MORAL JUDGMENT AND COLLECTIVISM:
A CULTURAL COMPARISON AMONG
COMMUNITY AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STUDENTS
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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1997

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

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Abstract

Differences in moral judgment, with respect to individualism and collectivism, were investigated. One hundred and eighty-five undergraduate community college students completed the Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT-2) and Triandis’ (1995) measure of the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct. This study asked the following questions: (1) What is the nature of the relation of moral reasoning to individualism and collectivism? (2) What is the nature of the relation of moral reasoning to the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct? Although no significant associations of moral reasoning were found with general individualism/collectivism, significant associations were found with some of the specific dimensions of the IC construct. Vertical Individualism and Vertical Collectivism were associated with lower levels of moral reasoning and Horizontal Individualism was associated with higher levels of moral reasoning. These findings suggest that the horizontal and vertical relationships of the IC construct may be a significant factor in moral reasoning, a factor that had not been considered in previous research.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. ii

List of Tables .......................................................................................................................... vi

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................ vii

Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 1

   Purpose of Study ..................................................................................................................... 1

   Significance of Study ............................................................................................................. 3

   Research Questions ............................................................................................................... 4

Review of the Literature .......................................................................................................... 5

   Moral Judgment Development .............................................................................................. 5

      Kohlberg’s Six-Stage Theory ............................................................................................. 5

      Rest’s Schema Theory ......................................................................................................... 12

   Cross-Cultural Findings of Moral Judgment Development ...................................................... 18

   Individualism and Collectivism ............................................................................................ 20

   Individualism and Collectivism in Moral Judgment ................................................................ 26

Method ................................................................................................................................... 32

   Participants ............................................................................................................................ 32

   Measures ............................................................................................................................... 33

      Demographics .................................................................................................................... 33

      Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT-2) ........................................................................... 34

      Triandis’ Scale of Individualism/Collectivism ................................................................... 38
Procedure .................................................................................................................. 40
Results ....................................................................................................................... 42
Interrelations among Variables .............................................................................. 42
Moral Reasoning and Demographic Variables ...................................................... 42
Individualism-Collectivism (IC) Construct and Demographic Variables .......... 44
DIT-2 Indexes and Triandis Scores ........................................................................ 46
Predicting Moral Reasoning with Dimensions of the IC Construct .................... 49
Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting the N2 Index ......................................... 49
Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting the P% Index ....................................... 52
Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting the Maintain Norms Schema .............. 54
Discussion .................................................................................................................. 56
Moral Judgment and Acculturation ...................................................................... 56
Moral Judgment and the Individualism/Collectivism Construct ......................... 57
Limitations of the Study .......................................................................................... 62
Implications for Further Research ....................................................................... 63
Implications for Counselling .................................................................................. 63
Summary .................................................................................................................... 64
References ............................................................................................................... 65
Appendix A Demographic Questionnaire ............................................................... 73
Appendix B Sample Story From DIT-2: The Famine .............................................. 75
Appendix C Triandis' Measure of Individualism/Collectivism .............................. 76
Appendix D Introduction Letter

81
List of Tables

Table 1  The Six Stages of Moral Judgment ................................................................. 6
Table 2  The Seven Types Representing Schema and Schema Mix ............................... 17
Table 3  Correlations Among Moral Reasoning and Demographic Variables .................. 43
Table 4  Correlations Between Triandis Variables and Demographic Variables ............... 45
Table 5  Correlations Between Moral Reasoning and Triandis Variables ........................ 48
Table 6  Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting N2 ........... 51
Table 7  Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting P% ........... 53
Table 8  Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Maintain Norms ........................................................................................................... 55
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Introduction

Purpose of Study

In developing a theory to explain or predict human behaviour, one of the most criticized and difficult requirements is the generalizability to individuals from different cultures. In modern psychology, cultural universality is typically one of the first aspects of a theory to be examined and is always in question. The difficulty lies within the reality that all cultures cannot be tested to verify a theory to absolute certainty. Snarey (1985) indicated that examining and comparing specific types of different cultures in a variety of settings are more important in cultural research than comparing an infinite number of cultures, although the question of which and how many cultures need to be considered remains. The specialized field of moral psychology is no exception as Lawrence Kohlberg’s (1969) stage model of moral judgment has been, and continues to be, the topic of cultural debate.

Kohlberg (1969, 1971) stated that his stage model of moral judgment, or moral reasoning, would apply to people of different cultures and countries where all individuals use the same basic moral categories, concepts, or principles, and that all individuals move through the same order of stage development, though the rate and endpoint of development may vary across persons and cultures. Specifically, every person, both male and female, should develop moral reasoning in a fixed sequence of stages from a preconventional to a postconventional level of moral maturity, regardless of cultural variance. Taking into consideration that his initial twenty-year longitudinal study consisted of fifty-eight adolescent American males (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983), Kohlberg’s claims of universality have stimulated controversies that continue to generate an endless amount of research.
Collections of studies have examined Kohlberg's theory of moral judgment as it applies to groups of different cultures (e.g., Bergling, 1981; Dien, 1982; Edwards, 1981; Ji, 1997; Loo, 1998; Moon, 1986; Nisan & Kohlberg, 1982; Park & Johnson, 1984; Snarey, 1985; Snarey, Reimer, & Kohlberg, 1985; Walker, 1988; Walker & Moran, 1991). Although a number of these studies provided some evidence to support the universality claim (Edwards, 1975; Gorsuch & Barnes, 1973; Moir, 1974; Nisan & Kohlberg, 1982; Park & Johnson, 1984; Snarey et al., 1985; Triel, Edwards, & Kohlberg, 1978; White, 1975; White, Bushnell, & Regnemer, 1978; Walker, 1991), others researchers, specifically looking at Asian cultures, have determined otherwise (Bergling, 1981; Dien, 1982; Edwards, 1981; Ji, 1997; Loo, 1998; Moon, 1986; Park & Johnson, 1984; Snarey, 1985). Specifically, they have suggested that Asian participants would achieve lower scores of moral judgment than their North American counterparts.

One of the more frequently offered explanations for the differences in moral reasoning found between Asian and North American groups concern issues surrounding individualistic and collectivistic societies (Dien, 1982; Ma, 1988). Critics suggest that Kohlberg's stage theory of moral judgment development, which was developed in the predominantly individualistic United States, may be biased toward people with an individualistic perspective (Dien, 1982; Hogan, 1975; Ma, 1988; Simpson, 1974; Snarey, 1985; Sullivan, 1977). These researchers have identified and outlined flaws in the stage theory. Specifically, they argue that Kohlberg's postconventional level does not accurately represent the moral values of some non-Western cultures. A collectivistic perspective has been considered to be one of these concepts, and a handful of researchers have subsequently
attempted to establish if differences exist in moral development between individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Ji, 1997; Loo, 1998).

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relation between moral reasoning and the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct. This study attempted to examine if a collectivistic perspective, which is believed to be more prevalent in Asian cultures, is associated with the moral maturity of an individual as measured by Kohlberg’s moral stage model. Furthermore, researchers (Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) have defined specific cultural patterns of the IC construct that emphasize horizontal and vertical social relationships. Previous research has not examined the impact of these relationships of the IC construct with moral reasoning. Therefore, this study also attempted to examine the relation of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the IC construct with moral reasoning.

Significance of Study

Recognizing that a limited number of studies have investigated the relation between moral judgment development and the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct, this study will add to the data that has been accumulated to date. Although some studies have examined the cultural universality of Kohlberg’s theory (Bergling, 1981; Dien, 1982; Edwards, 1981; Moon, 1986; Nisan & Kohlberg, 1982; Park & Johnson, 1984; Snarey, 1985; Snarey, Reimer, & Kohlberg, 1985; Walker, 1988; Walker & Moran, 1991), at the present time there only has been a handful of studies that empirically examined the relation of moral judgment to the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct (Ji, 1997; Loo, 1998). Many researchers have suggested links, but additional empirical research is required to either
support or counter their claims. This study attempted to examine factors that may contribute to differences in moral judgment scores between specific cultures, in order to address the question whether or not Kohlberg's stage theory adequately represents the moral ideals of collectivistic societies.

Research Questions

In order to expand on previous research findings, this study asked the following questions: (1) What is the nature of the relation of moral reasoning to individualism and collectivism? (2) What is the nature of the relation of moral reasoning to the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct?
Review of the Literature

This section provides a review of two theories of moral judgment, the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct, and how moral judgment and the IC construct interact.

Moral Judgment Development

Kohlberg's Six-Stage Theory.

Kohlberg and his colleagues (e.g., Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983) tested the reliability and validity of Kohlberg's stage theory of moral judgment on a twenty-year longitudinal study consisting of American males. At the beginning of the study, participants' age ranged from 10 to 16 years old. Most of the participants' moral reasoning at this point was rated within the earlier, more primitive, stages. At the end of the study, the researchers found that most participants advanced to higher, more advanced stages of moral judgment. From this and subsequent studies, Kohlberg further refined his six-stage theory of moral judgment development. Based on the cognitive developmental perspective, Kohlberg speculated that individuals progress through up to three levels of moral development. As outlined in Table 1, the three levels are subdivided into six stages of an invariant sequence (Colby et al., 1983; Kohlberg, 1984).
Table 1
The Six Stages of Moral Judgment (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 174)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>What is Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation</td>
<td>To avoid breaking rules backed by punishment; obedience for its own sake; avoiding physical damage to persons and property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Instrumental purpose and exchange</td>
<td>Following rules only when it is to one’s immediate personal interest; acting to meet one’s own interest and letting others do the same; right is what’s fair, an equal exchange, an agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: Mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity</td>
<td>Living up to what is expected by people close to you or what people generally expect of people in your role; “being good” is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4: Social system and conscience</td>
<td>Fulfilling the actual duties to which you have agreed; laws are always to be upheld except in extreme cases where they conflict with other fixed social duties; right is also contributing to society, the group, or institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: Social contract, utility, and individual rights</td>
<td>Being aware that people hold a variety of values and opinions, that most values and rules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 6: Universal ethical principles

are relative to your group; these rules should usually be upheld because they are the social contract.

Following self-chosen ethical principles; particular laws or social agreements are usually valid because they rest on such principles; when laws violate these principles, one acts in accordance with the principle; principles are universal principles of justice: the equity of human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.
Kohlberg stated that the preconventional level of morality is based on the motivation to avoid punishment and gain rewards. Specifically, in Stage 1 individuals obey authority figures, typically parents or guardians, in order to avoid punishment. Morality is defined in terms of the physical consequences as opposed to the internalization of what is right or wrong, which is prevalent in more advanced stages. Subsequent to this first stage, those who advance to Stage 2 act in order to gain immediate rewards in addition to avoiding negative consequences. Sharing and reciprocity become increasingly common, although it is typically based on the self-serving needs of the individual to satisfy their personal interests. The primary distinction between the first and second stages consists of the awareness that others have interests in addition to our own. Specifically, the individual assumes that others also seek identical goals of satisfying positive rewards while minimizing negative consequences (Kohlberg, 1984).

