

The Effect Of Culture On Emotions

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Statement Of The Problem

Culture encompasses the values, beliefs, and behaviour that are deemed acceptable within a societal context. The outward projection of emotions varies across cultures as per the guidelines, structure, rules, and expectations of society. The expression of emotions within a culture is often regulated by type and frequency. These rules of cultural display guide people in regulating their sentiments and form the cultural basis for acceptable and unacceptable expression. While some cultures may promote the display of negative emotions such as sorrow and fear openly, others promote suppressing these feelings, especially when dealt with in the context of gender-specific situations. The purpose of this research paper is to explore the effect of culture on emotions. The paper further analyses the different cultural differences and gender stereotypes associated with emotional expression.

Numerous anthropological studies have focused on the cultural difference in viewing emotions and categorizing these as either beneficial or harmful. Meanwhile, many other pieces of research aim to analyze the impact of these differences on the regulation of emotions at an individual and societal level. Emotions are studied through various frameworks. One such framework is the extent of interdependence or independence that a culture endorses. An interdependent culture prioritizes relationships and seeks to establish harmony, while within an independent culture, individuals prioritize their unique traits. Moreover, individual motivation also plays a role in regulating emotions. This motivation is shaped by the cultural context (Ford & Mauss, 2015).

Emotion is considered to be culture-specific and universal with underlying cultural and biological determinants. The bio-cultural model of emotions highlights three premises that distinguish emotion from affect. It posits that various types of emotions exist. It also entails that within these emotions, different domains exist, which are either regulated by biology or culture. These different domains of emotion consist of priming reactions, subjective experiences, and emotional meanings. Priming reactions are physiological responses that occur within seconds of the emotion-causing event. Subjective experience requires some higher-order thinking, and it involves self-reporting of the emotions experienced. Lastly, emotion meanings are the values, beliefs, or theories of emotions. The priming reactions are impacted by culture and enable individuals to learn about the appropriate emotional reaction. It regulates subjective experience. The comparative intensity of emotional experiences also varies across cultures. Cultural emotions stem from the cultural context, and these are unique in terms of the cultural knowledge they elicit. Although these emotions are universal, they may not be biologically inherent, and their expression varies from one cultural context to another. An example of this is that feelings of jealousy, guilt, love, and hatred exist across the globe, but the

cultural events that elicit these emotions may differ. The emotional reaction often requires higher cognitive processing, such as memory, language, and abstract thinking, all of which are highly partial to social norms (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2012).

There are different stereotypical beliefs associated with emotions, and these beliefs vary across cultural settings. Gender stereotypes not only determine the appropriate emotions for males and females but also regulate how these emotions are expressed. While the expression of one emotion may lead to labelling women as “emotional”, the same, when expressed by a man, may be termed as being “rational”. Studies regarding gender differences in emotions conclude that women exhibit an increasingly emotional response to situations. However, this does not apply to all forms of sentiments and situations. The display and inhibition of emotions are associated with gender roles and expectations. As women are generally regarded as lower in status, especially in strict cultures, the role associated with females is primarily to be committed to care and show sensitivity to others. This powerlessness associated with females also results in attributing powerless emotions such as shame, fear, and sadness to them. In contrast, men are expected to be concerned with being tough, assertive, and focused on material achievements. The individualistic vs. collectivist culture is also a determinant of appropriate emotional expression. Individualistic societies are characterized by loose societal ties which emphasize autonomy and self-expression. While collectivist societies are bound by social groups therefore, a certain code of mutual respect guides emotional conduct (Fischer & Manstead, 2017).

Research Question

This research paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of culture on emotions?
2. How are people impacted by different emotions in a given cultural context?
3. How does gender bias in strict cultures impact emotions?

These research questions are aligned with the problem statement of this research. The questions would establish the impact of culture on emotions and explain how different people respond to these in a particular setting. Moreover, the questions would guide this study in exploring the effect of gender bias in strict cultures and how these influence emotions.

Key Relationships/ Hypothesis

The key relationship that this paper aims to explore is between culture and emotions. Furthermore, the paper explores the key relationship between gender bias and emotions. The following hypotheses will guide the research:

H1: Culture has a significant impact on emotions.

H2: In strict cultures, gender bias significantly impacts emotions.

Concepts

The key concept focused on in this paper is emotional display within different cultural contexts. The main idea is that in certain cultures, gender roles and biases impact emotions and the way these are expressed. Adopting a mixed methods approach, the study will employ an interpretive approach during the qualitative interviewing phase. This approach will allow the researcher to examine how emotions are felt and expressed in a given cultural context, i.e. The setting. The study will apply an explanatory approach in the quantitative phase, and data will be collected through a survey created by the researcher. Using the data gathered through the two sources, the conclusion of the study will be presented.

References

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- Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. S. (2012). Culture and emotion: The integration of biological and cultural contributions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 43(1), 91-118.