

# Lecture 1 - Culture and Well-being

## East vs. West Paradox

1. East Asians report higher levels of negative emotions
  - a. More negative affect
  - b. Reduced life satisfaction and well-being
2. Prevalence of affective disorders lower in Asian nations
3. Debate
  - a. If differences are "real"
    - i. Measurements are not translatable
    - ii. Culture affects willingness to acknowledge
    - iii. Culture predicts somatisation
  - b. Evidence
    - i. No methodological reasons for low prevalence of mood disorders in Japan
    - ii. Emergent case of treating cultural differences as real differences in emotional functioning & affective disturbance

## Cultural differences

1. Individualism vs collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
Supposed to take care of themselves & immediate family	Born into extended families / clans that protect people in exchange of loyalty
"I" consciousness	"We" consciousness
Personal identity	Social identity

2. Markus & Kitayama (1991)

Independent self-construal	Interdependent self-construal
Separate from social context	Connected with social context
Bounded, unitary, stable structure	Flexible variable
Internal, private	External, public

3. Westerners respond poorly to negative emotion
4. Provides theoretical framework to examine cultural differences in responding to negative emotion
5. Suggests that variation may be both across cultures & individuals

## System of thought perspective

1. Cultural differences influence how people think about the world
2. Chinese vs Greek science, mathematics, philosophy

Chinese	Greek
Continuity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World as a collection of overlapping and interpenetrating stuffs or substance</li> </ul>	Discreteness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World as a collection of discrete objects that "have" properties</li> </ul>
Filed	Object focused
Dialectics	Foundational principles & logics
Experiential	Abstract and analytical

3. Cultural differences influence how people think about the world

Eastern	Western
Allow contradiction	Avoid contradiction
Expect change	Expect continuity
Focus on context	Focus on individual

- a. Contradiction
    - i. Chinese vs. Americans more likely to accept truth of contradictory argument
      1. Given a pair of apparently contradictory arguments
        - a. Americans
          - i. Take one to be true, dismiss the other as false
        - b. Chinese
          - i. Take both to be true
  - b. Change
    - i. Chinese - world is in constant flux
    - ii. Eastern culture
      1. Increased predicted likelihood of change in stock market and weather
    - iii. Priming culture
      1. Chinese expect change
      2. Yin Yang symbol prime this expectation
  - c. Context
    - i. Easterners more likely to pay attention to context of field
    - ii. Understand self as connected to social context
    - iii. Americans & Japanese given recognition test
      1. Japanese
        - a. Recognise object better in same context
      2. Americans
        - a. Little differences
4. Proposition & evidence
  - a. Emotions co-occur (contradiction)
    - i. Propositions
      1. Reduces valuation of position emotions and devalue of negative emotions
      2. Reduces efforts to up regulate positive emotion and down regulate negative emotion
    - ii. Easterners
      1. More likely to experience mixed emotions/co-occurrence of positive & negative emotions
      2. Less likely to value positive emotions & more likely to value negative emotion
      3. Less likely to focus on up-regulating positive emotions & down-regulating negative emotions
    - iii. Evidence
      1. Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener (2002)
        - a. Weaker negative correlations between frequency of pleasant and unpleasant emotions in Asian Dialectic cultures
        - b. Partly moderated by gender
          - i. Strongest in non-ADP women
          - ii. Same in ADP men and women
  - b. Emotions change (change)
    - i. Propositions
      1. Increases perceived self-efficacy to regulate emotion
      2. Reduces the perceived threat value of negative emotion

