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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY AND INTIMACY AS MODERATED BY
CULTURE

by

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ABSTRACT

Several important developmental processes occur in the young adulthood period. Young adults form their identities, determine trajectories regarding careers, and typically they form intimate relationships. Erikson (1963) stated that healthy identity development during adolescence is a necessary precursor to intimacy in romantic relationships during emerging adulthood. Although findings from cross-sectional and short-term longitudinal studies somewhat confirm the proposed link between identity and intimacy development, none of them addresses the role of culture in moderating Erikson's tenets of developmental ordering. The primary goal of the present investigation was to determine the role of cultural orientation in identity and intimacy development among emerging adults today.

Participants included 422 university students (mean age = 20.80, sd = 3.63) were recruited from one urban university in Delhi, India (n = 96), two urban universities in Beijing, China (n = 180), and one urban university in Orlando, USA (n = 146). Among this sample, 36.7% were males, and 63.3% were females. All participants completed a battery of measures, including a Demographic Questionnaire, the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire, the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale, and the Cultural Orientation Scale.

Our first hypothesis that identity would predict intimacy in relationships was confirmed. Our second hypothesis that identity development will be a negative predictor for both relationship anxiety and relationship avoidance in romantic relationships was also confirmed.

The third hypothesis that females would endorse more collectivistic cultural values compared with males, who will endorse more individualistic cultural values was also confirmed. Finally, our fourth hypothesis that the relationship between identity and intimacy would be moderated by cultural orientation, such that it will be stronger among those that endorse more

individualistic cultural values compared to those who endorse more collectivistic cultural values was not supported. Results from the multiple regression analysis indicated that although identity and cultural orientation considered alone were significant predictors of intimacy in relationships, the relationship between identity and intimacy were moderated by cultural orientation only for relationship anxiety, such that a strong sense of identity along with a collectivistic cultural orientation predicted less relationship anxiety. Further analyses and implications for professional practice are discussed.

To my dearest parents and loving family for always believing in me, encouraging and inspiring me to reach for the stars, and providing me with unconditional love and support

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To all the students who willingly participated in this study

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Erikson (1963) stated that healthy identity development during adolescence is a necessary precursor to intimacy in romantic relationships during emerging adulthood. However, our knowledge is still limited as to how people from different cultural orientations differ in their identity development process, and how the cultural emphasis on freedom and independence versus harmony and interdependence impacts the establishment and maintenance of identity.

According to Bedford & Hwang (2003), an individualistic theory of human nature suggests that a person should have maximum freedom and be in charge of choosing goals and the means for obtaining them. Based on this notion, the boundaries of the individual self can be rigid and need to be protected. In contrast, Confucian cultures define identity in terms of the system of relationships in which a person is involved. The boundaries of the self are more permeable and may include family members and others with whom the individual shares a close relationship. Therefore, the self may comprise of other personal relations, and a sense of self is defined through interpersonal relationships (Hamaguchi, 1982). This basic difference in the conceptualization of identity raises questions about the relationship between identity and intimacy in different cultural contexts. Therefore, based on the theoretical proposition that emerging adults are likely to experience intimacy only after establishing a strong sense of personal identity, this study aims to assess the role of cultural orientation in identity and intimacy development among emerging adults today.

Identity Formation

As individuals make the transition from childhood to adulthood, questions about identity become salient. The young person may ponder over questions such as: Who am I? What are my values and aspirations? What makes me unique? Do I really continue being the same person from one year, or decade, to the next? These questions can play a prominent role in identity formation during adolescence as well as through adulthood (e.g., Erikson, 1980; Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992).

Erik Erikson was one of the first classic theorists to establish a tradition of identity theory. He was careful to distinguish identity from self, which is loosely defined as “that part of the person that knows and experiences reality” (Harter, 1988), and self-concept, which can be characterized as one’s awareness of “the internal organization of external roles of conduct” (Hormuth, 1990, p. 2). His theory integrated the intrapsychic focus adopted by psychology and the environmental focus adopted by sociology (Côté & Levine, 1987).

Erikson’s (1968) theory of life-span development suggested that developmental progression involves the subsequent mastery of eight stages. Each stage is characterized by a distinct psychosocial crisis that becomes dominant on the basis of changes in biological, psychological, and social processes. Although Erikson suggested these crises occur at particular points along the developmental progression, he also left room for individual differences in the timing of these issues. Thus, each stage in Erikson’s theory has an overall trajectory describing the average person’s progression through the stages.

In Stage 5, Erikson talked about the crisis of Identity versus Role Confusion. In this phase, adolescents engage in an exploration of possibilities and start developing their own identity based upon the outcomes of these explorations. A successful resolution of this stage

results in an awareness of one's uniqueness, understanding and integration of societal roles, feelings of continuity of the self over time, and fidelity. An unsuccessful resolution, on the other hand, may result in an inability to identify with appropriate roles in life. He noted that making commitments was a salient aspect of optimal identity development, and that an identity crisis or exploration phase was an important component in the process of taking up identity commitments. These exploration and commitment dimensions of identity are fundamental to Marcia's model of identity development.

Marcia (1966) has expanded on the identity formation process theorized by Erikson as involving two basic dimensions, exploration and commitment. Exploration is a developmental process that encompasses the individuals' active search for information and examination of choices related to identity (Schwartz, 2001). There are seemingly an infinite number of possibilities facing the young adult regarding issues such as sexuality, politics, religion, education, career, peers, romantic partners, interests and hobbies, finances, and so on. Thus, the best identity outcomes are believed to be the result of an exploratory period in which young adults become equipped with knowledge of the various alternatives available to them before making commitments (Berman, Schwartz, Kurtines, & Berman, 2001). Commitment refers to individuals' decisions regarding these alternatives and possibilities, and determines their trajectories towards future goals. Initial commitment decisions often are tentative and then become more firm, or are sometimes abandoned after more in-depth exploration and life experience have occurred (Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005).

Identity status can be conceptualized as steps in a process, with the different statuses indicating an individual's location in the process. The four primary statuses are diffused (characterized by a lack of both exploration and commitment), achieved (both exploration and

commitment have occurred), foreclosed (commitment without exploration) and moratorium (exploration without commitment).

The diffusion status (low in exploration and commitment) is characterized by individuals who are not committed to any particular goals, roles, or beliefs about the world and are not actively searching for ones either. The foreclosure status (low in exploration, but high in commitment) is descriptive of individuals who lack a period of exploration of alternatives but are nevertheless committed. Generally, these commitments represent those goals, roles, and beliefs about the world suggested by others, often parental figures, and are assumed without being questioned or examined, and therefore are attained more from a process of modeling rather than through self reflection. The moratorium status (high in exploration, low in commitment) precedes identity achievement. The individuals in this status experience a “crisis” due to their active exploration of different options but have not yet chosen from the alternatives. Finally, those individuals who are able to move beyond the moratorium status and choose their goals, roles, and beliefs about the world are said to be in the achievement status (high in exploration and commitment).

It is clear that identity formation is a complex process that affects the individual in a variety of domains. Some researchers have suggested that the domain of interpersonal relationships is of special importance in terms of identity exploration (Berman, Weems, Rodriguez, & Zamora, 2006; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Montgomery, 2005). This domain is explored primarily through family, peer, and romantic partner interactions (Thorbecke & Grotevant, 1982). For the purpose of the current study, romantic relationships in particular are salient, and the link between the identity formation process and intimacy in romantic relationships is examined in depth.

Intimacy

The sixth psychosocial task according to Erikson's (1963) theory, the conflict of "intimacy versus isolation," is met during early adulthood. It is during this stage that people begin to feel both an internal need and external pressures to amalgamate their identities with the identities of others. Relationships involving intimacy – friendships as well as loving, sexual relationships are sought with increasing vigor.

Genuine intimacy means having "the capacity to commit to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises" (Erikson, 1968, p. 263). Young people learn to be less focused on themselves, more open to experiencing closeness with significant others, and become more amenable to surrendering some autonomy in favor of experiencing harmony and coalition, without fear of losing parts of their own identity. During this phase, emerging adults are focused on developing close, intimate relationships with others. A successful resolution of this stage results in the development of close friendships and loving, sexual relationships. A failure to successfully resolve this stage may result in loneliness, isolation, and fear of relationships.

Orlofsky, Marcia, and Lesser (1973) elaborated on Erikson's (1963) original ideas regarding intimacy and took it a step further by suggesting that intimacy may best be understood by analyzing qualitatively different styles of close personal relationships rather than by conceptualizing intimacy as a construct that can be assessed on a high to low scale. Orlofsky et al. (1973) proposed five different intimacy statuses, or styles of dealing with intimacy issues. According to this model, "*Intimate* individuals have close friendships in which personal matters are shared and discussed with openness and depth, and they are also committed to an exclusive

partner. *Preintimate* individuals also enjoy close, mutual relationships, but are not involved in an exclusive relationship with another person. Individuals with *stereotyped* relationships generally have several friends, but these relationships lack depth and commitment and personal matters are rarely discussed. Communication here is based on more superficial issues. *Pseudointimates* have friendships, as well as a more or less committed relationship, that share the same characteristics as stereotyped relationships. *Isolates* do not have enduring personal relationships, and rarely initiate social contacts.”

Some researchers have looked at intimacy in romantic relationships from an attachment perspective and proposed various attachment styles indicating how a person relates to a partner. Two dimensions of attachment style that have been examined in the adult attachment literature include anxiety (defined as being overly concerned about receiving love and care from a partner) and avoidance (defined as being wary and dismissing of closeness in a relationship) (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2007; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Individuals with a high amount of anxiety within the attachment context are believed to experience anxiety as a result of fear of rejection or abandonment, while high avoidance results from the individual’s fear of his or her own incompetence within a relational context.

