

The Effect of Culture in Personality Development

Mia Florence and Luis Braxton

Department of mass communication and culture Ryerson University Canada

ABSTRACT

Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Culture is the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people. The conceptualization of culture is by no means a simple matter. Funder defined personality as “an individual’s characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms hidden or not behind those patterns” There five dimensions of culture, such as individualism and collectivism, power distance, masculinity and femininity, uncertainty avoidance. long-term and short-term orientation. Several studies have tried to describe the impact of cultural factors on individuals’ personality development, acknowledging that individuals’ personality may also affect the evolution of their cultural context. Our culture greatly contributes to the development of our beliefs and values. For this reason, both cultural psychologists and social anthropologists believe that culture affects one’s personality

Keywords: Culture, personality, development, individualism, collectivism.

INTRODUCTION

Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Culture is the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people. The conceptualization of culture is by no means a simple matter. One possible way to think about culture is that “culture is to society what memory is to individuals” [1]. It includes what has worked in the experience of a society, so that it was worth transmitting to future generations. [2] used the analogy of an epidemic. A useful idea is adopted by more and more people and becomes an element of culture [3]. [4] distinguished three kinds of culture: Meta culture, evoked culture, and epidemiological

culture. They argue that “psychology underlies culture and society, and biological evolution underlies psychology” (p. 635). The biology that has been common to all humans as a species distinguishable from other species, results in a “meta culture” that corresponds to panhuman mental contents and organization. Biology in different ecologies results in “evoked culture” (e.g., hot climate leads to light clothing), which reflects domain-specific mechanisms that are triggered by local circumstances, and leads to within-group similarities and between-groups differences. The position that the ideas, meanings, beliefs and values people learn as members of society determines human nature. People are what they learn. Optimistic version of cultural determinism places no limits on the abilities of human beings to do or to be whatever they want. Some

anthropologists suggest that there is no universal "right way" of being human. "Right way" is almost always "our way"; that "our way" in one society almost never corresponds to "our way" in any other society. Proper attitude of an informed human being could only be that of tolerance. [5] [6] described "epidemiological culture" Elements of culture are shared standard operating procedures, unstated assumptions, tools, norms, values, habits about sampling the environment, and the like. Because perception and cognition depend on the information that is sampled from the environment and are fundamental psychological processes, this culturally influenced sampling of information is of particular interest to psychologists. Cultures develop conventions for sampling information and determine how much to weigh the sampled elements from the environment [7]. For example, people in hierarchical cultures are more likely to sample clues about hierarchy than clues about aesthetics. [8] argued that people in individualist cultures, such as those of North and Western Europe and North America, sample with high probability elements of the personal self (e.g., "I am busy, I am kind"). People from collectivist cultures, such as those of Asia, Africa, and South America, tend to sample mostly elements of the collective self (e.g., "my family thinks I am too busy, my co-workers think I am kind") [9], [10]. The term personality has been defined in many ways, but as a psychological concept two main meanings have evolved. The first pertains to the consistent differences that exist between people: in this sense, the study of personality focuses on classifying and explaining relatively stable human psychological characteristics. The second meaning emphasizes those qualities that make all people alike and that distinguish psychological man from other species; it directs the personality theorist to search for those regularities among all people that define the nature of man as well as the factors that influence the course of lives. This duality may help explain the

two directions that personality studies have taken: on the one hand, the study of ever more specific qualities in people, and, on the other, the search for the organized totality of psychological functions that emphasizes the interplay between organic and psychological events within people and those social and biological events that surround them. The dual definition of personality is interwoven in most of the topics discussed below. It should be emphasized, however, that no definition of personality has found universal acceptance within the field.

[11] defined personality as "an individual's characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms hidden or not behind those patterns" (pp.1-2). Characteristic sampling of the information in the environment, which corresponds to the sampling that occurs in different cultures, can be one of the bases of individual differences in personality. Personality may also be conceptualized as a configuration of cognitions, emotions, and habits activated when situations stimulate their expression. Generally, they determine the individual's unique adjustment to the world. This view is supported by data that indicate the importance of the situation. For example, the authoritarian personality is characterized by submission to authorities, aggression toward people who are different, and conventionalism [12]. Interestingly, Russians who are high on this trait reject laissez-faire individualism, whereas Americans who are high on this trait support this type of individualism [13]. Rejection of individualism is consistent with Russian conventionalism, whereas support for individualism is consistent with American conventionalism.

