

# Cross Cultural Psychology: Introduction

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## LEARNING GOALS

- Be more aware of how cultural factors influence human behavior
- Understand how psychological theories and practices in different cultures
- Understand cross-cultural research methods

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## Course Outline

- Introduction
- Cross-Cultural research methods
- Theories of culture
- Culture and:
  - Development
  - Cognition/Intelligence
  - Emotion and Motivation
  - Gender and Social Interactions
- Intercultural Relations
- Conclusion

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## Psychology

- **Psychology:** Scientific study of human behavior and mental functions
  - **Scientific Study:** Systematic, objective methods of observing behavior and mental functioning
  - **Behavior:** Activity that can be observed, recorded, and measured by researchers
  - **Mental Functions:** Individuals' thoughts, feelings, and emotions

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## Differentiating Psychology

- **Psychology:** Study of behavior and mental processes
  - Focus is on the individual
- **Sociology:** The study of society
  - Focus is on a social group
- **Anthropology:** The study of humanity and culture
  - Focus is on the cultural group
- **Needs Assessment:** Studies that determine and address gaps between current conditions and desired conditions

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## Differentiating Psychology

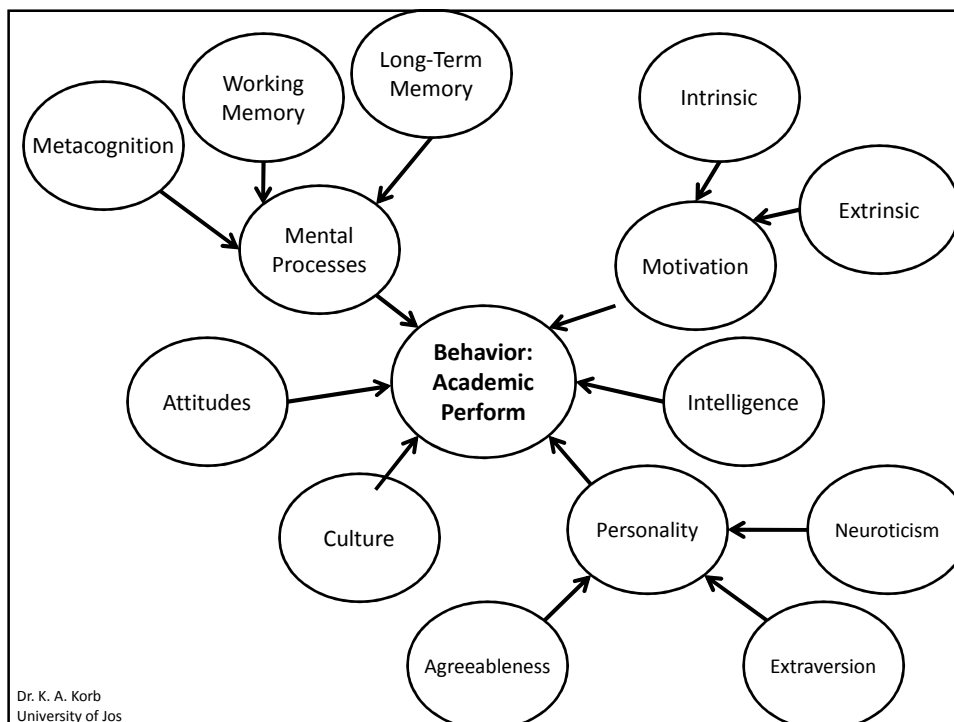
- How does the UBE influence enrollment of girls in primary schools?
- How does motivation affect academic performance?
- What do rural women believe will help improve their literacy skills?
- How do elders train young men in the Zulu tribe?
- What is the influence of computerized instruction on maths achievement?

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## Psychology

- **Purpose of Psychology:** Understand, predict, and control individual behavior
- To this end, psychologists develop hypothetical constructs (variables) that explain patterns of performance in human behavior

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## Observing Human Behavior

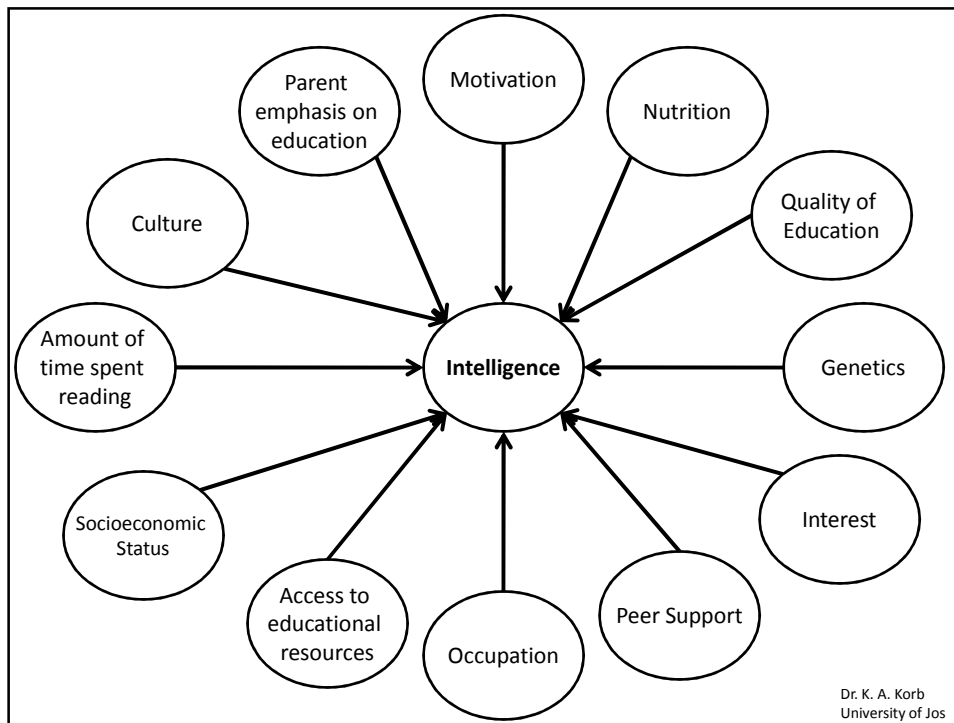
- Typical types of measurement:
  - Frequency of behaviors
  - Response time
  - Performance on cognitive tasks
  - Self-report on questionnaires

