Tinto, 1999; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella, 1985; Weidman, 1989).

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## Uncertainty Avoidance ?

- The space actively promotes flexibility and minimal rules to meet the need of students at any given period in the student lifecycle.
- Hofstede's framework would suggest that students from high UAI cultures should in theory find this uncertainty stressful and have a negative emotional response to the space.
- High UAI cultures may try to minimize the occurrence of unknown and unusual circumstances
- High UAI cultures may try to ask to have more structure by asserting the implementation of rules, and regulations in the Hub

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## Gathering data?

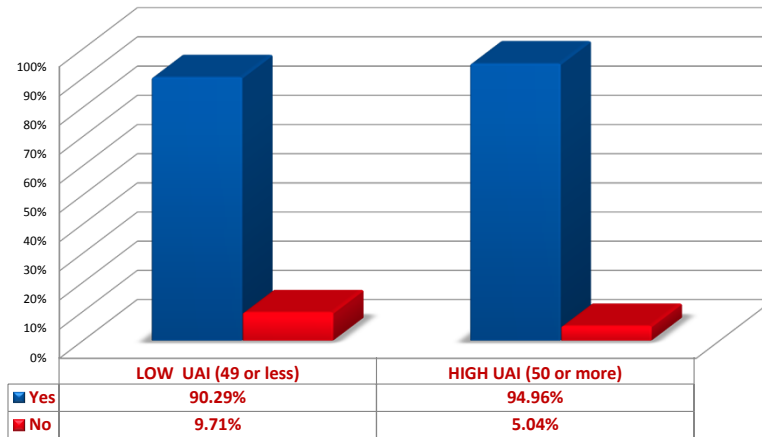
- The ideas for this paper are drawn from an ethnographic approach to how staff observe students in the workplace 'Hub Central' as a means to gather ideas and reflect about student use and how to improve the experience and support of academic achievement.
- A survey asking 8 questions used during or whilst waiting for a service transaction
- A total of 227 students using Hub Central volunteered to complete the survey.



Country of Respondents	UAI Score	Number of Respondents	Low UAI	High UAI
Singapore	8	14	LOW UAI	
Hong Kong	29	5	LOW UAI	
Sweden	29	4	LOW UAI	
Vietnam	30	1	LOW UAI	
Great Britain	35	5	LOW UAI	
Ireland	35	1	LOW UAI	
Malaysia	36	12	LOW UAI	
Myanmar	36	1	LOW UAI	
China	40	44	LOW UAI	
India	40	3	LOW UAI	
United States	46	2	LOW UAI	
Canada	48	1	LOW UAI	
Indonesia	48	5	LOW UAI	
New Zealand	49	4	LOW UAI	
South Africa	49	2	LOW UAI	
Norway	50	3		HIGH UAI
Australia	51	58		HIGH UAI
West Africa	54	2		HIGH UAI
Iran	59	2		HIGH UAI
Thailand	64	3		HIGH UAI
Germany	65	3		HIGH UAI
Lithuania	65	1		HIGH UAI
Brazil	76	16		HIGH UAI
Chile	80	1		HIGH UAI
Colombia	80	2		HIGH UAI
Korea	85	9		HIGH UAI
France	86	4		HIGH UAI
Spain	86	1		HIGH UAI
Japan	92	11		HIGH UAI
Russia	95	2		HIGH UAI
Total		222	104	118

## Most students seems to like the space

Are you happy with how the hub works as a learning space?

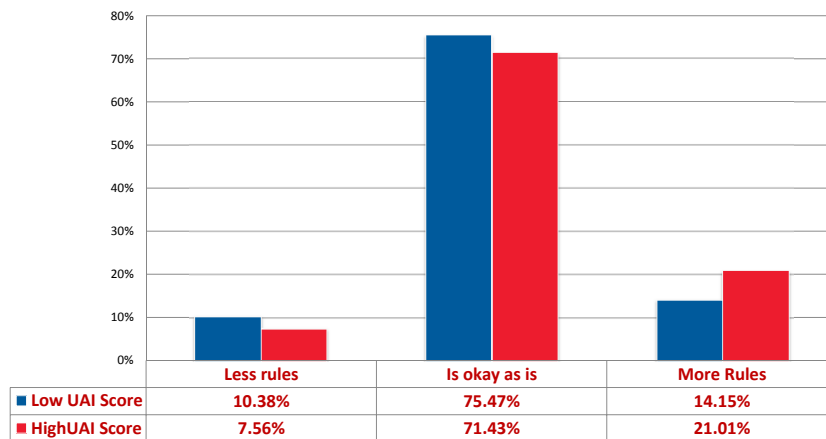


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9

Supports the expected outcomes from Hofstede's framework with students from low UAI countries preferring fewer rules and students from High UAI countries preferring more rules. It is worth noting that the majority of students are happy with the flexibility of the Hub space as it currently run.

