

Critical Review of Cultural Ethos, Well-being and Psychological Health Measures

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the review of existent literature has been carried to study the cultural ethos influences wellbeing. Cultural ethos is understood as a spiritual, religious, social and an existential wellbeing. Cultural ethos plays a crucial role in shaping the individual's health and wellbeing. Further cultural ethos highlights the importance of cultural awareness and responsiveness towards wellbeing and holistic health. The studies on cultural ethos, indicates that it influences well-being through various mechanisms. In addition, cultural ethos promotes self-awareness, recognizing how culture shapes one's identity, positively impacts well-being by enhancing cultural identification. In other words, cultural ethos plays a crucial role in family dynamics, daily lifestyle and mental health. These cultural factors together shape emotions, well-being, and health outcomes. Comprehending and incorporating cultural beliefs and practices into support systems and interventions is crucial for promoting well-being across diverse cultural contexts. The clarity of cultural identity, self-esteem, lifestyle consistently may influence well-being. In addition, by the clarity of self-concept promotes cultural identity and consequently offers psychological benefits for individuals to deal with cultural issues related to well-being. Being self-aware and having a clear sense of identity have been associated with higher self-esteem and better psychological well-being. A strong cultural identity offers individuals a clear model to help them navigate the processes needed to build a solid personal identity, which in turn supports the development of self-esteem and well-being. Research suggests a significant positive relationship between cultural engagement and psychological well-being, particularly among Indigenous adolescents. As the studies revealed that cultural ethos is a multi-dimensional factor that directly or indirectly influences the well-being. As the present study proposed to review the measures that are relevant to measure the well-being in the context of the factors of cultural ethos. The paper will mark the direction of the future research in the context of the cultural ethos by incorporation and administering the appropriate measures for well-being. The implication of the research will set the new direction in the realm of cultural ethos and well-being for holistic health.

Keywords: *Cultural Ethos, Well-being, Psychological Health Measures*

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This research paper focuses on the set of the stated objectives to understand the essence of cultural ethos that incorporates the cultural factors which promotes psychological health. There are studies which supports the significance of cultural ethos that encompasses the factors such as family dynamics, spirituality, lifestyle, mental and holistic health which needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way to take into the cognigence by the practitioners. The paper presents the two major aspects: firstly, the diagnosis of the life issues and problems by the help of the psychological measures and secondly, an opportunity to crosscheck and balance the psychosocial factors while prescribing the interventions. Finally, this paper will help the practitioners to incorporate cultural ethos and its related dimensions for the future research endeavours as a guiding tool for their better research areas.

Cultural ethos relates to the attitudes, shared beliefs, characteristic spirit, encompasses the core values and practices that influences the development of a particular culture or a society. It encompasses the influence on the collective mindset, beliefs, norms, ethics and social behaviours that forms the individual identity which helps to cultivate, perceive and communicate with the world, as understanding cultural ethos is way more important in order to deal with effective cross-cultural communication and social integration in whichever domain the individual faces. Shweder and LeVine (1984) explored cultural psychology, examining how cultural practices shape human development and behaviour. The cultural ethos provides a framework that works as a lens that serves as one's place in the world and the meaning of life. This can offer a sense of purpose and direction, contributing positively to mental health, effective daily lifestyle, well-being, personal conduct, social norms and system of governance.

Cultural ethos is to understand, appreciate, and effectively interact with people coming from different cultures practices and backgrounds. It reorganises cultural differences, understanding their impact on behaviour and communication, and adapting one's approach to be adaptive, respectful and effective in cultural settings.

