DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF AND ANXIETY

AS A FUNCTION OF CULTURE

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of
California State University, Stanislaus

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Science in Psychology

By
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May 2013
CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

“I’ll have my MS, as soon as I finish my thesis;” this work is dedicated to family and friends who had to listen to me repeat these words throughout the last 7 years. Thank you for hanging in there with me. And thank you to those who never stopped believing that “If only I had finished my thesis” would not need to be chiseled into my tombstone.
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The goal of this study was to determine the relationship between differentiation of self, anxiety, and cultural identity. It is widely accepted that people with high differentiation of self experience lower levels of anxiety than those with low differentiation of self. Being a theory which originated in western, predominantly individualist culture, the researcher sought to determine whether this would be the case with those who identify with more collectivist cultures. Participants (N = 152) were comprised mostly of women. Participants completed three inventories: the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, the Differentiation of Self Inventory, and the Self-Construal Scale, which measures whether one identifies predominantly with individualist or collectivist culture. Results supported the hypothesis that those who reported high differentiation of self also reported lower anxiety; those who reported low differentiation of self experienced more anxiety. This was the case among those who affiliated more with collectivism as well as individualism. Conclusions can be drawn that, among participants who reside in an individualist culture, differentiation of self is inversely related to anxiety, regardless of cultural affiliation.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The present study examines Murray Bowen’s concept of differentiation of self and anxiety levels while taking into account key cultural variables. This popular theory has been applied to individuals in therapy, with little or no distinction between how to use this theory with individuals from different cultures. Of particular interest is the interaction between differentiation of self, anxiety, and culture in a therapeutic setting, where culture may often be overlooked. Individuals presenting for therapy often come from a variety of cultures, and such culture must be taken into consideration in order for the therapist to formulate an effective treatment plan. One goal of this study is to determine whether the Bowen’s concept of differentiation of self (a western philosophy) can be applied to individuals from varying cultures in a therapeutic setting in a way that does not make incorrect assumptions about how this theory may work across all cultures.

The majority of the research that has been conducted to support this theory has been conducted in the United States with participants from a society that is dominated by individualistic values (Hogan, 1975). At this point, research has yet to determine whether its applicability stands within collectivist cultures where members are encouraged to be more the same than different (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).
Study Variables

Three variables were examined in this study. The three variables are differentiation of self, chronic anxiety, and cultural orientation. These study variables are briefly defined below. They are each discussed more in depth later on.

Differentiation of Self

Bowen and Kerr (1988) define differentiation as “the ability to be in emotional contact with others yet still autonomous in one’s emotional functioning” (p. 145). It is an individual’s ability to think and reflect, rather than to react emotionally, and the ability to be flexible and wise, even in the face of anxiety (Nichols & Schwartz, 2006). Highly differentiated individuals demonstrate emotional maturity, with a more proficient ability to deal with both their anxiety and the anxiety of others (Bowen, 1978). In this study, differentiation of self will be measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

Anxiety

According to Bowen and Kerr (1988), anxiety is an organism’s response to any perceived threat. They define chronic/trait anxiety as a persistent feeling of tension and apprehension that cannot be related to any obvious threats. Chronic anxiety remains relatively stable over time. In this study, chronic anxiety will be measured by the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger et al., 1970).

Cultural Orientation

The constructs of individualism and collectivism refer to the way a person interacts with the society in which he/she lives. Individualist cultures emphasize the
need to be interdependent, unique, and separate from others, while collectivist
cultures stress the need to be interdependent, similar to and connected with others
(Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In this study, cultural orientation will be measured by
the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994).

Relevance of Study

Differentiation of self is a theory that is widely accepted by many therapists,
but has been subject to little empirical research (Carpenter, 1990; Skowron &
Friedlander, 1998). Therefore, investigating its efficacy and relationship to anxiety
with any population may facilitate a discovery as to whether this theory ought to be
utilized by professionals. Investigating its efficacy with both individualist and
collectivist cultures may help professionals to better understand how this theory may
(or may not) be applied to each client individually, rather than assuming it should (or
should not) be applied to every client in the same way.

