

## Research Article

### A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF AVOIDANCE (RELATIVE TO APPROACH) PERSONAL GOALS

Andrew J. Elliot,<sup>1</sup> Valary I. Chirkov,<sup>1</sup> Youngmee Kim,<sup>1</sup> and Kennon M. Sheldon<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Rochester and <sup>2</sup>University of Missouri-Columbia

**Abstract**—*The results from this research supported our primary hypothesis that the adoption of avoidance (relative to approach) personal goals varies as a function of individualism-collectivism (across representations of this distinction). Interdependent self-construals were positively related and independent self-construals were negatively related to adoption of avoidance goals (Study 1), Asian Americans adopted more avoidance goals than non-Asian Americans (Study 2), and persons from South Korea and Russia adopted more avoidance goals than those in the United States (Studies 3 and 4, respectively). Studies 3 and 4 investigated and found support for our secondary hypothesis that avoidance personal goals are a negative predictor of subjective well-being in individualistic (the United States), but not collectivistic (South Korea and Russia), countries. The findings are discussed in terms of other approach-avoidance constructs and motivational processes.*

The distinction between approach and avoidance motivation is fundamental and basic to the study of human behavior. In approach motivation, behavior is instigated or directed by a positive event or possibility, whereas in avoidance motivation, behavior is instigated or directed by a negative event or possibility (Elliot, 1999). This approach-avoidance distinction is applicable to several different levels of conceptual analysis, from global motives to goals to rudimentary reflexes, and has been shown to have theoretical and empirical utility in numerous research domains throughout the history of scientific psychology.

One important construct at the goal level of analysis is that of personal goals, which represent the consciously articulated, personally meaningful objectives that individuals pursue in their daily lives (Emmons, 1986; B. Little, 1983). With regard to personal goals, the approach-avoidance distinction is based on the focus of the goal. Approach goals are focused on a positive outcome or state, and regulation involves trying to move toward or maintain that outcome or state (e.g., “do well in school,” “make friends”); avoidance goals are focused on a negative outcome or state, and regulation involves trying to move or stay away from that outcome or state (e.g., “not do poorly in school,” “avoid losing friends”).

To date, empirical investigation of avoidance (relative to approach) personal goals has taken place entirely within Western countries, and nearly exclusively in the United States. In the present research, we sought to investigate avoidance personal goals in cross-cultural context by utilizing the individualism-collectivism distinction<sup>1</sup> at the levels of cultural attribute (i.e., country), ethnic category, and psychological construal (see Brockner & Chen, 1996). As idiographic representa-

tions of self and identity, personal goals seem ideal for investigating cross-cultural differences in approach-avoidance motivation. Two objectives guided our research. Our primary objective was to investigate whether the adoption of avoidance personal goals varies as a function of individualism-collectivism. Our secondary objective was to investigate whether the relationship between avoidance personal goals and subjective well-being (SWB) varies as a function of individualism-collectivism.

Culture plays an integral, formative role in the development of the individual’s cognitive, affective, and motivational processes. Through socialization, persons are provided with an interpretive framework that establishes their view of the world, the self, and the self’s place in the world (Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996; Shweder et al., 1998). In individualistic cultures, the self is construed in independent terms as a separate, distinct entity, and the main task of the person is to “stand out” by becoming distinguished from others through self-sufficiency and personal accomplishment. In collectivistic cultures, the self is construed in interdependent terms as a connected, relational entity, and the main task of the person is to “fit in” by maintaining interpersonal relationships and group harmony (Heine & Lehman, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). These different cultural perspectives are presumed to promote different motivational processes. The individualistic emphasis on standing out fosters a bias toward positive information and a focus on acquiring positive characteristics that establish or affirm one’s distinctiveness; conversely, the collectivistic emphasis on fitting in fosters a bias toward negative information and a focus on eliminating negative characteristics that helps one avoid relational discord or group disruption (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Markus et al., 1996).