Dimensions of Culture

There five dimensions of culture, such as individualism and collectivism, power distance, masculinity and femininity, uncertainty avoidance. long-term and short-term orientation.

www.idosr.org

[14] found “clear patterns of similarity and differences among the five dimensions,” [15] says. However, “as with any generalized study, the results may or may not be applicable to specific individuals or events. Although [16] results are categorized by country, often there are more than one cultural group within that country. In these cases there may be significant deviation from the study’s result.”

For example, in Canada, where there is a majority English-speaking population throughout most of the country but a majority French-speaking population in the province of Quebec, there are moderate cultural differences.

Other studies, including research conducted by an international team of experts including Robert House, a professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, continue to show patterns of behavior with national boundaries.

1. Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism and collectivism is one of the first four clusters. It looks at the relationship the individual has with others.

The outcome of individualism and collectivism “focuses on the degree a society reinforces individual or collective achievement and interpersonal relationships,” [17] says.

In high individual ranking, individuality and individual rights are paramount within the society. In low individualism ranking, societies are more collectivist with close ties between individuals. It reinforces extended families and collectives, where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

The United States is one of seven countries where high individual ranking indicates a society with a more individualistic attitude and relatively loose bonds with others. In these countries, the populace is more self-reliant and family-oriented. The others are Australia, United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Canada, Italy and New Zealand.

Mia and Braxton

On the collectivist side are societies where people are integrated from birth into strong cohesive in-groups. The extended family - grandparents, uncles and aunts - is protected in exchange for unquestioned loyalty. Countries with high collectivistic values include Pakistan, Indonesia, Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador and Guatemala.

Countries with even stronger collectivistic cultures are China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, nations in East and West Africa as well as Arab nations.

In Individualism and Collectivism, the determining question is, “Are you motivated to do things for yourself or for the group?” [18] says.

2. Power Distance The second cluster, power distance, focuses on the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions, such as the family, expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. [19] said it represents inequality but defined from below, not above. “It suggests inequality is endorsed by the leaders and followers,” [20] says. “Power and inequality are fundamental factors of any society and anybody with some international experience will realize all societies are unequal, but some societies are more unequal than others,” says [21]. For power distance the question is “Are there clear lines of authority within a hierarchy or is there a flattening of the hierarchy”

3. Masculinity and Femininity: [6] defines masculinity as “a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life.” Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life,” he said. In this particular cluster, [9] poses the question, “Do cultures adhere to traditional male or female roles?” Masculinity focuses on the degree the society reinforces the traditional masculine work role model of male achievement, control and power.

Femininity refers to the distribution of roles between the genders. The latter is defined by the extent to which society stresses achievement or nurture. Masculinity is the trait that “emphasizes ambition, acquisition of wealth and differentiated gender roles,” [12] says. The femininity trait “stresses caring and nurturing behaviors, equality, environmental awareness and more fluid gender roles.”

4. Uncertainty Avoidance: The fourth cluster is referred to as uncertainty avoidance, which denotes the need to avoid uncertainty about the future and in work relationships.

The uncertainty avoidance index focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society. A high uncertainty avoidance ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. It fosters a rules-oriented society. A low uncertainty avoidance ranking suggests the country has less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance for a variety of opinions. It reflects a society that is less rules-oriented, more readily accepts change, and takes more and greater risks. [18] explains uncertainty avoidance deals with the society’s tolerance for ambiguity. “It ultimately refers to a man’s search for truth.” Uncertainty avoidance “indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations,” she adds. “Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual.” In uncertainty-avoiding cultures, societies “try to minimize the possibilities of such situations by enforcing strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute truth.” In Japan, harmony is important in the workplace because of the nation’s collectivist society. For example, employees customarily will agree with a manager, even one who is unprepared and does not know the facts. Students also tend to prefer to work in groups to come up with a solution, then have one

representative from the group present their collective decision. “Unity and harmony among the collectivist group is more important than being right,”.