Cultural ethos has its significant relationship with psychological health measures and to understand the relationship between cultural ethos, mental health and social environment or context which is crucial for developing the culturally sensitive. In which individuals live and interact in daily life. Cultural ethos and its impact on mental health has become an increasingly important issue in a globalised world where the interactions between cultures continue to grow exponentially. Cultural ethos structures how mental health and illness are defined and understood. Some cultures may view certain mental health conditions as spiritual issues, while others see them as medical problems. For example, Kleinman (1988) demonstrated how cultural beliefs influence the manifestation and interpretation of depression across different societies. It can be sum-up that cultural ethos and psychological well-being provide a framework that enables to expand holistic health and well-being.

As aforementioned, illustrated in the review that the cultural ethos has a significance contribution in promoting the psychological health. In this context the following set of objectives have been stated.

Objective of the Study

The following set of objectives have been framed to acknowledge the role of the psychosocial factors of cultural ethos in exploring wellbeing and to prescribe the suitable psychological health measures:

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- To identify the psychosocial factors of cultural ethos that contribute in the process of health and well-being.
- To understand the significance of psychosocial factors of cultural ethos with the review of the reviews.
- To identify the suitable psychological tools which measures the psychosocial factors of the cultural ethos.
- To derive suggestions from the content based on the findings from study review of reviews for the practitioners.

In the following section, the conceptual understanding of cultural ethos is being describes in various dimensions such as psychological well-being, mental health, family and well-being, values and spiritual well-being. This section would also highlight the suitable psychological measures to understand the role of cultural ethos with respect to aforementioned dimensions.

Cultural Ethos and Psychological Well-being

In influence of cultural ethos, psychological wellbeing encompasses individual emotions, feelings, cognitive and social health that shares the values, beliefs, and norms within a society, that shapes the well-being of an individual and their coping with challenges that they face in the fulfilment of life. To understand the psychological well-being in relation to cultural ethos, psychological wellbeing scale (PWS) can be administered.

Cultural ethos explains the alternative approach to come up with best alternative solutions. Also, cultural ethos helps to identify how others think and how they respond to behavioural patterns as cultural ethos gives better understanding of people theoretically as well as practically. It also provides us with a framework and a medium to understand the differences and capitalize on them, not just tolerate or ignore them (Plum E, Achen B, Draeby I and Jensen I, 2007). An individual with high cultural ethos is able to learn to cope with psychological health (Deng and Gibson, 2008).

This can be sum-up with a notion that the behavioural pattern plays an important role in determining the psychological health with the help of the measure in the context of the cultural ethos.

Culture Ethos and Mental Health

Cultural ethos significantly impacts mental health, influencing perceptions of health and illness, treatment-seeking behaviours, and therapeutic relationships. Cultural ethos clearly impacts on different aspects of mental health including perceptions of health and illness, coping styles, gender and family support. Some other elements such as communication, the use of cultural and linguistic interpreters, the marginalisation of traditional positive resources in the community, and the nature of cultural competency and other cross-cultural training are essential considerations. (Gopalkrishnan & Babacan, 2015)

According to *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 1999), culture ethos relates to how people cope with everyday problems and more extreme types of adversity. Culture ethos helps in the process of coping, that suggest the ways that helps to cope with everyday problems and issues related to well-being and mental health (Gopalkrishnan & Babacan, 2015).

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Coping in terms of perceived emotional support is measured by brief COPE. This measure the emotional component of cultural ethos as a coping mechanism to deal with problems and issues related with psychological well-being (Carver, 1997).

In a study, the US Department of Health and Human Services noted differences in coping when reporting that in the Thailand culture it is been observed that Thai children use twice covert coping methods such as not talking back as compared to US children, whereas, overt methods such as screaming and running away are commonly used in us children. In addition, the study (Chun and Cronkite,2006) examined how cultural ethos influence coping strategies in response to stress. Further, the study reports that individuals from collectivist cultures were more likely to use social support and emotion-focused coping strategies, while those from individualistic cultures were more likely to use problem-solving and cognitive restructuring strategies. The study reveals that the cultural ethos of interdependence versus independence and their impact on emotional coping. The concept of ethos, or the fundamental character of a culture, can create strong emotional support when carefully nurtured (Kezar, 2020).