In short, individualistic and collectivistic cultures appear to differentially promote approach and avoidance motivational processes, respectively. The extant research seems consistent with this characterization. Cross-cultural comparisons have revealed that collectivism, relative to individualism (whether operationalized in terms of cultural attribute, ethnic category, or psychological construal), is associated with more pessimism, higher fear of academic failure, a greater attentiveness to negative self-relevant information, a preference for loss-framed information, a valuing of shame tactics in child rearing, and a tendency toward self-criticism (see Heine et al., 1999; Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000, for reviews). In the present research, our primary hypothesis was that persons with interdependent self-construals (Study 1), Americans of Asian descent (Study 2), and persons in collectivistic countries (Studies 3 and 4) would adopt more avoidance personal goals in negotiating their daily lives than persons with independent self-construals, Americans of non-Asian descent, and persons in individualistic countries, respectively.

Research on the relationship between avoidance personal goals and SWB has demonstrated that avoidance goals are a negative predictor of SWB (Elliot & Church, in press; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997; Elliot, Sheldon, & Church, 1997). To date, all of this research has been conducted with U.S. samples. It is possible that this finding generalizes

Address correspondence to Andrew Elliot, Department of Psychology, Meliora Hall, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627; e-mail: andye@scp.rochester.edu.

1. We use this distinction generically to represent a widely acknowledged set of differences in how persons define themselves in relation to others.

## Avoidance Personal Goals

across cultural contexts, but we suspect that it may be culturally constrained.

Most individuals, regardless of their culture, desire to feel that they are a valuable member of society (Heine & Lehman, 1999), and evaluate their SWB, at least in part, on this basis. Culture dictates what it means to be a valued societal participant, and optimal functioning in a given culture entails utilizing self-regulatory tactics (e.g., goals) that are attuned to and, therefore, effectively serve these cultural emphases (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). Avoidance goals (i.e., regulating according to negative outcomes) seem ill-suited to the individualistic emphasis on standing out, which fosters a bias toward positive information and a desire for positive outcomes. Thus, it is not surprising that avoidance goals have evidenced a negative relationship with SWB in the United States. However, avoidance goals seem more concordant with the collectivistic emphasis on fitting in, which fosters a bias toward negative information and a desire to avoid negative outcomes. Therefore, avoidance goals may not be negatively associated with SWB in collectivistic cultures. In the present research, we investigated the relationship between avoidance personal goals and SWB in South Korea and the United States (Study 3) and Russia and the United States (Study 4). We hypothesized that avoidance goals would be negatively related to SWB in the U.S. samples (replicating prior work), but would not be negatively related to SWB in the South Korean sample nor the Russian sample.

### STUDY 1

In this study, we examined whether the adoption of avoidance personal goals varies as a function of psychological construal. We hypothesized that interdependent self-construals would be positively related, and independent self-construals negatively related, to adoption of avoidance personal goals.

#### Method

Thirty-five male and 72 female U.S. undergraduates participated in the study; the sample was limited a priori to those of non-Asian descent. Participants completed the assessments in a take-home packet. Singelis's (1994) Self-Construal Scale was used to assess participants' interdependent ( $\alpha = .71$ ) and independent ( $\alpha = .73$ ) self-construals. Participants' personal goals were assessed using a revised version of Emmons's (1986) procedure for eliciting personal strivings (Elliot et al., 1997) in which individuals list the eight goals that they typically strive for in their daily life. Two trained coders independently categorized each goal as approach or avoidance; in this and all subsequent studies, interjudge agreement exceeded 99%, and coders were blind to

all other variables. An avoidance-goals index was created by summing the number of avoidance goals listed and dividing by the total number of goals (given that approach-avoidance was coded dichotomously for each goal, approach and avoidance were reciprocal, and this measure functionally represents avoidance relative to approach goals). Participants reported their sex after completing the other measures.

