

VU LEARNING HUB

vulearninghub.xyz

HIGHLIGHTED HANDOUT

PSY515

Cross Cultural Psychology

PSY515 by VU Learning HUB

Prepared for VU students • Free study resources

<https://vulearninghub.xyz>

Table of Contents

Lesson 1	Introduction to Cross Cultural Psychology	1
Lesson 2	Methodology of Cross Cultural Research	7
Lesson 3	Cultural Factors in Complex Decision Making	24
Lesson 4	The Psychology of Morality	35
Lesson 5	Subjective Well-Being Across Cultures	43
Lesson 6	Cultural Perspectives on the Interactions between Nutrition, Health and Psychological Functioning	50
Lesson 7	Cultural Aspects of Depressive Experience and Disorders	59
Lesson 8	Prevalence of Schizophrenia and Counseling in Cross Cultural Psychology	68
Lesson 9	Culture and Development: Developmental Pathways to Individualism and Interrelatedness	81
Lesson 10	Cultural Variations in Parental Support of Children's Play	90
Lesson 11	Adolescent Future Orientation: An Integrated Cultural and Ecological Perspective	98
Lesson 12	Family: Variations and Changes Across Cultures	110
Lesson 13	How Death Imitates Life: Cultural Influences on Conceptions of Death and Dying	118
Lesson 14	Subjective Culture and Stereotyping	128
Lesson 15	Social Motives and their Development in Cultural Context	136

©Copyright Virtual University of Pakistan

Lesson 1

INTRODUCTION TO CROSS CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Cross-cultural psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and mental process, including both their variability and invariance, under diverse cultural conditions." (Ho & Wu, 2001, p. 4). Through expanding research methodologies to recognize cultural variance in behavior, language and meaning, it seeks to extend, develop and transform psychology. Central themes, such as affect, cognition, conceptions of the self, and issues such as psychopathology, anxiety, and depression, are all re-examined in cross-cultural psychology in an attempt to examine the universality of these concepts. Critics have pointed to methodological flaws in cross-cultural psychological research and claim that serious shortcomings in the theoretical and methodological basis used impede rather than help this scientific search for universality. Cross-cultural psychology is differentiated from Cultural Psychology. The latter is the branch of psychology that holds that human behavior is determined by unique individual cultures that can be compared with each other only to a very limited extent. In contrast, Cross-Cultural psychology includes a search for possible universals in behavior and mental processes. Various definitions of the field are given in Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen (1992), including: "the scientific study of human behavior and its transmission, taking into account the ways in which behaviors are shaped and influenced by social and cultural forces" (Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1990) (cited in Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen, 1992, p. 1); "the empirical study of members of various cultural groups who have had different experiences that lead to predictable and significant differences in behaviors" (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973; cited in Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen, 1992, p. 1). These authors define [culture] as "the shared way of life of a group of people" (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen, 1992, p. 1). Early work in cross-cultural psychology was suggested in Lazarus and Steintal's journal *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* [Journal of Folk Psychology and Language Science] which began to be published in 1860. More empirically oriented research was subsequently conducted by Williams H. R. Rivers (1864-1922) who attempted to measure the intelligence and sensory acuity of indigenous people residing in the Torres Straits area, located between Australia and New Guinea (Jahoda, 1993).

Two possible approaches of cross cultural psychology:

It is quite common for cross-cultural psychologists to take one of two possible approaches:

Etic approach: emphasizes similarities of cultures.

Emic approach: emphasizes differences between cultures (Smith & Bond, 1982). Generally speaking, it is received wisdom that traditional agriculture-based societies have more collectivist cultures than modern "information societies." Various factors on which cultures have been compared are discussed by Berry et al., including:

1. Child rearing. Berry et al. refer to evidence that a number of different dimensions have been found in cross-cultural comparisons of child-rearing practices, including differences on the dimensions of obedience training, nurturance training (the degree to which a sibling will care for other siblings or for older people), achievement training, responsibility training, self-reliance and autonomy;

2. Differences in personality variables such as locus of control:

Williams and Best (1990) have looked at different societies in terms of prevailing gender stereotypes, gender-linked self-perceptions and gender roles. They both find universal similarities as well as differences between and within more than 30 nations. The rise of cross-cultural psychology reflects a more general process of globalization in the social sciences that seeks to purify specific areas of research have western biases. In this way, cross-cultural psychology together with international psychology aims to make psychology less ethnocentric in character. Cross-cultural psychology is now taught at numerous universities located around the world, both as a specific content area as well as a methodological approach designed to broaden the field of psychology.

