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Chapter 3: Basic Emotion Theory and Social Constructivist Theory Much of the work supporting the social constructivist perspective compares the experiences of emotions between participants raised in Western Cultures to those of participants raised in Western Cultures to those of participants raised in Eastern Cultures.
status, whereas Western cultures emphasize individual uniqueness and equality. Based on these cultural differences, Easterners would be expected to experience emotions related to violations of an
individual's rights and to individual successes. Another differences between these two cultures is the experience of mixed emotions at the same time, such as joy and sadness. Westerns seek to optimize positive emotions and minimize negative emotions. Conversely, Easterners are
more comfortable balancing positive and negative emotions, and thus tend to experience mixed emotions more often and for a longer period of time. Chapter 3: Basic Emotion Theory and Social Constructivist Theory Much of the work supporting the social constructivist perspective compares the experiences of emotions between participants raised in
Western Cultures to those of participants raised in Eastern cultures emphasize relationship interdependence, hierarchy and status, whereas Western cultures emphasize individual uniqueness and equality. Based on these cultural differences, Eastern cultures emphasize individual uniqueness and equality.
of group norms, and maintaining group harmony. Conversely, Westerners would be experience emotions related to violations of an individual's rights and to individual successes. Another difference between these two cultures is the experience of mixed emotions. Mixed emotions occur when we experience two different emotions at the
same time, such as joy and sadness. Westerns seek to optimize positive emotions and minimize negative emotions. Conversely, Easterners are more comfortable balancing positive emotions, and thus tend to experience mixed emotions more often and for a longer period of time. As a library, NLM provides access to scientific literature.
Inclusion in an NLM database does not imply endorsement of, or agreement with, the contents by NLM or the National Institutes of Health. Learn more: PMC Disclaimer | PMC Copyright Notice . 2016 Mar 21;5(2):105-109. doi: 10.1016/j.imr.2016.03.004 Whether emotion is universal or social is a recurrent issue in the history of emotion study among
psychologists. Some researchers view emotion as a universal construct, and that a large part of emotional experience is biologically based. However, emotion is not only biologically determined, but is also influenced by the environment. Therefore, cultural differences exist in some aspects of emotions, one such important aspect of emotion being
emotional arousal level. All affective states are systematically represented as two bipolar dimensions, valence and arousal level of actual and ideal emotions are valued and promoted more than low arousal emotions.
Moreover, Westerners experience high arousal emotions more than high arousal emotions. By contrast, in Eastern or collectivist culture, low arousal emotions are valued more than high arousal emotions. Mechanism of
these cross-cultural differences and implications are also discussed. Keywords: collectivist culture, cultural difference, emotion is universal or social is a recurrent issue in the history of emotion study among psychologists. 1, 2, 3 Some researchers view emotion as a universal construct and that a
large part of emotional experience is biologically based. 4, 5 Ekman 6 argued that emotions are interpreted in the same way across most cultures or nations. In addition, similar emotions are experienced in similar situations across cultures. In a study conducted by
Matsumoto and colleagues, Japanese and American participants reported to feel happiness, pleasure, sadness, and anger in similar situations (e.g., meeting friends or achievements) but negative emotions when they encounter negative antecedent
events (e.g., traffic or injustice), regardless of culture. However, culture also influences emotion in various ways. Culture constrains how emotions are felt and expressed in a given culturel should express their emotions. 52 In a large number of studies, 3, 8, 9 some
aspects of emotion have been shown to be culturally different, because emotion is not only biologically determined, but also influenced by environment, and social or cultural situations. 10 The role of culture in emotion experience emotion, people first
experience physiological arousal and then they label this arousal as emotion. In this process, culturally defined and provided emotion words are used. Some other examples of emotions, 9 nature of emotions commonly
experienced, 7, 12, 13 and affect valuation. 14 Cultural differences in various aspects of emotion have been studied and reported. Now, what is culture and how is it defined? In cross-cultural psychology, culture is referred to as "shared elements that provide the standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those
who share a language, a historic period, and a geographic location (p. 408)."15 Since Markus and Kitayama8 published a monumental paper on comparisons of the self between the West (e.g., Japan), most cross-cultural studies have compared Western versus Eastern cultures.16 Eastern culture commonly indicates culture
of East Asian countries such as Korea, Japan, and China. Western culture includes the culture of North American and Western European countries. Markus and Kitayama8 introduced the term "self-construel" for establishing the differences between the two cultures. Westerners construe self as independent and separate from other people. This is
referred to as independent self-construal. Those who have independent self-construal consider that the basic unit of society is the individual; and groups exist to promote individual's uniqueness is important. People are encouraged
to express their inner states or feelings, and to influence other people. 18 By contrast, Easterners construe self as fundamentally connected to, and interdependent on, others. This is called interdependent self-construal. For those who have interdependent self-construal, the core unit of society is the group. In addition, individuals must adjust to the
group so that society's harmony is maintained.17 For this reason, Eastern culture is identified as collectivistic cultures, all individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in.18 Although, in both individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups the 
interdependent self-construals, 8, 19, 20 each culture normally encourages to more strongly cultivate its promoted self-construal than the other. 16 Myers 8 argued that "physiological arousal, expressive behaviors, and conscious experience" are fundamental elements of emotion (p. 500). In other words, emotional arousal is one of the most important
research topics in psychology literature. In line with this, one of the many researched aspects of emotion, mood, and feeling) are structured in two fundamental dimensions: valence and arousal level. 21, 22, 23 Russell24 proposed the circumplex model of affect.