### Results and Discussion

In this and all subsequent studies, preliminary analyses were conducted to control for the main and interactive effects of sex and, in Studies 3 and 4, other important control variables. These control variables were retained in the final analyses when significant (see Judd & Kenny, 1981); all significant results are reported.

The intercorrelations among the Study 1 variables are presented in Table 1. Consistent with our predictions, Pearson product-moment correlations revealed that interdependent self-construals were a positive predictor of avoidance goals,  $r = .23, p < .05$ , and independent self-construals were a negative predictor,  $r = -.20, p < .05$ . A multiple regression analysis testing both self-construals simultaneously yielded the same results: Interdependent self-construals were a positive predictor of avoidance goals,  $\beta = .23, p < .05$ , and independent self-construals were a negative predictor,  $\beta = -.24, p < .05$ .

### STUDY 2

In this study, we sought to replicate Study 1 using ethnic category rather than psychological construal to represent the individualism-collectivism distinction.

#### Method

Sixty-five male and 116 female U.S. undergraduates participated in the study. Participants reported their sex and ethnicity at the beginning of the study, and approximately 1 week later attended a group session to complete the personal-goals assessment. The personal-goals assessment and avoidance-goal measure were the same as in Study 1, except that participants listed the goals that they would be pursuing during the next 3 months at minimum.

### Results and Discussion

The intercorrelations among the Study 2 variables are presented in Table 2. Two contrasts were created for the analyses: Asian Americans ( $n = 22$ ) versus non-Asian Americans ( $n = 159$ ) and Asian Americans versus Caucasian Americans specifically ( $n = 137$ ). Consistent with

**Table 1.** Intercorrelations among variables in Study 1

Variable	Avoidance goals	Interdependent self-construals	Independent self-construals	Sex
Avoidance goals	—			
Interdependent self-construals	.23*	—		
Independent self-construals	-.20*	.03	—	
Sex	-.03	.00	.19	—

\* $p < .05$ .

**Table 2.** Intercorrelations among variables in Study 2

Variable	Avoidance goals	Asian Americans vs. non-Asian Americans	Asian Americans vs. Caucasian Americans	Sex
Avoidance goals	—			
Asian Americans vs. non-Asian Americans	.17*	—		
Asian Americans vs. Caucasian Americans	.17*	—	—	
Sex	.12	.07	.07	—

\* $p < .05$ .

our predictions,  $t$  tests revealed that Asian Americans ( $M = .24$ ) listed more avoidance goals than did non-Asian Americans ( $M = .17$ ),  $t(179) = 2.31, p < .05$ , and Caucasian Americans specifically ( $M = .17$ ),  $t(157) = 2.10, p < .05$ .

### STUDY 3

In this study, we sought to replicate Studies 1 and 2 using country (United States vs. South Korea) to represent the individualism-collectivism distinction. In addition, we examined the relationship between avoidance personal goals and SWB in the two countries. We hypothesized that avoidance goals would be negatively related to SWB in the U.S. sample, but would not be negatively related to SWB in the South Korean sample.

#### Method

Two hundred ninety-two undergraduates participated in the study: 42 males and 60 females from the United States, and 118 males and 72 females from South Korea.<sup>2</sup> Care was taken to maximize the comparability of the two samples; for example, participants from both countries were introductory psychology students at research-oriented universities of similar size (more than 15,000 students).

All instructions and measures were translated from English to Korean by a Korean psychologist, and back-translated by a second Korean individual proficient in English and Korean. Independent judges in the United States assessed the equivalence of the original and back-translated versions of the measures and made minor revisions to the measures accordingly.