5. Long-Term and Short-Term Orientation: The more recently added cluster spotlights long-term and short-term orientation. “Is society focused on the past, present or future? Long-term orientation focuses on the degree the society embraces or does not embrace long-term devotion to traditional, forward thinking values,” she added. A high long-term orientation ranking indicates the country prescribes to the value of long-term commitments and respect for tradition. This is thought to support a strong work ethic, where long-term rewards are expected as a result of today’s hard work. However, it may take longer for a business to develop, particularly if it is run by an outsider. Short-term orientation means that, comparatively, the national culture likes to get things done and relies on a quick turnaround time. In a short-term oriented work environment, employees tend to change jobs more often. The long-term vs. short-term orientation concept can be explained through an example involving a question of contracts between the Japanese and Canadians negotiating a coal shipment deal [3]. In the example, the Japanese were seeking a 10-year deal with the Canadians to ensure a long relationship involving the transport of coal from British Columbia to Japan. However, the Canadians wanted a shorter deal in case a more lucrative proposal became available.

Approaches to Studying Personality in a Cultural Context

There are three approaches that can be used to study personality in a cultural context: the cultural-comparative approach, the indigenous approach, and the combined approach, which incorporates elements of the first two approaches.

The cultural-comparative approach seeks to test Western ideas about personality in other cultures to determine whether they can be

www.idosr.org

generalized and if they have cultural validity [7]. For example, researchers used the cultural-comparative approach to test the universality of McCrae and Costa's Five Factor Model. They found applicability in numerous cultures around the world, with the Big Five traits being stable in many cultures [3]; [4].

The indigenous approach came about in reaction to the dominance of Western approaches to the study of personality in non-Western settings [20]. Because Western-based personality assessments cannot fully capture the personality constructs of other cultures, the indigenous model has led to the development of personality assessment instruments that are based on constructs relevant to the culture being studied [20].

The combined approach which serves as a bridge between Western and indigenous psychology as a way of understanding both universal and cultural variations in personality [8].

How the environment allows the personality to form

While Genes do affect people's personalities still this effect is greatly determined by the environment. The way the person interacts with his environment allows his genes to be expressed in a specific way. This means that two people having the same exact genes but raised in different environments are very likely to developed totally different personalities. This is why the different cultures can have different impacts on the personality even if the genes were highly similar.

Universality of Personality

Dimensions since the 1990s, an abundance of cross-cultural research has examined the universality of personality models. Several personality models such as Hans Eysenck's psychoticism extraversion-neuroticism personality model, the five-factor model, or some variation of these models were replicated in a large set of cultures and are currently considered as universal. Some of this research has been conducted on very large samples from more than 50 cultures or nations. Although many studies

Mia and Braxton

adopting an etic or a cross-cultural approach confirmed that most personality models could be regarded as universal, with some minor cultural specificities, other studies have adopted an emic approach, conducted in a specific culture, leading to the development of indigenous personality models. For example, Ibrahima Sow described an African sub-Saharan personality model and several Asian psychologists suggested considering specific personality traits to describe behaviors in an interpersonal context (e.g., renqing that assesses the level of reciprocity in a relationship or the construct of harmony). A combined emicetic approach allows taking into account both universal and culture-specific aspects of personality. Such an approach has, for example, been used to develop the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory or the South African Personality Inventory. These inventories partly consider the five-factor model and integrate some cultural specificities.

Factors of Personality

Enormously the following five factors of personality are contributing to the formation and development of human personality.

1. Biological Factors of Personality: Biological factors of personality are very important for the formation of human personality. Children are born in a family; inherit many traits and features from their parents. Children get physical and psychological characteristics from their parents which becomes a part of their personalities. Some of the inherited traits are courage, coward, intelligence, weakness etc. For example it was experimented on the negro that they are biological inferior. A normal healthy man has some physical similarities such as two hands five senses, two eyes and these biological similarities help to explain some of the similarities in the behavior. It separates individuals from one another and their various physical characteristics except identical twins having the same physical qualities. So, biological factors of

personality are responsible for the development of personality.