The circumplex model of affect proposes that all emotions are the product of two independent neurophysiological systems. 25 In other words, affective states are systematically organized and represented as two bipolar dimensions: pleasure (or valence) and degree of arousal. The degree-of-arousal dimension, which is also called
activation-deactivation26 or engagement,24 refers to the perception of the autonomic nervous system.55 Literature shows that both emotional valence and arousal affect brain activity28, 29
and cognitive behaviors such as decision making and memory.56 Russell24 categorized verbal expressions of emotion has been demonstrated numerously by many studies in different methods.30 This two-dimensional structure of
emotion was also proved to be appearing in many different nations and cultures. 24, 30, 31, 32 In other words, valence and arousal emotions as categorized in previous literature. List of high and low arousal emotions Studies High arousal emotions Low arousal emotions Russell
(1980)24 Afraid, alarmed, angry, annoyed, aroused, astonished, delighted, distressed, excited, frustrated, glad, happy, tense At ease, bored, calm, contented, depressed, droopy, gloomy, miserable, pleased, relaxed, satisfied, serene, sleepy, tired Feldman (1993)51 Afraid, enthusiastic, nervous, peppy Calm, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Tsai (2007)36
Elated, enthusiastic, excited, fearful, hostile, nervous Calm, dull, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sleepy, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful, relaxed, sluggish Suh & Koo (2011)32 Irritated, joyful Helpless, peaceful,
situations where mobilization and energy are required. When a high arousal emotion is induced, decision making becomes focused and simplified.26 Moreover, high arousal emotions such as joy or anger are known to amplify the nervous system in various ways.35 By contrast, low arousal emotions are enervated states that prepare inaction or rest.26
Cross-cultural differences in emotional arousal level have consistently been found. Western culture is related to low arousal emotions, whereas Eastern culture is related to low arousal emotions, whereas Eastern culture is related to low arousal emotions, whereas Eastern culture is related to low arousal emotions, whereas Eastern culture is related to low arousal emotions, whereas Eastern culture is related to low arousal emotions.
others.8 For this purpose, high arousal emotions are ideal and effective.18 By contrast, in Eastern culture, adjusting and conforming to other people is considered desirable.8 To meet this goal, low arousal emotions work better than high arousal emotions.18 In fact, in terms of positively valenced emotions, the arousal level of ideal affect differs by
cultures. Ideal affect, or "affective state that people in certain ways so that they feel the emotional state that are considered to be ideal in their culture. Tsai36 argued that
Westerners value high arousal emotions more than Easterners, so they promote activities that elicit high arousal emotions. Actually, Americans, compared with East-Asians, are reported to prefer high arousal emotions are
ideal, and the opposite is true for children of the East. 39 Conception of happiness is also different in arousal level by culture. Lu and Gilmour 40 conducted a cross-cultural study on the conception of happiness; they found that the American conception of happiness is also different in arousal level by culture. Lu and Gilmour 40 conducted a cross-cultural study on the conception of happiness; they found that the American conception of happiness is also different in arousal level by culture.
being solemn and reserved. This means that, in America, high arousal positive emotional states are considered as happiness in China. This was replicated in another study. Uchida and Kitayama57 showed that Japanese people conceptualized happiness as
experiencing low arousal positive emotions more than high arousal level, difference in the actual arousal level, difference in the cultural difference in the cultural difference in the cultural study comparing
Caucasians and Asians. Researchers used an arousal scale composed of four bipolar items, which consists of emotion adjectives representing different arousal levels. Emotion items in the arousal scale were stimulated-relaxed (reversed), and unaroused-aroused. The result showed that Caucasians were
more likely to be in high arousal emotional states (i.e., stimulated, excited, frenzied, and aroused) than Asians, whereas Asians were more likely to be in low arousal emotional states (i.e., relaxed, calm, sluggish, and unaroused). In addition, Tsai and colleagues 42 reported that the closer the participants to American rather than Chinese cultural
orientation, the higher their cardiovascular arousal level during interpersonal tasks. Another example of the difference of actual arousal levels of emotional experiences between individualist and collectivist cultures can be found from emotion scale research. Affect scales measuring positive and negative emotional experiences developed in America
consist mostly of high arousal emotions. This is because emotion scale items are selected based on the emotion scale items are selected based on the emotions arousal emotions. This is because emotion scale items are selected based on the emotion scale, Positive and
Negative Affect Scale, was developed by American researchers.43 Emotion items in the Positive and Negative Affect Scale are weighted toward high arousal emotions such as enthusiasm, activation, and excitement. Furthermore, cultural differences are also found in physiological and behavioral aspects of emotion. Research conducted by Scherer et
al54 showed that Japanese participants, compared with American and European participants, reported significantly fewer physiological symptoms. Mesquita and Frijda2 suggested that one possible explanation is that their physiological symptoms are actually different. In addition, behaviors corresponding to emotional arousal level different.
by culture. Westerners prefer to participate in more active sports than Easterners to elicit high arousal emotions. 44 Moreover, parents lead their children to engage in activities that are likely to elicit valued emotions in the culture. For example, Western mothers are reported to encourage their children to play games that increase emotional arousal
level.45 Therefore, cultural differences in emotional arousal level emerge at a relatively young age.39 Support for cultural difference in the level of emotional arousal has also been found in values. Individuals who have strong
stimulation values are motivated to live an exciting and varied life, and to seek novelty and challenges in life. Behaviors derived from these goals are likely to induce high arousal emotions. Therefore, Schwartz's 46 study indirectly support that high arousal emotions are more frequently experienced in Western culture. This is a study indirectly support that high arousal emotions are more frequently experienced in Western culture.