Participants attended a small-group session in which their personal goals and SWB were assessed, and demographic information was obtained. The personal-goals assessment and the avoidance-goals measure were the same as in Study 1, except that Emmons's (1986) original procedure for eliciting personal strivings was utilized. SWB was assessed using affect-balance (Positive Affect/Negative Affect Scale; Watson, Tellegen, & Clark, 1988) and life-satisfaction (Satisfaction With Life Scale; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) measures; the SWB index was created by summing the standardized scores from the individual measures (item level  $\alpha = .89$ ). Information regarding participants' sex, marital status, parental education, and family in-

come was also obtained; each of these variables has been identified as an important control variable in SWB research (see Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Participants reported their mother's and father's highest level of education (on a scale from "less than high school" [1] to "beyond college" [6]), and these two scores were summed to form the parental-education index. Participants reported their family's yearly income on a 9-point scale with monetary values calibrated across the two countries.

#### Results and Discussion<sup>3</sup>

The intercorrelations among the Study 3 variables are presented in Table 3.

##### *Country as a predictor of avoidance goals*

Consistent with our prediction, a  $t$  test revealed that South Korean participants listed more avoidance goals ( $M = .11$ ) than did U.S. participants ( $M = .08$ ),  $t(290) = 2.32, p < .05$ .

##### *Preliminary SWB analyses*

Mean and covariance structures (MACS) analysis was used to assess the measurement equivalence of SWB across the two countries (T. Little, 1997), with both the factor loadings and the intercepts of the indicators constrained to be equal across groups. The root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), nonnormed fit index (NNFI), and incremental fit index (IFI) were used to assess the fit of the model to the data (T. Little, 1997). This analysis supported the measurement equivalence of SWB in the United States and South Korea:  $RMSEA = .052$ ,  $NNFI = .99$ ,  $IFI = .98$ . Thus, it was possible to proceed with confidence that the cross-cultural comparisons were being conducted with a comparable SWB construct.

An analysis of covariance revealed that U.S. participants reported higher SWB (adjusted  $M = 1.18$ ) than did South Korean participants (adjusted  $M = -0.68$ ),  $t(289) = 9.49, p < .05$ ; males reported higher

2. Two participants completed the goal assessment twice (listing different sets of goals); these participants were excluded from the analyses.

3. Following an anonymous reviewer's suggestion, in this study and the next we had two coders independently categorize each goal for achievement and affiliation content using Emmons's (1999) coding system (interjudge agreement exceeded 95%), and we repeated all analyses controlling for these goal contents (both independently and jointly). In both studies, all results reported in the text remained the same in these reanalyses.

## Avoidance Personal Goals

**Table 3.** Intercorrelations among variables in Study 3

Variable	Avoidance goals	Country	Subjective well-being	Sex	Married	Parental education	Family income
Avoidance goals	—						
Country	.14*	—					
Subjective well-being	-.16**	-.47**	—				
Sex	.08	-.20**	-.02	—			
Married	.04	.04	-.02	-.03	—		
Parental education	.01	-.40**	.14*	.04	-.02	—	
Family income	.01	.00	.08	.02	.00	.34**	—

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

SWB (adjusted  $M = 0.19$ ) than did females (adjusted  $M = -0.23$ ),  $t(289) = 2.20$ ,  $p < .05$ . This between-country finding replicates prior research showing lower SWB in South Korean than U.S. samples (Diener & Diener, 1995).

#### Avoidance goals as a predictor of SWB

Consistent with prior research, a multiple regression analysis with U.S. participants revealed that avoidance goals were a negative predictor of SWB,  $F(1, 96) = 4.57$ ,  $p < .05$  ( $\beta = -.21$ ); as we predicted, however, this relationship did not even approach significance in the analysis with South Korean participants,  $F(1, 187) = 1.35$ ,  $p > .24$  ( $\beta = -.08$ ). In the U.S. analysis, the interactions of avoidance goals with parental education ( $\beta = -.26$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and marital status ( $\beta = -.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ) also attained significance (detailed information regarding interactive results may be obtained from the senior author); in the South Korean analysis, the family-education variable was also significant ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### STUDY 4

The majority of cross-cultural work contrasts one (or more) of the collectivistic countries of East Asia (e.g., China, Japan, South Korea) with the United States, and recently researchers have highlighted the need to attend to other collectivistic countries, such as those in Eastern Europe (Realo & Allik, 1999). Study 4 was an attempt to heed this call by examining whether the findings of Study 3 could be replicated with a Russian sample; Russia is characterized as a moderately collectivistic country in the cross-cultural literature (Ryan et al., 1999; Stetsenko, Little, Oettingen, & Baltes, 1995). We hypothesized that the Study 3 findings would indeed generalize to Russia.

