

# Cultural Influences on Human Behavior: Eastern vs Western Societies

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In the study of human behavior, culture plays a significant role in shaping individuals' beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors. Cultural background influences how individuals perceive the world around them, interact with others, and make decisions. This essay aims to explore the influence of cultural background on human behavior through a comparative study of Eastern and Western societies.

One of the key differences between Eastern and Western cultures is their emphasis on individualism versus collectivism. Western societies, such as those in Europe and North America, tend to prioritize individual goals, self-expression, and personal achievement. In contrast, Eastern societies, including those in Asia, tend to prioritize group harmony, social conformity, and interdependence. These cultural differences have profound effects on how individuals from these societies behave in various social settings. For example, in Western societies, individual success is often celebrated and encouraged. People are encouraged to pursue their own goals and dreams, even if it means standing out from the crowd. On the other hand, in Eastern societies, conformity and group harmony are valued above individual achievement. People are expected to prioritize the needs of the group over their own desires, leading to behaviors that promote social cohesion and cooperation.

These cultural differences can also be seen in communication styles. Western cultures tend to value direct and assertive communication, where individuals are encouraged to speak their minds and express their opinions openly. In contrast, Eastern cultures often value indirect and polite communication, where individuals may use nonverbal cues and subtle hints to convey their messages. Cultural background influences how individuals perceive authority and hierarchy. In Western societies, there is often a more egalitarian approach to authority, with individuals questioning and challenging those in positions of power. In Eastern societies, on the other hand, there is a greater respect for authority, with individuals showing deference and obedience to those in positions of authority.

These cultural differences in values and behaviors have been studied extensively by researchers in the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. For example, psychologist Geert Hofstede developed a model of cultural dimensions to compare different cultures based on their values and behaviors. His research identified several key dimensions, including individualism versus collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity versus femininity. Studies have shown that these cultural dimensions have a significant impact on human behavior. For instance, individuals from collectivist cultures tend to prioritize the needs of the group over their own desires, leading to behaviors that promote social cohesion and cooperation. In contrast, individuals from individualistic cultures may prioritize personal achievement and success, even at the expense of others.

Cultural background has a profound influence on human behavior. By comparing Eastern and Western societies, we can see how cultural values, norms, and behaviors shape individuals' beliefs and actions. Understanding these cultural differences is essential for promoting cross-cultural understanding and cooperation in an increasingly globalized world. Researchers and policymakers should continue to study the impact of cultural background on human behavior to promote diversity, inclusion, and respect for different cultural perspectives.