CULTURE AND THE NEED FOR POSITIVE SELF-REGARD:
THE JAPANESE CASE

by

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Abstract

A great deal of research indicates that North Americans are motivated to possess, enhance, and maintain positive self views. The cross-cultural generalizability of these motivations is addressed by examining a culture characterized by an interdependent view of self: Japanese. An anthropological and social psychological review suggests that many elements of Japanese culture are incongruent with needs for positive self-views. It is maintained that Japanese culture discourages people to think highly of themselves, in large part because positive self-views conflict with fulfillment of interdependent cultural goals. Five studies were conducted to test the notion that Japanese have a less pronounced need for positive self-regard than do North Americans. Studies 1 and 2 demonstrate that Japanese are less likely than Canadians to enhance their groups. Study 3 shows that the absence of self-enhancing biases is linked to larger actual-ideal discrepancies for Japanese. Study 4, employing a hidden behavioral measure, provides additional albeit somewhat limited evidence for self-enhancing tendencies among Canadians and for self-effacing tendencies among Japanese. Finally, Study 5 demonstrates an absence of dissonance reduction and self-affirmational tendencies among Japanese. The results of the 5 studies are discussed within the context of the role of positive vs. negative self-feelings in Japanese culture.
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Preface

Studies 1 and 2 has been accepted for publication in Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. The manuscript, entitled “The cultural construction of self-enhancement: An examination of group-serving biases,” was authored by S. J. Heine and D. R. Lehman. Study 3 is currently under review at Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin. The manuscript, entitled “Culture, self-discrepancies, and self-satisfaction,” was authored by S. J. Heine and D. R. Lehman. Study 5 has been accepted for publication in Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin. The manuscript, entitled “Culture, dissonance, and self-affirmation,” was authored by S. J. Heine and D. R. Lehman. All writing and analyses for the above studies were conducted by the author of this dissertation, under the supervision of D. R. Lehman.
Cultural and the Need for Positive Regard: The Japanese Case

One of the most common assumptions in research on the self is that the majority of people have a need to view themselves positively (e.g., Baumeister, 1993). Although the assumption of this need appears across research topics (e.g., self-esteem, self-serving biases, self-evaluation maintenance), the vast majority of research hinging on this assumption has been conducted in North America. No doubt, we have a solid understanding of self-evaluation for the average North American: He or she possesses a positive self-view (e.g., Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Diener & Diener, 1995b), tends to enhance the positivity of his or her self-view (e.g., Greenwald, 1980; Taylor & Brown, 1988), and actively seeks information that allows the maintenance of this positive self-view (e.g., Steele, 1988; Tesser, 1988). Quite clearly, the normative view of self in North America can be described as “biased” or “skewed” in terms of its valence. Its center of gravity lies distinctly above the theoretical mid-point of the self-evaluation spectrum (Baumeister et al., 1989).

Significantly less research on self-views has been conducted outside of North America, particularly within Eastern cultures (Diener & Diener, 1995a). Yet the available evidence indicates that those from Eastern cultures do not have similarly skewed distributions of self-views. The suggestion, then, is that tendencies to possess, enhance, and maintain positive self-views are not basic to humankind, but may be culturally constructed.

This dissertation reviews literatures relevant to two cultures: North American and Japanese. Similar to other psychological phenomena that have been shown to be influenced or shaped by culture (for a review see Markus & Kitayama, 1991b), I argue that self-evaluations do not exist within a cultural vacuum. I will suggest that whereas the achievement of North American cultural goals is fostered by the maintenance of a positive
self-view, fulfilling Japanese cultural tasks is not aided by feelings of positive self-regard. To the contrary, such feelings may impede the fulfillment of Japanese cultural goals.

**Culture and Self**

The enormous body of research on the self-concept conducted at North American universities reflects our deep fascination with the self. The self-concept, however, being forever bound to the historical and cultural context within which it is examined (Sampson, 1977), remains a resistant target of objective study. Gergen (1973) argued that much of social psychological research is an historical undertaking, with the processes under study best understood as the psychological counterparts to cultural norms. Indeed, Baumeister (1987) noted that the self-concept as we know it today is a relatively recent historical construction, emerging in Western Europe roughly around the 16th century. The point here is that the self cannot be treated as though it exists independent of a social context—its various forms have developed to their present states through peculiar sets of historical and cultural antecedents.

It is perhaps most accurate, then, to view the vast amount of “self” research amassed over the past few decades largely as a reflection of contemporary middle-class North American culture. Indeed, Markus, Kitayama, and Heiman (1996) remind us that it is not uncommon for critics to refer to psychology as “Anglo-American Area Studies.” Unfortunately, because the cultural specificity of social psychological theories is rarely noted, often the implicit assumption is that these theories reflect pancultural psychological processes. To this end, Hogan (1975) suggested that “much American psychology can be plausibly described as theoretically egocentric” (p. 534). For the most part, the extent to which our theories generalize to other times or cultures still remain empirical questions.

The notion that the self is shaped by its cultural context has recently enjoyed a resurgence in social psychology. For example, in their influential paper, Markus and Kitayama (1991b) posited that because cultures differ from each other in fundamental ways, so must the self-concepts of people raised in those cultures. One important way in
which cultures differ is the extent to which they emphasize two tasks relevant to everyday life: independence (i.e., tasks related to agency and autonomy) and interdependence (i.e., tasks related to communion and affiliation; Bakan, 1966; Kashima, Yamaguchi, Kim, Choi, Gelfand, & Yuki, 1995). Cultures in which the former process is primary are said to foster an independent construal of self, whereas cultures in which the latter process is dominant are said to foster an interdependent construal of self.

The independent construal of self is the predominant sense of self in Western, and especially North American middle-class cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Sampson, 1977; Triandis, 1989). It is characterized by a bounded and autonomous sense of self that is distinct from others and the environment (Geertz, 1974/1984). This sense of self is constructed primarily upon a foundation of internal attributes, such as an individual’s abilities, traits, attitudes, and characteristics, and is made meaningful in reference to these attributes. The primary cultural task within these cultures is to discover, actualize, and confirm these internal self-attributes (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 1994) thereby asserting one’s individuality and autonomy, and highlighting one’s separateness from the social world (Sampson, 1977).

In contrast, within Asian, particularly Japanese, as well as Latin American, African, and Southern European cultures, there is a culturally shared belief in the interdependence of the self with others (Hamaguchi, 1985; Kondo, 1987; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Triandis, 1989). The self is not considered to be separate and autonomous, and it is only within the contextual fabric of individuals’ social relationships, roles, and duties that the interdependent self gains meaning. The principal cultural task in these cultures is for individuals to achieve a sense of belongingness with their respective groups. The maintenance of this interdependence requires individuals to constrain and tame their internal desires or wishes, which, if left unchecked, could potentially threaten the ever-important interpersonal harmony (Kitayama et al., 1994).
These culturally-sanctioned views of self are perpetuated within cultures by collectively shared social assumptions and practices which appear as subjectively "natural" ways of acting and interacting with others. Behavior that conforms to cultural standards is rewarded and authenticated by various cultural beliefs, institutions, and practices, thereby maintaining the culture's habitual or predominant mode of existence (Kitayama, Markus, & Lieberman, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1994).

However, as the psychological literature on agency and communion demonstrates, orientations of independence and interdependence are not strictly restricted to individuals from "Western" and "Eastern" cultures, respectively (e.g., Bakan, 1966; Kashima et al., 1995). For example, interdependent orientations among North Americans, and independent orientations among Japanese, are not exceedingly rare. These orientations, however, should be construed as secondary as they are not encouraged within the cultural system (Kitayama et al., 1994). Successful or poor performance with respect to these secondary tasks will neither be rewarded nor sanctioned to the same extent as performance of the primary cultural tasks. In fact, in some situations, these secondary tasks may be in direct conflict with the principal orientations of the cultures and may even be actively opposed. Recent research in terror management shows that these secondary cultural values are rejected after individuals have reflected upon their own mortality (Heine & Lehman, 1996c). Normative construals of selves are maintained within cultures by the validation or authentication of primary cultural tasks and a relative lack of elaboration of secondary cultural tasks. These differential elaborations of cultural tasks lead to dissimilar views of selves between cultures.

Markus and Kitayama (1991b) maintain that divergent cultural views of self lead to cultural differences in psychological processes that involve the self. Cultures characteristic of the independent construal of self should show evidence of motivations, cognitions, and emotions that affirm the independence and autonomy of the self. On the other hand, psychological processes within cultures representative of the interdependent construal of
self should affirm the interrelatedness and belongingness of the self. Much of the cultural psychological literature (see, e.g., Cousins, 1989; Heine & Lehman, 1995a; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984) has focused on differences between cultures in such processes.

The extent to which individuals possess positive self-views is one psychological process that could potentially vary between cultures. A difference between cultures in the positivity of self-views would be expected to the extent that the cultures differed in characteristics that were associated with tendencies to elaborate or enhance positive self-evaluations. In the following section, I discuss how the need for positive self-regard differentially relates to the primary cultural tasks of North American and Japanese cultures.

The Role of Positive Self-Views Within North American and Japanese Cultures

The above discussion of cultural influences on the self-concept suggests the existence of cultural mandates that direct individuals to act in accordance with culturally sanctioned ideals. Individuals are rewarded when their behavior conforms to their respective cultural mandates in that their modes of existence are authenticated by their cultures (D’Andrade, 1984). They have received a cultural stamp of approval indicating that they are “good” or “normal” individuals (Heine & Lehman, 1996c; Solomon, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1991). In contrast, behavior that fails to follow the cultural mandate may remain cognitively unelaborated or negatively sanctioned indicating that the individual has not met the cultural criteria of selfhood.

In North America, for example, the primary cultural mandate is for individuals to be adequate, competent, and self-sufficient (e.g., Sampson, 1977). North Americans who perceive themselves as falling short of this criterion thus remain “invalidated” by their culture and are likely to experience a certain degree of psychological discomfort. This suggests that North Americans should be motivated to view themselves especially
positively, creating the sense or illusion of their autonomy. The more positively North Americans can perceive themselves, the closer they will approximate the cultural ideals of adequacy and competency. The construction of the typical North American's identity as a meaningful cultural entity, then, hinges on the identification and confirmation of positive internal attributes of the self (Markus et al., in press). The elaboration of positive self-attributes and the denial or neglect of negative attributes (or the employment of any other deceptive cognitive maneuvers that can bolster a positive self-view) are rewarded by a cultural validation of the individual. North Americans who are able to maintain a high level of positive self-regard can continue to feel authenticated by their culture.

In contrast, the primary cultural mandate in Japan is for individuals to achieve a sense of interpersonal harmony and connection with others (e.g., Bachnik, 1992; De Vos, 1985). The Japanese self is defined as a relational entity that is made meaningful in reference to the pertinent social relationship to which the self is part (Hamaguchi, 1985; Nakamura, 1964). Therefore the construction of the typical Japanese individual's identity as a meaningful cultural entity involves the validation of the individual's social relationships by constantly seeking to identify and confirm shared expectations and norms. The need for identifying positive internal attributes of the self, even when present and demonstrable, does not aid individuals in adhering to the Japanese cultural mandates. Possessing, let alone enhancing or maintaining, a positive evaluation of the individual self that is disconnected from the social context ought not be a primary concern for Japanese. That is, a positive self-view is not implicated in the construction and symbolical affirmation of the identity as an active, mutually validating, and validated cultural agent (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, in press; Nisbett, Kitayama, & Markus, 1996). In fact, as I argue in the following section, negative views of the self may serve Japanese better in approaching their cultural criteria of selfhood.
Japanese Culture and Positive Self-Regard

Perhaps some readers versed in North American social psychological literature will find the notion that positive self-regard is of little importance to Japanese difficult to understand. Indeed, it is a possibility that stands in direct conflict to much of what is basic within Western cultural values. Because cultural psychologists view the self as a product of culture, they argue that it is only within the context of the cultural environment that we can gain a true understanding of the self and related processes (e.g., Greenfield, in press; Markus et al., 1996; Miller, 1994; Nisbett et al., 1996; Shweder, 1990). In an attempt to make this proposed absence of a need for positive self-regard among Japanese more understandable, in the next section, I provide an anthropological, sociological, and cultural psychological review of elements of Japanese culture that are relevant to self-evaluations. Moreover, I explain how these aspects of Japanese culture can be seen to shape and influence how Japanese view themselves.

Amae

Critical to any analysis of Japanese culture is the concept of amae (e.g., Kumagai & Kumagai, 1985). Amae is the emotion term, unique to Japanese, that refers to an individual’s indulgence upon another’s favors. Amae is the freedom to maintain the subjective experience of one’s dependence on another. That amae is viewed as integral to everyday life in Japan highlights the importance of mutual dependence or interdependence in the culture. The Japanese psychiatrist Takeo Doi (1973), who introduced the Western world to the concept of amae, describes it as the mortar that holds Japanese society together. It reinforces the solidarity of the group.

To the extent that amae is linked to the Japanese cultural mandate, we would expect that Japanese would be motivated to emphasize and elaborate their dependency on significant others, and conversely, that they would be reluctant to enhance feelings of their independence. The more that Japanese individuals focus on their ability to take care of themselves, the less they should be able to achieve a sense of mutual dependence with
others. We would expect, then, that Japanese would avoid feeling that they have become too capable by themselves (cf. De Vos & Wagatsuma, 1973; Miyamoto, 1994). For example, Nakane (1970) argued that it is important for leaders in Japan to maintain a sense of dependency on their subordinates:

"It is not essential for the superior, including the man right at the top, to be intelligent. In fact, it is better if he is not outstandingly brilliant. If his mind is too sharp and he is excessively capable in his work the men below him lose a part of their essential function and may become alienated from him. To counterbalance the dependence on the leader on the part of his followers, it is always hoped that the leader, in his turn, will be dependent on his men" (p. 65).

This phenomenon is not restricted to the corporate world, but extends across all aspects of Japanese life. Even the emperor, the ultimate symbol of the Japanese, maintains the air that he would be helpless without the Imperial house to take care of him (Doi, 1973). The solidarity of the Japanese nation thus appears to be reinforced by the mutual dependence of everyone, right up to the emperor. In fact, it appears that the people with the highest status in Japan are the most dependent upon others. Doi (1973) maintains that it is those individuals who best embody the sense of dependency characteristic of amae that are most qualified to perch on top of the hierarchy.

Achievement for the group, not the individual

Success in many aspects of Japanese life may be seen more for what one accomplishes together with or for one's group than what one accomplishes as an individual. Achievement that can be attributed to a single individual highlights the uniqueness of that individual and can be seen to diminish the success of the group (De Vos, 1985). Group solidarity is best maintained when every member is perceived to be contributing to the group's success. Individual success, then, is purchased at the formidable price of reduced group solidarity. This suggests that outstanding individual
achievement may have negative consequences in Japan. In support of this suggestion, Kitayama et al. (1994) found that Japanese exhibited a positive correlation between the experience of positive interpersonally-disengaged emotions (i.e., emotions that only implicate the individual, such as pride) and negative interpersonally-engaged emotions (i.e., emotions that implicate the relation between the individual and others, such as shame). They argue that this is an indication that success in tasks of independence in Japan is accompanied by negative emotions (also see Johnson, 1993) because it is detrimental to the maintenance of interdependence (incidentally, the reverse pattern was obtained with U.S. participants). Maintaining a sense of connection and harmony with others implies that individuals should not become too successful by themselves.

Individual achievement in Japan receives little reinforcement from existing social structures. Nakane (1970) noted that “In Japan, in contrast to other societies, the provisions for recognition of merit are weak, and institutionalization of the social order has been effected largely by means of seniority” (p. 29). This orientation is apparent in the Japanese education system. Throughout the period of mandatory education (i.e., until completion of junior high school), individual children do not have to meet any specified criteria of achievement in order to be promoted to the next grade. Rather, all children are promoted together (Hendry, 1987; Rohlen, 1983). Tailoring education to an individual child’s academic needs apparently is viewed as less important than maintaining the solidarity of the group. In contrast to the explicit goal of many North American schools to develop each child’s individual potential (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992), Japanese schools strive to bring each child towards consensual standards of what good children are supposed to be (Lewis, 1995; Rohlen, 1983; White & Levine, 1986).

As well, Japan’s famous “lifetime employment” system, although undergoing considerable restructuring in this “post-bubble” era, provides a lucid example of how individual merit is superseded in Japanese organizations by interpersonal factors such as loyalty. For the most part, salary and promotions in large Japanese companies are
contingent upon the time that one has spent with a company rather than being based on one’s performance (e.g., Christopher, 1983; Miyamoto, 1994). Hence, loyalty towards one’s company, as opposed to individual achievement, is primarily what is rewarded.

This lack of emphasis on individual achievement in Japan does not mean that achievement itself is foreign to Japanese. Indeed the accomplishments of Japan, particularly since World War II, are most impressive—perhaps even unprecedented in scale. However, the nature of this achievement is distinctively different from what is encouraged in the West. Achievement is seen to reflect upon one’s group, rather than upon the individual (De Vos, 1973a; Roland, 1988). The young man who passes the entrance examination into a top notch Japanese university elevates his family’s status. The hard work of a saleswoman to attract more clients helps her company to profit and expand. Achievement is a means by which an individual contributes to his or her group, not a means to elevate the individual above the group. The concrete results of achievement in North America and Japan may appear on the surface to be quite similar, but they seem to be based on distinctly different motivations and to serve different ends (De Vos, 1973a).

That Japanese society does not focus upon, nor explicitly reward, individual achievement suggests that individual merit remains culturally unauthenticated. Japanese individuals have few encounters with their individual performance being evaluated; indeed, the very process of assessing the merit of an individual is a rather unfamiliar undertaking to them. Because evaluations of the individual are less meaningful and relevant to their self-concepts, Japanese are less likely to dwell on their self-evaluations than do North Americans.

Self-Discipline

Another idiosyncratic characteristic of Japanese is the strong emphasis placed on self-discipline (Bachnik, 1992; Nitobe, 1969/1905; White & Levine, 1986). With the paramount cultural task being the achievement of interpersonal harmony, individuals must
be able to restrain internal attributes that could potentially interfere with the cohesion of the group (Hamaguchi, 1985). Restraint of the individual thus serves to deepen interpersonal harmony and cultivates the interdependent self (Bachnik, 1992).

The emphasis on self-discipline is reflected in a variety of Japanese words. For example, doryoku, gaman, and ganbaru have much more positive connotations than their English equivalents of effort, endurance, and perseverance. For example, in one national survey doryoku was chosen as the “most liked” word by those polled (cited in Whiting, 1990). Effort directed at improving oneself to meet consensual standards of performance is critical for functioning effectively in Japanese society. Gaman (to endure or bear hardships) in particular has an important role in Japanese life (e.g., Benedict, 1946; Johnson, 1993; Nitobe, 1969/1905). De Vos (1973a) states that “the virtues of endurance and perseverance, the capacity to put off pleasure and to endure suffering, characterize Japanese culture to a degree not paralleled elsewhere” (p. 195). Such an emphasis on suffering is evident in popular Japanese culture as well. In contrast to the typical ending of a Hollywood movie, where the hero succeeds in falling in love or in catching the bad guy, Japanese stories tend to eschew happy endings and focus on the suffering and losses of their heroes. As Buruma (1984) put it, “one really has to suffer to be popular in Japan” (p. 31).

Many Japanese parents and educators view gaman as a primary means for the development of children. Such parents and educators believe that personal hardships remove self-centeredness so that a deeper awareness for the group can be cultivated (White & Levine, 1986). Japanese moral education (dotoku), the vehicle by which the cultural mandate is officially transmitted within schools, stresses the importance of gaman. The most common theme in dotoku books is perseverance in the face of adversity. Lanham (1979) noted that whereas North American educators strive to teach children self-confidence (a value essential for following an individualistic cultural mandate), Japanese children are taught the importance of discipline, perseverance, and hard work. In fact, she
found that North American teachers were reluctant to give students tasks that were especially effortful and challenging because they felt that this might hinder the development of children's self-confidence.

The importance of gaman is also reflected in Buddhism (Minami, 1971), one of the two major religions in Japan. Individual suffering is viewed as an inevitable and essential part of life. To overly dwell on feeling good about oneself, thereby distancing oneself from the feeling of suffering tends to be viewed as somewhat immoral (Benedict, 1946). Accordingly, suffering in Japan is seen as critical for both development of the self and for spiritual development. The importance of individual suffering in Japan would thus be likely to discourage people from basking in positive feelings.

**Self-Criticism**

A self-critical orientation is commonly described as a defining characteristic of Japanese (De Vos, 1985; Kashiwagi, 1986; Kitayama et al., in press; Roland, 1988; White, 1987). Japanese tend to view themselves as incomplete (ki ga sumanai) and to feel unsatisfied with their performance (Doi, 1973). A survey by the Prime Minister's Office (1979) revealed that Japanese are considerably less content about their abilities than are North Americans. One question, for example, asked if students felt they were doing well in school. The vast majority (93%) of North Americans were happy with their performance, in contrast to only a minority (37%) of Japanese. Similarly, Stevenson, Lee, and Stigler (1986) found that parents from the U.S. were far more satisfied than Japanese or Chinese parents with their children's mathematics performance despite the fact that Japanese and Chinese children consistently outperformed American children.

Chronically viewing oneself as incomplete carries the implication that one must continue to work hard to make up for one's self-perceived deficits. Effort and hard work are natural consequences of the feeling that one hasn't done enough. This outlook can be seen to propel the incessant drive of Japanese toward role perfectionism, and it could play an important role in their industriousness (Befu, 1986; De Vos, 1973b; Doi, 1973).
Japanese artisans and craftsmen, for example, are famous for devoting their lifetime to perfecting their crafts. This never-ending drive towards improving one’s skills characterizes Japanese attitudes towards physical training as well. Former San Francisco Giant, Chris Arnold, had the following to say after playing baseball in Osaka for the Kintetsu Buffaloes:

"I'll tell you the big difference between Japan and the U.S. In the U.S. we believe that a player has a certain amount of natural ability and with practice he reaches a certain peak point, but after that no amount of practice will make him better--because after a certain point your ability reaches its limits. But the Japanese believe there is no peak point. They don't recognize limits" (cited in Whiting, 1990).

Japanese try to meet the highest possible standards associated with their roles (Befu, 1986); their lives are, in a sense, devoted to improving themselves. Accordingly, feeling satisfied about oneself could reduce the perceived need to continue one's efforts and could signal others that one is not doing his or her utmost to work towards the consensual standards of excellence.

Because the primary cultural goal in Japan is to maintain interpersonal harmony, any information indicating that an individual is not doing his or her part is crucial for that individual to remedy the situation and contribute more fully to the group (Roland, 1988). As a result, Japanese feel that they need to be particularly vigilant of, and sensitive to, information indicating their shortcomings or their incompleteness—areas upon which they must work harder to improve (Kitayama et al., 1995, in press; White, 1987). From a young age, Japanese are taught to reflect upon their weaknesses (hansei suru) and to focus upon how they can improve themselves (Johnson, 1993; Roland, 1988). In contrast to Western caretakers who tend to draw attention to children's positive features by praising, encouraging, and complimenting them; Japanese caretakers are more likely to draw children's attention to potentially negative features that may have to be corrected for the child to fit in properly with others (Markus et al., in press). This self-critical stance is
institutionalized in the education system (White & Levine, 1986) and serves to continually remind children of how important it is to ensure that one does not interfere with the success of the group. Moreover, this critical orientation generalizes beyond the individual to criticisms of others (Kitayama & Karasawa, 1996; Okugawa, 1992), their institutions (De Vos, 1985), and their country (Christopher, 1983; Lipset, 1996).

External Frame of Reference

Another aspect of Japanese culture that is important for understanding the role of self-evaluations is their consensual or external frame of reference (see Nakamura, 1964). Relative to the behavior of North Americans, Japanese behavior is less determined by individuals' internal attributes (e.g., attitudes, personal desires, motives) and more by cues from their social environment (De Vos & Wagatsuma, 1973; Heine, Lehman, Okugawa, & Campbell, 1992; Lebra, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). Japanese, then, seem particularly sensitive to social information that indicates appropriate ways to behave.

This external frame of reference leads Japanese to have a heightened awareness of their audience (e.g., Johnson, 1993; Kuwayama, 1992; Lebra, 1983; Roland, 1988). In this way, rather than being seen as subjects, they are more aptly viewed as imagined objects in the eyes of others (Hamaguchi, 1985). This dependence on the attitudes and expectations of others makes Japanese highly sensitive to insults and negative sanctions from others (De Vos & Caudill, 1973; De Vos & Wagatsuma, 1973; Smith, 1983). Hence Japanese tend to publicly present a formally impeccable self. The individual is protected by layers of insulating rituals, such as codes of formal communication, highly conventionalized forms of greetings, rules for posture, gesture, etc., all which serve to prevent the exposure of the individual self to others (Lebra, 1983). Effort is made to appease an audience, or an internalized awareness of an audience, as this is what ultimately evaluates the individual. Thus, considerations of self-worth are not simply a matter of being satisfied with oneself—one must endeavor for others to be satisfied with
oneself (e.g., Roland, 1988; Spence, 1985). The securing of others' approval requires Japanese to continually make efforts towards improving themselves.

In contrast, the behavior and attitudes of North Americans are largely determined by internal attributes and are less influenced by consensual or external factors (Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). This can be seen to generalize to their attitudes about themselves. Because the ultimate judge in North American self-evaluations is the individual, people are relatively resistant to the opinions of others. Although constrained by the objective evidence at hand (e.g., Brown & Smart, 1991; Kunda, 1987; Schlenker, 1975), North Americans are often in the privileged position of deciding for themselves how they are doing. Consequently, they are able to think that they are more competent and more adequate than they really are without encountering many negative consequences for holding these “positive illusions” (Taylor, 1989). For example, Myers' (1987) observation that 25% of U.S. college students believe that they are in the top 1% of the population with respect to the ability of getting along well with others is a reflection of how such overly positive beliefs can exist unchallenged. Westerners have developed a number of cognitive maneuvers that allow them to deceive themselves into believing that they more closely approximate their cultural ideals than in fact they do (Greenwald, 1980). As long as North Americans can convince themselves of their competence, they have made progress towards their cultural mandate (see Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1982). This may be one of the underlying reasons why self-deceptive strategies are associated with mental health in North America (Taylor & Brown, 1988).

The process by which Japanese strive to secure a favorable evaluation from others appears to be diametrically opposite to North Americans' tendencies for self-enhancement. The Japanese individual is not in the position to set standards for her or him, rather, Japanese must be aware of the consensual standards of excellence within a given context. They must critically assess themselves to determine what they are missing and then seek to eliminate the perceived deficit. It is crucial that they develop the skills to attend to and
elaborate their shortcomings with respect to the pertinent social standards. Information indicating how one has fallen short of the consensual standards is used to improve one’s actions and behaviors, to affirm one’s sense of belongingness, and to promote harmony within the group (Kitayama et al., in press; Nisbett et al., in press).

In Japanese culture, where the standards of excellence are externally and consensually defined, it is critical for individuals to strive to conform to the average. Kumon (1982) characterized the Japanese way of competition as yokonarabi (to line up sideways), where the emphasis is not on surpassing others (which seems to be a strong motivation in North America; see Taylor & Brown, 1988), but on not falling behind others. Japanese must work towards eliminating negative features from their selves so that they can approach these consensual standards of selfhood. It follows, then, that a sense of well-being would be likely to stem not so much from a positive evaluation of the self, but rather from the ability to actively respond to and eliminate deficits from the socially shared, consensual standards of excellence (Nisbett et al., 1996). Hence, the absence of negative features may be crucial for Japanese well-being. In support of this, Kitayama and Karasawa (1995) report evidence that Japanese appraisals of not having various negative qualities show a clear relation with their subjective well-being and physical health, whereas they found no such relation with Japanese individuals’ appraisals of their positive qualities.

Shame and Apologies

In her classic ethnographic account of the Japanese, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, Ruth Benedict (1946) characterized Japan as a “shame culture” in contrast to the “guilt cultures” of the West. Although the extreme nature of her assertion has been questioned by a number of researchers (e.g., De Vos, 1973b; Sakuta, 1967), most are in agreement that shame occupies a privileged position for Japanese (e.g., Creighton, 1990; Doi, 1973).
Lebra (1983) offers two reasons for the pervasiveness of shame in Japanese culture. First, she argues that because Japanese cultural norms are especially well-defined and clearly prescribe normatively appropriate ways of behaving (see Heine et al., 1992), violations are readily recognized and sanctioned. Second, she contends that Japanese spend much of their lives in the presence of significant audiences, thereby making them acutely aware of any unwanted attention. Shame naturally arises for Japanese when they are unable to perform to the standards necessary to maintain harmonious interactions within the group (Creighton, 1990). Shame serves as a social barometer indicating when the individual is in some way interfering with the ever-important group solidarity. Hence, the Japanese predisposition towards shame reflects the importance of being sensitive to information indicating how the individual is not doing enough for the group (Kitayama et al., 1995).

The effort expended toward ensuring that the individual is not interfering with the harmony of the group can also be seen in the importance of apologies in Japan. A recent article in The New York Times called Japan “the most apologetic country in the world” (Kristof, 1995, June 12). Empirical studies (e.g., Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990) confirm that apologies are more common in Japan than in North America; they abound in daily conversation and play an integral role in the Japanese judicial system (Bayley, 1976; Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986). In many situations, social customs require apologies, even when the individual is not directly responsible, and failure to apologize in these situations can be met with harsh sanctions (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990). Cultural conventions, therefore, force Japanese to take on a self-denigrating and submissive stance through apologies (Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986).