also in line with the fact that impulsiveness and sensation-seeking behavior, which are closely related to emotional arousal,47 are also more profound in individualist countries than in collectivist countries than in collectivist countries.41 The fact that Asian cultural norm discourages experiencing or expressing high arousal emotions can also be explained from the perspective of
traditional Asian medicine. In Korean or Chinese medicine, it is assumed that humans experience seven emotions (七情), including joy, anger, sadness, pleasure, love, greed, and hatred. From this standpoint, excessive emotions are 48, 49 For example, Hwabyung,
also known as "anger syndrome," a disease frequently reported in Korean culture, is argued to be resulted in suppression of affective experience, along with valence. Findings consistently support cultural differences in the levels of emotional arousal
between the West and the East. Westerners value, promote, and experience high arousal emotions more than low arousal emotion, whereas the vice versa is true for Easterners value, promote, and experience high arousal emotions, whereas the vice versa is true for Easterners value, promote, and experience high arousal emotions, whereas the vice versa is true for Easterners. As discussed above, emotion has a biological base. In addition, two fundamental dimensions of emotion, valence and arousal, are related to physiological aspect as well as
brain activities. Therefore, cultural differences in emotion, especially in arousal level of emotion, can also have implications in other adjacent areas, such as neuroscience and science of medicine. As mentioned above, findings about emotion in
psychology literature and Asian medicine are in line, in that Korean medicine cautions against excessive emotional arousals in psychology. However, compared with studies on cultural differences in norms about emotional arousals in psychology. However, compared with studies on cultural differences in norms about emotional arousals in psychology.
level, per se, have been conducted, especially those with physiological measures. Therefore, additional research on cultural differences of emotional arousal level from the perspective of Asian medicine may become the stepping stone to an integrative medicine research on Asian medicine and psychology. The author has no conflict of interest to
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doi: 10.1037/a0015634. [DOI] [PubMed] [Google Scholar] 58.Myers DG. Theories of emotion. In: Psychology. 7th ed. New York, NY: Worth Publishers; 2004. Articles from Integrative Medicine Research are provided here courtesy of Korea Institute of Oriental Medicine It is difficult to explain differences between the East and the West within a single
chapter. The differences can be discussed largely by two dimensions, however: extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions. The first is a phenomenon that is overtly seen and Koreans share a common culture in general, but their
languages and scripts are different from one another. This point of the common culture yet different language/script have been treated as separate constructs or approaches to the understanding of the East Asian people and traditions. 6.1.1 Extrinsic Differences 6.1.1.1
Architecture Architecture is one example of an overt and extrinsic cultural product that reveals esoteric qualities manifested differently in the East and the West. Architecture of modern days has become homogeneous in the East and
the West such that the city landscapes of Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul, New York, and London are pretty much similar to one another. However, ancient architecture beiging, Tokyo, Seoul, New York, and London are pretty much similar to one another. However, ancient architecture beiging, Tokyo, Seoul, New York, and London are pretty much similar to one another.
available at the time of construction. Every society has the religious place in the form of the church, the mosque, or the temple (or shrine) at which people are gregarious for spiritual maturity. The places are architecture in the form of the church, the mosque, or the temple (or shrine) at which people are gregarious for spiritual maturity. The places are architecturally elaborate and intricate monuments of spiritual sanctuaries. The ecclesiastical architecture is the prototype of architecture in the form of the church, the mosque, or the temple (or shrine) at which people are gregarious for spiritual maturity.
each society, given that the religious architecture is imbued with arts, beliefs, and values of the particular culture and society. Although architecture is imbued with arts, beliefs, and traditions, there are salient differences in the ecclesiastical architecture between the East and the West. Old Asian temples are
generally built with wood, and are round and circular and have symmetry-driven structures with variations. However, Western churches are in general rectangular and have sharp pinnacles with geometric shapes. These differences
between the East and the West can be an expression of subliminal workings of social member's mind.6.1.1.2 ClothingJust like language and architecture, clothing is a human-specific practice. Evidence suggests that humans began wearing clothes that were made up of animal skins or other natural resources somewhere from 100,000 to 500,000 years
ago. Primitive bone needles are dated back to 61,000 years ago and were discovered in Sibudu Cave in South Africa (Backwell, dErrico, & Wadley, 2008). The earliest silk production from the cocoon of domesticated silkworms was made in China in sometime between 5000 and 3000 B.C. Silk Road was the route for exchange of luxury textiles between
the East and the West, which facilitated the development of the great civilizations of China and Europe in the fashion system. The European use of silk and printed cotton textiles from Asia took place in the early establishment of modern fashion. The European use of silk and printed cotton textiles from Asia took place in the early establishment of modern fashion. The European use of silk and printed cotton textiles from Asia took place in the early establishment of modern fashion. The European use of silk and printed cotton textiles from Asia took place in the early establishment of modern fashion.
