

**IMPLICIT THEORIES AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS  
OF TRAITEDNESS ACROSS CULTURES**  
**Toward Integration of Cultural and Trait Psychology Perspectives**

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From the trait perspective, traitedness, or consistency of behavior, is expected in all cultures. However, cultural psychologists argue that behavior may be more determined by traits in individualistic than collectivistic cultures. The authors investigated implicit theories and self-perceptions of traitedness in two individualistic cultures, the United States ( $n = 342$ ) and Australia ( $n = 172$ ), and four collectivistic cultures, Mexico ( $n = 400$ ), Philippines ( $n = 363$ ), Malaysia ( $n = 251$ ), and Japan ( $n = 192$ ). Although implicit trait beliefs were endorsed in all cultural groups, they were stronger in individualistic than collectivistic cultures. Cultural differences in self-perceptions of one's own traitedness, as operationalized by self-monitoring, were also found, and comparisons involving the United States and most collectivistic cultures were consistent with cultural psychology perspectives. The ability of self-construals to predict implicit beliefs and self-perceptions of traitedness was also investigated. Overall, the results supported efforts to integrate trait and cultural psychology perspectives.

**Keywords:** implicit theories; self-monitoring; self-construals; traits; cultural psychology

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**Two theoretical perspectives** dominate research on culture and personality—trait psychology, in which the trait concept is central (McCrae, 2000), and cultural psychology, in which the trait concept is questioned (Markus & Kitayama, 1998). Although the two perspectives are viewed by some as incompatible, Church (2000) proposed an integration, drawing on the theoretical perspectives and empirical findings of both approaches. In the present study, we tested selected elements of this integrated perspective across six countries—the United States, Australia, Mexico, Philippines, Japan, and Malaysia. We examined cultural differences in (a) people’s implicit theories or beliefs about the “traitedness” of behavior in general and (b) people’s self-perceptions regarding the traitedness or consistency of their own behavior, as operationalized by the self-monitoring construct (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). We also examined the ability of self-construals to predict these two aspects of traitedness within cultures.

### CULTURE AND IMPLICIT THEORIES

From trait theory, we would expect that people in all cultures believe that personality traits play a role in the consistency and predictability of behavior. Church et al. (2003) referred to such beliefs as implicit trait theories. This prediction follows from the evidence of universal and heritable trait dimensions, which can be observed with some accuracy in all cultures (McCrae et al., 2004). At the same time, cultural psychologists have argued that implicit theories favoring trait explanations of behavior are more prevalent in individualistic cultures or among those with independent self-construals (Heine, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Triandis, 1995). In this view, people with stronger independent self-construals, because they conceive of themselves as autonomous and unique entities, are expected to place more emphasis on personality traits and other internal attributes as an aspect of self-concept and in the explanation and prediction of behavior (Kanagawa, Cross, & Markus, 2001). In contrast, people in collectivistic cultures, or those who view themselves as more interconnected with others (i.e., interdependent self-construals), are expected to have stronger implicit beliefs in the contextuality of behavior, reflecting the greater influence of social roles, relationships, and situational contexts in collectivistic cultures. Combining the trait and cultural psychology perspectives leads to the expectation that people in all cultures will endorse implicit trait beliefs, but that people in individualistic and collectivistic cultures will differ in their relative endorsement of trait and contextual beliefs. Although it is possible that cultures differ in their endorsement of trait beliefs as a function of the type of trait, the more common stance of cultural psychologists has been to associate individualism with greater traitedness in general, without reference to specific traits (Heine, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Triandis, 1995). Therefore, we began by investigating this more general link between individualism-collectivism and perceived traitedness.

To do so, Church et al. (2003) developed a measure of implicit trait and contextual beliefs, which incorporated five belief components drawn from theory and empirical findings on lay dispositionism. See the appendix for a list of belief components and sample items. Two previous studies have been conducted with this measure (Church et al., 2003, Church et al., 2005). Church et al. (2003) studied samples in the United States and Mexico, and Church et al. (2005) investigated new samples in the United States, Mexico, Philippines, and Australia. In both studies, the structure of the implicit theory measure—comprising relatively independent trait and contextual beliefs dimensions—generalized well across cultures. The finding of independent dimensions was theoretically important because it indicated that trait and contextual beliefs are not bipolar opposites. Rather, people can be implicit interaction

theorists, believing in varying degrees in both the traitedness and contextuality of behavior. Both studies examined cultural mean differences. Church et al. (2003) found that Americans averaged higher than Mexicans in trait beliefs, with no significant difference in contextual beliefs. Church et al. (2005) found that Americans averaged higher in trait beliefs and lower in contextual beliefs than Mexicans and Filipinos.

Finally, Church et al. (2003) tested the ability of self-construals to predict implicit theories within cultures, but only in the United States and Mexico. In both cultures, independent and interdependent self-construals predicted trait and contextual beliefs, respectively, as expected from cultural psychology theory. However, interdependent self-construals also predicted trait beliefs. This finding—which suggested that the predicted differential links between independent and interdependent self-construals and trait and contextual beliefs, respectively, might be oversimplified—needs to be replicated in additional cultures. In this study, we sought to replicate and extend these findings in new samples in individualistic (United States, Australia) and collectivistic (Mexico, Philippines, Japan, Malaysia) cultures. Specifically, we asked whether (a) individualistic cultures, as compared to collectivistic cultures, average higher in trait beliefs and lower in contextual beliefs, and (b) whether independent and interdependent self-construals are differentially related to trait and contextual beliefs within cultures.

#### CULTURE AND SELF-MONITORING

From the trait perspective, a degree of trait-related behavioral consistency is expected in all cultures. However, cultural psychologists have argued that consistency is greater in individualistic than collectivistic cultures because behavior in collectivistic cultures is more strongly influenced by contextual factors (Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Triandis, 1995). In this study, we did not investigate the traitedness or consistency of actual behavior. Rather, we investigated cultural differences in self-monitoring, a self-report construct that has been linked theoretically and empirically with behavioral consistency (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1974, 1987).

Snyder (1974) delineated five components of self-monitoring: (a) concern for appropriateness of social behavior, (b) attention to social comparison information, (c) ability to modify self-presentation, (d) use of this ability in particular situations, and (e) cross-situational variability of social behavior. Snyder (1974) proposed that high self-monitoring individuals, because of their concern about the situational appropriateness of their behavior, would be relatively trait free and show cross-situational variability (i.e., contextuality) in their behavior. In contrast, low self-monitoring individuals, because they are less sensitive to situational cues and more guided by internal dispositions, would be relatively traited in their behavior and show greater behavioral consistency across trait-relevant situations.

This distinction between traited and trait-free individuals corresponds well with the cultural differences in traitedness predicted by cultural psychologists. That is, if the behavior of people in individualistic cultures, and those with independent self-construals, is indeed more guided by traits, as predicted by cultural psychologists, we would expect that people in individualistic cultures will report less self-monitoring of their own behavior. In contrast, people in collectivistic cultures (and those with interdependent self-construals), whose behavior is expected to be more contextual or adaptive to situational cues, should report greater self-monitoring. Indeed, although Snyder (1987) rarely addressed cultural differences, he did predict that Japanese would average higher in self-monitoring than Americans, which is consistent with this reasoning.