Furthermore, examining culture and how it may interact with the therapeutic
process is useful to any therapist. Psychotherapy is a complex exchange between two
(or more) individuals. It is necessary for every therapist, regardless of his or her own
cultural affiliation, to become cognizant of the cultural differences between himself or
herself and the individual presenting for therapy, and how those differences might
interact (or interfere) with the therapeutic process (Corey et al., 2007). First it is
necessary to identify what those cultural differences might be by reviewing the
constructs of individualism and collectivism.
Individualism and Collectivism

The polarities considered individualism and collectivism might be easily described by two sayings that permeate the two types of cultures: the individualist is likely to say, “the squeaky wheel gets the oil”, while the collectivist is more likely to say, “the nail that stands out gets hammered down” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Where collectivist cultures suggest the need to fit in and live harmoniously with others, individualist cultures stress the need to be assertive, autonomous, and different from others.

The constructs of individualism and collectivism refer to the way a person interacts with the society in which they live. According to Hui and Yee (1994), there has been some debate among researchers as to how these constructs should be defined. Waterman (1984) described individualism in positive terms, stating that individualism is characterized by a sense of personal identity (Erikson), self-actualization (Maslow), internal locus of control (Rotter), and principled moral reasoning (Kohlberg). On the other hand, Hogan (1975) posits that individualism may be “the ruin of us all,” while Lasche (1978) describes it as narcissistic. Hui and Yee also state that in China, “individualism” is synonymous with egoism and selfishness.

In an effort to empirically define individualism and collectivism, Hui and Trandis (1986) conducted a poll of social scientists in which they inquired how they thought an individual from each culture would react in a variety of situations. They found that social scientists believed collectivists would be most likely to display a
pattern of attitudes and behaviors that involve (a) consideration of implications of one’s own decisions and/or actions for other people, (b) sharing of material resources, (c) sharing of nonmaterial resources, (d) susceptibility to social influence, (e) self-presentation and face-work, (f) sharing of outcomes, and (g) feeling of involvement in others’ lives. Individualism, as the opposite side of the coin, was described as the absence of these qualities.

Individualism and collectivism also refer to the way people view themselves and experience the world (Geertz, 1975). Markus and Kitayama, (1991) have described the two construals of the self as independent or interdependent. In the former, the individual’s focus remains on becoming separate from others based on accentuating their own unique thoughts, feelings, and actions. He or she seeks independence and autonomy, and values others in a context of needing his or her inner self to be accepted by others. In the latter, the focus remains on maintaining relationships with others, and basing behavior on the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others. The individual values others because his or her self-definition is based on a connection with others and roles in these social relationships. He or she is less motivated to differentiate and more motivated to fit in with others, create and fulfill obligations, and become a part of various interpersonal relationships. Table 1 is a brief and simplified summary of the hypothesized differences between these two cultural variables.
Table 1

**Summary of Key Differences Between an Independent and an Interdependent Construal of Self**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature compared</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Interdependent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>Separate from social context</td>
<td>Connected with social context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>Bounded, unitary, stable</td>
<td>Flexible, variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important Features</strong></td>
<td>Internal, private (abilities, thoughts, feelings)</td>
<td>External, public (status, roles, relationships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasks</strong></td>
<td>Be unique, Express self</td>
<td>Belong, fit in, Occupy one's proper place, Engage in appropriate action, Promote others' goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Realize internal attributes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote own goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be direct; &quot;say what's on your mind&quot;</td>
<td>Be indirect; &quot;read other's mind&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of others</strong></td>
<td><strong>Self-evaluation:</strong> others important for social comparison, reflected appraisal</td>
<td><strong>Self-definition:</strong> relationships with others in specific contexts define the self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basis of self-esteem</strong></td>
<td>Ability to express self, validate internal attributes</td>
<td>Ability to adjust, restrain self, maintain harmony with social context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Markus and Kitayama, 1991

These individual differences coalesce to form two cultures that are tremendously different from one another, which is manifest in the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the societies in which they exist. One goal of this study is to identify how these cultural differences might interact with an individual from a collectivist culture who seeks out psychotherapy, a discipline guided by theories and concepts.
derived heavily from a western society that is infused with individualist values (Triandis et al., 1995; Hogan, 1975).