Before study cross cultural psychology we should know what culture is.

CULTURE**Some definitions:**

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.

Culture is communication, communication is culture.

Culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behavior; that is the totality of a person's learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behavior through social learning.

A culture is a way of life of a group of people the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions.

Culture is the sum of total of the learned behavior of a group of people that are generally considered to be the tradition of that people and are transmitted from generation to generation.

Culture is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.

Theory of cultural determinism

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.

The optimistic version of this theory postulates that human nature being infinitely malleable; human being can choose the ways of life they prefer.

The pessimistic version maintains that people are what they are conditioned to be; this is something over which they have no control. Human beings are passive creatures and do whatever their culture tells them to do. This explanation leads to behaviorism that locates the causes of human behavior in a realm that is totally beyond human control.

Cultural relativism

Different cultural groups think, feel, and act differently. There are no scientific standards for considering one group as intrinsically superior or inferior to another. Studying differences in culture among groups and societies presupposes a position of cultural relativism. It does not imply normalcy for oneself, nor for one's society. It, however, calls for judgment when dealing with groups or societies different from one's own. Information about the nature of cultural differences between societies, their roots, and their consequences should precede judgment and action. Negotiation is more likely to succeed when the parties concerned understand the reasons for the differences in viewpoints.

Manifestations of culture

Cultural differences manifest themselves in different ways and differing levels of depth. Symbols represent the most superficial and value the deepest manifestations of culture, with heroes and rituals in between.

Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share a particular culture. New symbols easily develop, old ones disappear. Symbols from one particular group are regularly copied by others. This is why symbols represent the outermost layer of a culture.

Heroes are persons, past or present, real or fictitious, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture. They also serve as models for behavior.

Rituals are collective activities, sometimes superfluous in reaching desired objectives, but are considered as socially essential. They are therefore carried out most of the times for their own sake (ways of greetings, paying respect to others, religious and social ceremonies, etc.).

The core of a culture is formed by values. They are broad tendencies for preferences of certain state of affairs to others (good-evil, right-wrong, natural-unnatural). Many values remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore they often cannot be discussed, nor they can be directly observed by others. Values can only be inferred from the way people act under different circumstances.

Symbols, heroes, and rituals are the tangible or visual aspects of the practices of a culture. The true cultural meaning of the practices is intangible; this is revealed only when the practices are interpreted by the insiders.

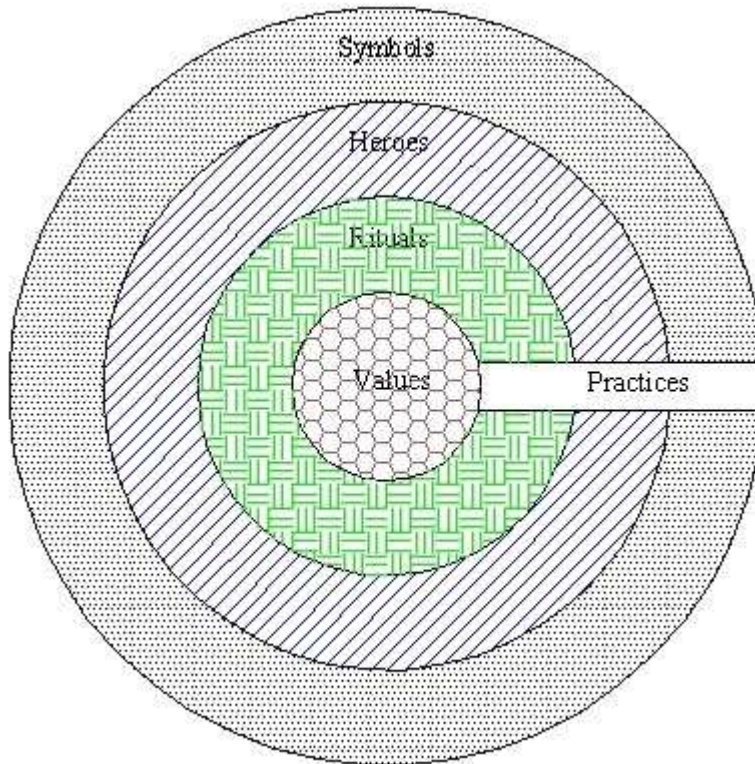


Figure 1. Manifestation of Culture at Different Levels of Depth

Layers of culture

People even within the same culture carry several layers of mental programming within themselves. Different layers of culture exist at the following levels:

The national level: Associated with the nation as a whole.

The regional level: Associated with ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences that exist within a nation.

