Psychology of Personality and Individual Differences: Theory and Applications
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Week 9
Lecture 20: Culture and personality

I welcome you all to module 9 of this course. Module 9 is about the social and cultural aspects of personality. This is the second lecture of this module and overall, it is lecture number 20. Today's lecture is about understanding the connection between culture and personality. We will discuss various aspects of culture and how it can influence human personality and so on.

Before we talk about today's lecture let me give you a brief recap of the last lecture which was also a part of this module. It was on gender and personality. In that lecture, we discussed the conceptual difference between the concept of sex and the concept of gender. We discussed that gender is more of a socially constructed idea and sex is more of a biological idea between males and females. We also talked about various assessment processes of gender which may include multiple combinations of masculinity and femininity and so on.

We also talked about various historical backgrounds in terms of how research in the context of gender and personality evolved. And then we discussed what are the factual differences between men and women in terms of personality and what are fictional things, mostly stereotypical concepts. We looked through the research findings and so on. We also looked at more specific aspects of gender and personality in the context of aggression, risk-taking behavior, leadership style, and so on. These are some of the things that we discussed.

In today's lecture, we will focus on the cultural and personality aspects. We will look at different approaches to studying personality and culture. We will talk about why it is so important to study cross-cultural differences in personality. We will also look at the various approaches to understanding the relationship between culture and personality. And at the end, we will talk about the cultural differences in the concept of self-construal. These are some of the things that will be discussed in today's lecture. So let us start today's lecture.

Before we talk about the connection between culture and personality, let me give you a brief background or a definition of what culture is all about. So, culture is a very difficult and challenging term to define because there are so many conceptions around it.

For example, in 1952, American anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn conducted a critical review of various concepts and definitions of culture, and they compiled about 164 distinct definitions of culture. Some of these definitions are given here. For example, culture is that complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. So, culture is a kind of collection of all these things that are included here, like knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, etc. which are acquired by people.

In a society, culture is also defined as a collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another. Whatever the collective programming a group of individuals has, it distinguishes one group from another. That is the culture. Another definition is that culture encompasses the beliefs, customs, art, and traditions of a society. It is transmitted through language and social reinforcement of behavior. If you see, most of these definitions are talking about the same thing, only in different ways. The idea is that culture includes all kinds of beliefs, morals, laws, customs, practices, and rituals—whatever is collectively done by a group of people. That becomes a part of the culture.
And generally, when we talk about culture, its units can vary. We can talk about culture in a very small group. It may include things like the culture of a family. It could include things like the culture of a society, the culture of a group, the culture of a region, or the culture of a country. We can also talk about global culture and so on.

The idea is that units of culture could differ from a very small unit to a larger unit. Depending on what the focus is when defining culture. So, like this when a group of people collectively believe in certain customs, rituals, or practices, which distinguish them from another group of people, that constitutes what culture is all about. Now, culture—how this whole group-level phenomenon could be connected to the concept of personality. As we have already discussed earlier, personality is a product of both genetic contributions as well as environmental factors. So, personality is contributed by whatever personality we all have, which is influenced by one's genetic contribution—whatever information we get through the genes from our parents and ancestors, that also contributes to the kind of person we are or become, as well as a lot of environmental factors as we progress in life. The influence of other people and the environment in which we live also influences our personality and shapes it. Now, when we talk about culture, it is a part of these environmental factors.

Culture is constituted by environmental factors. The culture in which we live is one of the most important environmental factors because it influences the kind of environment we are in, which could differ across cultures. Since culture determines many environmental factors and since the environment can influence our personality, culture can influence our personality factors. So, this is one of the basic ideas behind why culture should be studied in the context of personality. Personality psychologists have increasingly recognized the significant role of culture in shaping personality. With the progress of research, more recently, psychologists have focused on understanding cultural influences.

Earlier, the focus was more on studying factors that were considered universal. Now, many psychologists are examining cultural influences and cross-cultural differences in terms of personality factors. The cultural milieu influences an individual's personality by modeling acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Culture determines what is acceptable, what is unacceptable behavior, what is rewarded, and what is punished. All these will mold the kind of person we become.

So, that is one of the important kinds of mechanisms that can be connected to personality and culture. Researchers in personality psychology are investigating whether personality traits are consistent across cultures or exhibit variations. The focus of cultural psychologists in the context of personality is whether there are only universal traits in personality or whether there are cultural differences in terms of the expression of traits and so on. This is one of the main objectives of cultural psychologists in terms of understanding personality. We will see some of these findings.

It is observed that there is no doubt there are certain universal aspects to personality traits. Certain traits are there which are universally found across all cultures. There is also culture-specific influence that contributes to differences in personality among people from different cultural backgrounds. There are universal aspects to personality traits and there are culture-specific influences that also contribute to differences in personality among people of different cultural backgrounds. People are different because of certain cultural influences. So, both aspects are there, and we will see them. This recognition underscores the complexity of understanding personality. Personality complex factors could play a role in terms of shaping personality and one such factor is cultural factors. So, why should we study cultural factors in the context of personality?

It is very important for certain reasons. One is as proposed by some researchers, Benet and Oishi. Western ideas about personality may not be universally applied to other cultures. So, because researchers are studying diverse cultures, more and more research is being published from other cultures. People are realizing that many of the Western ideas about personality may not hold true in other cultures.

So, there is a need to understand personality in the context of other cultures. Different societies have distinct norms, values, and socialization practices that shape how personality traits are expressed and valued. Because of these factors that differentiate groups of different cultures, personality could be shaped in different ways. We cannot ignore these cultural nuances, which can lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of personality across different cultural contexts if you just impose Western ideas on other people. This is why it is important to study this.