Bartholomew & Shaver (1998) proposed that adult attachment styles could be depicted through an individual’s view of self and others in attachment relationships. Individuals can have a positive and/or negative model of themselves and others, thereby affecting the way they relate with others in a relationship. Combining these underlying dimensions resulted in the formation of four distinct attachment styles: Secure, Fearful, Preoccupied, and Dismissing. According to this model, secure individuals, characterized by both a positive view of themselves and others, are expected to be comfortable and trusting in intimate relationships. Preoccupied individuals,

characterized as having a negative view of themselves but a positive view of others, typically need approval and seek an almost unhealthy degree of closeness and intimacy with their attachment partners, and are often described as “needy” or “clingy.” Dismissing individuals, seen as having a positive view of themselves and a negative view of others, are characterized by a general discomfort with closeness and unwillingness to trust others. Fearful individuals, defined by a negative view of themselves as well as others, are characterized by high levels of insecurity in relationships. Attachment styles, initially formed in the infant-caregiver relationship (Bowlby, 1988), carried forward and developed in romantic relationships can shape future relationship choices and heavily influence life decisions for young adults (Pittman, Pittman, Keiley, Kerpelman, & Vaughn, 2011).

Based on existing literature of adult romantic attachment, the majority of people (55%-65%) are believed to be securely attached, as evidenced by low levels of avoidance and anxiety (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991, Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997). Research indicates that a secure attachment in adulthood appears to be associated with the most positive outcomes (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Holland & Roisman, 2010; Seiffge-Krenke, 2003).

For example, individuals who are classified as securely attached report the greatest satisfaction with their romantic relationships and tend to experience high self-esteem (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Holland & Roisman, 2010; Meyers & Landsberger, 2002). In the realm of insecure attachment, those who are classified as anxious-ambivalently attached report greater feelings of loneliness and lower self-esteem, whereas those who have an avoidant attachment report knowingly distancing themselves from others emotionally and avoid expressing vulnerable feelings (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

According to the epigenetic principle of Erikson's (1963) theory, issues of identity need to be addressed and fairly well resolved before genuine intimacy in relationships is possible. He emphasized the importance of possessing a strong sense of identity prior to entering intimate relationships, strongly implying that adolescents who fail to sufficiently resolve issues of identity may have difficulty forming and maintaining long-term close, and meaningful relationships with romantic partners since "Intimacy is the ability to fuse your identity with somebody else's without fear that you're going to lose something yourself" (Erikson, 1968, p. 135).

On the other hand, some have suggested (e.g., Brown, 1999) that in modern society, intimacy in close relationships already develops during adolescence and precedes identity development.

Relationship between Identity and Intimacy

The findings from numerous research studies examining the relationship between identity and intimacy status have been conflicting and inconclusive (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). Some researchers have found that identity and intimacy statuses are positively correlated, such that high status in one area is associated with high status in the other (Kacerguis & Adams, 1980; Orlofsky, Marcia, & Lesser, 1973; Schiedel & Marcia, 1985; Tesch & Whitbourne, 1982).

Orlofsky et al. (1973) examined the relationship between identity and status, and obtained findings consistent with Erikson's theoretical proposition. Men in the identity achievement and moratorium identity statuses (so called high-identity statuses) were more frequently in the high-intimacy statuses (intimate and preintimate) compared to those in the foreclosure, or diffusion status.

Berman, Weems, Rodriguez, and Zamora (2006) examined the link between identity status and romantic attachment style among an ethnically diverse sample of college (n = 324) and high school students (n = 189). The results of the study indicated that identity status and romantic attachment style were significantly related for males and females in the college sample, but were not significantly related in the high school sample. It was also found that a person in any identity status could have any of the attachment styles. However, foreclosed individuals were significantly lower in avoidance than diffused individuals were. Foreclosed individuals also scored lower on relationship anxiety than those who were achieved or in moratorium. Finally, identity achieved individuals appeared to be more likely to have preoccupied attachment (although it was expected that they would be secure), and foreclosed were more likely to be secure.

Additionally, Arseth, Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of studies examining the link between Marcia's identity statuses and romantic relationship attachment. The results of the meta-analysis revealed a moderate association between attachment style and identity status. Achievement and moratorium status were both found to be positively correlated with secure attachment and high intimacy, whereas diffusion and foreclosure statuses appeared to be linked with insecure attachment and low intimacy.

However, others have suggested (e.g., Van Hoof, 1999) that above all there is substantial inter-individual variability in the timing of identity and intimacy issues, leading to an overall unlinking of these two developmental tasks.

The identity-intimacy relationship has been chiefly studied in two ways (Adams & Archer, 1994). The first approach involves an investigation of the correlations between these two stages of development. The second approach consists of short-term longitudinal designs to assess

the temporal association between the stages of identity and intimacy. Some research studies have compared measures of identity to indirect evaluations of intimacy, such as measures of social relationships. In reviewing several studies of this nature, Adams and Archer observed that active forms of identity (namely, moratorium and achievement) were associated with more successful social relationships. For example, Mallory (1989) found active identity development to be associated with warm and close relationships. On the other hand, Markstrom, Sabino, Turner, and Berman (1997) found the moratorium status was negatively correlated with the ego strengths of fidelity and love.

In a relatively recent cross-sectional study examining variables associated with marital success among 40 stably married couples and 38 unstably married couples (aged 22–59.7 yrs), Rotenberg, Schaut, and O'Connor (1993) showed that marital success and satisfaction in adult couples - both revealing high intimacy, were associated with greater identity achievement in individuals.

Montgomery (2005), in a study examining age and gender differences in patterns of behavior and experience, cognitive beliefs, affective involvement, and psychosocial functioning in romantic relationships in 473 adolescents and emerging adults (ages 12-24) using the Erikson Psychosocial Index (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981), added that strong identity development is an independent predictor of psychosocial intimacy, after controlling for a series of background variables.

Two short-term (1-year interval) longitudinal studies also confirmed Erikson's basic premise. Fitch and Adams (1983) showed that in college-aged males and females, identity formation as assessed with Marcia's semistructured interview contributed to advanced intimacy status (Orlofsky et al., 1973) a year later. Marsh, Allen, Ho, Porter, and McFarland (2006)

demonstrated that strong ego development at age 13 not only explained concurrent levels of intimate behavior with friends and felt security in friendships but also predicted increases over time in these variables.

Hoegh and Bourgeois (2002) conducted a study on 79 undergraduates and found that individuals in the identity achieved status showed higher levels of secure attachment while their diffused counterparts showed higher levels of fearful attachment in relationships. Individuals in moratorium also scored high in secure attachment. Individuals in the foreclosed status tended to score higher on either secure or dismissive attachment styles.

Beyers, & Seiffge-Krenke (2010) utilized interview and questionnaire data from a longitudinal study conducted with 93 adolescents, to investigate whether ego development in middle adolescence predicts intimacy in emerging adulthood. Secondly, they examined whether this link is mediated by identity achievement at the transition to adulthood. Results indicated that there is a direct link between early ego development (age 15) and intimacy in romantic relationships (age 25). There were no gender differences found, and no paths were found from earlier intimacy to later ego development. An integrative identity construct, labeled relational identity achievement, measured at age 24, fully mediated the link between earlier ego development and later intimacy.

Studies assessing direct measures of both identity and intimacy consistently found that more advanced, active identity development was associated with higher levels of intimacy (e.g., Craig-Bray, Adams, & Dobson, 1988; Fitch & Adams, 1983; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979; Kacerguis & Adams, 1980; Orlofsky et al., 1973). Also, occupational identity was related to intimacy in relationships, for both genders (Fitch & Adams, 1983; Kacerguis & Adams, 1980).

Finally, Kennedy (1999) surveyed 225 college freshmen and found that individuals with a preoccupied attachment style had higher identity diffusion and moratorium scores than did those with a secure attachment style. Fearful individuals also scored higher on diffusion compared to secure individuals, and secure individuals in turn, scored higher on identity achievement than the fearful individuals.

Taken together, these findings from cross-sectional and short-term longitudinal studies somewhat confirm the proposed link between identity and intimacy development, but none of them provides an ideal test for Erikson's tenets of developmental ordering and conditionality. Also, many critics have asserted that Erikson's theory does not capture the experience of women accurately. There is agreement among many researchers in the field that the identity and intimacy tasks, as theorized by Erikson, may be applicable to men, but are probably reversed or fused in women.

Gender Differences in Identity and Intimacy Formation

In Erikson's view, a well-developed sense of identity is crucial for attaining intimacy, for a man who has been unable to find a suitable identity must maintain interpersonal distance as a means of self-definition. In his writings on feminine development, however, Erikson (1968, 1975) proposed that a woman's identity formation remains incomplete until she establishes an intimate partnership. This proposition implies that for women, it is essential to attain intimacy in order to develop a strong identity — a reversal of the sequence characterizing masculine development.

Erikson's theory has been criticized for being centered on men's psychosocial development, while failing to sufficiently address women's development. For instance, Patterson, Sochting, and Marcia (1992) stated that Erikson's conceptions on women's identity

implied that interpersonal issues are at the core of identity development for women; a woman's identity issues are only temporarily resolved at adolescence, while they are truly resolved only with marriage and reproduction; and that the sequencing of identity formation is less linear and stage-specific for women as the resolutions of identity, intimacy, and generativity tasks can overlap.

It has been suggested that there is a difference in the pathways followed by men and women towards identity development, and that Erikson's descriptions of identity and intimacy development might be normative for men, but not for women (e.g., Franz & White, 1985; Gilligan, 1982; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979).

Variations of these views are present in an assertion that identity formation is an important task for women, but it is best understood in the context of connection and relatedness to others (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1988). Dyk and Adams (1990) addressed this contention by conducting a short-term longitudinal study exploring the identity-intimacy link, and found that identity did precede intimacy. However, when gender and sex roles were considered, the predicted identity-intimacy connection held for all men, regardless of sex-role orientation, and for masculine-oriented but not feminine-oriented women, thereby lending support to the proposed gender differences in the identity-intimacy formation process.