It can be summarised that cultural ethos strengthens the mental health which is dependent upon the perception of health and illness. Cultural ethos positively impacts the coping styles, gender and family support for mental health and well-being.

Culture Ethos, Family and Well-being

In family settings, maintaining a positive emotional atmosphere can be central to enacting health and well-being (Garro, 2011). Emotions are dynamic cultural phenomena that connect individuals to their communities, with positive emotions promoting harmony and health (Leu, 2011). The study reveals the findings that cultural ethos shapes the way emotions are expressed, with collectivist cultures valuing harmony and therefore encouraging the suppression of negative emotions. (Matsumoto and Fontaine, 2008).

It is also being widely acknowledged that cultural ethos provides essential frameworks for shaping socialization goals and parental ideas about constitutes effective child rearing (D'Andrade, 1984; Keller, Voelker & Yovsi, 2005; Keller, Yovsi, & Voelker, 2002; LeVine, 1988; Okagaki & Divecha, 1993; Super & Harkness, 1996).

In addition, in Vietnamese culture, family comes as a significant factor in consideration to cultural ethos and psychological mental health. As there are different roles that family plays in different cultural practices according to different cultural backgrounds.

In the same vein, cultural ethos significantly influences family dynamics and social structures across generation over generation. (H. Stein, 1978). The culture ethos in respect to family dynamics can be measured through Family Environment Scale (FES; Moos & Moos, 1994).

Cultural norms and values profoundly impact the formation and functioning of family systems within various social structures, emphasizing cultural ethos in family dynamics shaped by different cultural backgrounds (Yang & McDonnell, 2024). As familism represents the cultural ethos (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990; Laosa, 1980, 1982). Familism encompasses loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity within the members of the family. In this sense, the family is an extension of individual self (Cortés, 1995). This means that individual self is facilitated by the family which strengthens the psychological health

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which fosters cultural understanding of mental health (Anastasia Tarnovetskaia and Linda Hopper Cook, 2008)

In further studies (Steffens, Haslam, Schuh, Jetten, & van Dick, 2017, Kiang, Yip, Gonzales-Backen, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006, psychological well-being (Nguyen, Wong, Juang, & Park, 2015, Kiang, Yip, Gonzales-Backen, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006, Martinez & Dukes, 1997,) it is been observed that for better contribution in well-being cultural identification and behavioural authenticity is equally important. In other words, stronger identification with culture ethos and well-being brings the collective purpose in life (Martinez & Dukes, 1997), daily happiness (Kiang, Yip, Gonzales-Backen, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006), psychological well-being (Nguyen, Wong, Juang, & Park, 2015), and physical health (Steffens, Haslam, Schuh, Jetten, & van Dick, 2017)

In a nutshell, culture ethos plays an important role in shaping the family support and positive environment by fostering by influencing the formation and functioning of family systems which can be determined by the psychological measure.

Culture Ethos and Values

Individuals who are high on their cultural awareness develop important aspects and well-being and more contributing factors for their better self that could help them to meet the situational demands of daily life. The individual perception about his or her cultural identity is significant for personal identity, self-esteem and well-being (McAdams, 2001).

Cultural ethos in the form of values play a significant role in shaping behaviour, decision-making, wellbeing, daily lifestyle and psychological health which can be studied and measured through the culture value scale. Researches have explored various aspects of cultural values, including their historical roots, measurement methodologies, and implications, (Singh, 2010) emphasizes the importance of understanding Indian cultural values in international companies that are rapidly growing in India. Schwartz (2008) introduces a theory for measuring cultural values, identifying cultural regional types and scales of cultural values. Carter (1991) reviews empirical research on value-orientations and value importance, highlighting both inter-group and intra-group variations in cultural context. Jackson (2001) examines the relationship between cultural values, ethos and management ethics across 10 nations, focusing on the dimensions of collectivism-individualism and uncertainty avoidance in respect to understand the various dynamics for improving healthcare in diverse culture contexts (Brashers, 2001).