Another factor is a lot of research on the Big Five factors or trait factors that we already discussed in detail. The Big Five personality factors include openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. So, this we have already discussed in the earlier modules. These Big Five factors or traits demonstrate that while there are universal aspects to these traits, their expression and relative importance can vary significantly across cultures. These traits have been found in diverse cultures which means there is a sense in which there is a universal aspect to these Big Five factors. So, traits are found in all cultures, but how these traits get expressed, which trait gets more prominence, and which one is relatively more important varies across cultures. Now, those differences and nuances exist in different cultures. So, cultures could differ in terms of which trait is expressed more, which trait gets more importance, and so on.

Even though these traits are present in all cultures, how they are expressed could differ depending on the culture. And so, that is why, even in universal factors—factors that are universally applicable across cultures—their expression could vary. So, that is why, for example, some studies show that cultures emphasizing collectivism may prioritize agreeableness and conscientiousness. We will talk about what collectivist culture is. Cultures can be categorized based on their characteristics. So, collectivism—which we will also look at in the upcoming slides—refers to cultures that focus more on relationships, groups, harmony, and so on. In such cultures, traits like agreeableness and conscientiousness may play a more

important role, be expressed more, and be given greater importance. In contrast, individualistic cultures—where the focus is on individual achievement, individual priorities, and personal aspects rather than group connections— might emphasize traits like extroversion and openness to experience. So, among these five traits, depending on the nature or characteristics of the culture, some traits may gain more prominence in certain cultures, while other factors may gain more prominence in other cultures. Like that, there can be cultural differences within the same expression of traits. In this essence, understanding cultural influences on personality allows psychologists to develop more comprehensive and accurate models of personality. As compared to when we study only one model of personality based on data from one particular culture, like Western countries and so on, to better account for the diversities of human behavior and experiences.

Cross-cultural studies are very important. It encourages a nuanced approach that respects and integrates cultural differences. It is also very important for better understanding the diverse expressions of personality among people of different cultures. Now, there have been various approaches to studying personality and culture. The two most prominent approaches are the culture-comparative approach, which means cross-cultural comparisons are made.

This is one approach where you study certain variables in different cultures and then make comparisons. So, in the cultural comparison approach, you see whether they are the same or different and so on. Another is the Indigenous approach, which focuses more on studying from the perspective of that culture rather than starting with an already-defined model and then studying. It starts from a bottom-up approach, where you study the culture from their perspective only. So, that is called the indigenous approach.

Let us see what these are in more detail about these two approaches. So, in the cultural comparative approach, personality psychology aims to evaluate the generalizability and cultural validity of Western-based theories and assessments of personality across different cultures. Because a lot of these models evolved in Western countries, they try to implement and see whether those models are valid in other cultures or not. So, they make comparisons by collecting data using those models and assessment tools and so on.

So, this approach involves testing whether concepts and measures developed in a Western context apply similarly to non-Western contexts, whether they are applicable or not, and whether similar patterns are observed in other cultures or not. For instance, researchers like McCrae and Costa, who proposed, developed, and did a lot of research in the context of the

Big Five trait model have conducted studies demonstrating the stability and applicability of the Big Five personality traits across diverse cultural settings. They did a lot of research and tried to compare whether these five-factor models exist in different cultures or not.

And they found a lot of validity and stability in these five factors across different cultures. So, this is an example of how the cultural comparative approach studies personality across cultures. The next one is the indigenous approach, which emerged from the limitations of applying Western-based personality assessments in non-Western cultures. A lot of research has found that when we start with a Western model and then see whether it is applicable or not, that means we are already conceptualizing things and ideas and theories from the Western perspective and then we are trying to apply it. The Indigenous approach found this is a limited approach because you are starting with already a certain concept that is developed in another culture then you are trying to see it. So, that will have a limitation because the concepts are already set up from other cultures. It acknowledges that the Western model may not fully capture the complexities and diversities of personality constructs across different cultural contexts. This model may not in the first place capture the essence of other cultures.

We need to develop theories and assessments from that cultural perspective. We need to develop new concepts or new understanding and theories and assessment processes that are applicable in that culture, rather than starting with things and theories and assessments developed in other cultures. So that is the indigenous approach. The indigenous approach advocates for developing personality assessment instruments that are grounded in the specific cultural values norms and constructs relevant to the culture being studied.

This context, this particular approach, develops theories and assessment processes from a particular cultural perspective only. And then they focus only on that culture understanding of that culture rather than taking western models and then looking at it. That is the difference between the indigenous approach and the culture-comparative approach. This particular Indigenous approach led to significant advancement including the translation of a lot of personality assessment tools, validation or kind of adaptation tools from the perspective of other cultures into various languages and cultural frameworks as well as integration of indigenous perspective and personality. A lot of research also went into that direction. By incorporating local cultural views and understanding of personality development researchers can create more culturally sensitive and value assessments. The idea is to develop things

models and assessment instruments that are more culturally sensitive. That is the approach of indigenous theories.

