The Effects of Cultural Differences and Constructive Capitalization Responses on Different Social Support Outcomes

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Abstract

This study looked to investigate the effects of constructive capitalization responses on different cultural groups. It was proposed that there would be cultural group differences in the effects of different kinds of constructive capitalization responses on self-esteem, happiness, relationship satisfaction, and relationship closeness as mediated by cultural values (self-construals, harmony values, emotion expression, modesty bias). The current study hypothesized that Asian Americans (AAs) would benefit more from passive constructive capitalization responses (PC) than European Americans (EAs), while EAs would benefit more from active constructive capitalization responses than AAs. It was also hypothesized that AAs would benefit more from collectivistically oriented active constructive responses (AC-C) and EAs would benefit more from individualistically oriented active constructive responses (AC-I). The study was composed of open-ended free response questions assessing previous capitalization experiences, questionnaires that assessed cultural values, and an experimental section with a 2 x 3 between-subjects design using scenarios and self-report items. Results revealed a marginal interaction effect between cultural group and capitalization response condition on relationship satisfaction. In addition, we observed a marginally significant main effect of cultural group on relationship closeness (such that EAs were higher in relationship closeness) and marginally significant main effect of capitalization response condition on self-esteem and relationship satisfaction (such that AC-I responses yielded higher responses in self-esteem and relationship satisfaction). Based on our findings, we believe that certain types of constructive capitalization responses may benefit cultural groups differently.

**Keywords:** Capitalization, constructive capitalization responses, culture, independence, interdependence, Asian/Asian American
The Effects of Cultural Differences on Constructive Capitalization Responses

“Social support provides general social therapy for all types of incongruities one may encounter, soothing and relieving the symptoms of the person encountering the incongruity,” (Moss, 1974). Here, Moss describes social support as a social therapy, and by doing so suggests the potential for social support to have benefits for health and well being. A wide body of literature has examined instances where social support has led to benefits for emotional and physical health. For example, in the case of a serious disease (e.g., cardiac disease, cancer), social support results in better emotional health for the patients, aids in adjustment and coping to the disease, and strengthens relationships where patients choose to seek out social support (Taylor, Lichtman, & Wood, 1984; Kim, Sherman, & Taylor, 2008). Social support occurs in communication networks and has the goal of helping people cope with hardships (Albrecht & Goldsmith, 2003). However with this in mind, social support-seeking behaviors do not look the same for everyone and it is unlikely that everyone benefits from the same type of social support.

In the context of stressful situations or adverse events like those described above, culture is a major factor that can shape and influence the ways that an individual seeks out social support or the types of social support likely to be most helpful. The idea of social support in a Western culture like the United States is apparent through idioms such as, “Just say it already! Spit it out!” These types of sayings indicate the traditional Western views of actively seeking out social support from someone by talking about problems and facing them directly. This type of support may not be as beneficial in all cultures. Whether and how social support is sought and used to cope depends largely on relationships and shared assumptions about those relationships. These assumptions are the result of the culture. In the United States, it is healthy to “spit it out”, but this may not necessarily be the case in an East Asian culture.
Keeping in mind these observations about social support in the context of negative or adverse events, what happens when things go right? What does social support look like when people choose to share positive events? This idea of sharing positive events with another person and deriving additional benefits has been termed *capitalization* (Langston, 1994). Social support research has become increasingly interested in this phenomenon, especially since positive daily events occur more frequently than negative events (Gable & Reis, 2010). In the same way that people from different cultures seek social support differently when confronted with stressful events, people from different cultures may tend to share positive events or attempt to capitalize differently as well.

In order to better understand social support seeking behaviors and how they differ amongst individuals, it is first necessary to look at culture. Just about any actualization of self or personhood can be attributed in significant part back to the culture that a person was raised in (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Understanding these cultural differences is important for implications in a range of interpersonal processes and in applications such as health practices, education, and business interactions. As the world diversifies and becomes more interconnected, different cultures commingle and merge and it becomes even more important to acknowledge these cultural differences and their effects (Markus & Kitayama, 2010).

While there are a multitude of differences within cultures, most cultures can be classified as either collectivistic or individualistic in nature. Countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom are examples of individualistic cultures, while countries such as Korea, Indonesia, and Japan are good examples of collectivistic cultures. Collectivism and individualism are both social patterns that influence and shape the ideals, beliefs, and actions of members of a culture. Collectivism is a social pattern that focuses on individuals who see
themselves as parts of collectives, as aggregates of individuals (e.g., a family, a group, a nation). These individuals are focused on the goals of the collectives and are willing to prioritize the goals of the collectives, internalizing those goals as highly significant parts of their behavior (Triandis, 1995). Individualism is a social pattern that consists of individuals who do not feel tied to collectives or at least less tethered to those aggregations, but rather act in more significant ways with emphasis on their own personal goals, needs, desires, and preferences. While it is typical for countries to be described as either an individualistic culture or a collectivistic culture, all countries contain certain collectivist and individualist elements, but these may be expressed in different combinations (Triandis, 1995).

**Culture and Self**

A defining characteristic of both collectivism and individualism is the way each defines the self. Markus and Kitayama (2010) define the self as, “a continually developing sense of awareness and agency that guides action and takes shape as the individual, both brain and body, becomes attuned to the various environments it inhabits.” In another paper, Markus and Kitayama (1991) claim the self is the “me” at the center of experience; it guides action and understanding, regardless of culture. Norms, practices, and social interaction help to shape cultural variations of the self. The researchers present two models of self-construals thought to reflect cultural differences: the interdependent self and the independent self.

Individuals from a collectivistic culture tend to have a higher interdependent self-construal. This construal of self is defined to a greater degree by the thoughts, feelings, and actions of relationships and collectives. It is oriented towards group dynamics and group harmony; the self is viewed as a relational entity that prioritizes the interests of the group (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). The interdependent self cannot be defined without defining all of
that self’s relationships. In other words, the interdependent self is a daughter, or a mother, a friend, or a teacher. These relationships with others shape who that self is in collectivistic cultures. Collectivistic cultures also place high value on conforming to group norms as this is seen as abiding by the norms/goals of the group in order to maintain harmony within the group. In other words, collectivistic cultures tend to be high in the cultural value of group harmony, which influences emotion and behavior such that persons of the group avoid conflicts with their relationships. To be unique is to be individual, which is viewed as undermining the collective (Kim & Markus, 1999). For example, In Japanese culture, which is typically viewed as collectivistic, parents will “ground” their children by locking them out of the house (Vogel & Vogel, 1961). Realignment with the family and the home signifies the end of a child’s punishment. Being on their own and away from the family is punishment for the children; this further emphasizes the power of the collective.

The interdependent self-construal is likely to assert secondary control. Control is defined as causing an intended event, such that secondary control occurs when individuals enhance their rewards and maximize satisfaction by accommodating and aligning themselves with reality (Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder, 1982). Changing the view or outlook on a situation, rather than changing the situation itself is the goal of secondary control. This form of control enhances perceived alignment with people, objects, or circumstances, which is a major characteristic of the interdependent self. An example of secondary control is apparent amongst the Japanese workforce. All employees dedicate themselves to the advancement of the company (i.e., the collective). When workers go on strike, they will often do so after business hours or during lunch, so as not to slow production and hurt the company (Ouchi, 1981). In other words, the workforce is attempting to assert primary control by going on strike, but is promoting secondary
control by still accommodating to their employers; they are aligning themselves to the situation, rather than being more assertive and changing the situation itself.

Individuals from an individualistic culture tend to have a stronger independent self-construal. The independent self is concerned with himself or herself as an individual and how one can assert, influence, and act to enhance personal goals. Individual traits are at the center of the independent self and dictate how the individual expresses and asserts itself. The autonomy of the self is characteristic of independence (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). To reference the earlier example presented by Vogel & Vogel (1961), when American children are “grounded” they are forced to stay inside the house. This form of punishment exerted by the parents takes away the autonomy of the child; in this instance, the home and the family (i.e., relationships and the collective) are seen as punishment. Uniqueness is valued in individualistic cultures, where people are taught to respect individual rights, as individuals are the basic units of society. The idea of being unique suggests that an individual is rejecting the norms, which is aversive to conforming to a group (Kim & Markus, 1999).

Unlike the interdependent self, the independent self is more likely to assert primary control. The goal of primary control is to influence existing realities to fit the self in order to enhance reward, rather than to change the self to fit reality (Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984). Primary control deals with influencing others or situations, a characteristic of the independent construal of self. Referring to the example of workforces, in comparison to the Japanese workforce, Americans are far more likely to assert primary control. Individuals focus more on independence and self-advancement within their company. Strikes are intended to be damaging to the employers (Ouchi, 1981). The American workforce directly attempts to change
reality by inflicting damage to the collective as a way for the individual to gain attention and elicit change.

Any society, relationship, or individual can have facets of both independence and interdependence. However, when cultures are described it’s typically as one or the other, since cultures tend to have stronger and more consistent values reflecting one of the self-construals. Therefore, a person from a collectivistic culture is likely to have more aspects of an interdependent self, as that is how the culture is defined, but they might also have aspects of independence. The opposite is also true; a person from an individualistic culture probably has greater aspects of independence, but can still show aspects of interdependence as well. This is paralleled with the concepts of primary and secondary control. Some situations may call for the use of primary control, while others call for secondary control. This is not to say that interdependent selves will never assert primary control and independent selves will never assert secondary control. People have aspects of both self-construals despite coming from a specifically collectivistic or individualistic culture and will thus exert both primary and secondary control in different situations.

Culture and Social Support

As previously discussed, there is a wide body of literature looking at the benefits of social support in light of negative or adverse events (Albrecht & Goldsmith, 2003; Taylor et al., 1984; Kim et al., 2008). However, much of the literature looking at social support adopts a Western, independent view when determining what is the “most beneficial”. Culture impacts the mode of social support that occurs, how effective social support is, and whether social support occurs at all. In collectivism, assisting others and giving social support is seen as a moral obligation; it is expected that individuals from a collectivistic culture will offer help to others. This differs from
individualistic social support in which offering help is a matter of personal choice (Miller, 1994). Similar to the ways in which individuals offer social support, individuals from different cultures have different social support seeking behaviors. These social support-seeking behaviors are influenced largely by the self-construals of independence and interdependence.

In collectivistic cultures, group harmony is valued, individuals tend not to seek social support directly from another individual as this may burden the other person. The individual that is reached out to will likely feel morally obligated to help, which can put strain on that relationship (Miller, 1994). Individuals from collectivistic cultures who hold a stronger interdependent self-construal are more likely to feel that sharing problems will cause stress for others. Sharing problems obligates another person from the collective to aid in problem solving, which can lead to a strain in that relationship. The individual who shared their problems may fear a loss of face in the relationship as a repercussion of revealing personal problems and weakness to the group. For example, it has been noted that Asian Americans are far less likely to seek out social support than European Americans. These differences are attributable to the collectivistic values of Asian American cultures such as group harmony, which will influence the emotions and behaviors of members in order to avoid conflict (Wang, Shih, Hu, Louie, & Lau, 2010).

Taylor et al. (2004) examined this phenomenon by looking at academic stressors and social support seeking behaviors amongst Asian American and European American students. The students were presented with prompts about academic stressors and asked to discuss how they seek social support in this instance as well as reasons for not seeking social support. The researchers were able to show that Asian American students were significantly less likely to draw from social support systems. They theorized that these results were due to cultural differences including group harmony, fear of criticism, saving face, making the situation worse,
and self-reliance. Asian American students tended to be higher in group harmony values, had a higher fear of criticism, were more concerned with saving face and making the situation worse, and were lower in self-reliance than their European American counterparts. This is due to the collectivistic values typically exhibited in Asian American cultures. The sharing of negative problems is perceived as having the potential to disrupt group harmony by making other group members feel bad or feel obligated to help. Asian Americans tend to have stronger interdependent self-construals, which led to the belief that seeking social support would risk making inappropriate demands of the group, thus helping to explain why social support was not sought out as frequently (Taylor et al., 2004).

This study supported the idea that social support in collectivism tends to be implicit. Implicit support is perceived support and emotional comfort that one can gather without actually disclosing or discussing problems with an individual or group (Taylor, Welch, Kim, & Sherman, 2007). Since the interdependent self-construal typically is unlikely to seek support from the collective, the collective provides support implicitly. The act of being in a group shapes the support that individuals with a higher interdependent self-construal find the most beneficial.