Apologies reflect the critical self-evaluative nature of the Japanese. Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990) view apologies in Japan as symptoms of inadequacy. They are public admissions of an individual’s faults. Wagatsuma and Rosett (1986) explain the relative lack of apologies by North Americans in terms of the high value that North Americans
place on self-esteem—self-denigrating acts such as apologies are simply too costly psychologically. The habit of accepting fault, even in situations where responsibility is clearly absent, runs directly counter to self-enhancing orientations. Apologies reflect the Japanese concern of being an imposition on others; they serve to minimize the individual, allowing for the proverbial nail to get pounded back down.

Secondary Locus of Control

A number of cross-cultural studies have revealed that Japanese have quite different perceptions of control than North Americans (Bond & Tornatzky, 1973; Heine & Lehman, 1995a, 1996b; Mahler, 1974; Parsons & Schneider, 1974). Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder (1982) argue that there are two broad ways in which individuals can gain perceptions of self-control. The first is by acting upon the world to change it so that it becomes more consistent with their desires--this is called primary control. The second is by aligning their desires with the existing realities--this is called secondary control. In other words, primary control refers to efforts to change the world and secondary control refers to efforts to change the self. Weisz et al. (1984) argue that primary control is more characteristic of North American control strategies, whereas secondary control better characterizes Japanese control strategies.

There are many aspects of Japanese life that reflect an orientation to secondary control. First is a strong belief in fatalism (Mahler, 1974; Parsons & Schneider, 1974). There is a sense in Japan that bad things cannot be avoided and that one must learn to accept things the way they are (Minami, 1971). In contrast to the North American slogan “Where there’s a will there’s a way,” Japanese are often heard to say “There is no way” (shikata ga nai). Japanese society is also structured to render individuals relatively less potent in achieving anything that runs counter to the mainstream; the highly bureaucratized nature of group activities and the consensual basis on which most decisions are made provides little voice to the individual. Nor is there much tolerance for stubborn dissenters (e.g., Benedict, 1946; Miyamoto, 1994). As the external environment is
perceived as being rather impervious to individuals' actions, sense of control is exerted by adjusting oneself to function within the system and by learning to be content with one's lot (Nakamura, 1964; Weisz et al., 1984).

An orientation to secondary control is also apparent in indigenous Japanese psychiatric therapies. Therapies can provide an interesting glimpse of cultural mandates because they are methods that are used to steer patients toward culturally normative ways of existing. The most famous Japanese psychiatric therapy is Morita therapy. The goal of this therapy is for patients to achieve a state of *aru ga mama*, that is, to learn to accept reality the way it is (e.g., Ishiyama, 1990; Lebra, 1976; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). This includes the complete acceptance of oneself, with all one's weaknesses. Morita therapy is based on the view that no individual is perfect and that a lack of self-confidence is shared by all. Realizing that it is normal to see oneself as imperfect is seen as the key to mental health (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984; Weisz et al., 1984; cf. Taylor & Brown, 1988). A second indigenous therapy, Naikan therapy, aids people in achieving mental health by forcing them to focus on how much they have received from others throughout their lives. Patients are required to self-reflect intensively for several days until they are aware of how dependent they are on the good will of others. They learn to accept their dependence and obligations toward others (Murase, 1986; Weisz et al., 1984). Both of these therapies highlight the secondary control orientation of the Japanese. They require individuals to focus on the acceptance of themselves and of their relations. Although in the West accepting reality without a fight is considered to be a weakness and a sign of a submissive personality, it enables Japanese to move forward (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). In her visit to an ethics retreat, Kondo (1987) observed that Japanese "selves had to be mortified to 'fit in' with society; there was no attempt to transform that society or its structures" (p. 268). The normative way of existence for Japanese can thus be seen as acceptance or accommodation, not resistance.
These orientations of control extend to the ways in which individuals evaluate themselves. For North Americans, primary control strategies suggest that their desires hold ascendancy over the status quo. They strive to align the world with their desires. Hence, if there is something about themselves that they do not like, individuals are behooved to try to change it. They may quit their job, move across the country, go on a diet, get a divorce, go see a therapist—anything to make their lives more positive. If an individual fails to achieve her or his desires, it is the individual who is perceived as responsible for the failure. Achieving the Western cultural mandate of independence requires that individuals feel that they are in control of their own destinies. In contrast, when Japanese do not like something about themselves, they are more likely to discipline themselves to learn to live with it. Negative thoughts about oneself are not to be dispelled but are to be accepted and learned from.

Emotional Restraint

The experience of emotions is conditioned and shaped by culturally-sanctioned socialization processes suggesting that many cultural differences may exist in this realm as well (Kitayama et al., 1994). For example, in North American culture, where the self is viewed to be largely constructed on a foundation of internal attributes, emotions are allowed to gain autonomy. Emotional experience can be seen as an important aspect of identity for the independent self. Hence, in the West the evaluative connotation of emotional experience can be seen to reflect the inner core of the self. Feeling good about oneself suggests that one is realizing the cultural mandate. In contrast, the experience of certain negative emotions can indicate that one is failing to be a competent and adequate individual. North Americans thus are likely to be highly motivated to increase and enhance subjectively positive feelings and to decrease and reinterpret subjectively negative feelings (Kitayama et al., 1994).

In contrast, when the cultural mandate is to maintain a sense of connection and harmony with others emotional experience is potentially a disruptive force. It is critical for
individuals to act in accordance with the wishes of the group, not on the basis of their own feelings. Hence, in Japan emotions are not allowed to attain autonomy. Affect is viewed as something to be controlled, subdued, or diluted (Lanham, 1988; Lebra, 1976; Nitobe, 1969/1905). This is clearly evident in Japanese melodramas, where the most poignant scenes are those in which the actor quashes obviously potent emotions (Buruma, 1984). In Japan, the expression of extreme emotion is inconsistent with both the interdependent self and the individual's abilities to approximate the cultural ideals. Emotional experience is seen as something either to be accepted as is or to be moderated and restrained (Kitayama et al., 1994). Accordingly, in Japan there is likely to be little motivation to enhance positive feelings or to avoid negative feelings.

These hypothesized tendencies for North Americans to enhance their positive emotional experiences and for Japanese to accept or moderate their emotional experiences suggest that North Americans should experience relatively more positive emotions than Japanese. In a study by Kitayama et al. (1994), which clearly demonstrated this cultural difference, both U.S. and Japanese students were asked to report the frequency with which they experienced a broad range of emotions. Whereas those from the U.S. reported experiencing a far greater proportion of positive than negative emotions (see also Brandstatter, 1991 for similar findings with Europeans), Japanese reported experiencing about the same amount of positive and negative emotions. Echoing this observed cultural difference, Diener and Diener (1995a) suggested that "life satisfaction may be based more on positive feelings in individualistic nations, for example, feelings about the self. Conversely, in collectivist nations life satisfaction might be influenced by a more prevalent negative focus" (p. 662).

Differences in the cultural construction of attitudes towards positive feelings are also evident in cross-cultural studies of child-rearing. Caudill and Weinstein (1969) found a high positive correlation between the frequency of American mother's chatting with their babies and their infant's "happy vocals," whereas there was no correlation between the
mothers' chatting and the babies' "unhappy vocals." The American mother thus appears to elicit and reinforce her baby's happy vocalizations. In contrast, Japanese mothers' chatting was shown to be significantly correlated with their babies' unhappy vocals and not with their happy vocals. Caudill and Weinstein argued that the Japanese mothers' chatting served to soothe their babies, rather than to reinforce their happy vocalizations. Moreover, they demonstrated that as early as 3 months of age American babies made more happy vocals, and fewer unhappy vocals, than did Japanese. That this difference is observable at such an early age underscores the strong influence that culture exerts on shaping our emotional experiences.¹

¹This dissertation is concerned with how culture shapes differences in the need for positive self-regard. That differences are identifiable between Japanese and Americans at such a young age may suggest to some that genetic differences (i.e., racial differences) might also influence psychological processes. Considerable research has shown that many psychological processes are hereditary (e.g., Tesser, 1993), which raises the possibility that the Japanese may have a gene pool which predisposes them towards possessing more negative attitudes about themselves than North Americans. Although I later report evidence that clearly shows that some differences cannot be explained solely in terms of genetic differences (e.g., the results of Asian-Canadians in Studies 1-3), the possibility remains that some of the cultural differences between Japanese and Canadians reported in this dissertation may also be influenced by genetic differences. Separating the cultural component from the genetic component, however, is an extremely difficult task. For example, even those Japanese who are adopted and raised by North American parents in North America are likely to internalize the stereotypical attitudes North Americans have towards Japanese. U.S. Senator Alphonse D'Amato's recent impersonation of Judge Lance Ito is perhaps one such example. Claude Steele's (Steele, 1990; Steele & Aronson, 1995) research on African-Americans testifies to the strength that these internalized expectations can bear on individuals' thoughts and behaviors and highlights the need for caution in seeing racial differences that may in fact be obscured by cultural differences. Hence, the extent to which genetic differences influence the psychological differences between cultures is largely an unanswered question, and perhaps will remain unanswerable. My own personal opinion on this matter is that genetic differences between Japanese and North Americans probably account for very little variation in the need for positive self-regard, and that efforts to understand how culture per se constructs and sustains this need will prove most fruitful.
The stark differences between Japanese and North Americans’ outlook toward a positive life-orientation were clearly articulated by the Japanese scholar, Shozo Ogiya, after his first trip to the U.S.:

The scene was repeated many tens of times, and every time the first and last words of greeting were: “Mr. Ogiya, are you enjoying your American tour,” “Well, Mr. Ogiya, I hope you enjoy your plane trip from here.” At first, whenever I heard the word enjoy I was struck by a feeling of strangeness. In our daily lives the word enjoy has a special position. With its meaning of “finding pleasure in” or perhaps of “being merry about” this word—at least to those of my generation has nuances that smack of the immoral...There are unemployed in America. In England and Italy there are crowds of the poor. What I mean to say is that in these countries the word enjoy has firmly put down roots into people’s lives whether they have money or not. It is so to speak a basic principle of their attitude toward living—this is the point I’m trying to make...Since returning to Japan I’ve been tremendously bothered by this word. The thought often has occurred to me, haven’t we possibly mistaken the purpose of daily living—or of existence? (quoted in Plath, 1964; p. 68).

This hesitation toward enjoyment is so firmly entrenched in Japanese culture that efforts to change this orientation are actually having to come from the government. Companies are being pressured to encourage their employees to take their vacation days. Yet, when many Japanese are not at work, they are hard-pressed to find something to do with their time. As Rohlen (1983) concludes, “Japan has become a country that needs to encourage its citizens to enjoy themselves” (p. 165).

Cultural differences in positive emotional experiences are evident with respect to happiness. Being happy is a basic value for North Americans. The U.S. Declaration of Independence, for example, declares that the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental right of
its citizens. Failing to be happy in North America implies that one has somehow failed to realize the cultural mandate. Hence, it is not surprising that North Americans report being exceptionally happy. Smith's (1979) review of national surveys from the 1940s to the 1970s showed that the percentage of Americans reporting happiness was always above 80%. Diener and Diener (1995a), in their analysis of Michalos' (1991) global study of college students in 31 countries, found that U.S. students reported the second highest life satisfaction scores—Finnish students were first. Moreover, Diener, Suh, Smith, and Shao (1995b) identified a substantial correlation between subjective well-being and Gross National Product (GNP) in Michalos' data and reported that the U.S. had higher overall levels of happiness and of life satisfaction than would be predicted on the basis of its per capita income.

In contrast, the pursuit of happiness appears to be somewhat of an immoral doctrine to the Japanese (Benedict, 1946). The Japanese social psychologist Hiroshi Minami (1971) suggested "It seems that feelings about happiness in life are for some reason diluted among the Japanese. The reason that the word 'happiness' is not used daily is not only because the Japanese masses are not blessed with happiness in daily life but because they have cultivated a habit of hesitation toward happiness" (p. 34). In contrast, Minami argues that "a view of unhappiness or hardship that is unique to the Japanese has become a sort of psychological tradition" (p. 49).

This hesitation towards happiness can be seen to be rooted in the philosophical and spiritual traditions of Japan (see Nakamura, 1964). A key characteristic of Japanese thought is a sense of balance. The good is always counterbalanced by the bad, and happiness is always offset by sadness. Moreover, Buddhism emphasizes the transience of all things, especially of positive feelings (Minami, 1971). Japanese believe that their happy experiences will soon come to an end, and they tend to be concerned that they will have to "pay" for their happiness later on to restore the sense of balance (Lebra, 1976). Japanese are thus very hesitant to focus or dwell on positive feelings, and they view such
tendencies to do so as somewhat immoral (Benedict, 1946). Perhaps the demonstration by Kitayama et al. (1994) that Japanese report experiencing as many good feelings as bad reflects this sense of balance in their emotional experience.

The cautious attitude of the Japanese towards happiness appears to extend to other Asian cultures. For example, Feather (1986) found happiness to be a less important value in China than in Australia. Diener et al. (1995b) noted that people from Asian countries (e.g., Japan, the People’s Republic of China, and South Korea) had lower subjective well-being and happiness scores than would be predicted from their per capita income. Their analysis of the data ruled out several potential artifactual reasons for the low scores of Asians: for example, general negative response biases, efforts to appear humble, and cultural norms governing the expression of emotions. Diener et al. concluded that Asians exhibit such low satisfaction and happiness scores because feeling and expressing positive affect is less desirable within Eastern cultures than it is in the West. Asian cultures thus do not appear to cultivate the need to experience positive feelings about the self.

In a follow-up study, Diener, Diener, and Diener (1995a) examined data from 55 nations and found that, after controlling for other predictors (such as GNP, human rights, equality), the only variable that consistently correlated with subjective well-being was individualism. They concluded that “a feeling of autonomy may be important in achieving subjective well-being” (p. 863). Feeling good about oneself, then, appears intimately linked with feelings of independence.

Summary

The above review elaborated how various aspects of Japanese culture related to the construction of a need to feel good about oneself differ from those in Western culture. In contrast to North American culture, Japanese culture does not appear to encourage its people to seek out, enhance, and elaborate their positive characteristics. Japanese cultural mandates contain various interpersonal scripts that lead individuals to adopt a self-critical orientation. Achieving the cultural tasks of interdependence requires Japanese individuals
to continually make efforts so that they can better approximate the culturally defined standards within a given context. To put it succinctly, whereas North American culture encourages individuals to focus on the ways in which they are good, Japanese culture focuses individuals' awareness on how they can strive to become better.

**Evidence Concerning the Need for Positive Self-Regard in Western and Eastern Cultures**

Awareness of the importance of a positive view of the self has been expressed by many of the most influential thinkers in psychology. For example, James (1950/1890) maintained that a direct feeling of regard for one's existence was basic to humanity. Maslow (1943) viewed the need for self-esteem to be the second highest need within his hierarchy of human needs, resting above physiological needs such as food, safety, and sex. The foundation of Rogers' (1951) phenomenological theory rested upon the notion that humans have a basic need to maintain and enhance the self. And Allport (1955) included a need for self-esteem in his list of the eight important attributes in the proprium to self. The aforementioned theorists, perhaps not coincidentally, were all North Americans, reflecting their socialization in a culture that, more than any other, lauds individualism (Sampson, 1977).

Contemporary research has continued in this tradition. For example, Carver and Scheier (1981) place the goal of maintaining a positive self-image near the top of their hierarchy of standards for self-regulation. Tesser's (1988) self-evaluation maintenance model has "at its core the assumption that persons behave so as to maintain a positive self-evaluation" (p. 204). Terror management theory (Greenberg et al., 1992) posits that self-esteem is "a vital human need" (p. 913). Brown (in press, Chapter 8) declares that "self-esteem has become the panacea of modern times" (ms. p. 2). Interestingly, too, research on self-esteem is perhaps the most dominant topic in social psychology, appearing in at least 10,000 empirical studies (Scheff, 1990). As Solomon et al. (1991)
put it "It is difficult to conceive of an area of behavior that has not been linked in some way to a need for self-esteem" (p. 107).

In the following review, I discuss studies, conducted primarily in either North America or Japan, related to a need for self-esteem. These studies are grouped into three categories: those showing the positivity of people's self-views, those showing whether or not people enhance the positivity of their self-views, and those showing whether or not people strive to maintain a positive self-view.

Possessing a Positive Self-View

Considerable research documents that North Americans possess particularly positive self-views. In a review of the Western self-esteem literature, Baumeister et al. (1989) observed that, without exception, the mean and/or median self-esteem scores were higher than the conceptual midpoints of the scales, regardless of the measures used. Thus, the distributions of self-esteem scores are heavily skewed in a manner that most people report having high self-esteem. This skewness is so pronounced that people who are classified as having "low self-esteem" by means of median splits, a common classification scheme, tend actually to have medium self-esteem in an absolute sense (Baumeister et al., 1989; Diener & Diener, 1995b).

The value of possessing a positive self-view in North American culture is apparent when one considers the manner in which low self-esteem is characterized. The subtitle of a recent book edited by Baumeister, "The Puzzle of Low Self-Regard," underscores this point. His own chapter in this book addresses the difficulty researchers have understanding the "seemingly contradictory," "irrational," and "maladaptive" nature of people with low self-esteem (Baumeister, 1993). Similarly, Taylor and Brown (1988) contrast people categorized as low in self-esteem (often by means of a median split) against a group that they label "normal." The culturally-sanctioned self-evaluation in North America is unambiguously positive, thereby rendering it a challenge for North Americans to comprehend the motives of those who diverge from this well-worn path.
In contrast, such positive views of self are not typical for Japanese. Kashiwagi (1986) suggests that a "negative evaluation of the self, or strong awareness of weaker aspects of self, is sometimes pointed to as one of the general characteristics of self-concept among the Japanese" (p. 180). These negative self-views are reflected in their self-esteem scores. Japanese have consistently been shown to have lower self-esteem scores than North Americans (Bond & Cheung, 1983; Campbell, Trapnell, Heine, Katz, Lavallee, & Lehman, 1996; Heine & Lehman, 1996b; Mahler, 1976), and in contrast to the heavily skewed distributions found in North American studies of self-esteem, Japanese mean self-esteem scores approach the theoretical midpoint of the scale (Diener & Diener, 1995a; Heine & Lehman, 1996b). That Japanese have been shown to demonstrate a greater tendency than North Americans to answer towards the middle of Likert scales, regardless of the content of the items (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995; Stening & Everett, 1984; Zax & Takahashi, 1967), might account for part of this cultural difference in self-esteem. However, given the extremely large magnitude of these obtained cultural differences in self-esteem (e.g., Campbell et al., 1996; Heine & Lehman, 1996b) and the fact that these differences are also reliably observed in cross-cultural comparisons of the relative frequency that positive and negative statements are made about the self (Bond & Cheung, 1983; Yeh, 1995), surely something more than moderacy biases must be behind this cross-cultural difference. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that Japanese are simply hiding their true feelings by answering the questionnaire items more modestly than North Americans (see Diener et al., 1995b; Heine & Lehman, 1995b; Kitayama et al., in press; Lai & Linden, 1993). Indeed, there appear to be "real" differences in self-esteem across cultures.

The notion that North American culture fosters the development of positive self-views has received additional support in four recent acculturation studies (Heine & Lehman, 1996b). In the first study, Canadian and Japanese students were classified on a continuum with respect to their exposure to Western culture. That is, European descent
Canadians were viewed as having the most exposure to Western culture, followed by Asian descent Canadians, then Asians who immigrated to Canada several years ago, then recent Asian immigrants, and last, Japanese living in Japan. Self-esteem scores were positively related to exposure to Western culture (See Figure 1).

The other three recent acculturation studies that have supported the view that North American culture fosters the development of positive self-views were longitudinal studies in which self-esteem was measured at two points in time. In one study, self-esteem scores of visiting Japanese exchange students collected a few days after their arrival in Canada were compared with scores collected 7 months later. The self-esteem scores of the visiting Japanese students increased significantly over this time. A complementary longitudinal study was conducted with Canadian English teachers going to Japan. Their self-esteem was measured before they left Canada, and then again 7 months after arriving in Japan. The Canadian teachers displayed a significant decrease in self-esteem over this time. Last, another longitudinal study measured the self-esteem of a second group of Japanese exchange students before they left Japan, and then again seven months after their arrival in Canada. In this study, Japanese exhibited a nonsignificant increase in self-esteem after living in Canada. In this latter study, however, a significant correlation emerged between the students' self-esteem change and their acculturation attitudes. That is, those students who had assimilated and integrated into the Canadian lifestyle showed a greater self-esteem change than those students who preserved their original cultural lifestyles.

Taken together, these data suggest that individuals' evaluations of themselves are responsive to the cultural context within which they interact. It seems that living in a Western cultural context leads Asians to attend more to their positive features as individuals, and thus increases their overall positive self-evaluations (especially for those
with assimilating and integrating attitudes towards Western culture). In contrast, it seems that living in Japan leads North Americans to adopt a more self-critical attitude and thus decreases the positivity of their self-evaluations.

The material presented thus far in this section suggests that self-esteem is a "Western" psychological concept. Feather (1991) provided evidence that self-esteem is more typical of people with an independent view of self, even within Western cultures, and that it is positively correlated with values regarding self-direction, achievement, and personal competence. In a large multinational survey, Diener et al. (1995a) investigated a number of variables that were related to subjective well-being. As described earlier, they found that individualism, a defining feature of Western culture, was the only variable that contributed unique variance in predicting subjective well-being. Given that subjective well-being correlates highly with self-esteem (Diener & Diener, 1995a), a similar relation with individualism would be expected for self-esteem. Singelis, Bond, Lai, and Sharkey (1995) showed that self-esteem also correlated significantly with an independent view of self in Eastern cultures. This suggests that Western cultural values bear an integral relation with self-esteem. Moreover, Singelis et al. showed that an interdependent view of self did not correlate with self-esteem, even in Eastern cultures (also see Yamaguchi, 1994). That is, possessing a view of self that is congruent with the predominant mode of being in Eastern cultures is not associated with a positive self-evaluation for Asians. Self-esteem and the Eastern cultural value of interdependence thus appear orthogonal.

Cultural differences in self-views are not just observable in reports of self-esteem. In fact, the dysfunctional part of the self-evaluation spectrum is more pronounced for Japanese compared to North Americans as evidenced in their significantly higher depression scores (Atkinson, 1988; Hymes & Akiyama, 1991; Zung, 1969). Ogawa, Hayashi, Nagai, and Shiraishi (1981) showed that Japanese scored markedly higher than North Americans on eight symptomatic features of social phobia which all indicate an excessively negative self-concept. De Vos and Wagatsuma (1973) called feelings of
personal inadequacy a "widespread inner experience" (p. 45) in Japan. Moreover these negative views of the self are not limited to the present but also generalize to the future. Japanese report being significantly more pessimistic than do Canadians (Heine & Lehman, 1995a, 1996b). Japanese estimate positive events to be less likely to happen, and negative events to be more likely to happen, to themselves than do Canadians.

All of the studies above are consistent with the notion that the average valence for self-evaluations differs between North Americans and Japanese. The normative view of self in North America is distinctly positive, with the majority of people reporting that they possess high self-esteem. In sharp contrast, the average self-evaluation in Japan appears neutral, if not somewhat negative.

Enhancing The Positivity of One’s Self-View

The importance of a positive self-view in Western culture is further documented in research on self-serving biases. Reviews of this literature (e.g., Bradley, 1978; Greenwald, 1980; Miller & Ross, 1975; Taylor & Brown, 1988) indicate that the typical North American’s self-evaluation is fraught with inaccurate and distorted perceptions. These are not simply random errors—rather individuals’ self-perceptions tend to be systematically biased toward an overly positive view of the self. For example, people tend to remember their past performance as better than it actually was (Crary, 1966), married individuals claim more responsibility than their spouses give them credit for in household tasks (Ross & Sicoly, 1979), people judge positive personality attributes to be more appropriate in describing themselves than in describing others (Alicke, 1985), and people tend to take credit for success, yet attribute failure to the situation (for a review see Zuckerman, 1979). Moreover, such self-serving tendencies are observable in American children as young as 4 years of age (Harter, 1983). These distorted self-perceptions are so common that they have been argued to be endemic to the human condition (Brown, in press), whether they are understood as errors inherent in the course of information-processing (Miller & Ross, 1975), egocentric knowledge organizations that are products of an "intrapsychic
evolution" (Greenwald, 1980), or self-protective tactics that foster the attainment of mental health (Taylor & Brown, 1988). Although there is some controversy over the nature, purpose, and consequences of self-enhancing biases, there is consensus that these biases are common (Greenwald, 1980; Taylor & Brown, 1988) and resistant to change (Krueger & Clement, 1994; Weinstein & Klein, 1995).

The motivations of people from Western cultures to enhance their self-evaluations can be understood within the context of cultural values. Self-serving biases augment aspects of the self (e.g., competency and adequacy) that are critical for following the Western cultural mandate. Viewing oneself in exaggeratedly positive terms subjectively narrows the discrepancy between reality and the cultural ideals of self-contained individuality (Heine & Lehman, 1995a). Moreover, as these self-serving biases are more apparent among Westerners with high self-esteem than those with low self-esteem (e.g., Alloy & Ahrens, 1987; Brown, 1991; Campbell, 1986), they are more typical of those who can be seen to be successfully fulfilling the Western cultural mandate (Solomon et al., 1991). They characterize the “normal” way of thinking of Westerners (Taylor & Brown, 1988; for an opposing view see Colvin & Block, 1994).

However, for those with an interdependent view of self, the value of such self-enhancement is questionable (Heine & Lehman, 1995a, 1996a; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b). Subjectively enhancing one’s own individual attributes should not serve to enhance others’ evaluations of the individual, and would not bring the individual any closer to the consensual standards of excellence (Kitayama et al., in press). If anything, calling attention to the individual self would weaken the solidarity of the group (De Vos, 1985; Miyamoto, 1994). Hence, it follows that people from interdependent cultures should display less self-serving ways of thinking than people from independent cultures.

Indeed, this is what the cross-cultural literature has shown. For example, although the false uniqueness bias (i.e., the tendency to see oneself as uniquely talented or better than most people on a given dimension) has consistently been observed among North
Americans (e.g., Campbell, 1986; Marks, 1984), Japanese do not display this tendency (Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). Similarly, self-serving biases are common in the North American attribution literature where typically success is attributed to internal factors and failure is explained away to external factors (see Zuckerman, 1979). In contrast, over 20 studies have found that Japanese tend to attribute failures as much as successes to their own (in)abilities (for a review, see Kitayama, Takagi, & Matsumoto, 1995).

Unrealistic optimism (i.e., the tendency for people to believe that they are more likely to experience positive events and less likely to experience negative events than is the average person) is one of the more robust self-serving biases documented in the North America literature (e.g., Perloff & Fetzer, 1986; Weinstein, 1980). However, Japanese do not show much evidence of this bias and in some situations are actually unrealistically pessimistic (Heine & Lehman, 1995a). I know of no studies that have demonstrated consistent self-serving biases with people from Eastern cultures.

Recent research by Kitayama et al. (in press) further underscores this cultural difference in self-enhancement. They had U.S. and Japanese undergraduates freely describe as many situations as possible in which their own self-esteem would either increase or decrease. Then, situations were randomly selected from both samples, and they were presented to different groups of U.S. and Japanese undergraduates. Participants were asked the extent to which they felt their self-esteem would be affected by each situation, and whether the situation would cause their self-esteem to increase or decrease. A number of interesting findings emerged. First, the Japanese students were more likely to perceive failure situations than success situations to be relevant to their self-esteem, whereas students from the U.S. showed the opposite pattern. Apparently, the Japanese students were especially sensitive to self-critical situations, whereas those from the U.S. were especially sensitive to self-enhancing opportunities. Second, the extent of estimated self-esteem decrease for the Japanese students in failure situations was greater than the extent of estimated self-esteem increase in success situations. Again the opposite
pattern emerged for Americans. Finally, the situations generated by Japanese were more self-critical and the U.S.-generated situations were more self-enhancing for individuals of both cultures. In sum, Kitayama et al. demonstrated that the daily experiences that constitute American culture are conducive to self-enhancement, whereas Japanese daily cultural life is more likely to provide opportunities to view oneself in critical terms.

Another recent study explored how daily conversations similarly reflect self-enhancement in America and self-criticism in Japan. Kitayama and Karasawa (1996) demonstrated that Japanese report a greater frequency of being criticized by others and a lower frequency of being complimented by others than do Americans. That is, individuals’ daily interactions with others reinforce positive or negative attitudes towards oneself. These data are in line with my suggestion that everyday life in Japan encourages people to be sensitive to their shortcomings, whereas North American society provides an environment conducive to self-enhancement.

In sum, the literature on self-serving biases indicates that, given the chance, North Americans typically will enhance the positivity of their self-views. This conforms to the notion that a positive self-view is important for following the cultural mandate within individualistic cultures. Self-serving biases can thus be seen as means by which Westerners bring their subjective self-evaluations more closely in line with their cultural ideals. In contrast, the lack of evidence indicating that Japanese exhibit self-serving biases suggests that they are not motivated to enhance themselves. This supports the suggestion that adherence to the Japanese cultural mandate does not require a positive self-view.

Maintaining a Positive Self-View

Further testimony to the importance of positive self-views in Western cultures is found in the ever-growing body of research on self-protective ways of thinking. This literature documents the variety of compensatory responses that are elicited when people encounter threats to their self-esteem. For example, Tesser and his colleagues have shown that people will try to maintain a positive self-view either by engaging in reflection or
comparison processes with a successful close other, depending on the relevance to their self-concept of the dimension at hand. When a close other outperforms one on a highly relevant task, Tesser (1988) argues that this amounts to a threat to one’s self-esteem. To counter this threat and to preserve a positive self-evaluation, individuals must manipulate whatever aspects of the threatening situation are most amenable. For example, they may create greater interpersonal distance between themselves and a successfully performing other (Pleban & Tesser, 1981), handicap a friend’s successful performance (Tesser & Smith, 1980), perceive a friend’s performance less positively (Tesser & Campbell, 1982), or devalue the relevance of the task (Tesser & Paulhus, 1983).