of Asian textiles reflects intellectual, commercial, and aesthetic relationships between Europe and Asia (Lemire & Riello, 2008). Despite the long history of interaction between the East and the West, the tradition of clothing is still different across cultures. Most human societies have their own forms of clothing that adapt to geographical and
meteorological conditions. Different cultures use clothing in different ways depending on climate, ecosystem, religion, and value systems. The trajectory of changes over time also varies across cultures due to the difference in their values. Clothing also reflects a society's beliefs and customs, and expresses the member's sense of beauty and aesthetic
qualities. In some cultures, clothing is used for specific purposes, such as the expressions of prestige and decorated garments with golden crowns. Top officials in ancient dynasties had different animal prints embroidered on their gowns to demonstrate their power and rankings
within the system. Shamans wore clothes of extraordinary colors and patterns with brightly decorated accessories or beaded fringes. Archeological findings and the West. Beyond these differences between the East and the West at the global level,
idiosyncrasies are found among people from China, Japan, and Korea at the regional level. Although the physical appearance of East Asians is similar to one another, I can quickly discriminate Koreans from Chinese and Japanese people more by the way they dress than by facial features or other physical characteristics. The way we dress is likely to
underpin the mode of expressions of personal and group values.6.1.1.3 Everyday PracticeSocial psychologists have shown that Eastern culture is individual-centered (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, Bond & Minkov, 2010; Nisbett, 2003; see Intrinsic Differences below for more detail on collectivism versus
individualism). This idea is demonstrated in language use as well as other social and cultural practices. The use of the first-person singular pronouns "me" and "my" is generally discouraged in Asian culture. For example, the Koreans emphasize the plural concept and discourage the first-person singular use. The Koreans use the phrase "our mother
or "our brother" instead of "my mother" or "my brother" (when the singular form is used in Korea, it is understandable but sounds awkward). An extreme example for the reluctance of the first person singularity is found in the phrase "our lover" or "my lover" or "my lover" or "my lover" or "my sweet heart." This is an example of how language
expresses the speaker's ideology and value systems of a culture, especially the group-oriented mindsets of the Koreans (see Culture and Value Systems below for more detail). Another example of group orientation found in everyday practice in China, Japan, and Korea is the order of information arrangement for the sender and the receiver that we
place on the envelope for mail. The American way is to write the receiver's and sender's names first and then gradually move on to a larger unit ending with the state name or the country or city names) and
then gradually narrow it down to the sender or the receiver name on the envelope for mail. This example shows how our value systems are expressed in our everyday activities. 6.1.1.4 Language and ScriptEach language has its own unique characteristics. Given that it has been time-tested and endured for a long period of time, language is inextricably
connected to the speaker's mind and cognition (Lenneberg, 1967; Levinson, 2003). A debate over the causal path of effects from language would be a chicken-egg debate at the surface level, but what is obvious is its indispensable link between the language we speak and our mind. Benjamin Lee Whorf already
conceptualized this in the early 1940s. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis (i.e., language shapes thought) was dismissed prematurely and inadequately. Recent evidence from the acquisition of a second or additional language shapes thought) was dismissed prematurely and inadequately. Recent evidence from the acquisition of a second or additional language shapes thought) was dismissed prematurely and inadequately.
writing system or script we use in our everyday lives. Reading has become an integral part of our lives in the twenty-first century with the immense use of hypermedia and social media. Not a single day does pass by without reading traditional text. The habitual and long-term use of written text is likely to affect the undercurrents of our
cognition and the way we process information. Since language and script are continuously discussed throughout this book, no further elaboration on language and script is made in this section.6.1.2 Intrinsic Differences 6.1.2.1 Culture and Value SystemsOne's identity is largely a function of one's role and membership in a group or within a culture.
together to create group harmony and consensus, and seek benefits for the whole group over the individual. Viewing the group over the individual. Viewing the group as a super-organism, collectivists emphasize group cohesiveness and harmony, advocate common values, and demonstrate in-group orientation. In contrast, members of an individualistic society are oriented around the
values of self-determination, self-expression, freedom, and independence (Hofstede, 1980). According to Hofstede (1980), the construct of collectivism or individualism is neither right or wrong nor opposite, but it is considered two distinct values. Not every society or culture is at one end or the other end of the continuum of social values, but the
majority of social members tend to lean toward one over the other in many sectors of their lives. Dominant values in each society shape individuals' intricate software for the development of social values, communication styles, and shared consciousness. Although each nation's value systems can be traced back to its early history, a multitude of
recurring factors contribute to the foundation of the culture. A couple of proverbs poignantly deliver the contrast between collectivistic and individualistic norms. The Asian proverbs "The nail that stands out gets pounded down" and "Pointy stone meets chisel" are sharply juxtaposed with the American adage "The squeaky wheel gets the grease." This
contrast further signifies the difference between the East and the West. Standing out among group members or seeking personal attention and benefits is not encouraged in America. Hofstede (1980)
conducted a seminal cross-cultural study making comparisons along the continuum of collectivism and individualism was challenged by other theorists because the nature of culture is more complex than the binary unidimensional aspect
However, Hofstede's (1980) conceptualization is still influential and has a useful point in a sense that it is one way to explain the phenomenon. According to him, individuals who endorse a high degree of collectivism prioritize communal goals over individual goals. Its contrasting tendency is found in individualists. The criticism that collectivism
individualism is unidimensional has been addressed in a more recent study by Hofstede and colleagues. Hofstede, Bond, and Minkov (2010) have conducted one of the most comprehensive cross-cultural studies of 76 countries and scored each country on a scale of 1 to 120 (1 representing the lowest and 120 representing the highest) for six
dimensions using factor analysis. According to Hofstede (1980), culture are covered in the model of national culture as follows: (1) power distance, (2) individualism versus collectivism, (3) masculinity versus femininity, (4) uncertainty avoidance, (5)
long-term pragmatic orientation versus short-term normative orientation, and (6) indulgence versus restraint. The dimension of power distance concerns how a society handles inequity among people. It refers to the extent to which less powerful members of the society accept the unequal distribution of power within a culture and tolerate a
hierarchical order and the unequal distribution of power. Individualists are likely to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. They prioritize individual goals over communal goals. Collectivistic individual stend to have a low power distance rather than the unequal distribution of power. They prioritize individualism versus for the second scale of individual goals.