The independent self is much more likely to actively seek out support from friends and family in the form of aid, advice, or comfort when something negative happens. In line with the idea of primary control discussed earlier, individuals who are higher in an independent self-construal are more likely to assert and influence in order to change their reality (Rothbaum et al., 1982). Therefore, seeking social support from friends and family is influenced by the characteristics of the independent self-construal, which enlists the help of others to actively change the negative situation. While collectivism supports an implicit form of support, explicit support is more frequently encountered in individualistic cultures. This form of social support
involves actively seeking support and comfort from friends and family, which is in line with the characteristics of the independent self-construal, encouraging individuals to approach their problems directly and discuss them with others (Taylor et al., 2007).

Capitalization

The current study focuses on the differences in social support seeking when positive events occur. As previously described, capitalization is the act of sharing a positive event with another person and deriving benefit from it (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004). Gable et al. (2004) conducted a study that examined the interpersonal and intrapersonal benefits of capitalizing. While the mental health benefits of seeking social support in the face of stressful events are well known (Albrecht & Goldsmith, 2003; Taylor et al., 1984), what makes capitalization a helpful form of social support requires more research.

According to Gable et al. (2004), capitalization requires retelling the positive event and engages a different kind of social support experience for relationships. The retelling of a positive event creates an opportunity for an individual to relive the event and experience those happy feelings again. By sharing this event with someone, a different social interaction is fostered than what happens when social support is enlisted in a negative situation; this form of support can ultimately strengthen relationships. The researchers proposed four different responses to capitalization attempts. Adapted from past research (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovic, & Lipkus, 1991), these responses were active-constructive (i.e., enthusiastic support), passive-constructive (i.e., quiet, understated support), active-destructive (i.e., quashing the event), and passive-destructive (i.e., ignoring the event).

The researchers utilized these four different capitalization responses in four different studies examining the interpersonal and intrapersonal consequences of seeking social support in
order to share positive events. The first study recruited participants to complete daily diary entries that documented positive and negative affect, life satisfaction, the most positive and most negative events of the day, as well as any capitalization attempts. For this initial study, Gable et al. (2004), concluded that people shared positive events with people 70.8% of days.

The second and third studies recruited couples to complete a survey designed to observe the effects that capitalizing with a romantic partner has on romantic relationships. The second experiment recruited couples that had been dating for at least three months. Both members of the romantic dyad completed a survey separately that measured relationship commitment, relationship satisfaction, trust, intimacy, accommodation, and perceived responses to capitalization attempts (PRCA scale). This PRCA scale was created by the researchers to measure the perceptions of partner’s responses to capitalization attempts, which is where the four types of capitalization responses were utilized (i.e., active constructive, passive constructive, active destructive, and passive destructive). For the second study, it was determined that when one partner received an active constructive response it was positively correlated with the relationship quality variables (i.e., commitment, satisfaction, intimacy, and trust). Passive constructive, active destructive, and passive destructive responses were all negatively correlated with the same relationship quality variables. The third experiment again utilized romantic partners, however this time the couples were married. There were overall marital satisfaction, intimacy, and PRCA scale one-time measures, as well as daily diary measures of daily marital satisfaction, daily conflicts, and daily positive activities. Similar to the findings in the second study, the active constructive responses were positively associated with better relationship quality, while passive constructive, active destructive, and passive destructive were all negatively correlated with relationship quality.
Finally, Gable et al. (2004) ran a fourth study that measured positive and negative affect, life satisfaction, positive and negative events, capitalization events, the PRCA scale, and a memory quiz in a daily diary design similar to the first study. The researchers determined that on days when people capitalized and shared a positive event, their positive affect and life satisfaction was greater than the affect reported right after experiencing the event.

These four responses to capitalization revealed varying effects on the participants who were capitalizing. Results from the study indicated that when actually perceived as constructive and not somehow misinterpreted, active-constructive responses were positively correlated with relationship quality as defined by commitment, satisfaction, intimacy, and trust. In addition, active constructive responses were likely to increase an individual’s positive affect; the enthusiastic response from a friend or family member made the participant feel even better than they felt directly after the event. Both active-destructive and passive-destructive responses were negatively correlated with relationship quality as both involved negative responses to the positive event an individual was attempting to share (Gable et al., 2004). However, Gable et al. (2004) found that passive constructive responses never yielded the same positive correlations to relationship quality that active constructive responses yielded.

This finding may be the result of the capitalization responses as proposed as beneficial by Gable et al. (2004) being individualistic in their assumptions. It is unlikely that an individual with a strong interdependent self-construal would be likely to share positive daily events with members of their collective, as this could upset group harmony, making members feel obligated to compliment the good news. The sharing of positive daily events would likely have similar effects on the collective dynamic that social support seeking in the context of negative situations has. Thus, because of the ways that individualism and collectivism differ in their utilizations of
social support, recent research has been looking to investigate the role of culture in social support when sharing positive events.

A study by Wang et al. (2010) investigated positive and negative social support seeking behavior in Asian American and European American college students using a daily diary design. The study showed that positive and negative daily events warranting social support occurred with similar frequency per day for both European and Asian Americans. The significant difference was the amount that individuals in each group reached out to others for social support; in the case of both positive and negative daily events, Asian Americans looked for support significantly less often than European Americans. This confirmed the notion that Asian Americans are less likely to explicitly seek social support in the context of negative situations, but it also meant that Asian Americans were generally capitalizing less than European Americans. This result was partially mediated by group harmony through emotional restraint (Wang et al., 2010). In other words, Asian Americans were less likely to capitalize, so as not to upset group harmony.

The researchers in the Gable et al. (2004) study make an important note that capitalization is only beneficial to the relationship if the capitalization response is perceived as genuine appreciation and interest. The results from the Wang et al. (2010) study proposes that capitalization occurs at different rates and is utilized differently in collectivistic cultures than it is in individualistic cultures, not unlike the sample that Gable et al. (2004) utilized for their study. Again, culture shapes whether or not social support occurs, the mode by which social support occurs, and how effective social support is. With this in mind, capitalization attempts and responses likely look different for an individual with a higher interdependent self-construal compared to a higher independent self-construal. The interdependent self-construal likely does
not want to disrupt group harmony, which may occur during capitalization. It suggests that a higher interdependent self-construal would tend to be less likely to share positive events with their friends and family for the fear of “rocking the boat”, making others feel bad, or appearing boastful. Again, the interdependent self-construal views that a person should conform to group goals; the needs and goals of an interdependent self are secondary to that of the collective (Fiske et al., 1998). This would explain why it was found that Asian Americans were capitalizing less than European Americans; sharing positive events that occurred to the individual can be seen as asserting oneself ahead of the collective.

While the body of literature regarding capitalization may be small, the body of literature surrounding capitalization and cultural differences is even smaller. However, Demir, Dogan, & Procsal (2013) observed capitalization attempts and the effects capitalization had on friendship and happiness amongst samples of American and Turkish college students. The researchers observed that consistent with cultural values, the Turkish (i.e., collectivisticly-oriented culture) students reported fewer attempts at capitalizing than the American (i.e., individualistically-oriented culture) students. For American students, positive capitalization responses were positively correlated with friendship quality and happiness, while this same effect was not observed in the Turkish students to the same degree (Demir et al., 2013). Per the social support literature that has been discussed, it is clear the collectivistic, Turkish students are not as likely to share their positive events, so as to not upset the harmony in the friendship. In addition, the researchers propose that when the American sample capitalize, they may not necessarily expect a positive response (the responder may not feel it is necessary to maintain a harmony within the dyad), but when they receive a positive response, it improves friendship quality further. This is in comparison to the Turkish sample which may come to expect some sort of positive response to
sharing a positive event, as a positive response would be less likely to upset either member of the
diad (Demir et al., 2013).

It is apparent that much of the growing work in capitalization has not had a focus on
culture. Thus, the current study is interested in how culture may shape capitalization. In
particular, the current study is interested in which capitalization responses are more or less
beneficial to collectivism or individualism.

Emotion Expression

“In collective cultures, there is greater need to suppress one’s emotional reactions, so as
not to offend others in the group, avoiding conflict and confrontation” (Matsumoto, 1993).
Members of collectivistic cultures learn early to discourage the outward expression of emotion as
well as to attribute less intensity to the emotions of others. In a variety of studies, David
Matsumoto has investigated the differences in the intensity judgments of emotions and the rules
around the display of emotions in collectivistic and individualistic countries such as Japan and
the United States (Matsumoto, 1990; Matsumoto, 1992). Display rules are the extent to which it
is deemed appropriate to display a certain emotion. The Matsumoto studies yield similar results:
in collectivistic cultures, such as Japan, display ratings and intensity rankings of emotion
consistently rank lower than ratings in individualistic cultures, such as the United States. This
evidence suggests that the degree of display that is appropriate in collectivistic cultures is far
lower than the degree of display that is acceptable in individualistic cultures.

In addition to the degree of display of emotion, the types of emotion that are considered
appropriate are also very different for collectivistic and individualistic cultures. In a study
utilizing Japanese and American participants, Matsumoto (1992) had participants identify six
different emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. The Japanese sample
was significantly worse at perceiving the negative emotions. According to Matsumoto, this highlights the importance of not upsetting other members of the collective; displaying negative emotions upsets social interactions and affects relationships negatively. In another study, Matsumoto (1993) observed that Asian Americans consistently ranked emotions as lower in intensity than Black Americans, Caucasian Americans, and Hispanic Americans. In addition, contempt, disgust, fear, and sadness were ranked as significantly lower in display rules (i.e., were considered less appropriate to display) for Asian Americans than the other cultural groups. All of these are negative emotions, which further confirms that negative emotions in particular are less appropriate to exhibit in collectivistic societies.

It is apparent from this research that emotions in collectivistic and individualistic contexts look very different. Mesquita (2001) looked further at why this may be the case. She suggests that emotions in individualistic cultures advance the subjective, independent self. The opposite is true in collectivistic cultures. For collectivistic cultures, Mesquita (2001) claims that emotions have an objective quality in which people claim that if someone else were to experience what he or she experienced, the other would feel similar emotions. In this way, it further dissociates the interdependent self from feeling something individual and distinct; others would feel the same way, so those emotions are not individual or independent. In the context of capitalization, this makes sense. The enthusiastic active-constructive responses are advancing to the Western, individualistic participants from the Gable et al. (2004); the relationship gets stronger as a result. Meanwhile, this enthusiastic, emotional response may not be the most beneficial for collectivistic cultures. Mesquita’s (2011) findings suggest that the understated passive support that is not as emotional may be more beneficial for collectivistic cultures.
In addition to the Matsumoto studies (1990, 1992, 1993), there have been a wide variety of other studies examining display rules and the types of emotions that are considered appropriate in collectivistic and individualistic cultures. One such study had American and Japanese participants view highly stressful films first alone and then with an experimenter in the room. The Japanese participants were more likely to smile rather than display their true negative feelings about the film, when the experimenter was present in the room. When alone, both American and Japanese participants displayed the same amount of negative emotion (Ekman & Friesen, 1971). These results confirm what is known about display rules. Collectivistic cultures (i.e., the Japanese participants) were less likely to find it appropriate to display negative emotion (i.e., disgust in regards to the film) than their individualistic counterparts. The Japanese participants were more reserved with emotions when the experimenter was present, so as not to offend or cause conflict.

Yet another study had Asian American and European American women watch distressing movies and then discuss the film in same-ethnicity dyads. The researchers were looking to observe the physiological stress (i.e., blood pressure) produced by discussing emotions, the actual emotion expression of participants, and the emotion experience produced by the distressing films (Butler, Lee & Gross, 2009). The experimenters recorded blood pressure throughout the conversation and it was seen that as Asian Americans emoted over the distressing film in their conversation, their blood pressure increased. These results indicate that emotion expression in Asian Americans was positively correlated with physiological stress. Again, these results are likely the product of the degree of emotion and types of emotion that are considered appropriate in collectivistic cultures. Negative emotions in particular have been shown to be threatening to relationships, so it may not be surprising that the act of discussing negative
emotions in a same-ethnicity dyad was more stressful to the Asian American sample in this study. The Asian American participants likely felt that the relationship of the dyad was threatened by potential conflict resulting from the negative emotions.

Another aspect of emotion expression that is different for individualistic and collectivistic cultures is that of self-enhancement versus modesty. The idea of a modesty bias has been proposed to explain certain behaviors in collectivistic cultures. This bias suggests that collectivism lends individuals to accept negative feedback concerning them as more valid than positive feedback (Takata, 1987). One study observed an American and Chinese sample of employees and asked both groups to rate their job performance. The Chinese employees rated their job performance significantly lower than what their employers ranked them as compared to the American employees. The American employees tended to rank themselves higher in job performance than their employers did (Farh, Dobbins, & Cheng, 1991). This further supports the theory of a modesty bias. The evidence that a collectivistic culture would be less self-enhancing than the individualistic culture makes sense as it is known that collectivistic cultures do not want to upset group harmony or make anyone else uncomfortable—self-enhancement does just that. It also makes sense that individualistic cultures are more likely to self-enhance as this places more influence on the individual and their successes (Markus & Kitayama, 2010).