This approach not only enriches our understanding of personality across cultures but also promotes inclusivity and respect for diverse cultural perspectives in psychological research. This is just an example that was done from the Indigenous perspective research by Burack and colleagues in 2019 which tries to understand the complex and diverse nature of Indigenous identity and the significant impact of historical and contemporary factors on personality development within Canadian Indigenous communities. This is an example of a study, of how it was done from the indigenous perspective. These researchers were trying to understand Canadian Indigenous communities from their cultural perspective, they were trying to understand how their identities are formed, and what historical and contemporary factors shape their personality and personality development. In that context, they also studied the trauma they faced in the history of indigenous peoples of Canada because of colonization, oppression, forced displacement, and displacement from their traditional lands and attempts at cultural assimilation. All these historical traumatic factors, how they shape their identity and shape their personality, they were trying to understand from their perspective. This history includes severe abuses such as forced relocation, family separation, and so on, which aimed at erasing Indigenous cultural identity. There were a lot of factors, historical traumatic factors.

They tried to alienate them from their own cultural identity and so on. And all these factors impacted their personality development. This collective trauma experienced as a group by Indigenous communities, including intergenerational effects, plays a crucial role in shaping their personality development. These experiences influence how individuals perceive themselves, their identity, and their place within the community and the broader society. This is an example of a study that was done from the indigenous perspective.

They were only interested in understanding how their cultural factors shaped their personality. The importance of cross-cultural differences—we have already touched upon some of these things. Here it is a little bit more elaborated Until recently, basically, psychologists largely ignored these cross-cultural issues because of certain challenges, such as the difficulty of studying too many cultures, and there were issues earlier. So, most psychologists focused on collecting data from samples available in their own cultures.

Not much importance was given to studying people from different cultures. This neglect has been mostly benign, as psychologists have focused on describing and explaining phenomena based on the people they can most easily study. People who can be most easily studied—people in their own culture, around them—were mostly the kind of samples being studied. Because of these practical issues, people were not looking at whether this was valid in other cultures or not. For example, people like Freud concentrated on Viennese women without much concern for cross-cultural differences. He was studying people from the Viennese countryside without really focusing on whether these things would be applicable to people in other cultures or not. Similarly, European and North American psychologists have primarily conducted research within the Western cultural context, focusing on individual differences, perception, cognition, and behavioral change. Most of these people from European and Western countries were focusing on findings from people in their cultures. So that was the trend because it was easily accessible and more practical for them.

However, this research has produced many interesting findings. Cross-cultural differences and the emphasis on the evolution of cultural psychology have recently been progressing. As a result, more data from other cultures are becoming available for comparison. However, this approach of focusing only on one culture became less sustainable as research expanded.
As I said, relatively recently, research has expanded to include many other cultures. Research has been published from many other cultures. So, slowly, people are realizing that factors and traits in other cultures could be much different. For example, the Surgeon General of the United States officially recognized that culture counts in understanding mental health, disorders, interventions, and risk factors.

Even Western countries are now focusing that when we focus on dealing with mental health, disorders, treatments, interventions, and cultural factor has to be looked at. You cannot give a generalized treatment to everybody or a generalized diagnosis for everybody. Some cultural unique aspects could also contribute to all these factors and that has to be. Psychologists are increasingly interested in cross-cultural differences for primarily three reasons. One is to enhance international understanding because now it is global, because of this globalization, we all know about other people and people are getting more in contact with each other.
So, international understanding of people from different diverse countries and cultures is becoming much more important because interaction and connection are increasing in today's world. The second is to assess the applicability of psychology to people worldwide so one can

give theories and grand theories from a particular cultural perspective but whether such theories are applicable in other cultures or not, it is very important to look at those things. Applicability of those concepts, whether they are applicable in other cultures or people worldwide, is the demand of the time to understand, to appreciate the diverse varieties of human experience. Cultural understanding is important simply because we need to appreciate the diversity of human behavior and experiences. It is only through cultural differences and cultural study we can understand those diversities. Now there have been historically various approaches in understanding the relationship between culture and personality. We will look at a few such approaches and how they evolved.

So, most anthropologists began using psychological concepts to explore the origins, cultural development, social customs, and beliefs of social groups. A lot of these cultural aspects were mostly studied by anthropologists. But anthropologists also looked at psychological concepts like personality and so on. And they also included those understandings in their research.

The connection of anthropologists to psychologists has led to many approaches to understanding the relationship between culture and personality. All these approaches helped or gave much more insight into understanding the role of culture and personality and so on. Some of these approaches include the Configurationalist approach, the national characteristic approach, personality and national culture, and the work of Hofstede. We will look at these three approaches in terms of how research evolved from the cultural perspective.

So, the configurationalist approach is one of the earliest schools of thought in psychological anthropology, which tried to look at personality from cultural aspects, developed in the 1920s. Mostly anthropologists like Edward Sapir and American academics like Ruth Benedict and her student Margaret Mead. These are the people who were mostly involved in this approach, the configurationalist approach, where they tried to look at personality from a cultural perspective. This approach says that culture embodies the collective personality of its members. When you talk about culture, it is nothing else but the collective personality of all the members of this particular culture. It says that all members of a society share similar characteristics through a cultural interconnectedness through symbolism and interpretation of their world. Most of these cultures, when you talk about it, they have similar personality characteristics.

Because they are all interconnected to each other, through various symbolism and interpretations of their world, they are very similar. For all members of society, culture is a

collective personality. So, this shared structure from a culture type is driven by common ideas and beliefs. All this shared structure is the cultural type that distinguishes one culture from another and also defines the characteristics of that culture. For researchers from this perspective, personality, and culture are inseparable, with the former being the reflection of the latter. These are all, both these two aspects, personality, and culture, are inseparable from each other. One is the reflection of another. These are not separate cultures.