collectivism refers to the extent to which loosely-knit or close-knit social frameworks are accepted by social members. The self-image tends to be expressed in the use of the pronoun "I" or "we." Regarding the third dimension, masculinity
prefers competition, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success, while femininity favors cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and consensus. The fourth dimension of uncertainty avoidance refers to the extent to which social members bear uncertainty and ambiguity to cope with the future. It is usually manifested by rigid or
relaxed codes of belief, behavior, and attitude. The existential goals of long-term or short-term orientation, which is the fifth dimension, involve interpreting the past to deal with the challenges of the present and trugality, and tends to have futuristic
mentality by focusing on relational order, interrelatedness, perseverance, and thrift. It also maintains time-honored traditions and norms with a more conventional mentality emphasizing face-saving and personal stability, and the past and
present. The last dimension, indulgence versus restraint, refers to the degree to which members have control over desires and impulses or needs gratification using stringent social norms. Figure 6.1. shows a comparison of the
scale scores of the three East-Asian people and Americans by dimension. Consistent with Hofstede's (1980) original hypothesis, Chinese people show the highest level of power distance, while Americans show the lowest. High power distance tends to be observed in collectivistic cultures. The higher scale of the Chinese than those of the Japanese and
South Koreans may have to do with the difference in their political climates. Collectivistic people are less likely to challenge authority or people in power in order to protect group wellbeing and established order. Individualistic people are inclined to challenge authority, by calling for the legitimate use of power and a reduction of power differences.
between or among social classes. As shown in Figure 6.1., differences are found among the four groups of people across Hofstede's dimensions. Notable differences are found among the four groups of people across Hofstede's dimensions. Notable differences are found among the four groups of people across Hofstede's dimensions. Notable differences are found among the four groups of people across Hofstede's dimensions of Individualism, Indulgence, and Long-Term Orientation. Americans show higher scores on Individualism and
Indulgence, but lower scores on the Long-Term Orientation. Within the three cultural groups are not monolithic. Figure 6.1. Cultural Scales among Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Americans. Based on Hofstede's (1980) and
Hofsted et al.'s (2010) studies, Table 6.1. summarizes the characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic cultures the contrastive traits can be directly and indirectly observed among ethnic groups within the U.S. and among people from different continents around the globe. Under the framework of cultural differences between the East and the
West, empirical studies in relation to attention and perception, problem-solving strategies, and rhetorical structures are reviewed below. Table 6.1. Traits of Collectivistic and Individualistic CulturesDifferences in attentional and perceptual patterns between Easterners have been investigated in social psychology. Predominant findings are reviewed below. Table 6.1. Traits of Collectivistic and Individualistic CulturesDifferences in attention and perceptual patterns between Easterners and Westerners and Westerners and Individualistic CulturesDifferences in attention and perceptual patterns between Easterners and Westerners and Individualistic CulturesDifferences in attention and perceptual patterns between Easterners and Individualistic CulturesDifferences in attention and perceptual patterns between Easterners and Individualistic CulturesDifferences in attention and perceptual patterns between Easterners and Individualistic CulturesDifferences in attention and perceptual patterns between Easterners and Individualistic CulturesDifferences in attention and perceptual patterns are reviewed below. Table 6.1. Traits of Collectivistic and Individualistic CulturesDifferences are reviewed below.
converge on robust differences in cultural members' attention to the foreground and the background of the scene for Westerners are likely to pay attention to context-independent information in a nalytic fashion (Masuda &
Nisbett, 2001; Miyamoto, Nisbett, & Masuda, 2006; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). Specifically, Masuda and Nisbett (2001) showed Japanese and American students short video clips of underwater scenes including fish, small animals, water plants, and small rocks, and asked them to describe what appeared in the video clips. American
students primarily described the characteristics and motions of the fish (i.e., the focal object) in the foreground (e.g., large, rapidly moving, bright colored). In contrast, Japanese students paid more attention to the context and relationships between the fish and the context (e.g., background objects, location of the fish in relation to other objects)
East-Asians' tendency to focus more on the context is also found in conceptual tasks. Chinese and other East Asians are more likely to attribute behaviors to individuals' behaviors to situational conditions, while Americans tend to attribute individuals' behaviors to individuals' behaviors to individuals' behaviors to situational conditions, while Americans tend to attribute behaviors to individuals' behaviors to individuals' behaviors to situational conditions, while Americans tend to attribute behaviors to individuals' behaviors to individuals' behaviors to individuals' behaviors to situational conditions, while Americans tend to attribute behaviors to individuals' behaviors to individuals' behaviors to situational conditions, while Americans tend to attribute behaviors to individuals' behaviors to situational conditions, while Americans tend to attribute behaviors to individuals' behaviors to situational conditions, while Americans tend to attribute behaviors to situational conditions, while Americans tend to attribute behavior to attrib
Norenzayan, 1999). This line of findings has been consistent with the evidence from neuroscientific research (see Goto, Ando, Huang, Yee, & Lewis, 2012). Using the change-blindness paradigm (i.e., people are at times blind to changes happening in the
environment), Masuda and Nisbett (2006) investigated how perception and cognition are qualitatively different between East Asians and Westerners using still photos and animated vignettes with changes in the focal objects than in the
periphery or context, while East Asians were sensitive to contextual changes by attending to the entire field and relations among objects within the field. Americans were less sensitive to situational cues or constraints on a speaker's behavior than East
 Asians. Asians tended to show the opposite. These results suggest that cultural variations exist as a function of basic perceptual processes. As an extension of Masuda and Nisbett's (2006) study, Miyamoto, Nisbett, and Masuda (2006) conducted a study that examined the role of the physical environment in perception using still pictures of scenes from
