

# Culture's Role in Shaping Personality and Behavior

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**Abstract.** As it relates to the creation of human behaviour, scholars have examined the complex connection that exists between culture, personality, and environmental circumstances. This research sheds light on the critical role that cultural standards play in the formation of an individual's personality. It also shows the need of matching one's personality with the cultural circumstances that are present in order to promote one's general well-being, which is shown by the fact that this statement has been made. The relationship between aspects of an individual's personality and aspects of a culture is the focus of this roundtable conversation, with a special emphasis placed on the link between extraversion and cultures that place a high importance on individuality. This study studies the two-way relationship that exists between an individual's personality traits and the situations that they find themselves in, giving special emphasis to the impact that cultural factors have on this connection. The majority of effort is being directed on the investigation of how people readjust to different environments in which they are living.

**Keywords:** Personality, Cultural Impact, Individual Behaviour.

## 1. Introduction

The longstanding scholarly and intellectual interest is in the ongoing discourse about the dominant factors that shape human behaviour, namely personality and circumstance [1]. The focus of this study is on the interactionist method, which is generally acknowledged and serves as the fundamental basis for this academic discussion. The present research explores the intricate domain of cultural settings in order to examine the deep impact of cultural norms and values on an individual's behaviour. Cultural influences play a significant role in shaping an individual's personality characteristics, giving rise to distinct circumstances in which adherence to society standards becomes of utmost importance, hence reinforcing certain elements of one's personality.

The complex interaction between culture, personality, and circumstance results in fascinating differences in personality characteristics across many cultural contexts [2, 3]. For example, persons who are brought up in collectivist societies often have elevated levels of agreeableness and prioritise community ideals [2]. On the other hand, individuals hailing from countries that prioritise individualism may exhibit higher levels of extraversion and independence.

Furthermore, this study expands its focus to include foreign students and persons who have crossed cultural borders, aiming to elucidate the complex impact of culture and the significance of the timing of one's integration into a novel cultural milieu. This study attempts to acquire a more profound understanding of the intricate dynamics of human behaviour in a more linked global context, via a thorough and complete examination.

## 2. Methodological Review

The present study encompasses a comprehensive examination of the existing literature, exploring a wide range of studies conducted globally, which examine the association between personality characteristics and social norms.

This thorough literature review uses a multidimensional analytical approach to examine the complex interplay between culture, personality, and behaviour. The process starts with a methodical review of the literature, including studies conducted through 2021, and incorporating a wide array of academic sources such as empirical research, theoretical frameworks, and conceptual papers. By using stringent inclusion criteria, this study carefully picks peer-reviewed publications of exceptional

quality for thorough analysis. The review effectively combines and incorporates essential themes, ideas, and discoveries from the chosen literature. It does this by using theoretical frameworks such as individualism-collectivism and the reciprocal causal link between personality and surroundings, therefore offering more profound insights. This paper provides a critical evaluation of the limits and gaps present in current research, with a particular emphasis on the significance of using culturally sensitive approaches and being attentive to the ever-changing cultural dynamics. Furthermore, the methodology employed in this study aims to identify potential avenues for future research. It emphasises the need for a more nuanced cultural analysis, alternative methodologies, longitudinal studies, and interdisciplinary perspectives. By incorporating these elements, the study seeks to enhance our comprehension of how culture impacts personality and behaviour, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this complex relationship.

### **3. Literature Review**

The discourse around the relative importance of personality traits and environmental circumstances in the prediction and formation of human behaviour has been a historical and extensively discussed subject. The criticism presented by Walter Mischel on the personality-centric approach has sparked fervent arguments among individuals, leading to varied interpretations. The consensus among scholars is that a thorough explanation of behaviour requires the consideration of both personality and environmental elements, with culture emerging as a distinct and influential force that influences both of these aspects.

Cultural norms have significant influence on an individual's behaviour, hence shaping their personality. The congruence between an individual's personality and the dominant societal standards has significant ramifications for their overall welfare. The notion described above is shown in the study conducted by Fulmer et al., wherein they explore the significant impact of cultural norms and the interplay between an individual's personality and their cultural environment on their levels of self-esteem and subjective well-being. The researchers present the concept of the "person-culture match hypothesis," which suggests that when an individual's personality aligns with the prevailing personalities in their culture, the culture functions as an enhancer, amplifying the favourable impacts of their personality on self-esteem and well-being. The theory is strongly supported by their results, which are derived from a comprehensive dataset obtained from a sample size of over 7,000 people from 28 distinct civilizations.

The findings of the research indicate that there is a notable amplification of the association between an individual's personality attribute and their well-being or self-esteem in cultures that exhibit greater levels of that specific personality component. The relevance of these discoveries is substantial, extending beyond those who are native to a particular culture to include migrants and persons living in culturally varied environments. The significance of taking cultural norms and the congruence between one's personality and the existing cultural environment into account is emphasised as crucial in the pursuit of understanding the complexities of well-being.