If you understand the culture and the personalities of the people in that culture, one is the reflection of the other. They argue that understanding individuals within a society is key to understanding that society as a whole. If you understand the individuals in that society, you can understand the society as a whole. That means if you understand the personality of people in a culture, you can understand the whole culture, the collective personality of that particular culture. So, each individual represents a microcosm of the culture they inhabit. So, that is why they all share similar characteristics. Consequently, the difference between cultures is seen as the difference between the personality types of the individuals within each society. Two cultures are different because the people in those two cultures are different. If you study people in a culture, you can understand the characteristics of the culture also.

Ruth Benedict's study, for example from this perspective, they studied different tribal cultures. She identified the general culture of particular societies by examining the personalities of individuals within those cultures. That was the approach because if you study the individual characteristics or personalities of the individuals in a culture, you can make sense of what this culture is all about. One such study was done by Ruth Benedict from this perspective. For example, she studied Pueblo Indians who lived in villages in northwestern New Mexico.
These are tribal people. Benedict found the characteristics of these people, and then she asked, 'What are the characteristics of their culture?' Benedict characterized their culture as Apollonian culture. It exhibits characteristics like clarity, harmony, and restraint in the behavior of the people. People avoided strong emotions.

People were not allowed to show individual assertiveness. And people prioritized cooperation over personal gain, especially in upholding group traditions. These are the characteristics she found common among individuals of that culture. These are the traits or characteristics of the people which define the characteristics of the culture of that group.

This is one approach where small groups are studied in terms of the idea that people are a reflection of the culture. If you study the characteristics or personalities of the people, you know the culture. Or if you know the cultural characteristics, you can understand the characteristics of the people. So this was one of the approaches.

Now, these are the same people who gave this configurationalist approach. They also expanded their study to larger groups, which became the concept or the approach of national character— the study of national character. So, this was another approach in the study of culture and personality, which emerged from investigations into national character. So, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, who studied this configurationalist approach, also expanded their study into the national character approach. Initially, as we have already discussed, they studied personality and culture in small-scale societies such as tribal groups.

However, as their research progressed, they began to analyze the national character of more complex or larger societies—a shift that was particularly influenced by the global context of World War II. Because of World War II, people could better understand the characters of nations or countries. What kind of people are in a particular country? Because when they got involved in war, people came to know larger entities or countries. From that, they progressed to study the national character of various countries.

So, that became essentially an approach to studying national character. During the war, differences between nations were very evident and starkly highlighted. This prompted anthropologist to describe and explain the national character of countries like Japan, Germany, and the USA. Because they were all involved in the war. So, that led to the study of such entire countries.

Characteristics or culture of the countries together. So, for example, in her book Chrysanthemum and the Sword in 1946, Ruth Benedict studied Japanese culture during wartime. She characterized the Japanese as a culture or Japan as a country that embodies the contradiction between fanatical militarism and restrained aestheticism. These are like her own way of observing and studying larger groups like a country. Similarly, some other people also tried, based on their observation, to make national culture and comment on the culture of a particular country. For example, Erich Fromm was a very celebrated psychologist from the tradition of psychoanalysis. In his book Escape from Freedom in 1941, he speculated on the German national character, particularly questioning why the German people submitted to

Hitler. Erich Fromm described Germans as having an authoritarian personality marked by obedience and subservience to superiors and cruelty to subordinates. This was all based on what was happening during the war. They gave characteristics of a country. Later, Margaret Mead, along with Metraux, explored the French national character in their book Themes in French Culture (1953), emphasizing traits of intellectual and emotional control. So, like this, some people tried to study the whole country's characteristics. That was the approach called the national character approach in terms of studying culture and personality characteristics. However, a lot of this research from the national culture perspective was criticized by many researchers because of its poor methodology.

In the earlier work, this whole configurationist approach was very simple, and they focused only on small tribes. So, it was much more productive in terms of understanding those small tribes. They provided ethnographic accounts, which involved detailed fieldwork to describe these tribal groups. So, this approach was more successful among small societies, like hunter-gatherer communities and tribes, and so on. It allowed for a straightforward analysis of their rituals, religious practices, and so on. So, in those studies, much more powerful and detailed analyses were done. Those studies were methodologically much more rigorous. However, when they and other people started examining larger and more complex societies, like whole countries—industrial countries such as Japan, Germany, and France—there were many problems. This ethnographic approach proved insufficient for these modern societies, which were too complex to reduce to simple themes or derived from fieldwork. So, it is very difficult to study a whole country.

You can just make some conclusions based on some observed things or certain patterns. But you cannot have detailed ethnographic accounts of a whole country because it is too big and complex as a society, and a whole country is not one thing; there could be many things within the country. Such approaches were criticized because it's too large an entity in terms of giving an ethnographic account for such a whole-country-level analysis. The complexity of the societies meant that a more nuanced and multifaceted approach would be needed to accurately capture the national character, which was not there in these approaches. That was one of the issues with a lot of these findings.

Now, in this direction, certain studies on national culture—some people tried to do some other studies like McCrae and Terracciano from the National Institute on Aging in the US, Maryland,

conducted a study on national character, which was relatively recent, in 2006, and explored whether the perception of a nation's character matched the personalities of individuals within that nation. So that was the objective of their study. People have certain perceptions about their countries' characteristics—whether those perceptions match their personalities or not. So that was what they were trying to understand in this particular research.

They again used the five-factor model or traits of personality in their research, which unfolded mostly in two stages. In stage one, they measured individuals' perceptions of their national character. Using a national character survey developed by Terracciano, this survey asked respondents to judge a hypothetical typical member of their culture across 30 bipolar scales corresponding to the five-factor model. So certain traits were given—bipolar traits—and they were asked, 'What are the characteristics of a typical person from your country or culture? What is your perception?' So, they gave certain ratings.