2. Social Factors of Personality When an individual interact with other persons in his/her group give and take relationship takes place and it affects the personality of an individual social factors of personality are responsible for the formation of personality, when an individual has group experience and contact with others personality of an individual is influenced by others may be bad or good but depends on the association in which he/she keeps. In a society every person plays a specific role and status.

For example in our society younger are expected to be respectful for elders. Many other social factors like environment, group life, family, media with which an individual interact in his/her society daily life mold their personalities. We can say that whatever comes in contact with an individual's social life affects personality of that individual and develop good or bad personality.

3. Cultural Factors of Personality Both material as well as non-material culture affects personality of an individual. An individual living in his/her culture adopts the traits consciously or unconsciously and acts accordingly. Culture of any society determines the behaviors and personality of an individual and he/she is expected to act according to the culture. A person follows all the social norms of a culture which results in the formation of good personality while non-conformity to the cultural rules develops abnormal or bad personality. So, the culture in which an individual seeks satisfaction adjusts himself/herself and develops personality.

4. Physical Environment Physical environment also determines the personality of an individual. Environmental factors include land, river, mountains, hills, forests, plain area, atmosphere etc which affect the personality to be good or bad, healthy or weak. All the feelings, emotions, ideas, attitudes, habits and behavior as well as body structure is the result of physical environment of to which an individual

Mia and Braxton

belongs. For example, body structure, physique, color and health of the rural people are different from urban people. These people have different environment due to which they develop variety of personalities. The people living in cities have facilities and modern ways of life which creates to develop delicate bodies and minds as compare to the rural people who are deprived of these facilities.

5. Situational Factors of Personality: Situational factors of personality also have a complete share in the formation of personality of an individual. situational factors of personality are charging according to the social situations. Every person face may situations in his life which enables him/her to change his/her behavior. For example, a teacher may be rigid and strict with students but may not with his/her family. An officer may behave with the subordinates differently as compare to his/her friends. Personality is not the result of only one factor but every factor is responsible to give complete share in its formation. A person behave and his/her personality exists when interacts with environment, culture, society, parents, friends and to those who come in contact by chance

Impact of Cultural Factors

Several studies have tried to describe the impact of cultural factors on individuals' personality development, acknowledging that individuals' personality may also affect the evolution of their cultural context. At the individual level, the cultural environment is considered to have an influence on the behavioral expression of personality dispositions, through regulatory psychological processes (e.g., the regulation of emotional expression). Personality traits are also related to acculturation styles. For example, neuroticism is associated with marginalization, and extraversion with integration. At the level of culture, aggregate personality traits (mean value per culture or nation) have been related to several cultural factors or context variables such as the gross national product, the geographic localization, and the overall level of individualism.

National prosperity has been associated with conscientiousness in some studies, suggesting that individuals in a particularly difficult economic context tend to be more organized and perseverant when pursuing their goals, whereas, in other studies, national prosperity has been associated with extraversion, openness, and agreeableness. Also, the average personality profile of a cultural group has been related to the geographical localization (e.g., latitude). On average, people who live farther from the equator seem to be more extraverted and less conscientious. Cultural values, as defined by [9], are systematically related to personality traits. Individualism correlates positively with extraversion; power distance correlates negatively with extraversion and openness to experience but positively with conscientiousness; masculinity correlates positively with neuroticism and openness to experience but negatively with agreeableness; and uncertainty avoidance correlates positively with neuroticism and negatively with agreeableness. Finally,

CONCLUSION

Evolution and genetics are believed to have brought about differences in personality traits as determined by the biological sex of a person. As explained by the Theory of Sexual Selection, males compete to attract females, so men are more likely to be aggressive and competitive than women. However, nowadays we may see that more and more