Hodgson and Fischer (1979) examined the relationship between intimacy and identity status in male and female college students. Their findings suggested that for males, the experience of crisis, followed by commitment in at least one of the spheres of identity was essential but not sufficient for establishing close relationships with peers. In contrast, for females, the establishment of close interpersonal relationships appeared to be essential but not sufficient for positive resolution of identity crisis.

Montgomery (2005) investigated the links between psychosocial identity and relationship intimacy using a sample of 473 adolescents and emerging adults ranging from age 12 to 24. Gender and age differences were also examined. Findings revealed gender differences for both identity and intimacy. Females reported being in love fewer times and were less likely to believe in love at first sight than males were, but reported experiencing greater intimacy in their relationships than males did. Females also scored higher than males regarding their capacity for mutual relational intimacy. Finally, older females showed higher scores than younger females in intimacy and identity, whereas males did not show significant differences across age groups. Finally, identity processes were highly significant predictors of psychosocial intimacy, with at least one measure from each of the psychosocial developmental domains yielding a significant correlation with intimacy outcomes.

Another study was done by Kahn, Zimmerman, Csikszentmihalyi, & Getzels (1985), with 166 college students, to investigate the relationship between gender, identity, and intimacy. They also found that the relationship between identity and intimacy is different for males and females. They used an indirect measure, which was the participants' likelihood of being married, and conceptualized it as being reflective of intimacy. Specifically, they discovered that regardless of where women were in the identity formation process, they were just as likely to be married than not. However, when they examined the male sample, they found that identity was a significant factor in establishing intimacy through marriage. As per the findings of this study, identity appeared to be a prominent factor in the attainment of intimacy for males, while this relationship did not appear to hold true for females.

Intimacy achievement is said to merge with, or even precede, identity achievement among women (Orlofsky, 1978). Some studies confirmed that intimacy and identity are largely

overlapping or that intimacy indeed might spur identity development in women (e.g., Lacombe & Gay, 1998; Schiedel & Marcia, 1985). However, other studies found no gender differences in the identity-intimacy link (e.g., Montgomery, 2005). For the purpose of this study, gender will be explored through the cultural lens.

Cultural Orientation

According to a recent definition of culture put forth by Fiske (2002, p. 85): “A culture is a socially transmitted or socially constructed constellation consisting of such things as practices, competencies, ideas, schemas, symbols, values, norms, institutions, goals, constitutive rules, artifacts, and modifications of the physical environment.”

Pedersen (2000) described that “culture encompasses demographic variables, social, economic and educational background; other formal and informal affiliations and ethnographic variables such as nationality, ethnicity, language and religion.”

In the last few decades, the concept of individualism/collectivism has become extremely popular for the cultural contrasting of the West with the East around the world (e.g., Geertz, 1974/1984; Miller, 1988; Schweder & Bourne, 1984; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Luca, 1988). According to the individualism/collectivism concept, the various cultures of the world can be conceptualized as falling on a single continuum, with the two extremes of individualism and collectivism, lying at either end of this continuum. It has been suggested that on this bipolar dimension, most Western cultures fall relatively close to the individualistic end, and Eastern cultures toward the collectivistic end (Kagitcibasi, 1997).

However, studies that have examined such variables as attachment, close relationships, love, and social networks with different cultural groups have found commonalities across

cultures, suggesting that humans in every culture at every stage of life need others (e.g., Bowlby, 1988; M. Lewis, 1982; Takahashi, 1990).

Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, and Morelli (2000) questioned the applicability of attachment theory in the Japanese culture. They asserted that attachment theory concepts are not as culturally universal as proponents have claimed, as the basic assumptions, ideas, and philosophies underlying most attachment constructs are deeply rooted in Western thought, and the majority of empirical studies lending support to the attachment theory have been conducted in the United States and Europe with White middle-class subjects, bringing the external validity or generalizability of the findings from these studies into question.

Ditommaso, Brannen, & Burgess (2005) conducted a comparative study to investigate the universality of loneliness and attachment in family, romantic and social relationships. They compared Canadian home students with Chinese visiting students for the purpose of this study. A total of 223 students completed measures assessing peer, parent, and romantic attachment; and emotional, and social loneliness. Significant main effects of culture and gender for both attachment and loneliness were found and the results indicated that Chinese students scored significantly lower in attachment security toward romantic partners than their Canadian counterparts.

A study conducted by You and Malley-Morrison (2000) examined the contribution of attachment styles to social intimacy and expectations of friends in 62 Caucasian American and 105 Korean college students. The study found that Koreans scored higher on preoccupied attachment, lower on intimacy, and lower on friendship expectations. Upon conducting regression analyses it was found that secure attachment style was a positive predictor, and dismissive attachment style was a negative predictor of intimacy and positive expectations;

culture was a significant contributor to these equations, with Korean students reporting less intimate relationships with friends and more negative expectations than Caucasian Americans.

Many researchers have suggested that identity in the Chinese culture, is defined in terms of the system of relationships in which a person is involved (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Therefore, close interpersonal relationships may be treated as part of the self, and a sense of self is established and maintained only through interpersonal relationships (Hamaguchi, 1982).

The current literature proposes “people construe the self in two divergent ways. One type of construal is described by such concepts as individualist, independent, autonomous, agentic, and separate, and the other by their antonyms such as collectivist, interdependent, ensembled, communal, and relational” (Bakan, 1966; Gilligan, 1982; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1989; Triandis, 1989).” The first type of construal is often attributed to men and people in the Western individualist cultures, while the second set to women and people in the Eastern collectivist cultures (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1994).

According to Bedford and Hwang (2003), an individualistic theory of human nature supposes that it is in a person’s best interest to have maximum freedom and responsibility for choosing goals and the means for attaining them. The underlying assumption is that the act of making choices contributes to individual development as well as to the welfare of the society. In contrast, most Confucian cultures emphasize that one’s life is an inheritance from one’s ancestors, just as one’s children’s lives flow from one’s own. Family is treated as part of the “great self,” and the boundaries of the self are more permeable and may include family members and others with whom the individual shares a close relationship. It is this “great self” that an individual is required to protect against any outside threats, contrary to the “individual self” of

the Western cultures. Behavior that promotes group cohesion, such as congenial interaction among group members, is treasured instead of individual goals or personal freedom as in Western cultures, and no individual ever has a reasonable cause for disrupting group harmony, as disruption affects everyone's identity.

Western individualism places a greater emphasis on personal rights, rather than personal duties or social goals. In contrast, Confucian ethics are guided by concepts of personal duties and social goals rather than personal rights (Bedford & Hwang, 2003). As stated by Triandis (1989, p. 509), individualists "give priority to personal goals over the goals of collectives; collectivists either make no distinctions between personal and collective goals, or if they do make such distinctions, they subordinate their personal goals to the collective goals". A similar view has been expressed by other theorists as well (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Shweder & Bourne, 1982; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988).

Based on the above, there is reason to believe there are differences in the identity formation process, with gender and cultural orientation playing a role in the developmental pathways followed by individuals across different cultures and genders. In cultures that are more collectivistic and de-emphasize personal identity, identity formation may not play as strong a role as a necessary precursor to intimacy.

Rationale and Hypotheses

Erikson suggested that healthy identity development during adolescence essentially precedes the attainment of intimacy in romantic relationships during emerging adulthood. However, there is reason to question this stringent developmental ordering from a developmental contextual perspective, especially in collectivistic cultures that conceptualize identity in terms of the system of relationships in which a person is involved. Although some researchers have

looked at how gender role orientation moderates the identity–intimacy association (e.g., Cruise and Marcia, 1993; Dyk and Adams, 1990; Bartle-Harting and Strimple 1996), there have been no studies that look at the role of cultural orientation in moderating this relationship. This research will address a significant gap in our current understanding about the role of gender and cultural orientation in the identity formation process, and how they moderate the relationship between identity and intimacy in individuals across cultures.

Following the findings of Craig-Bray, Adams, & Dobson, 1988; Fitch & Adams, 1983; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979; Kacerguis & Adams, 1980; and Orlofsky et al., 1973, our first hypothesis is that identity development will predict intimacy in relationships.

Our second hypothesis specifically looked at two dimensions of intimacy in romantic relationships: relationship anxiety and relationship avoidance. It is hypothesized that identity development will be a negative predictor for both relationship anxiety and relationship avoidance.

Based on the writings of Hofstede, 1980; and Triandis, 1994 that describe females as being more interdependent and relational, and males as being more independent and autonomous, our third hypothesis is that there will be gender differences in cultural orientation, such that females will endorse more collectivistic cultural values compared with males, who will endorse more individualistic cultural values.

In our fourth and final hypothesis, we attempted to understand the role of cultural orientation in moderating the relationship between identity and intimacy. Based on the findings of Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1988; Dyk and Adams, 1990; Lacombe & Gay, 1998; Schiedel & Marcia, 1985; and Hodgson & Fischer, 1979, that indicated gender does play an important role in moderating the relationship between identity and intimacy, and the findings of Hofstede, 1980;

and Triandis, 1994, that indicated females are more collectivistic compared to males, it is hypothesized that the relationship between identity and intimacy will be moderated by cultural orientation, such that it will be stronger among those that endorse more individualistic cultural values compared to those who endorse more collectivistic cultural values.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

Participants

A total of 422 college students (mean age = 20.80, sd = 3.63) were recruited from one urban university in Delhi, India (n = 96), two urban universities in Beijing, China (n = 180), and one urban university in Orlando, United States (n = 146). Among this sample, 36.7% were males, and 63.3% were females. The USA sample was 66.4% White/Caucasian, 15.8% Hispanic, 7.5% Black, 4.1% Asian, 5.5% Mixed, and 0.7% Other.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire was used to inquire about age, gender, grade, ethnicity etc.

Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (EPSI)

Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981) is an assessment of Erikson's first six psychosocial stages (trust to intimacy). This study targeted identity and intimacy subscales for examination. Each subscale reflects a successful and unsuccessful resolution of the psychosocial crises corresponding to each stage. The instrument consists of 12 items per subscale, and respondents answer each item according to a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Never true) to 5 (Always true). A continuous score reflects the degree to which a psychosocial stage resolution occurred, with higher scores representing more positive outcomes. Rosenthal et al. (1981) reported Cronbach's alpha to be .71 for identity and .63 for intimacy. The coefficient alpha reliabilities for the subscales in this study were .79 for individualism and .80 for

collectivism. For the current study, the coefficient alpha reliabilities for the subscales were .72 for both the identity and intimacy subscales.

Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)

Experiences in Close Relationships (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998) is a 36-item self-report measure of attachment that uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from disagree strongly to agree strongly. The ECR has two sub-scales labeled “Model of Self” and “Model of Others” also called “Relationship Anxiety” and “Relationship Avoidance”, respectively. For the Model of Self higher scores indicate more anxiety about rejection by others and feelings of personal unworthiness regarding interpersonal relationships. For the Model of Others higher scores indicate more interpersonal distrust and avoidance of closeness with others. The Relationship Anxiety sub-scale contains items such as the following: *“I worry about being abandoned”*. The Relationship Avoidance sub-scale contains such items as *“I try to avoid getting too close to my partner”*. Individuals with high scores on both the anxiety and avoidance subscales are classified as fearful, individuals with low scores on the anxiety subscale and high scores on the avoidance subscale are classified as dismissive, individuals with high scores on the anxiety subscale and low scores on the avoidance subscale are classified as preoccupied, and individuals with low scores on both subscales are classified as secure. Internal consistency and test re-test reliability for its two subscales have been reported at .94 and .90 for avoidance and .91 and .91 for anxiety, respectively (Brennan et al. 1998; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). The coefficient alpha reliabilities for the subscales in this study were .86 for the relationship avoidance subscale, and .79 for the relationship anxiety subscale.

Cultural Orientation Scale (COS)

Cultural Orientation Scale (Triandis and Gelfand, 1998) intends to measure various beliefs and attitudes that express individualistic and collectivistic tendencies. The combination of individualism and collectivism creates two dimensions upon which cultures vary. The original scale by Singelis et.al (1995) is made up of 32 items. For the shortened version of the scale developed by Triandis and Gelfand (1998), the same dimensions are identified, with a total of 27 items. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree), and include items such as “*Being a unique individual is important to me,*” “*Winning is everything,*” “*It is important to me to maintain harmony in my group,*” and “*My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me.*” A high score on any of the subscales indicates a high degree of that characteristic that is being measured (e.g. a high score on collectivism indicates a high degree of collectivism). The coefficient alpha reliabilities for the subscales in this study were .79 for individualism and .80 for collectivism.

Procedure

Participants were provided with an IRB approved informed consent form before completing the survey battery. The participants from USA who agreed to take part in the study completed an anonymous online survey that included an explanation of the research, an informed consent, a demographics questionnaire, and the measures. The participants recruited from the Indian and Chinese Universities completed the paper-and-pencil version of the measures in a group classroom setting and were assisted as necessary by the authors or trained research assistants. Participants were informed that this study surveyed their beliefs, values, goals, and feelings associated with interpersonal relationships.

Following the guidelines proposed by Guillemin, Bombardier, and Beaton (1993), the measures were translated from English into Chinese, and then translated back into English by someone who had not seen the original English measure, for the Chinese participants. The two English copies were then reviewed to discuss and ameliorate the discrepancies. Since students in the Indian sample use English as their instructional language, the English version was provided for them based on consultation with the local study coordinator.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Preliminary and descriptive Analyses

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that the three samples significantly differed in age $F(2, 412) = 6.81, p = .001$. A least squares difference (LSD) post hoc analysis indicated that the Indian sample ($\bar{x} = 22.04, S = 1.71$) was significantly ($p = .001$) older than the Chinese ($\bar{x} = 20.42, S = 1.65$) and the American ($\bar{x} = 20.51, S = 5.61$) samples ($p = .002$). The Chinese and American samples were not significantly different in age distribution. The three samples were also significantly different in gender distribution ($\chi^2(2) = 45.87, p < .001$) with 84.9% females in the USA sample compared to 53.6% females in China sample and 47.7% females in the India sample.

A 2 by 3 (gender by country) Multivariate Analyses Of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare the three samples on all measures (See Table 1). There was a significant main effect for gender (Wilks' $\Lambda = .88, F(6, 397) = 8.90, p < .001$) with males scoring higher on individualistic orientation ($F(1, 402) = 18.51, p < .001$), and females scoring higher on collectivistic orientation ($F(1, 402) = 9.88, p < .01$), identity ($F(1, 402) = 7.39, p < .01$), and intimacy ($F(1, 402) = 19.87, p < .001$). This confirmed our third hypothesis that stated that there would be gender differences in cultural orientation, such that females would endorse more collectivistic cultural values compared with males, who would endorse more individualistic cultural values.

There was also a significant main effect for country (Wilks' $\Lambda = .61, F(12, 794) = 18.52, p < .001$) in regard to collectivistic orientation ($F(2, 402) = 18.88, p < .001$), identity development ($F(2, 402) = 15.15, p < .001$), intimacy ($F(2, 402) = 4.00, p < .05$), relationship avoidance ($F(2, 402) = 59.06, p < .001$), and relationship anxiety ($F(2, 402) = 12.39, p < .001$). A

Least Squares Difference (LSD) post hoc analysis revealed that in regard to collectivistic orientation, the Chinese sample scored significantly lower than the American and Indian samples ($p < .001$), which were not significantly different from each other ($p = .06$). In regard to identity development, the American sample scored significantly higher than the Chinese sample ($p < .001$), which scored significantly higher than the Indian sample ($p = .003$). In regard to intimacy, the American sample scored significantly higher than the Indian and Chinese samples ($p < .001$), which were not significantly different from each other. In regard to relationship avoidance, the American sample scored significantly lower than the Indian and Chinese samples ($p < .001$), which were not significantly different from each other. In regard to relationship anxiety, the Chinese sample scored significantly lower than the Indian and American samples ($p < .001$), which were not significantly different from each other. There was also a significant interaction effect for gender by country (Wilks' $\Lambda = .91$, $F(12, 794) = 3.22$, $p < .001$) on individualistic orientation ($F(2, 402) = 9.09$, $p < .001$) and relationship avoidance ($F(2, 402) = 3.88$, $p < .05$). As can be seen in figure 5, males scored much higher in individualistic orientation in both the Indian and the American sample, but there does not seem to be a large difference by gender in the Chinese sample. In regard to relationship avoidance, in figure 3, it appears that females scored higher than males in India and China, but there does not seem to be a very large gender difference in the Chinese and American samples. The other analyses can be seen in figure 1, 2, 4, and 6.

Table 1

Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance F Ratios for Gender x Country Effects

Variable	ANOVA						
	Intimacy	Identity	Individualism	Collectivism	Relationship Anxiety	Relationship Avoidance	
	MANOVA						
	F(12, 794)	F(1, 402)	F(1, 402)	F(1, 402)	F(1, 402)	F(1, 402)	F(1, 402)
Gender	8.90***	19.87***	7.39**	18.51***	9.88**	2.21	.96
Country	18.52***	4.00*	15.15***	1.23	18.88***	12.39***	59.06***
Gender x Country	3.22***	2.96	2.47	9.09***	.10	.33	3.88*

Note. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis

	Possible Range	Actual Range	USA Mean (sd)	India Mean (sd)	China Mean (sd)	Total Sample Mean (sd)
Identity	12-60	23-59	43.96 (7.74)	36.97 (4.01)	39.44 (5.53)	40.45 (6.70)
Intimacy	12-60	20-60	44.46 (7.42)	39.75 (7.18)	40.15 (5.93)	41.56 (7.08)
Relationship Avoidance	1-5	1-4.72	2.31 (.87)	3.12 (.36)	3.21 (.26)	2.88 (.70)
Relationship Anxiety	1-5	1.11-4.61	2.91 (.77)	2.95 (.49)	2.60 (.42)	2.79 (.60)
Individualistic Orientation	1-5	1.31-4.77	3.29 (.50)	3.40 (.72)	3.29 (.57)	3.31 (.58)
Collectivistic Orientation	1-5	2.21-5	3.70 (.44)	3.84 (.49)	3.44 (.56)	3.62 (.53)