Several other self-protective strategies have been identified in the literature, for example, basking and blasting (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980), compensatory responses to embarrassment (e.g., Apsler, 1975), compensatory self-enhancement (e.g., Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Brown & Smart, 1991), compensatory self-inflation (e.g., Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1985), defensive pessimism (Norem & Cantor, 1986), dissonance reduction (Aronson, 1968; Greenwald & Ronis, 1978), downward comparison (see Wills, 1981; Wood, 1989, for reviews), self-affirmation (e.g., Steele, 1988), and self-handicapping (e.g., Berglas & Jones, 1978; Frankel & Snyder, 1978; Tice, 1991). That such a wide variety of self-esteem maintenance tactics exists highlights the importance of maintaining a positive self-evaluation, at least within North America.

These various compensatory responses to threats to self-esteem can be viewed as mechanisms by which North Americans adhere to their cultural imperatives. Negative information about the self is apparently incompatible with the Western cultural mandate of being independent and self-sufficient. Perhaps when people are made aware of negative aspects of their selves the discrepancy between the cultural ideal and their perceived shortcomings becomes painfully evident. When this occurs, some kind of psychological maneuver is necessary to reinstate a self-view that meets the cultural standards.
For Japanese, in contrast, the cultural mandate does not require individuals to dispel thoughts regarding their own inadequacy. Given the emphasis on adapting oneself to an external and consensual reality, negative information about the self serves to indicate deficiencies that require remedying for the individual to best achieve a sense of belongingness with others. Such information is not threatening, and it does not need to be avoided or countered (Kitayama et al., in press; Markus et al., 1996). Negative thoughts about the self do not appear incompatible with the Japanese cultural mandate of achieving connection with others. And instilling a positive view of the self through any of the aforementioned compensatory means should not serve to bring the interdependent individual's self-assessments any closer to their cultural ideals. Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect that Japanese would not demonstrate as strong a need to maintain a positive self-view and that they would show fewer self-protective responses to self-esteem threat than do people from Western cultures. In other words, the wide variety of self-protective ways of thinking that characterize North Americans might simply not hold for Japanese.

To my knowledge, there have been no cross-cultural studies of self-protective ways of thinking. This is not altogether surprising given the difficulty of conducting such experiments. A threat to the self must be engendered in a laboratory setting before participants' responses to the threat can be measured. Furthermore, the laboratory situations must be more or less equivalent for both cultures. Such experiments seem particularly important for us to gain an understanding of how those with interdependent views of self respond to negative information about the self.

Summary and Limitations

The above review demonstrates that evidence showing the prevalence of positive self-views within North America and the techniques that North Americans use to enhance and maintain their positive self-views has not been observed in social psychological research conducted with Japanese. Compared with North Americans, Japanese possess
fewer positive self-views, and they tend not to enhance the positivity of their self-views. Moreover, Japanese do not appear to be motivated to maintain positive self-views, although empirical evidence in this regard is lacking. Current psychological evidence thus is consistent with the notion that a need for a positive self-view is not characteristic of Japanese.

However, the empirical psychological literature on the Japanese reveal a number of significant limitations to the above conclusion. First, the studies reviewed above focused exclusively on evaluations of the individual, and techniques that are employed to enhance and maintain a positive view of the individual. A case could be made that the group-oriented nature of Japanese renders the meaning of individual self-evaluations less important to them. Japanese may indeed have a need to view themselves positively, yet this need may be observable only when they are evaluating their group. Second, most past cross-cultural studies with Japanese have focused on attributes that were derived within a North American context and are thus conceivably more important to North Americans than to Japanese. Perhaps Japanese would exhibit more enhancement in their self-evaluations if the attributes under question were more meaningful for fulfilling their cultural mandates. Third, the literature on the Japanese self (e.g., Doi, 1973; Johnson, 1993; Roland, 1988) is consistent in describing a self-critical stance of Japanese. This implies that Japanese are less satisfied with themselves than are North Americans. However, this hypothesized difference in self-satisfaction has yet to be empirically demonstrated. Fourth, the vast majority of cross-cultural studies with Japanese have been questionnaire studies, and hence they are susceptible to concerns about cultural differences in response styles that may obscure true differences (or similarities) between the cultures. Very little research has examined whether parallel findings can be obtained with behavioral measures that are not affected by response styles. And finally fifth, the above literature review revealed a void in the cross-cultural literature with respect to studies demonstrating tendencies to maintain positive self-views.
This dissertation includes five distinct studies which addressed each of the above limitations in the current Japanese psychological literature. As will be seen, the studies were successful in ruling out the above confounds and corroborating my argument that the need for positive self-regard is less pronounced in Japan.

**STUDIES 1 and 2**

Research in cultural psychology has underscored the notion that many psychological processes are not universal, that is, that culture plays an important role in influencing the ways that people think, feel, and view themselves. However, interpreting cultural differences obtained in psychological experiments tends to be a difficult task. The favored interpretation of cultural psychologists is that the psychological process under study varies across cultures (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Shweder & Bourne, 1984). Competing with this cultural view is a more prosaic interpretation: That is, the methodology of the experiment was more meaningful and relevant to one of the cultures, thereby indicating superficial and misleading cultural differences (Berry, 1969; Hui & Triandis, 1985; Triandis, 1978). Given that many social psychological paradigms have emerged within Western, “individualistic” cultures, we may indeed have stacked the deck against finding comparable results when studying individual-based psychological processes in Eastern, “collectivistic” cultures. Perhaps some failures to replicate common Western findings are attributable to the “imposed etic” of our individually-based methodologies (Berry, 1969).

One way of reducing the cultural bias in our Western methodologies is to explore targets of evaluation that are more meaningful within Eastern cultures. In contrast to the individualistic view of self common in Western cultures, Eastern cultures are characterized by a view of self that encompasses the important groups to which people belong (Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Triandis, 1989). Accordingly, employing individuals’ groups as targets is an important step in moving beyond the limitations inherent in individual-centered methodologies.
Cultural differences in self-enhancement

One domain of cross-cultural research that may be particularly susceptible to the potential imposed-etic effects of an individual-based methodology is self-enhancement. Self-enhancement research examines how individuals view themselves as individuals in unrealistically positive terms. The results of such research has revealed the various ways in which North Americans distort their views of themselves such that they appear, for example, overly competent and optimistic, and more in control (for reviews, see Blaine & Crocker, 1993; Greenwald, 1980; Taylor & Brown, 1988; Zuckerman, 1979). As is the case in the bulk of research on the self, self-enhancement research has focused almost exclusively on Western subjects.

In the Introduction, I reviewed the cross-cultural literature on self-enhancement and concluded that self-enhancement studies with Japanese have failed to demonstrate the self-enhancing patterns so common in the West (e.g., Heine & Lehman, 1995a; Kashima & Triandis, 1986; Kitayama et al., in press; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). I know of no studies that have demonstrated consistent self-serving biases with Japanese, or, for that matter, with people from any Eastern culture.

Two Interpretations

One interpretation of these cultural differences in self-serving biases is that they reflect differences in motivations to view oneself as especially positive or competent (Heine & Lehman, 1995a, 1996a; Kitayama et al., 1995). This interpretation suggests that these cultural differences in self-enhancement are observed because Western culture encourages people to think positively about themselves as a means to approach the culturally-defined ideals of independence and autonomy, whereas Japanese culture encourages people to strive to fit in with their groups. The Japanese orientation towards gaining a sense of belongingness requires Japanese to ensure that others are satisfied with their contributions to the groups. Hence, Japanese tend to focus on their shortcomings
and search for ways to improve themselves to secure the group's approval (Kitayama et al., 1995, in press; Markus et al., 1996).

A very different interpretation of the cultural differences in self-enhancement is that they result from a methodological artifact. Given that cross-cultural studies of self-enhancement typically employ a target of evaluation that is more meaningful to those from Western cultures (i.e., the individual self), it is reasonable to be concerned that studies demonstrating an absence of self-enhancing tendencies among Japanese are due to their evaluation of a target that is less consequential to them. Perhaps people from both Western and Eastern cultures have similar tendencies to enhance themselves, yet they enhance the view of self most meaningful to them. That is, individualistic North Americans may be motivated to enhance their individual selves, whereas Japanese may be motivated to enhance their collective selves. This view suggests that past cultural differences in self-enhancement might reflect differences in content (the target of the evaluation) rather than differences in process (the motivation to see the self, or one’s group, in a positive light; Greenfield, in press; Nisbett et al., 1996). If this is the case, Japanese should exhibit group-serving biases at a comparable level to North Americans’ self-serving biases.

Support for the “differences in content” position has emerged in the psychoanalytic literature of the Japanese. For example, Roland (1988) maintains that there is a parallel between Americans being more concerned with their “I-self regard” and Japanese being more concerned with their “we-self regard.” Similarly, Johnson (1993) argues that Japanese are socialized to transform their feelings of personal narcissism and vanity into a sense of group pride and collective narcissism. And De Vos (1973b) contends that Japanese aspire towards succeeding as a group in contrast to Americans’ aspirations to succeed as individuals. These perspectives suggest fundamental similarities in underlying psychological processes between Japanese and North Americans, yet differences in the nature of the self that these processes sustain.
Culture and Group-Serving Biases

These two opposing views of the nature of previously detected cultural differences in self-serving biases make opposite predictions regarding cultural differences in group-serving biases. The “differences in process” view assumes that North American culture places greater importance on viewing oneself positively than does Japanese culture (Heine & Lehman, 1995a; Kitayama et al., in press). To the extent that group-serving biases reflect upon the individual, this view would predict that North Americans should show group-serving biases to a greater extent than Japanese. That considerable research conducted in the West shows that feelings of self-worth are promoted by positive evaluations of individuals’ groups (e.g., Brown, Collins, & Schmidt, 1988; Lemyre & Smith, 1985; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests that group-serving biases may indeed serve to enhance the individual self as well.

In contrast, the “differences in content” view assumes the existence of similar motivations for self-enhancement across cultures. An implication of this view is that self-serving biases should be most prominent when individuals evaluate their most meaningful view of self. Given the collectivist, group-oriented nature of the Japanese (Hamaguchi, 1985; Kondo, 1987; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b), switching the target from the individual to the individual’s group should yield a view of self more meaningful to Japanese than to North Americans. To the extent that motivations to enhance the self are similar across cultures, Japanese should show more pronounced group-serving biases than North Americans.

Past research on group-serving biases

A review of studies of group-serving biases with Asian (albeit primarily non-Japanese) and North American participants is more in line with the “differences in process” view. Group-serving bias studies with Asian participants have yielded inconsistent results (Fletcher & Ward, 1988). I located three studies that found evidence for group-serving biases in people from Asian cultures. Taylor and Jaggi (1974) showed
that Hindus made internal attributions for other Hindus who performed socially desirable acts and external attributions for those who acted in socially undesirable ways. In contrast, when Hindus made attributions for the behavior of Muslims the reverse pattern was found. This study is problematic, however, because Muslims are a minority group of lower status than Hindus, and the reciprocal attributions from this group had not been solicited (Hewstone & Ward, 1985).

Hewstone, Bond, and Wan (1983) reported that Chinese students from two universities in Hong Kong made group-serving attributions favoring their respective universities. In a later study, somewhat limited evidence of group-serving biases in terms of sex-typed behaviors was found for Hong Kong Chinese students (Bond, Hewstone, Wan, & Chiu, 1985). However, the robustness of group-serving effects with Chinese participants is challenged. Bond et al. (1985) discovered that American students displayed a more pronounced group-serving bias for sex-typed behaviors than did Chinese, and a study of Chinese in Singapore by Hewstone and Ward (1985) found no evidence for group-serving biases at all. Hence, studies of group-serving biases with Chinese have not presented a clear picture.

Two recent studies with Japanese participants have failed to demonstrate group-serving biases. Kitayama, Palm, Masuda, Karasawa, and Carroll (1996) measured perceptions of vulnerability to earthquakes in two high-risk cities both in Japan and in the United States. Results showed that Americans from both cities demonstrated group-serving tendencies by stating that the other city was slightly more vulnerable to earthquakes than their own. In contrast, Japanese participants from both cities reported that their own city was significantly more in danger than the other. That is, Japanese showed unrealistic pessimism towards their own city.

Heine and Lehman (1995a) presented Japanese and Canadians with a list of possible negative future life events that specifically threatened the individual’s interpersonal network. They found that Japanese demonstrated even less unrealistic
optimism (or more unrealistic pessimism) for these events than they did for events that simply threatened the individual. This pattern was not obtained for the Canadian participants. At least for studies exploring perceived risk, then, Japanese have not been shown to exhibit group-serving biases. Japanese feel that their groups are at least as threatened, if not more so, than other people’s groups. Taken together, the past evidence for group-enhancing biases among Asians is not compelling.

In contrast, there is considerable evidence that North Americans do exhibit group-serving biases. North American research has shown that attributional biases, whereby individuals take credit for successes and explain away failures (see Zuckerman, 1979), generalize to the group level: For example, players and coaches of baseball and football teams make more attributional biases regarding their wins and losses than do sportswriters (Lau & Russell, 1980); individuals are at least as, if not more, self-serving when they interpret their spouses’ outcomes as when they interpret their own outcomes (Fincham, Beach, & Baucom, 1987), and people make group-serving attributions when their group succeeds and jointly absolve each other of responsibility when their group fails (Forsyth & Schlenker, 1977). Other self-serving biases have been shown to generalize from oneself to one’s friends. For example, individuals view positive personality traits to be more characteristic of their close friends than they are for others (Brown, 1986), and people believe that future negative life events are more likely to happen to the average other than to their close friends (Perloff & Fetzer, 1986).

A study by Crocker, Thompson, McGraw, and Ingerman (1987, Study 2) demonstrated group-serving biases among sorority members. They found that members of sororities evaluated rival sororities more negatively than their own, particularly when the participants were members of low-status sororities themselves. Brown et al. (1988) investigated group-serving biases in a minimal-groups paradigm. They showed that individuals tended to evaluate products made by their in-groups more positively than those made by out-groups and that this effect was more pronounced after participants received
negative feedback. Cialdini and Richardson (1980) showed that students viewed their university more positively than a rival university, particularly following failure feedback.

Cialdini et al. (1976) demonstrated that individuals affiliate themselves more with successful than unsuccessful groups. They argued that individuals feel good about themselves when they are associated with positively-viewed groups because they are able to bask in the reflected glory of the group’s success. Conversely, when their groups are viewed negatively, individuals are motivated to distance themselves from this reflected failure (e.g., Cialdini et al., 1976; Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986; Taylor & Mettee, 1971).

For North Americans, affiliating themselves with positively-viewed groups and holding unrealistically positive views of their groups appear to enhance their self-evaluations (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Group memberships, even for “independently-oriented” North Americans, form an important part of their individual self-concepts (e.g., James, 1950/1890), thereby suggesting that individual self-evaluations are served by enhancing one’s group-evaluations. Research (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) showing that collective self-esteem is correlated positively with global self-esteem corroborates this relation. Moreover, that some of the aforementioned group-enhancement studies (e.g., Brown et al., 1988; Cialdini et al., 1976; Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Crocker et al., 1987) showed increased group-serving tendencies when participants were confronted with threats to the self underscores the self-enhancing role that they play.

Present Research

I sought to pit the “differences in process” view and the “differences in content” view against each other by investigating how individuals evaluate the people to whom they are connected and the groups to which they belong. In Study 1, I measured how Canadians and Japanese evaluated a close family member relative to others and how they evaluated themselves relative to others. In Study 2, I compared how Canadian and Japanese students evaluated their own and a rival university. In both studies I assessed
collective self-esteem as another means to investigate how positively people evaluate their groups.

Because the Canadian data were collected in Vancouver, a city with a large Asian community, I partitioned the Canadian data for both studies into those of European and Asian ancestry. This third cultural group, “Asian-Canadians,” although heterogeneous in terms of country of origin and length of time/number of generations in Canada, falls in between the groups of European-Canadians and Japanese in terms of exposure to Western cultural values (Heine & Lehman, 1996b). To the extent that culture mediates evaluations of one’s groups, I anticipated that Asian-Canadians would show group-serving biases intermediate to European-Canadian and Japanese group-serving biases.

**STUDY 1**

**Method**

**Participants**

The Japanese sample consisted of students from Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto who completed the questionnaire packet 1 month before leaving Japan for a 7-month study-abroad program in Canada. Of the 93 students in the program, 82 (55 females and 27 males) agreed to participate in the study. It deserves mention that these students, in choosing to live abroad for an academic year may be more Western oriented than the average Japanese. If anything, however, this should reduce the likelihood of observing cross-cultural differences.

The Canadian sample consisted of 151 students enrolled in introductory psychology classes at the University of British Columbia (UBC). This sample was separated by ethnic background to further examine cultural differences. Forty-four (28 females and 16 males) declared themselves to be of Asian heritage and formed what I term the Asian-Canadian sample. Seventy-five (57 females and 18 males) declared themselves to be of European heritage and formed what I term the European-Canadian sample. The
remaining 32 students were of varied ethnic backgrounds (e.g., mixed-ethnicities, Latin-American descent, African descent, etc.) and were not included in the analyses.

Materials

All data were collected by questionnaire. Following some demographic questions, participants were asked to write down the name of and their relation to the member of their family to whom they felt closest. They were then asked to indicate how close they were to this family member on a scale from 1 (not at all close) to 10 (extremely close). Next, they were asked to complete a section of the questionnaire to assess their degree of family-member serving biases: They were asked to estimate the percentage of the population of the same age and sex as their chosen family member that was better than this family member with respect to 10 traits. Five of these traits were chosen to be particularly meaningful to the independent view of self (attractive, interesting, independent, confident, and intelligent), and five traits were chosen to be particularly meaningful to the interdependent view of self (cooperative, loyal, considerate, hard-working, and dependable; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b). Subsequently, participants were asked to complete a section of the questionnaire that assessed their degree of self-serving biases: They were asked to estimate the percentage of the population of the same age and sex as themselves that was better than them with respect to the same 10 traits. Following this, participants were asked how valuable each of the traits was to them on a scale from 1 (not at all valuable) to 10 (extremely valuable). Last, participants completed Rosenberg’s (1965) 10-item Global Self-Esteem Scale and Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) Collective Self-Esteem (CSE) Scale. The CSE Scale is composed of four 4-item subscales: membership, private, public, and identity. Membership CSE refers to the extent to which individuals feel that they are worthy members of their social groups. Private CSE indicates how satisfied one is about being a member of his or her social group. Public CSE assesses how individuals feel that others view their social groups. Finally, Identity CSE measures the importance of an individual’s social group to her or his self-concept.
Both Rosenberg’s and Luhtanen and Crocker’s self-esteem scales were completed using 5-point Likert scales from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The materials were originally produced in English and then translated into Japanese. Then, after an independent translator back-translated the Japanese version into English, three translators discussed and resolved any inconsistencies between the versions.

**Results and Discussion**

**Comparability of the Samples**

There was a significant\(^2\) difference in the average ages of the three samples, \(F(2, 198) = 5.44, p < .01\), with post-hoc comparisons (Tukey’s HSD for unequal \(\text{ns}\)) revealing that the European-Canadian sample (\(M = 21.2\) years) was significantly older than either the Asian-Canadian sample (\(M = 19.9\) years) or the Japanese sample (\(M = 20.0\) years). Given that correlational analyses revealed that age did not significantly relate to any of the dependent variables (all \(r\)s between -.10 and .03, \(\text{ns}\)), it is unlikely that this age difference confounded the cultural comparisons. Each of the samples was predominantly female; 67% of Japanese, 64% of Asian-Canadians, and 76% of European-Canadians were female. Sex was included as a factor in all analyses; however, for the sake of brevity, main effects for sex, and sex \(\times\) culture interactions, are reported only when they reach conventional levels of significance.

**Self-Serving and Family-Serving Biases**

Self-serving biases (SSBs) and family-serving biases (FSBs) were operationalized as the discrepancy between participants’ overall estimates and what would be expected if participants answered accurately. It is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain precisely what entails “accurate” responding by individuals. If we can assume a normal distribution of the population, and that the samples are not substantially different from the general

\(^2\)Note that throughout this dissertation \(p\) values of less than .05 are termed significant, and those of less than .10 are termed marginally significant.
population at large with respect to the traits, then, on average, there should be approximately 50% of the population better than the research participants. I realize that these assumptions are debatable. Samples consisting of university students may reasonably be argued to be "better than average" on certain traits. However, lacking more objective criteria, I adopted the 50% benchmark as the touchstone from which to describe the magnitude of enhancement biases. This operationalization of "bias" exists simply for illustrative purposes. My primary concern is with the cultural differences in the magnitude of self-enhancing biases, not the absolute magnitude of the biases per se. The lack of precision of the accuracy benchmark does not confound the cultural comparisons. Employing this 50% benchmark, SSBs and FSBs were calculated by subtracting each of the participant's population estimates for the 10 traits from 50%. Any estimate that was significantly less than 50% across the entire sample was termed an enhancement bias.

Composite Analyses for SSBs and FSBs

Reliability tests for the 10 traits were conducted for both measures of SSBs and FSBs. Cronbach's alphas were .90 for the SSB traits and .86 for the FSB traits. This indicates that participants tended to estimate that roughly the same percentage of people were better than either them or their family members regardless of the traits under consideration. Therefore, the 10 traits were averaged for both measures of SSB and FSB to give an overall estimate of the degree of bias.

First, examining the composite SSB measure, a significant Sex x Culture interaction emerged, $F(2, 191) = 3.98, p < .03$. Simple-effects analyses revealed that Japanese women estimated that significantly more people were better than them (50.0%) than did Japanese men (41.2%; $F[1, 78] = 9.09, p < .01$). Japanese women did not show evidence of SSBs as their estimates were not significantly less than 50%, $t < 1$. In contrast, Japanese men showed a significant overall SSB, $t(25) = 3.35, p < .01$.

Neither the estimates of Asian-Canadian women (29.1%) nor European-Canadian women (26.5%) differed from those of men (33.6% and 24.9% for Asian- and European-
Canadian men, respectively, both Fs < 1.1), and were thus examined together (see Table 1). Both Asian- and European-Canadians’ self-estimates were significantly less than 50%, t(41) = 9.29 and t(73) = 18.73, respectively, both ps < .001, across the 10 traits, thereby exhibiting a pronounced overall SSB.

A highly significant main effect for culture emerged, F(2, 191) = 44.95, p < .001, which Tukey’s comparisons revealed was the result of both Asian- and European-Canadians demonstrating a more pronounced self-serving bias than Japanese. The magnitude of the bias for Asian-Canadians was in between that of European-Canadians and Japanese, as I anticipated, although it did not differ significantly from the European-Canadians. The present pattern of data for European-Canadians and Japanese replicates the pattern obtained by Markus and Kitayama (1991a) in their cross-cultural study of the false-uniqueness bias.

Next, analyses of the composite FSB measure revealed a significant main effect for culture, F(2, 190) = 20.36, p < .001. Post-hoc comparisons revealed that both Asian- and European-Canadians reported that a significantly smaller percentage of the population was better than their family members, compared to Japanese. Again, the population estimates of Asian-Canadians fell in between European-Canadians and Japanese in terms of the magnitude of the bias, although the difference with European-Canadians was not significant. All samples showed significant FSBs as their estimates were less than 50%, t(78) = 11.66, t(41) = 11.31, and t(73) = 21.57, all ps < .001, for Japanese, Asian-, and European-Canadians, respectively, yet the tendency was more pronounced for both samples of Canadians. Moreover, the magnitude of FSBs was significantly larger than the magnitude of SSBs within each sample, F(1, 77) = 50.34, F(1, 41) = 12.44, and F(1, 74) = 17.96, all ps < .001, for Japanese, Asian-, and European-Canadians, respectively.
Analyses for Individual Traits

To investigate the possibility that some individual traits had unique patterns of results, ANOVAs were conducted among the cultural groups for the 10 traits individually. Significant main effects for culture emerged for each of the 10 traits. Tukey’s comparisons revealed that European-Canadians viewed fewer people to be better than they than did Japanese regardless of the trait under consideration (see Table 2). Asian-Canadians estimates were between the other two cultural groups for each of the 10 traits. Both groups of Canadians demonstrated significant self-serving biases (i.e., on average their estimates were significantly less than 50%) for each of the 10 traits. Japanese, in contrast, exhibited significant self-enhancement for only 3 of the 10 traits: independence, considerate, and dependable.

Insert Table 2 about here

Next, analyses were conducted for the individual traits with respect to FSBs. There were significant main effects of culture for 7 of the 10 traits. Tukey’s comparisons revealed that European-Canadians estimated that a smaller percentage of the population was better than their family members compared to Japanese for 7 of the 10 traits. The estimates of Asian-Canadians nominally fell between the other two cultural groups for 9 of the 10 traits. There were significant FSBs within each cultural group for all 10 traits. In sum, analyses on the individual traits revealed a fairly consistent pattern across traits.

As has been demonstrated in past cross-cultural studies of self-serving biases (Heine & Lehman, 1995a; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a), when evaluating themselves, Japanese estimates did not deviate much from what would be expected if participants were assessing themselves realistically (although the self-serving effect was evident for Japanese men in Study 1). Typically, however, North Americans exhibit pronounced self-serving biases (for reviews, see Greenwald, 1980; Taylor & Brown, 1988), and likewise, in Study
1, both Asian- and European-Canadians' estimates deviated substantially from the 50% benchmark, significantly more than did the Japanese estimates. That Asian-Canadians exhibited results between the other two cultural groups further corroborates the notion that self-serving biases are more pronounced in Western cultures.

Study 1 was most concerned with examining positive evaluations towards one's group. When evaluating a close member of their family, Japanese demonstrated a family-serving bias in that their population estimates were less than the 50% benchmark and were significantly more biased than were their self-evaluations. By itself, this trend could be seen as support for the "differences in content" view—that is, "group-oriented" Japanese showed more pronounced group-serving biases than they did self-serving biases. However, both Asian- and European-Canadians also demonstrated significantly more pronounced biases when evaluating their family members than when evaluating themselves, and importantly, these biases were significantly more pronounced than they were for Japanese. So although people from both countries exhibited FSBs, both samples of Canadians did so significantly more than Japanese. That Asian-Canadians exhibited results that were in between European-Canadians and Japanese underscores the relation between Western culture and positively-biased views about one's family. I thus suggest that this cross-cultural pattern of results is more in support of the "differences in process" view.

One artifactual possibility for why members of both cultures enhanced more for their family members than for themselves deserves comment. Given that participants chose the family member that they felt closest to, it is plausible that this individual may have been selected, in part, because he or she was deemed to possess several positive characteristics. Perhaps one reason that participants rated their family members more positively relative to others, than they did for themselves, is that they selected their "best" family member—someone who may be, in their eyes, "better than average." This issue suggests that perhaps the 50% benchmark may not be the most appropriate point from
which to assess FSBs. This potential artifact, however, does not reduce the importance of the finding that both groups of Canadians rated their family member more positively than did Japanese.

Cultural Differences on the Self-Esteem Scales

Replicating past research (Bond & Cheung, 1983; Campbell et al., 1996; Mahler, 1976), there was a significant difference between the cultural groups in terms of global self-esteem, $F(2, 194) = 11.38$, $p < .001$ (See Table 1). Tukey’s comparisons revealed that European-Canadians had significantly higher global self-esteem scores than Japanese. Again Asian-Canadians fell in the intermediate range, but they were not significantly different from either of the other two samples.

There were significant main effects for culture on 2 of the 4 subscales of Luhtanen and Crocker’s CSE measure. A significant ANOVA, $F(2, 194) = 8.10$, $p < .001$, followed by Tukey’s comparisons, revealed that European-Canadians had significantly higher membership CSE scores than Japanese. Asian-Canadians fell between the other two samples, but did not differ significantly from either sample. European-Canadians, then, viewed themselves to be more worthy members of their social groups than did Japanese. As this subscale consistently correlates highly with global self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), and the items are similar to global self-esteem items in terms of evaluating an individual’s self-worth, this cultural difference may reflect the tendencies of North Americans to think more highly of themselves as individuals than do Japanese (Heine & Lehman, 1995a).

There was a similar main effect for culture for public CSE, $F(2, 193) = 6.03$, $p < .01$. Again, European-Canadians endorsed the items in this measure significantly more than did Japanese, and Asian-Canadians fell nonsignificantly between the two. Thus,

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A significant main effect for sex emerged for public CSE, $F(1, 193) = 5.14$, $p < .03$, with females ($M = 15.2$) scoring higher than males ($M = 14.4$).
European-Canadians felt that others evaluated their social groups more positively than did Japanese. Reflecting the obtained cultural difference in the magnitude of FSBs, this is evidence that European-Canadians have more positive views of their groups than do Japanese. The intermediate results of Asian-Canadians adds further support to this notion.

Cultural differences did not emerge for either the private or identity subscales of the CSE Scale, both Fs < 1. None of the three cultural groups differed in their satisfaction with their memberships in their social groups, nor with the importance they ascribed to their social groups in influencing their identity. It deserves mention that these obtained cultural differences in self-esteem and CSE are conceivably affected by moderacy bias response sets (e.g., Chen et al., 1995) and thus should be interpreted with caution.

Within-participant correlations between importance of traits and SSBs/FSBs

Within-participant correlations were calculated to assess whether the magnitude of SSBs and FSBs was associated with the perceived value of the traits. That is, did participants report that they or their family members are better than more people with respect to traits that they deem particularly important?