In the second stage, they compared this perception with participants' personality assessments. Then, all these participants were also asked to assess their personality or rate their personality through the same five-factor method. The trait questionnaire measured their personality factors, and they are saying whether this matches or not their perception of people in their culture and their personality. This study analyzes a large-scale study of over 4,000 individuals from 49 countries, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the UK, Germany, France, Spain, New Zealand, Russia, the US, India, Italy, and so on.

So, it is a very large-scale study that includes diverse countries and cultures. All these scales were translated into different languages as necessary. The researchers then compared the national character survey data with the personality inventory of traits. The findings of this study showed varied correlations between national character perceptions and actual personality traits. They found there were different findings from different countries. For example, some samples, such as those from Poland, Lebanon, and Australia, displayed medium to large positive correlations for these countries. There was a medium positive correlation between their personality and the perception of their country's people. There was some positive correlation. However, some other countries, like the UK, Denmark, and Belgium, showed medium to large negative correlations.

That means their perception and their characteristics were opposite to each other. They were not positively correlated. They were negatively correlated. However, they found that overall,

most of the study's findings show that these correlations were very low. Between the perception of their country's characteristics and their personality characteristics.

With an average correlation of 0.02, which is very low. It is almost negligible indicating that individuals' personality profiles generally did not align with their perception of typical cultures. They have a certain perception, but they always rated themselves as different from that perception. For example, US respondents perceive typical US citizens to be higher in neuroticism and lower in agreeableness.

These are two traits of the five-factor model. Such as emotional, anxious, depressive, self-conscious, and less warm, trustful—all these typical traits. However, when rating themselves, US individuals were, on average, much lower in neuroticism and higher in agreeableness. When they rated themselves, they rated themselves in a much different way.

They rated that they perceive the typical US citizen as higher on neuroticism, and lower on agreeableness. However, when they rated themselves, they rated themselves as low in neuroticism and high in agreeableness. Just opposite to what is their perception of general people in their culture. Conversely, for example, Canadians viewed their national character as lower in neuroticism and higher in agreeableness. However, this NEO-PI-R result revealed that Canadians were higher in both neuroticism and agreeableness.

So their characteristics were different from how they perceived people in their countries. McCrae and his colleague then in this study emphasized national character studied exhibited reliability. The study showed reliability but was not valid regarding national character. What does that mean? Reliability is about consistency across different aspects of measurement.

So consistently the people of a country were rating let us say perception of themselves to the typical character of their country or nation. That was consistently the same. Almost everybody was talking about a similar thing. In that sense it was reliable. Consistency was high.

Such as items on a questionnaire or rating of different individuals. Validity on the other hand pertains to the accuracy of this phenomenon. However, it was not very valid because the accuracy was not there. Because they perceive it as different from their perception of a typical person in their culture. So, the validity was missing but reliability was high.

In their study, individuals from many cultures consistently identified a national character of their own country. So, everybody could identify almost similarly to a typical person in their culture or country, indicating it is a reliable finding because everybody was saying the same thing. It was a reliable finding. However, this national character did not correspond to the actual personality types of the individuals within those countries. But actual people who were asked

to rate their personality, it was different from their perception. So, the validity was missing because actual characteristics were different. This distinction highlights that people may have a consistent perception of their national character. This perception does not accurately reflect the true personality traits of individuals in a culture. That is kind of the summary of their findings. Perception is very consistent, but people are different in terms of when they are measured. Now, this was another approach. So, the configurationalist approach, then national character. Within the national character, one work by a particular researcher, Hofstede, is worth mentioning because he conducted very elaborate research on different characteristics of countries and national character.

One of the key investigators in the study of personality in national culture is this Dutch cultural psychologist. He was also a sociologist. His name is G.H. Hofstede. Hofstede has extensively written on the interaction between national and organizational culture. He studied people in organizations, big organizations like IBM. In 64 countries, he collected data and tried to see the interaction between national characteristics and the characteristics of the organizations within those countries or cultures. He conducted a significant research project examining national cultural differences across the multinational corporation IBM in 64 countries. He collected data, analyzed it, and tried to find out the national characters of different countries by studying people in IBM in 64 countries. In subsequent work, Hofstede also studied consumers in 15 countries, airline pilots in 23 countries, and civil service managers in 14 countries. So, he extensively studied diverse cultures and countries. Through these studies, he explored how national and regional cultural groups influence the behavior of societies and organizations. He focused on how people in those cultures impact their behavior in organizations.

Hofstede initially identified four dimensions of national culture. Later, he added a fifth dimension. There are four national cultures he found through studying people in different cultures or countries. One is power distance. Countries or cultures differ in something called power distance. Another is uncertainty avoidance. The third one is individualism versus collectivism. These are different characteristics of cultures. Masculinity versus femininity: cultures may differ. Cultures may also differ in short-term versus long-term orientations.