Kohlberg (1984) described the second level of moral judgment development as the conventional level, which consists of the third and fourth stages. Here, morality is based more on acceptance, approval, and conformity to the social norms of society, as opposed to avoiding physical punishment and receiving immediate rewards. Specifically in Stage 3, morality is based on receiving approval and maintaining relations with others. Typically in this stage, individuals act according to what is expected of them. Although individuals continue to base their judgments on the responses of others, obtaining approval and avoiding disapproval is more significant than physical consequences, which is significant in the preconventional level. The need to be accepted within the social system is the driving force in this stage of development. The fourth stage generally consists of maintaining social order,
where morality is based on social norms. Individuals in this stage invariably accept, without question, social norms and traditional rules. Generally, individuals in this stage attempt to act on what is expected by the majority of people in society. While a person reasoning at Stage 3 exhibit conformity to the standards and expectations of the individual’s immediate social system, individuals at Stage 4 conform to society as a whole. Behaviour is judged as good in terms of its compliance to a rigid set of rules.

The postconventional level consists of a morality of self-accepted moral principles. Specifically, individuals reasoning at this level have distinguished themselves from the social norm and outlined their values in terms of self-chosen principles (Kohlberg, 1984). In Stage 5, social contracts and individual rights are significant. In the conventional level, the maintenance of social order is achieved through conformity to blindly accepted rules and social norms. In the fifth stage, however, social contracts and individual human rights are perpetuated by conforming to norms that are agreed upon among individuals within the context of a social contract. Unlike the rigid rules of the conventional level, a social contract may be reviewed and modified if it fails to satisfy the outlined objectives. Stage 6 of Kohlberg’s model is based upon abstract universal principles entailing justice, compassion, and equality. Individuals in this stage act corresponding to their chosen ethical principles in addition to the social contract. The distinct attribute of Stage 6 is individuals’ conformity to both the agreed upon social standards and to internalized principles.

Kohlberg asserted that these stages must be consistent in terms of their structure, sequence, and hierarchy. These three criteria enable researchers to test the validity of the stage model as Kohlberg outlined. The structure criterion implies that each stage represent a
holistic structure where reasoning is consistent across contents and contexts (Walker & Moran, 1991). Individuals must be either “in” a specific stage or “in transition” between no more than two stages. An individual found within three stages would be a violation of the structure criterion. The sequence criterion emphasizes the invariant order of the stages, progressing to the next higher stage. Relapse to lower stages or “stage skipping” would demonstrate a violation of this criterion. The third and final requirement of the stage model is that of hierarchy, where the addition of each stage is an integration, rather than a replacement, of previous stages. Specifically, lower stages are significant, integrated components of the higher stages of development. Research has provided support for the validity of the three criteria, and consequently, the validity of the moral stage model (Walker, 1988; Walker & Moran, 1991).

Despite research that has supported the validity of Kohlberg’s approach in terms of the three criteria, several investigators criticized the findings of the original study and the stage model for two reasons – gender and culture confounds. Although Kohlberg asserted that his stage approach and criteria were universal, the original longitudinal study consisted entirely of Caucasian males in the United States. Critics, such as Carol Gilligan, stated that Kohlberg’s justice orientation to moral judgment does not fully represent the moral thought processes of women. Gilligan and her colleagues (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988) claimed that, women speak in a different moral voice than men. Men tend to speak in a voice emphasizing justice reasoning, which reflects an ideal of rights, individually, and principles of justice; while women tend to speak more with a care orientation, which reflects an ideal of attachment and where the self is connected and interdependent with others.
Kohlberg's theory, as Gilligan states, is exclusively concentrated on a justice orientation, which places women at a disadvantage.

Upon further investigation of possible gender bias, some studies supported the claim of different orientations (Donenberg & Hoffman, 1988; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Lyons, 1983), although others did not and questioned the research that did (Derry, 1989; Rothbart, Hanley, & Albert, 1986; Walker, 1989; Walker & Moran, 1991). In Walker's (1989) study, participants were given the Moral Judgment Interview (MJI), which consisted of hypothetical dilemmas, and a real-life dilemma. Both types of dilemmas were scored for moral stage and moral orientation. With regard to the MJI dilemmas, Walker found that participants with a care orientation did not score significantly different in moral stage than those with a justice orientation. This did not support Gilligan's claim where participants with a justice orientation would have scored higher on the MJI than those with a care orientation. The subsequent analysis of the real-life dilemma discovered participants with a care orientation attained higher scores of moral judgment than participants with a justice orientation, further contradicting Gilligan's claim. Despite some research that supports her conclusion that females are more affective-oriented than males (Ma, 1989), the overall empirical evidence supporting Gilligan's claims are somewhat contradictory and weak (Gielen, 1991), and that a majority of the, "evidence regarding sex bias is clear in demonstrating that Kohlberg's system does not down-score the moral reasoning of females" (Walker, 1988, p. 69).
The second criticism of Kohlberg's stage theory involves whether or not it can be applied to individuals across different cultures. This will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Rest's Schema Theory.

Although Kohlberg's stage theory has received a majority of the attention over the years, recently Rest and his colleagues (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999) used a different model by emphasizing the cognitive developmental approach of schemas, cognitive structures that form a basis for organizing behaviour in order to respond to the environment. These cognitive structures are an interrelated and organized group of memories, thoughts, actions, and strategies that an individual uses when attempting to understand a particular situation and/or environment. From infancy to adulthood, individuals possess many different schemas and these schemas change and adapt as the person develops. When an individual is confronted with a specific environment, that individual refers to their developed schemas and reacts accordingly.

Rest and his colleagues (Rest et al, 1999) emphasized moral schemas as opposed to Kohlberg's moral stages when explaining moral reasoning. While both theories centre on general knowledge structures that are used to adapt and structure information, there are a number of differences that must be distinguished.

Kohlberg's development of morality is characterized by his six stages where individuals advance up each stage in a specific sequence without relapse to lower stages or stage skipping, as described earlier. As individuals advance, they move up each stage through transition between no more than two stages without regression to a lower stage.
Kohlberg used the analogy of moving up a staircase from the lower level to a higher level of morality, where the lower stages form the foundation for the advanced stages. Rest and his colleagues (Rest et al., 1999) described moral judgment development in terms of acquiring schemas, and it is assumed that these schemas structure and guide a person’s moral thinking. While Kohlberg stated that once individuals reach a stage or is in transition between stages, that person cannot shift from one stage to another, and cannot regress to a lower stage. The schema model, however, suggests that development consists of a shifting distribution of schemas, where individuals’ moral understanding consists of a mixture of schemas rather than one specific schema. Analogous to Kohlberg’s stage theory, three developmental moral schemas were described: Personal Interests Schema, Maintaining Norms Schema, and the Postconventional Schema.

The main components of the Personal Interests Schema are similar to those of Kohlberg’s Stage 2 and Stage 3 where, “it justifies a decision by appealing to the personal stake that an actor has in the consequences of an action, including prudential concerns and also concerns for those with whom the actor has a personal affectionate relationship” (Rest et al., 1999, p. 305). The Personal Interests Schema (also labeled “S23”) is viewed as an earlier, more primitive form of moral thinking, and is not extensively discussed by Rest as the development of this schema takes place in childhood. Rest does not further describe this schema primarily because the schema model of morality is based on past DIT research, which begins with participants that must have a minimum 12-year-old reading level. Rest and his colleagues acknowledged that they could not discuss in more detail about this stage
as there is little DIT research conducted with children who would be classified under this schema.

The Maintaining Norms Schema is similar to that of Kohlberg's Stage 4 (hence the label, "S4") and consists of the following five components: (a) a need for rules and rolesystems, in order to avoid continuous conflict and disagreement and provide stability, predictability, safety, and coordination in a society; (b) a societywide scope, where people recognize that they must interact with both their known associates, and also with strangers and competitors; (c) a uniform application, where the established laws apply equally to everyone in society; (d) partial reciprocity, or mutual exchange were a person obeys the law and does their duty, expecting that others are also doing their duties; and finally (e) the duty orientation is the final component of the Maintaining Norms Schema where hierarchical role structures are recognized, respected, and obeyed in order to maintain the social system. The Maintaining Norms Schema emphasizes the importance of doing one's duty according to one's role position in society in order to uphold the established social order. Society in general is said to benefit from the division of labour and mutual exchange. This is similar to Kohlberg's Stage 4 where individuals conform to the rules of society in order to maintain stability. The schema emphasizes the need for law and social roles to sustain social order and deems it appropriate that unlimited power is given to authorities and to favour clear social norms for the collective.

The Postconventional Schema (labeled, "S56") is similar to Kohlberg's Stages 5 and 6 where, "moral obligations are to be based on shared ideals, which are reciprocal and are open to debate and tests of logical consistency, and on the experience of the community"
(Rest et al., 1999, p. 307). Here, as in the Maintaining Norms Schema, an individual realizes that laws, roles, and contracts are all social arrangements. However, in the Postconventional Schema, these agreements are adaptable and can change if the current laws do not serve society appropriately in order determine ideals for society. With the Maintaining Norms Schema, the agreements are highly resistant to change. The main difference between the Maintaining Norms and the Postconventional schemas is how each attempts to establish consensus. While the Maintaining Norms Schema calls upon conventional practice and existing authority, the Postconventional Schema attempts to appeal to ideals and logical coherence (Rest et al., 1999).

Taking into consideration that an individual may possess several moral schemas simultaneously, as opposed to Kohlberg’s Stage model where individuals are classified into specific stages, Rest and his colleagues (Rest et al., 1999) identified their own classification system where individuals may be categorized. They defined a typology where individuals may be grouped based on which moral schemas are most predominant and the degree of schema mixture (see table 2). Individuals who have high ratings and predominantly use one schema are termed “consolidated” and people who shift more frequently between schemas and with more equal ratings of two or three schemas are termed “transitional.” Specifically, Types 1 and 2 consist of the Personal Interests Schema, Types 3, 4, and 5 consist of the Maintaining Norms Schema, while Types 6 and 7 consist of the Postconventional Schema. In addition to the predominant schemas, Types 1, 4, and 7 are Consolidated (indicating high ratings of one schema only) and Types 2, 3, 5, and 6 are Transitional (indicating high ratings in more than one schema). These types allow researchers to classify participants into specific
groups and provide information about the extent of an individual's schema mixture. This classification also allows researchers to isolate and observe if a moral schema influence people's behaviour in a manner similar to Kohlberg's Stage theory.
Table 2
The Seven Types Representing Schema and Schema Mix (S. J. Thoma, personal communication, January 24, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Modal Schema</th>
<th>Off-Modal Schema</th>
<th>Schema Mix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>S23</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Consolidated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>S23</td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>S23</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Consolidated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>S56</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>S56</td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>S56</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Consolidated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross-Cultural Findings of Moral Judgment Development

The second controversy surrounding Kohlberg's stage theory of moral judgment development is the assumption of its cultural universality (Kohlberg, 1969; 1984). The moral stage model declares that (1) the three criteria (structure, sequence, and hierarchy) are universal, and (2) the approach represents the moral judgment of people from all cultures. It is argued that everyone, both male and female, in all cultures progress along a similar path to moral development, in a fixed sequence of stages.