Correlation coefficients were calculated among the 10 SSBs, FSBs, and importance scores for each participant, and these correlation coefficients were treated as individual variables for analyses. An ANOVA revealed no significant effects for culture in the average magnitude of the within-participant correlations between SSBs and importance, F(2, 190) = 1.26, n.s. The average within-participant correlations (after first conducting r-to-Z-to-r transformations; see McNemar, 1962) between trait importance and SSBs were r ssb, importance = -.46, t(74) = 8.94, p < .001 for European-Canadians, r ssb, importance = -.31, t(40) = 5.98, p < .001 for Asian-Canadians (p < .001) and r ssb, importance = -.64, t(76) = 3.20, p < .01 for Japanese.4 Hence, unexpectedly, Japanese did

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4Note, though, that with the r-to-Z-to-r transformations high correlations have an inordinate amount of influence upon the average value of the correlations. Hence, despite the nominally larger value of the Japanese correlation, its t-value is less significant than the
show a pronounced relation between SSBs and importance. This result contradicts previous research that failed to reveal a statistically significant relation among Japanese between self-serving tendencies and perceived importance (Heine & Lehman, 1995a). Apparently, Japanese estimates (and those of both groups of Canadians) do relate to the importance of the trait at hand, even though they demonstrate very small SSBs in terms of absolute magnitude (or in the case of Japanese women, no SSBs).

A significant main effect for culture emerged for the correlations between trait importance and FSBs, $F(2, 185) = 5.02, p < .01$. Tukey’s comparisons revealed that the only significant difference was that the average Japanese correlation ($r_{fsb, importance} = -.29, t[76] = 5.92, p < .001$) was significantly more pronounced than the average Asian-Canadian correlation ($r_{fsb, importance} = .00, t < 1$). The European-Canadian correlation ($r_{fsb, importance} = -.23, t[74] = 4.28, p < .001$) was marginally more pronounced than the Asian-Canadian correlation ($p < .07$) and was not significantly different from that of the Japanese. This result was also unexpected. Both Japanese and European-Canadians were more likely to see their family members as excelling on those traits that they valued more highly, whereas there was no statistically significant relation for Asian-Canadians.

**Correlations Between FSBs and Other Dependent Measures**

An examination of the correlations between the magnitude of FSBs and the other dependent measures reveals how family-member enhancement appears to be related to self-enhancement for Canadians. First, both Asian- and European-Canadians exhibited a significant positive correlation between the percentage of people they viewed as better than themselves and the percentage they viewed as better than their close family members, $r_s = .63$ and $58$, for Asian- and European-Canadians, respectively, both $p_s < .001$. The more likely individuals were to see themselves in a positive manner relative to others the

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other two groups, indicating that the Japanese value was inflated by having a subset of people with very high correlations between SSBs and importance.
more likely they were to view their family members in such a way. Self-enhancement, then, is closely tied to family-member enhancement for Canadians. Japanese exhibited a marginally significant positive correlation between their SSBs and FSBs, \( r = .22, p < .06 \). Hence, they too displayed some tendency to think better of their family-members, relative to others if they thought well of themselves. However, both the Asian-Canadian and the European-Canadian correlations were significantly larger than that of the Japanese, \( t(117) = 2.84 \) and \( t(147) = 2.67 \), respectively, both \( ps < .01 \), indicating that the relation between self-enhancement and family-member enhancement is less pronounced in Japanese than it is in Canadians.

Second, European-Canadians exhibited a significant negative correlation between how close they reported feeling to their family member and the percentage of people they estimated being better than that family member, \( r = -.40, p < .001 \). That is, the closer European-Canadians felt to their family member, the better they thought their family member was relative to others. This suggests that European-Canadians enhance themselves indirectly when they rate their family-member positively. In contrast, Japanese did not exhibit a significant correlation between their reported closeness to their family member and their estimates of the percentage of the population better than this person, \( r = -.12, p > \text{n.s} \). Moreover, the European-Canadian correlation was marginally greater in magnitude than that of the Japanese, \( t(147) = 1.78, p < .08 \). Japanese did not evaluate their family members more positively when they felt closer to them, and thus FSBs do not appear to be an indirect form of self-enhancement for Japanese. The same correlation for Asian-Canadians fell in between the European-Canadians and Japanese, but it did not reach significance, \( r = -.21, \text{ns} \). There was no difference in the magnitude of the correlations between Asian-Canadians and either of the other two cultural groups, both \( ts < 1.1 \).

Third, European-Canadians exhibited a significant negative correlation between their global self-esteem score and the percentage of people they estimated being better
than their family member ($r = -0.35, p < 0.01$). Viewing one's family member in positive terms was thus related to how European-Canadians evaluated themselves. For Japanese and Asian-Canadians there was no relation between these two variables, $rs = -0.09$ and $0.00$, respectively, both n.s. The European-Canadian correlation was also marginally greater than that of the other two groups, $t(116) = 1.91$ and $t(147) = 1.71$ for Asian-Canadians and Japanese, respectively, both $p < 0.09$.

European-Canadians' tendencies to display family-serving biases, then, seem to reflect their own positive feelings about themselves. For European-Canadians it appears that thinking positively about their family members is one way of thinking positively about themselves, although the direction of this causal relation is not clear. They appear to bask in the reflected glory of their family members (Cialdini et al., 1976). Aside from the marginal correlation between SSBs and FSBs, the Japanese results do not indicate that thinking positively about their family members serves to enhance themselves. The relations between FSBs and positive self-feelings were inconsistent for the Asian-Canadians.

Taken together, Study 1 demonstrates that Japanese exhibit some tendencies to enhance their family-members, but that these tendencies are not as strong as they are for European-Canadians, nor are they as strongly linked to their self-evaluations. Also, Japanese exhibited significantly lower public CSE than European-Canadians indicating that they felt that others evaluated their groups less positively. That the results of Asian-Canadians were, for the most part, between these two cultural groups increases our confidence that positive views of one's group are more pronounced for people from Western compared to Eastern cultures.

The results of the within-participant correlations between trait importance and SSBs/FSBs were at odds with the notion that Japanese are not motivated to self-enhance. The more important Japanese viewed the traits, the fewer people they estimated to be better than either themselves or their family members. This finding should perhaps be
interpreted with caution as past research has failed to demonstrate a relation between importance and self-serving tendencies with Japanese (Heine & Lehman, 1995a). Moreover, that Japanese displayed a pronounced correlation between trait importance and SSBs despite the fact that their SSBs were relatively small in magnitude (and nonexistent for Japanese females) makes it difficult to interpret this relation.

**STUDY 2**

One limitation of Study 1 is that the target of evaluation for the FSBs, although not the self, is still an individual. Perhaps the obtained cultural difference in FSBs reflects a relative hesitation by Japanese to view any individual in unrealistically positive terms. A positively biased evaluation of an individual might highlight how that individual is different from others—something which may have negative psychological consequences for Japanese (Markus & Kitayama, 1991b). Study 2 thus focused specifically on cultural differences in evaluating the groups to which one belongs. Toward this end, I compared Canadian and Japanese evaluations of their own and their rival universities.

**Method**

**Universities**

Two universities were selected from both Japan and Canada. Care was taken to select universities that would be comparable across the two cultures. For the Japanese sample, Doshisha University and Ritsumeikan University were selected. Both universities are located in Kyoto, Japan, a city of approximately 1.3 million. Doshisha and Ritsumeikan are both private schools of similar size, and although there are a number of other universities in and around Kyoto, these two universities have had a historical rivalry. The rankings of Japanese schools are well-publicized and rarely change. Doshisha and Ritsumeikan are commonly known as the 3rd and 4th best private schools in Western Japan, respectively. The academic standards necessary for entry are slightly higher for Doshisha than Ritsumeikan.
The University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) were selected for the Canadian sample. Both of these universities are located in greater Vancouver, Canada, which has a population of approximately 1.8 million. The two are both public schools and being the only universities in the Vancouver area, they too have had a rivalry. Although the ranking of Canadian schools is not particularly clear-cut, both schools are typically viewed quite positively. A recent national survey showed that UBC and SFU were rated as having the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} best overall reputations in Canada, respectively (Maclean's, November 14, 1994). The academic standards necessary for entry are slightly higher for UBC than for SFU.

Participants

Eighty-six introductory psychology students (57 females, 27 males, and 2 who did not report their sex) formed the sample from Doshisha. The Ritsumeikan sample consisted of 141 students (63 females and 78 males) from an urban studies course. All Japanese participants had Japanese parents, and all but one were born in Japan.

The UBC sample comprised 191 introductory psychology students, and the SFU sample comprised 178 introductory psychology or research methods students. As in Study 1, the Canadian samples were separated in terms of their ethnic background. Fifty-eight (37 females, 21 males) students from UBC and 47 (33 females, 14 males) students from SFU declared themselves to be of Asian ancestry and were termed Asian-Canadians. One hundred and six (74 females, 32 males) students from UBC and 108 (81 females, 27 males) students from SFU declared themselves to be of European ancestry and were termed European-Canadians. The remaining 27 students from UBC and 23 students from SFU were of varied ethnic descent and were not included in the analyses.

Materials

Participants were first asked to evaluate characteristics of universities and students for both their and their rival university. They were provided with 5 statements about the characteristics of the two universities and 10 statements about the characteristics of
students from the two universities, and they were asked to indicate how accurate the statements were on a 1 (Not at all accurate) to 6 (Completely accurate) scale (see Table 3). I selected half of the “characteristics of students” items to be typical of the independent view of self, and half to be typical of the interdependent view of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991b). Two versions of the questionnaires were counter-balanced such that half of the participants evaluated their own university first and half evaluated their rival university first. Next participants were asked to evaluate how important they thought each of the student traits were for succeeding in their culture and how important they thought that each of the university characteristics were for students. Both of these were rated on a scale from 1 (Not at all Important) to 10 (Extremely Important).

Insert Table 3 about here

Participants then completed a modified version of Luhtanen and Crocker’s Collective Self-Esteem Scale. All 16 items of the scale were altered by replacing the generic target “my social group” with the more specific target “my university.” Hence, the scale served to measure what might be called “university self-esteem” (USE). As in the original measure, there were four subscales of membership, private, public, and identity USE. Previous research (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) has shown that such modifications do not compromise the psychometric properties of the scale.

Participants were then asked how well they knew students from their rival university. This item was included as a control for differences in the familiarity of students with their rival universities. Two items followed that served as additional measures of university-enhancing tendencies. The first item was “Overall, I think that UBC/Doshisha is a better school to go to than SFU/Ritsumeikan,” and the second item was “I think that most UBC/Doshisha students are glad that they went to UBC/Doshisha instead of
SFU/Ritsumeikan.” Finally, participants completed some demographic items. All materials were originally produced in English and then translated into Japanese using the same procedure as in Study 1.

Results and Discussion

Comparability of the Samples

An ANOVA revealed significant age differences between the groups, \( F(5, 535) = 9.08, p < .001 \). Post-hoc comparisons (Tukey’s for unequal ns) revealed that the only difference was that the European-Canadian SFU sample (\( M = 23.0 \) years old) was significantly older than each of the other samples (\( Ms \) ranged from 20.3 to 20.9 years old). However, correlations within cultures with age and all of the dependent variables revealed a significant correlation in only one isolated instance, which will be discussed later.

The samples differed with respect to proportions of the sexes, \( \chi^2[5, N = 546] = 31.1, p < .001 \). Sex was included as a factor for all analyses. No significant interactions with sex were observed, and only two isolated significant main effects for sex emerged. For the sake of brevity, aside from these two exceptions, analyses with sex will not be discussed.

Analyses of Composite Totals

Reliability analyses revealed that both the 5-item university evaluation scale (Cronbach’s alphas for the four target universities ranged from 0.68 to 0.82) and the 10-item student evaluation scale (alphas ranged from 0.79 to 0.88) formed reasonably cohesive measures and indicated that participants tended to evaluate the universities and students from the universities in roughly the same way regardless of the characteristics under consideration. Consequently, the five items from the university evaluation measure and the 10 items from the student evaluation measure were summed to form composite measures for analyses.

First, I examined whether students would evaluate their own universities or students from their universities more positively than would students from their rival
universities, and conversely, whether students would rate their rival universities or students from those universities more negatively than would students from those universities. I term this tendency a university-serving bias (USB). A repeated-measures design was used to analyze participants’ evaluations of their own and their rival universities for all analyses. In line with the “differences in process” view, I anticipated that USBs would be more pronounced for European-Canadians than for Japanese. A 3-way (culture x school x target) analysis was first conducted for the 5-item university-evaluation measure. The predicted three-way interaction was significant, $F(2, 537) = 15.04, p < .001$, so follow-up analyses of school x target interactions were conducted within each culture. First, examining the Japanese sample, the 2-way interaction was significant, $F(1, 224) = 13.74, p < .001$. Simple-effects analyses revealed that this interaction is accounted for by the fact that, although students from both universities evaluated Ritsumeikan less positively than Doshisha, students from Ritsumeikan viewed the relative superiority of Doshisha to be greater than did students from Doshisha, $^5 F(1, 139) = 142.99, p < .001$, and $F(1, 85) = 17.62, p < .001$, for students from Ritsumeikan and Doshisha, respectively. That is, the university-evaluations from both Ritsumeikan and Doshisha students reflect the common knowledge that Doshisha has higher academic standards than Ritsumeikan, yet the interaction is evidence for a university-effacing bias (see Table 4). In stark contrast to what would be expected if Japanese were group-serving, Ritsumeikan students believed that Doshisha is more superior to Ritsumeikan than did Doshisha students.

$^5$A main effect for sex emerged here for the Doshisha sample, $F(1, 82) = 7.64, p < .01$. Simple-effects analyses revealed that Doshisha females rated Ritsumeikan ($M = 17.8$) lower than they did Doshisha ($M = 20.4$; $F[1, 56] = 28.61, p < .001$, whereas males showed no difference, $F(1, 26) < 1$. 
The 2-way interaction was also significant for European-Canadians, $F(1, 210) = 15.12, p < .001$. Simple-effects analyses revealed that this interaction is accounted for by the fact that, although students from both universities evaluated UBC more positively than SFU, UBC students viewed the gap between UBC and SFU as larger than did SFU students, $F(1, 104) = 73.85, p < .001$ and $F(1, 106) = 14.23, p < .001$ for students from UBC and SFU, respectively. In sum, the university-evaluations of European-Canadian students from UBC and SFU both reflected the higher academic standards of UBC, but UBC students saw the relative superiority of UBC as greater than did SFU students. This interaction is evidence of USBs for European-Canadians.

The 2-way interaction was marginally significant for Asian-Canadians, $F(1, 103) = 3.18, p < .08$. Simple-effects analyses revealed that this interaction is accounted for by the fact that, although students from both universities evaluated UBC more positively than SFU, UBC students viewed the gap between UBC and SFU as marginally larger than did SFU students, $F(1, 57) = 17.14, p < .001$ and $F(1, 46) = 6.14, p < .02$ for students from UBC and SFU, respectively. The marginal USB exhibited by Asian-Canadians thus falls between the evaluations of the other two cultural groups.

The same analyses were conducted for evaluations of the students. Again, the predicted 3-way (culture $\times$ school $\times$ target) interaction was significant, $F(2, 531) = 6.44, p < .01$. Follow-up analyses demonstrated that Japanese did not exhibit a significant School $\times$ Target interaction, $F(1, 221) < 1$. That is, they did not display either university-serving or university-effacing biases. Simple-effects analyses by school revealed, interestingly, that students from both Doshisha, $F(1, 85) = 3.47, p < .07$, and Ritsumeikan, $F(1, 136) = 8.83, p < .01$, were in agreement in terms of rating Ritsumeikan students more positively than Doshisha students. Despite the consensus that Doshisha is a better school than
Ritsumeikan, students from both schools viewed Ritsumeikan students more positively than Doshisha students.

A significant school × target interaction emerged for the European-Canadians, $F(1, 209) = 23.55, p < .001$. Simple-effects analyses revealed that this was due to UBC students rating UBC students more positively than they rated SFU students, $F(1, 102) = 8.02, p < .01$, and SFU students rating SFU students more positively than they rated UBC students, $F(1, 107) = 17.61, p < .001$. That is, the European-Canadian samples clearly exhibited USBs.

The Asian-Canadians also exhibited a significant school × target interaction, $F(1, 101) = 15.84, p < .001$. Simple-effects analyses revealed that, similar to European-Canadians, this is due to UBC students rating UBC students more positively than they rated SFU students, $F(1, 55) = 11.60, p < .01$, and SFU students rating SFU students more positively than they rated UBC students, $F(1, 46) = 5.17, p < .03$. Asian-Canadians thus also clearly exhibited USBs.

In sum, the above results indicate that both groups of Canadian students exhibited USBs when they evaluated their universities and the students from their universities. The tendencies to enhance the groups to which they belong are clearly evident for both Asian- and European-Canadians. In contrast, Japanese students showed university-effacing biases when evaluating their universities, and no biases when evaluating students from their universities. These evaluations, then, showed no tendencies on the part of Japanese to enhance the groups to which they belong. This pattern of results stands directly counter to the “differences in content” view that Japanese enhance themselves via their groups.

**Analyses of Individual Characteristics**

Analyses were conducted among the cultural groups for each of the 10 student traits and 5 university characteristics to investigate the possibility that some individual characteristics displayed unique patterns of results. Individual difference variables were
created by subtracting participants' rival school ratings from their own school ratings and these were subject to ANOVAs. Hence, positive values for these difference variables represent university-serving tendencies. First, analyses were conducted for the 5 university characteristics. The obtained pattern was fairly consistent across the characteristics (see Table 5). European-Canadians were significantly more university-serving than Japanese on 4 of the 5 characteristics (as evidenced by positive numbers in Table 5). The results of the Asian-Canadians were highly similar to those of the European-Canadians. European-Canadians showed significant USBs for 3 of the 5 characteristics and Asian-Canadians showed significant USBs for 2 of the 5 characteristics. In stark contrast, Japanese showed significant university-effacement for all 5 university characteristics. Regardless of the characteristic under question, when averaged across the whole sample, Japanese tended to view their rival school as better than their own school.

Insert Table 5 about here

Next, analyses were conducted for the student traits. ANOVAs revealed significant cultural differences for 6 of the 10 traits. The results varied considerably depending on the trait under question. Relative to Japanese, European-Canadians viewed students from their own schools more positively than students from their rival schools in 4 instances: intelligence, creativity, attractiveness, and being hard-working. However, Japanese showed greater USBs relative to Canadians for 2 of the 10 traits: being interesting and being able to get along well with others. The results of the Asian-Canadians were not significantly different from either of the other groups for any of the traits.

An examination of the absolute value of the university-enhancement/effacement also revealed some variable results. European-Canadians showed significant USBs for 8
of the 10 traits, and significant university-effacement for 1 trait: loyalty. Asian-Canadians demonstrated significant USBs for 6 of the 10 traits, and no significant university-effacing tendencies. Japanese showed significant USBs for 4 traits: being interesting, being able to get along well with others, considerateness, and athleticism; and showed significant university-effacing tendencies for 4 traits as well: intelligence, loyalty, attractiveness, and being hard working. Perhaps one pattern that can be gleaned from the Japanese data is that they exhibit USBs for traits that relate to being good friends (i.e., being interesting, being able to get along well with others, and considerateness). It might be the case that Japanese are particularly group-serving with respect to the quality of their relationships (cf. Endo, 1996).

Within-Participant Correlations Between USBs and Importance

As in Study 1, correlation coefficients were calculated among the 15 university-serving tendencies (operationalized as own school minus rival school, regardless of whether it was a university characteristic or student trait) and 15 importance scores for each participant, and these correlation coefficients were treated as individual variables for analyses. No cross-cultural differences emerged, $F(2, 484) = 1.01, \text{n.s.}$, and none of the correlations reached significance: $r_{\text{usb, importance}} = -.04, .00, \text{and } .00$, for European-Canadians, Asian-Canadians, and Japanese, respectively, all $p$s $>.10$. The importance of the characteristic under question thus had no bearing on the magnitude of the difference that participants perceived between their own and rival schools.

Between-Culture Comparisons of University Self-Esteem Subscales

The four subscales of the modified version of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) had good reliability (Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .82 to .86), especially given that each subscale comprises only four items. The items of the university self-esteem (USE) subscales thus still hung together well, despite the alterations from the generic target of participants’ social groups to the specific target of participants’ universities. Again, it is important to note that cross-cultural comparisons of Likert scales
are susceptible to moderacy-bias effects so I urge caution in interpreting the following results.

Between-culture comparisons revealed significant differences for three of the four subscales. Replicating Study 1, a highly significant main effect for culture emerged for membership USE, \( F(2, 576) = 123.52, p < .001 \). Tukey’s comparisons revealed that European-Canadians scored significantly higher than both Asian-Canadians and Japanese, and Asian-Canadians were significantly higher on this measure than Japanese (see Table 6). That is, both Canadian samples viewed themselves to be more valuable members of their universities than Japanese, and Asian-Canadians fell in between European-Canadians and Japanese. Again, given the high correlation between membership CSE and global self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), this effect likely reflects cultural differences in individual self-esteem (e.g., Bond & Cheung, 1983; Campbell et al., 1996).

Also replicating Study 1, a significant main effect for culture emerged with respect to public USE, \( F(2, 577) = 50.16, p < .001 \). Tukey’s comparisons revealed that European-Canadians had significantly higher public USE scores than both Asian-Canadians and Japanese, and Asian-Canadians scored significantly higher than Japanese. European-Canadians felt that others evaluated their university more positively than did Japanese, and Asian-Canadians fell squarely in between. This latter finding further supports the notion that Westerners have more positive views of their groups than do Japanese.\(^6\)

\(^6\)A main effect for sex emerged for public CSE, \( F(1, 577) = 10.09, p < .01 \), such that females (\( M=16.1 \)) scored higher than males (\( M=15.4 \)).
Again replicating Study 1, there was no cultural difference with respect to the identity USE subscale, $F(2, 576) = 2.22, p > .10$. Canadians and Japanese did not differ with respect to the degree to which they reported that their universities influence their individual identities. That Japanese did not state that their university (nor their social groups; see Study 1) formed a more important part of their identity than was reported by Canadians is surprising given the results of past investigations into the nature of the interdependent self (Cousins, 1989; Ip & Bond, 1995; Maday & Szalay, 1976). In these past studies, Asians made more references to their specific social groups in describing themselves than did North Americans. It is unclear why the present results did not reflect this previous finding.

Finally, unlike in Study 1, a significant main effect for culture emerged for private USE, $F(2, 579) = 19.79, p < .001$. Tukey’s comparisons revealed that European-Canadians felt more satisfied with belonging to their universities than did either Asian-Canadians or Japanese, and Asian-Canadians scored between the other two groups.

Additional Items

Analyses were conducted on the final three items of the questionnaire. The first item (“I know students from [name of rival university] very well”) was included as a covariate for all analyses. Its inclusion, however, did not affect any of the results.

ANOVA were conducted for the item, “Overall, I think that UBC/Doshisha is a better school to go to than SFU/Ritsumeikan.” A significant culture x school interaction emerged, $F(2, 532) = 8.76, p < .001$. Simple-effects analyses revealed that this interaction was due to the fact that, although all three cultural groups exhibited some university-serving tendencies (i.e., students from UBC and Doshisha agreed with this item more than

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7 A significant correlation emerged between age and identity university self-esteem both for the Japanese, $r = -.15$ and the European Canadian sample, $r = -.14$, both $p$ < .05. Controlling for age via an ANCOVA did not affect the magnitude of the cross-cultural difference.
students from SFU and Ritsumeikan), the discrepancy between European-Canadians from UBC and SFU (Ms = 3.8 and 2.4, respectively, F[1, 212] = 98.92, p < .001) was larger than the discrepancy between Doshisha and Ritsumeikan (Ms = 3.5 and 3.0, respectively, F[1, 225] = 11.45, p < .001). The discrepancy between Asian-Canadians from UBC and SFU (Ms = 3.6 and 2.6, respectively, F[1, 103] = 30.13, p < .001) fell in between the other two cultural groups.

The final item, "I think that most UBC/Doshisha students are glad that they went to UBC/Doshisha instead of SFU/Ritsumeikan," also revealed a significant culture × school interaction, F(2, 532) = 7.11, p < .001. European-Canadians showed clear evidence of university-serving tendencies as students from UBC endorsed this item (M = 3.7) to a greater extent than students from SFU (M =3.2; F[1, 212] = 13.06, p < .001). In contrast, Japanese showed a slight university-effacing tendency as students from Doshisha (M =3.1) endorsed this item marginally less than students from Ritsumeikan (M = 3.4; F[1, 225] = 3.27, p < .08). Asian-Canadians again fell in between, showing neither university-serving nor university-effacing tendencies, (Ms = 3.5 and 3.3 for UBC and SFU students, respectively, F[1, 103] < 1). Hence, these final two items similarly suggest that positively-biased views of one's university are more pronounced among European-Canadians than Japanese, with Asian-Canadians falling in the middle.

Taken together, cross-cultural comparisons of the dependent measures in Study 2 demonstrate that European-Canadians exhibited stronger university-serving tendencies than Japanese. Furthermore, in two instances Japanese demonstrated university-effacing responses. Clearly this pattern of results is at odds with the notion that Japanese enhance themselves by evaluating their groups in unrealistically positive terms. When evaluating their universities, Japanese demonstrated a similar lack of enhancement as when they evaluated themselves. The general tendency for Asian-Canadians to exhibit results intermediate to the other two cultural groups outlines a continuum of university-enhancement and Western cultural background. The more exposure participants had to
Western culture, the more likely they were to view their universities, and students from their universities, in overly positive terms.

**General Discussion for Studies 1 and 2**

The results of both studies support the "differences in process" view of cultural differences in self-enhancement. Japanese consistently exhibited weaker group-serving biases than European-Canadians and, at times, Japanese were actually group-effacing. No evidence suggested that Japanese compensate for a lack of individual self-enhancement by enhancing their groups more than (or even as much as) Canadians. Cultural differences in self-enhancement found in previous research (e.g., Heine & Lehman, 1995a; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a) thus do not appear simply to be a function of differences in the target of evaluation. They appear to reflect general differences in tendencies to enhance aspects of the self.

In short, I found that cultural differences in self-serving biases were paralleled by differences in group-serving biases. This suggests the possibility that motivations for enhancing one's individual self and for enhancing one's group are similar. This possibility is in line with other research that shows how group-enhancement or other-group derogation serves to enhance the self (e.g., Brown et al., 1988; Lemyre & Smith, 1985; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

This link between self-enhancement and group-enhancement was also supported by the pattern of correlations between the FSBs and the other dependent variables in Study 1. European-Canadians appeared to enhance themselves indirectly when they enhanced their evaluations of their family members. That this pattern was not obtained for Japanese further suggests a relative absence in their motivations for self-enhancement.

Moreover, the overall tendency of Asian-Canadians to exhibit group-serving biases intermediate to the European-Canadians and Japanese underscores the role of culture in evaluations of one's group. Group-serving biases became more pronounced alongside exposure to Western culture (see also Heine & Lehman, 1996b). This finding suggests
that Western culture may provide a relatively greater emphasis to view oneself and one’s groups positively (Heine & Lehman, 1995a, 1996a; Kitayama et al., in press; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b).

Limitations and Future Directions

These investigations of group-serving biases were limited to only two categories: one’s family member and one’s university. Although Canadians were clearly more group-serving than Japanese with respect to both of these categories, it is possible that a different pattern would emerge with different target groups. Perhaps certain elements of groups that are absent in families and universities may elicit more pronounced group-serving biases in Japanese. For example, groups that are based solely on voluntary memberships (such as groups of friends), groups that work towards a similar goal (such as companies or sports teams), or groups at a larger level (such as one’s country), might elicit stronger group-serving effects in Japanese than families and universities. However, I know of no research linking such elements of groups to stronger group pride among Japanese, and I can think of no reason to believe that this would affect Japanese more than Canadians. Importantly, that European-Canadians had significantly higher public collective self-esteem than Japanese with the generic target “my social group” casts doubt on the notion that a different pattern of results would obtain had I selected different groups to investigate.

A second potential limitation is that asking Japanese to evaluate a family member and their university on the basis of internal attributes might itself be an imposed-etic. The identity of the interdependent self is anchored more in its relationships with others than in its internal attributes (Hamaguchi, 1985; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b). This suggests that, to the extent that enhancement biases are present in the Japanese motivational repertoire, Japanese would be most likely to enhance when evaluating the quality of their relationships relative to others (Endo, 1996). That the Japanese participants in Study 2 showed university-serving biases with respect to three traits associated with being a good
friend (considerateness, getting along well with others, and being interesting) suggests that they might indeed show relationship-serving tendencies. My colleagues and I are currently preparing a study to test this possibility.

Targeting groups for evaluation instead of individuals was an important step towards realizing methodologies for understanding the nature of the interdependent view of self. In many respects, though, we are still relying on Western methodologies, and the risk for results obscured by imposed-etics are still present. Ideally, we should develop new, indigenous measures and methodologies to gain an understanding of the Eastern view of self that is not distorted by our Western lenses (cf. Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). Future research, preferably conducted by (or in collaboration with) Asian investigators, holds the promise of developing and employing more interdependently oriented methodologies towards this end.

**STUDY 3**

Past studies of self-enhancement have been consistent in revealing strongly attenuated self-serving tendencies among Japanese (e.g., Heine & Lehman, 1995a; Kitayama et al., in press; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). It is important to investigate and interpret the nature of this relative absence of self-enhancement for Japanese.

The main premise of my dissertation is that these cultural differences in self-enhancement exist because of the ways in which the self is served in each culture. For example, in the West the self appears to be served when the individual views him or herself in an unrealistically positive light, for example, as better than most others (Taylor & Brown, 1988). Western culture places great value on individuals being adequate, competent, and self-sufficient (Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Sampson, 1977). Viewing oneself in unrealistically positive terms (i.e., as especially competent, in control, etc.) can thus be seen to bridge the gap between the individual's actual standing and the cultural ideals, thereby authenticating the individual as a meaningful member of the culture (Heine
Self-enhancing biases serve to bring Westerners closer to their cultural ideals of selfhood.