So let us see these five dimensions that he found through his research. The first dimension is low versus high power distance. Some cultures are low in power distance, while some cultures or countries are high in power distance. What does that mean? This dimension measures the

extent to which less powerful members of a culture or institution within that culture accept and expect that power is distributed equally. What are the beliefs of people in a culture? To what extent is power distributed equally or unequally? Whether power is focused or concentrated on a few people. Or whether it is distributed equally among all people. Cultures differ in that dimension. So, in low power distance culture, in this culture, people tend to see each other as equals. Regardless of formal positions, people in these cultures generally believe that power is equally distributed. Even though somebody may be high in the hierarchy generally there is in terms of behavior they perceive less distance and people tend to look at or view themselves as equal to each other. Individuals contribute more freely to decision-making and processes and there is a general expectation of equality and shared power. So power is not only focused on a few people. It is more of an equal distribution. There is not much-concentrated power on only a few people.nCultures with low power distance are those cultures where people believe or at least they also experience that the distribution of power is more or less equally distributed. Hofstede in his research found low power distance cultures include Austria, Denmark, and New Zealand. These are the countries where power is much more equally distributed as compared to other cultures. People experience low power distance and more sense of equality among people. The next one is high power distance culture. In some cultures where there is a high-power distance. In these cultures, less powerful members accept and expect that power and decision-making are concentrated in the hands of few people often resulting in more autocratic leadership. Power is more concentrated in a few individuals. The people in power are much more at a very high distance from the people who don't have power. The distance is very long. So that's called high power distance cultures. There is also a higher acceptance of the hierarchy, and hierarchy is much higher in these countries.

Hofstede found high power distance cultures include Malaysia and Slovakia. When he collected data at that time, he found these two countries had very high power distances. So power is concentrated in only a few people, and there is a much less equitable distribution of power. This is one dimension where countries can differ in terms of cultural or national character. Some are low power distance cultures or countries, and some are high power distance cultures or countries.

The second dimension is individualism versus collectivism. Some cultures are individualistic, and some cultures are collectivist. So individualistic cultures are those that prioritize personal freedom, independence, and self-reliance. They emphasize personal achievement and goals over group or societal expectations.

The individual focus is more in those cultures where people are more oriented towards their freedom, achievement, independence, self-reliance, and autonomy, and people kind of focus in those countries and cultures on their aspects of life. They'll focus less on what is going on in the collective or the community sense is less. Hofstede found examples of individualistic culture in are USA, UK, and Australia where individual rights and personal success are highly valued. These are the countries where people are more focused on their own lives, independence, achievements, and so on.

Sense of community is less in this culture or at least this is what he found. On the other hand, collectivist culture, a culture with collectivist characteristics is just the opposite of individualistic. This culture prioritizes the interests of a group over those of individuals. The focus is more on group living, communal harmony, and so on. They emphasize harmony, cooperation, collective goals, and so on.

In this culture, individuals are closely integrated into strong, cohesive groups and may include family, extended family, and social groups. The social aspects, the interconnection between people, communal living, communal harmony, and those kinds of things are given much more importance or play a more important role. Your life may be more oriented what is your connection with other people, what is your relationship with other people, how other people perceive you, and so on. The sense of collectiveness is much stronger in those cultures. Hofstede found collectivist cultures include countries like Latin American cultures where families and community ties are strong. Group consensus and cooperation are valued much more than individual desires and so on. The sense of collectivism is stronger here. In some countries, some cultures may differ in the sense of individualism and collectivism.

Cultures can also differ in the traits of masculinity and femininity. Masculine cultures are those cultures where there is a strong emphasis on achievement, success, and material rewards. These are masculine cultures. Competition and assertiveness are highly valued. Societal roles often reflect this orientation. People collectively focus on achievement, success, material rewards, competition, and assertiveness. These are valued things in masculine cultures. Individuals are expected to be ambitious and strive for personal goals. So according to Hofstede, Masculine cultures include countries like Japan, where competitiveness, career, and success are highly prized. According to Hofstede, at that time when he collected data, he found Japan is a highly masculine culture. Feminine cultures include cultures that emphasize quality of life, relationships, caring for others, cooperation, modesty, and compassion, valuing these over assertiveness and material success. These are cooperation, compassion, caring, and

relationships. Those aspects play a more important role in these cultures, feminist culture, and feminine culture. Individuals prioritize the well-being of others and seek harmony in relationships. According to Hofstede, feminine cultures include countries like Sweden.

He found Sweden to be a country where social welfare, equality, and quality of life are given a lot of importance. Some cultures are feminine cultures, and some cultures are masculine.

The next trait of cultural differences is uncertainty avoidance. Some cultures are high on uncertainty avoidance, and some cultures are low on uncertainty avoidance. What are the characteristics here? Countries with high uncertainty avoidance are cultures with high uncertainty avoidance. There is a strong desire to minimize uncertainty and ambiguity through strict rules, laws, and structured societal norms. These are the cultures that avoid uncertainties. They don't want anything to be uncertain. They try to make everything certain by removing ambiguities through strict rules, laws, structured societal norms, and so on. So much more structured and rule-regulated societies and so on. This culture often relies on traditions, religious beliefs, and established practices to provide a sense of security and predictability in life. So much more rigorous sense of traditions, religious beliefs, and established practices. All these things provide a sense of certainty and security in life. Examples, according to Hofstede, of countries with high uncertainty avoidance are again here Japan, Latin America, and Mediterranean cultures. Some of these countries in those regions are high on uncertainty avoidance. They want very structured and rule-regulated societies. Countries with low uncertainty avoidance are just the opposite of high uncertainty avoidance. These cultures are low on uncertainty avoidance. They are open to changes and risk-taking. They are not so particular about structure, stability, and very rule-regulated things. They are more open to changes. They take many more risks. Taking risks means you are inviting more uncertainties in life. These are the cultures that are more tolerant toward risk-taking. They tend to have fewer rules and regulations. Governing social behavior and more accepting of diverse opinions and lifestyles, more openness, fewer rules, and so on. Individuals in this culture may be more comfortable with ambiguity and often more innovative and adaptable to new situations. They are more open to changes, more adaptable, and more innovative because they are not very structured in any way.