Indeed, the expectation of higher self-monitoring in collectivistic cultures is clearly implied by cultural psychology theory and some cross-cultural research. Markus and Kitayama (1991) theorized that individuals with interdependent self-construals are concerned about behaving appropriately and adapting their behavior to fit in, both key elements of high self-monitoring. Suh (2002) found that Koreans exhibited greater cross-situational variability than Americans in trait self-descriptions, also consistent with higher self-monitoring. Campbell et al. (1996) found that Japanese averaged lower than Canadians in self-concept clarity, a construct related to the consistency of self across time and situations. Heine (2001) also discussed the reduced value placed on consistency in East Asian cultures. Each of these theoretical descriptions and empirical findings suggests that people in collectivistic cultures should report greater self-monitoring of their behavior than people in individualistic cultures, and that independent and interdependent self-construals should differentially predict low and high self-monitoring, respectively.

A dilemma for this theoretical argument, however, is the following: The few studies that have directly measured self-monitoring across cultures have not been generally supportive. Several researchers found no significant differences in self-monitoring between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, or, contrary to theory, even higher scores in individualistic cultures (Furnham & Capon, 1983; Goodwin & Soon, 1994; Gudykunst et al., 1989; Gudykunst, Yang, & Nishida, 1987). There is evidence, however, that the problem is not with theory but with Snyder's (1987; Snyder & Gangestad, 1986) measures of self-monitoring, which have been criticized for including acting and extraversion items that are less relevant to the original construct (Briggs & Cheek, 1988; John, Cheek, & Klohnen, 1996; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). Extraversion tends to be higher in individualistic cultures (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). Thus, the unexpected finding that self-monitoring is higher in individualistic cultures could be due to the inclusion of extraversion content in these measures.

Indeed, support for this view is provided by Hamid (1994), who did find differences in the expected direction—Hong Kong Chinese averaged higher in self-monitoring than New Zealanders—using a self-monitoring measure developed by Lennox and Wolfe (1984), who eliminated extraversion items and wrote new items to assess the original components of Snyder's (1974) construct. Additional support comes from two studies that used Snyder's measure but also examined subscale scores (Gudykunst et al., 1987; Gudykunst et al., 1989). For example, Gudykunst et al. (1987) found that Americans averaged *higher* than Japanese and Koreans on the total scale and on the Acting and Extraversion subscales, but, as predicted by a cultural psychology perspective, *lower* on the Other-Directedness subscale. The Other-Directedness subscale is more similar to the Lennox and Wolfe (1984) measure. Thus, to better test cultural psychology expectations relating individualism-collectivism and self-construals to self-monitoring, and hence self-perceptions of traitedness, we used an adapted version of the Lennox and Wolfe (1984) measure. Specifically, we asked whether (a) collectivistic cultures, as compared to individualistic cultures, average higher in self-monitoring when appropriately measured and (b) whether independent and interdependent self-construals differentially predict low versus high self-monitoring within cultures.

## RELATING IMPLICIT BELIEFS AND SELF-MONITORING

Church (2000) proposed that these two aspects of traitedness—implicit trait beliefs and self-monitoring—would be inversely related because people's beliefs about the traitedness or contextuality of behavior would develop, in part, from their perceptions of the actual traitedness of their own and others' behavior (i.e., self-monitoring). Thus, if people in collectivistic

cultures, as compared to people in individualistic cultures, are more adaptive to situational cues and more variable in their trait-relevant behavior, they should evolve a greater belief in the contextuality of behavior. Alternatively, it is possible that self-monitoring is viewed by respondents not so much as a “metatrait,” capturing the degree of trait consistency across cultures, but as an indicator or correlate of traits such as adaptability and conformity. If so, self-reports of high self-monitoring might be positively correlated with trait beliefs. We sought to resolve these alternative possibilities by examining the relationship between these two aspects of traitedness across a range of cultures.

## OVERVIEW OF THIS STUDY

In summary, we sought to replicate and extend, in additional individualistic and collectivistic cultures, our previous findings regarding implicit trait and contextual theories while also exploring for the first time self-monitoring across cultures as an indicator of the perceived traitedness of one’s own behavior. New samples were obtained in the United States, Australia, Mexico, Philippines, Japan, and Malaysia. According to Hofstede (2001), among others, the United States and Australia are among the most individualistic cultures, whereas Mexico, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Japan are relatively collectivistic cultures. All three constructs in the study—implicit theories, self-monitoring, and self-construals—can address the perceived role of traits across cultures, but their mean levels and relationships across cultures need to be clarified.

## METHOD

### SAMPLE

*U.S. sample.* A total of 342 students (136 men, 206 women) at Washington State University provided complete data. Mean age was 20.6 years ( $SD = 2.7$ ). Ninety-nine percent described their ethnic background as White or Caucasian.

*Australian sample.* A total of 197 students at the University of Sydney provided complete data. We excluded 25 international students, leaving 172 participants (80 men, 92 women). Mean age was 19.5 ( $SD = 4.4$ ). The sample was ethnically diverse, with large enough subsamples of Anglo Australians ( $n = 82$ ; 39 men, 43 women) and Asian Australians ( $n = 68$ ; 31 men, 37 women) to examine separately in some analyses. Anglo Australians were viewed as relatively individualistic (Hofstede, 2001), whereas many Asian Australians retain collectivistic influences (Casimir & Keats, 1996). The remaining 22 participants were of Middle Eastern, Aboriginal, or multiethnic ethnicity, or did not report ethnicity.

*Mexican sample.* A total of 400 students (108 men, 292 women) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City provided complete data. Mean age was 21.5 years ( $SD = 3.3$ ). All participants reported their ethnicity as Mestizo (mixed Spanish and indigenous Indian), the majority ethnic group in Mexico.

*Philippine sample.* A total of 363 students (100 men, 263 women) at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, De La Salle University in Manila, and the University of Batangas in Batangas City provided complete data. Mean age was 18.6 years ( $SD = 2.0$ ). All participants were ethnic Filipino, except for two Chinese-Filipinos.

*Malaysian sample.* A total of 251 students (110 men, 141 women) at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia provided complete data. Mean age was 21.1 ( $SD = 2.1$ ). We sampled enough ethnic Malays ( $n = 117$ ; 55 men, 62 women) and ethnic Chinese ( $n = 125$ ; 52 men, 73 women) to analyze separately in some analyses. Both ethnic Malays and Chinese in Malaysia were viewed as collectivistic. The majority of the 9 remaining participants were Indian.

*Japanese sample.* A total of 192 college students (99 men, 93 women) at the Kwansai Gakuin University in Nishinomiya City provided complete data. Mean age was 19.8 years ( $SD = 1.4$ ). Because of the anticipated ethnic homogeneity of the Japanese sample, we did not ask about ethnicity but did verify that participants grew up in Japan and were not international students.