Rules: Does the Hub Need?

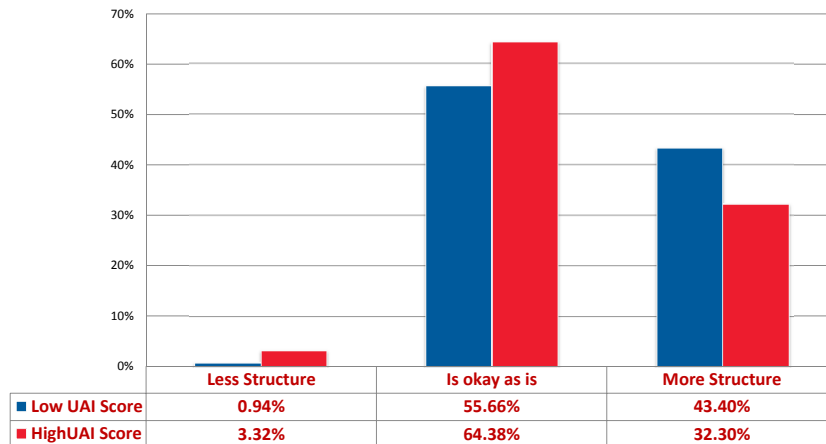


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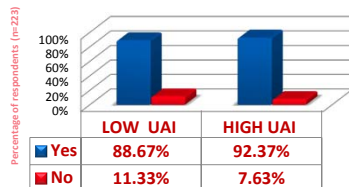
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It is also interesting that over 10% more students from Low UAI countries would like more structure than those from High UAI countries, this is counter to what would be expected when using Hofstede's framework.

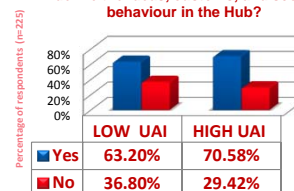
**Structure: Does the Hub Need?**



Do you like that you can organise the space in the Hub to meet your needs on any given day?

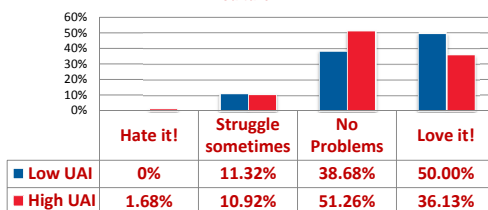


Is there a 'student culture' and does this define the ideas, customs, and social behaviour in the Hub?