In contrast, the relation between self-enhancing biases and the Japanese cultural ideals of selfhood appears to be quite different. The principle cultural tasks in Japan are for individuals to fit in harmoniously with others and to gain a sense of belongingness with others (e.g., Bachnik, 1992; De Vos, 1985; Kondo, 1987; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b). It would appear then that the self is best served in Japan when individuals feel that they are being accepted by their groups. This orientation towards fitting in with others (as opposed to individual achievements) suggests that it does not so much matter how individuals themselves evaluate how well they are doing—rather, it is more important how the groups to which they belong evaluate their performance (Nisbett et al., 1996; Spence, 1985; cf. Yamagishi, 1988). Hence, feeling good about oneself, far from hinging primarily on an individual's personal feelings and self-evaluations, has more to do with the feelings and evaluations of others. For Japanese, it is crucial to strive to gain others' approval.

Markus, Kitayama, and colleagues (Kitayama et al., in press; Markus et al., 1996; Nisbett et al., 1996) maintain that performing cultural tasks associated with interdependence requires Japanese to be vigilant about how they are being evaluated by their in-group members. Japanese must focus on how their behavior affects their relations with others and how it affects the overall harmony of the group. Succeeding in interdependent cultural tasks requires the individual to change and adapt her or himself to the needs of the group (Weisz et al., 1984).

As I discussed earlier, Doi (1973) argued that a characteristic feature of Japanese is that they maintain a perpetual sense of ki ga sumanai, that is, a sense of dissatisfaction about themselves. This dissatisfaction indicates a perceived discrepancy between Japanese individuals' current states and their aspirations. Kitayama and Markus (Kitayama et al., 1995, in press; Markus et al., in press) argue that it is crucial for Japanese to dwell on their inadequacies and shortcomings that may make it difficult for them to secure their groups'
approval (see also Kashiwagi, 1986). Japanese must be keenly sensitive to the ways in which they fall short of the consensual standards of excellence. Using this information, they must then act accordingly and work towards rectifying these shortcomings (see also Johnson, 1993; Roland, 1988; White, 1987). These tendencies stand in sharp contrast to North Americans’ tendencies to emphasize their positive attributes and to self-enhance (e.g., Taylor & Brown, 1988).

In my review of the anthropological literature in the introduction of this dissertation, I described how this habitual dissatisfaction with oneself is evident throughout Japanese culture. Various interpersonal scripts get played out in everyday life whereby people communicate their personal inadequacies and limitations (Marsella, Walker, & Johnson, 1973). Examples of such processes are amae (i.e., the notion that one indulges one’s sense of dependency on others; Doi, 1973; Kumagai & Kumagai, 1986), an emphasis on shame (Benedict, 1946; Creighton, 1990; Doi, 1973; Lebra, 1983), the widespread occurrence of apologies in Japan (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990), and the emphasis on self-criticism that is encouraged in the child-rearing process (Markus et al., 1996; White & Levine, 1986). In fact, the anthropological and cultural psychological literature on the Japanese is consistent in describing a chronic self-critical outlook. Clearly, such an outlook is at odds with the well-documented self-enhancing tendencies of North Americans. In Study 3, I investigated empirically this potential cross-cultural difference in self-satisfaction.

Comparisons of Actual and Ideal Self-Assessments

I employed the framework of self-discrepancy theory to explore the notion that Japanese feel chronically more dissatisfied with themselves than do Canadians. One of the two basic assumptions of self-discrepancy theory is that people are motivated to bring their current state into line with their ideal state (Higgins, 1989). Actual self-assessments represent how people currently view themselves, whereas ideal self-assessments indicate
how they ideally want to be. I reasoned that the discrepancy between these two types of self-assessments is one way to measure individuals’ dissatisfaction with themselves.

One of my key questions was “Do Japanese view themselves to be more distant from their ideals than do Canadians?” Larger actual-ideal discrepancies for Japanese than for Canadians would be in line with the notion that Japanese focus more on their incompleteness. A large discrepancy between the way one is and the way one wants to be highlights dissatisfaction with oneself.

Higgins and colleagues (Higgins, 1987, 1989; Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985) demonstrated that actual-ideal discrepancies correlate positively with depression (see also Marsella et al., 1973). Large discrepancies represent, in general, an absence of positive outcomes (i.e., the individual is not the type of person that he/she wishes to be) and are associated with dejection, sadness, and disappointment (Higgins, 1987). Such a relation between actual-ideal discrepancies and depression is consistent with the idea that large discrepancies signal individual inadequacy (see e.g., Marsella et al., 1973).

However, if viewing oneself negatively (i.e., as further away from one’s ideal self) is more a natural part of one’s everyday cultural life (as has been argued for Japanese), such feelings would be less likely to be accompanied by stress and consequent negative affect. To the extent that one’s culture encourages actual-ideal discrepancies, not only should such discrepancies be more common, they should be less debilitating. As Markus and Kitayama (e.g., Kitayama et al., 1995, in press; Markus et al., in press) have theorized, such a focus on actual-ideal discrepancies may serve, in part, as a means for Japanese to improve themselves in order to accomplish the tasks associated with interdependence. Indeed, in previous cross-cultural research (Marsella et al., 1973; Yanagida & Marsella, 1978), Japanese-Americans living in Hawaii have been found to exhibit a weaker relation between actual-ideal discrepancies and depression than do Caucasian-Americans. One of the objectives of Study 3 was to follow-up on this research with samples of Japanese, Asian-Canadians, and European-Canadians.
Highlighting the Role of Culture

In order to provide the most compelling test of the relation between culture and self-discrepancies, I employed two methodological devices. First, I sought to ensure that any obtained cultural differences were not due to differences in the cultural meaning of the traits that were employed to assess self-discrepancies. To avoid any “imposed-etics” stemming from our Western orientation (e.g., Berry, 1969), I included traits that were meaningful both to Japanese and Canadians. Towards this end, I conducted a pretest to determine which traits were viewed as most important by Japanese and Canadians for succeeding in their respective cultures, and I included those traits in the actual study.

Second, to increase the likelihood that any obtained cultural differences were due to culture and not some extraneous variable, I again included a third sample that would seem to characterize a point between Eastern and Western cultures: Asian-Canadians. To the extent that culture mediates self-discrepancies, I anticipated that Asian-Canadians would exhibit self-discrepancies intermediate to those of European-Canadians and Japanese. Such a pattern would suggest that any obtained differences were due to the cultural backgrounds of the participants.

Method

Participants

The Japanese sample consisted of 161 students (58 females and 99 males, and 4 who did not report their sex) enrolled in an urban studies course at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. All Japanese participants were born in Japan, and all but one had Japanese parents.

The Canadian sample consisted of 268 students enrolled in introductory psychology classes at UBC. One hundred and fifty-one (111 females and 40 males) declared themselves to be of Asian heritage and formed the Asian-Canadian sample. Ninety (65 females and 25 males) declared themselves to be of European heritage and
formed the European-Canadian sample. The remaining 27 students were of varied ethnic backgrounds and were not included in the analyses.

Materials

Participants were first asked a number of questions with respect to a list of 20 personality traits. Toward ensuring that this list of traits would be deemed relevant by both Canadians and Japanese, I conducted a pretest with separate samples of Canadians and Japanese to determine which traits were viewed as important. The procedure of the pretest was as follows: First I met with several Japanese university students to discuss which traits they viewed to be most important for succeeding in Japanese culture. From this discussion, a list of 20 important traits for Japanese was constructed. I constructed a list of another 20 traits to reflect important traits for succeeding in Canadian culture. This combined list of 40 traits was then given to a class of introductory psychology students at Toyama University, Japan and to a class of introductory psychology students at UBC (Canadian participants for this pretest were limited to those who declared themselves to be of European ancestry). Participants were asked to indicate how important they perceived each trait to be for succeeding in their respective cultures by indicating on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important).

The traits that were included in the main study were based on the ratings of the initial 40 traits in the pretest. I selected 20 of these traits: specifically, the 10 traits that were rated as most important by Japanese and the 10 traits that were rated as most important by Canadians. Three traits (getting along well with others, cooperativeness, and adaptability) were rated among the highest 10 traits for both cultures, so I also included the traits rated 11th most important for each culture, and the trait rated as 12th most important by Canadians to reach the target of 20.

These 20 traits were put into three different types of statements which participants were asked to rate in terms of their accuracy on a Likert scale from 1 (Not at all accurate) to 6 (Completely accurate). To reduce potential ceiling effects (a concern particularly for
the "ideal" statements), the statements were constructed using "extremely" as a modifier. On the first page, participants were asked to indicate how accurate the statements were in describing themselves (e.g., "I am extremely attractive."). On the second page, participants were asked how accurate the statements were in describing the type of person they ideally would like to be (e.g., "I would ideally like to be extremely attractive."). On the third page, participants were asked to indicate how accurate the statements were in describing the average student, same-sex as themselves, from their university (e.g., "She or he is extremely attractive"). Next, participants were asked to indicate how important they felt each of the 20 traits were for succeeding in their respective cultures on a 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important) scale (see Table 7 for list of traits and final importance rankings). Last, participants completed Zung's (1965) 20-item Self-Rating Depression Scale on a Likert scale from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (most or all of the time). This scale has been shown to be a reliable and valid instrument for measuring depression cross-culturally (e.g., Yanagida & Marsella, 1978; Zung, 1969).

Following the methodology of Hoge and McCarthy (1983), I operationalized actual-ideal self-discrepancies as the difference between how accurately participants rated positively-valenced statements about their actual selves and their ideal selves. More recent work on actual-ideal self-discrepancies by Higgins and his colleagues (Higgins, 1987, 1989; Higgins et al., 1985) measured self-discrepancies by asking participants to spontaneously produce two lists of traits, one that describes their actual selves and one that describes their ideal selves. These traits are then coded as synonyms (matches), antonyms (mismatches), or nonmatches. Higgins and colleagues operationalize self-discrepancies as the number of mismatches less the number of matches between participants' actual and ideal selves in these spontaneously generated lists. I felt that for
purposes of the present study, in which I was comparing self-discrepancies across cultures, issues regarding language would introduce confounds to the methodology. For example, it would be extremely difficult to adopt comparable thresholds in determining which words were synonyms and which words were antonyms across both Japanese and English. Moreover, if either of the languages is relatively richer in words associated with particular traits, then comparing self-discrepancies operationalized in this way across cultures would be confounded. Consequently, I elected to have participants evaluate their actual and ideal selves in a Likert scale format for traits that were predetermined to be important for both cultures. I also utilized this same methodology for determining discrepancies between participants' perceptions of the average university student and their own ideal selves.

In fact, this methodology lends itself to measuring self-enhancing biases in a different manner from past research. That is, it can be determined whether participants view their actual self as closer to or further away from their ideal self, relative to their perceptions of the average student from their universities. I operationalized self-enhancing biases in the present study as the difference between participants' actual-ideal discrepancies and their other-ideal discrepancies. If, on average, individuals' actual-ideal discrepancies are smaller than their other-ideal discrepancies this reflects self-enhancing biases. In contrast, if, on average, individuals' actual-ideal discrepancies are larger than their other-ideal discrepancies this reflects self-effacement.

All of the materials were originally produced in English and then translated into Japanese using the same methodology as in the previous studies.

Results

Comparability of Samples

A significant difference emerged in the average ages of the three samples, \( F(2, 395) = 5.66, p < .01 \). Post-hoc comparisons (Tukey's HSD for unequal ns) revealed that the Japanese sample (\( M = 20.4 \)) was significantly older than the Asian-Canadian sample
(M = 19.9), with the European-Canadian sample (M = 20.1) falling nonsignificantly in between. However, correlations within cultures between age and each of the dependent variables revealed a significant relation in only one instance, which will be discussed later. The samples differed with respect to proportions of sex, $\chi^2[2, N = 398] = 51.1, p < .001$. Sex was included as a factor in all analyses. No significant sex $\times$ culture interactions were observed, and only one significant main effect for sex emerged. For the sake of brevity, aside from this one exception, analyses with sex will not be discussed.

Comparisons of Self-Discrepancies

Following the suggestions of Hoge and McCarthy (1983) and Marsella et al. (1973), actual-ideal self discrepancies were operationalized as the absolute difference between participants’ ratings of their actual and ideal selves. Absolute difference scores reflect the magnitude of the discrepancy between the ways participants view themselves and the ways that they ideally would like to be, irrespective of the direction of the difference. That is, those instances in which participants rated their actual self more positively than their ideal self (e.g., an individual may view him or herself as being too honest or too tolerant) were treated the same as the more common discrepancies in which the actual self was rated more negatively than the ideal self. Both kinds of discrepancies reflect individuals’ dissatisfactions with their current selves. Hoge and McCarthy (1983) demonstrated that this treatment of actual-ideal discrepancies correlates highly with global self-esteem. I also operationalized the discrepancies between participants’ perceptions of the average student from their university and their ideal self-ratings (viz., other-ideal discrepancies) in terms of the absolute difference of the discrepancy.

Analyses of Composite Measures. Reliability tests for the 20 traits were conducted for both discrepancy measures. Cronbach’s alphas were .84 for actual-ideal discrepancies and .87 for other-ideal discrepancies. This shows that participants generally displayed similar discrepancies regardless of the specific trait under question. The 20 traits were averaged across each discrepancy measure to form a composite measure for analyses.
First, examining the actual-ideal composite, an ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for culture, $F(2, 373) = 10.26, p < .001$. Tukey’s comparisons revealed that the magnitude of the actual-ideal discrepancy was significantly larger for Japanese than it was for both Asian- and European-Canadians (see Table 8). As predicted, Asian-Canadians fell in between the other two cultural groups (although they were not significantly different from European-Canadians). In support of the notion that Japanese are chronically less content or satisfied with themselves, Japanese viewed their actual selves as being further away from their ideal selves than did both groups of Canadians.

Insert Table 8 about here

Note that comparing discrepancies, rather than scale totals, protects against possible cultural differences in moderacy response sets (Chen et al., 1995; Stening & Everett, 1984; Zax & Takahashi, 1967). By focusing on the magnitude of the discrepancies between scales, the effects of the moderacy bias are considerably reduced. In fact, to the extent that the moderacy bias anchors Japanese responses more toward the middle of the scale, it seems reasonable to expect the magnitude of discrepancies between their actual and ideal selves to be smaller than those of Canadians. That actual-ideal discrepancies were larger for Japanese than for both groups of Canadians, despite the former’s greater moderacy response tendencies, suggests that the obtained cultural difference might indeed be conservative.

Next, analyses of the other-ideal composite also revealed a significant main effect for culture, $F(2, 376) = 4.37, p < .02$. Post-hoc comparisons revealed that the only difference among the three cultural groups was that the magnitude of the other-ideal discrepancy was significantly smaller for Asian-Canadians than for either Japanese or European-Canadians. That is, of the three cultural groups, Asian-Canadians had the most positive views of the average student. Perhaps this tendency reflects the feelings of Asian-
Canadians (a minority at UBC, representing approximately one third of the student population) towards the European-Canadian majority (although, interestingly, in the classroom where the present study was conducted, Asian-Canadians were the majority). European-Canadians and Japanese held similar views of the average students from their respective universities in terms of the distances from their ideals.

Repeated-measure analyses were conducted between the two discrepancy measures as a means of assessing self-serving biases (SSBs); tendencies to view the self as closer to one's ideals than the average other student can be taken as evidence for self-enhancement. A significant culture $\times$ discrepancy interaction was observed, $F(2, 366) = 5.47, p < .01$. Simple-effects analyses revealed significant SSBs for European-Canadians (i.e., their actual-ideal discrepancies were significantly smaller than their other-ideal discrepancies), $F(1, 82) = 7.13, p < .01$, whereas there were no differences between the magnitude of the actual-ideal and other-ideal discrepancies for either Japanese or Asian-Canadians (both $p$s > .25). Past cross-cultural studies of the false-uniqueness bias (Study 1 of this dissertation; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a) have also revealed significant differences between Japanese and North Americans, however these earlier studies compared participants' estimates of the percentage of the population that was better than them with respect to certain traits. That I obtained a similar pattern (i.e., SSBs for European-Canadians and no biases for Japanese) employing a different measure of SSBs increases our confidence in this cross-cultural difference.

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8 A significant sex $\times$ discrepancy interaction also emerged, $F(1, 366) = 6.32, p < .02$. Simple effects analyses revealed that females tended to show self-effacement by viewing their actual-ideal discrepancies ($M = 1.36$) as slightly larger than their other-ideal discrepancies ($M = 1.31$), whereas males tended to show self-enhancement by viewing their actual-ideal discrepancies ($M = 1.33$) as slightly smaller than their other-ideal discrepancies ($M = 1.40$). However, neither of these tendencies were significant (both $p$s > .15).
Analyses of Actual-Ideal Discrepancies for Individual Traits. To investigate the possibility that some individual traits displayed unique patterns of actual-ideal discrepancies, ANOVAs were conducted between cultural groups for each of the 20 traits. Significant main effects for culture emerged for 8 of the 20 traits (see Table 9). Japanese exhibited significantly larger actual-ideal discrepancies than either European- or Asian-Canadians for 7 traits, and Asian-Canadians exhibited a significantly larger actual-ideal discrepancy than Japanese for 1 trait: happiness. Of the three cultural groups, Japanese displayed the largest actual-ideal discrepancy for 14 of the 20 traits.

Within-Participant Correlations Between Self-Discrepancies, SSBs and Importance

Within-participant correlations were calculated between the magnitude of the actual-ideal discrepancy and the perceived importance of the traits. I was interested to know whether participants tended to view themselves closer to or farther away from their ideal selves for the traits that they viewed as most important for succeeding in their cultures. A correlation coefficient was calculated among the 20 discrepancies and 20 importance scores for each participant, and these correlation coefficients were treated as individual variables (after first converting to Fisher Z scores; see McNemar, 1962) for analyses.

An ANOVA revealed a main effect for culture in the average magnitude of these within-participant correlations between actual-ideal discrepancies and importance, $F(2, 355) = 7.62, p < .001$. Tukey’s comparisons revealed that the only difference among the three groups was that European-Canadians ($r$ importance, discrepancy $= -.10$) and Asian-

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9The reported correlations resulted from r-to-Z-to-r transformations (see McNemar, 1962).
Canadians (r importance, discrepancy = -.06) showed a more negative relation between these two variables than did Japanese (r importance, discrepancy = .04). T-tests were conducted to test whether the average magnitude of the correlations was significantly different from zero. Although the correlations were very small for each cultural group, the powerful nature of this design resulted in the correlations being significant for both European-Canadians, t(77) = -3.13, p < .01, and Asian-Canadians, t(133) = 2.45, p < .02, and marginally significant for Japanese, t(145) = 1.80, p < .08. Both groups of Canadians thus exhibited slight tendencies to view themselves as closer to their ideals as the perceived importance of the traits under question increased. In contrast, Japanese did not exhibit this pattern and, in fact, showed a marginal tendency to view themselves as further away from their ideals alongside an increase in perceived importance. The small magnitudes of the correlations necessitate caution in interpreting these results, but at the very least, the pattern casts doubt on the notion that Japanese strive to view themselves as especially positive in the domains that are most important to them.

Next, within-participant correlations between SSBs (operationalized as other-ideal discrepancy minus actual-ideal discrepancy) and importance ratings were compared among cultures. There were no significant differences among cultures, F(2, 351) = 1.01, n.s. Analyses of the individual correlations revealed that the European-Canadians exhibited a small but significant correlation, r importance, ssb = .08, t(75) = 2.46, p < .02. That is, the more important the trait, the more likely European-Canadians were to see themselves as closer to their ideals than the average student from their universities, although the effect was very small. Neither the Asian-Canadians, r importance, ssb = .03, t < 1, nor the Japanese, r importance, ssb = .03, t(145) = 1.35, ns, exhibited significant correlations.

Relations with Depression

Participants' total scores on Zung's (1965) Self-Report Depression Inventory were compared across cultures by ANOVA. A significant main effect emerged for culture, F(2,
Post-hoc comparisons revealed that European-Canadians reported significantly lower depression ($M = 43.1$, $SD = 9.90$) than either Asian-Canadians ($M = 48.7$, $SD = 9.45$) or Japanese ($M = 51.0$, $SD = 9.60$). Although Asian-Canadians fell between the other two cultural groups, they were not significantly different from Japanese. Again, it is important to note that cross-cultural comparisons of Likert scales are susceptible to moderacy-bias effects so I urge caution in interpreting these results. These findings replicate similar cross-cultural differences in depression found between Americans and Japanese (Atkinson, 1988; Hymes & Akiyama, 1991; Zung, 1969).

Past research on self-discrepancies (Higgins, 1989; Higgins et al., 1985; see also Marsella et al., 1973) has revealed significant positive correlations between actual-ideal self-discrepancies and depression ($rs$ ranging from .5 to .7; see e.g., Higgins, 1987). In the present study, significant correlations emerged between these two variables for each of the three cultural groups, $rs = .53$, .36, and .30 for European-Canadians, Asian-Canadians, and Japanese, respectively. Comparisons of the correlations between cultures revealed that European-Canadians exhibited a significantly more pronounced correlation than Japanese, $t(225) = 2.00$, $p < .05$, with the Asian-Canadians’ coefficient falling nonsignificantly between the other two cultural groups. Hence, although Japanese’ feelings of depression were also related to how far they felt they were from their ideals, this relation was less pronounced than it was for European-Canadians. This smaller relation replicates the findings of past cross-cultural research comparing Japanese-Americans and Caucasian-Americans (Marsella et al., 1973; Yanagida & Marsella, 1978) and is in line with the notion that actual-ideal discrepancies are less distressing for Japanese than they are for European-Canadians.

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10A significant correlation between age and depression was observed for European-Canadians, $r(87) = -.23$, $p < .05$. Controlling for age via an ANCOVA, however, did not affect the magnitude of the cross-cultural difference.
Cultural Differences in the Importance and Ideal Ratings of the Traits

Participants' ratings of the importance of the traits and their ideal ratings of the traits also provide some interesting information. These importance ratings and ideal ratings would appear to reflect the cultural values of the respective groups. Importance ratings reflect what participants believe are important traits for succeeding in their cultures, whereas ideal ratings demonstrate the traits that participants most want to possess. Participants' importance ratings and ideal ratings for the trait "self-confidence" is particularly relevant to this dissertation. Self-confidence is the trait from this study that most closely approximates self-esteem. That is, it reflects on an individual's confidence in his or her abilities. Self-confidence was ranked 2nd out of 20 by European-Canadians, 5th by Asian-Canadians, and 18th by Japanese (see Table 7). Whereas both groups of Canadians viewed self-confidence as one of the most important traits for being successful, Japanese rated it near the bottom. Only honesty and happiness were seen as less important for succeeding in Japanese society.

A similar pattern is noticeable in participants' ratings of their ideal selves. European-Canadians rated self-confidence as the trait that they would most like to possess of the 20 on the list (see Table 10). Asian-Canadians rated it a little bit lower (6th), whereas Japanese rated it at the very bottom. Apparently, Japanese do not wish to be particularly self-confident. This is consistent with my arguments that feeling good about oneself and one's abilities is not consistent with Japanese cultural mandates.

 Insert Table 10 about here

There are also interesting results with respect to the trait happiness. Although happiness was not rated as particularly important for success in any of the three cultural groups (ranked 17th by European-Canadians, 9th by Asian-Canadians, and 19th by Japanese), there were pronounced cultural differences in participants' ratings of the
happiness of their ideal selves. Asian-Canadians rated happiness as the characteristic that they most wanted to possess, European-Canadians rated it 2nd, and Japanese rated it 18th. Ideally, wanting to be happy makes considerable sense in the West. Indeed, it seems to be what many North Americans are striving to achieve (this is nicely represented in Bobby McFerrin's hit pop song, "Don't Worry, Be Happy"). Interestingly, relative to Canadians, apparently Japanese do not wish to be particularly happy. This reflects the habit of hesitance towards happiness described by Japanese psychologists and anthropologists (Benedict, 1946; Lebra, 1976; Minami, 1971).

Discussion

In line with the notion that Japanese cultural experience fosters a greater tendency for people to be dissatisfied with themselves (Doi, 1973), I discovered that Japanese exhibited a larger gap between how they currently view themselves and how they ideally want to be than did either European- or Asian-Canadians. The personal goals to which individuals aspire remain further away for Japanese than they do for Canadians. The present data support the arguments of Kitayama and Markus (Kitayama et al., 1995, in press; Markus et al., in press) that Japanese are more likely to focus on their inadequacies and shortcomings in attempts to better fit in with their groups. I suggest that the tendencies of Japanese to dwell on their inadequacies enable them to focus on improving themselves to attain consensual standards of selfhood and to secure others' approval (Nisbett et al., 1996; Spence, 1985). Continual efforts toward self-improvement aid in maintaining the harmony and deepening the relationships so critical to the interdependent view of self.

In a wide range of previous studies, Japanese have not been found to exhibit the classic Western self-enhancement bias of viewing themselves as better than they really are. The present results suggest that this may be due in part to Japanese being chronically dissatisfied with themselves. In contrast to the tendencies of Westerners to focus on the end stage of being competent, I suggest that Japanese tend to focus on the process of
becoming competent. Such a process of perpetual self-dissatisfaction and self-improvement appears necessary to ensure that the individual is continually adapting her or himself to the needs of the group. The emphasis is on efforts toward achievement rather than on the final product of achievement itself (Holloway, 1988).

The present data also revealed that actual-ideal discrepancies are not as strongly related to depression for Japanese as they are for European-Canadians. The strength of such a relation may also be a cultural construction (see also Marsella et al., 1973; Yanagida & Marsella, 1978). Viewing oneself as distant from the type of person one wants to be appears to have threatening overtones for Westerners. In fact, the magnitude of the actual-ideal discrepancy may represent, in general terms, the distance that one is from the culturally-defined Western self in terms of independence, competence, and self-sufficiency.

In contrast, the Japanese cultural emphasis is on seeing oneself as inadequate (e.g., as further away from one's ideal). With this as a backdrop, actual-ideal discrepancies should not bring with them as much of a threatening sting. To the contrary, this kind of self-relevant information is important for Japanese to work towards securing the group's approval, thereby maintaining their interdependence with others (Kitayama & Karasawa, 1995; Kitayama et al., in press). It is important to note, however, that although the obtained relation between depression and actual-ideal discrepancy was smaller for Japanese than for European Canadians, the Japanese correlation was still significant, suggesting that viewing oneself as less than ideal seems to hold some negative consequences for Japanese as well.

That the present study employed traits that a pretest indicated were important to Japanese and European-Canadians increases the validity of the obtained cultural differences. I ruled out the possibility that Japanese evaluated themselves less positively or self-enhanced less than North Americans because they did not value the traits under consideration. Even for those traits which Japanese viewed as most important for
succeeding in their cultures, they tended to view themselves as more distant from their ideals than did both groups of Canadians. This finding presents strong evidence to corroborate the notion that self-enhancing motivations are not characteristic of Japanese.

The possibility remains, however, that despite these efforts, I still missed some traits that are viewed as especially important to Japanese. Yet the within-participant correlations between importance and actual-ideal discrepancies indicated that Japanese did not view themselves as closer to their ideals when the traits were more important, and this was in contrast to a slight (but statistically significant) tendency for both groups of Canadians to do so. This suggests that even if I had included other important cultural traits for Japanese, they would still show the same tendency to see themselves as further away from their ideals than Canadians.

Furthermore, the finding that, for the most part, Asian-Canadians exhibited results intermediate to European-Canadians and Japanese underscores the role of culture in actual-ideal self-discrepancies. The gap between the type of person one feels one is and the type one wants to be appears to decrease with exposure to Western culture (see also Heine & Lehman, 1996b; Kitayama et al., in press). This finding suggests that Western culture may provide a relatively greater emphasis to view oneself as complete, in order to approximate the cultural ideals of adequacy, competence, and self-sufficiency (Heine & Lehman, 1995a; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Markus et al., in press). In contrast, Japanese and perhaps people from other Asian cultures focus on their inadequacies that must be corrected in order for individuals to work towards becoming complete.

Limitations and Future Directions

My suggestion has been that the obtained cultural differences in actual-ideal self-discrepancies represent evidence that Japanese are less satisfied with themselves than are Canadians. I view this greater tendency on the part of Japanese to identify their inadequacies as a necessary step in correcting these inadequacies for attaining the consensual standards of selfhood (Kitayama et al., 1995, in press; Markus et al., in press).
However, the data in Study 3 address only the first step (i.e., dissatisfaction with oneself) of this self-improvement process. They do not address the correction phase.

The link between self-dissatisfaction and the need for self-improvement can be profitably examined in future research. For example, it will be important to demonstrate that Japanese not only show greater actual-ideal discrepancies in their questionnaire responses, but they also show self-improving behaviors in the lab. Efforts to create parallel situations in laboratory settings, where such behaviors can be measured, would go a long way towards advancing our understanding of cultural differences in self-improving motivations. The self-improvement hypothesis would gain plausibility, for example, if Japanese could be shown to persist longer than North Americans in the learning of a novel task or if Japanese reached higher standards of performance before becoming satisfied with their performance. Such future research efforts have the potential to delineate the distinction between self-enhancing motivations of North Americans and self-improving motivations of Japanese.

**STUDIES 4 and 5**

Cross-cultural questionnaire studies are forever challenged by the issue of response biases (e.g., Smith & Bond, 1993). It is difficult to determine whether obtained cultural differences reflect true differences in the constructs under study or merely differences in response styles. As discussed earlier, cultural differences have previously been found with respect to a moderacy response bias. Relative to North Americans, questionnaire responses by Asians tend to be closer to the midpoint of Likert scales (Chen et al., 1995; Stening & Everett, 1984; Zax & Takahashi, 1967). Hence, cultural differences in questionnaire studies in which Asian responses are closer to the midpoint of the scale than North Americans must be interpreted with caution.