#### Method

Two hundred sixty-three undergraduates participated in the study: 40 males and 59 females from the United States, and 72 males and 92 females from Russia.<sup>4</sup> As in Study 3, care was taken to maximize the comparability of the two samples; for example, participants from both countries were students at highly selective, research-oriented universities of similar size (fewer than 5,000 undergraduates).

4. A portion of the data in this study was also used by Ryan et al. (1999) to investigate a separate set of issues.

The procedure involved in translating the materials was comparable to that described for Study 3. In addition, the procedure and materials were the same as in Study 3, only participants listed 10 personal goals, a 5-point scale was used to assess maternal and paternal educational level, and a more extensive assessment of well-being was obtained for the SWB index (item level  $\alpha = .93$ ) by using measures of life satisfaction (Satisfaction With Life Scale; Diener et al., 1985), depression (Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale; Radloff, 1977), vitality (Subjective Vitality Scale; Ryan & Frederick, 1997), self-actualization (Short Index of Self-Actualization; Jones & Crandall, 1986), and self-esteem (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; Rosenberg, 1965).

### Results and Discussion

The intercorrelations among the Study 4 variables are presented in Table 4.

#### Country as a predictor of avoidance goals

Consistent with our prediction, a  $t$  test revealed that Russian participants listed more avoidance goals ( $M = .16$ ) than did U.S. participants ( $M = .09$ ),  $t(261) = 4.62$ ,  $p < .01$ .

#### Preliminary SWB analyses

Results from a MACS analysis supported the measurement equivalence of SWB in the United States and Russia:  $RMSEA = .069$ ,  $NNFI = .90$ ,  $IFI = .92$ . A  $t$  test revealed that U.S. participants reported higher SWB ( $M = 1.20$ ) than did Russian participants ( $M = -0.76$ ),  $t(261) = 4.19$ ,  $p < .01$ , a finding consistent with prior research (Balatsky & Diener, 1993).

#### Avoidance goals as a predictor of SWB

Consistent with prior research, a Pearson correlation revealed that avoidance goals were a negative predictor of SWB for U.S. participants,  $r = -.36$ ,  $p < .01$ ; as we predicted, this relationship did not even approach significance for Russian participants,  $r = -.05$ ,  $p > .56$ .

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results from the present research supported our primary hypothesis that the adoption of avoidance (relative to approach) personal

**Table 4.** Intercorrelations among variables in Study 4

Variable	Avoidance goals	Country	Subjective well-being	Sex	Married	Parental education	Family income
Avoidance goals	—						
Country	.28**	—					
Subjective well-being	-.21**	-.25**	—				
Sex	.09	-.03	.00	—			
Married	-.04	.25**	-.02	.10	—		
Parental education	-.06	-.03	-.01	-.14*	.01	—	
Family income	.11	.01	.01	-.10	-.08	.36**	—

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

goals varies as a function of individualism-collectivism. Interdependent self-construals were positively related and independent self-construals were negatively related to adoption of avoidance goals, Asian Americans adopted more avoidance goals than non-Asian Americans, and persons from collectivistic countries (South Korea and Russia) adopted more avoidance goals than those from an individualistic country (the United States). Thus, the proposition that collectivism, compared with individualism, promotes adoption of avoidance goals was documented across the three most common representations of individualism-collectivism utilized in the literature—psychological construal, ethnic category, and cultural attribute (i.e., country).

