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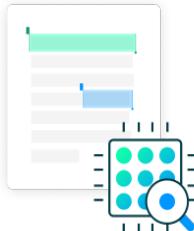
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An Examination of the African Culture

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An Examination of the African Culture

Introduction

Culture encompasses an array of ingrained patterns of human behavior, collective knowledge, customs, and beliefs within a specific community, exemplified by groups and cultures such as the African culture (Obradovich et al., 2022). Additionally, culture also encompasses individuals' actions, perspectives, and conduct, all influenced by the prevailing societal values. It is a lens through which individuals interpret symbols, from subtle language nuances to non-verbal cues like hand gestures (Galvano, 2019). In its totality, cultural constructs that distinguish each culture include literature, language, political tenets, institutions, religious edicts, and artistic coupled with culinary practices (Obradovich et al., 2022). These paradigms impact cultural interactions and provide social support that enhances an individual's sense of belonging within their community.

Africa has a copious and diverse culture underpinned by an antique African philosophy known as Ubuntu that elucidates the profound interrelatedness of humanity. Africans believe that individual well-being is inherently intertwined with the well-being of others and manifests in communal ethos and mutual support, which are fundamental pillars of societal congruence (Chigangaidze, Matanga & Katsuro, 2021). The diversity of the African culture extends across different countries and within regions and nations encompassing diverse ethnic groups. These ethnic groups have disparate cultural practices, ceremonies, artistic expressions, music, and oral traditions that intertwine to form the intricate fabric of societal identity (Elrashdi, 2021). Furthermore, the African culture emphasizes the social and cultural facets that influence healthy eating practices, such as dietary regimens aimed at healing (Begoña & José, 2021). As such, healthy dietary practices are profoundly embedded in the culture, historical traditions, policies,

norms, customs, and values of each social group within the African culture. For instance, Muslims observe the Feast of the Lamb, whereas Christians avoid meat consumption on Fridays during Lent (Begoña & José, 2021). The paper will define African culture, examine the transcultural theoretical model, detail cultural competence in advanced practice, and summarize the future implications of research.

African Culture

Elrashdi (2021) posited that African culture is the cradle of humanity and a dynamic and diverse tapestry of traditions, beliefs, and practices that underscore the interconnectedness of individuals with their natural and social environments. In this light, the African culture is reinforced by a comprehensive history that narrates the tale of civilization and a critical philosophy that underscores the interconnectedness of humanity (Chigangaidze, Matanga & Katsuro, 2021). The African culture and heritage are exceptionally diverse, varying not only from one country to another but also within regions and nations. It is characterized by its lushness, intricacy, and diversity, reflecting the unique histories, experiences, and identities of the numerous ethnic groups and communities that call Africa home (Olufadewa, Adesina & Ayorinde, 2020). Each ethnic group's culture forms the authentic social tapestry, from Egypt's ancient cultures to its many nations' vibrant current cultures. Furthermore, African culture is deeply rooted in the land, the people, and their shared experiences. It is expressed through various cultural practices, including storytelling, art, clothing, music and dance, cuisine, religious rituals, and social customs, influencing individual and communal identities (Elrashdi, 2021).

Despite its diversity, African culture is connected by common themes of community, spirituality, resilience, and a deep connection to the land and its natural surroundings. African cultures center on preserving individual traditions whereby the African people integrate their

indigenous cultural elements into educational systems to ascertain the transmission of traditional knowledge and values to future generations, fostering sustainable development and societal well-being (Elrashdi, 2021). Most importantly, African culture is grounded in the philosophical concept of ubuntuism that epitomizes the interconnectedness of all elements, including people, their spiritual essence, collective and individual identities, and the inclusive nature of family structures. It emphasizes the unity of mind, body, and spirit and the importance of interpersonal associations (Chigangaidze, Matanga & Katsuro, 2021). As such, it exemplifies the African values of empathy, compassion, harmony, consensus, solidarity and hospitality.

Leininger's Transcultural Theoretical Model and Graphic

In the 1950s, Madeleine Leininger designed Leininger's Transcultural Theoretical Model to solve the issue regarding the dearth of cultural understanding within the healthcare sector. The purpose of the model was to boost patient care by integrating culturally competent nursing curricula. Leininger's theory acknowledges cultural knowledge, encounters, and skills as crucial for delivering effective and top-tier healthcare services (Maniago, 2020). Additionally, Leininger's model focuses on providing culturally congruent nursing care that is sensitive, valuable, adequate, and tailored to the cultural values as well as predilections of the diverse patient population. McFarland and Wehbe-Alamah (2019) noted that the two fundamental aspects akin to this model are culture care accommodation and culture care restructuring. Cultural care accommodation equips healthcare professionals with adequate skills to care for individuals from specific cultures to achieve positive health outcomes. Conversely, culture care restructuring enables clinicians to guide patients in modifying their lifestyles to adopt new, beneficial health patterns (McFarland & Wehbe-Alamah, 2019).