They can mold themselves in various ways. So, according to Hofstede, cultures with low uncertainty avoidance include many of these Scandinavian countries and Anglo-Saxon cultures like the USA, UK, and so on. These are countries with low uncertainty avoidance. The last one is long-term versus short-term orientation.

Cultures may differ in terms of time orientation. So, this is about to what extent a culture is future-oriented and to what extent they are present-oriented. Long-term orientation is about the long-term focus of a culture. Cultures with a long-term orientation prioritize future rewards over immediate gains. They focus more on long-term goals that are important for their countries and cultures. More future-oriented views. The values of persistence, and perseverance, and about emphasizing the importance of planning for the future, investing in education, and preparing for long-term success. More long-term focus is there, focusing more on the future and so on. So, according to Hofstede, examples of cultures with long-term orientation include China, Japan, and many other Asian cultures where traditions and long-range goals are highly valued. So, this is one aspect of it where some cultures are more oriented toward future goals and so on.

On the other hand, short-term-oriented cultures focus more on immediate gratification and fulfillment of present needs. They value stability, respect for tradition, and fulfilling social obligations in the short term. These cultures may prioritize consumerism, quick results, and keeping up with current trends. These are more like short-term, immediate, present-oriented focuses. It is more of a relative thing; that does not mean they do not focus on the future. They are more focused on the behaviors and patterns of the people of those cultures, which are more present-oriented and immediately gratifying for them, and so on.

What is the current trend and focusing on that. Examples of those short-term oriented cultures are most of these Western countries, the US and the UK, where the emphasis is more on immediate results and enjoying the present moment. If you see the people of those countries, they are more of a short-term orientation. On the other hand, most of the Asian cultures are long-term-oriented cultures. So, these are some of his findings, and he found that cultures could be distinguished.

Based on all these dimensions, some cultures may be high, or low on certain dimensions, and so on. Hofstede developed a value survey module or a questionnaire—a tool that was developed to measure cultures on these five dimensions: power distance, individualism, masculinity, femininity, uncertainty, and long-term or short-term orientation. Based on that, he measured countries or peoples in this orientation. And that is still available, and one can use that to understand cultures.

However, Hofstede's research has also been criticized because no theory is perfect, and no research is perfect. So, many researchers have criticized some of his concepts and ideas. One is that he proposed a static nature of culture. Which means the critics argue that culture is not so fixed. Like, you are saying one country is like this. So, cultures may not be so fixed. Most of these cultures are evolving and have a dynamic nature. There is constant change, Making a lot of findings. It may be potentially outdated over time.

So maybe at that time when he collected data. Those characteristics were there in certain countries. But things may change afterward. Because the people, the countries, and the dimensions are all more dynamic and keep changing. Some authors like Mead noted that Hofstede's dimensions are only a snapshot of a particular time. And may not accurately reflect cultural changes that occur with the passage of time. It is more of a reflection of a particular time, showing how societies and cultures are. Another criticism is that Hofstede's research lacks cultural sensitivity, categorizing large regions like East Africa or South Africa as single cultural entities, disregarding the diversity of cultures within those regions because when talking about the culture of a very large group, it is very problematic in many cases.

These are not like one group. There may be much diversity within those regions, those big nations. Just generalizing a few characteristics of a large group may not always be accurate. This oversimplification can lead to misrepresentation of cultural values and behaviors. This is another criticism.

The third one is that researchers also find out that there are sampling issues and biases in Hofstede's research. Critics like Robinson argue that Hofstede's samples are not representative of a broad population or culture. He collected data primarily from employees of IBM and other multinational corporations as well as professionals like students and airline pilots. These are very highly educated people in very high-level organized jobs. He collected data only from this section of society. They may not be representative of the whole culture. These groups tend to have a higher socio-economic status and are influenced by Western organizational cultures, potentially biasing the results.

There is also another possibility that the sample from which he collected data may not be representative of the whole culture where he is generalizing. Another criticism is that there can be methodological limitations, like Hofstede's methodology relying heavily on self-report questionnaires and data assessing cultural dimensions which may have its limitations when people report certain aspects of their cultures. Some argue that relying only on the attitudes and perceptions of people may not capture the actual complexities of the cultures of that particular society, nation, or region. Many other measurements should be included like behavioral

measures, qualitative methods, etc. Many other ways of collecting data could enhance the validity and so on, which was not there. So, these are some of the limitations of Hofstede's study, which limits possibly some of the conclusions that he derived. But despite all these limitations or criticisms, Hofstede's Terminology in terms of categories of cultures and nations still plays a very important role in understanding cultures.

Now at the end, we will be talking about some differences with the concept of self-construction. How do you construct your self-ideas and concept of self? That may also differ from culture to culture. This sense of self-construction could be connected to the concept of personality.
We will be just briefly talking about that. How we define ourselves, is self-construal. Our self-concept is a core aspect of personality and determining factors in behavior. It can also shape our personality and influence our personality. This self-construal is how people define themselves about others. Typically, this concept is used to define ourselves in the context of our relationship with other people. This self-construal could be in the context of relationships with others, it could be independent self-construal or interdependent self-construal. How do you define yourself? Independently of others or in relation to others? Then it is interdependent. This concept of self-construal differs from culture to culture. Research has shown that aspects of self-concept can differ substantially from one culture to another. In particular, the extent to which the self is defined independently of others or interdependently with others varies across different cultures. So, Markus and Kitayama did a lot of research in this particular context of self-construal. They found cultures differed in this concept of self-construal.