A particular tool that is useful in further understanding the cultural differences in emotion expression, particularly in the manner of expressing positive emotion, is the Affect Valuation Theory (AVT). Developed by Jeanne Tsai (2007), the AVT proposes that ideal affect, or the way that individuals believe that they are expected to feel, is different from actual affect, which is the way people actually feel. Cultural factors influence ideal affect more than actual affect (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006). Different levels of arousal are seen as valued in different cultures. The
arousal dimension refers to the feeling that the environment demands more energy and mobilization versus rest and recovery depending on the scenario. High arousal positive states (e.g., excitement and enthusiasm) have been shown to be more valued in individualistic cultures than low-arousal positive states (e.g., serene and calm). The opposite is true in collectivistic cultures, such that low-arousal positive states are more valued. With what is known about emotion expression in collectivistic versus individualistic cultures, it makes sense that this is the case. High-arousal positive affect suggests a more intense and expressive degree of emotion, while low-arousal positive affect suggests a subtler degree of emotion. The lower the degree of the emotion, even if it is a positive emotion, the less likely an interdependent individual is to upset or offend a member of the collective.

In one particular study, it was identified that European Americans and Asian Americans valued high-arousal positive affect more than Hong Kong Chinese. On the other hand, Asian Americans and Hong Kong Chinese value low-arousal positive affect more than European Americans (Tsai et al., 2006). The researchers utilized European Americans to represent the individualistic sample in this study, while the second-generation Asian Americans represented a sample that had influences of individualism (through contact with United States culture) and collectivism (through their parents who immigrated to the United States from an East Asian country). Finally, the Hong Kong Chinese participants represented the collectivistic culture. The results follow a pattern that would be expected of emotion expression, such that calm and serene emotions of low-arousal positive affect were favored for the collectivistic cultures.

Emotion expression during capitalization is important to keep in mind for the purpose of the current study. Different ways of capitalizing may be beneficial to different cultures largely as the result of the degree and strength of emotion expressivity norms. The capitalization responses
defined in the Gable et al. (2004) study fit well with the AFT definitions of high-arousal positive and low-arousal positive affects. Active constructive responses are higher in arousal as they are described as enthusiastic and stronger in emotion expression, while passive constructive responses are lower in arousal and described as quiet, understated, and more restrained in emotion expression. The fact that the active constructive responses are characterized by higher emotion expression and arousal suggests that this type of capitalization response may not be as beneficial to collectivistic cultures, which have been shown to be in favor of low-arousal positive affective states.

Individuals in different cultures, based on whether those cultures are higher in individualism or collectivism, likely would respond differently to the active constructive capitalization response that the Gable et al. (2004) study states is the most beneficial to relationship quality as defined by commitment, satisfaction, intimacy, and trust. This study reveals a lot about emotion expression in an individualistic culture, but lacks findings for a collectivistic culture. In other words, the paper may be culturally biased. The homogenous, Western sample that was utilized reported capitalizing with a friend or family member 70.8% of the time, which is likely more than a collectivistic sample would be capitalizing (Wang et al., 2010). The researchers also noted that active-constructive responses from the person a participant was capitalizing with were the most beneficial for relationship quality. Interestingly, the passive constructive responses were negatively correlated with relationship quality. The researchers suggest these results may be because the target of capitalization may be disinterested in the relationship, the target of capitalization may not care much about the particular event being shared, or the target may be jealous or self-absorbed. However, with what is known about culture and emotion expression, this may be because the capitalization response was simply lower in
emotion expressivity and arousal than the active constructive, which are more affirming of the individual. In other words, the less emotional, understated support of passive constructive responses may be more beneficial for collectivistic relationships based on the cultural values (e.g., group harmony, modesty) that have been mentioned thus far.

It is apparent that while the Gable et al. (2004) study was major in understanding capitalization, excluding culture leaves room for research. In the Wang et al. (2010) study, the Asian American participants reported sharing positive daily events with family and friends significantly fewer times throughout the week than their European American counterparts. Emotion expressivity is a large part of capitalization and in collectivistic cultures individuals likely tend to capitalize in a different way than what was described in the Gable et al. (2004) study. It is also likely that individuals from a collectivistic culture benefit from different capitalization responses, which is what the current study plans to investigate further.

**Happiness, Self-esteem, Relationship Satisfaction, and Relationship Closeness**

What effects do varying kinds of responses to capitalization attempts have on an individual’s well being and on their perception of the relationship? The Gable et al. (2004) study identified a variety of intrapersonal and interpersonal consequences of positive capitalization experiences including higher positive affect and greater life satisfaction. Perceiving that a close relationship partner is happy also contributes to higher relationship quality. Other capitalization literature has indicated that self-esteem, happiness, relationship closeness, and relationship satisfaction are areas where people can benefit from capitalizing with another person.

Happiness has been shown to positively correlate with positive capitalization experiences as these experiences make people feel cared for, validated, and understood. In a study with U.S. (i.e., individualistic) and Turkish (i.e., collectivistic) college students, U.S. students reported
higher levels of capitalization (Demir et al., 2013). This is to be expected as the U.S. students represent an individualistic sample. As previously seen, individualistic cultures are likely to seek social support in both positive and negative situations more than collectivistic cultures, as collectivistic cultures do not want to disrupt group harmony (Wang et al., 2010). However, it was found that capitalization was positively correlated with happiness in both samples, regardless of how often capitalization occurred (Demir et al., 2013). This indicates that regardless of culture, when individuals perceive the person they are capitalizing with to be genuinely supportive of the positive event, happiness increases.

Self-esteem has been shown to also affect the ways that capitalization responses are perceived. A person high in self-esteem perceives higher partner enthusiasm, while someone lower in self-esteem perceives lower partner enthusiasm following a capitalization attempt (Smith & Reis, 2012). Any sort of threat to the relationship can affect self-esteem, which is important to note, as it will consequently affect how capitalization responses are interpreted. Self-esteem affects the ability of a relationship to capitalize and build on good fortune, strengthen relationships, and move on from conflict (Smith & Reis, 2012). Based on these observations, it is expected that positive capitalization responses will boost an individual’s self-esteem regardless of whether they are from an individualistic or collectivistic culture.

Relationship satisfaction and capitalization attempts have been observed in romantic relationships to predict trajectories of relationships. Attentiveness and responsiveness to personal disclosures about success strengthen relationships and allow for greater increase in relationship satisfaction (Logan & Cobb, 2013). Relationship satisfaction and capitalization attempts in platonic, friendly or familial relationships have not been observed as often as romantic relationships, but it is predicted that they are the same. If an individual attempts to capitalize with
a family member or friend and they receive a positive capitalization response, then it is likely that relationship satisfaction will increase between the two.

Finally, relationship closeness is positively correlated with capitalization. The Gable et al. (2004) study found that relationship quality defined as commitment, satisfaction, trust, and intimacy was positively correlated with capitalization. Intimacy was found to be the most significantly correlated with attempts to capitalize with a partner, which suggests closeness is increasing when capitalizing with a close friend or family member goes well. Capitalization attempts are likely to be with a close friend, partner, or family member and a positive capitalization response would further enhance relationship quality and closeness, while a destructive capitalization response would do the opposite.

The Current Study

The current study aims to look at how different types of constructive capitalization responses benefit Asian American and European American college students. The Asian American students represent a collectivistic culture that endorses an interdependent self-construal. The European American students represent an individualistic culture that endorses an independent self-construal. This study aims to look at the effects of three different kinds of constructive capitalization responses on these different cultural groups: active constructive-collectivistic, active constructive-individualistic, and passive constructive (Gable et al., 2004). The current study has defined two different types of active constructive responses: an active constructive response that is collectivistically oriented and an active constructive response that is individualistically oriented. In addition to the active constructive-capitalistic and active constructive-individualistic responses, the current study includes a passive constructive response. The thought is that the passive constructive response will elicit different responses for Asian
Americans and European Americans based on their varying degrees of emotion expression and how this is in line with the Affect Valuation Theory (Tsai et al., 2006). The current study only looks at constructive capitalization responses since it is reasoned that destructive responses, both active and passive, will have negative effects on individuals, regardless of cultural group.

We are predicting certain dependent variables to be affected depending on which capitalization response a participant receives as well as their cultural group. The dependent variables for the current study (i.e., Self-esteem, Happiness, Relationship Satisfaction, and Relationship Closeness) were selected as they represent both individual (i.e., Self-esteem and Happiness) and dyadic (i.e., Relationship Closeness and Relationship Satisfaction) variables that can be affected by the act of seeking social support, regardless of whether it is in the case of a positive or negative event. These dependent variables will likely be affected by the social act of sharing with another.

The current study focuses on an overarching research question: are there cultural differences in the positive effects of different constructive responses to capitalization as the result of type of constructive capitalization response and cultural group? We are expecting to see a main effect of cultural group (i.e., European American or Asian American) on our dependent variables, such that European Americans will be higher on the dependent variables than Asian Americans. Based on the review of literature, we are predicting that Asian Americans will score lower on Happiness and Self-esteem due to cultural variables including modesty bias and emotion expression. The modesty bias that is present in Asian American cultures (Takata, 1987) might affect the levels of Self-esteem that Asian Americans deem appropriate or in line with group harmony. Similarly, the suppression in emotion expression that is seen in Asian American cultures may affect the levels of happiness (Matsumoto, 1990). Finally, because European
American/individualistic cultures do not place as high of a value on group harmony, a constructive capitalization response is not necessarily expected. By receiving a positive response that is not necessarily expected, we predict that Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Closeness will increase more for European Americans.

In addition, we are predicting an effect of condition (i.e., active constructive-collectivistic, active constructive-individualistic, passive constructive) on the dependent variables, such that those participants in the two active constructive groups will be higher in reports for the dependent variables than those participants in the passive constructive condition. Gable et al. (2004) witnessed this phenomenon, so we expect to see this occur in our sample as well. We created two different active constructive responses for the purpose of this study (active constructive-collectivistic, active constructive-individualistic). We are interested to see the effects these have on the dependent variables for both cultural groups.

We expect to observe an interaction effect between cultural group and constructive capitalization response on our dependent variables. Within the interaction, it is hypothesized that Asian Americans (AAs) will find passive constructive responses to capitalization more beneficial than European Americans (EAs), while European Americans will benefit more from active constructive responses. Second, it is hypothesized that Asian Americans will benefit more from active constructive responses that are collectivistically oriented, while European Americans will benefit more from active constructive responses that are more individualistically oriented.

Finally, if we find the predicted significant interaction between cultural group (EA, AA) and type of constructive capitalization response (AC-C, AC-I, PC), than the group differences may be mediated by different cultural variables. We have identified construals of self (i.e.,
independence and interdependence), emotion expression, modesty bias, and harmony values to
determine which groups find which constructive capitalization responses more or less beneficial.

**Methods**

**Participants**

A group of young, college-aged adults was recruited to participate in this study (n = 79).
Ages ranged from 15-23 (M = 19.4, SD = 1.49) and approximately 50% of the sample was
comprised of college freshman (n = 40), although sophomores, juniors, and seniors were also
included in the sample. Participants were male (n = 17) and female (n = 62) students from the Bi-
College Consortium comprised of Haverford College and Bryn Mawr College.

There were a total of 47 European Americans recruited for the current study. It was
important that the European American sample was exposed to primarily mainstream American
culture. Therefore, the eligibility criteria for the European American sample required that the
participant and their parents were both born in the United States (i.e., third generation and
beyond). The study recruited participants of European American descent who were third
generation (n = 4), fourth generation (n = 11), and fifth generation or beyond (n = 32).

There were a total of 32 Asian American participants recruited for the current study; the
eligibility criteria were different for these participants. For the purpose of this study, Asian
Americans needed to be exposed to traditional Confucian-based values, typical of many
collectivistic Asian cultures. Thus, the recruitment included first generation (n = 19) Asian
Americans (i.e., born in Asian and immigrated to the United States) and second generation (n =
13) Asian American (i.e., parents were born in Asia and immigrated to the United States, but the
participant was born in the United States). The Asian American sample was comprised of East
Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese) and Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese,
Malaysian, Filipino) backgrounds. Of the 32 Asian/Asian Americans in the sample, 18 were Chinese, five were Korean, four were Japanese, two were Taiwanese, two were Vietnamese, and one was Filipino. Table 1.1 identifies more information about the current sample recruited for the study.

Participants were recruited from a human subject pool of students taking introductory psychology courses at Haverford College. Fliers placed around Haverford College and Bryn Mawr College campuses, various Asian affinity groups (e.g., Haverford Asian Students Association, HYPHEN—Bryn Mawr College’s Asian Students Association, the Bi-Co Japanese Culture Club, Bryn Mawr’s Japan Student Association, etc.), and postings on Facebook were used to reach out to more participants. As incentive for this study, participants received compensation for their participation. Introductory psychology students recruited through the human subjects pool received a credit towards their introductory course, while all other participants received a $10 Amazon gift card.

