

**CULTURAL VALUES/BELIEFS AND EMOTIONAL HOMEOSTATIC
DISEQUILIBRIUM (EHD) AMONG MARRIED UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN
BAYELSA STATE OF NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Nigeria is currently plagued with a lot of problems, prominent among them being the phenomenon of emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD). Although, it is a psycho emotional disease that affects individuals, it inadvertently affects marriages as well. That is why this study is carried out to determine if there is a relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married university lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. The moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among the study's subjects was also considered. All married university lecturers in Bayelsa State constituted the population of the study, out of which 1500 participants who volunteered to participate in the study were selected through purposive sampling technique. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were raised to guide the investigation. A Cultural Values/Beliefs Scale (CVS) and Emotional Homeostatic Disequilibrium Scale (CVEHDS) was used to collect data. Cronbach Alpha showed $\alpha = 0.82$ and $\alpha = 0.92$ reliability coefficients for the research instruments. Correlation and regression statistics were used to analyze data. Results indicated a significant relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD as well as a significant moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among the subjects of the investigation.

Keywords: Cultural values, Disequilibrium, Homeostasis, Emotion, University lecturers.

Introduction

Emotions constitute a very important aspect of human life. They regulate an individual's behaviours in nearly every situation that the individual is involved. Emotions help the individual in both their intrapersonal adjustment efforts and their interactions with other individuals in their environment. It is therefore noteworthy that individual personalities are adjudged or branded by the kind of emotions that they frequently exhibit. As people struggle with the different challenges of life, they are susceptible to exhibiting diverse forms of emotions in accordance with their experiences at every point in time.

There are basically two forms of emotions: positive and negative, otherwise referred to as pleasant and unpleasant emotions. An individual experiences or expresses a positive emotion when the environment provides a stimulus that enables them to react meaningfully. Positive emotions equally promote a physiological and psychological balance for the individual. Some forms of positive emotions are happiness, joy, laughter, smiles and so on. On the contrary, a person exhibits negative emotions whenever they are faced with experiences that cause them either physical or psychological harm, pain or discomfort. Negative emotions make the individual to experience imbalance in their physiological and psychological make-ups. Examples of negative emotions are grief, sorrow, fear, anxiety, worry and so on.

Emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) is a situation whereby the individual loses their ability to appropriately control their emotional experiences and expressions in order to be in terms with both self and other persons around them. When an individual is in such a situation, it is often difficult or even impossible for them to accomplish their life goals and aspirations. Emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) is about an individual's condition of emotional imbalance that makes them to be unable to maintain emotional well-being as well as soundness of heart and body (Malik et al, 2021). Malik et al (2021) further opined that EHD is a condition that makes unpleasant experiences of the individual to generate negative emotional attitudes that adversely affect their normal everyday functioning. They added that EHD also weakens an individual's immune system and exposes them to contagious emotional viruses and disease invasion.

It is quite disheartening to note, however, that the phenomenon of EHD has found its way into the many marriages is causing a lot of problems in them. Spouses who are in the throes of EHD do not have control over their behaviours, hence most their behavioural reactions to stimuli are unconsciously expressed and not intentional. For this reason, many married persons have inadvertently violated societal laws and received commensurate punishments in line with extant laws (Wessells & Kostelny, 2022). Wessells and Kostelny (2022) claimed that spouses who are under the grip of EHD seldom consider the repercussions of their actions, and that the rational minds of EHD victims are overwhelmed by their emotional minds. The attendant effect of this is that, many spouses who are controlled by EHD are often angry, destroy property and extreme

cases, murder fellow human beings. Others who do not vent their EHD behaviours on things in the environment, direct their behaviours inwards, which is on themselves; often feeling depressed, anxious, overly afraid and sometimes having suicide ideation.

It is presumed that in marriages, cultural values/beliefs may be responsible for the emergence of EHD behaviours of spouses. That is reason for this investigation. Cultural values/beliefs, according to Barowski et al (2023) are the core principles or ideals that an entire community or society is based around. The community revolves around these concepts and forms a harmonious, interconnected relationship around these shared values. The concepts embodied in a culture's values include a society's traditions, rituals and beliefs. Myyry (2022) opines that cultural values refer to socially desirable standards and goals that individuals internalize through socialization, representing intrinsic or extrinsic motives for personal preferences and behaviours within a society. In her words, Bambock (2024) simply describes cultural values as how individuals prefer to navigate life, complete tasks and interact with others. According to her, these values vary greatly between age groups, religions and countries of origin. To Trang (2024), culture is not merely a simple concept; it is a complex entity encompassing the creative products and activities of humanity. It is the result of continuous labour and innovation, passed down from generation to generation, reflecting the core values of truth, goodness and beauty.