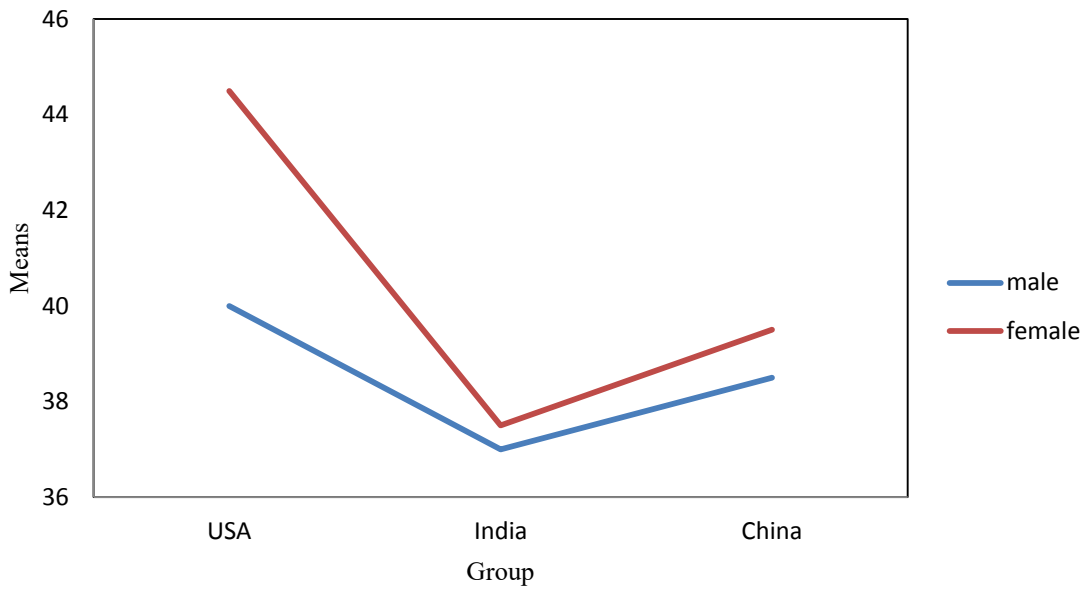


Figure 1: Means for Identity by Country for Males and Females

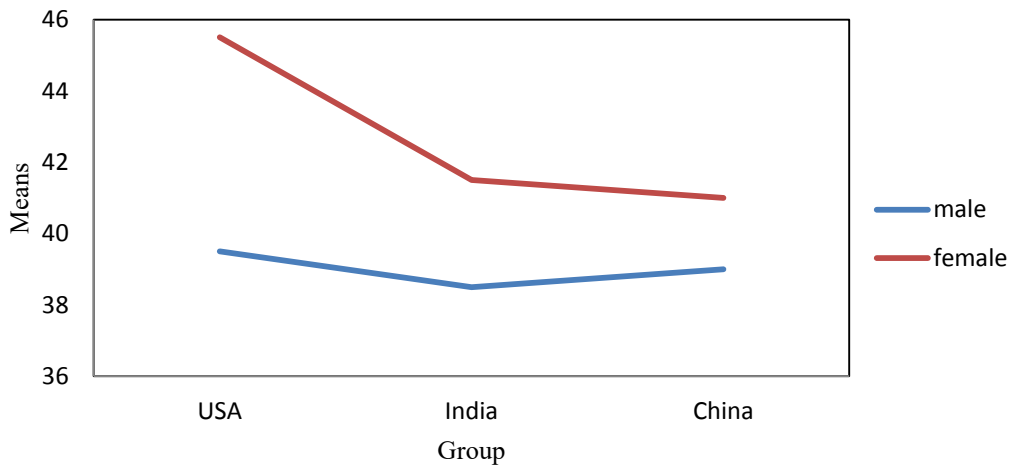


Figure 2: Means for Intimacy by country for Males and Female

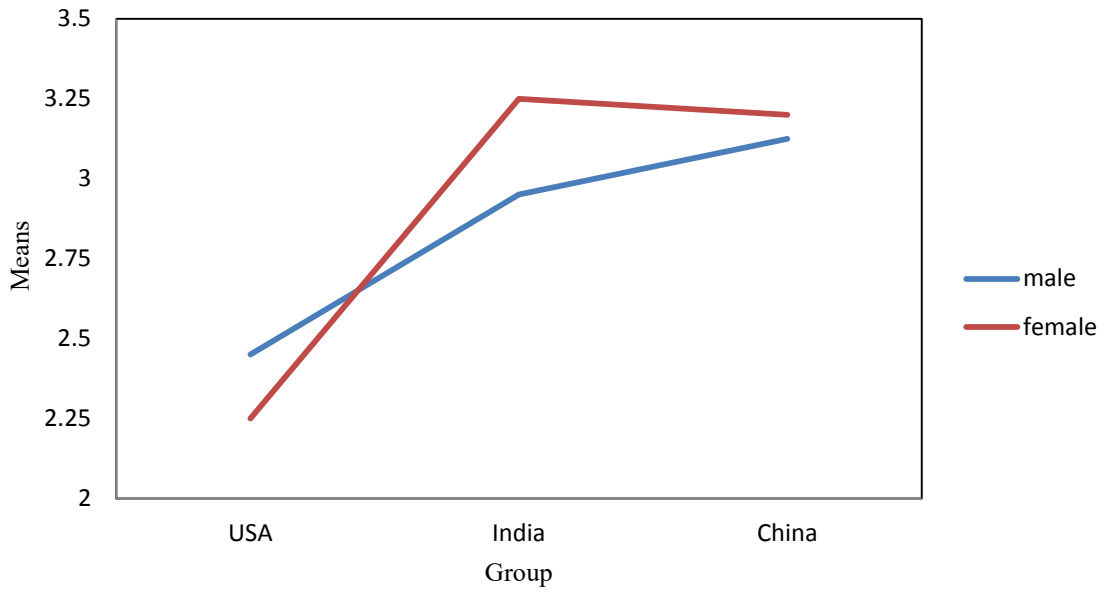


Figure 3: Means for Relationship Avoidance by Country for Males and Females

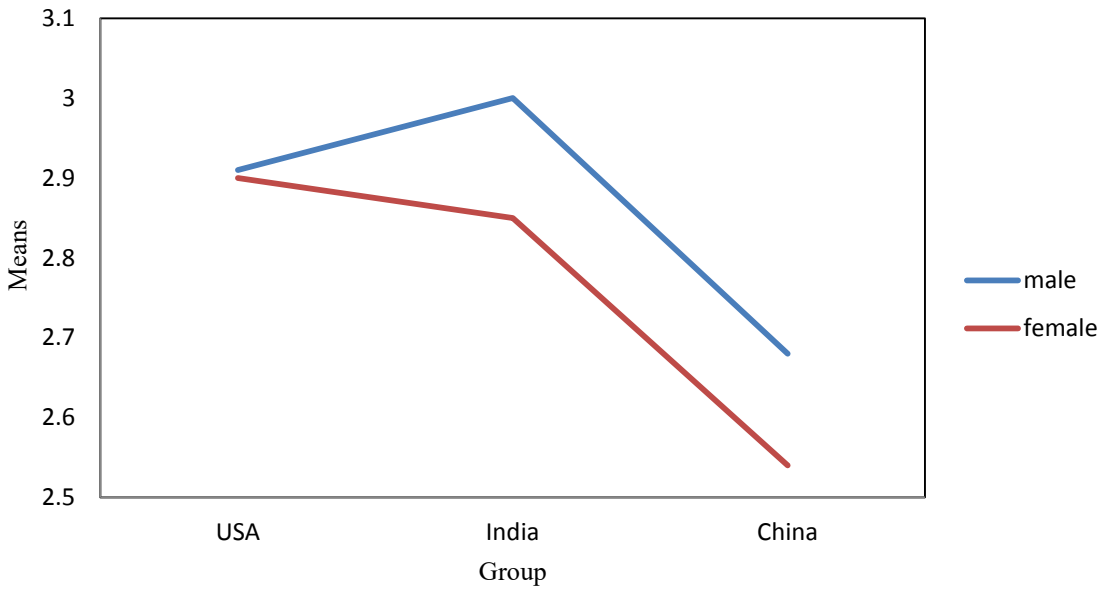


Figure 4: Means for Relationship Anxiety by Country for Males and Females

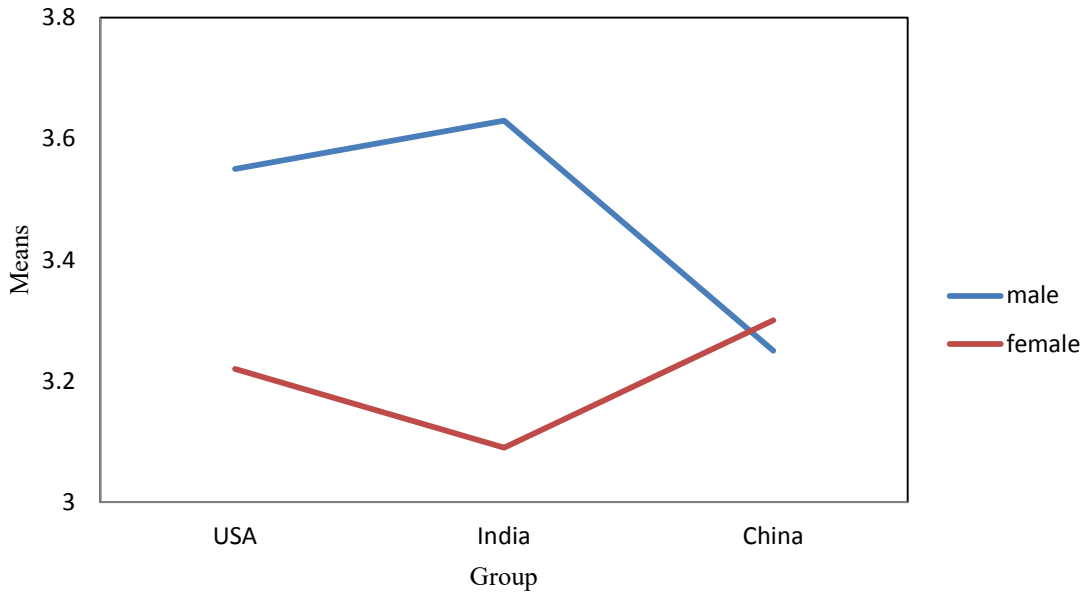


Figure 5: Means for Individualistic Orientation by Country for Males and Females

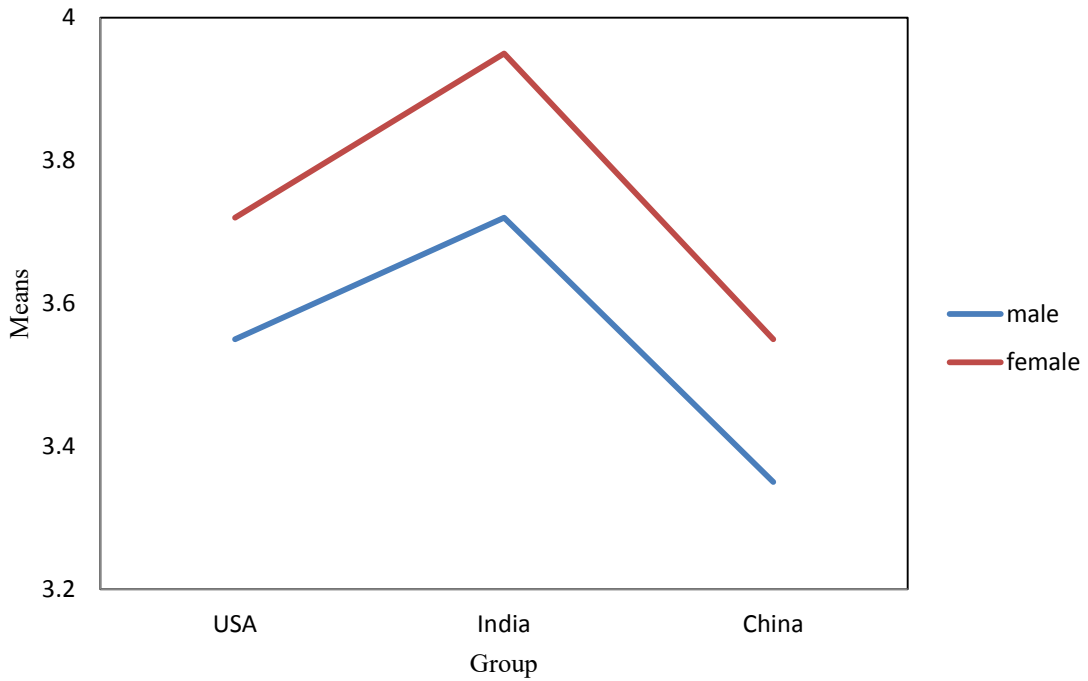


Figure 6: Means for Collectivistic Orientation by Country for Males and Females

A correlational coefficient matrix was constructed (see Table 3). As can be seen on this table, identity was significantly correlated with collectivism ($r = .26, p < .001$), and negatively correlated with relationship avoidance ($r = -.32, p < .001$), as well as relationship anxiety ($r = -.28, p < .001$). Intimacy was also significantly correlated with collectivism ($r = .41, p < .001$), but it was negatively correlated with individualism ($r = -.16, p = .001$), relationship avoidance ($r = -.41, p < .001$), and relationship anxiety ($r = -.10, p < .05$). Identity and intimacy were also correlated with each other ($r = .52, p < .001$). Collectivism was negatively correlated with relationship avoidance ($r = -.11, p < .05$). Additionally, individualism and collectivism were positively correlated with each other ($r = .30, p < .001$).

Table 3
Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	--					
Individualistic Orientation	.015					
Collectivistic Orientation	-.013	.295**				
Identity	.028	.048	.260**			
Intimacy	-.045	-.158**	.407**	.518**		
Relationship Avoidance	.020	.056	-.109*	-.323**	-.406**	
Relationship Anxiety	-.035	.050	.017	-.276**	-.103*	-.086

Note. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .001$

Main analyses

Three multiple regression analyses were conducted since this study explored intimacy in 3 ways: an Eriksonian measure (EPSI) which captures intimacy from Erikson's theoretical perspective; and another measure (ECR), which captures intimacy from an attachment

perspective, specifically looking at relationship anxiety and relationship avoidance as the two basic dimensions of intimacy in romantic relationships. To test the first hypothesis which stated that identity development will predict intimacy in relationships, a multiple regression analysis was conducted with age and gender entered on step one, identity score from the EPSI entered on step 2, individualistic and collectivistic scores from the COS entered on step 3, and interaction terms entered on step 4, with intimacy score from the EPSI as the dependent variable (see Table 4). In accordance with the procedure for testing moderator effects as proposed by Holmbeck (1997), interaction terms are created by centering the predictor variable (i.e. subtracting each score from the mean) and then multiplying the two predictor scores together. Thus we created two interaction terms, Identity/Individualism and Identity/Collectivism. The overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.44$, Adjusted $R^2 = .43$, $F(7, 400) = 45.36$, $p < .001$). At step 3, the change in R^2 was significant (change in $F(2, 402) = 51.09$, $p < .001$; change in $R^2 = .14$) with standardized beta coefficients reaching significance for identity ($\beta = .42$, $t = 10.61$, $p < .001$), individualism ($\beta = -.28$, $t = -7.04$, $p < .001$), and collectivism ($\beta = .37$, $t = 9.07$, $p < .001$). This confirmed our hypothesis that identity development would predict intimacy in relationships. At step 4, the change in R^2 was not significant, indicating that there was no interaction, thus disconfirming our fourth hypothesis.

Table 4
Regression Analysis Summary for Variables predicting Intimacy

Variable	β	t	p
Gender	.07	1.73	.085
Age	-.04	-1.05	.294
Identity	.41	10.05	.000**
Individualistic Orientation	-.27	-6.78	.000**
Collectivistic Orientation	.38	9.04	.000**
Identity-Individualism Interaction	.02	.40	.691
Identity-Collectivism Interaction	.05	1.10	.272

Note. * = $p < .01$, ** = $p < .001$

A second multiple regression analysis was conducted with age and gender entered on step one, identity score from the EPSI entered on step 2, individualistic and collectivistic scores from the COS entered on step 3, and interaction terms entered on step 4, with relationship anxiety score from the ECR as the dependent variable (see Table 5). The overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.11$, Adjusted $R^2 = .09$, $F(7, 397) = 6.92$, $p < .001$). At step 4, the change in R^2 was significant (change in $F(2, 397) = 6.17$, $p < .01$; change in $R^2 = .03$) with standardized beta coefficients reaching significance for identity ($\beta = -.25$, $t = -4.90$, $p < .001$), and the interaction term for identity with collectivism ($\beta = -.16$, $t = -3.01$, $p < .01$).

