

Introduction to cross-cultural psychology essay sample

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Culture is the structure of one's way of life and behavior, meaning one's beliefs, values, traditions, and behaviors (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013). As there are many cultures throughout the world and each one is unique in their ways of living and understanding, it is important to conduct research to learn and understand these various cultures. Cross-cultural psychology is a subfield in psychology where similarities and differences between cultures are studied to accomplish a better understanding of various cultures, as well as the people within those cultures. The purpose of this paper is to provide a definition and an example of cultural and cross-cultural psychology utilizing a case study, to analyze the relationship between cultural and cross-cultural psychology. The paper will discuss the methodology associated with cross-cultural research; discuss how the case study helps to better understand how ethnicity, race, and worldviews are separate yet related concepts as well as to discuss how enculturation may play a role in the case study. The chosen study of this paper is: SELF-EXPRESSION THROUGH RHYTHM AND MELODY.

Overview of the case study

Music has a way of moving people. Every culture has its own sounds. Music and dance express emotion, pass on knowledge, and present moral values and sexual identity. The Masai Tribe sings together where each member has their place and voice. The tribe's music tells stories of the tribes past as well as their present (Films on Demand, 2004). Music keeps their memories and the visions they have of the world. Music has a spiritual influence on the tribe and brings them closer to those they have loved and lost as well as those present. Fisherman from the Coast of Mauritania use music to keep in rhythm in order to work as a team and get the job done. Another culture

uses music and dance as a mating ritual. This study proves that music is extremely important to every culture and is used in various ways. Music is universal to the world. Relationship between Cultural and Cross-cultural Psychology

Cultural psychology focuses on the links between the psychology of a person living within a culture and the culture itself, whereas, cross-cultural psychology seeks to understand and look at psychological diversity and the reasons for diversity among people and cultures (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013).

Music from various cultures has many different meanings which show the cross-cultural diversity of the meanings behind each cultures music and rhythms. While music is the universal link between cultures, its meanings, importance, and styles are extremely different. Cross-cultural psychology focuses on the similarities as well as differences that music has on many cultures. Music, like cross-cultural psychology, is not culture-specific, it is universal as it seeks to understand as well as learn the limitations of each culture. American music, although extremely different in its form from the Masai Tribe music, it is similar in its way of affecting people. Methodology Associated with Cross-cultural Research

Cross-cultural research tests the cultural parameters of psychological knowledge. It involves research on human behavior that compares psychological processes between two or more cultures (Karasz & Singelis, 2009). Cultural psychologists have their own vocabulary for talking about universal and culture-specific psychological processes such as etics and emics. Etics are processes that are universal with different cultures;

whereas, emics are processes that are different across cultures or culture-specific processes (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013). Cultural research in the United States is emic; however, emic studies are cross-cultural when they take into account other cultures. Researchers must ensure that one culture can be applied to other cultures before they can establish a basis for theoretical comparisons. Music can be applied to many cultures, with each having their own distinct meanings. Understanding how ethnicity, race, and worldviews are separate yet related concepts in the world of music Music is universal; it has a way of bringing all ethnicities, races, and worldviews together. Music tells the stories of every culture, providing a look into the lives of others.

Music is in all aspects of life. Music is played at funerals, weddings, and gatherings. Music connects the world to the sacred world as well (Films on Demand, 2004). Many rituals include some type of music. Some cultures such as the fishermen from the Coast of Mauritania believe the song they sing in unison gives them the strength to pull in their nets. Music is a social phenomenon as it expresses people's emotions, thoughts and feelings. It can bring sadness, joy, and excitement. Music reminds one where they have been or where they are going. While there are many cultures, countries, religions, and people that differ greatly, a common thread they all share is the music. Music does not discriminate against any ethnicity, race or worldview. Enculturation

Enculturation is a process in which one learns the traditional ways of the culture and assimilates its practices and values. Therefore, as music is

passed from one generation to another, one learns the ways in which music is used in their particular culture. Every culture has a custom that revolve around music. The enculturation of music tells the history of people or countries which is passed from one generation to the next. It tells the generations how things should be, a sort of guidebook to their way of life. As the Masai Tribe performs, they are telling the next generation the ways of the tribe, showing them their memories of the past, as well as their vision for the future. The enculturation of music instills cultural morals and values in its people as well as to reinforce those morals and values in its people.

Conclusion

Western (American) culture music tells the stories of the past, present, and where we would like to be in the future. Eastern countries utilize music in more flamboyant ritualistic ways than Western culture, but the meanings of music remain the same. Music shows us that although there are many cultures in the world; music is a common thread that binds cultures and its people together. Cross-cultural research allows us to compare one way of life with another, to see the similarities and differences. Music is universal and does not differentiate ethnicities, race, cultures, or worldviews. If music were a person, it would want everyone to come together to enjoy and learn from it regardless of their differences.

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