

“Express yourself” : Culture and the Effect of Self-Expression on Choice

Heejung, S. K. & Sherman, D. K. (2007), *JPSP*, 92, 1-11

BBS 2/7
Asuka Komiya



1



abstract

- 自分を表現する (e.g. 発言する) ということにおく価値は、文化的に異なると予測される。
 - 例えば、欧米では権利や好みを主張することは当然なのに対し、東アジアでは主張することが好まれることはない。
- この研究の目的は、**自己表現の大切さと機能**に関する文化的に共有された仮定を検討することにある。



Cultural Self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)

- Different cultures often hold different assumptions about what are the core features of the self.

	Definition of self	Behavior
Independent self (Western, U.S.)	Separate or Distinct entity	determined by a set of internal attributes
Interdependent self (East Asia)	Relational entity	determined by his or her social relationships

Fiske et al.(1998)



Culture and Self-Expression

- In the U.S., expression of thoughts and ideas is a common and habitual practice.
 - e.g. political beliefs
 - Through words and actions, people reveal their internal attributes.
- Because,
 - Through these self-expressive acts, they define who they are by making their thoughts tangible.



How & why?

- Self-perception theory (Bem, 1972)
 - People come to know their own internal states is through observing their actions and behaviors.
- the act of expression may help inform people of what they really feel and think, furthermore, who they are.
 - Verbal expression of attitudes makes people believe in those attitudes more (Higgins & Rholes, 1978).



Culture and Self-Expression

- In the East Asia, meaningful aspects of the self are social and external, such as **roles and relationships**, rather than private and internal, such as **belief and value**.
 - So expression of thoughts and ideas is less significant in defining the self.
- In this context, self-expression may not convey the core aspects of the self.





Culture and Self-Expression

	Meaningful aspects	Self expression
Independent self (Western, U.S.)	Beliefs and values (internal attributes)	can help them inform of who they are
Interdependent self (East Asia)	Roles and relationships (external attributes)	Less significant



Choice as Self-Expression

- One way in which people express themselves is through their choices.
 - Through choices, people can make their preferences and values observable.
 - Does choice have a self-expressive function?
 - Are there any cultural differences?



Choice as Self-Expression

- The free-choice dissonance research paradigm (Brehm, 1956)
 - American people choose objects that are more self-expressive or chosen object, whereas East Asian people do not. (Heine & Lehman, 1997)
 - Moreover, college-educated participants show greater spreading of liking between alternatives than less educated participants. (Snibbe & Markus, 2004)

They need more self-expressions!!

These cultural differences suggest that "choice has a self-expressive function."



Overview of Studies

- Cultural differences in the importance of self-expression (Study1 and Study2).
 - Hypothesis: for the importance of self-expression,
 - European American > East Asian
- How actual expression affects psychological processes (Study3 and Study4).
 - Hypothesis: the expression of choice would make European Americans more invested in their choices than East Asian,
 - but this difference would be mediated by the degree to self-expression.



Study1: Methods

- Participants: 44 Korean, 53 European American
- Questionnaire: two questions
 - "Why do you think the ability to speak is important/unimportant?"
 - "What do you think is the purpose of language?"
 - The survey was handed out in class as part of a larger questionnaire packet.
 - Participants took the questionnaires home, and turned them in at the next class.



Study1: Coding schema

- First: two coding (yes or no)
 - Internal attributes (e.g. beliefs, thoughts, and feelings)
 - Relationships with others
- Second: grouped into four functions (yes or no)
 - Expression of internal attributes
 - Self-expression
 - Accommodation of relationship
 - Communication with others





Study1: Results

- The data was combined because the two questions were highly overlapping in terms of contents.
- If a participant mentioned one of the four main functions, then his or her response would be rated "yes".

13



Study1: Results

	Internal attributes	Self-expression	Relation-ship	Communi-cation
European American	80%	25%	2%	39%
Korean	31%	9%	14%	68%

Hypothesis was supported.

14



Study2

- The differences between Study1&2

1. Study2 featured a comparison between **East Asian Americans** and **European Americans**.

2. Closed-ended questionnaire format, a measure of "how important people think the expression of their thoughts is", was used in Study 2.

15



Study2:Methods

- Participants: 63 East Asian Americans, 103 European Americans
- Materials. :
 - The Value of Expression Questionnaire
 - Composed of 11 items
 - Behaviors
 - Beliefs
 - Using an 8-point scale.
 - Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994)
 - Participants received the questionnaire as a part of a larger questionnaire.

16



Study2: Results

- Reliabilities: $\alpha = .64$ (behaviors) and $.62$ (beliefs)

	Behaviors	Beliefs
European American	5.54	5.76
East Asian American	4.71	5.36

The results supported the hypothesis and replicated the results of Study 1.

17



Study2: Results

Both VEQ components were positively correlated with independence and negatively correlated with interdependence.

Correlations Between Independence and Interdependence in Study 2

Scale component	1	3	4
1. Behavior	—		
2. Belief	.39**	—	
3. Independence	.44**	-.35**	—
4. Interdependence	-.16*	-.07	.19*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

These results support the idea that the emphasis placed on self-expression is a feature of an individualist value system.

18



Study3

- The purpose of Study3:

to examine the effect of expression on how much people are committed in their choices as a function of cultural background.

- Through comparing
 - their expressed choice with privately choice.

19



Study3

- The hypothesis of Study3:

European American: They would derogate the less desirable choice more when they express their choice than when they do not.