The first claim of universality is crucial to the validity of the stage model. If any of the outlined criteria were violated, that would raise questions concerning the model as a whole. The research investigating the structure, sequence, and hierarchy criteria of the stage model supports the universality claim (Walker, 1988; 1991). Although briefly discussed in this paper, empirical studies have demonstrated that the criteria appear to be consistent among the different cultures investigated (Lei & Cheng, 1989; Snarey, Reimer, & Kohlberg, 1985; Tietjen & Walker, 1985).

The second claim of the model's universality states that the approach adequately represents the moral judgment of different cultures. Kohlberg stated the stage model accurately identifies and measures the ideals and concepts that are considered morally important to cultures outside of North America. Previous findings on cross-cultural research has both supported and challenged the cultural universality claim. The longitudinal studies that have found support (Nisan & Kohlberg, 1982; Snarey, Reimer, & Kohlberg, 1985) stated that there is minimal evidence it favours American males over non-American participants. It should be noted, however, that while a number of these studies were supportive, Gielen
(1991) pointed out that the samples used, “do not constitute national random samples, nor are the samples fully equated for educational background” (p.44). Hence these studies may not accurately represent the entire population and, as a result, the generalizability of the studies is in question. In fact, the evidence suggests that Kohlberg’s system, “although detecting much of what is morally relevant in various cultures, appears to miss or misconstrue several indigenous moral concepts that are fundamental in some societies” (Walker, 1988, p. 69). Essentially, this suggests that while most claims of universality are supported, some elements of Kohlberg’s theory may not fully represent specific moral concepts of all cultures in question. In their study examining moral reasoning among Tibetan monks, Heubner and Garrod (1993) indicated that Kohlberg’s theory, “may be of limited use in examining the moral reasoning of monks in a Buddhist culture,” as the theory, “does not appear to capture all possible moral issues for all cultures” (p.183). Their findings support statements by White, Bushnell, and Regnemer (1978) who emphasized that, “all cultures do not emphasize autonomous self-derived principles as a basis for moral decision making,” and “in the absence of exposure and support for ‘higher stage’ reasoning, individuals in such cultures may not be adequately described by Kohlberg’s six stages” (p.63). Furthermore, Baumrind (1986) posed the question of whether or not the principled stages are found universally. Many researchers have postulated that postconventional morality (especially Stage 6 reasoning) is rare, even among American individuals (Gibbs, 1995). The question that arises is whether the scarcity of principled stages is due to culture or other elements that are independent of culture.
Several researchers (Bergling, 1981; Edwards, 1981; Ma, 1988; Snarey, 1985) have suggested that, while Kohlberg's lower stages (i.e., Stages 1 through 4) may be regarded as universal, the higher, postconventional, stages (i.e., Stages 5 and 6), are more culture-specific. In their review of the cross-cultural research, Snarey (1985) and Ma (1988) suggested that the postconventional stages do not parallel the moral standards of collectivistic cultures and hence may miss some of the moral concepts crucial to Asian cultures. Furthermore, they advocated that the current concepts of Stages 5 and 6 should be supplemented with more collective postconventional principles from non-Western societies. In his article, Ma (1988) proposed a revised six-stage theory of moral judgment development. Similar to Kohlberg's model, the first three stages of this new model could be considered to be "culturally universal" as the concepts between individualism and collectivism are thought to be similar. It is the last three, higher, stages that include specific cultural components. Ma attempted to derive culture-bound sub-structures for these higher stages specific to the Chinese perspectives of morality, which consists largely of collectivistic constructs.

*Individualism and Collectivism*

The individualism/collectivism (IC) construct has been discussed within the context of cross-cultural psychology for many years (Triandis, 1995). It has not, however, been explored as extensively regarding its impact on moral judgment. Prior to exploring the research regarding the impact on moral judgment, a review of the current research is required. The IC construct is viewed as a continuum where people differ in four defining attributes: definition of the self, social behaviour, personal goals, and relationships (Triandis, 1995). It must be stressed that individuals are not defined solely by a set of extremes. This
general explanation of individualism and collectivism represents a simplified interpretation of an extremely complex systematic view. Empirically however, there must be defined endpoints in order to measure the predictability of behaviour. Outlining the four attributes, Triandis (1995) has defined collectivism as:

A social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives; are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, those collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and emphasize their connectedness to members of these collectives (p. 2).

Conversely, individualism is defined as:

A social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and the contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others (p. 2).

Those on the collectivistic side see the self as an integral part of a collective and value interdependence among their specific in-group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Their identity is based on membership with groups or organizations, as well as the emotional connection with them. Collectivists consider their membership within a group as the basic component of survival not only because the group provides support in a very intimate manner, but also because one’s membership in a group defines the self. In a collective, the individual’s identity is defined from the social system rather than from individual attributes (Hofstede,
 Conversely, individualists define the self independently of groups and on individual attributes. Although they co-exist with others, individualists believe that they do not require the same means of support and connection to a larger group as do collectivists in order to survive (Triandis, 1995).

Prediction of social behaviour also differs between individualists and collectivists. Norms, perceived duties, and obligations are key factors in collectivists' behaviour (Miller, 1994), while individualists typically act on internal processes, such as attitudes. Individualists are less influenced by what is expected of them by their group and tend to make decisions based more on their personal and distinct attributes.

The personal goals of collectivists typically overlap the goals of their in-groups as it is infrequent for goals to differ significantly. If, however, there is a variance between the two sets of goals, collectivists accept that the group goals take precedence over the personal goals and act accordingly to satisfy the group. While this may cause some internal conflict for the individual, the premise remains that the person is satisfied if the group is satisfied. Individualists, on the other hand, may or may not have goals that overlap with the goals of their in-groups, but the personal goals have priority over the group goals (Schwartz, 1990). Specifically, individualists would choose their personal goals over the group goals if a conflict arose.

To collectivists, their relationships with others are of greatest importance. As a person is identified through their group, any dissociation from the group is considered to be extremely negative. Hence, the person would attempt to do whatever is necessary to maintain the homogeneous state of the group and attempt to cause the least amount of
disruption. If the cost of maintaining these relationships exceeds the resulting benefits, collectivists tend to stay with the relationships and minimize their individual discomfort in order to maintain harmony within the group. Individualists, however, typically terminate relationships where the costs exceed the benefits (Kim, Triandis, Kagitecibasi, & Yoon, 1994). Although the establishment and maintenance of relationships is important, to the individualist membership within a group is not as substantial.

Triandis and his colleagues (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Triandis, 1995) classified the four attributes to assist in the distinction between individualism and collectivism. The researchers stressed that, “the constructs are polythetic as in zoology, where a phylum (e.g., birds) is defined by one or two attributes (e.g., feathers, wings) and numerous attributes define hundreds of species of that category” and, “individualism versus collectivism is the broadest division, with numerous ‘species’ of each, defined by culture-specific attributes” (Singelis et al., 1995, p. 243). They continue by emphasizing, “these defining attributes of cultures are best thought of as fluctuating pressures or tendencies,” and “are useful in describing and predicting differences in social behaviour among cultures.”

In addition to these four attributes (definition of self, social behaviour, personal goals, and relationships), Triandis and his colleagues (Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) have defined specific cultural patterns of individualism and collectivism. Specifically, they state that the most important attributes, or “species,” of both individualism and collectivism are the emphasis on horizontal and vertical social relationships. The vertical dimension concerns equality, while the horizontal dimension concentrates on the similarities or differences of people within the culture. These domains interact and produce four diverse
patterns: Horizontal Individualism (HI), Vertical Individualism (VI), Horizontal Collectivism (HC), and Vertical Collectivism (VC).

As previously outlined, with individualism in general, people desire to be unique and distinct from others and are highly self-reliant. Specifically with Horizontal Individualism (HI), people are not interested in becoming distinguished or acquiring status. They accentuate equality among others while maintaining their distinctiveness (Singelis, et al., 1995). The self is autonomous and independent as well as equal to others. Essentially, they wish to "do their own thing" and typically do not relate or compare themselves to others. Conversely, for those who are vertical individualists (VI), people want to become distinguished and acquire status, as they are particularly concerned to compare themselves with others. The understanding is that individuals are autonomous, and inequality among others is accepted. While these two groups differentiate in terms of acquiring status (i.e., through competition), they are equal in the desire for independence and distinctiveness.

On the other end of the individualism/collectivism spectrum, people who are collectivists see themselves as being similar to others, emphasize common goals with their in-groups, and are interdependent. They are willing to sacrifice their personal goals for the sake of in-group goals by submitting to the group's norms. Horizontal collectivists (HC) do not, however, submit easily to authority as they accept equality among other members of their group. They see the self as an integral part of the collective, but believe that all members of the group are the same. Those who are vertical collectivists (VC) accept that there are inequalities in the group with some members having more status than others, and are more willing to obey an authority figure if it is seen as beneficial to the in-group.
Horizontal collectivists, by contrast, view all members of the group equal and prefer do not submit to authority regardless of the potential benefits to the group. With collectivists, the main concern is their relationship with their specific in-group. The primary difference between these attributes is the view on equality and response to authority.

The distinctions of these four groups are important in attempting to explain cross-cultural differences in research. Individualism and collectivism are common throughout the world, however it tends to vary in degree and intensity. Individualists and collectivists in one culture may differ from individualists and collectivists in another culture (Triandis, 1995). Triandis states that the constructs are situation specific. Each culture is vertical in some situations while horizontal in others. In addition, it is believed that Vertical Collectivism and Horizontal Individualism are the “typical” patterns around the world. Empirically speaking, it has been suggested (Singelis et al., 1998; Triandis, 1995; Triandis, Chen, & Chan, 1998) that measuring the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the IC construct is preferable (see Singelis et al., 1998).