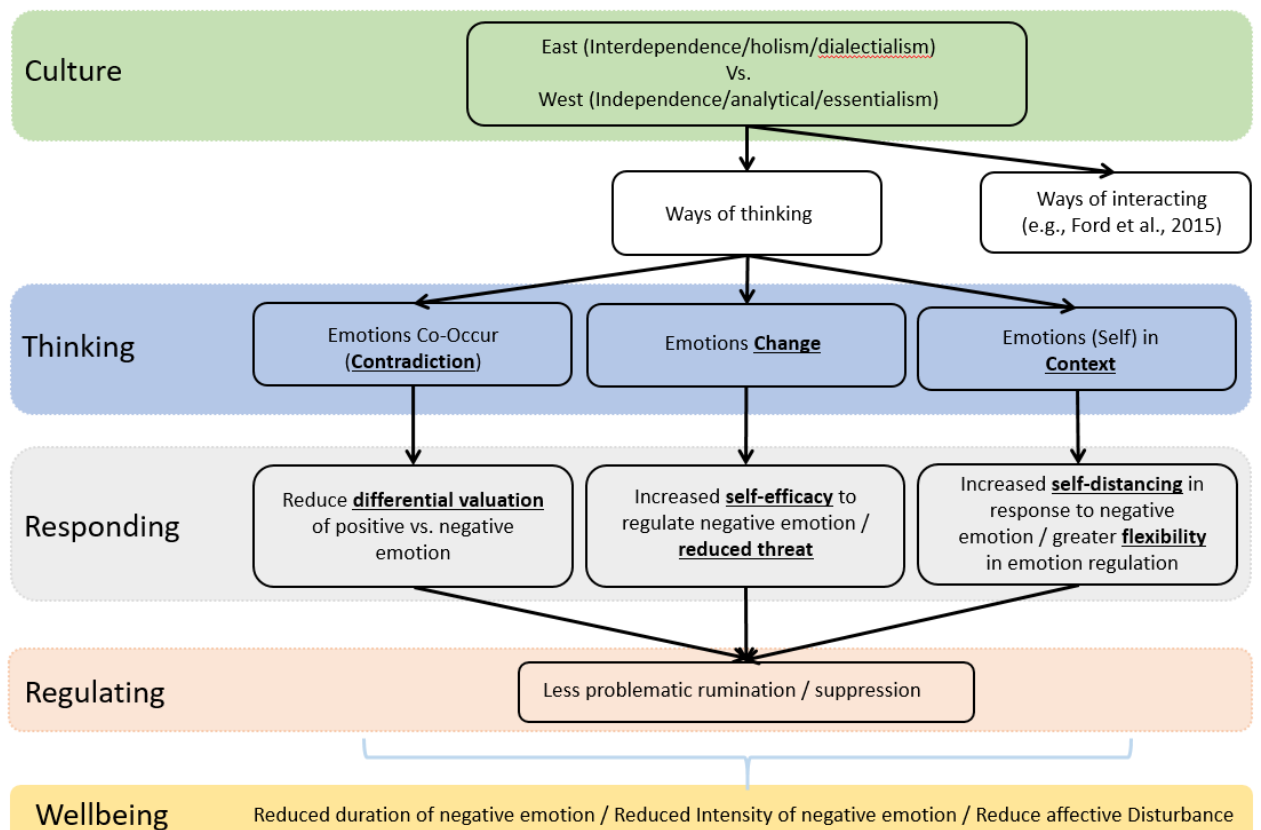
- ii. Beliefs that emotions change
  - 1. Associated with more effective emotion regulation
  - 2. Increase acceptance of negative emotion
  - 3. Enhancing adaptive emotion regulation
- iii. Entity vs. Incremental theories of emotion
  - 1. 3 part study



Figure 1. Implicit theories of emotion and the transition to college: Timeline of Parts 1–4 of the investigation.