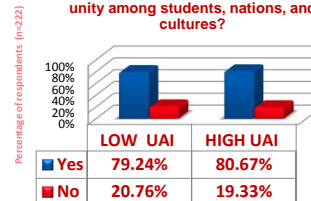


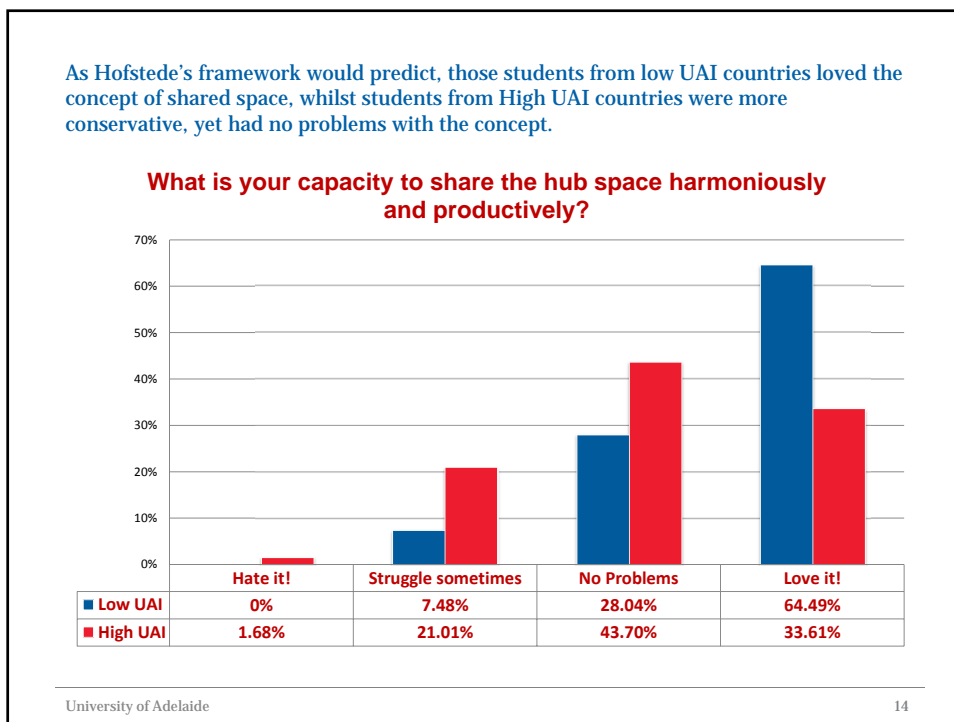
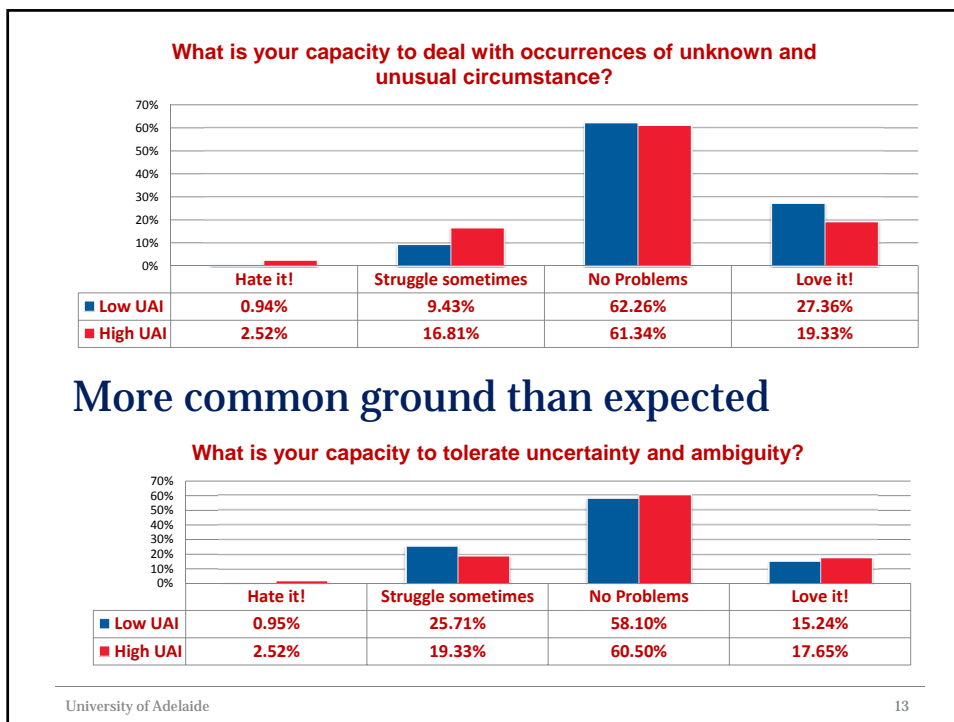
Counter Hofstede - globalisation through circumstances called "global flatteners." Friedman (2007, p.8), global flatteners are worldwide events that have closed gaps between countries and increased unity among humans, nations, and cultures


What is your capacity to study with people from diverse culture?



Do you believe that technology has closed gaps between countries and increased unity among students, nations, and cultures?







## Conclusions?

- We can conclude from our sample that students do actually like how the Hub is run as a study space.
- There was support for both Hofstede's framework and there was support for some of his critics theory's such as flattening and shared culture as a result of globalisation and technology.

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## My point - Making the invisible, visible!

In asking the question, Learning Hubs: Are they spaces that enhance academic outcomes for students from low uncertainty avoidance cultures? I have both explored the opportunity and the possibility to answer my own informal theories about students, culture, space and how to work best with students.

These theories may not always be a conscious or clear part of our awareness (Komives et.al. 2003) but they are present.

In trying to answer my question, I believe that firstly I have a professional responsibility to try and understand and communicate with others that I have observed something unique and I will try to the best of my ability to communicate this.

I should not be afraid that I am wrong, I should hope my questions, observations and conclusions promote discussion and lead to innovation in support that will lead to more positive outcomes for the student's we serve.

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