small, medium, and large cities in Japan and the U.S. Both objective and subjective analyses of the pictures showed that Japanese settings have more ambiguous contours of buildings and more complexity in settings than American counterparts. Consistent with previous findings, Japanese students were more attentive to the context than were
European Americans (Study 1). When the pictures of the three cities were primed with Japanese and American students who were primed with Japanese settings paid more attention to contextual features than those who were primed with American scenes. The researchers interpreted
the results as the physical environmental effects on perceptual patterns. The implication of this result is important in that Miyamoto et al. (2006) have identified the physical setting as a (causal) factor that affects (or reinforces) the patterns of perception. More studies are needed to corroborate the findings of this study. If Miyamoto et al. 's claim is
correct, it is possible that reading, in which we pay more conscious attention and effort in a daily activity, would exert a greater effect than scenes due to more cognizant attention to buildings or physical environments unless we have specific intention to do so. Easterners
collective and interdependent tendency is consistent with their worldview and beliefs that things are not monolithic. Westerners' individualistic and independent traits accord not only with their belief that they can control the object's behavior because all events are governed
by rules (Nisbett, 2003). The force or drive that makes differences between the East and the West is a self-reinforcing homeostatic system that is related to the fundamental nature of the mind (Nisbett, 2003). According to Nisbett (2003), the effect is a domino-like sequence as in "the social practices promote the worldviews; the world views dictate
the appropriate thought processes; and the thought processes both justify the worldviews and support the social practices" (p. xx). In a similar vein, my doctoral students and I are conducting a cross-cultural study of argument structures and descriptive tendencies using a picture book (Sun, Luo, & Pae, 2020). A picture book, Frog, Where Are You?1,
was shown to adult native speakers of Chinese, Korean, and English to examine how these language groups conceptualize the story based on a series of pictures. One of assumptions is that the two Asian groups would use more hedges, such as sort of, a little, kind of, maybe, and seem, than does the American counterpart. Hedge words in the forms of
adjectives, adverbs, or clauses are a tool used to soften the degree of confidence, passion, or tension associated with an expression or to express politeness. They can be viewed as a form of euphemism or a tool of epistemic modality. Asian students seem to use more hedge words in order to mitigate assertiveness in a message, which accords with the
predominant Asians' tendencies mentioned earlier. This is consistent with the finding that Japanese speakers show "greater reliance on what is arguably as general a noun as could be chosen" with the overuse of thing instead of specifying what it is (Schanding & Pae, 2018), as shown in an argumentative essay written by a native Japanese speaker:
 "The majority of Japanese may think that it is not [a] good thing that public matter assumes religious image and [that] also Japan becomes a religious nation" (bold in original, p. 72). Consistent with Masuda and Nisbett's (2006) study, the results of our study also show that Asian students are more likely to describe the surroundings of the scene than
the main characters' activities or attributes. For example, in the description of a scene depicting a boy (main character) and a dog looking at an empty jar in the bedroom, a Korean participant stated the following: "It's dark outside because there's a moon and the window is a little open. There's one bed with the lights on. Beside the kid, there's a
piece of clothes." This participant's account is filled with background descriptions rather than the main character's unexpected finding that his pet frog has run away (Sun et al., 2020). A typological difference is also found. The Chinese and Korean languages are topic-prominent languages, whereas English is a subject-prominent language. Asian
students tend not to produce an extraposed subject clause (i.e., a subject clause (i.e., a subject clause that is moved to the end of the sentence) by using the nonreferential subject "it." For example, the sentence "Finding the frog was difficult" tends to be produced by a
native speaker of English as a standard expression (Sun et al., 2020). In most cases, the subject in Japanese and Korean is not mentioned in the sentence "I love you" can be understood by the speaker and the listener with the verb only ("love") without the subject and the object
in Korean. The subject omission is possible in Korean and Japanese because who does what to whom is decipherable without mentioning within a particular context. This is different from English, which has the more rigid sentence structure in that the subject is mandatory except for imperative sentences. The omission of the subject (and object at
times) shows Asians' focus on the situation rather than the actor or agent of the verb action. This is consistent with findings of previous studies showing Asians' attention being placed more on contexts than main characters (Masuda & Nisbett, 2006).6.1.2.3 Problem Solving: Relation versus CategorizationReasoning and problem solving styles are
 found to be different across cultures as well. Research shows that East Asians prefer identifying relationships in information processing, while Westerners prefer categorizing objects (Nisbett & Miyamoto, 2005; Ii, Zhang & Nisbett, 2004). The tendency of East Asians to focus on relationships between objects and events
as well as contexts is consistent with previous findings. European Americans tend to decontextualize objects from their contexts in an orderly way (Chua, Boland, & Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett, 2001). Ji, et al. (2004) conducted two
mini-studies of categorization. In Study 1, they included four groups of participants including speakers of (1) Chinese residing in the U.S., (3) Hong Kong and Singapore Chinese in the U.S., and (4) European Americans. The researchers presented to participants a set of three words (e.g.,
monkey, panda, and banana; postman, uniform, and policeman) and asked them to find which two of the three words were most closely related to each other. Results showed that Chinese bilinguals tended to organize objects in a more relational way (i.e., monkeys eat bananas) than in a categorical way (i.e., monkeys and pandas are both animals)
regardless of the language in which they were tested (i.e., Chinese or English). When Chinese was the societal language were more likely to focus on relations when being tested in Chinese than in English. However, Chinese students
from Hong Kong and Singapore where both Chinese and English were spoken as the societal languages tended to be equally relational when they were tested in Chinese and English. In Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 1, such that either relational or categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 1, such that either relational or categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 1, such that either relational or categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task, but it was slightly different from that of Study 2, they also used a categorization task.