### **4. Theories Beyond and Discussions**

Building upon the findings of Fulmer's study, it becomes apparent that cultural norms have a significant impact on an individual's overall welfare and sense of self-worth. This highlights the importance of people adhering to social standards and adjusting their personalities to align with the dominant cultural norms. When people experience a significant influence on their well-being due to the congruence between their personality and the prevailing cultural norms, they tend to adapt their personalities in order to better assimilate into the culture in which they reside. This study highlights the complicated relationship between culture, personality, and well-being, emphasising the need of people navigating this nuanced landscape with an awareness of cultural norms.

A multitude of scholarly investigations have been conducted to examine the variances in personality characteristics throughout a wide range of cultural contexts. An illustrative instance may be seen in the study, whereby the researchers used the big five model [4]. The results of their study indicated that Malay pupils tend to have higher levels of agreeableness, while displaying lower scores in extraversion and openness. This observation is consistent with the wider depiction of Malay culture as a collectivist society, placing emphasis on community values and collaboration.

Expanding upon the concept of cultural impacts on personality, more empirical findings underscore the existence of these differentiations. According to Hofstede and McRae, there was a robust correlation seen between extraversion and cultural dimensions, surpassing the associations observed for other personality traits [5]. In civilizations that were characterised by a tendency towards individualism, it was observed that people had elevated levels of Extraversion. According to Hofstede's research conducted in 2001, cultures that exhibit higher levels of individualism tend to prioritise an "I" consciousness above a collective "we" consciousness. In such individualistic societies, there is a greater emphasis on values such as autonomy, variety, and personal satisfaction, whereas values such as expertise, responsibility, and security may be given relatively less importance. The observed disparity in values implies a tendency towards more extroversion in the former group and greater introversion in the latter group.

In the study conducted by Van Hoorn, an examination is undertaken to explore the differentiating factors of personality characteristics across collectivist and individualist civilizations, with a specific focus on the concept of trust [6]. The aforementioned results underscore the association between individuality and a wider trust radius, while collectivism is connected to a more limited trust radius. The concept of trust radius, which refers to the degree of trust inside a certain social network, is subject to the effect of cultural variables. In societies characterised by individualism, whereby personal rights and objectives are prioritised, people are more inclined to give trust to those outside their own social group. In contrast, collectivistic societies place a higher emphasis on group loyalty, resulting in the restriction of trust to those belonging to the ingroup. The results of this study highlight the strong correlation between trust radius and the cultural component of individualism-collectivism, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural differences in levels of openness and trust.

The impact of personality on behaviour is clearly discernible, especially when considering the effect of one's choices, which subsequently form the many circumstances people encounter. Fundamentally, individuals have a tendency to choose and navigate through circumstances that are consistent with their unique personalities. Motivations may exhibit variability in accordance with many psychological theories, covering objectives, a more profound comprehension of circumstances, and the quest for emotional gratification [7]. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognise the significant influence of culture in shaping the objectives that might be influenced via persuasion and the emotional contentment experienced by people.

A noteworthy illustration of the impact of culture on persuadable objectives and emotional pleasure may be seen in the widely common notion of "loss of face" throughout several East Asian societies. The term "face" refers to an individual's position in society, their reputation, and their subjective evaluation of their own value within their social circle or community. In the context of these particular cultures, the act of maintaining one's reputation and preventing instances that may result in the loss of social standing are given utmost importance. This prevalent cultural convention often throws people in distinctive circumstances when they are required to traverse intricate social dynamics and make choices that prioritise the preservation of one's reputation and the avoidance of humiliation above personal preferences or viewpoints.

In the context of business, frontline employees may encounter situations that elicit a perception of loss of face, such as instances of customer aggression. This can have adverse consequences on their psychological state, leading to the development of anxiety and emotional exhaustion [8]. In contrast, Western societies exhibit comparable psychological impacts such as worry and emotional tiredness, but the significance placed on "face" may not be as prominent as seen in Eastern cultures. In Western

countries, there is frequently a tendency to prioritise individuality, resulting in people assigning more importance to personal resilience and assertiveness in various circumstances. Consequently, frontline personnel in Western cultures may have a greater propensity to publicly acknowledge and tackle instances of consumer abuse. Individuals in such situations may also choose to seek assistance from their respective organisations or colleagues, or assertively advocate for their rights, rather than mainly prioritising the preservation of their reputation or social standing as a major issue. The aforementioned cultural gap highlights the influence of cultural norms and values on the emergence of distinct social circumstances, which people must negotiate in accordance with their cultural origins. This serves as a demonstration of the significant impact that culture has on interpersonal interactions and the processes involved in making decisions.

Ickes, Snyder, and Garcia provide a significant theoretical framework that highlights the reciprocal causal connection between personality traits and situational factors [8]. The complex dynamic observed implies that personality qualities not only influence people's preferences for certain circumstances, but also that the experiences they experience may shape and influence their personality traits. In this context, culture assumes a prominent role, exerting its impact on both an individual's personality and the circumstances they encounter. As a result, culture assumes a central role in shaping an individual's personality by virtue of the reciprocal causal connection between personality and the surrounding circumstances.