Cultural differences may play a crucial role in a therapeutic setting (Corey et al., 2007). Whether a therapist encounters a client from a similar or opposing cultural orientation, it may be helpful for the therapist to have an understanding about how the cultural experiences of the client can affect the therapeutic process, or more specifically, the therapeutic relationship.

**Culture and the Therapeutic Relationship**

In working with individuals, couples, and families in psychotherapy, it is important to consider every possible aspect of the client that may be pertinent to the therapeutic process. This requires that a therapist consider many different variables within the lives of his or her clients, including gender, occupation, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and a myriad of other factors.

According to Corey et al. (2007), one often misunderstood and underestimated component of psychotherapy is culture. Corey et al. state that some counselors deny the importance of cultural variables in counseling, often to the detriment of therapy. They believe that many counselors experience cultural tunnel vision by perceiving their client’s reality based on their own limited set of cultural experiences. By the same token, the counselor who is well aware of cultural variables, and yet assumes that every individual within a culture is the same and projects a stereotype onto their client, is also displaying this cultural tunnel vision. This may adversely affect the
therapeutic alliance by creating distance in the therapeutic relationship rather than trust and understanding.

Ridley (2005) posits that this kind of unintentional racism has permeated mental health delivery systems for quite some time, with documented cases found as early as the 1950s, followed by numerous subsequently documented cases. He goes on to explain that this display of unintentional racism may inadvertently sabotage well-meaning practitioners’ best efforts, and may actually perpetuate the very problems they are working to eradicate.

Wrenn (1962) identified certain characteristics generally shared by counselors who can be distinguished as “culturally encapsulated” (p. 444). He found that this type of counselor tends to (a) define reality according to one set of cultural assumptions, (b) show insensitivity to cultural variations among individuals, (c) accept unreasoned assumptions without proof or ignore proof because it might disconfirm his or her assumptions, (d) fail to evaluate other viewpoints, (e) make little attempt to accommodate the behavior of others, and (f) lock into one way of thinking that resists adaptation and rejects alternatives. Any one of these characteristics may prove harmful to the well-meaning therapist’s best efforts to build rapport with a client whose cultural experiences differ from his or her own.

In addition to possible harmful effects on rapport, these rigid attitudes and beliefs may also be particularly harmful during the case conceptualization and treatment stages of therapy. In the case of the culturally encapsulated counselor, identification of the client’s central issues may be formulated based on the
counselor’s rigid construction of reality, rather than on the reality of the client. This may become problematic when the reality of the counselor differs from that of the client.

Sayed (2003) identifies how cultural encapsulation may adversely affect therapy when an individual from a collectivist (e.g., Arab) culture encounters a therapist from an individualist (e.g., American) culture. He found that participants from the Arab community regarded health care professionals as omnipotent and mysterious, similar to that of a religious healer. They displayed a tendency to operate under the assumption that people in these positions will cure them, and so they must conform to everything they are told to do by the professional. This often resulted in what may have seemed like passivity toward the healthcare professional. Furthermore, they displayed a tendency to assume the role of an agent to be acted upon by the professional, and therefore did not usually take an active role in their own treatment.

The culturally encapsulated individualist counselor may conceptualize this behavior as a lack of assertiveness and self-confidence. Furthermore, the client’s lack of participation may appear as resistance to treatment or disinterest in improving his or her own mental health. The counselor may overgeneralize these actions to the client’s life outside of the office by assuming that the client must acquiesce to others just as easily. Furthermore, treatment plans may be formulated to focus on assertiveness training and boosting the client’s self-confidence. Within the client’s reality it is quite possible that these goals set up by the therapist may not be
compatible with his or her goals, and may, in fact, not be an issue at all in addressing the reason why he or she came in for therapy.

The culturally encapsulated collectivist counselor might also inappropriately conceptualize a case when working with a client from an individualist culture. If the client displays a high degree of individuality, the therapist might attribute the client’s presenting problem to this type of attitude. Furthermore, the counselor may suggest as treatment that the client try to fit in more and live more interdependently. Again, within the client’s reality it is quite possible that this goal may not be compatible with his or her goals, and may in fact not be an issue at all in addressing the reason why he or she came in for therapy.