**Design**

This was a 2 (culture [European American x Asian American] ) x 3 (constructive capitalization response [active constructive-collectivistic, active constructive-individualistic, passive constructive]) between subjects factorial design using an online questionnaire platform. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three capitalization response conditions: active constructive-collectivistic (n = 27), active constructive-individualistic (n = 27), and passive constructive (n = 25) prior to beginning the survey. In total, the study was comprised of four major sections. The first section contained a variety of questionnaires that aimed to evaluate potential confounds to control for (e.g., mental health and personality traits). The second section captured naturalistic best and worst capitalization experiences with open-ended questions that
were coded by experimenters to examine the qualities of what make capitalization experiences good or bad. The third section contained more questionnaires that aimed to better understand cultural values that could serve as potential mediators in any of the group differences. Finally, the fourth section was the experimental manipulation that evaluated responses to capitalization scenarios written by the researchers.

There were two independent variables that were tested in this study. The first independent variable was cultural group with two levels: Asian American (AA) and European American (EA). The second independent variable was capitalization condition, which contained three different levels: active constructive-collectivistic (AC-C), active constructive-individualistic (AC-I), and passive constructive (PC). There were four different dependent variables: Self-esteem, Happiness, Relationship Satisfaction, and Relationship Closeness.

Procedure

Participants were sent a link to the study with an identification number to keep their identity anonymous. The participant began by filling out the online consent form. After consenting to participate, participants moved onto a set of questionnaires that evaluated mental health, social anxiety, and a variety of personality factors. These questionnaires included: the Big Five Inventory, the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. The idea was that these questionnaires would be able to help control for any potential differences in the reporting of capitalization attempts/responses due to high social anxiety, depressive symptoms, high openness or extraversion, etc.

Open-Ended Capitalization Free Response Section. Following the initial questionnaires was an open-ended free response section that was coded by researchers. Participants were asked about their best and worst experiences sharing a positive event, capitalizing, with someone.
Participants were asked to first reflect on their best experience sharing good news with another person:

“Take a few minutes to think back on your BEST experience with sharing with another person about a personal positive event. This positive event may have been an achievement of some kind, something interpersonal or relationship-based, or any other positive occurrence that has personally affected you.”

The participants were then asked to briefly describe the event, the person they shared this event with, why they chose to share that event with that person, what the person said or did when the event was shared with them, and how their response personally affected the participant.

After the participant had answered those responses, they were presented with the same open-ended prompt, but this time the prompt addressed the worst experience participants ever had when sharing good news. The prompt asked the participants to:

“Take a few minutes to think back on your WORST experience with sharing with another person about a personal positive event…”

The rest of the prompt looked exactly the same as the best capitalization experience prompt and asked the same questions about the experience. The researchers used the same coding manual to code the responses for recurring themes.

Participants were time locked on the screen for five minutes for both the best experience and worst experience prompts to encourage more writing. The researchers developed a coding manual to assess recurring themes in the responses (Appendix A). Both researchers reviewed the responses independently to identify recurring themes that were observed in the responses for each question; they then met together and with an advisor to refine the coding definitions. Interrater reliability was attained as the two coders separately coded the first ten responses in two sets of five. After each set of five, the coders met to discuss and reconcile any discrepancies, make any adjustments and refine the coding manual, and to calculate inter-rate reliability. After both
researchers had coded the first ten responses, the coders had reached an acceptable level of reliability and continued coding the remaining responses independently. The coders continued to consult with each other and their advisor throughout the coding process if any questions regarding responses arose.

The researchers identified different recurring themes for each of the four questions. For the first question, “please describe the positive event you shared”, the researchers identified three “types” of capitalization situations: achievement, interpersonal, and network. The next question asked, “please tell us about the person you shared about the positive event with”. The researchers identified four categories of people that participants were sharing with: family, peers, romantic partners, and mentors. These categories were made based on the findings of previous social support literature (Wang et al., 2010). The third question was directed towards the capitalization response the participant received by asking, “what did this person say and/or do when you shared about your positive event”. The researchers used the capitalization responses developed by Gable et al. (2004) as well as the active constructive responses that were developed for the current study to code this section: active constructive-collectivistic, active constructive-individualistic, passive constructive, active destructive, and passive constructive. Finally, the last question: “How did their response affect you? What did you think, feel, and/or do after hearing their response” aimed to understand the effects that the capitalization response had on the relationship and on the self. The researchers coded these responses on a scale of one (extremely positive) to five (extremely negative) in order to allow for a neutral response if the participant did not mention either the relationship or the self in their response.

For the best capitalization responses, the researchers coded the responses to each question using the coding manual. Of note: the only capitalization responses that were coded in the third
question were the constructive capitalization responses; there were no recorded destructive responses (no one identified their best experience sharing good news as when they received a destructive response). To determine reliability for the coding manual for the best capitalization experience section, the type of positive event the participants were sharing used Cohen’s kappa for categorical codes (i.e., achievement, interpersonal, network; kappa = 1.00) to determine reliability, whom the participant was sharing the positive event with used Cohen’s kappa for categorical codes (i.e., family, a peer, a romantic partner, a mentor; kappa = 1.00), and the type of capitalization response displayed by the other person used Cohen’s kappa for categorical codes (i.e., active constructive-capitalistic, active constructive-individualistic, passive constructive; kappa = .78). How the capitalization response positively/negatively affected the relationship used an Intraclass Correlation Coefficient for continuous codes (ICC = .85) and how capitalization response positively/negatively affected the self used an Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC = .84) on a scale of “extremely positive” to “extremely negative”.

After the positive capitalization experience responses had been coded, the researchers moved onto the next section with responses regarding participants’ worst experiences with capitalization. Similar to the previous section, this section only coded capitalization responses (the third question) with destructive responses; no one reported a constructive response as their worst experience with sharing good news. For the type of positive event the participant shared (i.e., achievement, interpersonal, network) a Cohen’s kappa for categorical codes was utilized (kappa = .44), whom the participant shared the positive event with (i.e., family, a peer, a romantic partner, a mentor) utilized Cohen’s kappa for categorical codes (kappa = 1.00), and the type of capitalization response displayed by the other person (i.e. active destructive, passive destructive) utilized Cohen’s kappa for categorical codes (kappa = .64). How the responses
positively/negatively affected the relationship \((ICC = .88)\) and the self \((ICC = .92)\) on a scale of “extremely positive” to “extremely negative” utilized Interclass Correlation Coefficients for continuous codes. The superficially low Cohen’s kappa values that were observed for the type of event shared and the type of capitalization response for the worst capitalization experience were the result of asymmetrical matrices that reflected a differential use of response categories by the coders. Further analyses yielded percent agreements that were much higher in reliability for both (type of event shared = 99%; type of capitalization response = 85%).

**Cultural Value Scales.** The open-ended responses were followed by a series of questionnaires measuring cultural values selected to identify potential mediators that might aid in explaining the expected differences between the independent and dependent variables. The study utilized four scales that investigated four potential mediators (i.e., self-construal, harmony values, emotion expressiveness, and modesty bias). These scales included: the Singelis Self-Construal Scale, the Harmony Values Scale, the Emotion Expressiveness Scale, and the Modest Behavior Scale.

**Dependent Variable Measures.** Following the cultural value scales, the participants were presented with a short hypothetical scenario explaining a time when they attempted to capitalize with a friend, followed by their friend’s response. These scenarios differed depending on which constructive capitalization response the participant had been randomly assigned to: active constructive individualistic (AC-I), active constructive collectivistic (AC-C), or passive constructive (PC). Four different self-report questions each measuring one of the four dependent variables (Happiness, Self-Esteem, Relationship Satisfaction, and Relationship Closeness) followed the scenarios. All three scenarios started out the same way:

“You just found out you were offered an extremely competitive internship. You go to lunch with your friend, Cameron, and tell them about your opportunity”.

The name Cameron was chosen for each scenario as it is somewhat gender-neutral to rule out a potential cross-sex interaction confound. The difference for each of the scenarios is what Cameron says in response to the capitalization attempt. In the active constructive-individualistic scenario, Cameron says:

“You are so talented! I am so proud of you and how hard you have worked! This will be great for you and your job search next year!”

This response is individualistically oriented as it focuses on solo effort and how this experience will add to the individual’s further success in the future. In addition, the response focuses specifically on traits (i.e., you are so talented), which is a fundamental aspect of an independent self-construal.

In the active constructive-collectivistic manipulation, Cameron says:

“Your parents will be so proud of you; I know they’ve been a huge support system! You’re giving the school a great name!”

This response endorses an interdependent self-construal. The success and future of the individual in this scenario reflects back on the collectives and relationships of the individual, which is a key concept of the interdependent self-construal. In addition, interdependence focuses on connections with others, such that one can take the perspective of others and adjust accordingly.

The passive constructive condition gives no verbal cues, but rather, Cameron gives nonverbal cues to indicate excitement:

“It is clear that Cameron is pleased for you. They smile and nod.”

This response is the quiet, understated support that is characteristic of passive constructive responses.

A set of questions followed the scenario each participant saw that measured the dependent variables. These questions were the same for each participant, regardless of which
capitalization response scenario he or she was randomly assigned to: “How positive do you feel about yourself?” (e.g., Self-esteem), “How good do you feel?” (e.g., Happiness), “How satisfied are you with your friend’s response?” (e.g., Relationship Satisfaction), and “How close do you feel to this person?” (e.g., Relationship Closeness).

Materials and Measures

The first questionnaire gathered demographic information about our sample. This determined the participants’ sex, age, year in college, ethnicity, generation, etc.

Following the demographic questionnaire, three questionnaires were utilized to measure personality traits and mental health: the Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999), the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (Mattick & Clarke, 1998), and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977). These scales were intended assess general mental health or anxiety about social situations as well as factors that may affect how often participants choose to capitalize or how they interpret constructive capitalization responses.

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) measures levels of neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, extraversion, and conscientiousness (John & Srivastava, 1999; α = .69). Certain traits such as openness may affect how much people choose to capitalize. For example, people low in openness may be less likely to capitalize regardless of what culture they are in. Neuroticism may affect how people interpret responses to capitalization. For example, people high in neuroticism may interpret active constructive responses as sarcastic or insincere. This scale contains 12 items ranked one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) for each of the five of the personality traits that are measured.

The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale measures the fear of general social interaction with the items corresponding to DSM criteria for social phobia (Mattick & Clarke, 1989; α = .93). The
scale contains 19 items (e.g. “When mixing socially, I am uncomfortable”) ranked one (*not at all*) to five (*extremely*).

The Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale assesses a variety of behaviors associated with depression and aims to investigate how often they have happened within the past week (Radloff, 1977; $\alpha = .72$). There are 20 items (e.g. “I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends”) ranked rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day) to most or all of the time (5-7 days).

Four questionnaires were utilized after the open-ended response section to examine cultural variables that may be the potential mediators of predicted cultural group differences on the dependent variables: the Emotion Expressiveness Scale (King & Emmons, 1990), the Singelis Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994), the Harmony Values Scale (Wang et al., 2010), and the Modest Behavior Scale (Chen et al., 2009).

The Emotion Expressiveness Scale measures ambivalence or conflict towards emotion expression and has been shown to be positively correlated with certain well-being measures (King & Emmons, 1990; $\alpha = .76$). This is a sixteen-item scale ranked one (*not at all characteristic*) to seven (*extremely characteristic*). The scale includes measures such as, “When I am angry people around me usually know”.

The Singelis Self-Construal Scale measures an individual’s interdependent and independent construals of self (Singelis, 1994; $\alpha = .61$). An independent self-construal is centered around an individual’s own thoughts, feelings, and actions, while an interdependent self is focused on interactions with others and how these add to relationships and connections. While cultures are typically defined as being either independent or interdependent, it is typical for someone to have aspects of both self-construals, which is what this scale measures. The items are
measured on a one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree) scale. There are 12
interdependent items (e.g., “My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me”) and
12 independent items (e.g., “I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards”).

The Harmony Values Scale was adapted in the Wang et al. (2010; α = .85) study and
contains two subscales: the social harmony subscale and the emotion harmony subscale. The
social harmony subscale aims to measure the maintenance of group harmony through social and
communication behaviors. The emotional harmony subscale aims to measure the maintenance of
group harmony through emotion expression and restraint. Both subscales are ranked one
(strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). The social harmony subscale contains four items
such as, “Even when I strongly disagree with someone close to me, I avoid an argument”. The
emotional harmony subscale is also comprised of four items including, “It is better to hold one’s
emotions inside than to burden others by expressing them”.