Previous attempts to examine cross-cultural differences used general individualism and collectivism as primary factors. By implementing these additional attributes of the IC construct, researchers have at their disposal a more precise tool to measure potential differences. Previous research that studied the IC construct may have to be re-examined to account for horizontal and vertical relationships. The relation with moral judgment development is no exception.
Individualism and Collectivism in Moral Judgment

As previously indicated, researchers such as Dien (1982), Ma (1988), and Vine (1986) questioned Kohlberg’s theory and asserted that it does not take into consideration the differences between individualistic and collectivistic perspectives. Dien (1982) specifically suggested that Kohlberg’s theory does not contain some components of collectivistic moral principles, and Ma (1988) voiced the possibility that “the Chinese, Indian, and other non-Western philosophies have not been taken into account in Kohlberg’s postconventional stages, which results in a philosophically biased structure” (p. 202). Miller (1994) argued that alternative types of interpersonal moralities exist that reflect the beliefs emphasized in different cultural groups. Specifically, among Hindu Indians, morality is duty based, stressing interpersonal obligations. Furthermore, Parikh (1980) found evidence that supported Kohlberg’s theory of cross-cultural universality of sequences and stages but, regarding the East Indian culture, also noticed some differences in the rate of development. These statements coincide with assumptions that collectivism is considered to be relatively high in the East Indian culture (Triandis, 1995; Verma & Triandis, 1999). The moral code of this culture differs from the moral code of Americans, which stress personal freedom and individual responsibility.

As previously mentioned, Ma (1988) presented a revised 6-stage model to integrate common Chinese perspectives into Kohlberg’s theory. Furthermore, Triandis’ (1995) brief review of Kohlberg’s model outlined that Stages 5 and 6, although contain some collectivistic elements, consist primarily of advanced individualistic views. He also emphasized that morality among collectivists is more contextual and is different from the
individualistic perspective of Kohlberg. Specifically, Triandis stated that, "morality in collectivist cultures is linked to an adherence to many rules" and that "abstract principles, such as found in Kohlberg's Stage 6...have little validity in this framework" (p.78). Triandis also stated that the Eastern perspective emphasizes social cohesion where, "concern for others starts with concern for the family and gradually extends to wider circles" (p.77). This ideal is also similar to that of Gilligan's ethic of care orientation, which reflects an ideal of attachment, where the self is connected and interdependent with others. Furthermore, Rest's Maintain Norms Schema, which is analogous to Kohlberg's Stage 4, emphasizes the need for law and social roles to sustain social order and deems it appropriate that unlimited power is given to authorities and to favour clear social norms for the collective. This emphasis for law and social roles is similar to Triandis' description of the Vertical Collectivism construct.

Despite the theoretical assumptions of the possible influence of an individualistic or collectivistic perspective (Dien, 1982; Ma, 1988), as well as a number of studies that have recognized collectivistic morality in some non-Western cultures (Tietjen & Walker, 1985; Walker & Moran, 1991), there have only been two studies that formally measured the relation between the IC construct and moral judgment. Ji (1997) and Loo (1998) conducted similar studies and found different results, both of which contradicted the assumption of an individualistic bias. In his study, Ji (1997) administered both the Defining Issues Test (DIT) and the INDividualistic-COLlectivistic (INDCOL) scale to graduate students who were classified as either Asian or Euro-American. All of the Asian graduate students were born in either Eastern or Southeastern Asian countries and had attended high schools or colleges in their own countries prior to their arrival in the United States. Participants who completed
their secondary and college education in the United States were not included in the sample in order to control for participants' acculturation to the American culture. In total, 95 Euro-American and 70 Asian participants comprised the final sample. It was determined that the mean moral judgment scores between the two groups were significantly different, where the Euro-American participants obtained higher scores on the DIT than the Asian participants. This finding supported previous research that Asian participants generally score lower than American participants (Bergling, 1981; Edwards, 1981; Ma, 1988; Moon, 1986; Park & Johnson, 1984; Snarey, 1985). In terms of the relationship between the IC construct and moral reasoning, Ji (1997) found that the moral judgment scores of both groups were not significantly correlated with scores of collectivism at the .05 level. This contradicted previous views that collectivism is a factor in moral judgment development. Ji attributed his contradictory findings on his homogeneous sample group, whom he claimed were unlikely to be typical of the cultural groups targeted.

In a separate study, Loo (1998) administered a five-story DIT to 223 undergraduate students at a Canadian university. Similar to Ji’s (1997) study, Loo compared the means of the DIT P% score to Asian and non-Asian (European) groups. Loo further divided the Asian group, however, into two subgroups based on their place of birth. Hence, an Asian-born Asian group and a North American-born Asian group emerged. In this study, effect of education was also considered, and a two-factor ANOVA was used in the final calculation. The analysis found main effects for education and culture, where the Asian-born group scored significantly lower than both the non-Asian and North American-born Asian group. The non-Asian and North American-born Asian groups were not significantly different. No
interaction effects were found. These results further supported previous research suggesting Kohlberg’s principled stages may not be universal, but more culturally specific (Snarey, 1985). It should be noted, however, that there were unequal sample sizes in each group where the European group doubled the two Asian groups. Therefore a caution is warranted.

Loo used the shortened INDCOL scale to determine if there was a more direct relation between collectivism and moral judgment development. Unlike Ji’s study, a significant correlation at the .05 level was found; higher collectivism was associated with higher levels of moral reasoning as indexed by the DIT’s P% score. Subsequent analysis involved examining participants who scored on the extreme values of the INDCOL scale, concentrating on individuals above the 90th percentile and below the 10th percentile. Using an independent samples t-test, a significant difference was found between the two groups, with the collectivistic group obtaining higher moral judgment scores than the individualistic group. This finding contradicts the previous research to a greater extent than Ji’s (1997) study as it suggests that collectivism promotes moral development as opposed to inhibits it. As stated earlier, the collectivist perspective may be considered similar to that of Gilligan’s care perspective of morality. Walker (1989) found that participants with a care perspective did not score lower than participants with a justice perspective on the dilemmas of the Moral Judgment Interview. Furthermore, analysis of the real-life dilemma discovered participants with a care orientation attained higher scores of moral development than participants with a justice orientation. If collectivistic participants use a care orientation to moral reasoning, this could provide an explanation to Loo’s (1998) findings.
Although most researchers (Dien, 1982; Ma, 1988) have suggested that Kohlberg’s theory lacks the knowledge of collectivistic cultures, the findings by Ji (1997) and Loo (1998) have demonstrated otherwise. It should be noted, however, that both Ji and Loo found that collectivism was not more prevalent in the Asian groups than the non-Asian group, which is another contradiction to the literature (Triandis, Chen, & Chan, 1998). Both Ji and Loo suggested further study of moral development with collectivism is required before any conclusions to these findings could be attributed to specific factors.

Most of the research examining the relation between moral development and culture, especially the IC construct, has concentrated on Kohlberg’s Stage theory of morality. Both Ji and Loo used the original DIT to measure moral judgment and the INDCOL scale to measure the IC construct. The general purpose of this study was to continue and expand on Ji and Loo’s research by utilizing more powerful measures of both moral reasoning and the IC construct; sampling a more representative population; and controlling for education. By using the revised version of the DIT to measure moral reasoning and the Triandis scale to measure the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the IC construct, both to be described later, it was hoped a more detailed analysis would emerge. The application of the DIT-2 will also allow the researcher to observe differences in which moral schemas are predominantly activated. With the recent development of the DIT-2, no research on Rest’s (1999) model of moral schemas and the IC construct has been published. By using the DIT-2, the present study examined differences in moral judgment based on Rest’s Schema theory, and provided additional research on Kohlberg’s theory.
To review, this study asked the following questions: (1) What is the nature of the relation of moral reasoning to individualism and collectivism? (2) What is the nature of the relation of moral reasoning to the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct?
Method

Participants

Two hundred and seventeen undergraduate students participated in the study. Participants were recruited from 11 introductory psychology classes across three colleges, which were located near a large Western Canadian city. Samples from community colleges, as opposed to universities, were used in an attempt to gain a more representative sample of the population. Of these 217 participants, 32 (14.7%) were excluded from the final analysis due to their failure to pass criteria requirements of the moral judgment measure, the DIT-2, to be described later. As a result, 185 participants (85.3%) were used in the data analysis. One hundred and thirty-two females and 48 males participated in the study, while five participants did not report their gender. The mean age of female participants was 22.19 years ($SD = 7.70$). The mean age of males was 24.25 years ($SD = 10.40$). Reported ages for both genders ranged from 17 years to 82 years.

Of the 185 participants, 117 individuals were of European descent; 40 were of Asian descent, which consisted of 24 Chinese, five Filipino, five participants of mixed Asian descent, four Japanese, one Korean, and one Vietnamese; and 17 participants of East Indian descent. The remaining 11 participants were of other various cultural backgrounds. One hundred and forty-four participants (77.8%) were born in North America, 24 participants (13%) were born in Asia, eight participants (4.3%) were born in Europe, and the remaining nine participants were born in other various countries.
Measures

In order to determine participants' level of moral judgment and their collectivistic or individualistic perspective, a questionnaire package was constructed consisting of the following three questionnaires, which were randomly placed in an envelope. The sequence of the three questionnaires in the package were randomized to control for order effect, however the experimenter had no control of the order participants completed the questionnaires.

Demographics.

The demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed to collect information about participants' background. This questionnaire asked participants to report their place of birth, language preferences, years of education, ethnic background, religion, and socioeconomic status. Two steps determined ethnic background. The initial step consisted of asking participants their biological parents' place of birth and ethnic background. Based on the reported identity of the parents, participants' general ethnic background was determined. This procedure was used in order to gain a more detailed representation of participants' background. The second procedure of determining ethnic background consisted of participants' own self reported ethnic identity, using a modified version of the Suinn-Lew Asian Self Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA) (Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987). Participants were asked to complete the SL-ASIA, which was located on the second page of the demographic questionnaire, only if they were of Asian descent. Participants were instructed to skip the page if they were not of Asian
descent. Furthermore, participants who completed the SL-ASIA were asked to specify their specific Asian background.

Socioeconomic status was determined in this study by asking participants to indicate their parents’ occupation. Taking into consideration that moral reasoning is developmental, parents’ occupations were assessed in order to gage the socioeconomic status of the family during participants’ childhood development. These responses were matched with the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system of Canada and subsequently converted to the Blishen Socioeconomic Index for Occupations (Blishen, Carroll, & Moore, 1987), where higher scores on the index represent higher SES.


The Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT-2) was used to assess participants’ level of moral judgment. The DIT-2 is a revision of the first Defining Issues Test (DIT) developed by James Rest (1979). The DIT is a pencil and paper measure of moral judgment consisting of six stories, or hypothetical moral dilemmas, which is used to engage participants in moral problem solving. Participants are then asked for their opinion on how they would resolve the given dilemma. Following each dilemma, participants are presented with 12 statements and are asked to rate each statement according to what they perceive as significant in resolving the dilemma. Each statement is designed to represent different stages of moral reasoning, with some items representing erroneous statements used as part of the measure’s reliability checks to filter out unmotivated participants. Once participants rate the 12 statements, they are subsequently asked to indicate which of these rated statements are most important to them by ranking their top four choices. Based on these ranking data, a score is calculated to
determine participants' level of principled moral judgment. The most commonly utilized
DIT score is the P% score that indicates the degree to which the participant considers the
"Principled" (i.e., Kohlberg's postconventional stages of moral reasoning) items most
important. The higher the P% score, the higher the assumed level of moral judgment.

For the purposes of this study, the new five-story DIT-2 (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, &
Thoma, 1999) was used. Although the original DIT and the P% score were used for over 25
years in moral psychology research, a number of improvements were made for the revised
version of the DIT that addressed several issues of concern (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, &
Bebeau, 1999). The first of such issues involved outdated dilemmas and language (see
Appendix B for a sample dilemma). The instructions of the DIT-2 were rewritten and the
topics and language of the dilemmas in the DIT-2 were modified to reflect more modern
issues. For instance, one of the dilemmas of the DIT discussed the protests toward the
Vietnam War as if it was a recent event. In the DIT-2, the Vietnam War was replaced with
the United States' military presence in a South American country with political and
economic instability. As with the Vietnam War dilemma, protests were held and participants
were asked if the demonstrations were justified. While the specific event described in the
DIT-2 differs from the event in the DIT, the primary theme of the dilemma was maintained.

The second improvement of the DIT-2 over its predecessor is the use of the new
index, the N2, in addition to the P% score. As previously indicated, the P% score consists of
participants' ranking of items based on the principled stages of morality. The N2 index uses
these principled items as well, but also takes into consideration the rating of the lower stages,
which was ignored by the P% score. Therefore, the scoring of the N2 index consists of two
parts (Rest, Thoma, Narvaez, & Bebeau, 1997). The first component is essentially identical to the calculation of the P% score, which is based on the ranking data. The second part of the N2 is calculated on the variation between the average rating of the lower items to the average rating of the higher items. These two parts are combined to form the N2 index. Hence participants are measured by their rating of all of the stages, not just the principled stages. According to Rest and his colleagues (Rest et al., 1997), the N2 has superior construct validity and reliability than the P% score.

Finally, the DIT-2 purges fewer participants for doubtful response reliability than the DIT. As previously described, the DIT contains consistency and reliability checks to determine if a participant is providing reliable answers in attempting to resolve each dilemma. Rest et al. (1999) believed that the DIT may have been too strict with the checks as a large percentage of participants were discarded. While the DIT-2 maintains the importance of filtering bogus data, new consistency protocols were developed to purge fewer participants, although this was not the case in the present study as 14.7% of the cases were purged.

With the revision of the DIT, the format of the DIT-2 is similar to the original, but consists of updated dilemmas and items, is shorter in length, and has clearer instructions. The format of the DIT-2 is similar to that of its predecessor, where participants are asked to read five hypothetical moral dilemmas and to rate twelve statements of importance that follow each dilemma. As with the DIT, the DIT-2 asks participants to indicate which of these rated items are most important to them by providing a rank to the top four items.
Based on participants’ rating and ranking of these items, the DIT-2 produces several scores available to the researcher. As with the DIT, the DIT-2 calculates Kohlberg’s stage scores (Stages 2 through 6). The DIT-2 also calculates the previously described N2 index, the three schemas (Personal Interest, Maintain Norms, and Postconventional) and Type classification of Rest’s Schema theory (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). Measures of the schemas are similar to that of Kohlberg’s stages where the Personal Interest Schema consists of Stages 2 and 3, Maintain Norms Schema consists of Stage 4, and the Postconventional Schema consists of Stages 5 and 6. The inclusion of the schema scores will allow the researcher to examine Rest’s schema theory in more detail.

The DIT-2 includes the classification system that categorizes participants into one of seven Types. As discussed earlier, Rest’s view of the DIT-2 is influenced by the schema theory of moral reasoning (Rest et al., 1999), where by reading the moral dilemmas and statements the DIT-2 is a device for activating a person’s moral schemas. When a dilemma and statement activates a person’s preferred schema, the individual rates and ranks that schema item of high importance. If an item does not activate a preferred schema, it is given a low rating. Participants are assigned to one of the seven Types based on their preferred schema and whether the individual is currently consolidated or in transition between schemas. Consolidation indicates an obvious preference for a specific schema, where transition denotes no specific schema preference. These Types are different from Kohlberg’s stages and also differ from what the N2 measures, which is a developmental index. While the N2 is designed to represent developmental level, the Types indicate the specific
predominant schema (i.e., which schema is preferred) and schema mixture (whether there is consolidation or transition among schemas).

Rest and his colleagues (Rest, Thoma, Narvaez, & Bebeau, 1997; Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 1999) assert that the validity and reliability of the DIT-2 and N2 index is comparable to the original DIT and claimed that the N2 generally outperforms the P% index. Specifically, their studies suggested that the DIT is highly correlated with the DIT-2, and the stories of the DIT and DIT-2 demonstrate a high degree of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .90). Furthermore, Rest et al. (1997) stated that an index of moral judgment should conform to the following criteria: a) differentiate among levels of education; b) correlate with moral comprehension; c) show longitudinal change as a function of age and of enriching experiences; d) be sensitive to moral education interventions; e) link moral judgment to behaviour; f) link moral judgment to civil libertarian attitudes; and g) reliability. In their research, the N2 index matched or outperformed the P% on these criteria (Rest, Thoma, Narvaez, & Bebeau, 1997) and demonstrated that the internal reliability of the N2 was also better than the P%. Participants should be able to complete the DIT-2 in approximately 40 minutes.

Triandis' Scale of Individualism/Collectivism.

Triandis’ Scale of the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct was used to assess participants’ individualistic or collectivistic perspective. Developed by Triandis and his colleagues (Singelis et al., 1995; Triandis, 1995; Triandis, et al., 1998), the scale measures the four traits of the IC construct via 32 attitude statements and 16 scenario questions. Participants are first asked to read the 32 statements and indicate the extent to which they
agree or disagree with the statements via a 9-point likert scale (see Appendix C). Each statement represents one of the four IC constructs (HI, VI, HC, VC). Triandis (1995) believes that by indicating whether or not they agree with the statements, the scale can calculate participants' IC perspective. These attitude statements will produce one attitude sub-scale per IC construct, resulting in four attitude scores in total: HI Attitude, VI Attitude, HC Attitude, and VC Attitude.

Participants are then presented with a total of 16 scenarios. Following each scenario, participants are given four options to resolve the given scenario. Participants are asked to read each scenario, mentally place themselves in the situation, and rank the top two options (first choice and second choice) they consider to be most appropriate to resolve the situation. Each option represents one of the four IC constructs. These scenarios are scored by taking into account the percent of the time that the HI, HC, VI, and VC responses were chosen first and, separately, the percent of the time they were chosen second. Their first and second choices are compiled and produce two sub-scores per IC construct, resulting in a first choice score and a second choice score for each IC construct. With four IC constructs (HI, HC, VI, and VC) and two scenarios scores each, a total of four first choice scores and four second choice scores would be produced. Triandis (1995) states that by choosing two of the four options, participants specify which of the four IC constructs they would most likely use in the situation.

This measure should generate a more accurate representation of the IC construct than measures used in previous research. With other measures, like Hui's INDCOL scale (Hui, 1988; Hui & Yee, 1994), participants who respond to attitude items alone can become
aware that researchers are attempting to analyze the IC construct. It has been suggested that social desirability may have an impact on such research where collectivist responses may be seen as less socially desirable in some cultures, and participants may attempt to provide more individualistic answers (Triandis, et al., 1998). Considering Triandis’ measure includes scenario questions, which appear not to be affected by social desirability, it may be a more accurate measure (Triandis et al., 1988).

For the Triandis Scale, each participant receives 12 sub-scores (one attitude score and two scenario scores for each of HI, HC, VI, and VC) to determine which specific IC construct is most prominent. In this study, all 12 sub-scores were utilized in relation to moral reasoning. These 12 sub-scores were also combined to create an overall Collectivism Score, which does not provide information on specific horizontal or vertical dimensions, but gives a continuous variable measure of individualism/collectivism, where higher scores represent collectivism. Although this measure should provide more information on the specific dimensions of the IC construct, Triandis indicated that it is possible for participants to score high on none or all of these individualistic and collectivistic sub-scores. Participants require approximately 20 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Procedure

Participants were contacted through their introductory psychology classes in their university college or community college. Following a brief presentation on moral judgment development, the students were asked to volunteer for the study. Of the 217 total participants who responded, 138 received additional course credit from the class instructor, 75 submitted their names into a draw for the opportunity to win a $20 gift certificate, and the remaining 4
students participated on their own accord and stated they did not wish to receive any monetary benefits in return. Participants were presented with an introduction letter (see Appendix D) that accompanied the series of questionnaires, were asked to complete the measures on their own, and to return the measures to the experimenter upon his return to the class approximately one week later.
Results

Two questions were the focus of this study: (1) Is there a relation between moral judgment and the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct? (2) Does a horizontal dimension or a vertical dimension to individualism/collectivism contribute to differences in moral judgment?

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses and is divided into two sections. The first section describes the correlations among the DIT-2 indexes, Triandis indexes, and the demographic variables. The second section describes the results of the multiple regression analyses.

Interrelations among Variables

Moral Reasoning and Demographic Variables.

Table 3 presents the correlations between the DIT-2 indexes (Maintain Norms, Postconventional Schema [P%], and N2) and demographic variables. As can be seen, the Maintain Norms Schema was positively correlated with the Number of Years Participants Lived Outside North America, and the Number of Languages Participants Speak Fluently. Negative correlations between the N2 and P% indexes were found with the Number of Languages Participants Speak Fluently. Significant correlations were not found between the DIT-2 indexes and acculturation (SL-ASIA), age, SES, or sex.
Table 3.
Correlations Among Moral Reasoning and Demographic Variables (N = 185)

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<td>1. Maintain Norms</td>
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<td>-0.571***</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>0.085</td>
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<td>0.146</td>
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<td>0.238**</td>
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<td>2. P%</td>
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<td>0.922***</td>
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<td>-0.040</td>
<td>0.060</td>
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<td>0.069</td>
<td>-0.059</td>
<td>-0.178*</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. N2</td>
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<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>-0.154</td>
<td>0.031</td>
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<td>-0.180*</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Age&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>-0.108</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>-0.301</td>
<td>0.228**</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. SES&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>-0.222</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.092</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sex&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>0.155</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>-0.082</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SL-ASIA&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.572**</td>
<td>0.436**</td>
<td>0.427**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. RateEng&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.345*</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. NYears&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.462**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. NumLang&lt;sup&gt;g&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Variables were designated by: age (age in years); SES (socioeconomic status); Sex (gender of participant); SL-ASIA (acculturation); RateEng (participants' ability rating of English); NumLang (number of languages participants speak fluently); NYears (number of years participants lived outside of North America). Sex is coded 0 = Males, 1 = Females.