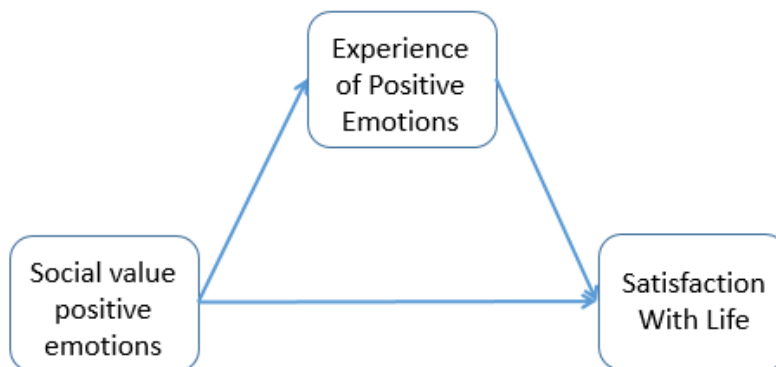
- a. Part 1
  - i. Implicit theories of emotion
  - ii. Measured emotion regulation strategies
- b. Part 2
  - i. Weekly diaries
    - a. Self-rated emotional experiences
    - b. Degree of social support from friends and parents
- c. Part 3
  - i. Long-term outcomes reported by self & peers
- c. Emotions in context (holism)
  - i. Propositions
    - 1. Allows for increased self-distancing
    - 2. Increased self-distance allows for greater
  - ii. East Asians
    - 1. See emotions as linked more to context than self
    - 2. Linked to effective emotion regulation

- iii. Russians (More interdependent than westerners)
  - 1. Self-distance more than Americans
  - 2. Slow less distress over a recent negative event
- iv. Individualism
  - 1. Perceive their own emotions as more diagnostic foundation of self-judgement
    - a. Individualists predominately construct their self-concept by focusing on their personal attributes
  - 2. Emotional experience more salient
- v. Collectivism
  - 1. Place greater importance on groups
  - 2. Focus on their relationships with significant others in constructing self-concept
- vi. Negative emotions
  - 1. Individualism
    - a. Emphasis on standing out & feeling good
      - i. Seek to promote positive experiences and avoid negative experience
  - 2. Collectivism
    - a. Emphasis more on harmonious interpersonal relationships
      - i. Experience of negative emotion be of secondary importance
    - b. Pursuit of group harmony
      - i. Carry cost of experiencing such negative feelings

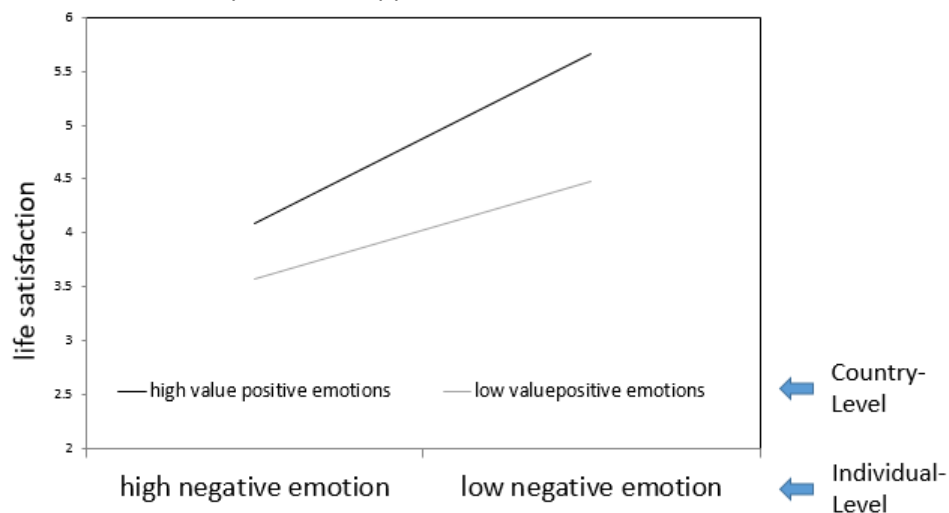


- 5. Implication
  - a. Provides a theory for understanding differences in affective disturbance across cultures
  - b. Builds insight into individual capacities that may be especially effective in coping with negative emotions