In brief, culture ethos plays a significant role in shaping values, norms, behaviour, decision-making, wellbeing, daily lifestyle and psychological health which can be inferred by the psychological measure.

Culture Ethos and Spiritual Well-being

Cultural ethos and spirituality are deeply interrelated. As cultural ethos includes, shared values, beliefs, and norms of a community that often shapes spiritual practices and beliefs. Cultural ethos in engagement with spiritual practices supports being generally happy, cheerful, peaceful most of the time, boosts good physical health and better lifestyle, and satisfies with the meaning and purposes of our lives.

This cultural ethos in terms of spiritual practices can be measured through spiritual well-being scale (SWBS). Cultural ethos and spiritual practices are positively related and plays an

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important part in shaping individuals' and communities' approaches to health, well-being, and overall life perspectives.

Cultural ethos and spirituality, influence and reinforce each other. Mutually, they shape spirituality as it is practiced and understood, in the context of the values, norms, and identity of a culture. Further, it is imperative to understand the relationship which is crucial for appreciating the diversity of spiritual expressions across cultures and the ways in which cultural contexts influence spiritual well-being. The interplay between cultural ethos and spirituality highlights the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in spiritual care, family and well-being. In a study, (**Hood and Spilka, 2009**) mentioned about cultural contexts which shapes spiritual experiences and the ways in which individuals interpret their spirituality in light of cultural expectations. It argues that cultural ethos can either support or hinder spiritual well-being, depending on how well an individual's beliefs align with cultural norms. **Hood, R. W., Jr., Hill, P. C., & Spilka, B., 2009**)

In a nutshell, mutually culture ethos and spirituality are interrelated including the norms, beliefs and values of a community collectively shape spiritual practices. This can be measured through psychological measure which includes the spiritual practices.

Suggestions

In this section, the obtained summary of the above-mentioned psychological well-being, mental health, family and well-being, values and spiritual well-being will be further interpreted along with the supporting evidences to delineate the suggestions for the practitioners to be considered at the time of diagnostic and prognostic aspects of the recovery process of the patient. These suggestions are described and explained as follows:

- In the context of the cultural ethos, the behavioural pattern plays an important role in determining the psychological health. This can be interpreted as a fact that the practitioners need to diagnose the psychological health by incorporating the behavioural pattern in the context of cultural ethos.
- Cultural ethos strengthens the mental health which is dependent upon the perception of health and illness. Cultural ethos positively impacts the coping styles, gender and family support for mental health and well-being. It is suggested in these circumstances, practitioners need to take the advantage of the perception drawn in the context of cultural ethos which strengthens the mental health.
- Culture ethos plays an important role in shaping the family support and positive environment by fostering by influencing the formation and functioning of family systems. Here, in this setting, the practitioner needs to dwell into the family aspects of the patients which inculcates the positive environment to harmonise the mental health and well-being.
- Culture ethos plays a significant role in shaping values, norms, behaviour, decision-making, wellbeing, daily lifestyle and psychological health. In this instance, the practitioners are suggested that values, norms, behaviour, decision-making, wellbeing, daily lifestyle need to be considered at the time of administering the therapeutic interventions.
- Mutually culture ethos and spirituality are interrelated including the norms, beliefs and values of a community collectively shape spiritual practices. This is a suggestive point for the practitioner that while designing and developing the therapeutic intervention for the patients the special consideration needs to be followed.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes with the following set of objectives that have been critically reviewed and analysed to derive the significant role of the psychosocial factors that facilitate cultural ethos. Further, an analogy between the psychosocial factors and well-being was established based on the critical analyses of literature review. In addition, the study prescribes the suitable psychological health measures. Consequently, the study helped to derive suggestions from the content based on the findings from study review of reviews for the practitioners.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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