<sup>a</sup>n = 180. <sup>b</sup>n = 152. <sup>c</sup>n = 180. <sup>d</sup>n = 54. <sup>e</sup>n = 44. <sup>f</sup>n = 182. <sup>g</sup>n = 184.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001
Individualism-Collectivism (IC) Construct and Demographic Variables.

Table 4 presents the correlations between variables of the Triandis Scale (which includes a continuous variable measure of the IC construct as well as sub-scores that measure specific dimensions of the IC construct) and the demographic variables. As can be seen, the Collectivism Score was negatively correlated with SES, suggesting that participants with higher socioeconomic status were associated with more individualistic perspectives.

Significant correlations were found between the demographic variables and with a handful of the specific variables of the Triandis Scale. The VI Attitude variable was positively correlated with SES, suggesting that participants with higher socioeconomic status were associated with higher Vertical Individualistic scores, and negatively correlated with Sex, where males scored higher on VI than females.

The HI Attitude variable was positively correlated with Participants' Ability Rating of English, and the HI Scenario - First Choice variable was negatively correlated with the Number of Years Participants Lived Outside of North America variable. Age was positively correlated with both of these HI variables, indicating that older participants were more likely to utilize higher levels of Horizontal Individualism than younger participants.

Both the VC Attitude variable and VC Scenario – First Choice variable were positively correlated with the Number of Languages Participants Speak Fluently. The VC Scenario – Second Choice variable was positively correlated with the Number of Years Participants Lived Outside of North America variable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IC Construct</th>
<th>Age(^a)</th>
<th>SES(^b)</th>
<th>Sex(^c)</th>
<th>DEMOGRAPHIC</th>
<th>RateEng(^e)</th>
<th>NumLang(^f)</th>
<th>NYears(^g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triandis Collectivism Score</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>-.178*</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>.133</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Attitude</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>.161*</td>
<td>-.225**</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.105</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>-.176</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>.176</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>-.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Attitude</td>
<td>.158*</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>-.069</td>
<td>-.180</td>
<td>.456**</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>-.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>.188*</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>-.239</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>-.138</td>
<td>-.188*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Attitude</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.272**</td>
<td>.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td>.196**</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>-.137</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.152*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC Attitude</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>-.180</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>-.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.069</td>
<td>-.139</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>-.239</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>-.125</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>-.047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Variables were designated by: age (age in years); SES (socioeconomic status); Sex (gender of participant); SL-ASIA (acculturation); RateEng (participants' ability rating of English); NumLang (number of languages participants speak fluently); NYears (number of years participants lived outside of North America). Sex is coded 0 = Males, 1 = Females.

\(^a\)\(n = 180\). \(^b\)\(n = 152\). \(^c\)\(n = 180\). \(^d\)\(n = 54\). \(^e\)\(n = 44\). \(^f\)\(n = 184\). \(^g\)\(n = 182\).

\(*p < .05. \,**p < .01.\)
**DIT-2 Indexes and Triandis Scores.**

To examine associations between moral judgment and the IC construct, a series of Pearson-Product Moment correlations were conducted (see Table 5) where the DIT-2 indexes were correlated with variables of the Triandis Scale. As can be seen, the Collectivism Score was not significantly correlated with the N2 index. Significant correlations were found, however, with a handful of the specific dimensions of the IC construct. Specifically, a negative correlation was found between the N2 index and VI Attitude, indicating that higher levels of Vertical Individualism were associated with lower levels of moral reasoning. The N2 index was also negatively correlated with the VC Attitude and the VC Scenario – First Choice variables, indicating that higher levels of collectivism on the vertical dimension were associated with lower levels of moral reasoning.

Similar results were found with the P% index, where the P% index was not significantly correlated with the Collectivism Score. As with the N2 index, negative correlations were found with the VI Attitude, VC Attitude, and VC Scenario – First Choice variables with the P% index. Similar to the results found with the N2 index, these correlations suggest that higher scores of Vertical Collectivism and Vertical Individualism are associated with lower moral reasoning as assessed by the P% index. In addition to these correlations, the P% index was also positively correlated with the HI Scenario – Second Choice variable, indicating that higher levels of Horizontal Individualism were associated with higher scores of moral reasoning as assessed on the P% index.
There were no significant correlations found with the Personal Interest Schema, but a number of correlations were found with the Maintain Norms Schema. Specifically, the Maintain Norms Schema was positively correlated with the VI Attitude variable and all three VC variables. In addition, the Maintain Norms Schema was also negatively correlated with both HI Scenario variables.
Table 5
Correlations Between Moral Reasoning and Triandis Variables (N = 185)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUALISM/COLLECTIVISM</th>
<th>Maintain Norms</th>
<th>P%</th>
<th>N2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triandis Collectivism Score</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>-.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Attitude</td>
<td>.218**</td>
<td>-.202**</td>
<td>-.168*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>-.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Attitude</td>
<td>-.107</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.174*</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>-.204**</td>
<td>.169*</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Attitude</td>
<td>.232**</td>
<td>-.216**</td>
<td>-.181*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>.214**</td>
<td>-.159**</td>
<td>-.151*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>.178*</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC Attitude</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>-.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.093</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05. **p < .01.
Predicting Moral Reasoning with Dimensions of the IC Construct

Recall that the goal of the present study was to determine if there is a relation between moral judgment and the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct. The correlations described in the previous section presented associations between moral reasoning and the IC construct. In order to determine which dimensions of the IC construct best contributes to moral reasoning, a series of simultaneous multiple regressions were performed with the DIT-2 indexes (N2, P%, Maintain Norms) as the dependent variables. The Triandis variables that were significantly correlated with the DIT-2 indexes were the independent variables used in the analyses.

Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting the N2 Index.

A simultaneous multiple regression was performed between the N2 index and the independent variables which consisted of the Triandis variables significantly correlated with N2: VI Attitude, VC Attitude, and VC Scenario – First Choice (see Table 6). A significant $R^2$ of .068 was found between the N2 index and the independent variables, $F(3, 181) = 4.41, p < .01$. Of these variables, the multiple regression analysis indicated that there was only one significant variable, VI Attitude ($\beta = .158, p < .05$), that was predictive of the dependant variable. Results of the collinearity diagnostics (eigenvalues, condition indices, variance inflation factors, and tolerances) indicate that multicollinearity among the variables was low.

Overall, results of the multiple regression analyses demonstrated that the independent variables accounted for a small, but significant, amount of variance and that the VI Attitude variable best predicted the N2 index. These results suggest that a higher preference for Vertical Individualism would be predictive of having lower levels of moral
reasoning, as assessed by the N2 index.
Table 6

Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting N2 (N = 185)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI Attitude</td>
<td>-.210</td>
<td>-.158*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Attitude</td>
<td>-.208</td>
<td>-.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.198</td>
<td>-.125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .068$

*p < .05.
Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting the P% Index.

A simultaneous multiple regression was performed between the P% index and the independent variables which consisted of the Triandis variables significantly correlated with P%: VC Attitude, VC Scenario – First Choice, VI Attitude, and HI Scenario – Second Choice (see Table 7). A significant $R^2$ of .103 was found between the P% index and the independent variables, $F(4, 180) = 5.14, p < .001$. Of these variables, the multiple regression analysis indicated that there was only one significant variable, VI Attitude ($\beta = -.164, p < .05$), that was predictive of the P% index. Results of the collinearity diagnostics (eigenvalues, condition indices, variance inflation factors, and tolerances) indicate that multicollinearity among the variables was low.

Overall, results of the multiple regression analyses demonstrated that the independent variables accounted for a small, but significant, amount of variance and that the VI Attitude variable best predicted the P% index. Similar to the findings with the N2 index, these results suggest that a higher preference for Vertical Individualism would be predictive of having lower levels of moral reasoning, as assessed by the P% index.
Table 7
Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting P% (N = 185)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI Attitude</td>
<td>-.210</td>
<td>-.164*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Attitude</td>
<td>-.226</td>
<td>-.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.199</td>
<td>-.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \( R^2 = .103 \)

\*\( p < .05 \)
Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting the Maintain Norms Schema.

A simultaneous multiple regression was performed between the Maintain Norms Schema and the independent variables which consisted of the Triandis variables significantly correlated with Maintain Norms: VC Attitude, VC Scenario – First Choice, VC Scenario – Second Choice, VI Attitude, HI Scenario – First Choice, and HI Scenario – Second Choice (see Table 8). The initial multiple regression analysis identified two cases with standardized residuals greater than 3 (case 146 and case 185) as possible outliers. These two cases were removed and a multiple regression analysis was performed again. A significant $R^2$ of .186 was found between the Maintain Norms Schema and the independent variables, $F(6, 176) = 6.69, p < .001$. Of these variables, the multiple regression analysis indicated that there were only two significant variables, VI Attitude ($\beta = .161, p < .05$) and HI Scenario – Second Choice ($\beta = -.183, p < .05$), that were predictive of the dependent variable. Results of the collinearity diagnostics (eigenvalues, condition indices, variance inflation factors, and tolerances) indicate that multicollinearity among the variables was low.

Overall, results of the multiple regression analyses demonstrated that the independent variables accounted a significant amount of variance and that the VI Attitude and HI Scenario – Second Choice variables best predicted the Maintain Norms Schema. These results suggest that a higher preference for Vertical Individualism would be predictive of having higher levels of the Maintain Norms Schema, and that a higher preference for Horizontal Individualism would be predictive of having lower levels of the Maintain Norms Schema.
Table 8
Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Maintain Norms (N = 183)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VC Attitude</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Attitude</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.161*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Scenario – First Choice</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>-.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI Scenario – Second Choice</td>
<td>-.220</td>
<td>-.183*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $R^2 = .186$

*p < .05
Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relation between moral reasoning and the individualism/collectivism (IC) construct, with specific focus on the horizontal and vertical dimensions. The aim was to provide clarification to the debate as to whether or not the current theories of moral reasoning, as put forth by Kohlberg (1969) and Rest (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999), accurately represent the moral reasoning of all cultures and societies. Researchers examining Kohlberg’s Stage Theory of moral reasoning have frequently suggested that his theory is biased toward the Western Culture, with its specific emphasis on the individualistic perspective of self. Nevertheless, there have been a limited number of empirical studies that have investigated the link between the IC construct and moral reasoning. The results of the current study add to the existent literature investigating the universality claim of Kohlberg’s theory of moral reasoning.