Considerable discussion also has centered around whether more "modest" cultures, such as Japanese, are exhibiting modest response styles in their questionnaire responses (Heine & Lehman, 1995a, 1995b; Kitayama et al., in press; Markus &
Kitayama, 1991b). Indeed, one characteristic frequently attributed to Japanese is the great distinction they make between their public presentation (tatemae) and their private feelings (honne; Bachnik, 1994; Doi, 1986; Johnson, 1993; Lebra, 1976). It is conceivable that this distinction is such an integral part of Japanese life that individuals have difficulty expressing their private thoughts, even anonymously in questionnaires. That is, perhaps privately Japanese are just as self-enhancing as North Americans, but are reluctant to express such thoughts in psychological studies because of social concerns regarding modesty. Although the available evidence suggests that Japanese (and Asians more generally) are not more prone than North Americans to disguise their responses on anonymous questionnaires (Diener et al., 1995b; Heine & Lehman, 1995b; Kitayama et al., in press; Lai & Linden, 1993), clearly it would be more compelling for cross-cultural researchers to demonstrate parallel cultural differences in the behavioral realm as well.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I reviewed evidence that Japanese do not possess particularly positive self-views or enhance the positivity of their self-views. I also argued that it seems reasonable to expect that Japanese would not be motivated to rid themselves of negative thoughts about themselves because such information would be highly instrumental for fulfilling their cultural imperative. This rationale suggests that Japanese would not exhibit any of the variety of self-protective ways of thinking previously demonstrated in North American subjects. However, I noted that there is currently a void in the cross-cultural literature with respect to studies demonstrating tendencies to maintain overall positive self-evaluations. Studies 4 and 5 represent initial attempts to examine whether Japanese indeed exhibit fewer self-protective ways of thinking than North Americans.

**STUDY 4**

Social comparison theory maintains that because many psychological characteristics cannot easily be evaluated against an objective standard, people instead evaluate themselves by making comparisons with similar others in their social environment...
(Collins, 1996; Festinger, 1954; Wills, 1981; Wood, 1989). That is, people come to understand themselves by assessing their abilities and characteristics relative to others. Making comparisons with others who are worse than oneself (downward comparisons) serves to enhance the self by casting the individual in a favorable light (Taylor, 1989; Taylor et al., 1992; Taylor, Wood, & Lichtman, 1983; Wills, 1981). In contrast, although comparisons with others who are better than oneself can provide valuable information for accurately evaluating oneself (Festinger, 1954; Wood, 1989), upward comparisons can also amount to a threat to the individual’s self-integrity by highlighting the individual’s relative inferiorities (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Laprelle, 1985; Taylor et al., 1992; Wills, 1981). In sum, information reflecting how an individual is better than others tends to enhance self-esteem, whereas information indicating how others are better than the individual tends to threaten self-esteem (for a description of additional complexities with respect to these relations see Collins, 1996; Taylor & Lobel, 1989).

The basic premise in this dissertation is that Western culture encourages individuals to view themselves positively, whereas Japanese culture encourages people to identify their shortcomings such that they can make efforts towards improving themselves. This suggests that North Americans should be particularly accepting of information indicating that they are better than others, and reluctant to believe information that presents them as worse than others. Japanese, in contrast, would not be expected to show this preference for self-enhancing information. In fact, given the importance of identifying and working towards eliminating negative information about themselves (Kitayama et al., in press; Markus et al., 1996), Japanese might be expected to accept negative over positive self-relevant information.

Study 4 examines the above hypothesis in a cross-cultural laboratory study of social comparison. The study was closely modeled after a similar study by Takata (1987, 1992), which in turn, was modeled after a study by Schwartz and Smith (1975). Schwartz and Smith originally were interested to see if people had the implicit understanding of a t-
test when they made social comparisons about ability. That is, they examined whether
individuals’ inferences about their abilities relative to comparison others were influenced
by the effect size between, and the variance within, their respective performances.
Schwartz and Smith had participants first complete a reaction time task, which consisted
of a large number of trials. Then they were shown bogus feedback of their performance
on the task, as well as the ostensible performance of the previous participant. They were
asked to compare their performance with the previous participant, one trial at a time, and
then decide which person, they or the previous participant, had scored better on the task,
**after viewing as few trials as possible.** The results indicated that participants tended to
view more trials before making their decision as the effect size was reduced, or as the
variance increased. In effect, participants were calculating intuitive t-tests. Likewise,
their confidence in their decision was lower when the effect size was smaller or when the
variance was larger. Schwartz and Smith additionally observed that participants were
**significantly more confident** in their decisions when their scores were higher than the
previous participants’ than when they were lower, although they did not differ in the
number of trials that they viewed. That is, the participants self-enhanced with respect to
their confidence in their decisions.

Takata (1987, 1992) attempted to replicate this study in Japan. He found the same
effect of variance and effect size in influencing the number of trials viewed and
participants’ confidence in their decisions. However, Takata identified a pronounced self-
effacing effect for Japanese. That is, participants viewed significantly more trials before
deciding that they had outperformed the previous participant (success condition) than they
did when deciding that the previous participant had outperformed them (failure condition).
Participants also were significantly less confident in their decisions in the success condition
than in the failure condition. In an attempt to rule out the confounding explanation that
participants feared they might meet the previous participant, Takata conducted a second
study where the comparison object was a computer programmed to perform like the
typical undergraduate student. Participants still exhibited a highly pronounced self-effacing tendency. Japanese were thus more easily convinced that they had performed worse than average than they were that they had performed better than average.

Takata's findings are highly suggestive of a self-critical orientation of Japanese, although the absence of a cross-cultural design makes it impossible to rule out the possibility that North Americans may have behaved in a similar way using his particular experimental design. The present study sought to compare directly the hypothesized self-effacing and self-enhancing orientations of Japanese and Canadians, respectively, employing Takata's experimental design.

A few modifications were made to Takata's original methodology. First, to make the ability at hand seem important to participants, they were told that the experimental task was an intelligence test. Participants in Takata's study were not told anything about the nature of the task, thereby allowing the possibility that they simply did not care much whether they scored better or worse than average. Second, to make the self-enhancement/effectance "signal" as pronounced as possible, I reduced the "noise" of the actual numbers by which participants made their decisions. That is, I kept the effect size small and the variance large between the two sets of numbers, making it more difficult to discern which set was higher. Hence, participants' decisions should be less influenced by the actual numbers that they see, and consequently be more influenced by their self-enhancing/effectance motivations. Takata (1987, 1992) demonstrated that Japanese were the most self-effacing in this condition. Third, because Study 4 was conducted on computers, using the Micro-Experimental Laboratory (MEL) programming interface (1990), I was able to add an additional dependent measure: the time that participants spent viewing the trials. The rationale was that this variable also measures the difficulty with which participants arrive at their decisions.
Method

Participants
Canadian participants were introductory psychology students enrolled at UBC. Participants were contacted through the subject pool, and because I wanted to compare a Western sample with the Japanese, participants were selected on the basis of those having names that seemed to be of European origin. Sixty-five participants were run through the experiment, but the data of 4 were eliminated because they expressed suspicion regarding the deception, leaving a total of 61 participants (34 females and 27 males) in the final sample. Japanese participants were introductory psychology students at Nara University in Nara, Japan. Sixty-four participants completed the experiment, but the data of 1 were eliminated because of a computer malfunction. None of the Japanese participants expressed any suspicion regarding the deception. This resulted in a total of 63 participants (31 females and 32 males) in the final sample. The Japanese data were collected by Toshitake Takata.

Procedure
Participants were brought into the lab individually to take part in an experiment entitled “Cognition and Judgment,” which they were told consisted of two phases. The first phase was called the “Integrative Cognitive Capacity” (ICC) test, which participants were told was a new kind of intelligence test. Participants saw grids of colored shapes that were presented on the computer and were asked to answer as quickly and accurately as possible questions regarding the numbers of certain shapes presented. Participants were told that their speed and accuracy in answering these questions reflected how well they could integrate and manipulate information, a skill that they were told is critically

11All 4 participants reported that they had previously been deceived in past social psychological studies.
linked to intelligence. An example question was “How many more yellow stars are there than red circles?” There were 20 such questions in the ICC test.

The second phase of the study was called the “Judgment Under Uncertainty” task. Participants were told that they were to make a decision with only limited amount of information. The decision that they were to make was whether their performance on the ICC test was better or worse than that of a computer, which participants were told was programmed to function the same as the average UBC (Nara University) student. They were presented with their ostensible scores for each trial of the ICC test with the ostensible scores of the average student, one trial at a time. Participants were told that they had to view at least 5 trials and no more than 20 trials (which is the total number of trials in the ICC test) before indicating that they had enough information to make their decision. The computer randomly assigned participants to either a success or failure condition, and the experimenter was blind to this assignment. All participants were presented with the same scores, with the difference between the two conditions being the positioning of the scores: In the success condition, the higher scores were under the participant’s ID number; in the failure condition, the higher scores were under the Average Student’s column. After indicating that they had seen enough information to make their decision, participants decided who performed better, themselves or the average student. This decision served as the independent measure.\footnote{Because I am more interested in how participants' perceptions of their performance, relative to average, influences their decisions than I am in how their actual (bogus) performance influences their decisions, I treated their decision as the independent variable. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in a later section.}

Next, participants were asked to

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\footnote{In addition, I conducted a pre-test employing both Canadians and Japanese to assess the feasibility of the study. This pre-test showed that significantly more Canadian participants made incorrect decisions when the computer assigned them to the failure group compared to the success group. To ensure that the sizes of the two Canadian samples, based on their decisions, were similar, the computer was programmed to randomly assign more Canadian participants to the failure condition than the success condition. Thirty-nine Canadian participants were thus assigned to view failure scores, and 22 were assigned to view success scores. The pretest did not reveal a tendency for}
indicate how confident they were that they had made the correct decision on a scale from 1 (Not at all Confident) to 9 (Extremely Confident). After completing the “Judgment under Uncertainty Phase,” participants completed a brief questionnaire. They were asked to estimate the average ICC scores of both themselves and the average student. This item served as a manipulation check to ensure that participants understood the feedback that they saw. Then, the participants were asked to estimate the percentage of students from their university whom they thought could perform better than they did on the ICC test. Some demographic questions followed. The dependent measures in the study were the percentage of errors participants made in their decisions, their confidence in their decisions, the number of trials participants viewed before making their decisions (range 5 to 20 trials), the amount of time participants spent viewing those trials (measured in milliseconds by the MEL program), and their estimates of the percentage of their classmates who could outperform them on the ICC test. After completing the questionnaire participants were probed for suspicion and thoroughly debriefed. All materials and computer instructions were originally produced in English and then back-translated into Japanese using the same methodology as in Studies 1, 2, and 3.

Results

Comparability of the Samples

The two samples did not differ with respect to age, $F < 1$, nor in the proportions of sex, $\chi^2(1, N = 124) < 1$. Sex was included as a factor in all analyses, but for the sake of brevity, sex differences are reported only when they reach conventional levels of significance.

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Japanese to make more errors in one condition than the other so the computer was programmed to randomly assign the same number of Japanese participants to both success and failure conditions. Thirty-two Japanese participants were assigned to view failure scores and 31 were assigned to view success scores.
My procedure of selecting participants on the basis of their last name had some success in terms of restricting the Canadian sample to those of Western ancestry. Fifty of the UBC participants declared themselves to be of European ancestry, 5 of other nonAsian ancestry (Caribbean, Middle Eastern, and Latin American), and 4 of mixed ancestry; and 2 did not answer the ethnicity question. The data from all participants were included in the study.

Manipulation Check

Comparisons were made between participants' estimates of their own versus the average student's average ICC scores. This item served as a manipulation check to ensure that participants understood the decision that they were asked to make. Four Canadians and 5 Japanese made estimates that were inconsistent with the decisions they made on the computer (e.g., they estimated their average ICC score to be higher than that of the average student's, but on the computer they decided that they had been outperformed by the average student). Because it is unclear whether these participants fully understood the instructions of Phase 2, their results were not included in the final analyses.

Analyses of Self-Enhancement/Effacement

First, comparisons were made between the percentage of participants who made errors in their decisions between cultures and conditions. Twenty-two percent of Canadians (8 of 37) assigned to the failure condition mistakenly concluded that they had scored higher than the average student, whereas only 5% (1 of 20) assigned to the success condition incorrectly decided that they were worse than the average student. These proportions are marginally different, $\chi^2(1, N = 57) = 2.85, p < .10$. These errors can be seen to indicate a slight self-enhancing tendency on the part of Canadians. The same analyses of errors made by Japanese, in contrast, revealed a significant self-effacing tendency, $\chi^2(1, N = 58) = 5.99, p < .02$. A significantly larger percentage of Japanese assigned to the success condition (46.4%; 13 of 28) made incorrect decisions than did those assigned to the failure condition (16.7%; 5 of 30). Hence, Canadians were
somewhat reluctant to conclude that they were worse than average, whereas Japanese were reluctant to conclude that they were better than average, even when the numbers that they viewed in Phase 2 indicated otherwise. Interestingly, Japanese participants made marginally more total errors (31.0%; 18 of 58) than did Canadians (15.7%; 9 of 57; \( \chi^2[1, N = 115] = 3.70, p < .06 \)). It is unclear why this was the case.

The analyses for the remaining dependent variables for this study (viz., confidence in one’s decision, the numbers of trials viewed to make that decision, the amount of time spent viewing those trials, and the percentage estimates of university students better than oneself) are complicated by the fact that many participants made errors in their decisions. I first conducted analyses including the data of all participants regardless of whether they had decided correctly or incorrectly. ANOVAs of Canadian participants’ confidence in their decisions revealed that those who decided they outperformed the average student (success decision) were significantly more confident than those who concluded that the average student outperformed them (failure decision), \( F(1, 53) = 10.97, p < .01 \) (See Table 11). This successfully demonstrated the self-enhancing tendency predicted for Canadians.

\[ \text{Insert Table 11 about here} \]

Next, analyses of the numbers of trials that Canadians viewed in Phase 2 showed that those who made failure decisions viewed slightly more trials than did those who made success decisions, but this difference was not significant, \( F(1, 53) = 1.22, \text{n.s.} \). Analyses of the amount of time that Canadians spent viewing the trials in Phase 2, however, did reveal a significant self-enhancing effect, \( F(1, 53) = 4.19, p < .05 \): Those who made success decisions viewed the trials for a significantly shorter period of time than did those who concluded they scored worse than average. Interestingly, Canadians’ percentage estimates revealed that regardless of participants’ decisions, both groups estimated that less than
50% of students from their university could perform better than they on the ICC test, \( t(29) = 3.69 \) and \( t(26) = 4.22 \), for failure and success decisions, respectively, both \( ps < .001 \). Even when Canadians concluded that they had just performed worse than average, they still displayed a clear self-enhancing tendency to believe that they could outperform most of the students from their university. The two decision groups did not differ in their estimates, \( F < 1 \). Taken together, these results indicate that Canadians had a relatively difficult time believing that they performed worse than average: Those who made failure decisions were less confident in their decisions and viewed the trials for a longer time before making their decisions than those who made success decisions, and those who made failure decisions continued to believe that they could outperform most other people.

Analyses for the Japanese group did not replicate the significant self-effacing pattern obtained by Takata (1987, 1992). Japanese who made success decisions were slightly more confident in their decisions than were those who made failure decisions, \( F(1, 54) = 2.75, p < .11 \). That is, Japanese, like Canadians, displayed self-enhancing tendencies in the confidence of their decisions, although the effect was less pronounced. There were no significant differences for Japanese between the two decision groups for either of the two behavioral measures (number of trials viewed and time spent viewing trials) both \( Fs < 1 \). Japanese participants' percentage estimates were responsive to the feedback they received as those who made failure decisions estimated that a significantly greater percentage of the population could outperform them than did those who made success decisions, \( F(1, 53) = 5.60, p < .03 \). The estimates of those who made failure decisions were marginally greater than 50%, \( t(36) = 1.87, p < .07 \), whereas those of the success condition did not differ significantly from 50%, \( t(19) = -1.52, n.s. \).

Analyses of culture \( \times \) decision interactions also failed to demonstrate the anticipated significant interactions for confidence,\(^{13} \( F < 1 \), the number of trials viewed, \( F <

\(^{13}\)A significant main effect for sex emerged here, \( F(1, 107) = 4.42, p < .04 \). Males were significantly more confident (\( M = 6.30 \)) than females (\( M = 5.74 \)).
1, the amount of time spent viewing the trials, $F(1, 107) = 2.14$, and the estimates of the percentage of university students who could perform better on the ICC test, $F(1, 106) = 1.70$, all $p_s > .14$. A significant main effect for culture emerged for the percentage estimates, $F(1, 106) = 19.23$, $p < .001$, indicating that on average Canadians estimated that a smaller percentage of fellow university students could outperform them than Japanese. All in all, from initial inspection the results of Study 4 do not appear to support Takata’s earlier findings.

However, it is important to note that including all participants who decided that they succeeded or failed also includes those who made errors in their decisions. It is plausible that those individuals who made incorrect decisions may have been responding to the feedback differently than those who correctly interpreted it. Table 12 presents the data for participants separately for those who made correct and incorrect decisions.

The results of subjects who made incorrect decisions are presented in the left-hand side of Table 12. First, examining the results of those Japanese who incorrectly concluded that they performed worse than average, we can see that their confidence in the accuracy of their decisions is much lower and the number of trials they viewed is much higher than it is for any of the other conditions. It appears that these individuals were particularly resistant to concluding that they did better than average: They viewed the largest number of trials of all groups, and after seeing all these data, which suggested that they were better than average, they still concluded (although not very confidently) that they were worse than average. Hence, it would seem that this group may have strong self-effacing motivations. However, including their results with those who made correct decisions clearly would confound the results. It seems reasonable to reconduct analyses including only those who made correct decisions, although this reduces the Canadian sample by
16% and the Japanese sample by 31%, resulting in a considerable loss of power. This loss in power is further exacerbated by the fact that this approach removes those Japanese who were self-effacing in the errors they made and those Canadians who made self-enhancing errors—participants who would appear to be thinking in ways consistent with my basic hypothesis. In Takata's (1987, 1992) original study participants' actual decisions were disregarded, and he instead focused only on the condition to which participants were originally assigned. Given that the decisions in the present study were quite difficult for participants to make, I felt that it was better to focus on how the participants interpreted the feedback rather than on the actual nature of the feedback that they received.\textsuperscript{14}

First, re-examining the Canadian results, the right-hand side of Table 12 reveals that with the reduced sample, Canadians who made success decisions were still significantly more confident than those who made failure decisions, $F(1, 44) = 13.44$, $p < .001$. Canadians who made success decisions viewed slightly fewer trials than those who made failure decisions, but this trend again did not approach significance, $F < 1$. The significant difference in the amount of time spent viewing the trials that was evident with the whole Canadian sample was no longer evident with the reduced sample. Those who made failure decisions viewed the trials for a nominally longer period of time than those who made success decisions, but this difference was not significant, $F(1, 44) = 1.31$, n.s. The reduction of the sample size did not affect the findings with respect to participants' estimates of the percentage of university students better than they. Regardless of their decision, Canadians still tended to assume that they could outperform most students from

\textsuperscript{14}Analyses also were conducted employing the participants' condition as the independent variable as was done by Takata (1987, 1992). The pattern of results differed from those of the reduced sample of participants who made correct decisions in only one respect: Japanese were slightly more confident in the failure condition ($M = 5.58$) than in the success condition ($M = 4.94$), $F(1, 59) = 2.38$, $p < .13$, and this resulted in a significant culture $\times$ condition interaction, $F(1, 116) = 9.17$, $p < .01$. This self-effacing pattern in the confidence of Japanese participants' decisions is consistent with Takata's previous results.
their university. Hence, the only noticeable difference in the results that appeared by analyzing the reduced Canadian sample was that there was no longer a significant difference between conditions in the amount of time spent viewing trials.

The data for the reduced Japanese sample, however, revealed considerably different results from that of the entire sample. First, the slight self-enhancing effect for their confidence in their decisions that was evident in the entire sample was considerably smaller, $F < 1$, although those in the success condition were still slightly more confident than those in the failure condition. Takata's (1987, 1992) finding that Japanese were significantly less confident about their decisions when in the success condition contradicts this observation. Next, analyses of the reduced Japanese sample revealed a significant self-effacing tendency in the number of trials that participants viewed before making their decisions. Those who decided that they performed better than average viewed significantly more trials than those who decided they performed worse than average, $F(1, 36) = 4.36, p < .05$. This result replicates Takata's earlier demonstration of a behavioral self-effacing tendency among Japanese. However, the analyses of the time spent viewing trials did not reveal a significant difference between conditions, $F < 1$. Last, Japanese participants' percentage estimates were still slightly responsive to the decisions they made, although the effect in the reduced sample was only marginally significant, $F(1, 35) = 3.21, p < .09$. Neither groups' estimates deviated significantly from 50%, $t(23) = 1.47$, and $t < 1$, for failure and success decisions, respectively, both ns.

Analyses for culture x decision interactions revealed a slight effect for confidence, $F(1, 80) = 2.38, p < .13$, which did not reach significance. This trend is consistent with Canadians showing a slightly larger self-enhancing tendency than Japanese

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15 Japanese males ($M = 5.27$) were significantly more confident in their decisions than Japanese females ($M = 6.29$), $F(1, 36) = 4.80, p < .04$.

16 A significant main effect for sex again emerged, $F(1, 80) = 8.19, p < .01$. Here too, males were significantly more confident in their decisions ($M = 6.60$) than were females ($M = 5.84$).
in their confidence in their decisions. A significant culture \times decision interaction emerged with respect to the number of trials viewed, $F(1, 80) = 5.10, p < .03$. Specifically, Japanese were significantly more self-effacing in terms of this variable than were Canadians. No interaction was found with respect to the time spent viewing trials, nor in the percentage estimates, $F < 1$ and $F(1, 79) = 1.59$, respectively, both n.s. Again a main effect of culture emerged in the percentage estimates, indicating that Canadians estimated that fewer people could score better than them on the ICC test than did Japanese, $F(1, 79) = 17.30, p < .001$.

In sum, the results varied considerably depending on whether those who made incorrect decisions were included in the analyses or not. Removing those who made incorrect decisions resulted in significant self-enhancement for Canadians with respect to their confidence and their percentage estimates, and significant self-effacement for Japanese in terms of the numbers of trials they viewed. Analyses of none of the other variables revealed tendencies toward self-enhancement nor self-effacement in either culture.

**Discussion**

Although the data of Study 4 are somewhat inconsistent and difficult to interpret, I believe a general pattern can be gleaned from the results. First, the Canadian data provide some evidence that Canadians were self-enhancing and no evidence to suggest that they were self-effacing. Specifically, compared to those who decided they performed worse than average, Canadians who concluded that they performed better than average made marginally more errors in their decisions, were significantly more confident in their decisions, and, when the data from those who made incorrect decisions were included, viewed the trials for significantly shorter. Moreover, Canadians who decided that they scored worse than average still believed they could outperform most other university students on the ICC test. Taken together, Canadians appeared to be quite reluctant to accept that they had performed worse than average.
Overall the Japanese results provided some evidence for self-effacement. Japanese who made success decisions made significantly fewer errors and viewed significantly more trials than those who concluded that they performed worse than average. Japanese were also somewhat responsive to the feedback they received as indicated by their estimates of the percentage of their classmates who could outperform them on the ICC test. Taken together, Japanese were not hesitant to conclude that they performed worse than average and were somewhat reluctant to conclude that they performed better than average.

Study 4 successfully replicated Takata's (1987, 1992) finding of a self-effacing behavioral tendency for Japanese in terms of the number of trials that they viewed in order to make their decisions. This provides evidence that Japanese do not merely publicly report that they are no better than average—privately they appear to believe it as well. This finding is consistent with the contention of Kitayama and Markus (Kitayama et al., in press; Markus et al., in press) that Japanese adopt a self-critical attitude and learn to be particularly sensitive to negative information about themselves. Unlike Canadians, Japanese did not demonstrate self-protective behaviors in trying to deny the possibility that they are worse than average. In sum, Study 4 provides some support for the notion that Japanese do not strive to maintain a positive self-view.

Limitations and Future Directions

Given the relatively small N in Study 4, particularly for the analyses that excluded the large number of participants who made incorrect decisions, caution should be exercised in interpreting the results. Moreover, the considerable variance in participants' responses to the feedback in Phase 2 and the large percentage of participants who made errors suggests that many found the task in Phase 2 quite difficult. It seems that future efforts would be better served by employing an experimental paradigm that did not involve such a challenging task. My colleagues and I are currently exploring various possible experimental designs with which to follow up Study 4.
Furthermore, although Study 4 provided some evidence consistent with the notion that Japanese do not employ self-protective ways of thinking, these findings should be interpreted with respect to the manipulation used in Study 4. That is, participants were led to believe that they were either more or less intelligent than the average student from their university. It is possible that being intelligent is a more desirable trait for those with independent as compared to interdependent selves (see Table 10), and hence Japanese in Study 4 may not have experienced as much threat to their self-worth as did Canadians. Future efforts should include manipulations that serve as "interdependent threats" to the self. I will return to this point in the discussion of Study 5.

**STUDY 5**

Study 5, an investigation of self-affirmation and dissonance reduction, represents a second attempt to search for differences in self-protective ways of thinking between Japanese and North Americans. Dissonance reduction is perhaps the most researched self-protective way of thinking in social psychology, being the subject of well over 1000 studies (Cooper & Fazio, 1984). However, we still know very little about its cultural boundaries.

Since its original proposition by Festinger in 1957, dissonance theory has been extensively refined and revised—the most notable shift in perspective being the nature of the thoughts that constitute dissonance. Festinger contended that cognitive dissonance is the uncomfortable inconsistency between two or more elements, typically between an individual's attitudes and behaviors. Theoretical revisions have led to an ego-based view of dissonance, in which the disturbing inconsistency is seen to lie between the individual's positive view of him or herself and the cognition that he or she has done something potentially foolish or bad (see e.g., Aronson, 1968; Greenwald & Ronis, 1978; Thibodeau & Aronson, 1992). By changing their original attitudes, individuals can make their behavior appear more in line with what would be expected from competent and adequate people, thereby reducing or eliminating the distressing dissonance.
Relatively few studies have examined whether dissonance reduction exists at comparable levels in nonwestern cultures. In fact, some authors (e.g., Hiniker, 1969; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b) have contended that individuals from some cultures might not experience dissonance at all. For example, to the extent that dissonance casts the self in a negative light, it would seem that Japanese would feel less of a need to counter such threats to their self-integrity than would North Americans. In the present research, I investigated whether such cultural differences in dissonance reduction could be empirically demonstrated.

Self-affirmation theory of dissonance

Research by Steele and his colleagues on self-affirmation (Spencer, Josephs, & Steele, 1993; Steele, 1988; 1990; Steele & Liu, 1983; Steele, Spencer, & Lynch, 1993) has significantly advanced the ego-based view of dissonance. Self-affirmation theory proposes the existence of a self-system that serves to maintain a global image of self-integrity through frequent explanations and rationalizations to the self. This self-affirming, image-maintaining process is activated when an individual encounters information that threatens his or her positive view of self, and it is carried out until the inconsistencies are resolved and the individual's sense of overall adaptive and moral adequacy is restored. When an individual realizes, for example, that he or she has undertaken an action or made a decision dissonant from what would be expected of a good and competent person, the self-system is activated and runs through its course until the threatening dissonance is rationalized.

Because the goal of this self-system is to maintain the perception of global self-integrity, individuals do not have to dismiss every self-image threat that they encounter. Rather the self-system is flexible such that affirmations of completely unrelated aspects of the self are able to restore an individual's overall sense of adequacy (Steele, 1988). Threats to the self, then, may be acknowledged provided that one has access to other positive information about the self to restore one's integrity. For example, the photograph
on a salesperson's desk of his loving family can heal the wound caused by his boss's insults, or the sting accompanying a rejected manuscript can be mollified by beating one's arch-rival in a tennis match. In short, a positive thought about oneself seems able to ameliorate other unrelated threats to the self.

Steele (1988) contends that the reason dissonance reduction is so clearly observable in the laboratory is that participants are given only one means to respond to the self-image threat aroused by the experimental task: to directly reduce the dissonance. If other avenues to restore their integrity are made available to participants, self-affirmation theory maintains that the dissonance would not need to be countered directly. That is, affirmations of the self unrelated to the dissonance task could effectively "shut off" the dissonance-reducing tactics that lie at the heart of dissonance theory.

Steele and his colleagues have garnered considerable empirical support for self-affirmation theory. For example, Steele and Liu (1983) demonstrated that dissonance-reducing attitudinal change in a standard forced-compliance paradigm can be eliminated by the completion of a value scale consistent with participants' dominant value orientations. They reasoned that responding to the value scale affirmed important aspects of the participants' selves and hence allowed them to restore their self-integrity without addressing the specific threat of the dissonance task. In contrast, completion of the value scale for participants with different value orientations did not serve any self-affirming function for them and thus had no effect on their attitude change. The completion of relevant value scales has also been shown to eliminate self-image threats associated with unfavorable social comparisons (Tesser & Cornell, 1991).

Steele and his colleagues have obtained similar results using Brehm's (1956) "free-choice" dissonance paradigm. In this paradigm, participants are given a choice between two closely evaluated alternatives, which they rate both before and after their choice. Brehm argued that the positive features of the nonchosen alternative and the negative features of the chosen alternative are dissonant with the participant's choice. Typically,
participants rationalize their decision by increasing their postchoice rating of their chosen alternative and/or decreasing their postchoice rating of their nonchosen alternative. Steele (1988) contended that this behavior, termed "spreading the alternatives," occurs because participants are loath to accept the possibility that they have made a poor decision. Such acceptance would threaten their subjective perception of overall competence. Instead, participants are motivated to affirm themselves by reassessing their decision in ways that make it appear more sound. As in forced-compliance tasks, this rationalizing behavior can be eliminated by providing participants with a different means to affirm themselves. Steele and colleagues have been able to shut off the spread of alternatives by giving participants positive personality feedback (Steele et al., 1993) or, remarkably, by allowing science majors to wear a coveted lab coat (Steele, 1990). Participants rationalize their decisions only when they have no other clear means available to view themselves positively.