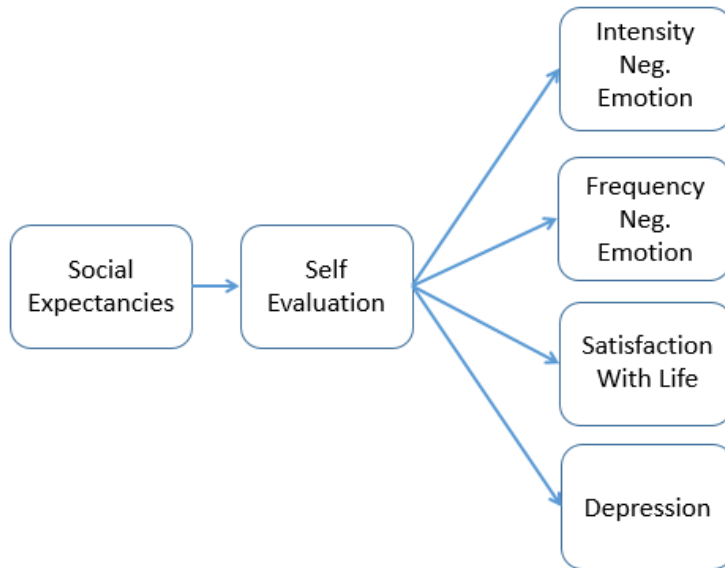
- c. Leads to some reflection on current trends in psycho-therapy
- Cultural-values based approach



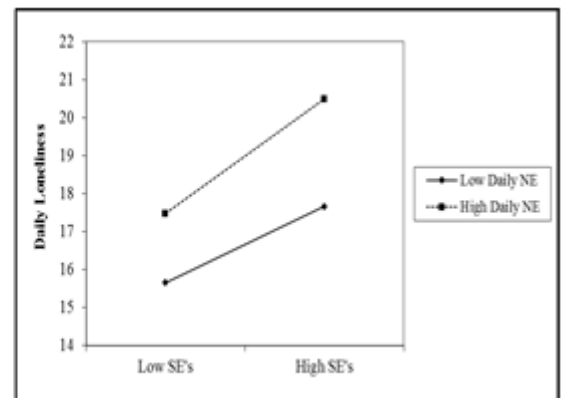
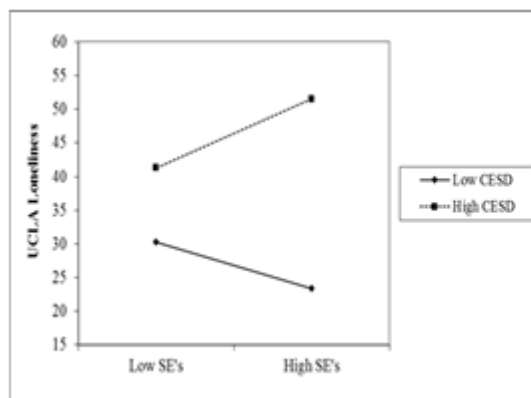
1. Culture influence how we think and in turn this can have implications for how we respond to negative emotion
  - a. Positive emotion
    - i. Highly valued
    - ii. Mandatory optimisation
  - b. Negative emotion
    - i. Pathologised
    - ii. Medicalised
    - iii. Treated with drugs & interventions design to quickly & efficiently return us to "normality"
2. Valuing happiness & life satisfaction
  - a. International college Survey (2001)
    - i. Measure
      1. Satisfaction with life
      2. Frequency of experienced emotions in last week
      3. Social value of emotion
    - ii.  $\uparrow$  value in positive emotion =  $\uparrow$  life satisfaction
  - b. Individual & country value in happiness