## INSTRUMENTS

*Translation.* All instruments were translated by doctoral-level psychologists into Spanish, Filipino (Tagalog), Malaysian, and Japanese using the back-translation method. For the Australian instruments, a few items in the American English versions were modified to reflect Australian English usage.

*Personality Beliefs Inventory (PBI).* To measure implicit trait and contextual beliefs, we administered a 74-item version of the PBI (Church et al., 2003), using a 6-point agreement scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). Sample items are shown in the appendix. Church et al. (2003, Church et al., 2005) reported validity evidence for the PBI. Measurement equivalence and reliability analyses for all instruments are reported in a separate section below.

*Self-Construal Scale (SCS).* The 30-item version of the SCS (Singelis, 1994) was used to measure self-construals. Items were rated using the PBI 6-point agreement scale. A sample independent self-construal item is the following: "I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects." A sample interdependent self-construal item is the following: "I will sacrifice my self interest for the benefit of the group I am in." Although controversy has emerged about the validity of self-construal scales (e.g., Kim & Raja, 2003; Levine et al., 2003), many cross-cultural studies have reported findings consistent with self-construal theory (Gudykunst & Lee, 2003).

*Self-monitoring measure.* We based our measure on Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) facets of self-monitoring (ability to modify self-presentation, sensitivity to expressive behavior of others, cross-situational variability, attention to social comparison information) and added a fifth facet (attention to others' status characteristics) proposed by Gudykunst, Gao, and Franklyn-Stokes (1996). We slightly modified several items that measured the *ability* to modify self-presentation (e.g., "In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior if I feel that something else is called for") so that they measured the *tendency* to modify self-presentation (e.g., "In social situations, I alter my behavior if I feel that something else is called for"). In our view, it is the *tendency* to adapt behavior and attend to social cues that should exhibit the expected cultural differences associated with individualism-collectivism, not the *ability* to do so, which is related to extraversion (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). We also excluded several items that our multicultural team judged to be less relevant to self-monitoring in some cultures (e.g., items about clothing fashions, which might instead reflect economic well-being or

clothing restrictions). Finally, none of the existing self-monitoring measures contains more than a few reverse-keyed items, so we wrote 13 new items to assess the low self-monitoring pole of the five facets (e.g., “At social events, I prefer to express my true self, rather than adjusting my behavior to what others expect.”). The instrument included 53 items that were rated using a 6-point agreement scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). Although there are disadvantages in modifying instruments, we did not believe we could adequately test cultural psychology expectations regarding self-monitoring without doing so. See Day, Schleicher, Unckless, and Hiller (2002), Gangestad and Snyder (2000), and Snyder (1987) for evidence of the validity of self-monitoring measures.

## PROCEDURE

In the U.S. sample, students were recruited in classes, completed the questionnaires on their own time for extra credit, and returned them to class or to the researchers for pickup. In the Australian sample, participants were recruited from a research participant pool and completed the questionnaires in small, proctored groups. In the Mexican, Filipino, Malaysian, and Japanese samples, student volunteers completed the questionnaires during regular classes. All students completed the PBI first, which included the demographic questions, then the self-construal and self-monitoring measures in counterbalanced order.

## MEASUREMENT EQUIVALENCE AND RELIABILITY ANALYSES

For each instrument, we conducted exploratory factor analysis to screen out a few items with weak loadings in each culture, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to test structural equivalence, and mean and covariance structure analyses (MACS) to test scalar equivalence. In the CFA and MACS analyses, the latent constructs (e.g., trait and contextual beliefs in the PBI) were measured by three- to five-item parcels, each comprising randomly assigned items or items from existing content facets (Kishton & Widaman, 1994). In the CFA analyses, factor loadings were constrained to equality across cultures. In the MACS analyses, the intercept parameters for each indicator (i.e., item parcel) were also constrained to equality (Byrne, 2001). Models were evaluated using conventional guidelines for interpretation of fit indices (e.g., Goodness of Fit Index [GFI] and Comparative Fit Index [CFI] indices of .90 or higher, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] indices of .05 or smaller). Given space limitations, only summary comments are made for each instrument.

Cross-cultural measurement equivalence was good for the PBI after we deleted the general understanding component of contextual beliefs, which had nonsignificant factor loadings in the Malaysian and Japanese samples. The self-monitoring measure exhibited a replicable two-factor structure composed of (a) a Self-Monitoring factor defined by the high self-monitoring items and (b) an Autonomous Self-Expression factor defined by low self-monitoring items measuring authenticity, or expressing one's true feelings; trait consistency; independence of others' approval; disregard for the expressive cues of others; and egalitarian rather than status-based relations. The two-factor structure of the SCS replicated well in four of six cultures, but not in the Filipino and Malaysian samples, where a number of interdependent items loaded better on the independent factor. Therefore, we excluded those two cultures from analyses involving the SCS. In the MACS analysis, only a small minority of intercept parameters had to be freely estimated rather than constrained to equality across cultures to obtain good model fit. This indicated that scalar equivalence was largely achieved, making cross-cultural mean comparisons reasonable (Byrne, Shavelson, & Muthén, 1989).

There were some cultural differences in the freely estimated correlations among the latent constructs within each instrument, particularly for the self-monitoring measure ( $r$  range =  $-.38$  to  $.06$  for the PBI,  $-.71$  to  $.20$  for the self-monitoring measure, and  $-.04$  to  $.21$  for the SCS). These differences probably reflect cultural differences in acquiescence response style (Smith, 2004), which could affect between-culture mean comparisons. Therefore, we also examined within-culture comparisons of paired constructs (e.g., trait beliefs vs. contextual beliefs), which should be largely immune from such biases. Across cultures, alpha reliabilities ranged from  $.87$  to  $.92$  for trait beliefs,  $.78$  to  $.90$  for contextual beliefs,  $.83$  to  $.91$  for the self-monitoring,  $.65$  to  $.79$  for autonomous self-expression,  $.64$  to  $.77$  for independent self-construal, and  $.63$  to  $.75$  for interdependent self-construal.

## RESULTS

### CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN IMPLICIT THEORIES

One central question in the study was whether individualistic cultures, as compared to collectivistic cultures, average higher in trait beliefs and lower in contextual beliefs. In MANOVAs, we found no significant gender effects in this study, so we combined men and women in each sample. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for all constructs in each cultural sample (except self-construals for the Filipinos and Malaysians). A MANOVA comparing all eight cultural and ethnic groups on implicit beliefs and self-monitoring revealed a significant main effect for culture; Wilks's Lambda =  $.60$ ,  $F(28, 6048) = 32.88$ ,  $p < .01$ . Follow-up ANOVAs yielded significant cultural effects for each of the four constructs (see Table 1). Effect sizes ranged from small to medium. Figure 1 shows the implicit theory means, with cultures ordered from left to right by the size of the difference between their means for trait and contextual beliefs.

In the between-culture comparisons for trait beliefs, the American sample averaged higher ( $p < .01$ ) than all of the collectivistic cultures. The differences were statistically significant for five of the six comparisons. The Anglo Australians averaged second highest in trait beliefs, although their mean was only significantly higher than the means of the Chinese Malaysians and Japanese. For contextual beliefs, the American sample averaged significantly lower than all of the collectivistic groups. The Anglo Australians also averaged lower in contextual beliefs than all of the collectivistic cultures, with the differences being statistically significant for all but the comparison with Mexico.