To provide an illustration, let us assume a hypothetical situation in which an individual hailing from a collectivist cultural background, which is renowned for its emphasis on group cohesion and dependency, has personality attributes that are marked by elevated levels of agreeableness and conformity. These characteristics may motivate individuals to actively pursue social environments that are consistent with their cultural standards, such as engaging in cooperative team-based activities within their professional setting. Over a period of time, when individuals participate in collaborative environments, these encounters might potentially strengthen their pleasant and compliant personality characteristics. Hence, it can be argued that culture plays a significant role in not only shaping individuals' basic personality disposition but also exerting a continuous effect and reinforcement via their participation in certain events. This highlights the reciprocal nature of the link between personality and situations.

The recognition of culture's significant impact on people's circumstances, and subsequently, their personality, is of utmost importance. The investigation carried out by Wurf examined the influence of culture on the development of adolescent personality and identity, with a specific focus on the unique context of international schools [9]. In contrast to previous studies highlighting substantial cultural variations in personality, the present study yielded results indicating the absence of statistically significant differences in personality characteristics among kids with Chinese, North American, or mixed cultural origins within the setting of an international school. This implies that the presence of cultural diversity in foreign schools may potentially reduce the impact of proven cultural differences in personality [10].

Additionally, the research provides evidence to support the concept that kids attending culturally varied foreign schools tend to assimilate personality qualities that are more in line with the dominant cultural norms of the new environment they are immersed in, indicating a phenomenon of personality acculturation. This discovery highlights the notable capacity of people to adjust in the face of heterogeneous situations. Furthermore, this observation highlights the fluid and evolving character of the interplay between individuals and their cultural contexts. When individuals are exposed to new cultural environments, they form fresh and mutually influential connections between these environments and their own identities.

Furthermore, the study findings indicate that children enrolled in foreign schools often cultivate complex transnational identities, which are significantly shaped by their exposure to a vast range of cultural settings. This suggests that an individual's personal identity is not only influenced by their cultural heritage, but rather significantly moulded by the diverse range of intercultural encounters that students encounter.

Culture has a significant role in shaping persons by exerting a strong effect on the experiences they face, ultimately impacting their personality. The interaction of culture, circumstances, and personality constitutes a dynamic phenomenon, which is notably observable in the multicultural setting of international educational institutions. In such environments, people undergo a process of adaptation and growth, resulting in the formation of intricate identities via their exposure to a wide range of cultural settings.

Although this literature analysis provides essential insights on the significant influence of culture on personality and behaviour, it is not exempt from some limitations. One significant constraint is to the tendency to oversimplify cultural impacts, often focusing on overarching cultural qualities such as individualism and collectivism. The elements outlined may not fully encompass the intricacies of cultural diversity, thereby requiring a more detailed examination of distinct regional and subcultural subtleties. There are methodological considerations that arise in the literature, since several research depend on self-report measures, which may be susceptible to response biases and cultural disparities in communication patterns. In order to ensure ongoing relevance, it is crucial for future research endeavours to confront these limits by the adoption of alternative approaches and the careful consideration of the always changing nature of cultural dynamics. Furthermore, it is worth noting that while the study offers a thorough examination of research conducted through 2021, it is crucial to acknowledge that cultural dynamics may undergo quick transformations as a result of globalisation and migration. This highlights the need of staying updated with the latest research findings. In order to enhance the scope of future study, it is imperative to include a micro-cultural analysis, integrate longitudinal studies, and use qualitative research methodologies to effectively capture the multifaceted nature of people's experiences within cultural settings. Furthermore, the examination of cultural intersectionality and the use of cultural perspectives across other disciplines might augment our comprehension of the ways in which culture impacts individual traits and actions. In order to advance the subject of cultural psychology and understand its influence on people's lives, it is crucial to take into account rising elements such as globalisation and digital culture.

## 5. Conclusion

Through the review of these above-mentioned theories, this article has examined the intricate interplay between culture, personality, and behaviour. The influence of both personality characteristics and environmental circumstances on human behaviour is readily apparent. Culture has a significant and comprehensive role in shaping not just an individual's personality but also the circumstances they experience. The complex and dynamic relationship between culture, personality, and behaviour involves a reciprocal effect, wherein culture has an impact on personality, which subsequently shapes the circumstances people encounter and negotiate. The study under consideration, especially within the realm of international schools and cross-cultural studies, emphasises the capacity of people to adjust in multicultural settings and the significant influence of culture on one's sense of self. As the pursuit of comprehending human behaviour advances, it becomes imperative to acknowledge the significant and intricate influence exerted by culture within this intricate dynamic. This underscores the need of cultivating cultural sensitivity and understanding throughout many domains of our existence.

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