set of three words (e.g., carrot, rabbit, and eggplant; teacher, doctor, and homework) with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that Chinese in Hong Kong. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed the findings of Study 1, the re
identifying relationships in Chinese than in English. In contrast, Hong Kong Chinese and English with no language effect found in Chinese students from Mainland China and Taiwan. The two
groups of Chinese students seem to differentiate categorizations depending on the language they use at hand. They categorized the word stimuli in a more relational way when they were tested in English. The same results were found regardless of the localities of the U.S. or China. However, the language effect
disappeared in the bilingual groups from Hong Kong and Singapore. The researchers interpreted the age of English acquisition and the living environment as the sources of the difference found in the Chinese participants between the two Chinese-spoken localities (Mainland and Taiwan), which showed a language effect, and the dual-language-spoken
localities (Hong Kong and Singapore where both Chinese and English are spoken), which showed no language effect. Westerners' tendency to pay attention to categorization as a way of problem-solving strategies leads to the assumption that they use rules and principles or follow linear logic to understand the properties of objects and behaviors of
animals and humans. Easterners focus on relationships and functions within the context, this comparison gives rise to important implications for understanding the nature of
thought, thought processes, and cognitive tools that each cultural group uses to make sense of the world. Overall, these research findings furthermore offer a global understanding of the sense of self, the mind's workings, and belief systems between Westerners and Easterners. 6.1.2.4 Rhetorical Structures: Linear vs. RoundaboutKaplan (1983)
observes that "speakers of different languages use different languages use different devices to present information, to establish the relationships among ideas, to show centrality of one idea as opposed to another, to select the most effective means of representation" (pp. 140-141). This observation is summarized in the notion of contrastive rhetoric (a.k.a., intercultural
rhetoric), indicating that, when an individual expresses his/her ideas in a second language (L2), the individual's first language and culture have an impact on L2 writing in terms of discourse structures and the ways in which an individual's
rhetorical structures influence argument or rhetorical patterns in L2. Studies of contrastive rhetoric examine similarities and differences in writing across cultures. Contrastive rhetoric has been criticized for its theoretical foundation and methodological practice as well as overgeneralization. Kubota and Lehner (2004) assert that "...contrastive
rhetoric has tended to construct static, homogeneous, and apolitical images of the rhetorical patterns of various written languages" (p. 9). With the publication of Contrastive Rhetoric has been reinvigorated in L2 writing. Regardless of its criticism for
oversimplification and skewed use of adult subjects, Kaplan (1966) had a valid point in cross-cultural differences of rhetorical or narrative structures. According to him, English speakers (including Germanic languages, such as German, Dutch, Norwegian, and Danish) tend to communicate in a direct and linear way without much digression. In
contrast, Asian people are likely to beat around the bush to avoid a direct statement and to take various perspectives into consideration. The notion of contrastive rhetoric is consistent with empirical findings that have been reviewed in this chapter. Hall (1989) also noted that collectivists tend to subscribe to a high-context communication style relying
on relationship dimensions. Reading between the lines is at times necessary for Asians because beating around the bush is not uncommon. Being direct or getting right to the point can be regarded as disrespectfulness or being rude. In contrast, individualistic individuals are likely to have a low-context communication style, showing a tendency of
precise, direct, and specific modes of communication. The ability to articulate thoughts and ideas eloquently is encouraged in individualistic cultures. The explicit mode of communication among individualists is used focusing on content in order to avoid misunderstandings and confusions between the speaker and the listener. To summarize, the
differences between the Easterners and Westerners and Westerners and Westerners and the modes of inquiry, fairly consistent findings have been accumulated to indicate robust differences existing between
Easterners and Westerners. In the following section, I attempt to tease apart reasons behind the difference from several perspectives. Page 2Dimension Easterners Westerners and Westerners and Westerners. In the following section, I attempt to tease apart reasons behind the difference from several perspectives.
KnowledgeInductiveDeductiveReasoningPropositionLogicApplication of logical rulesNot likelyUse of logical rulesComposition of the environmentIncontrollable/AdaptableControllable/IncordeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveDeductiveD
of the environmentFocus on objectsDebateAvoid conflict and dissonanceThe free marketplace of ideasApplication of dialectical approachesSeek the Middle WayInsist on correctness of one's beliefCausal InferenceContext-centeredSpecific item-centeredScience and MathematicsAlgebra and ArithmeticGeometryMedicineHolistic approach; Prevention-
orientedAnalytic approach; Intervention-focusedConflict ResolutionIntermediaries; Hostility reduction and compromiseLegal confrontations; Right or wrong and principle of justiceRhetoric StructureRoundaboutLinearReligionBoth/And Orientation; Pantheism; Cycles and recurrencesRight/Wrong mentality; Monotheism It's simply not the case that
'Eastern' cultures are relationally-minded, while 'Western' societies are individualisticThe idea that people in the 'East' and in the 'West' differ psychologically in important ways has been studied for decades and popularised in countless articles and books. You might have read that, compared with East Asians, people in North America tend to place
more value on being unique, for example, or that they are more inclined to focus on their own positive qualities. Indeed, various aspects of 'self-construal' - that is, how people see themselves in relation to others - have been reported to vary in this way, with some cultures, notably in East Asia, showing a more interdependent emphasis (on how people see
are related), and others, such as those in the US and Canada, having a more independent emphasis (focused on being distinct and independent). This work has helped to demonstrate that psychologists can't assume that a finding in one part of the world will necessarily hold up in another. Such differences are also suggested to have various important
consequences for how people in different cultures behave individually, such as whether they are prepared to speak out, and collectively, such as in the way a community responds to disaster. But cultural psychologists have warned that relying too much on a binary, East-versus-West view risks oversimplifying the reality of cross-cultural psychological
differences. The originators of self-construal theory, Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, have themselves highlighted the importance of other kinds of cross-culture, and overlap across cultures, in terms of how people define themselves.