Although little empirical work has explicitly addressed the issue of cross-cultural differences in approach-avoidance motivation, as noted earlier, a few studies in the extant literature may be interpreted from an approach-avoidance standpoint. For example, research has found that collectivists, relative to individualists, are higher in neuroticism, lower in extraversion, higher in fear of failure, and higher in social anxiety, and use more avoidance-based coping strategies (Abe & Zane, 1990; Chang, 1996; Eaton & Dembo, 1997). The present findings complement this research by demonstrating that collectivists, relative to individualists, engage in more avoidance regulation at the goal level of analysis. Note that our research documented this approach-avoidance difference with an idiographic, rather than nomothetic, assessment procedure. Therefore, we were able to use participants' own personally articulated goal statements to demonstrate that collectivism promotes a greater emphasis on avoiding or eliminating the negative than does individualism.

Just as there has been little cross-cultural research conducted on approach-avoidance motivation, there has been a dearth of research conducted in any culture on antecedents of avoidance personal goals. The studies that have been conducted to date have focused on intrapsychic variables such as motive dispositions (Elliot & Sheldon, 1997) or neurophysiological sensitivities (Elliot & Sheldon, 1998; Elliot et al., 1997). The present research extends this work by documenting cultural context as an antecedent of avoidance personal goals. The findings discussed in the previous paragraph suggest that culture plays a role in the development of motive dispositions such as fear of failure and fear of rejection, and may even influence neurophysiological sensitivities such as neuroticism and extraversion (see also Markus et al., 1996). This raises the interesting possibility that these intrapsychic variables may, in part, account for (i.e., mediate) the link between individualism-collectivism and adoption of avoidance goals, and future work would do well to investigate this possibility.

In addition to supporting our primary hypothesis, the results of our studies provided support for our secondary hypothesis regarding the link between avoidance personal goals and SWB across cultures. Avoidance goals were a negative predictor of SWB in the United States, but were not a negative predictor of SWB in either South Korea or Russia.

In individualistic cultures such as the United States, the attainment of positive outcomes is emphasized and valued, whereas in collectivistic cultures such as South Korea and Russia, avoiding negative outcomes is emphasized and valued. Our results indicate that personal goals that mismatched the cultural emphasis (avoidance goals in the United States) were negative predictors of SWB, whereas those that matched the cultural emphasis (avoidance goals in South Korea and Russia) were not negative predictors of SWB. A conceptual parallel may be drawn between these results and those from Brunstein, Schultheiss, and Grassmann's (1998) recent research on goals and motives. These researchers demonstrated that personal goals are a negative predictor of SWB when they are incongruent with the individual's motive dispositions (e.g., agentic goals for a person high in the need for communion), but are not a negative predictor of SWB when they are congruent with the individual's motive dispositions (e.g., agentic goals for a person high in the need for agency). Our results document similar relationships, focusing on culture rather than motive dispositions, and goal valence rather than goal content.

Although avoidance personal goals were not negative predictors of SWB in South Korea and Russia, it is interesting to note that they were unrelated to SWB, rather than positively related. This may reflect a basic structural feature of avoidance goals—they enable one to acquire the absence of negative outcomes, but do not enable one to acquire the presence of positive outcomes (Elliot et al., 1997). It may be the case, across cultures, that the absence of negative outcomes (e.g., relational discord) can benefit SWB to some degree, in some situations, but that the presence of positive outcomes or "inputs" (e.g., relational harmony) is additionally required to optimally facilitate SWB (Ryan, 1995). Thus, in collectivistic countries, avoidance goals may not negatively predict SWB because they are in accord with the cultural emphasis on avoiding negative outcomes, but they may fail to positively predict SWB because they are unable to produce the positive outcomes needed by the organism. Alternatively, it is possible that the South Korean and Russian results simply reflect a limited assessment of SWB. The SWB measures that we used may be construed as emphasizing individual well-being, rather than relationship- or community-oriented well-being (e.g., collective self-esteem, relationship

harmony or satisfaction), and these latter types of well-being may be what is most important to persons from collectivistic cultures and most relevant to their goal striving (Diener & Suh, 1999; Heine et al., 1999). Thus, avoidance goals might indeed facilitate SWB in collectivistic countries—but not the type of SWB that we examined. Clearly, additional research is needed to more intricately examine the complexities involved in the relationship between avoidance regulation and well-being across cultures.