Moral Judgment and Acculturation

In this study, participants who identified themselves as Asian were asked to complete the acculturation section of the demographic questionnaire. Acculturation was not found to be associated with any of the DIT-2 indexes. Specifically, this study did not find any relation between participants’ self-reported identity with moral reasoning. Although no associations were found, it should be noted that the number of participants who completed the acculturation section is small relative to the rest of the sample. Furthermore, language may have been a factor. One of the requirements for the DIT-2 is that participants must have a minimum 12-year-old reading level of the English language. Participants whose first language was not English were asked to rate their ability to speak English. There were no
correlations found between participants’ ability rating and the DIT-2 indexes. It is possible, however, that some potential participants may have chosen not to participate in the study because it was written in English. It is possible that this study inadvertently filtered out participants who were not comfortable or able to comprehend the complexity of the questionnaires, thereby limiting the diversity of the sample.

In order to obtain a fully representative sample of the population, a study must use measures that all participants, from various cultural backgrounds, can fully comprehend. This would require versions of all questionnaires to be translated into the various languages of the cultures in question. While this requirement was beyond the capabilities of the present study, future studies may want to take this under consideration.

*Moral Judgment and the Individualism/Collectivism Construct*

The primary purpose of the current study was to examine the relation between the IC construct and moral reasoning. Although findings from previous research in this area have been equivocal (Dien, 1982; Ji, 1997; Loo, 1998; Ma, 1988; Vine, 1986), researchers (Bergling, 1981; Edwards, 1981; Ma, 1988; Snarey, 1985) have suggested that the lower stages of Kohlberg’s theory (Stages 1 through 4) may be regarded as universal, however the postconventional stages (Stages 5 and 6), are more culture-specific. Ma (1988) also suggested that the postconventional stages do not parallel the moral standards of collectivistic cultures and hence may miss some of the moral concepts crucial to Asian cultures. The current study attempted to supplement and extend previous research by examining the IC construct with emphasis on the horizontal and vertical dimensions, as this has not been examined previously. To review, there are four dimensions of the IC construct that were
examined in relation to moral reasoning: Horizontal Collectivism (HC), Horizontal Individualism (HI), Vertical Collectivism (VC), and Vertical Individualism (VI).

Preliminary analysis indicated there were no significant correlations found between the overall Collectivism Score, as measured by the Triandis Scale, and the P% nor the N2 index, as measured by the DIT-2. These results suggest that general individualism/collectivism may not be a factor in the determination of moral judgment. These findings may also reflect the type of measure that was used in this study, as well as the differences between Kohlberg's model and Rest's model of moral reasoning. The concerns of an individualistic bias stemmed from Kohlberg's theory and the Moral Judgment Interview. Rest's theory and the DIT-2, which was used in the present study, differs from Kohlberg's principled moral reasoning and may not be as individualistic. Kohlberg's Postconventional Level, especially Stage 6, is based on a specific philosophical tradition (Rawls, 1971). Rest's Postconventional Schema, however, is based more on a "common morality" where postconventional moral thinking is not linked to any one moral philosophy, but reflects the shared ideals of the community (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). If Rest's Postconventional Schema is based on the morality of many different philosophies, some of which entail collectivistic as well as individualistic perspectives, this could provide one explanation for this study's inability to find a relation between moral reasoning and the IC construct.

Although there were no associations found between the DIT-2 indexes and the Collectivism Score, the DIT-2 indexes were significantly correlated with a handful of the specific IC variables, which both supported and challenged the assumptions by Dien (1982),
Ma (1988), and Vine (1986). Specifically, high scores on some of the Vertical Collectivism variables were associated with lower scores on the P% and N2 indexes, and one Horizontal Individualism variable was positively associated with the P% index. These findings would support assumptions by Dien (1982), Ma (1988), and Vine (1986) of an individualistic bias. Contradicting the assumption of an individualistic bias and supporting Loo’s (1998) study where individualism was associated with lower scores on the P% index, results suggested that a high preference for the Vertical Individualism dimension was associated with lower moral reasoning. It should be noted that while these correlations were significant, the magnitude of these correlations was somewhat small.

Regression analyses were performed to further explore which variables could predict moral reasoning. Again, results both supported and contradicted the assumptions that collectivistic perspectives inhibit the development of moral reasoning, failing to provide clarification to the debate. It should be noted that the variables identified as possible predictors in the multiple regressions contributed to a small amount of the overall variance, suggesting that other variables that were not measured in this study may be more predictive of moral reasoning.

Although the results both supported and contradicted the assumptions of an individualistic bias, the findings also suggest that the horizontal and vertical relationships of the IC construct may play a significant role in predicting moral reasoning, as there appeared to be a consistent pattern with regard to these relationships. Specifically, it was found that variables with high vertical dimensions, regardless of the individualism/collectivism perspective, were associated with lower principled moral reasoning, and variables with high
horizontal dimensions were generally associated with higher principled moral reasoning. In addition, variables with high vertical dimensions were associated with higher conventional moral reasoning, and variables with high horizontal dimensions were associated with lower conventional moral reasoning.

To explain the effect of vertical and horizontal relationships, recall that the vertical dimension focuses on equality, or inequality, in relationships, while the horizontal dimension concentrates on the similarities or differences of people within a group (Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Specifically, Vertical Individualists seek power and status, while attempting to distinguish themselves from others through competition and comparison. Vertical Individualists may not be as concerned with society as a whole, but primarily with the individual and to their own well being. They accept hierarchy in society and endeavor to advance their status. Conversely, Vertical Collectivists do not distinguish themselves from others as they see themselves as an integral part of a group. They accept there are inequalities within the group, and are willing to obey and follow authority figures if it is seen as beneficial. Vertical Collectivists typically seek guidance and follow the leadership of others rather than openly debate the contracts and agreements that are not servicing society. They may be less willing to make social change and more willing to follow the direction of others who have decided what is best for society.

While these two views on the vertical dimension differ from each other significantly, both views differ from the basis of Kohlberg's Postconventional Level (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983) and Rest's Postconventional Schema (Rest et al., 1999) that moral obligations are based on shared ideals and that contracts are social
arrangements, which are adaptable and can change if it does not serve society appropriately. In addition, VC and the Maintain Norms Schema both emphasize the need for law and social roles to sustain social order, and consider it appropriate that unlimited power is given to authorities and social norms are defined for society. The positive associations between VC and the Maintain Norms Schema supported these views. Taking into consideration that high levels of principled moral reasoning are partially based upon equality, it provides an explanation as to why the vertical dimensions were negatively associated with the P% and N2 indexes and positively correlated with the Maintain Norms Schema.

The horizontal dimension concentrates on the similarities or differences of people within the culture, rather than inequalities. Horizontal Individualists emphasize equality, typically "do their own thing," and do not relate or compare themselves to others (Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). The basis of HI is similar to the basis of the Postconventional Level where individuals reasoning at this level have distinguished themselves from the social norm and outlined their views in terms of self-chosen principles (Kohlberg, 1984). It is therefore not surprising why the HI variables were negatively correlated with the Maintain Norms Schema and positively correlated with the P% index, considering that the Postconventional Level is based upon abstract universal principles entailing justice, compassion, and equality, and HI also emphasizes equality in relationships as well as individual rights.

Previous research has not examined the influence of horizontal or vertical relationships on moral reasoning, as gender, culture, and the IC construct has received the most attention. This study has therefore provided new information on what may contribute
to moral reasoning. Triandis (1995) stated that Vertical Collectivism and Horizontal Individualism may be the most common patterns around the world. If this statement is true, then previous research on moral reasoning and the IC construct only examined these two dimensions while ignoring the importance of Vertical Individualism and Horizontal Collectivism. Furthermore, if previous research only examined VC, which was found to be negatively associated with moral reasoning, and HI, which was found to be positively associated with moral reasoning, then it is possible that the results of previous studies may have been misconstrued, where the assumption was that individualism or collectivism, not the horizontal or vertical relationships, played a role in the determination of moral reasoning. Future studies looking at moral reasoning and the IC construct need to take into consideration the effect of the vertical and horizontal relationships.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study was that it was not well controlled compared to other studies. As a means to gather an adequate sample size, participants were permitted to complete the measures on their own time, outside of the control of the experimenter. A number of factors could have contributed to differences among the participants that could not have been controlled by design.

Second, the target sample raises some questions about the generalizability of the study. Although there was an adequate sample size, participants were recruited from a Western Canadian population, which may be unique, in itself, relative to the sample populations of previous studies.
Finally, although the results of the simultaneous multiple regression analyses investigating the DIT-2 indexes were significant, the independent variables contributed for a small amount of the total variance of the dependent variables, suggesting that other variables that were not measured by this study may be more predictive.

**Implications for Further Research**

As previously stated, the primary purpose of this study was to supplement existing research findings on the relation between moral reasoning and individualism/collectivism. While currently there have been a number of studies that examined the cross-cultural universality claim of Kohlberg’s moral judgment theory, at the present time, there have only been two previous studies that empirically examined moral judgment’s association to the IC construct. Furthermore, there have been no previous studies comparing Rest’s schema model to collectivism. Many researchers have suggested links between moral judgment and the IC construct, but the quantity of the research available is limited. While this study would not, by any means, resolve the debate that has circulated since Kohlberg’s theory was in its infancy, it adds to the empirical research previously conducted.

**Implications for Counselling**

Most of Kohlberg’s work, and the research that followed, involved examining the process of moral judgment. However, little research has been conducted on the implications for counsellors. Unlike other theories, such as those prepared by Freud, Rogers, and Gestalt, moral judgment has not been directly applied to the counselling profession. Most of the concentration has been focused on moral education rather than counselling. There are a few researchers that have examined moral judgment in relation to counselling (Hayes, 1991;
1994; Rest, 1984), however they mention minimal cross-cultural counselling implications in their articles. Despite the lack of cultural implications, Rest asserts that research supports the view that, “development in moral judgment should be an important component in the education of health professionals” (p. 24). The results of this study suggest that when using moral reasoning as a component for a counselling theory, a more multicultural perspective of moral reasoning must be taken into account rather than a perspective based solely on Kohlberg’s theory.

Summary

The primary purpose of the current study was to provide additional empirical evidence to determine if the assumption of an individualistic bias is supported. Would individualism promote or inhibit participant’s moral judgment. The current study supported and contradicted the assumptions, providing little clarity to the debate. More importantly, this study provided additional information regarding the effect of horizontal and vertical relationships. Regardless of the degree of individualism or collectivism, an increase in the preference of the vertical dimension was associated with decreased N2 and P% scores. Additionally, findings suggested that an increase in the horizontal dimension was associated with higher P% index levels. These findings are only preliminary as the correlations and regression analyses found in this study were relatively low. At the present time, there has been no clear distinction as to whether individualism or collectivism alone plays a role in the determination of moral judgment, based on Kohlberg’s Stage Theory and Rest’s Schema Theory. Examining horizontal and vertical relationships in conjunction with the IC construct may be a more appropriate task.
References


Appendix A Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Information

Please provide the following information accurately and to the best of your ability. To maintain confidentiality, DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME.