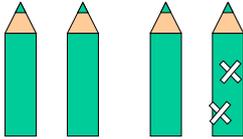
East Asian American: They would not be affected by expression of their choice.

20



Study3: Method

- Participants: 55 European Americans, 35 East Asian Americans
- “Research in Consumer Behavior”
 - “Of the four pens, decide which pen you like the most. You will get to keep the pen you liked the most.”



21



Study3: Method

- Writing condition: They have to write down their choices.
- No-writing condition: they cannot write down their choices.
- “Sorry, the only pen we have is this one. Could you evaluate this one?”

The target pen (less desirable)

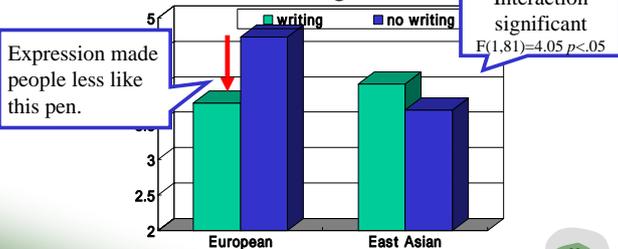
Dependent measure: four items
“How much do you like the pen?”
1: not at all-8: very much

22



Study3: Results

- The four evaluation items had high reliability ($\alpha = .83$), and were combined into single measure



23



Study4

- The purpose of Study4:

to examine whether individual differences in the extent to which people value expressing their thoughts would mediate the cultural findings of Study3.

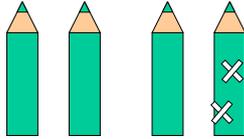
- To examine this, VEQ (Study 2) and the same paradigm as Study 3 were used in Study 4.

24



Study4: Method

- Participants: 50 European Americans, 40 East Asian Americans
- The procedure was the same one as Study3.

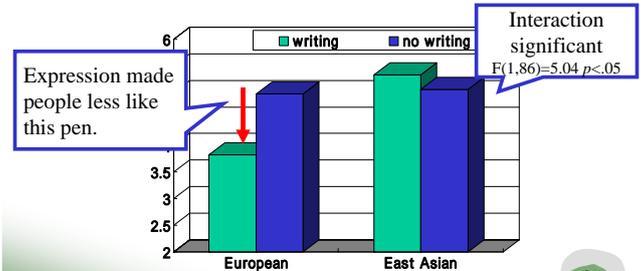


25



Study4: Results

- The results were replicated.



26



Study4: Results

- Regression analysis
 - The behavior component of the value of expression = -.15
 - Instruction variable = -.02
 - The interaction term = **-.30****

27



Study 4: Results

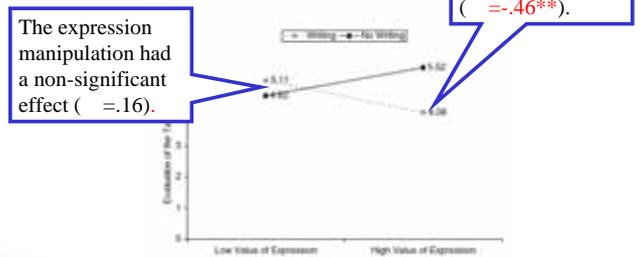


Figure 3. Liking for target pen as a function of value of expression and instruction (no writing vs. writing) in Study 4. Points are predicted values on the basis of values plotted one standard deviation above and below the mean on value of expression.

28



Study4: Results

Table 2
Least Squares Regression Results for Mediated Moderation in Study 4

Predictor	Regression 1 criterion: Evaluation of target pen		Regression 2 criterion: Value of expression (behavior)		Regression 3 criterion: Evaluation of target pen	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
Instruction	-.14	-1.37	.15	1.66	-.17	-1.71
Culture	-.25	-2.50*	.51	5.61*	-.30	-3.48*
Instruction \times Culture	-.23	-2.32*	.09	0.99	-.11	-0.96
Value of expression					.13	1.13
Instruction \times Value of Expression					-.25	-2.10*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

29



Summary

- East Asians/East Asian Americans and European Americans differ in the extent to which they value self-expression.
- This difference in the value of expression leads to differences in how people from each culture are affected by the act of expression.
 - European Americans: a means to commit, establish, and affirm who they are.

30



In independent-self culture

- Many studies have shown the positive psychological effects of expressing one's internal states.
 - Various studies in the United States that have specifically examined the effect of verbal expression have found that verbal expression can be physically and psychologically beneficial (Pennebaker et al.1988).

31



In interdependent-self culture

- People from East Asian cultures are more affected by the expression of the social attributes than by the expression of internal attributes.
- Direct verbal expression may not be the most appropriate mode of communicating one's social roles.

32



研究的興味に関して

- 文化心理学的研究の中では、比較的、認知プロセスまで落とした研究だな、と思いました。
 - 行動 価値、価値 行動のつながりをきちんと示した、という意味で。
- 今コーディング中の後悔研究の中で、「言わなければよかった」が出てこない理由が少しわかりました。
 - アメリカ人は「もっと理解してあげればよかった」が多いのです。

33



実践的興味に関して

- とある先輩曰く、「choiceができない、あるいは黙っていると、バカに見られる」と。
 - バカなことでもいいからとにかくしゃべれ、と言われました。
 - その背後には、こんな背景があったのか、と少し納得しました。
 - アメリカはサンドイッチから大学Tシャツの種類まで本当にchoiceの多い国です…。

34