The Modest Behavior Scale aims to measure modesty themes including self-effacement,
other-enhancement, and avoidance of attention seeking (Chen et al., 2009; α = .78). This scale
contains 32 items (e.g., “I admit my own faults and apologize when someone criticizes me”) ranked one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree).

The four questions that were used to test the dependent variables, “How positive do you
feel about yourself?” (Self-esteem), “How good do you feel?” (Happiness), “How satisfied are
you with your friend’s response?” (Relationship Satisfaction), and “How close do you feel to this
person?” (Relationship Closeness), were all on a self-report scale of one (i.e., extremely
negative, extremely bad, extremely dissatisfied, or extremely distant) to 100 (i.e., extremely
positive, extremely good, extremely satisfied, extremely close).

**Results**
The following section presents the results gathered from this study. The descriptive statistics are presented first, followed by bivariate correlations amongst all variables. The results are presented for the full sample of participants, but are also separated into Asian American (AAs) and European American (EAs) subgroups (Table 2.1). Lastly, the analyses of variance results from the experimental section of the study are reported.

**Descriptive Statistics and Group Differences**

Table 2.1 presents descriptive statistics and group differences on self-report variables using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the full sample (European Americans and Asian Americans; N = 79). In addition, the sample was split in order to compare cultural group differences between the European Americans (EAs) and Asian American (AAs) for self-report variables, coding variables, and outcome variables.

For personality traits, the groups were not significantly different for levels extraversion \((F(1, 77) = .01, p = .921)\) or on agreeableness \((F(1, 77) = .02, p = .897)\). In addition, the groups were not significantly different on openness \((F(1, 77) = .00, p = .969)\), nor were they significantly different on neuroticism \((F(1, 77) = .34, p = .564)\). However, there was a trend towards a significant difference between groups on conscientiousness \((F(1, 77) = 3.75, p = .057)\), such that EAs \((M = 3.68, SD = .58)\) scored higher on conscientiousness than AAs \((M = 3.44, SD = .48)\). There were no significant group differences on depressive symptoms, \(F(1, 77) = .440, p = .509\), or social anxiety, \(F(1, 77) = .632, p = .429\).

The coded, open-ended section produced five variables: the type of event that was shared (Type Positive), who the event was shared with (Who Positive), what type of capitalization response they received (Capitalization Positive), how it made them feel about their relationship
with the person they shared with (Relationship Positive), and how the capitalization response made them feel about themselves (Self Positive).

Because they were coded categorically, the Type Positive, Who Positive, and Capitalization Positive variables were analyzed using chi square tests of independence. In addition, percent deviation statistics were computed to analyze patterns for significant chi square effects. A chi square test was run on the Type Positive variable to examine the patterns of reporting achievement events on interpersonal events for EAs versus AAs. Results showed a marginally significant pattern, such that EAs shared achievement events more frequently (+5.70%) and interpersonal events less frequently (-8.40%) than what would be expected due to chance alone ($\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 2.86, p = .091$). Conversely, AAs shared achievement events less frequently (-28.9%) and interpersonal effects more frequently (+42.2%) than what would be expected by chance. The Who Positive variable yielded a statistically significant pattern, such that EAs shared positive events most frequently with their family (+27.1%) and less frequently with peers (-28.0%), romantic partners (.90%), and mentors (-66.4%) as compared to what would be expected by chance ($\chi^2(3, N = 79) = 10.87, p \leq .01$). Conversely, AAs shared the most with their peers (41.1%) and mentors (97.5%) and less with their family (-39.8%) and romantic partners (-1.30%) when compared to what would be expected by chance. Finally, the Capitalization Positive variable was analyzed using a chi squared test, which revealed no statistical pattern ($\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 2.20, p = .138$), such that neither EAs nor AAs reported active constructive-individualistic or active constructive-capitalistic responses at a rate different than what would be expected by chance.

The continuous Relationship Positive and Self Positive different variables were coded on a scale (1 = extremely positive, 2 = positive, 3 = neutral, 4 = negative, 5 = extremely negative).
The Relationship Positive ($M = 2.03$, $SD = .83$) variable was not statistically different between EAs and AAs, $F(1, 77) = .800$, $p = .374$. The Self Positive variable revealed a marginally statistically significant difference ($F(1, 77) = 3.03$, $p = .086$) between EAs ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .81$) and AAs ($M = 1.78$, $SD = .75$), such that AAs reported feeling more positive about themselves than EAs when receiving a constructive capitalization response (e.g., feeling happier, increase in self-esteem).

The same five codes were applied for the WORST capitalization experience: the type of event that was shared (Type Negative), who the event was shared with (Who Negative), what type of capitalization response they received (Capitalization Negative), how it made them feel about their relationship with the person they shared with (Relationship Negative), and how the capitalization response made them feel about themselves (Self Negative).

The Type Negative variable was analyzed using a chi squared test, which revealed no significant pattern ($\chi^2(1, N = 79) = .112$, $p = .945$), such that neither EAs nor AAs reported sharing achievement or interpersonal events at a rate different than what was expected by chance. The Who Negative variable revealed marginally significant pattern ($\chi^2(3, N = 79) = 7.50$, $p = .059$); EAs shared more with family (+10.1%) and peers (+7.70%) and less with romantic partners (-28.0%) and mentors (-100%) at a rate greater than what would be expected by chance. Conversely, AAs reported sharing events with their romantic partners (+41.1%) and mentors (146.9%) more and family (-14.9%) and peers (-11.4%) less than a rate that would be expected by chance. Finally, the Capitalization Negative variable was analyzed with a chi squared test, which revealed no pattern ($\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 1.50$, $p = .221$), such that neither EAs nor AAs reported receiving active destructive or passive destructive responses when they shared their event at a rate any different than chance.
The Relationship Negative and Self Negative variables were coded the same way as the first open-ended question (1 = extremely positive, 2 = positive, 3 = neutral, 4 = negative, 5 = extremely negative). The Relationship Negative variable ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .75$) was not significantly different between EAs and AAs, $F(1, 77) = .12, p = .734$. The Self Negative variable ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .82$) did not reveal any statistically significant differences between EAs and AAs ($F(1, 77) = .26, p = .614$).

The one-way ANOVA revealed that there were no group differences on the Emotion Expressiveness scale ($F(1, 77) = 2.16, p = .145$). The Singelis Self-Construal Scale is comprised of interdependence measures and independence measures; the ANOVA revealed a marginally significant difference between EAs ($M = 4.79$, $SD = .75$) and AAs ($M = 4.51$, $SD = .61$) on levels of independent self-construal ($F(1, 77) = 3.02, p = .086$), but no significant difference between EAs and AAs on interdependent self-construal ($F(1, 77) = .11, p = .740$). The group differences between EAs and AAs were such that EAs ($M = 4.79$, $SD = .75$) were higher in levels of independent self-construal than AAs ($M = 4.51$, $SD = .61$). The Harmony Values Scale is also divided into two subscales: the Emotional Harmony Subscale and the Group Harmony Subscale. The Emotional Harmony subscale revealed a statistically significant difference between EAs and AAs ($F(1, 77) = 4.46, p = .038$), such that EAs ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.48$) value emotional harmony within a group less than AAs ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.37$) value emotional harmony. The Group Harmony subscale ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.21$) revealed no significant differences between EAs and AAs in the value of group harmony dynamics, $F(1, 77) = .327, p = .569$. Finally, the Modesty Behavior Scale ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .29$) revealed no significant differences between EAs and AAs on this particular cultural value, $F(1, 77) = 2.01, p = .160$. 


There were no significant differences between EAs and AAs for reports of Happiness 
\( (F(1, 77) = .01, p = .941) \), Self-esteem \( (F(1, 77) = 2.19, p = .143) \), Relationship Satisfaction \( (F(1, 77) = .37, p = .546) \), or Relationship Closeness \( (F(1, 77) = 2.40, p = .126) \).

*Bivariate Correlations Among Self-report Variables*

Several bivariate correlations were conducted to observe relationships between variables for the sample of participants. Table 3.1 depicts the full list of bivariate correlates for all of the variables discussed in this study; however, this section focuses on particular significant correlations that involved the self-report variables and dependent variables.

An interdependent self-construal was positively correlated with agreeableness \( (r(77) = .25, p = .024) \), but was negatively correlated with extraversion \( (r(77) = -.26, p = .021) \). In addition, interdependence was positively related to modesty behavior \( (r(77) = .41, p < .005) \), emotional harmony values \( (r(77) = .37, p < .005) \), and group harmony values \( (r(77) = .43, p < .005) \). An independent self-construal was positively correlated with emotion expression \( (r(77) = .41, p < .001) \) and negatively correlated with group harmony values \( (r(77) = .26 p = .020) \).

Emotion expression was negatively correlated with emotional harmony values \( (r(77) = .34, p < .001) \), and group harmony values \( (r(77) = .36, p < .001) \). Modesty behavior had a positive relationship with emotional harmony \( (r(77) = .32, p < .001) \), group harmony \( (r(77) = .36, p < .001) \), the Relationship Satisfaction dependent variable \( (r(77) = .29, p < .001) \), and the Relationship Closeness dependent variable \( (r(77) = .36, p < .001) \). Social interaction anxiety had a positive relationship with emotional harmony values \( (r(77) = .26, p = .020) \) and group harmony values \( (r(77) = .38, p < .001) \). The Emotional Harmony Values subscale and Group Harmony Values subscale were positively correlated \( (r(77) = .39, p < .005) \). The Group Harmony Values
subscale was positively correlated with the relationship closeness dependent variable ($r(77) = .26$, $p = .021$).

Happiness, Self-esteem, Relationship Satisfaction, and Relationship Closeness were positively correlated with each other. In addition, all of these self-report variables were all positively associated with agreeableness.

*Main Effects of Cultural Group and Constructive Capitalization Condition Response on Dependent Variables*

In order to examine how cultural group and capitalization response condition affected our proposed dependent variables (Happiness, Self-esteem, Relationship Satisfaction, Relationship Closeness), we conducted a 2 (culture [European American x Asian American]) x 3 (constructive capitalization response [active constructive-collectivistic, active constructive-individualistic, passive constructive]) ANCOVA and controlled for sex, age, independent self-construal, conscientiousness, and emotional harmony values. These were found to be significantly different between cultural groups in the one-way ANOVA analyses previously discussed, so they were factored in as covariates.

There was a marginally significant main effect of cultural group (Figure 2.3) on Relationship Closeness, $F(2, 76) = 3.15, p = .080$, with European Americans reporting feeling closer to the person they were capitalizing with ($M = 75.2, SE = 2.75$) as compared to Asian Americans ($M = 67.3, SE = 3.40$). There were no statistically significant main effects of cultural group on Happiness ($F(2, 76) = .15, p = .697$), Self-esteem ($F(1, 77) = 2.38, p = .128$), or Relationship Satisfaction ($F(2, 76) = 1.12, p = .297$).

There was a main effect of constructive response condition on Relationship Satisfaction, $F(2, 76) = 3.83, p < .05$, and a marginally significant effect of condition on Self-Esteem, $F(2, 76)$
An LSD post-hoc test was conducted in order to understand the main effect of condition on Relationship Satisfaction (Figure 2.1). The results revealed that AC-I responses (M = 88.0, SE = 4.38) were significantly higher than PC responses (M = 69.6, SE = 4.83; p < .010). In addition, AC-C responses (M = 77.6, SE = 4.24) were marginally lower than AC-I responses (M = 88.0, SE = 4.38; p = .053). In addition, LSD post-hoc analyses were run to better understand the marginal main effect of condition on Self-esteem. Results revealed that AC-I responses (M = 86.7, SE = 3.21) produced higher self-reports of Self-esteem than PC responses (M = 75.7, SE = 3.54; p < .010; Figure 2.2). There were no statistically significant main effects of condition on Happiness, F(2, 76) = .244, p = .784, or on Relationship Closeness, F(2, 76) = .691, p = .505.

Interaction Effects Between Cultural Group and Constructive Capitalization Response Condition on Dependent Variables

There was a marginally significant interaction effect between cultural group and constructive capitalization response condition on Relationship Satisfaction, F(2, 76) = 2.37, p = .101 (Figure 1.3). For EAs, AC-I responses (M = 95.6, SE = 5.48) yielded higher self-reports of Relationship Satisfaction than PC responses (M = 64.4, SE = 6.05). For AAs, this same effect was not observed; AC-I responses (M = 80.4, SE = 6.90) still yielded a higher self-report of Relationship Satisfaction as compared to PC responses (M = 74.9, SE = 7.13), but this difference was not nearly as great as what was observed in EAs. LSD post-hoc analyses revealed that only the simple effect of AC-I and PC conditions for EAs were significantly different (p < .010) for the interaction.

