

Cultural Worldview

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll discuss cultural worldview and the different ways in which it can be expressed.

The specific areas of focus include:

1. Recognizing Cultural Worldview
2. Cultural Dimensions

1. Recognizing Cultural Worldview

Culture influences all of us in the way we perceive the world and the way we behave. As you know, we can see expressions of culture all around us.

➦ **EXAMPLE** You can travel anywhere and see cultural expression through food, art, language, film, literature, or proverbs. These are all ways of expressing something about the people in that culture.

Culture is more than just external expression; it's also something internal. Culture is really assumptions, expectations, and viewpoints about the way things are and the way we believe they should be.

Thus, a cultural **worldview** is a set of assumptions that are common to everyone in a particular culture; this worldview governs behavior and decisions about how to interpret the world.

Every culture has a worldview, so it's important to recognize other worldviews instead of **stereotyping**, or applying traits or trends seen in a particular culture to everyone in that culture.

Unfortunately, it's way too common for people to stereotype, when in reality, every culture has both individuals who more or less adapt to the worldview, and individuals who express things or see things slightly differently.



TERMS TO KNOW

Worldview

The way a person interprets and makes decisions about his or her environment (world), including beliefs or assumptions about what is considered right or normal.

Stereotype

Forming a belief that certain general trends or traits of a group (culture) apply equally strongly to all individual members of that group; perceiving people as simplistic representatives of abstract cultural traits rather than as

2. Cultural Dimensions

There has been quite a bit of research done on ways of recognizing worldview, in particular by Geert Hofstede, Hall, and Kohls. These men have all been pioneers in looking at different cultures.

Hofstede, a Dutch researcher, was a pioneer in cross-cultural groups and organizations. He came up with a theory called cultural dimensions, which are certain elements that affect how people perceive things and behave.

Hall and Kohls also looked at values and cultural elements, of which there are many. Taking a look at these worldview elements can be helpful in understanding the components of different worldviews:

Worldview Element	Considerations
Power	How does the culture view power? Who should hold power? How evenly distributed should it be within the culture? What are the expectations and assumptions surrounding power?
Individual/Group Orientation	Is the worldview that an individual can rise to the top and be competitive? Is the worldview more about the grand collective?
Fate and Personal Responsibility	Is the worldview a fatalistic one that depends on destiny? Is the worldview one of personal responsibility?
Future and Past	Is the worldview focused on traditions and preserving a long history? Is it a worldview that thrives more on innovation and looking to the future?
Time Orientation	How does the culture use time? How about risk or ambiguity? Is the culture averse to risk? Is it open to experimentation?
Language	How does the culture express itself verbally and nonverbally? Is the communication very direct? Is it indirect?

These are just a few of the cultural dimensions, and we will be discussing them more in depth in upcoming lessons.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **recognizing cultural worldview** and avoiding stereotypes are important steps in terms of understanding others from different cultures. You now understand that there are a number of **cultural dimensions**, or elements, that are useful to look at in order to come to a broad comprehension of a particular culture's worldview. Having a general understanding of what a worldview is can be enormously helpful in communicating better and thus avoiding conflict. Good luck!



TERMS TO KNOW

Stereotype

Forming a belief that certain general trends or traits of a group (culture) apply equally strongly to all individual members of that group; perceiving people as simplistic representatives of abstract cultural traits rather than as individuals.

Worldview

The way a person interprets and makes decisions about his or her environment (world), including beliefs or assumptions about what is considered right or normal.