Table 5
Regression Analysis Summary for Variables predicting Relationship Anxiety

Variable	β	t	p
Gender	.01	.10	.923
Age	-.03	-.70	.487
Identity	-.25	-4.90	.000**
Individualistic Orientation	.02	.35	.728
Collectivistic Orientation	.06	1.14	.254
Identity-Individualism Interaction	-.03	-.50	.618
Identity-Collectivism Interaction	-.16	-3.01	.003*

Note. * = $p < .01$, ** = $p < .001$

A third multiple regression analysis was conducted with age and gender entered on step one, identity score from the EPSI entered on step 2, individualistic and collectivistic scores from the COS entered on step 3, and interaction terms entered on step 4, with relationship avoidance score from the ECR as the dependent variable (see Table 6). The overall model was significant $R^2 = 0.13$, Adjusted $R^2 = .11$, $F(7, 397) = 8.40$, $p < .001$). At step 2, the change in R^2 was significant (change in $F(1, 401) = 42.04$, $p < .001$; change in $R^2 = .09$) with standardized beta coefficients reaching significance for identity ($\beta = -.31$, $t = -6.48$, $p < .001$). At step 4, the change in R^2 was not significant. This confirmed our second hypothesis that identity development would

be a negative predictor for relationship anxiety and relationship avoidance. Our final hypothesis that the relationship between identity and intimacy would be moderated by cultural orientation, such that it would be stronger among those that endorse more individualistic cultural values than those who endorse more collectivistic cultural values was not supported. Our findings from the multiple regression analysis indicated that although identity and cultural orientation considered alone were significant predictors of intimacy in relationships, the relationship between identity and intimacy were moderated by cultural orientation only for relationship anxiety, such that a strong sense of identity along with a collectivistic cultural orientation predicted less relationship anxiety.

Table 6
Regression Analysis Summary for Variables predicting Relationship Avoidance

Variable	β	t	p
Gender	-.06	-1.19	.235
Age	.02	.38	.704
Identity	-.30	-5.88	.000**
Individualistic Orientation	.06	1.20	.230
Collectivistic Orientation	.06	1.14	.254
Identity-Individualism Interaction	-.03	-.49	.625
Identity-Collectivism Interaction	-.09	-1.74	.083

Note. * = $p < .01$, ** = $p < .001$

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

As hypothesized, identity was found to be a strong predictor for intimacy in romantic relationships. This also provides support for the proposed link between identity development and intimacy formation put forth by Erik Erikson in his theory of psychosocial development. He highlighted the importance of having a strong sense of identity prior to intimate relationships, strongly arguing that adolescents who fail to find a suitable identity may have difficulty forming and maintaining long-lasting close relationships with romantic partners since “intimacy is the ability to fuse your identity with somebody else’s without fear that you’re going to lose something yourself” (Erikson, 1968). It was also found that an individualistic cultural orientation was a negative predictor of intimacy in relationships. This implies that people having a predominantly individualistic orientation are less likely to experience a deep level of intimacy in romantic relationships. A potential explanation of this finding can be the individual’s focus on individual independence, development, and interests as getting in the way of establishing true intimacy in a romantic relationship. Since an intimate romantic relationship demands a certain level of interdependence and collaboration, individuals with an individualistic orientation could have difficulty maintaining such relationships. On the other hand, a collectivistic orientation was found to be a positive predictor of intimacy in relationships. This implies that people having a more collectivistic orientation are more likely to experience intimacy in romantic relationships. A possible explanation for this finding can be the individual’s values of interdependence, companionship, and harmony as fostering deeper intimacy in relationships.

Our second hypothesis that identity will negatively predict relationship anxiety and relationship avoidance in romantic relationships was also supported. As can be seen from the regression analysis, identity came out to be the strongest predictor for relationship avoidance and

relationship anxiety, implying that the stronger the sense of identity, the less likely it is that the individual will display avoidance and experience anxiety in romantic relationships. Once again, this supports Erikson's (1969/1980) view that some degree of identity resolution is necessary for intimacy within a romantic relationship context.