Mediation Model
We hypothesized several different cultural variables as potential mediators (construal of self, emotion expression, modesty bias, harmony values) between cultural group and the dependent variables. There were no significant relationships found between the predicted cultural variables and cultural group or the dependent variables and cultural group, so we did not pursue the mediation model any further.

**Discussion**

This study was designed to look at how different types of constructive capitalization responses (active constructive individualistic, active constructive collectivistic, and passive constructive) and cultural group (European Americans and Asian Americans) affected different interpersonal and intrapersonal outcome variables (Happiness, Self-esteem, Relationship Satisfaction, and Relationship Closeness). Previous research has observed capitalization as a form of social support, but most of this research has been limited to Western, individualistic cultures (Gable et al., 2004; Gable & Reis, 2010). What little research that has been done regarding capitalization while also accounting for cultural group differences has been ineffective at examining the different effects of constructive capitalization responses that are more beneficial for different cultural groups (Demir et al., 2013).

While previous literature has indicated that active constructive responses yield the most beneficial effects on various outcome variables (Gable et al., 2004), the current study sought to better understand if this was the result of a lack of cultural diversity in the participant sample. Thus, the current study employed a more diverse sample with AAs and EAs representing collectivistic and individualistic cultures. We hypothesized that Asian Americans (AAs) would find passive constructive responses to be more beneficial than European Americans (EAs). In addition, EAs would find active constructive responses to be more beneficial than AAs. These
hypotheses were designed based on the knowledge of culture and social support, as well as levels of emotion expression and modesty bias that are observed in collectivistic vs. individualistic cultures. (Chen et al., 2009; Matsumoto, 1990). In addition to observing the differences between passive constructive (PC) and active constructive responses, we aimed to learn if certain types of active constructive responses would yield greater benefit to each cultural group. As a result, we chose to create two different subtypes of active constructive capitalization responses: active constructive individualistic (AC-I) and active constructive capitalistic (AC-C). Both were enthusiastic, vocal responses, but one focused more on the individual (AC-I), while the other was more focused on collectives and groups (AC-C). We hypothesized that the AC-I response would yield greater benefit for the EA sample than the AC-C response and that the AA sample would benefit more from the AC-C responses.

We used self-report questionnaires, open-ended free response questions, and an experimental section with a short scenario and self-report questions to better understand what might affect what sort of capitalization responses are the most beneficial for different cultural groups. Our range of data collection techniques allowed for us to observe culture group differences when capitalizing from a variety of different angles. The open-ended coding section allowed for us to get free responses in which participants could describe events when they capitalized, who they capitalized with, and how it made them feel. The experimental design section allowed for us to manipulate constructive capitalization responses and observe the different effects that this had on the cultural groups.

**Cultural Differences in Self-Report Variables**

AAs and EAs were not significantly different for any of the personality traits that were examined using the Big 5, except for conscientiousness. Further analyses revealed that EAs were
higher in conscientiousness than AAs, which is actually contrary to most literature (Triandis, 2001). Previous literature examining cultural differences and the Big Five Inventory has indicated a negative relationship between collectivism and openness. In addition, a positive relationship has been noted between collectivism and conscientiousness and agreeableness as well as a negative relationship with extraversion (Triandis, 2001; Realo, Allik, & Vadi, 2007). The fact that our sample did not exhibit these typical findings may be due to the nature of our sample. All participants were recruited from a small, academically challenging, liberal arts college. Thus, the EA sample we recruited may have been more conscientious than a typical EA sample because of their academic responsibilities at such a rigorous school.

Following the initial self-report questionnaire analyses, we coded all of the free response sections and ran analyses. First, we discovered that when reporting about best experiences capitalizing, EAs tended to share achievement events more than interpersonal events. In other words, they shared events more frequently that were defined by individual success (e.g., academic successes, career/growth successes, college acceptances, etc.) as opposed to something that happened involving another person (i.e., celebrating an anniversary, getting asked on a date, family vacation, etc.). AAs shared interpersonal events more frequently than achievement-oriented events. As seen in previous literature, individualistic cultures tend to be focused more on the individual traits and successes. This is in contrast with collectivistic cultures that place heavy emphasis on the collective and groups that a person is involved with, rather than on the individual themself (Triandis, 1995). Someone from a collectivistic culture is likely more interested in advancing the group than themselves. Thus, this finding is interesting as the EAs (i.e., individualistic culture) are choosing to focus and capitalize on events focused on themselves as an individual. AAs are also capitalizing on individual-oriented, achievement
events, but they are far more likely than EAs to choose to share an event that occurred that involves another person. Based on previous literature, we would have expected AAs to share more about events that involve the successes/achievements of a group or collective (i.e., network events). However, it is interesting to note that while the interpersonal events that AAs were sharing more frequently are individually-oriented, they involve another person. The AAs are choosing to share good news about themselves that involved another member of a group/collective. This finding was observed less frequently in EAs, who chose to capitalize more about individual events that did not involve another person (i.e., achievement events).

When describing their best experience capitalizing, it was observed that EAs were more likely to share with family members as opposed to peers, romantic partners or mentors during a positive capitalization experience. In contrast, AAs were far less likely to go to their family members and were much more likely to go to peers or mentors to capitalize. Again, due to the nature of collectivism, the AAs may have been less likely to go to family to share positive events as this could disrupt group harmony with a more important, closer relationship (Wang et al., 2010). By sharing good news with family members, AAs may feel as though they are making members of the collective feel obligated to compliment or congratulate. This may come off as boastful, straying from the modesty bias that is typically observed in collectivistic cultures (Takata, 1987; Fahr et al., 1991).

Finally, while not significant, trends indicated that EAs were more likely to report receiving AC-I responses than AAs. In addition, AAs reported receiving AC-C responses in more instances than what could be expected by chance. This initial finding suggests that different types of active constructive responses may be more or less experienced from culture to culture. With what is known about cultural group differences and emotion expression, these trends
support our initial predictions. However, these findings were not significant, so it is important to continue research in this area. While both AC-I and AC-C responses are technically active constructive and thus require some amount of emotion expression greater than passive constructive responses, the emotion expression in the AC-C responses is not directed at an individual, but rather at a group/collective. These responses were designed to focus on the advancement of a group as the result of the achievement of another. Literature has shown that higher levels of emotion expression are not observed in collectivistic cultures (Matsumoto, 1990; King & Emmons, 1990) as this can upset emotional harmony in the group. However, when the emotion expression is directed towards the collective, rather than the individual, this may be more acceptable. On the other hand, individualistic cultures are more likely to be higher in emotion expression (Matsumoto, 1990), which is why the AC-I responses are more beneficial for EAs.

When describing a bad capitalization experience (i.e., a time when the participant attempted to share good news, but received a passive destructive or active destructive response), EAs were more likely to report the capitalization attempt was with peers more so than with their family. AAs were still more likely to be sharing with peers. It is interesting that when reporting their worst experiences sharing good news, EAs reported this occurred when sharing with their friends. Previous literature has documented that when EAs receive a positive response to a capitalization attempt with a friend, the increase in positive relationship outcomes is significant (Demir et al., 2013). EAs may receive more destructive responses from their peers as it is not the norm for their peers to be concerned about upsetting group harmony. On the contrary, EA parents are far less likely to be as destructive in response to capitalization attempts. Child-rearing literature has documented the idea that EA parents are more focused on self-esteem building and
comfort, while AA parents are less accessible (their parenting style is more like training, rigid; Vogel & Vogel, 1961; Rothbaum et al., 1982). AAs reported going to outlets other than family in both their best and worst capitalization experiences and this may be in part to the child-rearing style visible in AA culture. The family dynamic may feel that sharing good news and potentially upsetting the group harmony is far more threatening than potentially upsetting a group dynamic with peers; peers may be a more accessible outlet for AAs.

All of the findings for these variables were categorical, such that responses were coded as either AC-I, AC-C, or PC, either achievement or interpersonal. However, when asked in the free-response how these experiences made the participant feel about their relationship with the person they were capitalizing with and how it made them feel about themself, the responses were coded on a scale of one to five. The averages of these variables were compared between cultural groups. In the worst capitalization experience, there were no group differences. In other words, EAs and AAs did not differ in how they felt about themselves or about their relationship after receiving a destructive response to their capitalization attempt. This is in line with previous literature (Gable et al., 2004), which indicated that no matter what type of destructive response a participant receives (passive or active destructive), the outcome would be negative. As previously stated, the current study chose not to focus on destructive responses as it was assumed that destructive responses would yield negative results no matter what cultural group the participant was in.

For constructive capitalization responses, there were no cultural group differences between reports of how participants felt about their relationships after sharing. However, when receiving a constructive capitalization response, there were significantly different responses for how the AAs felt about themselves (e.g., happiness, self-esteem, better about self as a result of
sharing with someone else) as compared to the EAs, such that AAs reported feeling better about themselves when receiving a constructive capitalization response. This suggests that when AAs receive positive responses to capitalization attempts, they feel better about themselves than when EAs receive positive responses to capitalization attempts. In social support literature during stressful times, AAs are less likely to activate social support and generally find it less helpful (Kim et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2010). This finding is different from social support seeking behaviors in stressful or negative situations, when AAs typically do not find social support beneficial. It is interesting that the positive response is in the self category, rather than the relationship category. Positive responses from a collective may not strengthen a relationship for AAs because this type of response is expected; a positive response from a peer may be elicited in order to maintain group harmony (Miller, 1994). So, while this may not necessarily boost the relationship, it still makes AAs feel better about themselves as a result of sharing, which has been documented by capitalization literature in the past (Gable et al., 2004).

After the free response questions, participants moved on to more self-report variables, which were analyzed to determine any other group differences. There were no significant differences between EAs and AAs self-reports of emotion expression. There were no group differences in self-reports of interdependent self-construals, but there were group differences between AAs and EAs on self-reports of independent self-construal. EAs reported higher independent self-construal than AAs. This is to be expected as EAs were representing the individualistic culture; individualistic cultures tend to be higher in independent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 2010; Cousins, 1989; Morling et al., 2002). There were no reported group differences for group harmony values, however there were significant differences between groups for emotional harmony values, such that AAs reported significantly higher value on
emotional harmony that EAs. This finding is supportive of previous literature, which states that AAs place a higher emphasis on emotional restraint as a way of maintaining group harmony than EAs (Wang et al., 2010). This is interesting to consider in the context of capitalization. Attempts to capitalize may have been directed to peers more so than to family members as potentially upsetting group harmony through emotion expression with peers is less threatening that upsetting group harmony with family.

**Correlational Relationship Amongst Self-Report Variables**

The relationships that were found to be significant all support findings from previous literature. An interdependent self-construal was positively related to agreeableness and negatively related to extraversion. Previous literature has noted this positive relationship between collectivism and agreeableness (Reale et al., 1997). Since an interdependent self-construal is usually higher in collectivistic cultures, this relationship between interdependence and agreeableness makes sense (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Interdependence is also positively related to modesty behavior, emotional harmony values, and group harmony values, all of which has been examined in the literature before as being related to collectivism (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Independence, which is associated with an individualistic culture, was positively related to emotion expression. This is supportive of the idea that EAs (the individualistic sample for the current study) found enthusiastic, AC-I responses to be significantly more beneficial than less emotive, PC responses.

Emotion expression was negatively correlated with group and emotional harmony values, which makes sense. It is likely that individuals from collectivistic cultures do not want to upset group harmony and being overly emotive could disrupt this harmony. In addition, modesty behavior (i.e., less emotion expression, humility) was positively related to group and emotional
harmony. Interestingly, it was also positively related with the two interpersonal dependent variables: Relationship Closeness and Relationship Satisfaction. In other words, modesty is linked to positive relationship variables that we chose to measure in this study. One interesting finding was that social interaction anxiety was positively linked to emotional harmony and group harmony values. In other words, greater social interaction anxiety was positively linked to group and emotional harmony values. This may explain why AAs have been found to seek out social support less; seeking out social support actually produces interaction anxiety (Wang et al., 2010; Wang & Lau, in press).

Finally, all of the dependent variables were positively related to each other. An increase in Happiness as the result of a constructive capitalization response will also be related to an increase in Self-esteem, Relationship Closeness, and Relationship Satisfaction. Any increase in any of the dependent variables were linked with an in the others.