Cultural values/beliefs may be highly influential in shaping individual behaviour, including the experience and expression of emotions. This presumption is corroborated by Cultur54_wp (2025) when they asserted that cultural values play a crucial role in shaping how people perceive and interact with the world. It is on this premise that this research investigation is carried out with the aim of unveiling whether or there is a connection between a spouse's cultural values/beliefs and emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD).

Individual behaviour is essentially a reflection of a person's culture, in that one socialized by their culture to promote the behaviours that they exhibit. Moreover, different cultures socialize their members to express emotions that they consider beneficial to both the individual and the society. Hence, some cultures approve of some emotions and disapprove others. In other words, an individual's cultural orientation influences how they experience and express emotions (Tsai, 2024; Dashnaw, 2024). Song et al (2024) revealed in their study that emotion regulation strategies were influenced by cultural differences. It means that various cultures socialize their indigenes to control their emotions in line with their own cultural standards. They also revealed that guidelines, expectations, rules and structure are provided by culture to help individuals understand and interpret behaviours.

Various ethnographic research results indicate that cultural differences exist in social effects, especially as it concerns determining emotions. Regarding which emotions are preferred in particular cultures; the ways emotions are experienced are also influenced by culture (Walter et al,

2021). For instance, happiness is commonly regarded as a worthy emotion in every culture. According to von Suchodoletz and Hepach (2021), in countries with individualistic views such as America, happiness is seen as infinite, attainable and internally experienced, whereas in collectivist cultures such as Japan, emotions such as happiness are very relational and include a myriad of social and external factors, and reside in shared experiences with other people. Briggs (1979) as cited in He et al (2021) explains that in the Utku Eskimo populations, anger is rarely expressed, and in the rare occasion that it did occur, it resulted in social ostracism.

Some cultures have rigid gender roles that define expected behaviour. Men's lives exist primarily outside the home, while women's roles are specifically in the home. In these cultures, women may not even leave their homes unless escorted by a male family member. Conversely, men never enter the kitchen. If someone from this type of culture encounters a social stressor which forces a change in roles or a challenge to the status quo (i.e., death of a spouse), such stressor may cause this person to become depressed. For instance, if a husband (from a culture with rigid gender roles) loses his wife, he will not know how to care for his children's day to day needs such as feeding, bathing and so on. Similarly, if a woman loses her husband, she will not know how to provide financial support for her family (and additionally, may be prevented from even trying). This situation may give rise to several EHD symptoms like depression, anxiety and anger.

In a study conducted by Dai-Kosi and Acquaye (2020), it was discovered that both negative and positive aspects of emotional intelligence can be learned through the process of social and cultural transformation. They also stated that "culture plays an important role in determining how an individual recognizes, organizes and applies emotional intelligence". Similarly, Pugh et al (2021) revealed in their study that neural representation of fear indeed varies according to both culture and situation, and their interactions in ways that are consistent with norms instilled by cultural background. In another development, Hofman et al (2010) concluded in their study which utilized Asian, Russian and US samples that an individual's social concerns need to be examined in the context of the person's cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds in order to adequately assess the degree and expression of social anxiety and social anxiety disorder. Also, in another study, Asnaani et al (2010) discovered that African-Americans frequently met criteria for PTSD as compared to the White Americans, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans. According to the authors, these data point to the strong contribution of culture on anxiety disorders.

Gender is also a variable in this study. It refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy as well as relationships with each other (World Health Organization, 2025). WHO (2025) further describes gender as the distinction a culture makes in what it considers masculine or feminine. It is socially defined and enshrined in the social setting and procedure by an organization of limits that assist to assign what is proper or improper for every gender and by self-concepts, values, principles, beliefs and consequences for behaviour. There are speculations

that the existence of gender differences in emotional experience and expression. However, opinions vary concerning the expression of emotions among males and females. Whereas some authors claim that males express negative emotions more than women, others posit that it is the other way round. Interestingly, there are also some scholars who do see any noticeable difference in emotional expression between males and females. In their view, both males and females express emotions in the same way. In a study that aimed to explore role of gender in emotional reactivity to music, Fuentes-Sanchez et al (2024) discovered that women showed a greater deceleration of heart rate while listening to both emotional (pleasant and unpleasant) and neural music than men. Women also scored higher on trait anxiety compared to men. These results suggest that women may have heightened sensitivity to emotional stimuli than men. Peraica et al (2023) also undertook a study that resulted in the following outcomes: 1. A global study of 55 cultures revealed that extroverted and conscientious than men. 2. Females interpret other person's emotional responses better than men do, despite whether or not they obtained such emotional signals orally by sight. 3. Female indicated experiencing love and anger a little deeper than males did in a different investigation of gender variances in emotional reaction. 4. Men and women respond to stress in different ways. Females exhibit more sadness or anxiety compared to males, while males display an elevation in their blood pressure and more inclined toward alcohol consumption. 5. Females have greater proclivity for experiencing disgust compared to males when faced with a stimulus that can elicit an emotional response.