Some limitations of the present research should be noted. First, as in all cross-cultural research (Singelis, 2000), the countries we contrasted in Studies 3 and 4 differ in many ways. For example, in addition to the individualism-collectivism dimension that we highlighted, the United States likely varies from South Korea and Russia on other cultural dimensions (e.g., the vertical-horizontal dimension; Triandis, 1995), and in terms of macrosocial characteristics (e.g., the nature and stability of their economic systems). Investigating whether the present findings can be replicated in other individualistic and collectivistic countries is an important priority. Second, the samples in our study were drawn from restricted segments of the U.S., South Korean, and Russian populations in order to maximize comparability. Accordingly, the generalizability of our findings to the populations at large remains an open question. Finally, the present research was correlational and concurrent in nature; therefore, definitive conclusions regarding causality are not warranted.

In sum, the present research adds to the expanding empirical corpus demonstrating the utility of the individualism-collectivism distinction in the analysis of psychological processes. In addition, our research highlights the importance of testing, rather than merely presuming, the invariance of empirical relationships across cultures (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998). Our studies are among only a few cross-cultural investigations of goals that have been conducted in the literature to date, and we encourage other goal researchers, and motivational researchers more generally, to examine their constructs in cultural context. Such research is likely to be multiply beneficial, as it promises not only to yield information regarding cross-cultural differences, but also to further illuminate the precise nature of basic motivational processes.

**Acknowledgments**—We are grateful to Taeyun Jung and the members of the approach-avoidance laboratory for their assistance in conducting the present research. We thank Rachael Mapes, Holly McGregor, Rich Ryan, and Todd Thrash for providing helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. This research was supported in part by a Faculty Scholars Grant from the William T. Grant Foundation.

