

The german american ethnicity

Psychology



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Ethni identifies a person's orientation to a social group that has defined characteristics. Such characteristics may be cultural or regional. The United States is an ethnically diverse society with members of different races from around the world. One of the major factors to this diversity is the wave of immigration, both ancient and contemporary. Each of the ethnic groups however has its identifiable characteristics to form the basis of diversity. This paper explores my cultural heritage, of the German American ethnic group, background of my family of origin, application of the ethnicity's heritage in my family and the heritage's impacts on my life.

Introduction Ethnicity refers to a social construct that identifies a group of people with common characteristics. Such characteristics may include language, religion, physical appearance, and behavior. In this paper, I explore the German American ethnic group to which I belong.

The German American ethnicity History The initial wave of German immigration to the United States is reported to have occurred in the seventeenth century. This was followed by an increasing trend and by the twentieth century, German Americans were one of the largest groups among foreign Americans. The initial German immigration into the United States was a result of a revolution against the then German leaders. The immigrants however exhibited diverse characteristics because German societies existed as autonomous groups each with its cultural practices. The immigration was however followed by assimilation of the German population into the English culture, a process that washed away some of the native German traditions. While initial assimilation, facilitated by the fear that the English had of the Germans, was through intermarriages, there are reported cases of forced assimilation. Later immigration from Germany into the United States is however attributed to the quest for

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education and more liberalized labor markets (McGoldrick, Giordano and Preto, 2005). Culture German culture is basically hierarchical and is known as middle hierarchical culture. It identifies social ranks upon which respect is observed. The hierarchy then defines people's behavior in the society and in social interactions with other members of the society. The German culture also highly regards family as a social structure. They are also religious conscious with Christianity as the practiced faith. This identifies the Christmas as a major religious festival. In social interactions, Germans prefer brief handshakes and to be introduced by another party in a new social environment. German Americans have however been significantly assimilated into the native education system though some of its cultural values has also been adopted by other ethnic groups (McGoldrick, et al, 2005). Germany, as a nation, is however known for its classical music, which is a traditional type of music. The national culture promotes music and every individual feels encouraged to participate in music and musical competition (McGoldrick, et al, 2005). In spite of the identified family values among German Americans, the German national culture identifies individualism. Social interactions and decisions are primarily determined at individual levels rather than at group levels. The country's culture also identifies high performance from members of the society. Performance attitude is one of the major features of the country though it is not the best globally. A comparative consideration between performance orientation and other cultural orientations within the German society however identifies the society's highest focus on performance. National culture also has high level of uncertainty. In order to manage the uncertainties, the society is structured with procedures and rules that governs practices towards certainty. The

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nationals are also assertive in their interactions and adapt direct confrontations in resolving issues. The assertive nature also communicates normalcy of conflicts in the German society (Puffer, 2004). Characteristics

Cuisine: One of the defining characteristics of German Americans is the cuisine meat and potatoes though their meals are not limited to these. Their breakfast includes rolls, cheese, boiled eggs, and tea. Their main meal is lunch, which consists of around seven courses. Their dinner consist of a lighter meal and may include sausages. **Festivals:** The observed festivals are lively and have energetic exposure. They revolve around family and food. An example is Oktoberfest, which can attract 7 million people who converge to have fun and drink German beer. They do have religion celebrations that are held every year. **Games:** Sports is another integral element of the German culture and many Germans engages in different sporting activities though registered sport club. **Assessment of family background and validity of the general characteristics** My family originated from Bremen, Germany, around the Rhine River. Some of the generalized characteristics are true to my own family construct because there is some relationship between my family and family of origin background. Others do not however apply completely. My family for example strongly holds values of family construct as a social set up as well as religious practices. The other aspects are however either weakly held or completely disregarded by my family. Two factors have contributed to the deviation from the general characteristics. My family's origin, Bremen, is a metropolitan, and therefore inhabits diversified cultures. This could have been a factor towards assimilation of specific practices. Assimilation in the American environment is also a factor. Some of the characteristics are also not true to my family because Germany has

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diversified traditional practices and some of them are not applicable to my native community (McAdoo, 1999). Impacts of the characteristics and values on my personal life The applicable values and rules, social structure based on family, and religion, have significant impacts on my life. Since my family holds them, I have acculturated them and they define my character. Some of the identified impacts of are good morals, integrity, and respect (Acock and Clair, 1986). Reference Acock, A. & Clair, J. (1986): The influence of the family: a review and annotated bibliography of socialization, ethnicity, and delinquency, 1975-1986. New York: Garland. McAdoo, H. (1999). Family ethnicity: Strength in diversity. Thousand Oaks, Calif [u. a.: Sage Publications. McGoldrick,, M., Pearce, J., & Giordano, J. (2005). ETHNICITY & FAMILY THERAPY . New York: Guilford Press. Puffer, S. (2004). International management: Insights from fiction and practice. New York, NY: M. E. Sharpe.