In paired  $t$  tests *within* each culture, the two individualistic groups, the Americans and Anglo Australians, and to a lesser extent the Malays, endorsed trait beliefs significantly more than contextual beliefs ( $p < .01$ ). In contrast, only the Chinese Malaysians and Japanese endorsed contextual beliefs significantly more than trait beliefs. The remaining groups—Mexicans, Asian Australians, and Filipinos—endorsed trait and contextual beliefs to the same extent.

In summary, the cultural psychology prediction that individualistic cultures, as compared to collectivistic cultures, would average higher in trait beliefs and lower in contextual beliefs was supported. The contrast was most definitive between Americans and Anglo Australians on one hand and Chinese Malaysians and Japanese on the other. However, consistent with trait theory, all cultural groups tended to agree with trait beliefs (e.g., means of 4.0 correspond to *slightly agree*). In fact, six of eight cultural groups endorsed trait beliefs as much as or more than contextual beliefs.

TABLE 1  
**Cultural Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA Statistics for Self-Construals, Implicit Beliefs, and Self-Monitoring Constructs**

<i>Construct</i>	<i>American (U.S.)</i>	<i>Anglo Australian</i>	<i>Mexican</i>	<i>Filipino</i>	<i>Malay</i>	<i>Chinese Malaysian</i>	<i>Asian Australian</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Partial <math>\eta^2</math></i>
<i>Trait beliefs</i>										
<i>M</i>	4.45 <sup>a</sup>	4.35 <sup>a,b</sup>	4.21 <sup>b,c</sup>	4.17 <sup>b,c,d</sup>	4.29 <sup>a,b</sup>	4.02 <sup>c,d</sup>	4.24 <sup>b</sup>	4.00 <sup>d</sup>	16.92	.07
<i>SD</i>	0.54	0.48	0.68	0.47	0.43	0.49	0.54	0.53		
<i>Contextual beliefs</i>										
<i>M</i>	3.73 <sup>c</sup>	3.90 <sup>b,c</sup>	4.09 <sup>a,b</sup>	4.18 <sup>a</sup>	4.14 <sup>a</sup>	4.21 <sup>a</sup>	4.17 <sup>a</sup>	4.26 <sup>a</sup>	28.79	.11
<i>SD</i>	0.60	0.52	0.60	0.46	0.35	0.41	0.56	0.52		
<i>Self-monitoring</i>										
<i>M</i>	3.97 <sup>b</sup>	4.20 <sup>a</sup>	3.74 <sup>c</sup>	4.23 <sup>a</sup>	4.30 <sup>a</sup>	4.15 <sup>a,b</sup>	4.27 <sup>a</sup>	4.14 <sup>a,b</sup>	34.32	.13
<i>SD</i>	0.60	0.45	0.63	0.46	0.41	0.36	0.52	0.45		
<i>Autonomous self-expression</i>										
<i>M</i>	3.70 <sup>b,c</sup>	3.48 <sup>d</sup>	4.03 <sup>a</sup>	3.79 <sup>b</sup>	3.43 <sup>d</sup>	3.45 <sup>d</sup>	3.60 <sup>c,d</sup>	3.12 <sup>e</sup>	65.05	.21
<i>SD</i>	0.53	0.58	0.60	0.53	0.46	0.47	0.60	0.53		
<i>Independent self-construal</i>										
<i>M</i>	4.46 <sup>b</sup>	4.33 <sup>b,c</sup>	4.84 <sup>a</sup>	—	—	—	4.18 <sup>c</sup>	3.90 <sup>d</sup>	87.76	.25
<i>SD</i>	0.64	0.60	0.58	—	—	—	0.56	0.55		
<i>Interdependent self-construal</i>										
<i>M</i>	3.89 <sup>b</sup>	3.92 <sup>b</sup>	3.34 <sup>e</sup>	—	—	—	4.29 <sup>a</sup>	3.91 <sup>b</sup>	57.25	.18
<i>SD</i>	0.63	0.51	0.73	—	—	—	0.54	0.66		

NOTE: Means in each row that share the same superscript were not significantly different from each other (Tukey HSD tests). All ANOVA *F* tests significant at  $p < .01$ . Self-construal means are not reported in the Filipino, Malay, and Chinese Malaysian samples due to lack of measurement equivalence (see text).