Effects of Cultural Group and Constructive Capitalization Response Condition on Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Outcome Variables

The hypotheses for this study were primarily for the experimental portion of the study. In particular, we were looking for any interaction effects between cultural group and constructive capitalization response condition on four dependent variables (Happiness, Self-esteem, Relationship Satisfaction, and Relationship Closeness). Most findings were consistent with or trending in the direction of our hypotheses. AC-I responses were significantly more beneficial than the PC responses for the EA participants; this is supportive of previous literature (Gable et al., 2004). This same significant difference between responses was not observed for AAs, which was one of our initial predictions. One finding that was not originally predicted was the universality of AC-I. For both EAs and AAs, this capitalization response was consistently the
highest (we had initially predicted that AAs would benefit more from AC-C responses). It was important to note that while a distinct separation was visible between the effects of the three difference capitalization responses for EAs, this same distinction was much smaller for AAs. With a different sample, these results may have been significant (this will be discussed further in the limitations and future directions section).

We observed a marginal main effect of cultural group on relationship closeness, such that EAs were more likely to report feeling closer to the person that they were capitalizing with in comparison to AAs. In the Demir et al. (2013) study, it was noted that American college students were more likely to report an increase in friendship variables when sharing a positive event with a peer and receiving a constructive capitalization response. The thought is that EAs are less likely to expect a positive response when sharing good news since peers are not as concerned with maintaining a group harmony (i.e., criticizing the positive event or speaking against the event is not taboo like it is more so in collectivistic cultures). In the same study, the Turkish sample (utilized to represent a collectivistic culture) did not show the same increase in friendship variables. This is somewhat in line with the finding from the current study, such that members of a collectivistic culture may not feel the same relationship benefits as a member of an individualistic culture when receiving a constructive capitalization response.

Social support is seen as obligatory and reciprocal in collectivistic cultures (Miller, 1994). This obligation of social support for AAs may not improve relationship closeness, simply because support from the collective is expected when good news is shared. This expectance of a positive result may affect how AAs perceive the genuineness of someone’s capitalization response; it may have affected how the AAs reported relationship closeness in the current study. If AAs expect a positive/supportive response, they may feel like the positive response that they
receive is out of obligation, rather than it being volunteered to better the relationship. On the other hand, relationships for EAs and individualistic cultures are more transient and voluntary. As a result, when an EA participant received an AC-I response in the current study, it may have felt more sincere and genuine since this response was given voluntarily, so they reported higher levels of relationship closeness. Similarly, when an EA participant received a PC response, the same thought process may have been true. The person who delivered the PC response voluntarily gave this response, which is interpreted as not as enthusiastic or excited for the individual.

Main effects were also observed within the constructive capitalization response condition amongst the dependent variables. A marginal main effect of response condition was observed on Self-esteem. Post-hoc analyses for the main effect of condition on Self-esteem revealed that the AC-I response condition increased self-esteem self-reports significantly greater than the PC condition. This could be expected as the AC-I response focuses directly on the individual and the accomplishments of the individual, which boosts self-esteem. This same increase in self-esteem is not as likely for the PC response as this is a nonverbal form of support; there is no direct acknowledgement of the individual or their accomplishments. We may have underestimated the universality of self-esteem amongst cultures. The sample of college students we recruited for the current study responded most positively on self-esteem when receiving an AC-I response. They are at a time in their lives when positive affirmations are greatly reassuring and can directly alter feelings to build confidence and self-esteem. It was also interesting that AC-C response elicited greater benefits to self-esteem than the PC response (while the results was not significant, the means trended in this direction). This finding may suggest that the higher levels of emotion expression and verbal support from the active constructive responses were more beneficial for benefitting self-esteem.
It was also observed that condition had an effect on relationship satisfaction. Again, post-hoc analyses revealed that AC-I responses were significantly higher on reports of relationship satisfaction than PC responses. In addition, AC-I responses were marginally higher on relationship satisfaction than AC-C responses. Participants likely felt more satisfied with the relationship where they received verbal responses (AC-I) rather than the nonverbal responses (PC; Gable et al., 2004). The marginal difference in relationship satisfaction between the AC-I and AC-C conditions might stem from the direct acknowledgement of the individual in the AC-I response. This personal acknowledgement makes them feel like they are in a more worthwhile, caring relationship. AC-C responses may be lower in relationship satisfaction ratings because the acknowledgement the responder speaks more on behalf of collectives and groups: “your mom and dad will be so proud of you! You are giving the school such a great name!” The responder does not personally acknowledge the individual achievements, which may not lead to as significant of an enhancement in relationship satisfaction as that seen in the AC-I condition.

Based on the results from this section, it is clear that we may have underestimated the effects of AC-I responses on both cultural groups. Both AAs and EAs ranked AC-I highest on relationship satisfaction and self-esteem. Since both groups preferred AC-I, it speaks to the idea that when good news is shared, people like to hear responses that boost them as the individual, no matter what culture they are from. Our results still support the literature as EAs were much higher in the ranking of this response than AA. This AC-I response had a significant effect on Relationship Satisfaction (which was the only dependent variable that was found to be marginally significant in our interaction effect) and Self-esteem. In addition, AC-I responses significantly affected self-esteem for both groups. The universal preference of this response speaks again to our sample which is comprised of undergraduate students in a vigorous academic
setting. The positive reinforcement they receive from AC-I may explain why they were likely to rank this higher, regardless of cultural group. A difference sample may not have yielded the same preference for this condition across cultural groups.

Finally, there was a marginally significant interaction effect of cultural group and constructive capitalization response on relationship satisfaction. Our two hypotheses were aiming to look at differences between cultural group and active versus passive constructive responses as well as differences between cultural groups and individualistic versus collectivistic active constructive responses. The interaction effect was able to indicate that our hypotheses were towards we predicted (Figure 1.3). EAs reported much higher relationship satisfaction for AC-I than they reported for PC. This same effect was not seen for AAs, such that there was no significant difference between AC-I, AC-C, and PC in reports of relationship satisfaction. While the AC-I and AC-C responses didn’t necessarily elicit the responses that we had predicted between cultural groups, the PC response was not significantly different from the AC-I condition for AAs, which is relevant to our first hypotheses (AAs would find PC responses more beneficial). As suggested previously, we predicted that AAs would not show the same negative effects in response to receiving a passive constructive capitalization response as was originally discussed in the Gable et al. (2004). We predicted that AAs would benefit more from PC responses than EAs as these responses involve less singling out of the individual as well as less emotion expression, which is more in line with the ideas proposed by the Affect Value Theory (Tsai, 2007).

Limitations and Future Directions

While most of our hypotheses were observed, most of the effects were only marginal. With that being said, our sample was also somewhat small for the online survey design. With
more participants, a larger interaction effect that would reach conventional levels of statistical significance between cultural group and constructive capitalization response on our dependent variables may become apparent. As mentioned previously, some of our results may have been the result of the participant pool that we were recruiting from. Both EAs and AAs were recruited from a small, academically challenging, liberal arts college. As a result, both groups of participants may not have fully represented typical individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Several characteristics about these groups may have been different, leading to only marginally significant results as well as some universal findings about AC-I responses and self-esteem, which were discussed previously. In the future, this study might be interesting if administered to first-generation AAs only, who had not been exposed to Western values, as well as EAs who aren’t currently enrolled in such a demanding academic atmosphere.

Another limitation included how we measured the dependent variables. The current study only used one item to measure each of the four dependent variables after the scenario. More items worded differently may have given us greater reliability. Creating scales for each dependent variable would allow for us to make certain that we were accurately assessing each dependent variables. Because we only included one self-report question for each dependent variable, we may have been limiting ourselves. Finally, each dependent variable question was measured on a scale of 1-100. As a result, we had high variability in responses for these questions. For future research, narrowing down the scale may reveal more significant results.

Another limitation of the study is the manipulation design in the experimental section. The scenario begins with, “You just found out you were offered an extremely competitive internship. You go to lunch with your friend, Cameron, and tell her about your opportunity”. This scenario is focusing on an achievement event that is being capitalized on. As was found in
our free response section, EAs were more likely to report sharing achievement events at a rate
above chance, while AAs were more likely to share interpersonal events at a rate above chance.
Since the scenario that we designed focused on an achievement event and then measured
dependent variables, this may have skewed the AAs who may not necessarily share achievement
events as readily as interpersonal events when capitalizing.

A future direction to expand on this study would involve manipulating what types of
event participants receive in the event. For example, maybe instead of “sharing with Cameron
that you were offered an extremely competitive internship”, participants are told that they are
“sharing with Cameron about being asked out on a date to the movies”. Something that is
interpersonal may elicit different responses from cultural groups. A 2 (cultural group: EA vs.
AA) x 2 (capitalization event: achievement vs. interpersonal) x 3 (constructive capitalization
response: AC-I, AC-C, PC) experimental design may allow for even more findings regarding
cultural differences in capitalization.

Another potential future direction may be to bring participants into the lab to attempt to
observe capitalization attempts in-person. A limitation of the study is that majority of it was self-
report. By bringing participants into the lab and designing a study that asks them to capitalize
with one another in person, we could utilize observational coding. Seeing the constructive
capitalization responses in person, as opposed to reading them and picturing them as a part of the
scenario may yield different results. Self-reports are limited in that they can be biased based on
the participant’s responses. Bringing the participants into the lab and allowing the researchers to
conduct in vivo objective observation with coding might produce results that are less biased.

Conclusion
Capitalization is a fairly new social support phenomenon that still requires more research. This study aimed to investigate how cultural group potentially influences which constructive capitalization responses are considered more beneficial. By utilizing past research on capitalization (Gable et al., 2004), three different constructive capitalization responses were developed. The AC-I response was developed and hypothesized to be the more beneficial active constructive for the EA sample recruited for the study. The AC-C response was developed and hypothesized to be the more beneficial of active constructive responses for the AA sample. The PC response that was previously developed (Gable et al., 2004) was hypothesized to be more beneficial for AAs than for EAs.

This study managed to expand on previous literature on capitalization and cultural group differences. The online design of the study allowed us to employ open-ended free response and self-report responses, which revealed certain patterns and trends between cultural groups and capitalization. More research is definitely needed in this area to continue to better understand the process of capitalization and how it differs amongst cultural groups. However, based on our results and hypotheses, it does appear that EAs tend to prefer an AC-I response much greater than AAs, while the AA sample did not show as much of a preference towards a specific type of constructive capitalization response.
References


*Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5*(4), 420-430.


Wang, S., & Lau, A. *Reciprocity and its influence on social support: Cultural differences in the psychological, behavioral, and biological effects of support activation*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Psychology, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.


Table 1.1 Frequency data for the sample (N = 79)

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Table 2.1 Descriptive statistics and cultural group differences on study self-report variables

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* p ≤ 0.05, *** p ≤ 0.001, † p ≤ 0.10
Table 2.2 Descriptive statistics and cultural group differences on study self-report dependent variables

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*p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.001, †p ≤ 0.10
### Table 3.1 Bivariate correlations for self-report measures and self-report dependent variables (N=79)

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*p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01, ***p ≤ 0.001, †p ≤ 0.10
Figure 1.1 Non-significant interaction effect of cultural group and condition on happiness as an outcome variable.
Figure 1.2 Non-significant interaction effect of cultural group and condition on self-esteem as an outcome variable.
Figure 1.3 Marginally significant interaction effect of cultural group and condition on relationship satisfaction as an outcome variable.

$\gamma p < .10, \ast p < .05, \ast \ast p < .01$
Figure 1.4 Non-significant interaction effect of cultural group and condition on relationship closeness as an outcome variable.
Figure 2.1 Significant main effect of condition on relationship satisfaction.

† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01
Figure 2.2 Marginally significant main effect of condition on self-esteem.

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$
Figure 2.3 Marginally significant main effect of cultural group on relationship closeness.

† \( p < .10 \), * \( p < .05 \), ** \( p < .01 \)
Appendix A.