As hypothesized, females were found to endorse more collectivistic cultural values compared with males, who endorsed more individualistic cultural values. Erikson also claimed there were important gender differences between men and women in the identity development process wherein men focus more on developing their identity in the intrapersonal domains (such as occupation and ideological beliefs), whereas women focus more on the interpersonal domain.

Considering that a number of previous researches focusing on the cultural contrasting of the Western and Eastern cultures have found that Eastern cultures are more collectivistic, whereas Western cultures are more individualistic, one very surprising finding of this study was the Chinese sample scored significantly lower than both India and the United States on collectivism. This finding might be explained by the intensification of globalization, due to which, people around the world are increasingly exposed to and involved in the global culture (especially Western and American culture). Wang (2006) proposes that college-educated youths in China are undergoing major value changes, such as "individualism, materialism, and moral crisis," as the larger society transitions under the context of ever intensifying globalization. Since the participants of the study were college students from two urban universities in China, the lower scores on collectivism make sense in light of this proposition. Another possible reason for this finding could be the use of translated measures for the Chinese sample, which may not have accurately captured the essence of some questions in the measures, thereby distorting the questions and skewing the results.

Another interesting finding of the study was that the US sample did not score significantly different from the Indian sample on collectivism. The author proposes that this finding is the result of a much larger percentage of females in the US sample (84.9%), compared with the Indian sample (47.7%). Since the results indicate that overall, females scored significantly higher than males on the collectivistic dimension, the unequal gender distribution might be skewing the true picture by making the US sample appear more collectivistic.

In summary, the results indicate that identity development is a very strong predictor for intimacy, such that a strong sense of identity positively predicts intimacy, and negatively predicts relationship anxiety and relationship avoidance. Also, cultural orientation considered alone is a significant predictor of intimacy in relationships, such that a collectivistic cultural orientation positively predicts intimacy and negatively predicts relationship anxiety and relationship anxiety. However, the relationship between identity and intimacy is moderated by cultural orientation only for relationship anxiety, such that a strong sense of identity along with a collectivistic cultural orientation predicts less relationship anxiety. We were therefore, unable to support our hypothesis that the relationship between identity and intimacy would be stronger for individuals endorsing more individualistic values compared to those endorsing more collectivistic values.

This study makes important contributions to the existing literature by bringing forth some salient points for consideration. Firstly, the findings from the study suggest that the traditional conceptualization of individualism and collectivism as constructs on the opposite ends of a dichotomous continuum may be limited, implying that individualism is not necessarily the opposite of collectivism. Triandis (1995) has suggested that people choose and adopt their personal characteristics, styles of communication, and inclinations, from both individualistic and collectivistic cognitive structures under different circumstances. Also, increasing globalization

has led to a fusion of cultures from all over the world, necessitating a reconsideration of the traditional conceptualization of individualism/collectivism as a simple dichotomy. Therefore, it is possible for individuals to be both individualistic and collectivistic in different aspects of their lives.

Hofstede (1983) classified over 50 countries in three regions of the world based on individualism and collectivism. His classification was conceptualized on the basis of a one-dimensional view of human values, with individualism and collectivism lying at the opposite poles on a continuum. Nations and cultures were defined as located at one or the other of those bipolar dimensions, or somewhere in between. However, the findings from the study suggest that it is fallacious to make assumptions about an individual's cultural orientation based on the country he/she belongs to. Therefore, one must not assume that everyone from traditionally individualistic cultures is an individualist, whereas everyone from traditionally collectivistic cultures is a collectivist. Dutta-Bergman and Wells (2002) also recently provided ample evidence on within-culture variations in terms of individualism and collectivism and the consequent differences reflected in behavioral indicators.

Finally, it should be noted that having a collectivistic cultural orientation is not antithetical to identity development. Some existing literature has suggested that collectivists de-emphasize personal identity, implying that they may have a weaker sense of identity as compared to individualists. However, our results indicate this is not true, and while identity may be constructed in different ways across cultures, people endorsing collectivistic cultural values do have a strong sense of identity, and it plays an important role in their relationships.

The findings from this study have important practical implications for therapy with individuals from different cultures. Therapists are urged to recognize their biases and

stereotypical beliefs about individuals from different cultures, and to recognize that there is great inter-individual variability in beliefs, values, and behaviors across cultures. Therapists are encouraged to be more open-minded and not adhere to the traditional dichotomous view of cultural orientations while working with clients in a multicultural context.

These findings also have important implications for therapy with couples, wherein therapists would benefit from addressing identity issues with both partners. They could encourage both partners to define themselves inside and outside of the relationship, and individual identity building could be a first step in improving relationship quality and fostering a deeper sense of intimacy for the couple. It should be noted that personal identity development does not imply that individuals are to focus on their own interests, goals, and choices while sacrificing relationship goals and disregarding the needs of their partner. The results from this study clearly indicate that having values like harmony and interdependence, which are often associated with collectivistic cultures, are strong predictors for intimacy in relationships. Therefore, an emphasis on personal identity development can go hand in hand with more collectivistic cultural values and serve to enhance relationship quality.

When considering the findings of this study, there are certain limitations that should also be noted. First and foremost, participants in the Indian, Chinese, as well as the US sample were college students from urban cities. Also, a majority of the participants in the sample were females (63.3%). A more balanced sample involving both genders and participants from the larger community might yield more generalizable findings. Further, it would be interesting to collect data from people belonging to diverse socio-economic statuses (SES) and within both rural and urban settings in India, China, and the USA. Additionally, there has been some debate in the field with regards to the equivalence of computerized, and paper-and-pencil administration

of measures. Since for the purpose of this study, the USA sample completed the computerized version of the measures, while the Indian and Chinese samples completed the paper-and-pencil version, this raises another limitation of the study that needs to be considered. Furthermore, the usage of self report measures in this study might have impacted the participants' responses by leading them to either respond in socially desirable ways or to defensively approach certain questions.

APPENDIX A: APPROVAL OF EXEMPT HUMAN RESEARCH



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Shengnan Li and Garima Jhingon**

Date: **August 01, 2011**

Dear Researcher:

On 8/1/2011, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: UCF IRB Initial Review Submission Form
Project Title: Identity and Close Personal Relationships as Moderated by Culture.
Investigator: Shengnan Li
IRB Number: SBE-11-07767
Funding Agency: None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Kendra Dimond Campbell, MA, JD, UCF IRB Interim Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Janice Turchin on 08/01/2011 11:45:31 AM EDT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice Turchin".

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT (ENGLISH VERSION)



EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

Title of Project: Identity and Close Personal Relationships as Moderated by Culture.

Principal Investigators: Garima Jhingon and Shengnan Li

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Steven L. Berman

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

- The purpose of this research is to study possible cultural differences in the effects of close personal relationships on identity. It will explore gender and culture by looking at close personal relationships, including friendships and romantic relationships, as they related to conceptions of identity, in three cultural contexts: USA, India, and China.
- You will be asked to complete a survey which includes demographics as well as a few short questionnaires relating to your relationships, beliefs, values etc. The survey is anonymous; you will not be asked to write your name on the questionnaires. Results will only be reported in the form of group data.
- The survey contains 220 questions in addition to the demographics, requiring not more than 1 hour for completion.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints contact Garima Jhingon, Graduate Student, Clinical Psychology Program, at garimajhingon@knights.ucf.edu; Shengnan Li, Graduate Student, Clinical Psychology Program, at shengnanli2010@knights.ucf.edu; or Dr. Berman, Faculty Supervisor, Psychology Department, at (386) 506-4049 or Steven.Berman@ucf.edu.

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY (ENGLISH VERSION)

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Please use the Bubble Sheet provided to fill in your background information as follows:

NAME: Leave Blank

SEX: mark MALE or FEMALE

GRADE: bubble in your year in college

BIRTH DATE: Mark "Month," "Day," and "Year"

Now please turn over both the bubble sheet and this page, and complete the survey. Thank you.

EPSI

The following statements describe things you may either agree with or disagree with. In the bubble sheet provided, please mark the letter that shows how much you agree or disagree that a statement is true of you or not true of you.

A	B	C	D	E
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
True	True	True	True	True

1. I change my opinion of myself a lot.
2. I've got a clear idea of what I want to be.
3. I feel mixed up.
4. The important things in life are clear to me.
5. I've got it together.
6. I know what kind of person I am.
7. I can't decide what I want to do with my life.
8. I have a strong sense of what it means to be male/female.
9. I like myself and am proud of what I stand for.
10. I don't really know who I am.
11. I work keep up a certain image when I'm with people.
12. I don't really feel involved.
13. I get embarrassed when someone begins to tell me personal things.
14. I'm ready to get involved with a special person.

15. I'm warm and friendly.
16. It is important to be completely open with my friends.
17. I keep what I really think and feel to myself.
18. I think it's crazy to get too involved with people.
19. I care deeply for others.
20. I'm basically a loner.
21. I have a boyfriend/girlfriend who is a close friend of mine as well as a close romantic partner.
22. I prefer not to show too much of myself to others.
23. Being alone with other people makes me feel uncomfortable.
24. I find it easy to make close friends.

ECR

The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it.

Please fill in your rating on the Bubble Sheet, using the following rating scale:

A	B	C	D	E
Strongly	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Strongly
Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Agree

25. I prefer not to show how I feel deep down.
26. I worry about being abandoned.

27. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
28. I worry a lot about my relationships.
29. Just when my partner starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.
30. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
31. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
32. I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.
33. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
34. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.
35. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.
36. I often want to merge completely with romantic partners, and this sometimes scares them away.
37. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
38. I worry about being alone.
39. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
40. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
41. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
42. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
43. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
44. Sometimes I feel that I force my partners to show more feeling, more commitment.
45. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
46. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
47. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
48. If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.

49. I tell my partner just about everything.
50. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
51. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
52. When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
53. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
54. I get frustrated when my partner is not around as much as I would like.
55. I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help.
56. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
57. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
58. When romantic partners disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.
59. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
60. I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.