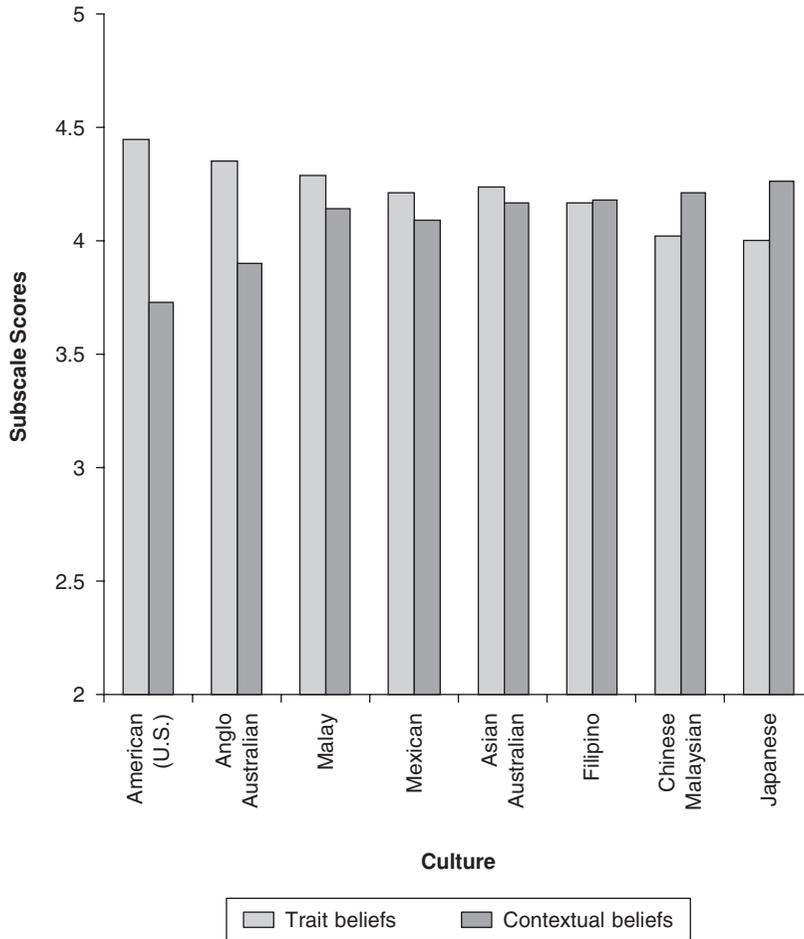
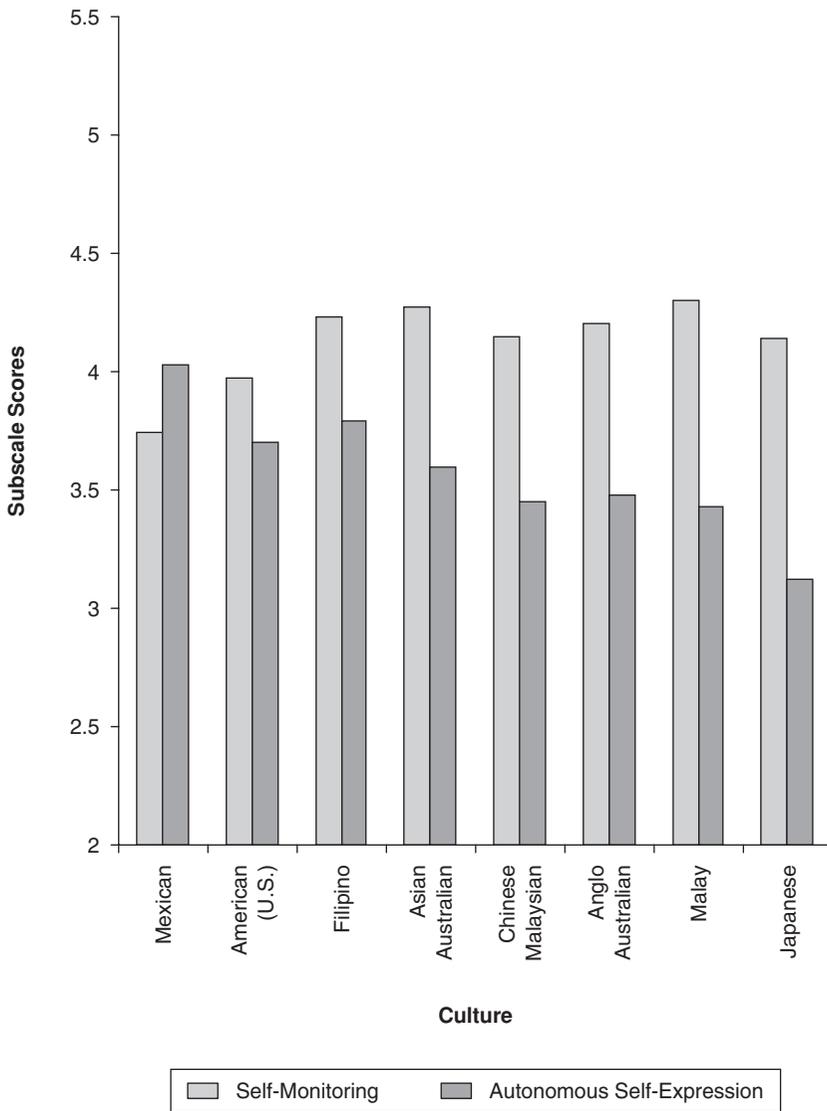


Figure 1: Cultural Means for Trait and Contextual Beliefs

#### CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN SELF-MONITORING

We have argued that cultural psychology theory is consistent with the expectation that self-monitoring will be higher in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures, although noting that studies with Snyder's measures have not supported this prediction (except for the Other-Directedness subscale). By adapting the Lennox and Wolfe (1984) measure, we hoped to find better support for cultural psychology expectations. In the MANOVA, main effects for culture were found for both the self-monitoring and autonomous self-expression dimensions (see Table 1 for follow-up ANOVA statistics). In Figure 2, cultural groups are ordered from left to right by the size of the difference between the two means. The Mexicans, who averaged lowest in self-monitoring and highest in autonomous self-expression, defied expectations for a collectivistic culture. However, the results for the American sample were fairly supportive of theoretical expectations. The American sample averaged lower in self-monitoring than all collectivistic cultures except



**Figure 2: Cultural Means for Self-Monitoring and Autonomous Self-Expression**

Mexico. The differences were statistically significant for the comparisons with Filipinos, Asian Australians, and Malays (Tukey HSD tests). The Americans also had one of the highest means for autonomous self-expression.

In the paired  $t$  tests, all cultural groups except Mexico averaged higher in self-monitoring than autonomous self-expression. Thus, respondents in all samples described their own behavior as adaptive to situational and social cues of appropriateness. Nonetheless, the size of the difference favoring self-monitoring was smaller in the United States than in any of the collectivistic cultures except Mexico. Contrary to expectations, the Anglo Australian

sample did not differ much from the collectivistic cultures in the absolute or relative pattern of scores for self-monitoring and autonomous self-expression, a finding we return to in the Discussion section. Overall, we found only limited support for theoretical expectations, and primarily in comparisons of the United States with collectivistic cultures other than Mexico.

### RELATING IMPLICIT THEORIES AND SELF-MONITORING

We considered two alternatives regarding the relationship between these two aspects of traitedness. As suggested by Church (2000), trait and contextual beliefs might be differentially related to autonomous self-expression and self-monitoring, respectively, because people's implicit theories would develop, in part, from observations of the traitedness (i.e., autonomous self-expression) versus situational variability (i.e., self-monitoring) of their own and others' behavior. Alternatively, characteristics associated with self-monitoring might be viewed by respondents as traitlike so that both autonomous self-expression and self-monitoring might be positively associated with trait beliefs. CFA estimates of the relevant correlations are shown in the first two rows of Table 2. They show that trait and contextual beliefs were not differentially associated with autonomous self-expression and self-monitoring, respectively. In a follow-up analysis, we examined whether any of the content facets of self-monitoring might relate differentially to implicit contextual and trait beliefs. This was the case for two facets: the cross-situational variability facet of self-monitoring and the trait consistency facet of autonomous self-expression. In Table 2, we show the relevant Pearson correlations. Differential prediction was fairly consistent across cultures for these two facets. Respondents who believe that the behavior of people *in general* is relatively contextual (i.e., contextual theorists) also tend to describe their *own* behavior as variable across situations (i.e., cross-situational variability). Conversely, respondents who believe that the behavior of people *in general* is predictable from stable traits (i.e., implicit trait theorists) also describe their *own* behavior as consistent across situations (i.e., trait consistency).