How do you define yourself in relation to other people? It differs from culture to culture. There is variation in culture regarding self-construal. They proposed this framework to highlight cultural variability in self-construal in terms of understanding the concept of self in different cultures. So, according to Markus and Kitayama, each individual faces two primary cultural tasks. One is communion, collectivism, or interdependence. The task is how individuals affiliate with and engage with their larger social groups. How they connect, how they define themselves in relationship to other people in their society. It encompasses relationships with others, adherence to group norms, and a sense of belongingness and embeddedness within the community. To what extent do people define in the context of other people in terms of group norms, in terms of what extent do they feel a sense of belonging to their society or community or they feel alienated or not.

So, a sense of Interdependence is about that. To what extent do you define yourself in connection with other people, in terms of relationships with other people. To what extent do you accept the group norms. You feel a sense of belongingness.

So that's interdependence. Agency individualism or independence is about, this is the task to pertain individuals, and how they differentiate themselves from others. It includes the development and expression of unique abilities, personal motivations, and personality traits that distinguish individuals from other groups. To what extent do you also define yourself as independent from others in terms of your own personal characteristics, personal motivation, personal life, personal unique abilities, and so on. So culture may differ in terms of this self-construction.

One is interdependent; one is independent. Markus and Kitayama argued that these two cultural tasks vary significantly in different cultures. Some cultures lean more toward interdependent orientation, while others lean more toward independent orientation. Some cultures emphasize interdependence and communal values. They see themselves as more connected to their relationships with other people in the community.

Individuals derive their sense of self from their roles and relationships within the group. In contrast, other cultures prioritize independence and individualistic values, where autonomy and uniqueness are emphasized in self-definition. So, this is how these two dimensions differ. Markus and Kitayama found that most Western individualistic cultures, like Canada and the UK, are individualistically oriented. They emphasize independence and independent self-construction.

Here, individuals prioritize personal goals, autonomy, and uniqueness. Most people in those cultures define themselves more independently. In contrast, many non-Western collectivist cultures, such as Japan and China, emphasize interdependence and interdependent self-construction. In these cultures, the focus shifts to group harmony, social roles, and interconnectedness. In those cultures, people define themselves more by their relationships with others in their community and society. More like what their social roles are, and how much importance they give to group harmony or interconnectedness with people. This is how they define themselves more. Some cultures are more individualistic, and more independent cultures. Some are more interdependent or collectivist cultures in that sense. The difference is how they define themselves. For example, in one study done by Markus and Kitayama, they compared how Japanese and European students describe themselves using different attributes. They asked students from two different cultures—Japanese students and European students—and tried to see how they define themselves. What kind of attributes or characteristics do they

mention when asked to define themselves. They found that a significant cultural difference existed in their self-descriptions. More specifically, they found that 84% of Japanese students described themselves as ordinary. In the same context, only 18% of American students used this term. So, more Japanese people define themselves as ordinary individuals. But very few individuals from American culture—only 18%—define themselves using this term. On the other hand, they found that about 96% of American students described themselves as special, whereas only 55% of Japanese students used this term to describe themselves. So, the kind of terms used by people in different cultures differed here very specifically.

So, this finding clearly highlights the contrasting cultural norms in self-construction—how the self is defined. Japanese culture emphasizes humility, modesty, and fitting in with the group. Hence, a higher percentage of students describe themselves as ordinary because they see more of a group identity rather than themselves as somebody special. So, they use 'ordinary' more as a description.

In contrast, American culture tends to emphasize individuality, uniqueness, and standing out from the crowd. This is reflected in the higher percentage of students describing themselves as special because that is what is emphasized in their culture. They describe themselves more with these terms. These are the findings of different terminology used by European Americans and Japanese students.

So, there is a clear difference in terms of the highest percentages used for different terms. So, it is a very clear, sharp difference—for example, if you see Japanese students, they use more emotion-related terms, with only 84%. They used 'ordinary' as a term, and if you look here, 96% say it is 'special'. So, there are certain differences found, which show a very clear cultural difference. In summary, the research provides empirical support or evidence that

Individuals in different cultures may have different self-concepts because of the cultural environment. This is how we define ourselves very differently based on what kind of cultural environment we are exposed to. These self-concepts are typically transmitted from parents to teachers to children within the cultural context. Some critics, like Matsumoto and others, also argue that the Western self-constitution being strictly independent and the Asian self-constitution being strictly interdependent may be problematic because, again, the problem is, they say the cultural difference in self-construction is more a matter of degree than actual differences.

So, in terms of degrees, certain cultures may lean more toward interdependent self-construction, and some toward more independent construction. They may not be clear-cut.

Such dichotomies may not be a very feasible or good way to depict them. Rather, it is more a matter of degree difference. Some criticism exists in that regard.

Moreover, studies have found that individuals may alter their self-concept when they move to a new culture. So, the self-construal may not be so fixed. When they go to another culture, they change their description of self-construal when they move to new cultures. Gradually aligning more with the norms and values of the new environment over time. Furthermore, within any society, certain individuals may exhibit self-concepts and identities that diverge significantly from those of the broader population. Those individual exceptions will always be there. When we talk about one culture, everybody may not be the same. There may be people in the culture whom most people may describe in a certain way, but many exceptions who describe themselves differently from the majority of the people. This variability underscores the dynamic nature of self-concept.

Self-concept may be very dynamic. A lot of these theories, the problem sometimes happens when you take those identities and ideas and are very fixed because things may change. With that understanding obviously, all these concepts can be useful. But one should understand that cultures, people's identities, and people's self-conceptions all can change because of their dynamic nature. These are some of the ideas that are related to how culture can be connected to the concept of personality.

So, with this, I will stop here. Thank you.