## REFERENCES

- Abe, J., & Zane, N. (1990). Psychological maladjustment among Asian and White American college students: Controlling for confounds. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 37*, 437–444.
- Balatsky, G., & Diener, E. (1993). Subjective well-being among Russian students. *Social Indicators Research, 28*, 225–243.
- Brockner, J., & Chen, Y. (1996). The moderating roles of self-esteem and self-construal in reaction to threat to the self: Evidence from the People's Republic of China and the United States. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 603–615.
- Brunstein, J., Schultheiss, O., & Grassmann, R. (1998). Personal goals and emotional well-being: The moderating role of motive dispositions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*, 494–508.
- Chang, E. (1996). Cultural differences in optimism, pessimism, and coping: Predictors of subsequent adjustment in Asian American and Caucasian American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 43*, 113–123.
- Diener, E., & Diener, M. (1995). Cross-cultural correlates of life satisfaction and self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68*, 653–663.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R., Larsen, R., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction With Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 47*, 1105–1117.
- Diener, E., & Suh, E. (1999). National differences in subjective well-being. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 434–450). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Diener, E., Suh, M., Lucas, R., & Smith, H. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin, 125*, 276–302.
- Eaton, M., & Dembo, M. (1997). Differences in the motivational beliefs of Asian American and non-Asian students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*, 433–440.
- Elliot, A. (1999). Approach and avoidance motivation and achievement goals. *Educational Psychologist, 34*, 169–189.
- Elliot, A., & Church, M. (in press). Avoidance personal goals in the therapy context. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*.
- Elliot, A., & Sheldon, K. (1997). Avoidance achievement motivation: A personal goals analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*, 171–185.
- Elliot, A., & Sheldon, K. (1998). Avoidance personal goals and the personality-illness relationship. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*, 1282–1299.
- Elliot, A., Sheldon, K., & Church, M. (1997). Avoidance personal goals and subjective well-being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23*, 915–927.
- Emmons, R. (1986). Personal strivings: An approach to personality and subjective well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*, 1058–1068.
- Emmons, R. (1999). *The psychology of ultimate concerns*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Fiske, A., Kitayama, S., Markus, H., & Nisbett, R. (1998). The cultural matrix of social psychology. In D. Gilbert, S. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., Vol. 2, pp. 915–981). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Heine, S., & Lehman, D. (1999). Culture, self-discrepancies, and self-satisfaction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*, 915–925.
- Heine, S., Lehman, D., Markus, H., & Kitayama, S. (1999). Is there a universal need for positive regard? *Psychological Review, 106*, 766–794.
- Jones, A., & Crandall, R. (1986). Validation of a short index of self-actualization. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 12*, 63–73.
- Judd, C., & Kenny, D. (1981). Process analysis: Estimating mediation in treatment evaluations. *Evaluation Review, 5*, 602–619.
- Kitayama, S., Markus, H., Matsumoto, H., & Norasakkunkit, V. (1997). Individual and collective processes in the construction of the self: Self-enhancement in the United States and self-criticism in Japan. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*, 1245–1267.
- Lee, A., Aaker, J., & Gardner, W. (2000). The pleasures and pains of distinct self-construals: The role of interdependence in regulatory focus. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*, 1122–1134.
- Little, B. (1983). Personal projects: A rationale and method for investigation. *Environment and Behavior, 15*, 273–309.
- Little, T. (1997). Mean and covariance structures (MACS) analyses of cross-cultural data: Practical and theoretical issues. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 32*, 53–76.
- Markus, H., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98*, 224–253.
- Markus, H., Kitayama, S., & Heiman, R. (1996). Culture and “basic” psychological principles. In C. Higgins & A. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 857–913). New York: Guilford Press.
- Radloff, L. (1977). The CES-D scale: A self-report depression scale for research in the general population. *Applied Psychological Measurement, 1*, 385–401.
- Realo, A., & Allik, J. (1999). A cross-cultural study of collectivism: A comparison of American, Estonian, and Russian students. *Journal of Social Psychology, 139*, 133–142.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ryan, R. (1995). Psychological needs and the facilitation of integrative processes. *Journal of Personality, 63*, 397–427.
- Ryan, R., Chirkov, V., Little, T., Sheldon, K., Timoshina, E., & Deci, E. (1999). The American dream in Russia: Extrinsic aspirations and well-being in two cultures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*, 1509–1524.
- Ryan, R., & Frederick, T. (1997). On energy, personality, and health: Subjective vitality as a dynamic reflection of well-being. *Journal of Personality, 65*, 529–565.
- Shweder, R., Goodnow, J., Hatano, G., Levine, R., Markus, H., & Miller, P. (1998). The cultural psychology of development: One mind, many mentalities. In R. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 865–937). New York: Wiley & Sons.
- Singelis, T. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20*, 580–591.
- Singelis, T. (2000). Some thoughts on the future of cross-cultural social psychology. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 31*, 76–91.
- Stetsenko, A., Little, T., Oettingen, G., & Baltes, P. (1995). Agency, control, and means-ends beliefs about school performance in Moscow children: How similar are they to beliefs of Western children? *Developmental Psychology, 31*, 285–299.
- Triandis, H. (1995). Motivation and achievement in collectivist and individualist cultures. *Advances in Motivation and Achievement, 9*, 1–30.
- Watson, D., Tellegen, A., & Clark, L. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*, 1063–1070.

(RECEIVED 11/3/00; REVISION ACCEPTED 2/15/01)