COS

The following statements describe things you may either agree with or disagree with. In the bubble sheet provided, please mark the letter that shows how much you agree or disagree that a statement is true of you or not true of you.

A	B	C	D	E
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
True	True	True	True	True

61. I'd rather depend on myself than others.

62. I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others.
63. I often do my own thing.
64. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.
65. Being a unique individual is important to me.
66. It is important that I do my job better than others.
67. Winning is everything.
68. Competition is the law of nature.
69. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.
70. I enjoy working in situations involving competition.
71. Some people emphasize winning; I am not one of them.
72. Without competition, it is not possible to have a good society.
73. It annoys me when other people perform better than I do.
74. If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud.
75. The well-being of my coworkers is important to me.
76. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
77. I feel good when I cooperate with others.
78. If a relative were in financial difficulty, I would help within my means.
79. It is important to me to maintain harmony in my group.
80. I like sharing little things with my neighbors.
81. My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me.
82. Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.
83. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.
84. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.

85. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.

86. Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure.

87. I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group.

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT (CHINESE VERSION)



研究说明

课题题目：自我认同和亲密人际关系以及文化作为影响因素

主要研究者：Shengnan Li 和 Garima Jhingon

指导教师：Steven L. Berman 博士。

你被邀请参加这个研究调查。是否要参加取决于你。

- 这个研究的目的是要了解亲密人际关系对自我认同的影响以及可能的文化差异在其中的影响。研究会通过观察亲密人际关系包括友谊和恋爱关系来探讨性别和文化，以及在三个不同文化背景下（美国，中国和印度）他们和自我认同的关系。
- 你需要完成一个调查，其中包括基本信息和一些有关到你的关系，信仰，和价值的短的问卷。这个调查是匿名的，你不需要在问卷上写你的名字。结果只会以集体数据的形式呈现并报告。
- 这个调查包括 220 道题目以及基本信息，需要大约两小时来完成。

你必须是满 18 岁或以上才可以参加这个调查。

关于研究的问题或报告问题的学术联系事宜：如果你有问题，担心，或投诉，请通过 shengnanli2010@knights.ucf.edu 联系 Shengnan Li, 研究生, 临床心理学专业,; 通过 garimajhingon@knights.ucf.edu 联系 Garima Jhingon, 研究生, 临床心理学专业,; 或者通过 (386) 506-4049 或 Steven.Berman@ucf.edu 联系 Berman 博士, 指导老师, 临床心理学专业。

关于你在研究中的权利或投诉的 IRB 联系事宜：在中佛罗里达大学有关人类参与者的研究都是在 Institutional Review Board 的监督下进行的。这个研究已经被 IRB 审查并通过。有关参与者的权利的信息，请联系 Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 或致电 (407) 823-2901.

APPENDIX E: SURVEY (CHINESE VERSION)

基本資料問卷

請使用所發給的答題卡填寫下面基本資料.

姓名: 請留空白

性別: 請填 男 或 女

年級: 請選擇你的年級

生日: 請留空白

識別碼 :

A: 在**A**欄中選擇你的婚姻狀態.

(0)單身

(1)已婚

(2)離婚

(3)喪偶(寡婦或鰥夫)

(4)分居

BC: 在**BC**欄中選擇你的年齡.

現在請你(使用答案紙和背面問卷)開始填寫. 謝謝你.

ECR

說明:下面的句子是有關你在愛情關係裡如何感覺.我們有興趣於你如何經驗你的男女愛情關係,而不只是在目前的關係裡發生了什麼.請根據下面句子的描述指出你同意或不同意的程度.請在答案卡上選出一個適當的代號.

A

B

C

D

E

从不是这样

很少是这样

有时是这样

经常是这样

总是这样

1. 我比較不喜歡在男/女朋友面前表現我內心的情緒 (憂傷) .
2. 我擔心會(分手)或被拋棄.
3. 當我跟男/女朋友親密地在一起時,我能感到非常舒服.
4. 我會很擔心我的愛情關係.
5. 只要當我的男/女朋友開始親近我時,我發現我會想避開.
6. 我會擔憂我的男/女朋友不会在意我如我那麼在意他們一樣.
7. 當男/女朋友想要非常親近我時,我會感到不舒服.
8. 我會很擔心失去我的男/女朋友.

9. 當我跟男/女朋友分享一些私密的情感時,我會感到不舒服.
10. 我總是希望我的男/女朋友對我付出的感情能有如同我對他/她付出的一樣的相同程度.
11. 我想要親近我的男/女朋友,但常又退縮.
12. 我常想與男/女朋友完全融入,不過有時會使他/她們嚇跑.
13. 當男/女朋友太親近我時我會感到緊張.
14. 我會擔憂獨自一個人 (孤單) .
15. 我能舒服地和我的男/女朋友分享我的私密想法與情感.
16. 我想要非常親密的慾望有時候會嚇走別人.
17. 我試著去避免太親近我的男/女朋友.
18. 我需要一再地被保證我是被我男/女朋友所愛的.
19. 我覺得與我的男/女朋友親近是相當容易的.
20. 我覺得有時候我會迫使我的男/女朋友對我表現較多的情感和承諾.
21. 我覺得讓我自己依賴男/女朋友是困難的.
22. 我不常擔憂分手或被拋棄.

23. 我比較不喜歡與我的男/女朋友太親密.
24. 如果我不能吸引我的男/女朋友,我會感到不開心或生氣.
25. 我幾乎每件事都告訴我的男/女朋友.
26. 我發覺我的男/女朋友不想如我所想要的如此親密.
27. 我經常跟我的男/女朋友討論我的問題跟我所關心的事.
28. 當我沒有認真投入 (男女) 關係時,我感到有些焦慮和不安全.
29. 我能舒服的去依賴我的男/女朋友.
30. 當我的男/女朋友沒有如我所想的那麼常在我身邊時,我會感到受挫.
31. 我不介意要求我的男/女朋友給我安慰,意見或幫忙.
32. 當我的男/女朋友沒有空滿足我的需求時,我會感到受挫.
33. 當我有需要時求助於男/女朋友是能獲得及時幫助的.
34. 當男/女朋友反對我的意見時,我對我自己感到很差勁.
35. 我求助於我的男/女朋友很多事,包括尋求安慰和再保證.
36. 我會怨恨我的男/女朋友沒有花時間陪伴我.

EPSI

下面的陈述描述了一些你可能同意或不同意的东西。选择一个数字来表达多大程度上你同意或不同意那个陈述说的是你的真实情况或不是你的真实情况。

A	B	C	D	E
从不是这样	很少是这样	有时是这样	经常是这样	总是这样

- 37. 我改变了很多关于自己的看法。
- 38. 我对于自己想成为什么有一个清晰的概念。
- 39. 我感到很迷惑不解。
- 40. 生活中重要的的事情对于我来说很清楚。
- 41. 我把自己的生活安排得很好。
- 42. 我知道我是什么样的人。
- 43. 我不能决定我想用我的生命来干什么。
- 44. 我有对于男性/女性意味着什么强烈的意识。
- 45. 我喜欢自己并且我对于自己的主张很自豪。
- 46. 我并不真的知道我是谁。
- 47. 我尽力在我和别的人在一起时保持一定的形象。
- 48. 我并不真的感觉到自己融入其中。
- 49. 当有人开始告诉我个人的事情时我会变得尴尬。

- 50.我准备好和一个特别的人开始恋爱。
- 51.我很温暖并且友好。
- 52.完全对我的朋友开放很重要。
- 53.我对我自己真正的想法和感觉缄口不言。
- 54.我认为和人们太融入是很疯狂的。
- 55.我深深的关心其他人。
- 56.我基本上来说是个孤独的人。
- 57.我有一个男/女朋友，他/她既是一个亲密的朋友又是一个恋人。
- 58.我倾向于 不对其他人展示太多我自己。
- 59.和别的人们单独待在一起会让我感到很不舒服。
- 60.我感到和较亲密的朋友在一起很容易。

COS

對於以下的描述,請決定你同意或不同意的程度.利用下述的等級,請在答案卡上填選(塗黑)

一個最適當的代號.

A	B	C	D	E
从不是这样	很少是这样	有时是这样	经常是这样	总是这样

- 61.我宁愿依靠自己而不是别人。
- 62.大多数时候我依靠自己；我很少依靠别人。
- 63.我经常做自己的事情。
- 64.我个人的自我认同，对于别人的独立，对于我来说很重要。
- 65.做一个独特的个体对我很重要。
- 66.我做自己的工作比别人好很重要。
- 67.胜利是一切。
- 68.竞争是自然的律法。
- 69.当另一个人做的比我好时，我会感到神经紧张和警醒。
- 70.我享受在融入竞争的情况中工作。
- 71.有些人重视胜利；我不是他们中的一员（相反的）。
- 72.没有竞争是不可能有一个好的社会的。
- 73.当别人比我表现好时会令我很烦扰。
- 74.如果我的同事得到嘉奖，我会感到骄傲。
- 75.我同事的康乐对于我很重要。
- 76.对我来说，花时间和别人相处是个乐趣。
- 77.当我和别人合作时我感觉很好。
- 78.如果一个亲戚有经济上的困难，我会用我有限的方法给予帮助。
- 79.对我来说保持在群体中的和谐很重要。

80. 我喜欢和我的邻居分享些小东西。
81. 我的幸福很大程度上取决与我周围人的幸福。
82. 家长和孩子必须尽可能的待在一起。
83. 照顾我的家庭是我的职责，即使需要我牺牲我想要的。
84. 家庭成员应该坚持一直在一起，不管需要牺牲多少。
85. 对我来说尊重我的群体的决定很重要。
86. 孩子应该学习把职责放在享乐前面。
87. 我经常为了我群体的利益牺牲我的个人兴趣。

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