Also, in a study that investigated sex dissimilarities in experiences and expressivity of emotions, Chatterji and Heise (2021) measured heart rate (HR) as an index of emotional experience and subjects were made to view videos that incite eight kinds of emotions (horror, disgust, sadness, neutrality, anger, amusement, pleasure and surprise). The results showed that males more often displayed deeper emotional experiences compared to females that showed greater emotional expression particularly unpleasant ones. Moreover, it was revealed that gender differences were more or less emotion-specific and not the valence. Likewise, Guvon et al (2023) discovered in their study that females reacted with more sadness to sad films than did males and with more fear-disgust to fearfully-disgusting films than males did. On the other hand, males responded with greater happiness to happy films. In yet another study, Yang (2022) presented a similar result.

There are many problems plaguing Nigeria in recent times, among which the phenomenon of EHD appears to be one of the most devastating. Unfortunately, it has also infiltrated marriage institution thereby causing untold destruction in several marriages resulting in estrangements, separations, divorces, dissolutions and extreme cases, mortality of spouses. Cultural values/beliefs may have a relationship with the occurrence of EHD among couples. Hence, the problem that this investigation seeks to provide answer to, at least in part, is: Does cultural values/beliefs have a relationship with EHD among married university lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria?

Theoretical framework

This investigation hinges on Wundt's Tri-dimensional theory. Theory holds that individuals or spouses are capable of expressing three dimensions of feelings which are pleasantness and unpleasantness; tension and relaxation, and, excitement and depression (Wundt, 1896). According to this theory, each individual's or spouse's feeling is expressed between the aforementioned poles of emotions (Ilgin, 2023) and within the poles (Sikorski & Hominis, 2024). For example, it is believed that a spouse would be capable of emitting the emotion of laughter which can rapidly move along the dimension of pleasantness, while at the same time express excitement and then tension would follow. In other words, Wundt's theory ignores the aspect of arousal and explains that a spouse is capable of expressing different poles of emotion within the same period of time.

This study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses which are:

1. What is the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria?
2. What is the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria?

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant moderating influence of gender in the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

Methodology

The ex post facto correlation with moderation design was adopted for this study. Real-life situations in which the subjects had experienced the context under study were investigated by the researcher. This method is about collection of data and analysis of the variables retrospectively in order to determine how they influence or have relationship with one another (Rasimin & Yusra, 2020; Ina et al, 2021). The population comprises all married university lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used to select 1,500 participants from the four universities in Bayelsa State of Nigeria, namely Federal University, Otuoke; Niger Delta University, Amassoma; Bayelsa Medical University, Yenagoa and University of Africa, Toru-Orua. In this technique, any lecturer that possesses the requisite qualification, (that is, being married) and shows interest to participate in the study was selected. Therefore, from each of the four universities, 375 participants were selected for the study.

The instrument of data collection was a 24-item Cultural Values/beliefs and Emotional Homeostatic Disequilibrium Scale (CVEHDS) that was constructed by the researcher for this study. It was a 4-point Likert scale of SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree with 9 items that measured cultural values/beliefs and 15 items that measured emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) indicators. Prof R.I Okorodudu, an APA-trained psychometrician and Prof (Fr) Jude Obiunu, a Measurement and Evaluation specialist validated the instrument and deemed it valid for the study. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .82$. Correlation and regression statistics were used to analyze the data with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

Results

The results presented below are analysis of data collected from 1,486 participants in the study.

Research question 1: What is the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria?

Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married university lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

| N | Variable | Mean | SD | r | r ² | r ^{2Adj} |
|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------|-----|----------------|-------------------|
| 1,486 | Cultural values/beliefs | 50.82 | 11.92 | .59 | .35 | .35 |

Independent variable: Cultural values/beliefs

Dependent variable: EHD

The result in table 1 shows that there is a positive relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria ($r = .59$). This means that the answer to research question 1 is that, there is an impact of cultural values/beliefs on EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. The adjusted r of .35 shows that 35% of variance in EHD among the subjects of the study was accounted for by the impact of cultural values/beliefs.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

| Source | SS | Df | MS | F | B | β | SE | T | P |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Regression | 17475.50 | 1 | 3495.100 | 157.28 | .013 | - | - | - | - |
| Residual | 32666.66 | 1485 | 22.222 | | | | | | |
| Total | 50142.16 | 1486 | | | | | | | |

$P \leq 0.05$ level of significance; $N = 1,486$

The result in table 2 shows that cultural values/beliefs relate significantly with EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. This result proves that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative holds true. The calculated $F = 157.28$ $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance. There, it is concluded that cultural values/beliefs has influence on EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

Research question 2: What is the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria?