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## Psychology

- **Deterministic:** One variable completely *determines* another
  - Guarantee
- **Probabilistic:** One variable increases the *probability* of another
- **Psychology is probabilistic.**
  - Reasons why psychology is probabilistic:
    - Many variables influence each outcome
    - Free will

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## Foundation of Cross-Cultural Psychology

- Most current psychological theories were developed from a Western perspective.
- Most Western psychologists believe these theories are **universally valid** in explaining human behavior.
- Cross-cultural psychology :
  - Examines the influence of culture on human behavior
    - How does culture influence human thought and behavior?
  - Examines psychological topics from a multicultural perspective
    - How do individuals from different cultures differ in their typical thought and behavior?

## Cross-Cultural Psychology

(Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002)

- Cross-cultural psychology is the study of:
  - Similarities and differences in psychological variables among various cultural groups
  - Relationships between psychological variables and cultural, ecological, and biological variables
  - Ongoing changes in psychological, cultural, ecological, and biological variables

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## Goals of Cross-Cultural Psychology

- Test the generality of psychological theories
- Discover cultural and psychological theories in non-Western cultures
- Integrate results of psychological theories from across the world to develop a **universal psychology** that applies to a broad range of cultures

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## Perspectives in Cross-Cultural Psychology

- **Absolutism:** All psychological variables are the same in all cultures
  - Assess constructs using the same methods and instruments across cultures
- **Relativism:** All psychological variables are culturally influenced
  - No comparisons can be made between cultures
- **Universalism:** All psychological variables are common between cultures but culture influences the development and manifestation of psychological variables
  - Comparisons can be made cautiously, but with modifications to methods and instruments to make them culturally meaningful.

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## Perspectives in Cross-Cultural Psychology

1. Every tribe in Nigeria has a different way of raising children.
2. Nigerians have better social skills than Americans.
3. Chinese mothers and Dutch mothers show affection to their children differently.
4. Unschooling children demonstrate their intelligence differently than schooled children.
5. The Swiss keep time better than Nigerians.
6. Nigerians and Americans have completely different conceptions of marriage.

## Perspectives in Cross-Cultural Psychology (Berry et al., 2002)

	<b>Absolutist</b>	<b>Universalist</b>	<b>Relativist</b>
Definition of psychological variables are the same across cultures	Yes	Difficult but possible	No
How should variables be measured?	Same in all cultures (Standardized)	Adapt instruments within each culture	Develop different instruments for each culture
Making comparisons between culture	Straight-forward, Evaluative	Controlled, Non-evaluative	Usually avoided, Non-evaluative

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## Perspectives in Cross-Cultural Psychology

- Definition of variables:
  - **On time:** Being settled and prepared for an activity at the exact second it should start
  - **Intelligence:** The ability to solve abstract problems
- Measuring variables
  - **Father's Warmth:** Degree to which a father shows his children that he cares for them:
    - My father accepts me and likes me as I am.
    - My father clearly conveys his love for me.
    - My father makes me feel very special.
    - My father is typically happy to see me.

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## Contributions of Cross-Cultural Research to Psychology

- **Knowledge:** Identifying similarities and differences of behavior and mental functioning have added to the body of psychological knowledge
- **Critical Thinking:** Psychological findings are now analyzed to determine whether similar results will be found in different cultures

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## Historical Progression of Cross-Cultural Research

- **Beginning:** Document differences between cultures
- **Currently:** Determine the cultural variables that produce differences in behavior and mental functioning
  - Culture is replaced with specific, measurable psychological variables hypothesized to account for cultural differences
- **Future:** Universal theories of psychological processes

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## Cross-Cultural Psychology in Nigeria

- Questions to Ask:
  - What psychological theories are **not** relevant to the Nigerian context?
  - What psychological variables should be studied that are unique to the Nigerian context?
  - What are practical problems in Nigerian society that culturally-relevant psychological research can address?

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## Revision

- What is the purpose of cross-cultural research?
- What are the different perspectives that are taken in cross-cultural psychology?
- What contributions have cross-cultural research made to the field of psychology?

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