Steele and colleagues also propose that individual differences exist for self-affirmation (Spencer et al., 1993; Steele et al., 1993). They argue that the more positive one's general self-view, the more easily one will be able to recruit positive information about oneself to maintain a global sense of adequacy. Therefore, people with high self-esteem should be more resilient to specific self-image threats than those with low self-esteem. Persons with high self-esteem have greater access to self-affirming resources and therefore do not need to rationalize threatening information (such as that encountered in dissonance tasks) as much as those with low self-esteem. In support of this, Steele et al. (1993) demonstrated that high self-esteem participants showed less rationalization of their decisions in a free-choice task than did low self-esteem participants, particularly when participants' attention had just been focused on their characterological resources by completing a self-esteem scale.
Cognitive Dissonance and the Japanese

The four decades of research on cognitive dissonance has demonstrated its robustness as a phenomenon. However, because the vast majority of these studies have been conducted in North America it is difficult to ascertain whether similar results would obtain with non-Western samples, particularly Japanese. Indeed, there are two elements of cognitive dissonance that appear at odds with what is currently understood about the Japanese self.

First, and most relevant to this dissertation, is the notion that Japanese do not strive to maintain positive self-views. Instead, as I have argued throughout this thesis, Japanese are motivated to identify negative aspects of themselves and work towards correcting these (Kitayama et al., in press). Thoughts, arising from standard dissonance tasks, that one may have done something foolish would seem to serve as identifying potentially negative aspects of the self. The self-improving orientation of Japanese suggests that they should not try to rid themselves of the influence of such negative information—in contrast, this may serve as useful information for Japanese to focus on for improving themselves. Dissonance reduction, then, would not seem to aid self-improving goals and is thus less likely to be observed with Japanese.

A second element of dissonance theory inconsistent with Japanese is that their behavior tends to be governed by situational constraints and obligations, and consequently, behavior is not typically viewed as an accurate reflection of the individual’s thoughts and attitudes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Miller, 1984; Shweder & Bourne, 1984). Hence, if a Japanese individual behaves in a way inconsistent with his or her attitudes, or makes a potentially foolish decision, it is less likely to be seen as diagnostic of the actor than it would be for North Americans. Such an event should not be particularly threatening for Japanese. This second element also suggests that Japanese should not demonstrate as much dissonance reduction as North Americans.
The strongest test of the above hypothesis would involve a situation in which dissonance reduction is most likely to be observed. Steele et al. (1993) argued that dissonance reduction should be especially pronounced when an individual (North American) confronts an additional threat to the self, such as receiving negative personality feedback. Under these circumstances the need to restore self-integrity is compounded and the motivation to reduce dissonance is exacerbated. To the extent that Japanese do not show dissonance reduction even under circumstances most conducive to eliciting it would strongly suggest that this self-affirming behavior is not part of their motivational repertoire.

Cultural theory therefore predicts that in traditional dissonance paradigms, North Americans should show greater dissonance reduction than Japanese, particularly when they receive feedback that is threatening to their self-images. Potentially running counter to this hypothesis is the finding from self-affirmation studies that people with low self-esteem (whom have fewer self-affirmational resources) exhibit greater dissonance reduction than do people with high self-esteem (Spence et al., 1993; Steele et al., 1993). That cross-cultural studies have consistently shown Japanese to score significantly lower on self-esteem scales than North Americans (e.g., Bond & Cheung, 1983; Campbell et al., 1996; Mahler, 1976) raises the possibility that, to the extent that Japanese have a similar need to maintain a positive self-view, they would be expected to show greater dissonance reduction than North Americans. Support for the former hypothesis, that is an absence of dissonance reduction by Japanese, particularly after receiving an additional threat to the self, would therefore provide important initial data challenging the universality of self-affirmation theory.

Past Dissonance Research with Asians

A review of the literature reveals that studies of cognitive dissonance and related processes that have been conducted with Japanese (and other Asian samples) have produced inconsistent results. Sakai and Ando (1980) obtained findings with Japanese
consistent with dissonance theory in that participants who were to receive electric shocks based on the outcome of a roll of dice reported the shocks to be less painful when they shook the dice than when an experimenter did. That is, the participants who shook the dice themselves and thus brought upon their own fate (although by chance), manifested greater dissonance reduction than those who viewed the shocks to be completely beyond their control. The “boomerang effect” of cognitive dissonance (the tendency to become more extreme in one’s opinions after attempts to persuade a partner elicits the unexpected result of the partner becoming even more committed to the counter position), has been observed in two studies conducted in Japan (Numakami, 1972; Shirai, 1974). However, Sakaki’s (1984a, 1984b) investigations of this effect yielded results contradictory to the predictions of dissonance theory. Conceptual replications in Japan of Festinger and Carlsmith’s (1959) original peg-turning study have also been inconsistent. Yoshida (1977) and Takata and Hashimoto (1973) found some evidence that participants reported that a mundane task was less interesting if they received rewards or justifications; however, Yoshizaki, Ishii, and Ishii (1975) failed to demonstrate this effect in two separate studies. Yang (1972) found some inconsistent evidence for dissonance theory in Taiwan. Participants rated themselves on a list of 30 personality traits and were later presented with bogus ratings about themselves supposedly made by their classmates. Participants recalled the names of traits that were inconsistent between their own and their classmates’ ratings, a finding supportive of dissonance theory, however this same pattern was not obtained with respect to participants’ recollections for the ratings of the traits.

Sanada and Norbeck (1975) observed the reactions of a doomsday cult in Japan both before and after the earthquake prophesized by their leader failed to materialize. Unlike Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter (1956), Sanada and Norbeck did not observe that this false prophecy led to deeper faith and proselytizing among cult members as a means of dissonance reduction. In fact, the Japanese leader of this cult responded to his
failed prediction by unsuccessfully attempting to commit suicide and then later by disbanding the sect.

A number of investigations of forced compliance (the paradigm that perhaps best represents the backbone of dissonance theory; for reviews see Cooper & Fazio, 1984; Thibodeau & Aronson, 1992) have been conducted with Asian participants that have failed to yield results consistent with dissonance theory. Several studies of forced-compliance in Japan (Hirose & Kitada, 1985; Kudo & Mitsui, 1974; Monden, 1980; Sakai, 1981) have not succeeded in demonstrating the standard effects of increased attitude change under conditions of high choice. In fact, I found only one study, which was published in a small Japanese university journal, that demonstrated significant forced-compliance effects with Japanese participants (Takata, 1974). Hiniker (1969) also failed to demonstrate forced-compliance dissonance in his study of Chinese refugees living in Hong Kong.

Taken together, the majority of published studies employing Japanese and other Asian participants has produced findings at odds with dissonance theory. Although some evidence in line with dissonance theory has emerged, it is rare and inconsistent. In addition, given the tendency of journals to publish only statistically significant findings, it seems reasonable to assume that many unpublished studies have failed to demonstrate dissonance reduction in Asian participants.

Because all of the studies with Asian participants described above were conducted without a Western control group, it is possible that each failure to demonstrate standard dissonance phenomena were due to inappropriate methods. Cooper and Fazio (1984), in their review of dissonance research, suggested that a number of requirements must be met in order for dissonance reduction to be expected: For example, an aversive consequence to one's behavior must be anticipated, and participants must perceive themselves to have acted of their own volition. It is unclear whether both of these conditions were present in each of the aforementioned studies.
I sought to put cognitive dissonance theory to a more rigorous cross-cultural test in which members of two distinct cultures were run through an identical methodology. My primary question concerned whether I could demonstrate that people from a culture characteristic of an interdependent view of self (Japanese) exhibit significantly less dissonance reduction than those from a culture typical of an independent view of self (Canadians).

The Present Study

I employed the classic "free-choice" dissonance paradigm (Brehm, 1956) used by Steele and his colleagues (Steele, 1990; Steele et al., 1993). I felt that this paradigm lends itself better to cross-cultural study than the forced-compliance paradigm because of the relative ease of equating the dissonance task across cultures. If I had asked participants to write counter-attitudinal essays, for example, it would have been nontrivial to select issues of equal importance across cultures. The free-choice paradigm has participants make a choice that has an anticipated aversive consequence (viz., the participant's concern that he or she has made the wrong choice). As in nearly all other published studies of postdecision dissonance (e.g., Brehm, 1956; Gilovich, Medvec, & Chen, 1995; Knox & Inkster, 1968; Steele et al., 1993), I did not measure dissonance per se, but rather inferred its existence by measuring dissonance reduction. Past research measuring dissonance arousal directly in such postdecision paradigms justifies this methodological simplification in the literature (Gerard, 1967).

I anticipated that Japanese would exhibit significantly less dissonance reduction (i.e., a smaller spread of alternatives) than Canadians. Moreover, I hypothesized that Japanese would not rationalize their decisions even when confronted with threatening information about themselves. Toward maximizing experimental control, I conducted the study in essentially an identical manner for both cultural samples, using the same materials and the same laboratory. I thus decided to recruit Japanese participants who were visiting Canada. The Canadian government allows Japanese under the age of 26 to obtain
"working-holiday" visas in which they are permitted to spend up to one year in Canada. I exploited the fact that the most popular destination within Canada for working-holiday Japanese is Vancouver and, at any given time, hundreds of young Japanese are temporarily living there (Consulate General of Japan, Vancouver, personal communication, March 14, 1995).

One methodological advantage of the present study deserves note. As the vast majority of cross-cultural studies compare questionnaire responses across cultures, most obtained cultural differences can be challenged by a response-style interpretation (Chen et al., 1995; Smith & Bond, 1993). That the main dependent variable in Study 5 was completely unobtrusive and could not be influenced by self-presentational motivations, the results were not amenable to response-style interpretations.

**Method**

**Overview and Design**

The experimental design was closely modeled after Study 1 of Steele et al. (1993), with a few modifications. The experiment was presented to the Canadian participants as a marketing study investigating the relation between music preferences and personality. As a justification for specifically recruiting Japanese participants in Vancouver, Japanese participants were told that in addition to the above purpose the study also sought to investigate Japanese people's knowledge and tastes for Western music. Aside from (a) the language used throughout the study and in the written materials, (b) the experimenter, and (c) this single difference in the cover story; Canadian and Japanese participants were treated in an identical manner. All participants were promised a free compact disc (CD) of their choice as compensation for their participation, which they were told would take approximately 1.5 hr.

Participants were scheduled to come to our lab in small groups and were told the purposes of the study. Individually, they first completed a bogus personality measure entitled the Multi-Polar Integrative Personality Inventory (MPIPI) and then underwent a
free-choice task. Initially they rated the desirability of 10 CDs that they chose from a list of 40 available titles. After then ranking the CDs, they were offered a choice between their 5th and 6th ranked CDs as compensation for their participation. Finally, they re-rated all 10 CDs. Participants could rationalize their decision by showing an increase in the desirability rating of their chosen CD and/or a decrease in the rating for their rejected CD. This change in the ratings, known as the “spread of alternatives,” was the primary dependent measure in the study. I also attempted to manipulate participants’ feelings about themselves by giving them either positive or negative false feedback from the MPIPI. A control group that was not given any personality feedback was also included. This resulted in a 2 (culture) × 3 (feedback) factorial design.

Participants

All participants were recruited by advertising a free CD for taking part in a marketing research study. Japanese participants were recruited by means of posters, ads in local Japanese newspapers, and public service ads on local Japanese television programs. All contact with Japanese participants was in Japanese. The ads limited participation to Japanese nationals who had been away from Japan for less than 2 years, who were between the ages of 18 and 30, and who were interested in Western rock and pop music. Seventy-one Japanese participants responded, however 4 were not included in the final sample because they did not complete the dependent measure, the data for 2 had to be discarded because they received the wrong forms, and 1 was not included because he lacked familiarity with the type of music used in the study. This left a final Japanese sample of 64 (38 females and 26 males).

Canadian participants were recruited by means of posters put up on campus at UBC. The Canadian ads restricted participation to those whose mother tongue was English, who were between the ages of 18 and 30, and who were interested in rock and pop music. Seventy-one Canadian participants responded, but 2 were not included for failing to complete the dependent measure, and the data for 3 had to be discarded for
indicating to the experimenter that they intended to trade in their CD for a different one after the study. This left a final Canadian sample of 66 (24 females and 42 males). The 7 Japanese and 5 Canadian participants whose data were deleted were fairly evenly distributed across the three feedback conditions.

Procedure

I scheduled participants in groups ranging from 4 to 6 to come to the laboratory. There they were greeted by the experimenter (a Japanese female for Japanese participants and a Canadian female for Canadian participants). Before each session was run, the group of participants was assigned to be in either the control or the feedback condition. Participants in the feedback condition were randomly assigned to receive either positive or negative feedback. Participants were directed to individual cubicles, where they remained for the duration of the study.

Participants were first asked to complete the MPIPI on a computer scored sheet. The MPIPI and all the other materials used in the study were translated into Japanese and then back-translated into English using the same methodology as the previous studies. In an attempt to make the MPIPI seem important to both Canadian and Japanese participants, it was described as an efficient and reliable measure often used by companies to identify applicants who are able to work well with others. The MPIPI consisted of 80 general items gleaned from various personality measures, including the 10-item Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale. All MPIPI items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). After completing the MPIPI, participants in the positive and negative feedback conditions were told that the tests would immediately be computer-scored so that they would be able to see their profiles before leaving the study. Participants in the control condition were not told anything about their profiles being scored.

Next, participants were presented with a list of 40 current rock and pop CDs that were on loan to our lab from a local music store. Great care was taken in constructing a
list that would contain a wide variety of Western titles, popular to both Japanese and Canadians. Current Japanese and Canadian music magazines were scoured to ensure that each of the bands (e.g., Pearl Jam, Janet Jackson, R.E.M.) was popular in both countries. Participants were asked to cross off the CDs from the list that they already owned and then indicate the 10 CDs from the remaining list that they would most like to own. The experimenter brought each participant evaluation forms for their 10 selected CDs. The evaluation forms consisted of a picture of the CD, the song list, a number of marketing research-type questions, and the first part of the main dependent measure: a question asking them how much they thought they would like the CD. Participants indicated their responses by making a mark on an unmarked 118-mm line labeled “Wouldn’t like this CD at all” at the left end and “Would like this CD very much” on the right. Participants were then asked to rank the 10 CDs in order of their relative desirability, with the most desirable CD as “1” and the least desirable CD as “10.” When the experimenter returned, she told the participants that she would retrieve the available CDs from their selected list of 10, and the participant would be able to choose one to take home with them. The experimenter also informed each participant in the feedback conditions that their profiles had been scored, and presented them with a large envelope containing a graph identified by their participant number. The graphs were designed to look as official as possible in order to enhance their credibility.

As I wanted to ensure that the feedback would be important to the Japanese participants, it consisted of a profile of interdependent qualities. Wishing to maximize the comparability of the results between cultures, Canadians received the identical feedback as the Japanese. I assumed that Canadian participants would be affected by any feedback that implicated the individual, whether it was of an independent or an interdependent nature. As will be shown later, this “interdependent” personality feedback had the desired effect upon Canadians.
The graphs conveyed participants' percentile scores with respect to 10 positively valenced traits that were assumed to be key values for the interdependent self based on descriptions by cultural psychologists and Japanese anthropologists (De Vos, 1985; Hamaguchi, 1985; Lebra, 1976; Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Triandis, 1989): Loyal, Considerate, Modest, Cooperative, Persevering, Dependable, Cautious, Tolerant, Patient, and Adaptable. Participants in the positive feedback condition could see that, averaged across the 10 traits, they scored better than 85% of Canadians/Japanese, whereas participants in the negative feedback condition scored better than only 25% of Canadians/Japanese. Control group participants did not receive any feedback.

After having several minutes to view their feedback (the control participants read magazines during this time), the experimenter approached each participant with 2 CDs to choose from for their compensation. The experimenter explained that our stocks were currently low, and that only two of their top-ranked CDs were available. To ensure that they were making a choice between two closely-valued alternatives, each participant was given their 5th and 6th ranked CDs to choose from. This also increased the chances that their ratings were close to the middle of the scale allowing for movement between their pre and postchoice ratings. Because participants were being run in small groups, and we had only one copy of each of the 40 CDs in our stock; in some cases, two or more participants' 5th or 6th ranked CDs overlapped with each other. In these cases, participants received adjacently ranked CDs that were as close as possible to their 5th and 6th ranked choices (e.g., 3rd and 4th ranked, or 6th and 7th ranked), and whenever possible, they received more positively, rather than less positively, ranked CDs.

Next, participants were given a filler questionnaire containing demographic information as well as other marketing research-type questions. After several minutes had passed (to ensure that participants would have enough time to justify their choice; Walster & Festinger, 1962), participants were given an alphabetized list of the 10 CDs that they had originally evaluated, and were asked to indicate how much they thought they would
like each CD in an identical manner to their prechoice ratings. The difference between participants' ratings on this question and on the corresponding prechoice question for the two CDs they received constituted the main dependent measure. Lastly, participants in the positive and negative feedback condition answered three questions about their perceptions of the personality test feedback. They were asked on 5-point Likert scales how positive their feedback was (a manipulation check; from “1” Mostly Negative to “5” Mostly Positive), how they felt after viewing their feedback (from “1” Very Bad to “5” Very Good), and how accurate they felt the test was (from “1” Not at all Accurate to “5” Very Accurate). Participants were then reunited with the rest of the members of their session and probed for suspicion. Not a single participant expressed any awareness that we were interested in comparing their pre and postchoice ratings of the CDs. Participants were then extensively debriefed and the purpose of the study was explained in detail. Participants in the feedback conditions were ensured, at great length, that the results of the personality test had no relation to their actual personalities. Finally, participants were thanked and presented with a $13 gift certificate for a CD of their choice from a local music shop in exchange for the CD that they had selected.

Results

Composition of the Samples

All Japanese participants were Japanese born and of Japanese parents. The median length of time spent outside of Japan was 4 months, with a range of 2 weeks to 5 years. Although we had originally requested participants to have been out of Japan for less than 2 years, five participants indicated that they had been out of Japan for more than 2 years. Sixty-one of the Canadian participants were born in North America, whereas each of the remaining five indicated that they had lived in Canada for at least 14 years. All participants were included in the analyses.

A few differences emerged with respect to the background of the two samples. The Japanese sample (M = 22.8 years old) was significantly older than the Canadian
sample ($M = 21.5$), $F(1, 128) = 6.02, p < .02$. Also, 86% of the Canadian sample were students ($n = 57$) compared with 75% ($n = 47$) for the Japanese. The remaining participants were either employed or tourists. These proportions were marginally different, $\chi^2(1, N = 129) = 2.87, p = .09$. Correlational analyses, however, revealed that neither of these two variables were related to the main dependent variable of the spread of alternatives within either culture (all $r$s between -.01 and .03, n.s.).

The Canadian sample consisted of 36% females ($n = 24$) compared to 59% ($n = 38$) for the Japanese. These proportions are significantly different, $\chi^2(1, N = 130) = 6.94, p < .01$, and as this variable (coded as 1 for females, 2 for males) did significantly correlate with the spread of alternatives for Japanese, $r = -.30, p < .05$, although not for Canadians, $r = .01$, n.s., it was included as a covariate in the main cross-cultural analysis.

**Cultural Differences in Procedure and Interest in the CDs**

Participants were scheduled to come to the lab in groups of 4 to 6 people. Seventy-six percent of the participants were run in groups of these sizes. However, because some participants did not show up at the scheduled time, and some unexpectedly brought along friends, the sizes of the groups actually ranged from 1 to 8 participants. Because of the difficulty and expense of obtaining and running participants, all participants that showed up were included in the study. The average size of the test groups did not differ between Japanese ($M = 4.38$) and Canadians ($M = 3.79$), $F(1, 33) = 1.28$, n.s.

Interest in any obtained cross-cultural differences in the spread of alternatives would be reduced if it could be shown that the CDs were of more value to the participants in one culture than the other and that this factor related to the spread of alternatives. It seems reasonable to speculate that decisions might be rationalized less for less desirable objects. Two measures in this study relate to the overall desirability of the CDs. The first is the average prechoice desirability ratings which participants made on the 118 mm line for the two CDs they received. Canadians ($M = 78.2$ mm) indicated that they desired the CDs significantly more than did Japanese ($M = 63.2$ mm), $F(1, 128) = 25.97, p < .001$. It
should be noted that the aforementioned past finding that Japanese tend to exhibit a moderacy bias (e.g., Chen et al., 1995) may account for this difference. A second variable that relates to the overall desirability of the CDs is the number of CDs from the initial list of 40 which participants already owned. This seems like a reasonable proxy for how motivated participants were to actually go out on their own and buy the CDs used in the study. Canadians (M = 4.81) reported owning slightly more of the CDs than did Japanese (M = 3.84), although this difference was not significant, F(1, 127) = 2.23, p > .10.

Correlational analyses revealed, however, that neither of these two variables were related to the spread of alternatives within either culture (rs between -.16 and .09, all ps > .19).

**Effect of the Personality Test Feedback**

The manipulation check about the positivity/negativity of their feedback revealed that participants from both cultures understood their personality feedback, Ms = 4.86 and 2.00 for Canadians in the positive and negative conditions, respectively, F(1, 41) = 118.09, p < .001 and the corresponding Ms for Japanese were 4.36 and 1.52, F(1, 41) = 103.49, p < .001. There was no significant culture x condition interaction, F < 1, but, interestingly, Canadians stated that their feedback was more positive than did Japanese in the positive feedback condition, F(1, 42) = 4.88, p < .04, and slightly, though not significantly, more positive in the negative feedback condition as well, F(1, 40) = 2.31, p < .14. This is also consistent with my notion that North Americans have a greater tendency to view themselves positively than Japanese.

Both Canadians and Japanese reported feeling better about their personality feedback in the positive than in the negative conditions: Ms = 4.18 and 2.71 for Canadians in the positive and negative conditions, respectively, F(1, 41) = 40.27, p < .001, and the corresponding Ms for Japanese were 4.18 and 2.29, F(1, 41) = 44.54, p < .001. There was no significant culture x condition interaction, F(1, 82) = 1.37, p > .20. Canadians and Japanese reported feeling equally good in the positive feedback condition, F < 1, whereas Japanese reported feeling slightly, although not significantly, worse than Canadians in the
negative feedback condition, $F(1, 40) = 2.52, p < .12$. Hence, Japanese reported feeling at least as affected by the personality feedback as did Canadians.

Finally, both Canadians and Japanese viewed the personality test to be more accurate when they were in the positive than in the negative condition, $M_s = 3.45$ and $1.81$ for Canadians in the positive and negative conditions, respectively, $F(1, 41) = 41.55, p < .001$, and the corresponding $M_s$ for Japanese were $3.41$ and $2.70$, $F(1, 40) = 6.69, p < .02$. There was a significant culture $\times$ condition interaction, $F(1, 81) = 6.25, p < .02$, which simple effects analyses revealed was primarily the result of Canadians believing the negative feedback significantly less than Japanese, $F(1, 39) = 10.76, p < .01$. This finding is also consistent with the notion that Canadians are more inclined to try to maintain a positive self-view than Japanese.

**Cultural Differences in Dissonance Reduction**

The primary prediction in this study, that dissonance reduction would be significantly attenuated for Japanese, was clearly supported. A Culture $\times$ Feedback factorial ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for culture, $F(1, 124) = 8.99, p < .004$. Moreover, statistically controlling for the cultural difference in the proportions of sex via an ANCOVA enhanced the magnitude of the effect, $F(1, 123) = 12.18, p < .001$.

Three alternative explanations for this cultural difference in dissonance reduction deserve consideration. First, perhaps Japanese were simply more accurate than Canadians in recalling their prechoice estimates thereby obscuring any dissonance-reducing tendencies. Second, perhaps moderacy bias effects precluded Japanese responses from moving much from the middle of the scale. Both of these alternative accounts would gain plausibility if the variance in the spread of alternatives was significantly less for Japanese than for Canadians; however, a comparison of the variability of the spread of alternatives between cultures revealed no difference between cultures, $F(63, 65) = 1.13, n.s., s^2 = 351.7$ and $310.0$ for Japanese and Canadians, respectively. Japanese postchoice estimates deviated from their prechoice estimates as much as they did for Canadians, yet unlike
Canadians, Japanese postchoice estimates were not systematically in the direction of dissonance reduction. A third alternative explanation is that more Japanese than Canadian participants made their CD selection simply on the basis of their prechoice ratings; that is, in an automatic way, they chose the CD with the higher pre-choice ranking. Without questioning whether or not they made the correct choice, it is conceivable that dissonance would be less likely to be experienced. Undermining this third alternative account, however, a comparison of the percentage of participants whose decision was consistent with their preliminary evaluation revealed no difference between cultures: 59% and 52% for Japanese and Canadians, respectively, \( \chi^2[1, N = 130] < 1, \text{n.s.} \)

**Spread of Alternatives Between Feedback Conditions**

With respect to the various feedback conditions, the results for Canadians replicated past research on self-affirmation. As Figure 2 shows, in the control condition Canadians showed a significant spread of alternatives, \( t(22) = 2.47, p < .03 \). This replicates earlier studies with North American participants (e.g., Brehm, 1956; Gerard, 1967; Steele, 1990; Steele et al., 1993). When provided with a means to affirm themselves through positive personality feedback, however, Canadians' spread of alternatives was no longer significant, \( t(21) = 1.45, p > .20 \). When confronted with threatening information about themselves by way of negative personality feedback, Canadians exhibited an even more pronounced spread of alternatives than in the control condition, \( t(20) = 3.71, p < .002 \). Comparing across feedback conditions, Canadians displayed a significantly larger spread of alternatives in the negative condition than in the positive condition, \( F(1, 41) = 4.94, p < .04 \). Hence, replicating the findings of Steele et al. (1993) and supporting self-affirmation theory, the personality feedback had a significant effect on Canadian participants' spread of alternatives.
The Japanese results diverged considerably from this pattern. Japanese did not exhibit a significant spread of alternatives for any of the three conditions, all ts < 1.1, and their spread of alternatives was unaffected by feedback condition, F < 1 between positive and negative feedback conditions. Regardless of how Japanese were made to feel by the personality feedback, then, they did not show any tendency to rationalize their choices. The culture x feedback interaction, however, was not significant, F(2, 124) = 1.65, n.s.

Self-Esteem and the Spread of Alternatives

Steele and colleagues (Spence et al., 1993; Steele et al., 1993) have demonstrated that Americans with low self-esteem tend to show greater dissonance reduction than those with high self-esteem. These researchers argued that this is because those with low self-esteem have a particularly strong need to restore a positive self-view. Self-esteem was investigated in the present study to see if low and high self-esteem Japanese behaved in similar ways to their Canadian counterparts. First, comparisons of self-esteem scores between Japanese (M = 34.3) and Canadians (M = 41.2) revealed a main effect for culture, F(1, 126) = 47.7, p < .001. Japanese thus appear to have significantly fewer self-affirmational resources than do Canadians. That Japanese showed virtually no spreading of alternatives relative to Canadians, despite their relative lack of self-affirmational resources, challenges the cross-cultural generalizability of self-affirmation theory.

Groups of high and low self-esteem were formed by conducting median-splits with respect to self-esteem scores within each culture. The mean self-esteem for those Japanese categorized as low self-esteem was 30.0, whereas the mean score for the high self-esteem group was 38.9. The mean scores for Canadians were 37.4 and 45.3, for low and high self-esteem, respectively. A 3-factor (culture x condition x self-esteem group) ANOVA revealed a significant culture x self-esteem interaction, F(1, 118) = 4.98, p < .03. Simple effects analyses revealed that high self-esteem Japanese showed a marginally greater spread of alternatives than did low self-esteem Japanese, F(1, 62) = 3.23, p < .08 (see Figure 3). Canadians with high self-esteem showed a nominally smaller spread of
alternatives than those with low self-esteem, but the effect did not approach significance, \( F(1, 64) = 1.71, \text{n.s.} \). An investigation of the magnitude of the spread of alternatives revealed that the Japanese spread was not significantly different from zero for either groups of high \((t[31] = 1.38, \text{n.s.})\) or low self-esteem \((t[31] = -1.18, \text{n.s.})\). In contrast, both high \((t[32] = 2.16, p < .04)\) and low self-esteem \((t[32] = 4.28, p < .001)\) Canadians showed a significant spread of alternatives.

Correlational analyses between self-esteem and the spread of alternatives revealed similar findings. Canadians demonstrated a slight non-significant tendency to show a smaller spread of alternatives with increased self-esteem, \( r = -0.09, \text{n.s.} \). The direction of this trend is consistent with self-affirmation theory, although the effect is not significant. Japanese, in contrast, showed a significant positive correlation between their self-esteem and the magnitude of their spread of alternatives, \( r = 0.26, p < 0.05 \). The more positively Japanese viewed themselves, the more likely they were to rationalize their decisions. Comparisons between the magnitude of the correlations between cultures also revealed a significant difference, \( t(124) = 1.98, p < .05 \). Although the culture difference and Japanese correlation were significant, the Canadian correlation was not, so interpretations of the patterns must remain speculative. The Canadian results supported self-affirmation theory and replicated the results of Steele et al. (1993) in terms of the direction of the obtained pattern, although the obtained effect was not significant here. Japanese, in contrast, displayed a significant relation in the opposite direction. Japanese with high self-esteem showed a slight tendency to show a spread of alternatives consistent with dissonance reduction. In contrast, Japanese with low self-esteem showed a slight tendency for what might be called dissonance augmentation. The Japanese pattern is consistent with the speculation that Japanese might rationalize their decisions in line with
their feelings about themselves. That is, those with relatively positive self-views may assume by default that they made a good decision and thus show a trend towards a positive spread of alternatives. In contrast, those with relatively negative self-views may assume by default that they made a poor decision and therefore show this trend towards a negative spread of alternatives. However, the nonsignificant and novel pattern of results reported here renders these interpretations highly speculative. Moreover, that high self-esteem Japanese had self-esteem scores comparable in magnitude to low self-esteem Canadians further complicates these interpretations. At the very least, though, this pattern indicates that self-affirmation theory does not generalize well to Japanese.