The gender level: Associated with gender differences (female vs. male)

The generation level: Associated with the differences between grandparents and parents, parents and children.

The social class level: Associated with educational opportunities and differences in occupation.

The corporate level: Associated with the particular culture of an organization. Applicable to those who are employed.

The concepts of culture, ethnicity, diversity, and the misused term "race" (Segall, 1999) have been part of psychology's vocabulary for many years—even going back to Wilhelm Wundt and his interest in Folk Psychology and the 11 volumes he published under that title. But it wasn't until about the mid-1960s that a convergence of independent events and efforts led to what has been called the "modern movement" in cross-cultural psychology. This confluence of activities and initiatives led to the creation, in 1972, of the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP), an organization consisting of approximately 800 psychologists from some 70 countries. These individuals strongly identify with IACCP and its basic mission of extending psychology's horizons beyond the traditional Euro-American sphere that has dominated the

discipline for many years. IACCP holds both international and regional meetings, and is central to organizational and professional matters. The 25th anniversary conference was held at Western Washington University in 1998.

What are the important reasons, behind the development of cross cultural psychology.

Most cross-cultural psychologists share the opinion that the only way psychology can reach the highest level of scientific achievement and influence, on par with sciences such as chemistry and physics, is to extend its investigations to all corners of the world. Indeed, if generalizability is a necessary ingredient of what defines a "true" science, then one may ask if psychology falls somewhat short when compared with the so-called "hard" sciences.

Another important point for is, a large number of questions may be asked in the search for commonalities or universals. For example, are laws of learning, memory, perception, and other basic processes as applicable in Afghanistan, Benin, Chile, Egypt, and indeed anywhere else on the planet as they are in Anaheim, Chattanooga, or Bellingham, Washington, where I live? If not, what accounts for variations? Is conformity the same everywhere? Is depression to be understood in exactly the same way in all corners of the world? Open an introductory psychology text to four or five pages at random (perhaps excluding statistics and basic physiological processes--but don't close the book on how culture may influence those, either) and ask yourself if the topics on those pages are culturally invariant. And if you are convinced that they are, what is your evidence?

Why Many Psychologists Ignore or Resist the Challenge of Incorporating Culture in Their Work

There are many reasons why psychologists may not want to get involved with other cultures. Formidable methodological problems (see below) may inhibit many scholars, and difficulties in acquiring adequate funding for research is another reason that may result in researchers deciding to stay home to enjoy the comfortable and familiar trappings of their own laboratories, language, customs, and values. Another inhibiting factor has been a tendency for many people to compartmentalize disciplines, which carries with it the argument that the study of culture should be left to the anthropologists and sociologists. Moreover, many instructors may shy away from cultural topics either because they don't have time in their already jam-packed syllabi or feel ill-prepared to deal with the complexities of culture. Who wants to appear ill-informed in front of admiring students?

Another inhibiting factor has been a tendency for many people to compartmentalize disciplines, which carries with it the argument that the study of culture should be left to the anthropologists and sociologists. Moreover, many instructors may shy away from cultural topics either because they don't have time in their already jam-packed syllabi or feel ill-prepared to deal with the complexities of culture. Who wants to appear ill-informed in front of admiring students?

What Do Cross-Cultural Psychologists Do, and Why?

Cross-cultural psychologists would hardly disagree with the definition of psychology and the listing of its goals as found; for instance; in standard introductory psychology texts (e.g., psychology is the systematic study of human thought and behavior). In a very real sense cross-cultural psychology is not a separate, fractionated "field" unto itself but a methodological approach, on par with the experimental, physiological, quantitative, and clinical approaches. The special nature of cross-cultural psychology requires, as noted earlier, that the challenges of rather trenchant methodological problems be met. For example, problems of equivalence (conceptual, linguistic, and metric) must be solved. Also, various problems associated with sampling require creative solutions. In a sophisticated research design, one must ask important questions: Which cultures are to be studied, and why? Which communities and individuals should be selected, and why? And precisely which behaviors should receive detailed attention? These are difficult matters to confront effectively and convincingly. However, there are excellent overviews of how to define and approach methodological problems (e.g., Berry et al., 1997, and van de Vijver & Leung, 1997).

The breadth of what cross-cultural psychologists study is astonishing, and it reflects the heterogeneity of mainstream psychology. Thus we see how emotions are regulated differently in various cultures, how anxiety is manifested and controlled as a function of family type, how culture shapes conceptions of the self, and whether writing Chinese characters affect performance on various Piagetian tasks. Cross-cultural psychologists study the consequences of rapid relocation, they try to determine if Gypsy children develop intellectually like other