Coding Manual

1. Type of good news
   a. Achievement category = 1 (specifically for the capitalizer. i.e., “I got into Haverford College”)
      i. Academic
         - Grades/assignments
         - Acceptance to school
      ii. Career/growth oriented (can be academically related—focus of response is on the future)
         - Acceptance to job/internship
         - Scholarships
      iii. Other
         - Athletic accomplishments
         - Any other achievements that don’t fall into the above categories (i.e., getting an audition, being published, awards, etc.)
   b. Interpersonal = 2 (EITHER the capitalizer or someone else e.g., “I was asked out on a date last week by a classmate”)
      i. Romantic
         - Asked someone out/was asked out on a date
         - New boyfriend/girlfriend
         - Anniversary
      ii. Peer
         - Friendships
         - Fun experiences with friends/classmates/teammates
      iii. Family
         - Family vacation
         - News related to family (e.g., my sister got a job)

   c. Network = 3 (e.g., “My sister got an award for her piece of writing”)

2. Who the good news is shared with (i.e., the capitalization responder)
   a. Family = 1
      i. Parents
      ii. Siblings
      iii. Extended family
   b. Peers = 2
      i. Friends/Classmates
      ii. Teammates
iii. Roommates
iv. Other
   - PAFs, CPs, Social Media accounts
   - This category is reserved for instances of people who are not described as friends, but fall into the peer category

c. Romantic = 3
   i. Boyfriend/girlfriend
   ii. Casual (e.g., hook up/crush)

d. Mentors = 4
   i. Professors
   ii. Coaches
   iii. Advisors
   iv. Deans
   v. Other authority figures

3. Capitalization Response (Gable responses plus our AC-C/AC-I distinctions)
   a. Active Constructive-Collectivistic = 1: enthusiastic support that focuses on the capitalizer’s relationships, or how the good news will benefit a group as a whole; talk of shared success
   b. Active Constructive-Individualistic = 2: enthusiastic support that emphasizes the individual’s success, mention of personality or talent, highlighting individual traits
      i. “Congratulations! I am so happy for you”
   c. Passive Constructive = 3: quiet, understated support (e.g., non-vocal cues that let the capitalizer know that the person is happy for them/proud, smiles, hugs, nods, handholding, etc.)
      i. Can also be misinterpreted as a negative response--minimal response that is interpreted as a lack of response (e.g., “Oh, that’s cool)
   d. Active Destructive = 4: quashing the event (e.g., giving reasons why the positive event isn’t positive, diminishing the importance of the event/positivity of the event)
   e. Passive Destructive = 5: ignoring the event, not acknowledging the capitalization attempt
      i. Changes the subject right away

4. Dependent Variables
   ** The positive and negative definitions are simply examples of things to consider when coding for positive or negative relationship/self DV’s **
   ** If there is a lot of back and forth between positive and negative feelings regarding the response, stick with neutral**
   e.g., “I was surprised and disappointed to see that she didn’t share the same enthusiasm as I had. I didn’t feel any less excited about the trip; I just felt upset that she wasn’t as excited about it as I was, and I guess maybe she made me a little bit more nervous about going there alone. Eventually she came around and was happy for me, but I kind of had to pull it out of
her” (Rel = 4 or 5, Self = 3 because she keeps going back and forth about how it made her feel)

** The relationship/self may not be explicitly mentioned, but rather, it may be implied. In this case, do not assume negativity or positivity. Score as neutral.

a. Relationship

i. How positive or negative do you feel about your relationship with the person with whom you shared your positive event with?
   1. 1 = Very positive
   2. 2 = Somewhat positive
   3. 3 = Neutral (no mention of feelings about relationship)
   4. 4 = Somewhat negative
   5. 5 = Very Negative

ii. Positive
   1. **Closeness**: feeling closer to the person you shared with
   2. **Satisfaction**: feeling content with the strength of your relationship with the person
   3. **Support**

iii. Negative
   1. **Disappointment**: feeling upset/let down about the relationship after sharing the positive event due to the response given
   2. **Distance**: feeling alienated/distant from the person whom you are sharing with
   3. **Frustration**: anger/annoyance over the relationship due to the person’s response

b. Self

i. How positive or negative do you feel about yourself after receiving a response from the person with whom you shared your good news with?
   1. 1 = Very positive
   2. 2 = Somewhat positive
   3. 3 = Neutral (no mention of feelings about self)
   4. 4 = Somewhat negative
   5. 5 = Very Negative

ii. Positive
   1. **Happiness**: feeling happier about yourself after sharing the positive event with someone
   2. **Self-esteem**: feeling better about yourself/proud of yourself as the result of sharing a positive event with someone
   3. **Better about the event having shared with someone else**

iii. Negative
1. **Anxiety**: feeling stressed about yourself/the positive event because of the response you receive
2. **Disappointment**: feeling down on yourself after the response given
Appendix B.

Demographic Questionnaire

I am taking this survey for an introductory psychology credit.

Yes
No

Sex:

Male
Female

Age:

Year in college (select one):

Freshman
Sophomore
Junior
Senior
Post-senior year

Race

European American/Caucasian/White
Asian/Asian American (specify ethnicity below)

If Asian/Asian American, please specify ethnicity from the following choices:

Korean
Chinese
Japanese
Taiwanese
Vietnamese
Malaysian
Other

Please select the generation that best applies to YOU.

1st generation—You were born in another country.
2nd generation—You were born in the US and one of your parents was born in another country.
3rd generation—You were born in the US, both of your parents were born in the US, and all of your grandparents were born in another country.
4th generation—You and your parents were born in the US and at least one grandparent was born in another country. The other grandparents were born in the US.
5th generation—You, your parents, and all grandparents were born in the US.
Appendix C.

Big Five-Factor Inventory (BFI)

Below are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

1------------------------2-------------------3---------------------4-------------------5
strongly disagree somewhat neither agree somewhat strongly agree
disagree nor disagree agree

I see myself as someone who…..

____ 1. Is talkative
____ 2. Tends to find fault with others
____ 3. Does a thorough job
____ 4. Is depressed, blue
____ 5. Is original, comes up with new ideas
____ 6. Is reserved
____ 7. Is helpful and unselfish with others
____ 8. Can be somewhat careless
____ 9. Is relaxed, handles stress well
____ 10. Is curious about many different things
____ 11. Is full of energy
____ 12. Starts quarrels with others
____ 13. Is a reliable worker
____ 14. Can be tense
____ 15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker
____ 16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm
____ 17. Has a forgiving nature
____ 18. Tends to be disorganized
____ 19. Worries a lot
____ 20. Has an active imagination
____ 21. Tends to be quiet
____ 22. Is generally trusting
____ 23. Tends to be lazy
____ 24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
____ 25. Is inventive
____ 26. Has an assertive personality
____ 27. Can be cold and aloof
____ 28. Perseveres until the task is finished
____ 29. Can be moody
____ 30. Values artistic, aesthetic experience
____ 31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited
____ 32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
____ 33. Does things efficiently
____ 34. Remains calm in tense situations
____ 35. Prefers work that is routine
____ 36. Is outgoing, sociable
____ 37. Is sometimes rude to others
____ 38. Make plans and follows through with them
____ 39. Gets nervous easily
____ 40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas
____ 41. Has few artistic interests
____ 42. Likes to cooperate with others
____ 43. Is easily distracted
____ 44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature
Appendix D.

Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale

For each of the following items, please circle the appropriate number to indicate how often you felt or behaved this way during the past week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 Day)</td>
<td>Some or a little of the time (1-2 Days)</td>
<td>Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 Days)</td>
<td>Most or all of the time (5-7 Days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Social Interaction Anxiety Scale**

Using the 5-point scale below, please indicate the extent to which you believe that the statement characterizes you, placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in responding.

This statement describes me…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>not at all</strong></td>
<td>slightly</td>
<td>moderately</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>extremely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

___ 1. I get nervous if I have to speak with someone in authority (teacher, boss, etc.)
___ 2. I have difficulty making eye-contact with others.
___ 3. I become tense if I have to talk about myself or my feelings.
___ 4. I find difficulty mixing comfortably with the people I work with.
___ 5. I tense-up if I meet an acquaintance in the street.
___ 6. When mixing socially, I am uncomfortable.
___ 7. I feel tense if I’m alone with just one other person.
___ 8. I am at ease meeting people at parties, etc.
___ 9. I have difficulty talking with other people.
___ 10. I find it easy to think of things to talk about.
___ 11. I worry about expressing myself in case I appear awkward.
___ 12. I find it difficult to disagree with another’s point of view.
___ 13. I have difficulty talking to attractive persons of the opposite sex.
___ 14. I find myself worrying that I won’t know what to say in social situations.
___ 15. I am nervous mixing with people I don’t know well.
___ 16. I feel I’ll say something embarrassing when talking.
___ 17. When mixing in a group, I find myself worrying I’ll be ignored.
___ 18. I am tense mixing in a group.
___ 19. I am unsure whether to greet someone I only know slightly.
Appendix F.

**Emotion Expressiveness Questionnaire**

Using the 1-7 scale below please indicate the extent to which each statement is characteristic of you.

1 ----------------- 2 ----------------- 3 ------------ 4 --------------- 5 ------------- 6 ------------- 7
not at all characteristic                        extremely characteristic

_____  1. I often tell people that I love them.

_____  2. When I am angry people around me usually know.

_____  3. I often touch friends during conversations.

_____  4. I laugh a lot.

_____  5. People can tell from my facial expressions how I am feeling.

_____  6. Whenever people do nice thing for me, I feel “put on the spot” and have trouble expressing my gratitude.

_____  7. When I really like someone they know it.

_____  8. I apologize when I have done something wrong.

_____  9. Watching television or reading a book can make me laugh out loud.

_____ 10. If someone makes me angry in a public place, I will “cause a scene.”

_____ 11. I often laugh so hard that my eyes water or my sides ache.

_____ 12. If a friend surprised me with a gift, I wouldn’t know how to react.

_____ 13. When I am alone, I can make myself laugh by remembering something from the past.

_____ 14. I always express disappointment when things don’t go as I’d like them to.

_____ 15. My laugh is soft and subdued.

_____ 16. I show that I like someone by hugging or touching that person.
Appendix G.

**Singelis Self-Construal Scale**

Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact. 1
2. I’d rather say “No” directly, than risk being misunderstood. 1
3. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. 1
4. Speaking up during a class is not a problem for me. 1
5. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. 1
6. Having a lively imagination is important to me. 1
7. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor. 1
8. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards. 1
9. I respect people who are modest about themselves. 1
10. I am the same person at home that I am at school. 1
11. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in. 1
12. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. 1
13. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishment. 1
14. I act the same way no matter who I am with. 1
15. I should take into consideration my parents’ advice when making education/career plans. 1
16. I feel comfortable using someone’s first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older I am. 1
17. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group. 1
18. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I’ve just met. 1
19. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I’m not happy with the group. 1
20. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects. 1
21. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible. 1
22. My personal identity independent of others is very important to me. 1
23. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument. 1
24. I value being in good health above everything.
Appendix H.

**Harmony Values Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SocHar1 (Avoid argument)</th>
<th>Even when I strongly disagree with someone close to me, I avoid an argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SocHar2 (What others want)</td>
<td>I go along with what others want even when I would rather do something different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SocHar3 (What others expect)</td>
<td>I find myself naturally going along with what others expect of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SocHar4 (Opinion)</td>
<td>When my opinion clashes with another person’s, I usually try to go along with the other person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EmoHar5 (Hold emotions inside)</td>
<td>It is better to hold one’s emotions inside than to burden others by expressing them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EmoHar6 (Stay calm)–revised</td>
<td>It is more important to stay calm than to act on your true feelings at the moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EmoHar7 (Strong expression)</td>
<td>It is best to avoid expressing emotions too strongly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EmoHar8 (Suffer quietly) ©</td>
<td>It is better to show your emotions to others than to suffer quietly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Responses are rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale.

© Denote reverse scored items.
## Appendix I.

### Modest Behavior Scale

Below are some statements on social behavior. Please read each statement and circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing your behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Usually praise other people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not praise one’s own strengths</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Often shift the conversation to talk about myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wear clothes that draw people’s attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Attribute success to luck rather than one’s own ability in front of others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Avoid causing inconvenience to others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lead people around me to acknowledge my superiority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Politely ask others to correct me when I express my own opinions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Avoid showing off in front of peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Actively avoid asserting my privileges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Not praise myself in an attention-getting way</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thank the person who criticizes me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Admit my mistakes and apologize when criticized</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Treat everyone equally regardless of status</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Emphasize others’ contributions when I am praised</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ask more questions and listen to others’ opinions attentively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Avoid saying too much about myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Assert my needs when in conflict with others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Admit and correct my mistakes after doing something wrong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Showing off my expensive accessories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Deny my own strengths in front of others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Try to defend myself when I am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
criticized
23. Sincerely accept others’ suggestions  | 1  2  3  4  5
24. Say thank you when praised              | 1  2  3  4  5
25. Speak out less; listen to others’ opinions more | 1  2  3  4  5
26. Not show off                            | 1  2  3  4  5
27. Accept differences with others          | 1  2  3  4  5
28. Find and appreciate others’ strengths   | 1  2  3  4  5
29. Post awards where people can see        | 1  2  3  4  5
30. Deny my strengths when praised          | 1  2  3  4  5
31. Wear revealing clothing                 | 1  2  3  4  5
32. Follow tasks and demands               | 1  2  3  4  5
33. Fulfill duties to friends and family    | 1  2  3  4  5
34. Finish workload on time and in an adequate manner | 1  2  3  4  5
35. Give credit to others                   | 1  2  3  4  5
36. Say polite words and phrases to my companions | 1  2  3  4  5
37. Tell others about my accomplishments    | 1  2  3  4  5
38. Encourage someone else take the lead    | 1  2  3  4  5
39. Talk myself down to downplay my talent  | 1  2  3  4  5