These are possible results of the various cultural issues that may arise when a counselor and client from differing cultures are working together in therapy. There are a multitude of ways in which cultural differences may confuse and interfere with a therapeutic relationship. The current research will attempt to examine these cultural differences through a family therapy lens using a widely accepted theory in family therapy: Murray Bowen’s concept of differentiation of self.

**Differentiation of Self**

Within the realm of family therapy, Murray Bowen has been an influential figure. He hypothesized that there are two major forces by which individuals are driven: the need for companionship and togetherness, and the need for individuality and independence. The extent to which an individual is capable of reconciling these polarities depends upon the individual’s differentiation of self. Bowen and Kerr
(1988) define differentiation of self as one’s ability to be emotionally connected with others without experiencing a fusion (or blurring of psychological boundaries between self and others) of those emotions. Highly differentiated individuals tend to govern their reactions by thoughtful reflection as opposed to highly undifferentiated individuals who tend to be driven by emotional reactivity. This characteristic persists across all situations, and is most evident when the individual is faced with situations that tend to evoke anxiety.

When a family system has a high level of fusion, the individual is less likely to become differentiated (Bowen, 1978). According to Schwartz et al. (2006) this is because the individual has not learned how to separate his or her emotions and intellect from others. Consequently the fusion between family members and the lack of differentiation of self leads to the individual being more dependent on others, more susceptible to the emotions of those around them, and less able to use intellectual functioning in problem solving and emotional processing— all characteristics that may lead to increased anxiety.

Undifferentiated individuals are more likely to be emotionally cut off from their family of origin. Emotional cutoff is a process in which the individual attempts to physically and/or emotionally distance themselves from his or her family in reaction to fusion between family members. Kerr (1981) suggested that the results of emotional cutoff are threefold: (a) it indicates there is a problem of fusion between generations, (b) solves a problem by decreasing interaction between family members and therefore decreases anxiety, and (c) creates a problem by isolating individuals
who could otherwise benefit from contact. This is one way that undifferentiated individuals might attempt to differentiate themselves, albeit rather unsuccessfully. There may be many residual effects of emotional cutoff (Bowen, 1978; Kerr, 1981). These include the inability to form healthy close relationships in the future, increased emotional reactivity, and higher likelihood of continuing the cycle of fusion, emotional cutoff, and emotional reactivity in their own family.

Bowen believed that one’s level of differentiation of self has a considerable impact on the individual’s life, influencing patterns of interactions across his or her lifespan. He also believed that it has an immense influence on the individual’s choice in partner. Bowen (1978) proposed that individuals at equivalent levels of differentiation tend to marry, arguing that “the life styles of people at one point on the scale are so different from others just a few points removed that they [would] consider themselves to be incompatible” (p. 203). However, research has found that this may not necessarily be the case. In her review of the literature on this subject, Bosholm (2004) found that evidence in support of this theory is offset by an equal amount of evidence that does not support the theory. Her review of the literature suggested that individuals are equally likely to choose partners with matched or mismatched differentiation levels.

Bowen also theorized that children tend to develop equivalent or lower levels of differentiation than their parents. Bowen called this the family projection process, and suggested that this process occurs as a result of the parents projecting their own differentiation level onto their children. Theoretically, this multigenerational
transmission process results in sequentially lower levels of differentiation in subsequent generations, eventually leading to impairment in need of clinical attention.

Tuason and Friedlander (2000) measured the differentiation level of parents and that of their adult children. They hypothesized that, in line with the multigenerational transmission process, they would find similarities between the differentiation level of parents and that of their adult children. However, their results did not support this theory, suggesting that one’s differentiation level may be equally or more affected by factors outside of the family. On the other hand, Gavazzi and Sabatelli (1990) found a significant relationship between the presence of family conflict, parental intrusiveness, and psychological reactivity and lower levels of psychosocial maturity, suggesting that a fusion of familial boundaries may, in fact, hinder the differentiation process. Furthermore, Anderson and Sabatelli (1992) found that family differentiation level was a significant predictor of adolescents’ depression levels, as well as levels of fear, worry, state anxiety, and trait anxiety. More research is necessary to help discover whether the multigenerational transmission process occurs in families, and if so, how significant that process might be to an individual as they learn to differentiate.

