Considering the Validity of Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Self-Report Measures

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What Validity Criteria Exist for Comparisons of Cultures with Self-Report Measures?
Reference-Group Effect
Reference-Group Effect

• People come to understand themselves by comparing themselves to similar others. In different cultures, the comparison others are different, resulting in divergent standards.
Please indicate your agreement with this item.

I am short.

Strongly Disagree

1 2 3

Strongly Agree

4 5
Please indicate your agreement with this item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am short.</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am independent.</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural Variation in Individualism/Collectivism
Review of all published studies (on PsycInfo) that compared scales measuring individualism and collectivism between North American and East Asian samples.

Found 76 Relevant Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means are in the direction of the “Dominant View”</th>
<th>Means are in the opposite direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sign test: $z = .80$, ns
Asked 14 “Cultural Experts” to evaluate whether each item on Singelis’s (1994) Independence/Interdependence Scale was more characteristic of Japanese or North Americans.
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Found that ALL interdependent items were viewed as more characteristic of Japanese and ALL independent items were viewed as more characteristic of North Americans.
• There is a lack of convergent validity between this self-report data and the expert’s predictions.
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• Furthermore, the self-report data is at odds with much other psychological research using diverse measures (e.g., Bond & Smith, 1994; Cousins, 1991; Ji, Zhang, & Nisbett, 2004; Kim & Markus, 1999; Suh, 2002).
Study 1
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Asked Japanese and Canadians to complete Singelis’s measure of independence/interdependence.
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We manipulated the reference-group by explicitly asking participants how they viewed themselves in comparison to specific others.
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Importantly, our samples all had a great deal of familiarity with the two cultures.
Manipulating Reference-Groups

Sample Item

**Standard Format**

“I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.”

**Cross-Cultural Referent Format**

(for Canadians)

“Compared to most Japanese I know, I think I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.”
Standard Item Comparison

Culture by Scale Interaction
$F(1, 85) = 2.90, p < .09.$
Cross-Cultural Reference
Groups Comparison

Culture by Scale Interaction
$F(1, 85) = 38.72, p < .0001.$
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16 Items</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Items Consistent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Number of Items Opposite of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the &quot;Dominant View&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Dominant View&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Items Showing No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Cultural Reference Group Format</td>
<td>16 Items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Items Consistent with the “Dominant View”</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Items Opposite of “Dominant View”</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Items Showing No Difference</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study 2
Study 2

Contrasted Japanese and Canadians on Singelis’s scale by focusing on naturally occurring reference groups.
## Samples Used in Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canadians</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European-Canadians</td>
<td>Returnee Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-Canadians</td>
<td>“Japan-Bound” Japanese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Standard Item Comparison

![Bar Chart]

Culture by Scale Interaction
\[ F(1, 1690) < 1, \text{ ns.} \]
Canadian Samples

Culture by Scale Interaction
$F(1, 1144) = 53.81, p<.0001$. 

Euro-Canadians
Asian-Canadians
Japanese Samples

Culture by Scale Interaction
\(F(1, 540) = 20.86, p<.0001.\)
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“Western” vs. “Eastern” Reference Group

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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Validity Problems are Not Limited to Individualism
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• Cross-cultural research on Protestant Work Ethic.
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- Cross-cultural comparisons of incremental and entity theories of self.
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• Comparisons of health across people of different ages.
• Comparisons across the sexes on stereotyped characteristics.
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- Utilize culture level measures (e.g., Vandello & Cohen, 1999).
- Compare conditions within cultures, in particular, by benefiting from the control of the experimental method (e.g., Lee et al., 2000; Sanchez-Burks et al., 2000).
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- Employ behavioral or physiological dependent measures (e.g., Cohen et al., 1996; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999).
- Most importantly, use multiple methods and look for convergence.
Thank you.

Acknowledgments
Darrin Lehman
Kaiping Peng
Joe Greenholtz