### PREDICTING TRAITEDNESS FROM SELF-CONSTRUALS

Cross-cultural researchers have noted the importance of directly measuring hypothesized explanatory variables—in this case, self-construals. Unfortunately, cultural mean differences in existing self-construal scales have often failed to conform to expectations (Levine et al., 2003; Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002). Possible reasons include unrepresentative sampling, cultural differences in response styles, reference group effects, or real societal changes in individualism-collectivism (Gudykunst & Lee, 2003; Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002). In the present samples, a MANOVA comparing five cultural or ethnic groups (Americans [United States], Anglo Australians, Mexicans, Asian Australians, and Japanese; Filipinos and Malaysians were excluded) revealed a significant effect for culture; Wilks's Lambda = .62,  $F(8, 2152) = 71.79$ ,  $p < .01$ , and follow-up ANOVAs yielded significant cultural effects for both independent and interdependent self-construals (see Table 1). The primary exception to expectations again involved the Mexican sample, which averaged significantly higher in independent self-construals and lower in interdependent self-construals than all other cultural groups. Other cultural differences conformed better to theory. The American and Anglo Australian samples averaged higher in independent self-construals than the Japanese and Asian Australians (most differences were statistically significant) and averaged significantly lower than the Asian Australians but not the Japanese on interdependent self-construals. In addition, the

TABLE 2  
Correlations Between Implicit Trait and Contextual Beliefs and Self-Monitoring Constructs

Self-Monitoring Construct	United States		Australia		Mexico		Japan		Philippines		Malaysia	
	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C
Self-monitoring <sup>a</sup>	.26*	.32*	.31*	-.04	.29*	.28*	.45*	.27*	.40*	.48*	.34*	.46*
Autonomous self-expression <sup>a</sup>	.15*	.19*	-.06	.41*	.24*	.20*	-.10	-.05	.40*	.23*	.14	.11
Cross-situational variability <sup>b</sup>	.08	.35**	.02	.12	.05	.33**	.04	.34**	.20**	.39**	-.07	.29**
Trait consistency <sup>b</sup>	.32**	.09	.19*	.09	.33**	-.01	.25**	-.07	.36**	.02	.33**	.02

NOTE: T = Implicit trait beliefs; C = Implicit contextual beliefs.

a. Correlations obtained in confirmatory factor analyses.

b. Pearson product-moment correlations among raw subscale scores.

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

Americans and Anglo Australians, as compared to the Japanese and Asian Australians, showed larger relative mean differences favoring independent self-construals over interdependent self-construals. Of primary interest for theory testing was the ability of self-construals to predict traitedness within the four cultures for which the SCS exhibited acceptable measurement equivalence.

*Predicting implicit theories.* From a cultural psychology perspective, independent self-construals should predict trait beliefs, whereas interdependent self-construals should predict contextual beliefs (Heine, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Triandis, 1995). However, Church et al. (2003) found that both independent and interdependent self-construals predicted trait beliefs in American and Mexican samples. In the present sample, we used structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the differential-prediction model suggested by cultural psychology theory, and a second model that incorporated the cross-construct paths relating independent self-construals to contextual beliefs and interdependent self-construals to trait beliefs (see Figure 3). The differential-prediction model fit the data well;  $\chi^2 / df = 2.40$ , GFI = .91, CFI = .92, root mean square residual (RMR) = .05, RMSEA = .04, but not as well as the model with the two cross-construct paths;  $\chi^2 / df = 2.27$ , GFI = .91, CFI = .93, RMR = .04, RMSEA = .03;  $\Delta\chi^2(8, N = 1104) = 63.63, p < .01$ . Figure 3 shows the standardized path coefficients. For clarity of presentation, the constrained measurement models are not depicted in the figure.

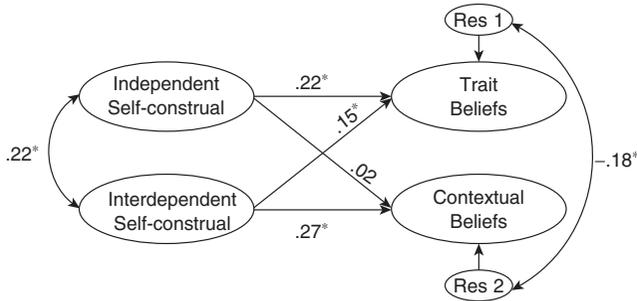
Independent self-construals significantly predicted trait beliefs in three of the four cultures. However, interdependent self-construals predicted contextual beliefs only in the U.S. sample. Furthermore, there was little evidence of differential prediction outside the United States. Follow-up analyses at the item level revealed that the tendency for interdependent self-construals to also predict trait beliefs was due to the subset of interdependent items that make reference to personal values and feelings or to trait attributes (e.g., “It is *important to me* to respect decisions made by the group”; “I respect those who are *modest* about themselves”; italics added). Most of these items correlated significantly with trait beliefs but not contextual beliefs. Overall, we conclude that independent and interdependent self-construals are not differentially related to trait and contextual beliefs and that interdependent self-construals are not inconsistent with a belief in the traitedness of behavior.

*Predicting self-monitoring.* From a cultural psychology perspective, interdependent self-construals should predict self-monitoring, and independent self-construals should predict autonomous self-expression. We compared two SEM models, one in which only the two predicted paths were included and a second model in which the two cross-construct paths were also incorporated (see Figure 4). The fit of the differential-prediction model was fair ( $\chi^2 / df = 3.28$ , GFI = .86, CFI = .83, RMR = .07, RMSEA = .05) and not as good as the model with the cross-construct paths;  $\chi^2 / df = 3.17$ , GFI = .87, CFI = .84, RMR = .07, RMSEA = .04;  $\Delta\chi^2(8, N = 1104) = 62.89, p < .01$ . However, the cross-construct paths were generally small. Only in Japan was one cross-construct path large, but it reflected a sensible inverse relationship between interdependent self-construals and autonomous self-expression.

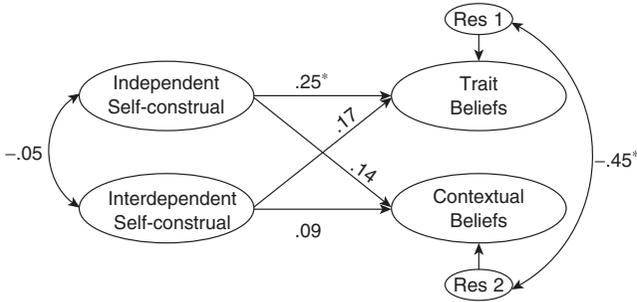
## DISCUSSION

A central question in the study of culture and personality is the extent to which behavior is traited or consistent across time and contexts in diverse cultures. We did not examine the traitedness of *actual* behavior, although our results may have implications for such