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

| N | Variables | Mean | SD | r | r^2 | r^2_{Adj} |
|----------|------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1486 | Gender | 1.61 | .49 | .22 | .05 | .05 |
| | Cultural values/ | 50.82 | 11.92 | | | |
| | Beliefs | | | | | |
| | EHD | 32.85 | 5.83 | | | |

Moderating variable: Gender

Independent variable: Cultural values/beliefs

Dependent Variable: EHD

The result in table 3 reveals that there is a positive correlation between gender, cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria ($r = .22$). This implies that the answer to research question 2 is that, there is a moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among the subjects of this study. The adjusted r of $.05$ indicates that 5% of the variance in EHD was accounted for by the influence of gender.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria

| Source | SS | Df | MS | F | B | β | SE | T | P |
|------------|----------|------|---------|-------|-----|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| Regression | 569.589 | 1 | 142.397 | 4.225 | - | - | - | - | 000 |
| Residual | 49572.57 | 1485 | 33.700 | | | | | | |
| Total | 50142.16 | 1486 | | | | | | | |
| Gender | - | - | - | - | .13 | .01 | .32 | .41 | .69 |

$P \leq 0.05$ level of significance; $N = 1486$

The result shown in table 4 indicates that gender is related to EHD among the subjects of this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative holds true. The calculated $F = 4.225$; $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance shows that gender significantly influences the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married university lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. The beta weights as seen in the table shows that gender ($\beta = .01$; $P \leq 0.05$) has a significant moderating influence on EHD among the subjects of this research investigation.

Discussion

From the foregoing results presented, a brief discussion of the findings is made with a view to ascertain how these findings agree or disagree with the works reviewed in related literature as well as contemporary issues in the area under investigation. Concerning the relationship between

cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married university lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria, the study came up with an instructive finding which is that, there is a significant relationship between the two variables. This result appears to quite logical. Bayelsa State is a homogenous State inhabited by the Ijaw people with only little differences in their dialect. Aside from that, the cultural and traditional practices are the same across the whole State as well as the behavioural patterns. That is why the findings of this study may be attributed to these factors as it is presumed that presumed lecturers in Bayelsa State, including those employed from outside the State have imbibed the behavioural patterns through acculturation. This finding is in line with the findings of Song et al (2024) which indicates that emotion regulation strategies were influenced by cultural practices. Similarly, Dai-Kosi and Acquaye (2020) equally found in their study that “culture plays an important role in determining how an individual recognizes, organizes and applies emotional intelligence”. This also corroborates the findings of the present investigation.

Moreover, regarding the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married university lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria, the findings revealed that gender significantly influences the relationship between cultural values/beliefs among the subjects of this study. This result may be attributed to a complex interplay of socio-cultural norms, gender role expectations and individual identity determined by both traditional and professional influences. In other words, cultural scripting influences how married lecturers of different genders interpret and express their emotions, particularly in the context of marital roles and professional identity. Although, both men and women are influenced by traditional and professional expectations, the specific emotional scripts they follow differ, resulting in gendered patterns of emotional regulation and expression. This result is in agreement with those of Fuentes-Sanchez et al (2024), Peraica et al (2023), Guvon et al (2023) and Yang (2022), who all discovered that there were gender differences in emotional expression among subjects of various studies.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were made based on the results of this study:

1. There is a significant relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.
2. Gender has a significant moderating influence on the relationship between cultural values/beliefs and EHD among married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in this study.

Implications/Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it may be said that EHD behaviours of married University lecturers in Bayelsa State of Nigeria need to be acknowledged and/or viewed from context of an individual's cultural orientation. That is, having to understand which cultural values and beliefs they hold dear. On that note, this author recommends that psychologists and counsellors should be mindful of an individual's cultural values/beliefs when handling cases that involve EHD. It is also recommended that cultural practices or values that tend to instigate marital dissatisfaction and may likely lead to the development of EHD symptoms in spouses should be cautiously managed. Furthermore, it is recommended that subjects of this study and other married persons ensure to avail themselves of counselling services whenever cultural values/beliefs seem to threaten their marital bliss.

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