Bowen’s theories seem to have nomological acceptance among those in the field of psychology. Indeed it seems that well-seasoned practitioners can attest to the efficacy of Bowen’s theories by presenting numerous case examples of clients whose developmental history and subsequent symptomology could validate them. It is not difficult to find empirical research examining several different variables utilizing
differentiation of self as a measuring tool by which to evaluate other variables. It is, however, difficult to find research that has narrowed their study variables enough to empirically validate the most basic tenets of Bowen’s theory (Carpenter, 1990; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). However, research has found empirical evidence that supports Bowen’s connection between differentiation of self and anxiety.

**Differentiation and Anxiety**

At the core of differentiation of self is the manifestation and management of anxiety (Carpenter, 1990). According to Bosholm (2004), “Differentiation level is a measure of each person’s ability to handle disturbances in the [emotional] system, whereas anxiety level is a measure of the degree of disturbance in that system” (p. 16). According to Bowen (1978), individuals with a low level of differentiation are emotionally immature, and as such have difficulty dealing with both their own anxiety and that of those around them.

Theoretically, when an individual who exhibits a low level of differentiation encounters a stressful situation, the individual may attempt to alleviate anxiety via maladaptive methods that may temporarily reduce anxiety, but may actually cause more anxiety in the long run. For example, when an undifferentiated individual experiences anxiety in a dyadic relationship, the individual may choose to triangulate with another person. Triangulation involves bringing a third person into the relationship in an effort to gain sympathy and support. This is often an attempt to reduce anxiety and encourage another person to solve the problem, rather than experience the pain of working through difficulties and learning to do it on his or her
own, or with the other half of the dyad. While triangulation may temporarily reduce anxiety by redistributing it among three people instead of two and provide the individual with a confidant, it undermines the dyadic relationship and leads to conflict in the long run.

Another way an undifferentiated individual might choose to alleviate anxiety maladaptively is by emotionally cutting off from the family of origin. The degree at which a person cuts off usually depends upon the degree of fusion that exists in the family; one may choose to simply reduce the frequency of contact with the family, or physically move away and never contact the family. In any case, Bowen (1978) posited that any amount of emotional cutoff, in an attempt to alleviate anxiety, actually serves to increase anxiety by causing the individual to be isolated from otherwise available support systems. The individual is also at risk to cultivate fused relationships in the future. Kerr (1981) further explains that the individual may remain stuck in the emotional system of the family, rendering him or her less capable of forming close meaningful relationships, and more prone to be guided by emotional reactivity. Furthermore, the individual may be more likely to continue this cycle of fusion and emotional cutoff through the family projection process. All of these factors are more likely to increase rather than alleviate anxiety.

There is a vast amount of empirical evidence in support of Bowen’s connection between differentiation of self and anxiety (Alber, 1991; Carpenter, 1990; Tuason & Friedlander, 2000; Peleg, 2005; Bosholm, 2004; Peleg-Popko, 2002; Maynard, 1997). The general findings are similar to that of Skowron and Friedlander
(1998), who found that level of differentiation of self significantly predicted trait anxiety, with an inverse relationship between differentiation and psychological distress. Skowron and Friedlander also found that emotional cutoff and emotional reactivity significantly predicted global maladjustment, which may provide an empirical link between differentiation of self with emotional cutoff and emotional reactivity.

In most of the aforementioned studies there was a lack of consideration of culture among the participants. Three of the studies (Alber, 1991; Carpenter, 1990; Peleg-Popko, 2002) neglected to take culture into account in their analyses. The participants from the study by Bosholm (2004) were predominantly Caucasian (87%), and resided in the United States, which may suggest that her sample was largely made up of people who would identify themselves as more individualist. There is no known research about differentiation of self and anxiety that includes a measurement of cultural affiliation. This being the case, what remains to be seen is whether low differentiation of self is related to chronic anxiety among people from collectivist cultures, where interconnectedness is highly valued and encouraged.