1. Your Religion
2. Your Place of Birth
3. If you have ever lived outside of Canada, please indicate the countries and the amount of time spent in each.
4. As of April 2002, how many academic years of post-secondary education have you completed in Canada (note: approximately 30 credits equals to one academic year)?
5. How many languages do you speak fluently?
6. What is your first language?
7. If English is NOT your first language, how would you rate your ability to speak English (1 = very bad; 2 = moderately bad; 3 = neutral; 4 = good; 5 = very good)?
8. What language do you speak with your family?
9. What language do you speak with your friends?

Please answer the following questions about your parents (or legal guardians).

10. Where is your Father’s place of birth.
11. What is your Father’s ethnic background?
12. What is/was your Father’s occupation?
13. What was your Father’s highest level of education?
14. Where is your Mother’s place of birth.
15. What is your Mother’s ethnic background?
16. What is/was your Mother’s occupation?
17. What was your Mother’s highest level of education?
This page is for persons with an Asian background only. If you are not of Asian descent, please skip this page.

Please note: In this questionnaire, “Asian” refers to your specific ethnic/cultural background.

Please specify your ethnic background: _______________________

1. How strong is your cultural identity as Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, East Indian, etc.)?

   1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   not at all moderately extremely strong

2. How strong is your cultural identity as Canadian or North American?

   1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   not at all moderately extremely strong

3. How Asian (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, East Indian, etc.) was the social environment in which you grew up for the most part of your childhood?

   1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   not at all Asian moderately completely Asian

4. What would be your preferences like, if you were to choose between Asian and Canadian (or North American)? “Asian” refers to your particular ethnic/cultural background. Please use the following scale:

   1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9

   Mostly Canadian about Mostly Asian
   or N. American 50-50

   (a) Arts and music 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   (b) Language 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   (c) Food 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   (d) Traditional events and celebrations 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   (e) Local community to belong to 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   (f) Manners and customs 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   (g) Values 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   (h) Friends 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
   (i) Counsellors/advisors 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
Appendix B Sample Story From DIT-2: The Famine

The small village in northern India has experienced shortages of food before, but this year’s famine is worse than ever. Some families are even trying to feed themselves by making soup from tree bark. Mustaq Singh’s family is near starvation. He has heard that a rich man in his village has supplies of food stored away and is hoarding food while its price goes higher so that he can sell the food later at a huge profit. Mustaq is desperate and thinks about stealing some food from the rich man’s warehouse. The small amount of food that he needs for his family probably wouldn’t even be missed.

What should Mustaq Singh do? Do you favor the action of taking the food? (Check one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Favor</td>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>Slightly Favor</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Slightly Disfavor</td>
<td>Disfavor</td>
<td>Strongly Disfavor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate the following issues in terms of importance (1 = great, 2 = much, 3 = some, 4 = little, 5 = no). Please put a number from 1 to 5 alongside every item.

1. ☐ Is Mustaq Singh courageous enough to risk getting caught for stealing?
2. ☐ Isn’t it only natural for a loving father to care so much for his family that he would steal?
3. ☐ Shouldn’t the community’s laws be upheld?
4. ☐ Does Mustaq Singh know a good recipe for preparing soup from tree bark?
5. ☐ Does the rich man have any legal right to store food when other people are starving?
6. ☐ Is the motive of Mustaq Singh to steal for himself or to steal for his family?
7. ☐ What values are going to be the basis for social cooperation?
8. ☐ Is the epitome of eating reconcilable with the culpability of stealing?
9. ☐ Does the rich man deserve to be robbed for being so greedy?
10. ☐ Isn’t private property an institution to enable the rich to exploit the poor?
11. ☐ Would stealing bring about more total good for everybody concerned or not?
12. ☐ Are laws getting in the way of the most basic claim of any member of society?

Which of these 12 issues is the 1st most important? (write in the number of the item) ☐

Which of these 12 issues is the 2nd most important? ☐

Which of these 12 issues is the 3rd most important? ☐

Which of these 12 issues is the 4th most important? ☐
Appendix C Triandis' Measure of Individualism/Collectivism

This questionnaire is anonymous, and there are no right or wrong answers. We want to know if you strongly agree or disagree with some statements. If you strongly agree, enter a 9 in the blank space. If you strongly disagree, enter a 1 in that space. If you are unsure, enter a 5 next to the statement. If you think the question does not apply to you, use a 5 and draw a circle around the 5. In short, use this key:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. I prefer to be direct and forthright when I talk with people.
2. My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me.
3. I would do what would please my family, even if I detested that activity.
4. Winning is everything.
5. One should live one’s life independently of others.
6. What happens to me is my own doing.
7. I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group.
8. It annoys me when other people perform better than I do.
9. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.
10. It is important to me that I do my job better than others.
11. I like sharing little things with my neighbours.
12. I enjoy working in situations involving competition with others.
13. We should keep our aging parents with us at home.
14. The well-being of my co-workers is important to me.
15. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways.
16. If a relative were in financial difficulty, I would help within my means.
17. Children should feel honored if their parents receive a distinguished award.
18. I often do "my own thing."
19. Competition is the law of nature.
20. If a co-worker gets a prize I would feel proud.
21. I am a unique individual.
22. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
23. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.
24. I would sacrifice an activity that I enjoy very much if my family did not approve of it.
25. I like my privacy.
26. Without competition it is not possible to have a good society.
27. Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure.
28. I feel good when I cooperate with others.
29. I hate to disagree with others in my group.
30. Some people emphasize winning; I am not one of them.
31. Before taking a major trip, I consult with most members of my family and many friends.
32. When I succeed, it is usually because of my abilities.
Below are several scenarios. Each scenario is followed by four options. Please imagine yourself in those situations and rank these options, by placing a 1 next to the option you consider the best, or the most “right” or “appropriate for you” and a 2 next to the next best option. Do not bother to rank the other two options. Remember there are no “correct” answers, just your opinion of what is best.

33) You and your friends decided spontaneously to go out to dinner at a restaurant. What do you think is the best way to handle the bill?
   Please rank the four options
   _______ A. Split it equally, without regard to who order what.
   _______ B. Split it according to how much each person makes.
   _______ C. The group leader pays the bill or decides how to split it.
   _______ D. Compute each person’s charge, according to what that person ordered.

34) You are buying a piece of art for your office. Which one factor is most important in deciding whether to buy it?
   _______ A. It is a good investment.
   _______ B. Your co-workers would like it.
   _______ C. You just like it.
   _______ D. Your supervisor would approve of it.

35) Suppose you had to use one word to describe yourself. Which one would you use?
   _______ A. Unique.
   _______ B. Competitive.
   _______ C. Cooperative.
   _______ D. Dutiful.

36) Happiness is attained by
   _______ A. Gaining a lot of status in the community.
   _______ B. Linking with a lot of friendly people.
   _______ C. Keeping one’s privacy.
   _______ D. Winning in competitions.

37) You are planning to take a major trip that is likely to inconvenience a lot of people at your place of work, during your absence. With whom would you discuss it before deciding whether or not to take it?
   _______ A. No one.
   _______ B. Your parents.
   _______ C. Your spouse or close friend.
   _______ D. Experts about the place I plan to travel to so I can decide if I want to go.
38) Which one of these four books appears to you to be the most interesting?
   _____ A. How to make friends.
   _____ B. How to succeed in business.
   _____ C. How to enjoy yourself inexpensively.
   _____ D. How to make sure you are meeting your obligations.

39) Which is the most important factor in an employee’s promotion, assuming that all other factors such as tenure and performance are equal? Employee is or has
   _____ A. loyal to the corporation.
   _____ B. obedient to the instructions from management.
   _____ C. able to think for him/herself.
   _____ D. contributed to the corporation much in the past.

40) When you buy clothing for a major social event, you would be most satisfied if
   _____ A. You like it.
   _____ B. Your parents like it.
   _____ C. Your friends like it.
   _____ D. It was so elegant that it would dazzle everyone.

41) In your opinion, in an ideal society national budgets is determined so that
   _____ A. All people have adequate incomes to meet basic needs.
   _____ B. Some people are rewarded for making brilliant contributions.
   _____ C. There is maximal stability, law, and order.
   _____ D. People can feel unique and self-actualized.

42) When people ask me about myself, I
   _____ A. Talk about my ancestors and their traditions
   _____ B. Talk about my friends, and what we like to do
   _____ C. Talk about my accomplishments
   _____ D. Talk about what makes me unique.

43) Suppose your fiancé(e) and your parents do not get along very well. What would you do?
   _____ A. Nothing.
   _____ B. Tell my fiancé(e) that I need my parents’ financial support and he or she should learn to handle the politics.
   _____ C. Tell my fiancé(e) that he or she should make a greater effort to “fit in with the family.”
   _____ D. Remind my fiancé(e) that my parents and family are very important to me and he or she should submit to their wishes.
44) Teams of five people entered a science project contest. Your team won first place and a prize of $100. You and another person did 95% of the work on this project. How should the money be distributed?
   _____ A. Split it equally, without regard to who did what.
   _____ B. The other person and I get 95% of the money and the rest goes to the group.
   _____ C. The group leader decides how to split the money.
   _____ D. Divide the money the way that gives me the most satisfaction.

45) Imagine you are selecting a band for a fund-raising event given by your organization. Which are the most important factors in making your decision?
   _____ A. I really like the band.
   _____ B. My friends approve of this band.
   _____ C. The administration of my organization approves of the band.
   _____ D. The band would draw a large crowd.

46) You need to choose one more class for next semester. Which one would you select?
   _____ A. The one that would help me get ahead of everyone else.
   _____ B. The one my parents said to take.
   _____ C. The one my friends plan to take.
   _____ D. The one that seems most interesting to me.

47) You are at a pizza restaurant with a group of friends. How should you decide what kind of pizza to order?
   _____ A. The leader of the group orders for everyone.
   _____ B. I order what I like.
   _____ C. We select the pizza that most people prefer.
   _____ D. We order the most extravagant pizza available.

48) Which candidate would you vote for in the election for president of the student government?
   _____ A. The one your friends are voting for.
   _____ B. The one I like best.
   _____ C. The one who would reward me personally.
   _____ D. The one who is a member of an organization important to me. The status of the organization would improve if that candidate is elected.
Contact:
If I have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, I may contact Dr. Schonert-Reichl or one of her associates at (604) 822-2215.
If I have any concerns about my treatment or rights as a research subject I may contact the Director of Research Services at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Richard Spratley at (604) 822-8598.