Discussion

The results of Study 5 demonstrate that those from a culture characteristic of an interdependent view of self (Japanese) do not rationalize their decisions within the free-choice paradigm. Whereas the Canadian results virtually duplicated Steele and colleagues' past self-affirmation findings with U.S. participants, Japanese did not exhibit any of the markers of this behavioral pattern. Even when confronted with feedback threatening to their self-integrity (the condition which resulted in the most dissonance reduction for Canadians), Japanese did not rationalize their choices. This was so even though Japanese reported feeling at least as bad as Canadians after viewing the negative feedback, and they believed that this feedback was more accurate than did Canadians. Japanese, thus, did not counter threats to their selves by dissonance reduction in this free-choice paradigm. Moreover, given that self-affirmation theory has demonstrated that those with lower self-esteem (and consequently fewer self-affirmational resources) show especially pronounced dissonance reduction, the lack of dissonance reduction on the part of Japanese, despite their lower self-esteem scores, presents a further challenge to the universality of self-affirmation theory.

As the past Asian literature (e.g., Hiniker, 1969; Hirose & Kitada, 1985; Kudo & Mitsui, 1974; Monden, 1980; Sakai, 1981; Takata, 1974) similarly demonstrates that
Japanese and Hong Kong Chinese rarely exhibit forced-compliance dissonance effects, a reasonable working assumption is that dissonance effects are, at least in some ways, culturally constructed. Along with the myriad conditions necessary to observe dissonance reduction in forced-compliance and free-choice paradigms summarized by Cooper and Fazio (1984), I would now add that the sample should not be from a culture representative of the interdependent view of self.

The present findings are consistent with two characteristics of the interdependent self. One, directly relevant to this dissertation, suggests that Japanese should not attempt to counter threats to their self because they do not have motivations to maintain a positive self-view. This view is consistent with the finding that Japanese did not counter the negative personality feedback with increased dissonance reduction, nor was there a greater tendency for low self-esteem Japanese to rationalize their decisions. Second, that situational constraints regulating the behavior of Japanese may render their actions less diagnostic of themselves (Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; Miller, 1984), compared to North Americans, raises the possibility that the free-choice paradigm may not be perceived as threatening to Japanese. Without a clear link between behavior and disposition, potentially “foolish” behaviors should not implicate Japanese individuals’ competence to the same extent as they do for Canadians, thereby reducing the pressure to explain these away. Situational factors, for example in this study the fact that participants were required to choose between two CDs that were rated more or less equally desirable, a clearly difficult task, may absorb more of the negative implications associated with Japanese participants’ choices than they did for Canadians.

The present study demonstrated that Japanese did not show free-choice dissonance reduction as a means to counter a threat to their selves. That cognitive dissonance theory is perhaps the most researched self-protective way of thinking in social psychology and is consistently observed in Western cultures lends encouragement to this finding. Future research on other self-protective ways of thinking (for example, compensatory self-
enhancement, self-handicapping, self-evaluation maintenance, etc.) might similarly reveal conspicuous absences for Japanese. However, it is important to view the present study as simply a first step towards understanding the nature of Japanese self-protective ways of thinking. Because cognitive dissonance represents a process that is theoretically more meaningful and threatening to those with an independent view of self, it is difficult to interpret the absence of dissonance reduction on the part of those with an interdependent view of self.

Clearly, in future studies it will be important to investigate explicitly how people from Eastern cultures respond to threats to the interdependent self. Yet the operationalization of interdependent paradigms to study dissonance and other threats to the self in non-Western cultures remains a formidable methodological task. Social psychologists have become quite skilled in techniques to manipulate how an individual feels about him or herself (Roese & Jamieson, 1993), but it remains a challenge to develop techniques to realistically manipulate individuals' perceptions of their most important relationships within a laboratory setting. Although such efforts would no doubt prove fruitful for deepening our understanding of the nature and motivations of the interdependent self, the first crucial task, it seems to me, is to succeed in developing the methodological machinery needed to create these interpersonally-relevant laboratory contexts.
Conclusion

Summary of Results

This dissertation raised the question "Is the need for positive self-regard a cultural universal?" A review of the anthropological, sociological, and social psychological literature of the Japanese suggested that the answer to this question may be "no." The findings from the five studies included in this dissertation were, for the most part, in line with this position. Studies 1 and 2 showed that cultural differences in positive self-regard are not limited to evaluations of the individual self, but extend to individuals' evaluations of their groups. European-Canadians evaluated their family-members and universities more positively, showed a greater tendency to bask in the reflected glory of their family members, and had higher collective public self-esteem scores than Japanese. Study 3 demonstrated that Japanese were more critical towards themselves than were European-Canadians as evidenced by their larger actual-ideal discrepancies, despite the fact that Japanese were rating the traits that they viewed as most important for succeeding in their culture. Moreover, viewing themselves in this critical way appears to be associated with fewer negative consequences for Japanese, as evidenced by the lower relation between their actual-ideal discrepancies and depression scores. That the results of Asian-Canadians in Studies 1, 2, and 3 fell between those of European-Canadians and Japanese supports the view that exposure to Western values is associated with a tendency to view oneself and one's groups in more positive terms (Heine & Lehman, 1996b).

Studies 4 and 5 were consistent with past literature in suggesting that cultural differences are not simply the result of self-presentational differences (see also Diener et al., 1995b; Heine & Lehman, 1995a, 1995b; Kitayama et al., in press): Japanese do not just publicly say that they are no better than average. Study 4 demonstrated that they truly seem to believe it. Japanese were more easily convinced of their failures than were European-Canadians. Study 5 demonstrated that dissonance reduction, a highly subtle process that occurs beneath individuals' awareness, is also not evident with Japanese.
Studies 4 and 5 also made significant first steps in demonstrating an absence of self-protective ways of thinking among Japanese. Japanese did not exhibit any compensatory reactions to information suggesting that they scored worse than average on an intelligence test or that their personality was undesirable. Taken together, the studies in this dissertation consistently demonstrate that Japanese do not seem to have a significant need for positive self-regard.

It is important to note, however, that because these data were only collected from student samples, the possibility remains that these observed tendencies among Japanese do not generalize to non-student samples. It would seem, though, that because Japanese university life is typically described as the time most free of obligations for Japanese, that this might indeed be the most individualistic period of their lives. Perhaps results with non-student samples might show an even greater hesitancy towards positive self-feelings.

The Cultural Value of Self-Confidence and Happiness

Perhaps the findings from this dissertation that most directly attest to cultural differences in the role of positive self-regard come from the importance and ideal ratings for the 20 traits included in Study 3. Here we can clearly see how traits related to positive self-regard (i.e., self-confidence and happiness) are interpreted differently across cultures. The second most important value for succeeding in Canada as seen by European-Canadians was self-confidence, whereas the only values seen as less important for succeeding in Japan were happiness and honesty. The traits that European-Canadians most want to possess are self-confidence and happiness, whereas these were respectively ranked numbers 20 and 18 by Japanese. In stark contrast to European-Canadians, Japanese do not appear to want to be very confident or very happy. These two traits seem to remain quite unelaborated or unauthenticated within Japanese culture and perhaps are associated with negative consequences.

There is a word in Japanese, jishinka, which in English translates to a person (ka) with confidence (jishin). Interestingly, though, this word clearly has negative
connotations. When Japanese say "He is a jishinka" this is meant as an insult, referring to the person's selfishness and arrogance that Japanese typically see associated with confidence. Confidence in one's self is seen as a process that separates one from others (Doi, 1973; Kitayama et al., 1994; Nakane, 1970) and suggests that one is satisfied with one's abilities, thereby reducing the need to make efforts to improve. In light of the importance of self-criticism in Japanese culture, as outlined in this dissertation, extreme confidence would thus seem to interfere with the maintenance of Japanese cultural tasks.

Furthermore, it seems noteworthy that Japanese, relative to Canadians, do not state that they wish to be particularly happy. In North America, especially among college students, it seems that the barometer that people often employ to determine whether or not they are succeeding in life is how happy they are (cf. Kitayama et al., 1994). North Americans would thus appear to have a rather simple philosophy regarding happiness: More is better. But Japanese do not have this insatiable need for, or outlook towards, happiness and positive feelings in general. Rather, their emotional experience is better characterized by balance (Diener et al., 1995b; Kitayama et al., 1994; Minami, 1971). This is an important cultural difference to emphasize because many Westerners (at least many of those with whom I have discussed my research) tend to assume that the lower scores of Japanese on self-esteem and happiness suggest a deficit in their quality of life. The ideal ratings of Study 3 reveal that Japanese do not necessarily want to have high levels of self-confidence or happiness showing, importantly, that these measures may not be appropriate for evaluating the quality of Japanese individuals' lives. These traits emphasize an imbalanced view of the self, and such a lack of equilibrium stands against fundamental Japanese values (Lebra, 1976; Nakamura, 1964). Japanese instead appear more content with viewing themselves in balanced or neutral terms. This cultural difference in the meaning of happiness underscores the need for caution in interpreting cross-national studies of happiness and subjective well-being (e.g., Diener & Diener,
The Cultural Construction of a Need for Self-Esteem

Given that North American research on the self has so consistently shown tendencies for individuals to possess, enhance, and maintain positive self-regard and that self-esteem has been shown to be rooted in so many of the ways in which we think (Scheff, 1990), it is understandable that so many of us in the field have assumed that these tendencies reflect a basic need of humankind. This assumption has been so fundamental to social psychology that, aside from the exception of terror management theory (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1992; Solomon et al., 1991), very little research has attempted to explore why people are motivated to view themselves positively. My suggestion has been that positive self-regard aids North Americans in approaching their cultural standards of selfhood (i.e., independence and autonomy). This need, then, can be seen to be constructed on the foundation of Western cultural values.

My review of the literature regarding Japanese, on the other hand, has shown that Japanese cultural mandates do not encourage individuals to dwell on their positive characteristics as this can interfere with their performance of interdependent tasks. Cross-cultural comparisons revealed that Japanese did not possess particularly positive views of themselves, they did not enhance the positivity of their self-views, and Studies 4 and 5 provided preliminary evidence to suggest Japanese didn’t strive to maintain positive self-views. Taken together, the past and present research suggests that Japanese do not demonstrate a need for self-esteem. Far from a basic human need, then, positive self-views appear to be a culturally-constructed need.

The majority of North American psychologists will most likely never do research outside of North America, and many may view the results of cultural psychology to be largely irrelevant to them. The point I want to emphasize, however, is that cultural differences highlight the fact that the roots of many our ways of thinking are buried...
somewhere in our cultural upbringing. A need for positive self-regard is nourished by and grows out of the soil of Western cultural values. Hence, efforts to fully understand the nature of self-esteem, self-enhancement, and self-evaluation maintenance in North America will be aided by interpreting these constructs with regard to Western cultural values. Studying self and social processing in other cultures can thus serve to provide us with a better understanding of our own self and social processing.

Are There Any Cultural Universals?

As cultural psychology gains momentum as a discipline, the list of psychological processes that vary among cultures continues to grow. Therefore, a reasonable question to ask is “Are there any ways of thinking that are common to everyone, regardless of culture?” Indeed, this question seems nontrivial as many cultural psychologists maintain that even those characteristics of ourselves that would seem to be the most resistant to cultural influences are also largely influenced by culture. For example, Markus et al. (1996) contend that some of our basic biological processes, as evidenced by findings in medical anthropology (e.g., Greenwood, Lindenbaum, Lock, & Young, 1988) and cross-cultural studies of endocrinology (e.g., Worthman, 1995), are importantly shaped by culture.

I tentatively speculate that within the realm of social psychology a culturally universal motivation is for individuals to be viewed as “authentic” members of their respective cultures (D’Andrade, 1985). That is, we wish to be seen in a way that is consistent with our dominant cultural values, so that we can view ourselves as meaningful, morally good, and productive members of our culture (Heine & Lehman, 1996c; Mathews, 1996; Solomon et al., 1990). There may be considerable individual differences within cultures with respect to this motivation, but I would conjecture that this is a common defining characteristic of all cultures. On the surface, given the varieties of differences between cultures, this common motivation might manifest in the pursuit of quite different ends. For example, decades of research have shown that in North America
one way that individuals authenticate themselves is by viewing themselves positively (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1989; Greenwald, 1980; Maslow, 1943; Steele, 1988; Taylor & Brown, 1988). In contrast, Japanese are motivated to secure a sense of belongingness with their groups, and this requires individuals to ensure that others are satisfied with them. Hence, Japanese continually strive to identify their shortcomings and make efforts towards eliminating these deficits (Kitayama et al., in press). It seems to me that both North Americans and Japanese wish to be authenticated by their cultures, but that this process is aided by self-enhancement in North America and by self-criticism in Japan.

Limitations of Current Methodologies

The influence of social psychology’s Western heritage has come to shape how we understand the self-concept and related ways of thinking. However, it would also seem that implicit assumptions regarding the nature of the independent self have affected the research methodologies that we have developed as well. For instance, our methodologies tend to treat the individual as though it were an autonomous entity. The relevance of such methodologies with respect to those with interdependent views of self is indeed questionable. As an example, although Studies 4 and 5 did not demonstrate self-protective ways of thinking among Japanese, perhaps this is because the threats created in the studies (i.e., one is less intelligent than average or one has made a potentially foolish decision) were not perceived as significant enough to warrant compensatory reactions by Japanese. It is extremely important for future research with Japanese to investigate methodologies that focus on the self as a related entity.

Another methodological consequence from our implicit assumptions of the individual self-concept is that we tend to disregard any contextual or situational effects in our experimental settings. We tend to view the self as an inviolate entity that exists separately from the context. In contrast, the Japanese self is characterized by a strong situational focus, and individuals constantly adapt their behavior to the requirements of the situation (Bachnik, 1994; Hamaguchi, 1985; Kumon, 1982; Lebra, 1994; Markus &
Kitayama, 1991b). Hence, the nature of the experimental setting may have a large impact on the results that we obtain from Japanese. Future research might demonstrate that it is critical to determine the effects of various situational factors. For example, is the individual alone or in a group, is the individual with his or her superiors or with friends, is the individual in a laboratory or at home, and what is the relationship of the individual to the person running the experiment? It may even be the case that there are certain situations in which Japanese are quite self-enhancing. Some recent psychological research with Japanese (Cousins, 1989; Cross, Kanagawa, Markus, & Kitayama, 1995) has investigated situational effects on the Japanese self-concept with promising results. Future research examining whether different ways of thinking can be measured among Japanese in different situational contexts will be helpful in addressing this question.

Decades of research on the self have provided us with a rich understanding of the nature of the Western self-concept. However, as research on the Japanese self has received relatively little attention until recently (even in Japan), there are still many aspects of the Japanese self-concept about which we know little. For example, do Japanese exhibit other kinds of self-relevant biases or compensatory self-protective reactions that do not exist in the West? Is there a functional equivalent to self-esteem in terms of a general construct that relates to a wide variety of ways of thinking in Japan? What kinds of constructs are related to positive self-regard among Japanese? What is positive self-regard for Japanese? There is still much that is not well understood about the nature of the Japanese self and related processes. It is crucial to increase our efforts, preferably in collaboration with Japanese researchers, towards deepening our understanding of the nature of the interdependent self-concept.
References


Maclean’s. (November 14th, 1994). Measuring excellence (pp. 16-39).


Table 1:
Means and Standard Deviations for the Main Dependent Measures in Study 1

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Asian-Canadians</th>
<th>European-Canadians</th>
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<td>31.4%b</td>
<td>25.6%b</td>
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<td>(11.10)</td>
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<td>Family-serving biases</td>
<td>34.6%a</td>
<td>24.2%b</td>
<td>21.0%b</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(11.42)</td>
<td>(14.75)</td>
<td>(11.68)</td>
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<td>(2.00)</td>
</tr>
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<td>(2.07)</td>
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Note. Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.
Rows with different letters are significant at p < .01.
Table 2:  
Mean Estimates and Standard Deviations for Individual Traits in Study 1.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Ratings</strong></td>
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<td>39.2**ab</td>
<td>33.4**a</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(21.71)</td>
<td>(19.44)</td>
<td>(15.68)</td>
</tr>
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<td>49.9b</td>
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<td>28.0**a</td>
</tr>
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<td>(15.84)</td>
<td>(14.41)</td>
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<td>35.3**a</td>
<td>29.2**a</td>
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<td>(19.00)</td>
<td>(18.14)</td>
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<td>47.7b</td>
<td>23.3**a</td>
<td>17.8**a</td>
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<td>(24.25)</td>
<td>(17.14)</td>
<td>(12.74)</td>
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<td>33.6**b</td>
<td>24.5**a</td>
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<td>(21.77)</td>
<td>(18.58)</td>
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<td>23.2**a</td>
<td>20.4**a</td>
</tr>
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<td>(13.98)</td>
</tr>
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<td>37.5**ab</td>
<td>33.9**a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(23.27)</td>
<td>(21.69)</td>
<td>(21.09)</td>
</tr>
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<td>50.1b</td>
<td>30.5**a</td>
<td>28.1**a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(21.62)</td>
<td>(16.92)</td>
<td>(19.43)</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Family Ratings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>32.7**a</td>
<td>28.5**a</td>
<td>25.7**a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(19.45)</td>
<td>(18.44)</td>
<td>(16.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>26.0**a</td>
<td>24.1**a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(23.23)</td>
<td>(19.45)</td>
<td>(18.99)</td>
</tr>
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<td>(23.16)</td>
<td>(17.51)</td>
<td>(15.76)</td>
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<td>36.4**b</td>
<td>15.9**a</td>
<td>12.3**a</td>
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<td>33.2**b</td>
<td>22.3**a</td>
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<td>(27.00)</td>
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<td>22.7**a</td>
<td>18.9**a</td>
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<td>(16.08)</td>
<td>(21.45)</td>
<td>(18.12)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43.0*b</td>
<td>27.6**a</td>
<td>28.4**a</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(23.03)</td>
<td>(20.75)</td>
<td>(20.15)</td>
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<td>36.3**b</td>
<td>19.4**a</td>
<td>18.1**a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(22.45)</td>
<td>(19.01)</td>
<td>(18.46)</td>
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</table>
| **Note:** Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.  
Rows with different letters are significant at p < .05.  
* Estimates are significantly different from 50% at p < .05  
** * * * * * * p < .001
Table 3:

**Characteristics of Universities and Students in Study 2**

**University Characteristics**

1) University X has an excellent reputation among Canadian/Japanese universities.
2) University X graduates tend to enter the upper ranks of society.
3) University X has top-notch facilities.
4) University X graduates tend to get good jobs.
5) University X provides a high quality education.

**Student Characteristics**

**Independent Characteristics**

1) University X students are quite interesting people.
2) University X students are very creative.
3) University X students are highly intelligent.
4) University X students are quite physically attractive.
5) University X students are athletic.

**Interdependent Characteristics**

1) University X students are very loyal to their school.
2) University X students are considerate.
3) University X students are particularly hard-working.
4) University X students are very easy to get along with.
5) University X students are cooperative.
## Table 4:

**Mean University and Student Evaluations in Study 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Evaluator</th>
<th>Doshisha</th>
<th>Ritsumeikan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluations of</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Universities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Doshisha</td>
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<td>17.7b</td>
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<td>(3.43)</td>
<td>(3.34)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Ritsumeikan</td>
<td>20.7a</td>
<td>16.9b</td>
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<td>(3.72)</td>
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<td>Doshisha</td>
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<td>36.6b*</td>
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<td>Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(5.26)</td>
<td>(5.12)</td>
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<td>35.8b</td>
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<td>(5.95)</td>
<td>(6.88)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Evaluator</th>
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<th>SFU</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>(3.86)</td>
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<td>20.0b</td>
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<td>(4.11)</td>
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<td>(8.88)</td>
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<td>(6.37)</td>
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<td>37.9b</td>
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<td>(6.62)</td>
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</table>

**Note.** Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

Rows with different letters are significantly different at $p < .02$.

* Different at $p < .07$. 
Table 5:
Means and Standard Deviations for Differences Between Own School Less Other School
per Individual Trait in Study 2

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<td>.56a**</td>
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<td>.15a*</td>
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<td>.04a</td>
<td>.06a</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(1.70)</td>
<td>(1.71)</td>
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<td>-.03a</td>
<td>.01a</td>
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<td>.18a*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(1.27)</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Characteristics</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.34b**</td>
<td>.32a**</td>
<td>.15a*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(1.18)</td>
<td>(.86)</td>
<td>(1.17)</td>
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<td>-.09a</td>
<td>-.30a**</td>
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<td>(1.26)</td>
<td>(1.09)</td>
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<td>.22a*</td>
<td>.25a**</td>
</tr>
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<td>(1.01)</td>
<td>(1.00)</td>
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<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>.07a</td>
<td>.12a</td>
<td>.16a*</td>
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<td>(1.10)</td>
<td>(.92)</td>
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<td>Interesting</td>
<td>.62b**</td>
<td>.44ab**</td>
<td>.28a**</td>
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<td>(.85)</td>
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<td>.27a*</td>
<td>.17a*</td>
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<td>(.86)</td>
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<td>.19a</td>
<td>.15a*</td>
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<td>(1.28)</td>
<td>(.86)</td>
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<td>Hard-Working</td>
<td>-.23b*</td>
<td>.32a*</td>
<td>.13a</td>
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<td>(1.23)</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
<td>(1.01)</td>
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<td>.16a</td>
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<td>(.93)</td>
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<td>Get Along Well With Others</td>
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<td>.41ab**</td>
<td>.19a*</td>
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<td>(.88)</td>
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</table>

Note. Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

* Values are significantly different from zero at p < .05
** " " " " " " p < .001

Rows with different subscripts are different at p < .05
Table 6:

**Means and Standard Deviations for University Self-Esteem Subscale Scores in Study 2**

<table>
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<th>Asian-Canadians</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>(2.54)</td>
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<td>16.8c</td>
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<td>(2.49)</td>
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<td>(1.99)</td>
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<td>(3.53)</td>
<td>(3.34)</td>
<td>(3.30)</td>
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</table>

**Note.** Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

Rows with different letters are significantly different at $p < .001$. 
Table 7:
List of Traits and Final Rank-Order of Importance Ratings in Study 3

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<th>European-Canadian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Considerate</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intelligent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attractive</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tolerant</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Persevere in Difficult Situations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Honest</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Get Along Well With Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Self-Motivated</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Patient</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Determined</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Cooperative</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sensitive to Others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Dependable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Self-Confident</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Adaptable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Competent</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Creative</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Hard-Working</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Decisive</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Happy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Item 5 read, for the first stem, “I always persevere in difficult situations.” Item 7 read, for the first stem, “I get along extremely well with others.”
Table 8:
Means and Standard Deviations for Actual-Ideal and Other-Ideal Discrepancies in Study 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Asian-Canadians</th>
<th>European-Canadians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual-Ideal Discrepancies</td>
<td>1.49a</td>
<td>1.25b</td>
<td>1.20b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.57)</td>
<td>(0.50)</td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Ideal Discrepancies</td>
<td>1.42a</td>
<td>1.23b</td>
<td>1.44a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.56)</td>
<td>(0.57)</td>
<td>(0.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>.07a</td>
<td>.02a</td>
<td>-.24b*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.64)</td>
<td>(0.58)</td>
<td>(0.60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

Rows with different subscripts are significantly different at p < .02.

* Actual-ideal discrepancies and other-ideal discrepancies are significantly different at p < .01.
Table 9: Means and Standard Deviations for the Actual-Ideal Gaps per Individual Trait in Study 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Asian-Canadian</th>
<th>European-Canadian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considerate</td>
<td>1.38b (.97)</td>
<td>.70a (.80)</td>
<td>.74a (.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>1.62a (1.20)</td>
<td>1.57a (.99)</td>
<td>1.40a (.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>2.03b (1.11)</td>
<td>1.84a (1.19)</td>
<td>1.58a (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerant</td>
<td>1.38a (1.14)</td>
<td>1.22a (1.08)</td>
<td>1.27a (.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persevere in Difficult Situations</td>
<td>1.25a (1.10)</td>
<td>1.27a (.93)</td>
<td>1.09a (1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>1.20b (1.03)</td>
<td>.85a (.85)</td>
<td>.90ab (.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Along Well With Others</td>
<td>1.52b (1.33)</td>
<td>1.09a (.87)</td>
<td>.91a (.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Motivated</td>
<td>1.62a (1.19)</td>
<td>1.47a (1.06)</td>
<td>1.40a (1.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>1.31a (1.12)</td>
<td>1.40a (1.15)</td>
<td>1.36a (.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>1.21a (1.08)</td>
<td>1.30a (.94)</td>
<td>1.06a (1.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>.92a (.91)</td>
<td>.75a (.70)</td>
<td>.97a (.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive to Others</td>
<td>1.01a (.97)</td>
<td>.86a (.85)</td>
<td>.84a (.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>1.96b (1.30)</td>
<td>1.03a (.90)</td>
<td>.93a (.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Confident</td>
<td>1.48a (1.20)</td>
<td>1.63a (1.14)</td>
<td>1.80a (1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable</td>
<td>1.28a (1.06)</td>
<td>1.12a (.90)</td>
<td>1.10a (.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>1.71b (1.13)</td>
<td>1.17a (.92)</td>
<td>.93a (.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>2.19b (1.33)</td>
<td>1.55a (1.02)</td>
<td>1.63a (1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-Working</td>
<td>1.24a (1.11)</td>
<td>1.19a (.98)</td>
<td>1.06a (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>2.04a (1.32)</td>
<td>1.74a (1.26)</td>
<td>1.65a (1.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>1.48b (1.20)</td>
<td>1.84a (1.19)</td>
<td>1.51ab (.17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard deviations are reported in parentheses. Rows with different subscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Asian-Canadian</th>
<th>European-Canadian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considerate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerant</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persevere in Difficult Situations</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Along Well With Others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Motivated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive to Others</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Confident</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-Working</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11: Means and Standard Deviations for Main Dependent Variables Including All Participants for Study 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Failure Decision</th>
<th>Success Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>6.16a (1.02)</td>
<td>7.00b (.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Trials Viewed</td>
<td>8.64a (2.87)</td>
<td>7.83a (2.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Spent Viewing Trials</td>
<td>99.96a (39.9)</td>
<td>80.69b (27.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Better</td>
<td>38.1%a* (17.7)</td>
<td>36.3%a* (16.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Japan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>5.07a (1.84)</td>
<td>5.85a (1.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Trials Viewed</td>
<td>10.26a (5.01)</td>
<td>10.95a (4.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Spent Viewing Trials</td>
<td>96.78a (55.9)</td>
<td>102.27a (41.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Better</td>
<td>54.6%a (15.0)</td>
<td>45.1%b (14.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

Rows with different subscripts are significantly different at p < .05.

* Significantly different from 50% at p < .001.
Table 12:
Means and Standard Deviations for Main Dependent Variables in Study 4 Separated by Correct or Incorrect Decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect Failure Decision</td>
<td>Incorrect Success Decision</td>
<td>Correct Failure Decision</td>
<td>Correct Success Decision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>7.00a (--)</td>
<td>6.63a (.52)</td>
<td>6.14a (1.03)</td>
<td>7.19b (.99)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Trials Viewed</td>
<td>7.00a (--)</td>
<td>7.25a (1.39)</td>
<td>8.69a (2.90)</td>
<td>8.04a (2.88)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Spent Viewing Trials</td>
<td>81.87a (--)</td>
<td>64.45a (17.3)</td>
<td>100.63a (40.4)</td>
<td>87.99a (29.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Better</td>
<td>85%a (--)</td>
<td>35%b* (15.1)</td>
<td>36.4%a** (15.6)</td>
<td>36.8%a** (18.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                      |                      |                      |                      |                      |                      |
| Japan                |                |                      |                      |                      |                      |
| n                    | 13              | 5                    | 25                   | 15                   |
| Confidence           | 3.92a (1.98)     | 6.00b (1.79)         | 5.66a (1.46)         | 5.90a (1.51)         |
| Number of Trials Viewed | 13.23a (5.83)     | 8.40a (1.52)        | 8.77a (3.84)         | 11.84b (5.33)        |
| Time Spent Viewing Trials | 81.43a (33.8)     | 84.54a (16.0)      | 102.98a (63.9)       | 108.33a (45.5)       |
| Percentage Better    | 55.1%a (16.3)    | 40.0%a (12.3)       | 54.4%a (14.6)        | 46.7%a (15.3)        |

Note: Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

Rows with different subscripts are significantly different within their respective columns at $p < .05$.

* Significantly different from 50% at $p < .05$.

** $^*^*^*$ $^*^*$ $^*^*$ $^*^*$ $p < .01$. 
Figure 1:

Rosenberg Self-Esteem and Cultural Group

Increased Exposure to Western Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JPN</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-A</td>
<td>Recent Asians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT-A</td>
<td>Long-Term Asians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Asian-Canadians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Euro-Canadians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

±1.96*Std. Err.

Mean
Figure 2:
Spread of Alternatives as a Function of Culture and Personality Test Feedback in Study 5.

- Positive Control Negative

-0.64 4.32 3.33 9.22* 15.76**

n = 22 n = 22 n = 21 n = 23 n = 21 n = 21

* p < .05
** p < .01
Figure 3:
Spread of Alternatives as a Function of Culture and Self-Esteem.

Japanese  
-3.91  
Self-Esteem: Low

Canadian  
12.48**  
Self-Esteem: Low

4.38  
Self-Esteem: High

6.45*  
Self-Esteem: High

* p < .05  
** p < .001