**Differentiation of Self and Collectivist Cultures**

This study aims to discover whether people from collectivist cultures experience intense anxiety similar to people from individualist cultures amidst a fusion of familial boundaries. Indeed, the term “fusion” may itself be culturally inappropriate to use when describing familial relationships in collectivist cultures. Western culture attaches a negative connotation to a lack of individuation present
among family members. However, the idea that one must aspire to a level of independence and autonomy within one’s family system to maintain healthy relationships may not be of value as much or at all to those who identify with a culture in which interdependence and deference to a group is highly valued and encouraged.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) point out that in many collectivist cultures, displaying individualistic characteristics that may result from the differentiation of self process, such as ability to take an I-position, is highly discouraged. However, Tuason and Friedlander (2000) found that among a Philippine sample, the same inverse relationship between differentiation level and anxiety that has been present among individualist cultures was present in this sample of a collectivist culture. This relationship was true for all subscales, including the ability to take an I-position. These results indicate that differentiation may actually promote psychological well-being among those who identify with collectivist cultures.

It seems that western assumptions about the nature of collectivist cultures may be relatively inaccurate, and may be a matter of perception. What we call “emotionally reactive” and view as dependent and emotionally immature, individuals from collectivist cultures may conceptualize as empathetic and view as one who experiences life intensely. It is possible that being “emotionally reactive” and having “fused” boundaries does not cause individuals from collectivist cultures to experience anxiety for two reasons: (1) the way in which these concepts are defined in their culture may differ significantly from western culture, and (2) because those factors
(by their more positively perceived definition) are inherent in their culture and therefore to be expected. These individuals may find value in sharing in each other’s emotions, and take no issue in experiencing the joy and pain of others.

Additionally, to the collectivist culture, the western concept of fusion may be similar to their idea of togetherness. It seems that it may be an issue of perception, and what we are taught to value in our cultures. In western culture, a mother who includes herself in her adolescent daughter’s “private” life and wishes to be included in her decisions may seem “overbearing” and “meddlesome,” but to the collectivist adolescent, this may seem an indicator of the mother’s genuine love and concern for her well-being. It is possible that the “fusion” in the western-cultured relationship may come about as a result of what that culture has taught the mother and daughter about how they “ought” to act to obtain autonomy and respect for one another. Collectivist cultures having promoted the values of togetherness and sharing, may have taught the mother and daughter that taking part in one another’s lives will bring about harmony in their relationships. Therefore, by this hypothesized definition, “fusion” would not cause the collectivist members more anxiety.

Furthermore, it is possible that while fitting in is highly valued by collectivist cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) asserting oneself (e.g., taking an I-position) may also be valued. Herein may lie a false dichotomy that individualists have constructed, that one must either assert oneself or be swallowed up by passivity. Perhaps collectivists have struck the delicate balance between asserting oneself, but not past the point when doing so is at the expense of group cohesiveness. Therefore, taking an
I-position may be valued in collectivist cultures, while simultaneously the individual may be at peace with the cultural value of being aware of and sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. In this case, asserting oneself in a collectivist culture would not cause anxiety, as long as it is within the cultural bounds that have been set.

One limitation of the Tuason and Friedlander study was the lack of measurement with regard to cultural identification. Markus and Kitayama (1998) note that even though there are some cultures that are generally termed collectivist or individualist, there are variations among each individual within those cultures in exactly how collectivist or individualist they may actually live. Therefore, simply using ethnicity to identify cultural affiliation may be perpetuating assumptions and stereotypes about the individual, based solely on ethnicity rather than actual data obtained from the individual.

Because these individual differences exist among members of the same culture, determining whether an individual identifies himself or herself as more individualist or collectivist becomes an important variable to consider upon examination of any data measuring these types of cultures. Measuring cultural identification rather than using ethnicity to assume cultural identification helps reduce the possibility that participants are erroneously assigned to a collectivist or individualist culture based exclusively on their ethnicity.

It would be of great value to explore more in depth how differentiation of self and anxiety might interact in collectivist cultures. Any results obtained may give insight into how a therapist can more effectively apply the differentiation of self
construct to clients from collectivist cultures. Results may indicate that this construct is an important area of exploration for clients from collectivist cultures. On the other hand, results may indicate that the differentiation of self construct should not be used at all with these types of clients. Another outcome may be that some components of the differentiation of self construct are relevant, and others are not as important, irrelevant, or even counterproductive for people from collectivist cultures. In any case, exploring how these factors interact in collectivist cultures may yield clinically useful results.