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Leininger's model underscores the importance of understanding variations in dynamics, factors impacting cross-cultural interactions, showing respect towards patients, and communicating proficiently (McFarland & Wehbe-Alamah, 2019). Furthermore, the model delineates the relationship between a nurse and a patient, emphasizing the nurse's role as the primary caregiver (Leyva-Moral et al., 2023). The transcultural theoretical model has significantly enhanced nurses' awareness of patient diversity, fostering insights that can profoundly impact a patient's path to recovery. Moreover, it resonates with the African culture by emphasizing cultural competence and acknowledging diverse worldviews. Given the diversity within African cultures, the model recognizes the importance of understanding and valuing these variations in healthcare delivery (McFarland & Wehbe-Alamah, 2019). Additionally, the model's principles, such as cultural awareness, knowledge, encounters, and skills, align with the intrinsic values of the African cultures, underscoring the critical role of cultural sensitivity and competence in healthcare provision.

Leininger's Transcultural Theoretical Model Graphic

(McFarland & Wehbe-Alamah, 2019).

Cultural Competence in Advanced Practice as a NP/DNP

Primarily, culturally competent care seeks to provide equitable access to healthcare among diverse patient groups, guaranteeing that they receive culturally sensitive and congruent care tailored to their specific health necessities (Arruzza & Chau, 2021). Cultural competence comprises the healthcare provider's aptitude to engage with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds while recognizing their cultural norms, practices, predispositions, and values. Culturally competent healthcare providers deliver bespoke, germane, and efficient services,

demonstrating cultural sensitivity to the patient's cultural identities (Chu, Wippold & Becker, 2022). It is noteworthy to acknowledge that cultural competence empowers nurses to provide personalized, relevant, and effective services, showcasing sensitivity to the cultural identities of their patients (Chu, Wippold & Becker, 2022). Therefore, cultural competence is a focal point for a DNP-prepared nurse in providing holistic and patient-centric care to diverse patient populations.

As a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP), I encountered a patient scenario during one of the clinical rotations. The patient was a 78-year-old African man who had moved to the United States six years ago. He had held various unskilled jobs throughout his life to sustain his family. The patient was married for over thirty years until the untimely demise of his wife, and together they had four kids. He currently resides with the eldest son, who is the primary caregiver, since his health has considerably declined. The patient, K.M., was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, along with other comorbidities, including diabetes, hypertension, and coronary artery disease. The son accompanied K.M. to the facility to seek treatment as he exhibited depression symptoms. According to the son, the patient had lost interest in activities he previously enjoyed, experienced feelings of emptiness and anxiety, and displayed symptoms of fatigue, irritability, and restlessness.

As a PMHNP, providing culturally competent, compassionate, and congruent care was imperative. As such, this entailed employing various strategies, including utilizing the facility's interpreter to gather detailed information, employing nonverbal cues, maintaining eye contact, and establishing rapport. It was essential to infuse therapeutic alliance techniques such as active listening to facilitate trust and open communication to accurately diagnose the patient and support the family through the transitions in his care journey. As the primary care provider, the

treatment plan incorporated the concept of cultural accommodation, rooted in the transcultural theoretical model. The team integrated the patient's traditional healing practices, such as African traditional medicine prepared from roots, into the treatment plan (Mothibe & Sibanda, 2019). The treatment process was anticipated to enhance the patient's overall well-being while honoring, valuing, and incorporating his cultural values.

Conclusion and Future Implications for Research

In conclusion, Africans have a diverse and vibrant cultural background that forms the foundation for delivering culturally informed, sensitive, empathetic, and culturally appropriate nursing care. Therefore, DNPs, specifically PMHNPs, must embrace and adjust to cultural humility, recognizing historical obstacles and crafting bespoke care plans tailored to each patient's unique health requirements. Integrating the transcultural model into clinical practice is crucial for developing patient care strategies that align with the patient's cultural beliefs, preferences, and values.

In future, researchers should acknowledge the potential positive influence of African traditional medicine alongside modern medicine. Therefore, they should advocate for policies, guidelines and legislation to expedite the regulation of traditional medicine practices (Mothibe & Sibanda, 2019). Non-indigenous researchers should actively participate in tailoring and introducing evidence-based practices rooted in African cultures to strengthen cultural connections and contribute to cultural revitalization. Ultimately, this will ensure that traditional medicine practices are integrated safely and effectively into mainstream healthcare systems.

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