Mia and Braxton different studies have shown that geographically and historically similar cultures are associated with similar aggregated personality profiles. Western cultures are usually more extraverted and open to experience than African and Asian cultures that are more agreeable and more conscientious. Another way of considering the personality characteristics of a culture is to consider the national character stereotypes. These stereotypes are widely shared and are apparently influenced by climate and national wealth. At the same time, they are uncorrelated with aggregate personality traits; thus, they seem unfounded. Currently, only a few studies have analyzed the relation between cultural factors and personality, or its development, at an individual level. Considering the potential methodological shortcomings (measurement issues) of the studies conducted at the culture level, their results are preliminary and further research and replications are undoubtedly needed to better understand how cultural factors influence personality and its development, and vice versa

women become aggressive in competing against other women for a man. Our culture greatly contributes to the development of our beliefs and values. For this reason, both cultural psychologists and social anthropologists believe that culture affects one's personality. In addition, gender differences also influence the personality traits a person possesses.

REFERENCES

1. American Anthropological Association. Archived from the original on October 26, 2016. Retrieved October 30, 2016.
2. Haviland, William A.; McBride, Bunny; Prins, Harald E.L.; Walrath, Dana (2011). *Cultural Anthropology: The Human Challenge*. Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. ISBN 978-0-495-81082-7.
3. Lindström, Martin (2016). *Small data: the tiny clues that uncover huge trends*. London: St. Martin's Press. ISBN 978-1-250-08068-4.
4. Simmel, Georg (1971). Levine, Donald N (ed.). *Georg Simmel on individuality and social forms: selected writings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. xix. ISBN 978-0-226-75776-
6. Archived from the original on

- September 12, 2017. Retrieved May 29, 2017.
5. Sokal, Alan D. (1996). "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies". *Lingua Franca*. Archived from the original on March 26, 2007. Retrieved October 28, 2016. Physicist Alan Sokal published a paper in a journal of cultural sociology stating that gravity was a social construct that should be examined hermeneutically. See Sokal affair for further details.
6. Berlin, Isaiah; Ryan, Alan (2002). *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 130. ISBN 978-0-19-510326-7.
7. Williams, Raymond (1983). "Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society". New York: Oxford University Press: 87-93, 236-38.
8. Berger, John (1972). *Ways of seeing*. Peter Smithn. ISBN 978-0-563-12244-9.
9. "Studying Culture – Reflections and Assessment: An Interview with Richard Hoggart". *Media, Culture, and Society*. 13.
10. Adams, Tim (2007). "Cultural hallmark". *The Guardian*. ISSN 0261-3077. Archived from the original on October 31, 2016. Retrieved October 30, 2016.
11. James, Procter (2004). *Stuart Hall*. Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-26267-5.
12. Sardar, Ziauddin; Van Loon, Borin; Appignanesi, Richard Mia and Braxton (1994). *Introducing Cultural Studies*. New York: Totem Books. ISBN 978-1-84046-587-7.
13. Fiske, John; Turner, Graeme; Hodge, Robert Ian Vere (1987). *Myths of Oz: reading Australian popular culture*. London: Allen and Unwin. ISBN 978-0-04-330391-7.
14. Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhaïlovich; Holquist, Michael (1981). *The dialogic imagination four essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press. p. 4.
15. Purdue University Press. 2015. Archived from the original on August 5, 2012. Retrieved October 30, 2016.
16. Lindlof, Thomas R; Taylor, Bryan C (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* (2nd ed.). Sage. p. 60. ISBN 978-0-7619-2493-7.
17. du Gay, Paul, ed. (1997). *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*. Sage. ISBN 978-0-7619-5402-6.
18. MacKenzie, Gina (2018). "Julia Kristeva". *Oxford Bibliographies*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved September 29, 2019.
19. Petrakis, Panagiotis; Kostis, Pantelis (2013). "Economic growth and cultural change". *The Journal of Socio-Economics*. 47: 147-57.
20. Heine, Steven J. (2015). *Cultural psychology* (Third ed.). New York, NY. ISBN 978-0-3932-6398-5.
21. Myers, David G. (2010). *Social psychology* (Tenth ed.). New York, NY. ISBN 978-0-0733-7066-8.