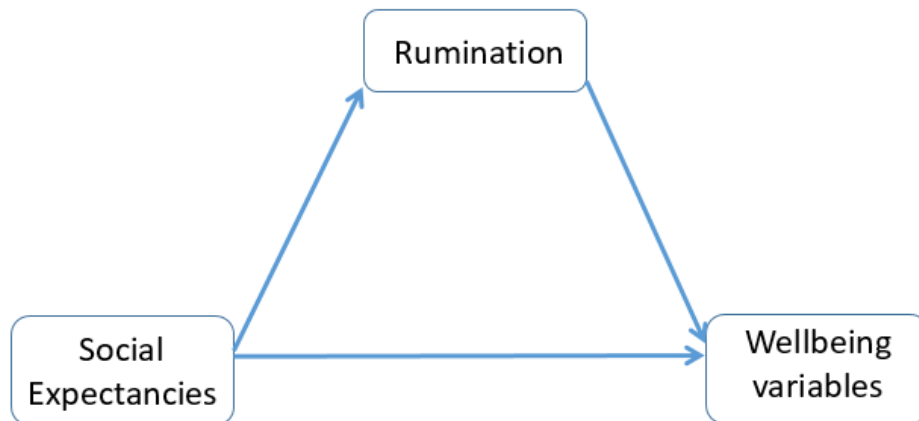
3. Social expectancies



- a. Increase loneliness
  - i. Experiencing negative emotion in contexts where happiness is highly valued
    - 1. Lead to feelings of loneliness
  - ii. Measure
    - 1. Record how they feel 10 times each day for 7 days
    - 2. Chronical loneliness (UCSA loneliness scale0
    - 3. Depressive symptoms (CESD)
    - 4. SE
  - iii. Result



- b. Trigger negative emotions
  - i.  $\uparrow$  SE felt =  $\uparrow$  anxiety/depression
  - ii. Especially for people high in trait anxiety/depression
- c. Predict depressive symptoms in daily life
  - i. Network analysis
    - 1. SE at the central of network of depressive symptoms
      - a. Predict outward to other symptoms
      - b. Other symptoms do not predict inward
- d. Increase rumination
  - i. Rumination: key predictor of mood disorder
  - ii. SE associated with negative self-evaluation about negative emotion



e. Experiment

i. 3 conditions

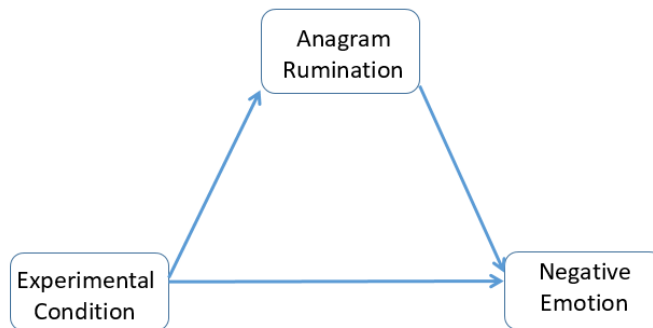
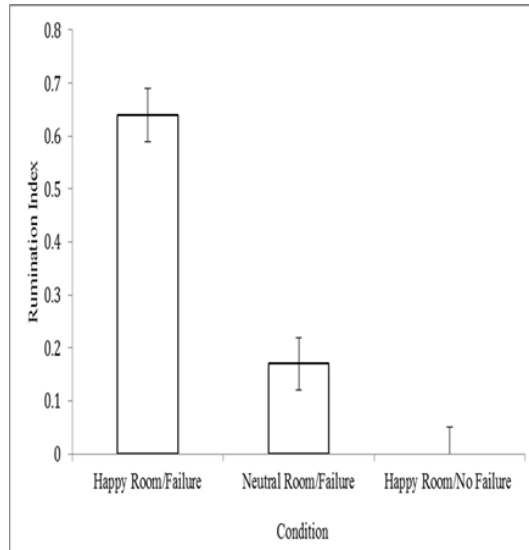
1. Happy Room / Failure
2. Happy Room / Non-failure
3. Neutral Room / Failure

ii. Rumination

1. 5 minutes breathing exercise, interrupted by a series of 12 tones
  - a. Indicate whether their mind had been focused on thoughts unrelated to breathing
  - b. Describe the thought
2. Rate intrusive thoughts: negative/positive
3. If negative, participants rate 5 criteria (index of rumination)
  - a. Frequency
  - b. Duration
  - c. Distress
  - d. Repetitiveness
  - e. Uncontrollability
4. Content
  - a. 28% anagram
  - b. 29% university
  - c. 25% tone
  - d. 18% other

iii. Result

1. Generalised rumination didn't differ
2. Anagram-related



#### 4. Implication

- a. Promotion of happiness
- b. Depression epidemic
  - i. Need to understand cultural causes of depression, not simply individual causes

#### Ecological variables

- 1. Income inequality