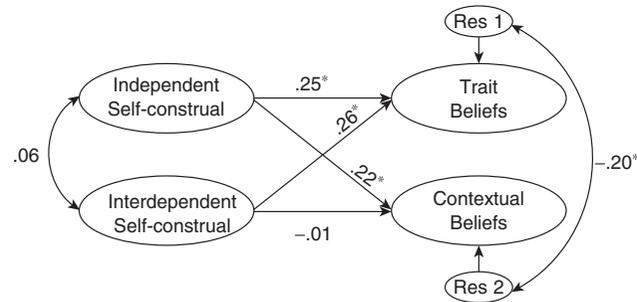
A. United States sample



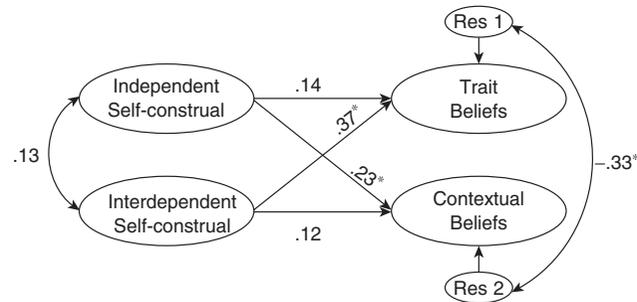
B. Australian sample



C. Mexican sample



D. Japanese sample

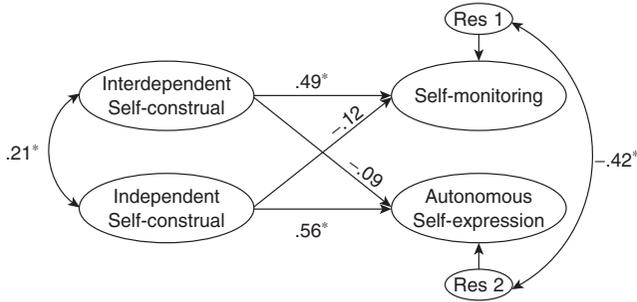


**Figure 3: Predicting Implicit Trait and Contextual Beliefs From Independent and Interdependent Self-Construals**

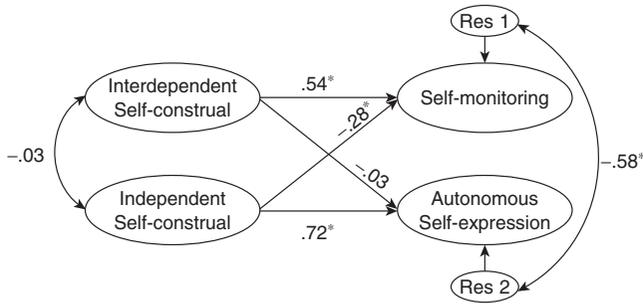
NOTE: Res 1 and Res 2 represent residual terms in the prediction of implicit trait beliefs and implicit contextual beliefs, respectively.

\* $p < .05$ .

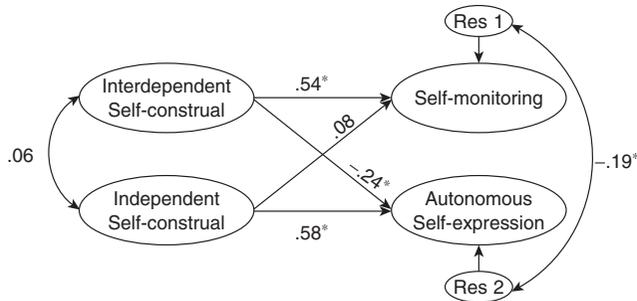
A. United States sample



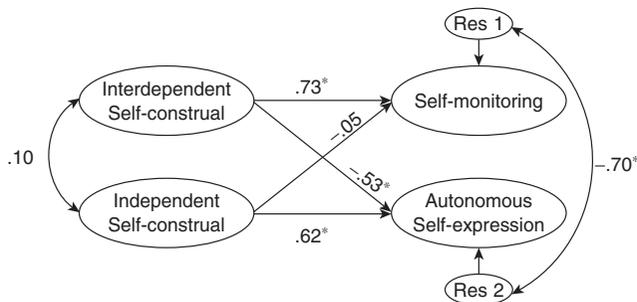
B. Australian sample



C. Mexican sample



D. Japanese sample



**Figure 4: Predicting Self-Monitoring and Autonomous Self-Expression From Independent and Interdependent Self-Construals**

NOTE: Res 1 and Res 2 represent residual terms in the prediction of self-monitoring and autonomous self-expression, respectively.

\* $p < .05$ .

(Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Rather, we investigated cultural differences in implicit theories or beliefs about the traitedness of people in general and self-perceptions about the traitedness of one's own behavior. Strengths of the study included (a) its basis in an integration of trait and cultural psychology theory (Church, 2000), (b) the inclusion of large samples from six countries, including countries not yet included in cultural psychology studies, and (c) the demonstration of cross-cultural measurement equivalence for most instruments and cultural groups. Limitations included (a) the failure of the self-construal structure to replicate well in two cultures, (b) our use of a slightly adapted measure of self-monitoring, but for justifiable reasons, and (c) some ambiguity about the status of the Mexican sample along the individualism-collectivism dimension. Regarding the last point, unexpected cultural differences in individualism-collectivism and self-construals are not unusual in the literature, and Latino samples, in particular, have been among the least predictable (Oyserman et al., 2002). We suspect that our Mexican university sample is fairly individualistic in comparison to more representative Mexican samples and judged themselves as high in autonomous self-expression and independent self-construals relative to their collectivistic cultural norm (Heine et al., 2002). The implicit trait and contextual beliefs measures were apparently less affected by such reference group effects—thus providing results that were more consistent with theory—because respondents were not describing their own behavior relative to a cultural norm but the traitedness of people in general (i.e., the cultural norm itself).

#### CULTURE AND IMPLICIT THEORIES

One definitive finding was that implicit trait beliefs were endorsed to some extent in all cultural groups. More often than not, they were endorsed as much or more than contextual beliefs. This finding supports trait perspectives. A plausible conclusion is that lay dispositionism is a cultural universal rather than unique to individualistic cultures. These results replicate previous findings by Church et al. (2003, Church et al., 2005) in new samples and additional cultures.

At the same time, cultural differences in trait and contextual beliefs were consistent with theory and provided support for cultural psychology perspectives. This was especially so in the contrast between individualistic Americans and Anglo Australians and collectivistic Japanese and Chinese Malaysians. In the cultural psychology literature, comparisons of Americans and Canadians with East Asians, especially Japanese, have been dominant, so our inclusion of a wider range of collectivistic groups was important. Our findings suggest that differences associated with individualism-collectivism may not be as striking when one moves beyond comparisons of North Americans and East Asians.

#### CULTURE AND SELF-MONITORING

The self-monitoring measure assessed self-perceptions of one's own traitedness. New items written to measure low self-monitoring defined a separate Autonomous Self-Expression factor. Cramer and Gruman (2002) also identified separate factors for high and low self-monitoring items, so our finding of distinct dimensions is not unprecedented. It is not surprising that the self-monitoring and autonomous self-expression dimensions were inversely related in most cultures. Cultural differences in the size of this correlation, particularly the modest positive correlation in the Philippines, are likely the result of cultural differences in acquiescence response style, which can attenuate inverse relationships (Green, Goldman, & Salovey, 1993). Smith (2004) found that the Philippines ranked highly among cultures in acquiescence

tendency. Cultural differences in response styles would primarily affect between-culture comparisons, which is why we also examined the relative differences between paired constructs (e.g., self-monitoring vs. autonomous self-expression) *within* cultures.

Cross-cultural comparisons of self-monitoring have been rare, and findings have typically failed to conform to expectations based on cultural psychology theory. We have argued, however, that previous researchers used scales that emphasized acting, extraversion, and the ability (rather than tendency) to modify behavior. Instead, we assessed those aspects of self-monitoring that we expected to relate to differential traitedness, not extraversion. Indeed, Lennox and Wolfe (1984) showed that the sum of their items did not correlate significantly with extraversion ( $r = .03$ ), and an inspection of the content of our items suggests that they do not measure extraversion, exhibitionism, or social self-confidence. The validity of our self-monitoring measure is also supported by the expected relationships found between the two self-construal constructs and the self-monitoring and autonomous self-expression constructs.