Tantalisingly, there is also a great deal of underexplored psychological ground outside of the East-West framework. With a recent crop of papers, researchers have aimed to capture more of this complexity. And their findings give plenty of reasons to think that many cultures don't fit into neat patterns of either interdependent or independent thinking
For instance, for their large study published earlier this year, an international team led by Ayse Uskul, now at the University of Sussex in England, compared not only participants in the US, the UK, Japan and Korea, but also people in societies ringing the Mediterranean Sea: Egypt, Greece, the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, Italy,
Lebanon, Turkey and Spain. The team used a variety of measures designed to test for evidence of independent orientations. Their findings challenge the usual interdependent orientations. Their findings challenge the usual interdependent orientations. Their findings challenge the usual interdependent orientations.
independence ... and interdependence'. For example, in response to some questions about how they viewed themselves in relation to others, the Mediterranean participants gave more independent responses, on average, than either East Asians or Anglo-Westerners - such as by indicating that they liked being different from (as opposed to similar to)
other people; that they tended to rely on themselves (rather than on others); and that they favoured self-expression over preserving harmony in relationships. Yet on other points, the Mediterranean-based participants gave relatively interdependent answers - for example, on questions about connection to others (eg., 'If someone in your family achieves
something, you feel proud, as if you had achieved something yourself'). Considering what might help explain this mixed pattern of results, the researchers drew on previous theorising about the role of honour in Mediterranean cultures. In this view, honour is treated within these cultures as a valued resource that reflects 'both a person's own self-
worth as well as the worth assigned to the person by others in the society'. This might contribute to some interdependent ways of being as well as some interdependent ones, they suggested. The researchers aren't out to propose a sweeping 'Mediterranean identity', Uskul tells me. There was significant variation in results among the different participant
groups from the region. But Uskul notes that, on the measures she used, the Mediterranean samples were more similar to each other than they were to the 'Western' or 'Eastern' samples. They didn't fit neatly on either side of the binary. Also complicating an East-West perspective is a 2022 paper co-authored by Kuba Krys at the Polish Academy of
Sciences and his colleagues. The team analysed their own and others' previously collected data to explore how people from East Asian and Western countries. 'Again we have this pattern, where people in Latin American societies seem to
endorse some kinds of independence and some kinds of interdependence,' says Vivian Vignoles at the University of Sussex in England, who was a co-author both on this paper and on the Mediterranean paper. Whereas Latin American participants tended to rate as relatively independence and some kinds of interdependence and some kinds of interdependen
reliance and toward being different from others, they also tended to score high on, for example, receptiveness to other people's influence (considered a dimension of interdependence). You may like There were 'differences of nuance' with the Western samples, but 'it's very clear that Latin American societies do not have similar models of the self to
East Asian societies,' says Vignoles. 'And that obviously goes against the traditional West-versus-the-rest binary.' In their paper, the researchers considered various cultural features - such as modes of subsistence, religious and philosophical traditions, colonial history, and more - that they think could potentially help account for tendencies toward
certain forms of independence or interdependence or interdependence. The analysis by Vignoles and his colleagues also challenges the seemingly commonsense assumption that cultures that are deemed 'collectivistic' (prioritising the group over the individual) - such as in Latin America, Asia and elsewhere - will promote interdependent self-construal, rather than
independent self-construal. The Latin American participants showed their mix of independence, despite living in cultures that are usually characterised as collectivistic. The mingling of 'independent' and 'interdependent' are usually characterised as collectivistic. The mingling of 'independent' are usually characterised as collectivistic. The mingling of 'independent' are usually characterised as collectivistic. The mingling of 'independent' are usually characterised as collectivistic. The mingling of 'independent' are usually characterised as collectivistic.
way I see them, they are useful umbrella terms [for exploring cross-cultural differences], Vignoles says. But neither should be considered a monolithic feature of cultures, he suggests. 'As soon as you think that independence is "a thing", or interdependence is "a thing", then you're edging along the wrong route.' Each is an abstract collection of
variables that, as the research shows, don't always go together. Igor Grossmann, a psychologist at the University of Waterloo in Canada, who conducts research in cultural psychology but wasn't involved in either of these new studies, has some reservations about what can be gleaned from the research on constructs such as independence and
interdependence. One is a concern about the measurements that researchers have tended to use, including self-report questionnaires: 'There is always a layer of bias - ie, how people would like to present themselves in this vs that environment may distort the results,' he says. He also suggests that 'stories about why cultural differences between
different regions in the Americas, Middle East or elsewhere emerge are just that - stories.' Most scholars, he says, lack the data to support claims about putative factors such as subsistence modes or religious groups. Nevertheless, Grossmann agrees that it makes sense to go beyond 'weird dichotomies' such as subsistence modes or religious groups. Nevertheless, Grossmann agrees that it makes sense to go beyond 'weird dichotomies' such as the East-versus-West binary in cultural
psychology. Even a term such as 'Western' is often defined in different ways by different people, he notes. A core takeaway from the recent developments in the field, then, is the need to be wary about dividing the world into simplified cultural categories (even seemingly innocuous ones) and assuming that groups will tend to land on one side or the
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other of theoretical borderlines. In the ways we view ourselves, as in other domains, humans are varied and complex. 'There aren't just two different kinds of people in the world, us and them,' Vignoles says. 'We are much more diverse - but, at the same time, much more similar to each other - than is often realised.