Although our cultural mean differences results were not entirely consistent with expectations, they were more supportive of cultural psychology theory than the results of most previous studies. Comparisons involving the American sample showed some support for theoretical expectations. Americans averaged lower in self-monitoring than all collectivistic groups except Mexicans and exhibited the smallest difference in favor of self-monitoring over autonomous self-expression. In contrast, collectivistic groups (with the exception of Mexico) exhibited substantially higher means for self-monitoring than autonomous self-expression, as expected. The slightly higher self-monitoring than autonomous self-expression scores in the American sample probably reflect the lower social desirability of some autonomous self-expression items. Some of these items (e.g., "I often ignore cues from others on how I should act in a situation and behave as I wish") suggest self-centered tendencies that even individualistic Americans might find less acceptable to endorse than self-monitoring items. Support for this interpretation comes from Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) finding that self-monitoring items measuring cross-situational variability and attention to social comparison information correlate positively with the need for social approval, indicating that their content is socially desirable. Even so, the American sample still endorsed the self-monitoring items less than all collectivistic groups except Mexicans.

After further consideration of some features of Anglo Australian culture, we believe our unexpected Anglo Australian findings may be meaningful and informative. Although the United States and Australia are both individualistic cultures, Australians value mastery less and harmony more than Americans (Schwartz, 1994) and value equality, friendship with mates, and group solidarity (Feather, 1998). Indeed, Australians seek to bring down those who stand out in a conspicuous manner (e.g., the high achiever or "tall poppy"), particularly when such behavior does not conform to group norms or values (Feather, 1989). These Australian values, which resemble collectivistic values, would be facilitated through high self-monitoring, whereas too much autonomous self-expression might lead one to stand out in ways that are socially discouraged. If this analysis is correct, it would indicate that a general distinction between individualistic and collectivistic cultures is not sufficiently refined to explain some cultural differences in self-monitoring.

#### RELATING IMPLICIT THEORIES AND SELF-MONITORING

Church (2000) reasoned that implicit trait beliefs and self-monitoring should be inversely related because people's beliefs about the traitedness of behavior would develop, in part, from their perceptions of the actual traitedness of their own and others' behavior (i.e., self-monitoring).

However, only one facet of self-monitoring (i.e., cross-situational variability) and one facet of autonomous self-expression (i.e., trait consistency) were differentially related to trait and contextual beliefs. In all cultures, respondents who believed that the behavior of people in general is contextual also described their *own* behavior as variable across situations. Conversely, respondents who believed that people's behavior is predictable from stable traits also described their *own* trait-relevant behavior as consistent. These relationships are not tautological. It would be possible for respondents to believe that people in general are consistent across situations, yet judge their own traits or behaviors to be more variable. Endorsement of the other facets of self-monitoring was not inconsistent with the belief in stable and predictive traits. Indeed, respondents in all cultures may view self-monitoring as a cluster of behavioral tendencies or traits, including adaptability, conformity, and interpersonal sensitivity, which can lead to greater cross-situational variability but that are not incompatible with implicit trait beliefs.

### PREDICTING TRAITEDNESS FROM SELF-CONSTRUALS

Cultural psychologists have linked differences in the traitedness of implicit theories and behavior to differences in self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Indeed, we found that independent self-construals predicted autonomous self-expression, and interdependent self-construals predicted self-monitoring. That is, respondents who conceive of themselves as more interconnected with others (i.e., interdependent self-construals) described themselves as willing to modify their behavior to fit the situation and as attentive to social comparison information. In contrast, respondents who conceive of themselves as more autonomous, unique entities (i.e., independent self-construals) described themselves as authentic and consistent in the expression of their inner dispositions and as more independent of the approval, expressive feedback, and status characteristics of people around them. These results demonstrate an empirical link between an aspect of self that has been theoretically associated with culture—*independent versus interdependent self-construals*—and self-descriptions of the traitedness versus contextuality of behavior.

In contrast, we did not find differential links relating independent self-construals to trait beliefs and interdependent self-construals to contextual beliefs. Rather, both independent and interdependent self-construals predicted implicit trait beliefs across cultures. This finding replicates, in additional samples and cultures, previous results in the United States and Mexico (Church et al., 2003). An important implication is that individuals with independent and interdependent self-construals differ less in their beliefs about the stability or predictive value of traits than in which traits they value or manifest. We did not measure trait values in this study, but other researchers have. Several studies have linked independent self-construals or individualism to agentic traits and values such as independence, assertiveness, and self-confidence, and linked interdependent self-construals or collectivism to communal traits or values such as respectfulness, modesty, and conformity (e.g., Hui & Villareal, 1989; Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clack, 1985). These results require a revision of cultural psychology proposals that associate implicit trait beliefs solely or even primarily with independent self-construals but are consistent with our conclusion that implicit trait beliefs are cultural universals.

### CONCLUSION

In summary, although not all theoretical expectations were supported, we did gain important knowledge for attempts to integrate trait and cultural psychology perspectives. This

knowledge included the likely universality of trait beliefs and also the presence of expected cultural differences in trait and contextual beliefs associated with individualism and collectivism. Our results confirmed the expected differential relationship between independent and interdependent self-construals and low and high self-monitoring, respectively, but also revealed that cultural psychology theory linking independent and interdependent self-construals to trait and contextual beliefs, respectively, needs to be revised. Even our finding that the self-construal measure did not function in an equivalent manner in the Filipino and Malaysian samples is important to report, given the widespread use of the measure without measurement equivalence analyses (Levine et al., 2003). Further work on equivalent measurement of self-construals is needed across cultures, but it seems premature to abandon theory associated with the concept. The adapted self-monitoring measure provided results that were more consistent with cultural psychology theory than previous self-monitoring studies and thus appears promising for cross-cultural studies. Overall, there was sufficient support in the study to justify continued efforts to integrate trait and cultural psychology perspectives.

## APPENDIX

### Sample Items From Personality Beliefs Inventory

<i>Belief Component</i>	<i>Sample Item</i>
<i>Implicit trait beliefs</i>	
Longitudinal stability	People who are quite industrious when they are students will probably be quite industrious in their jobs as adults.
Cross-situational consistency	An adolescent who is generally rebellious at home is probably also rebellious at school.
Predictive validity	How funny a person will be at a party can be predicted very well from the person's personality characteristics.
Trait inference	If I saw a person return some lost money to its owner, I would probably conclude that the person is an honest person in general.
General understanding	For someone to understand me well, they would need to know some of my personality characteristics.
<i>Implicit contextual beliefs</i>	
Longitudinal instability	How arrogant a person is will tend to change a lot over time.
Cross-situational variability	A person who is hotheaded at home might be calm and patient with friends.
Lack of predictive validity	Even if we know how competitive a person tends to be, it does not tell us how competitive he or she will be in a particular situation.
Difficulty of trait inference	It is hard to judge how timid a person is until you have interacted with him or her in many social situations.
General understanding	It makes little sense to describe people in terms of their personality characteristics, because people are better understood in terms of their roles and duties in various situations.

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