**Hypotheses and Rationale**

**Hypothesis One.** Participants who identify themselves as more individualist will report higher levels of differentiation than participants who identify themselves as more collectivist. Individualist cultures emphasize the importance of separation from others and asserting oneself (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Collectivist cultures emphasize the importance of blending in with others, and deferring one’s own needs and desires to those of the group, as well as remaining a part of that group. Differentiation of self involves learning to become separate and distinct from others. These are qualities that are more highly valued and promoted in individualist cultures. Therefore, participants who identify themselves as more individualist will report higher levels of differentiation of self than participants who identify themselves as more collectivist.

**Hypothesis Two.** Participants who identify themselves as more individualist and report higher levels of differentiation will experience less anxiety than
participants who identify themselves as more collectivist and report higher levels of differentiation. Most research shows that among western samples, participants who report higher levels of differentiation also report lower levels of anxiety (Carpenter, 1990; Tuason & Friedlander, 2000; Peleg, 2005; Bosholm, 2004; Peleg-Popko, 2002; Maynard, 1997). In a culture where individuation is so highly valued, it seems likely that those who identify themselves as more individualist and have learned to differentiate would experience less anxiety than those who identify themselves as more collectivist and have learned to differentiate.

**Hypothesis Three.** Participants who identify themselves as more collectivist and report lower levels of differentiation will experience less anxiety than participants who identify themselves as more individualist and report lower levels of differentiation.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

The researcher recruited participants from California State University, Stanislaus, and through social networks such as friends and friends of friends. The researcher attempted to collect data from individuals who were likely to identify with collectivist cultures, as well as individuals who are likely to identify with individualist cultures in order to have a basis of comparison. To obtain participants who were likely to identify with individualist cultures, the researcher recruited from the psychology research participant pool, from on-campus psychology courses, as well as through friends and friends of friends. To obtain participants who were likely to identify with collectivist cultures, the researcher recruited from on-campus psychology courses, on-campus ethnic organizations, and through friends and family of fellow graduate students who may identify with cultures typically classified as collectivist. The researcher attempted to recruit a minimum of 100 participants. Permission was granted from the instructors before recruiting in classes at California State University, Stanislaus. Announcements were made in the classes and on-campus ethnic organizations asking for people who would like to participate in research. Individuals were told that the researcher was looking at culture and relationships. All participants were treated according to the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (American Psychological Association, 1992).
One hundred fifty-two people ($N = 152$) completed three inventories and a demographic questionnaire. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 60 years old, with an average age of 28.79 ($SD = 10.61$). Participants were comprised of mostly females. The majority of participants were Caucasian, and had completed high school or some college. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was the most frequently reported religion. The next most frequently reported religion was Catholic and non-LDS Christian. Participants were predominantly from the California Central Valley. See Table 2 for a summary of demographic information.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Caucasian  55  36.2%
Hispanic  31  20.4%
Asian  10  6.6%
African American  4  2.6%
Native American  3  2.0%
Assyrian  2  1.3%
Other/Not Identified  42  27.6%

Religion
LDS/Christian  49  32.2%
Catholic  33  21.7%
Christian (Non-LDS)  28  18.4%
None  13  8.6%
Agnostic  8  5.3%
Atheist  5  3.3%
Buddhist  3  2.0%
Other  9  5.9%

**Materials**

**Informed Consent.** The informed consent sheet (Appendix A) stated that the purpose of the current study is to examine culture and relationships. It also gave participants information about how they could contact the researcher if they had any
questions or concerns. Participants were told that they could discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Participants were also assured that all data would be kept from inappropriate disclosure and that anonymity would not be compromised.

**Instructions.** The instruction sheet (Appendix B) gave detailed directions about how to complete and return the questionnaires.

**Demographic questionnaire.** A brief form (Appendix C) assessed basic demographic information along with information about the participants’ socioeconomic status (parental and personal education level, parental and personal annual income).

**Debriefing statement.** The debriefing statement (Appendix D) fully revealed the nature of the study and included information about cultural orientation, differentiation of self, and anxiety, including references to articles about the study topics. The debriefing statement gave participants information about who could be contacted if they had questions regarding their participation. It also gave information about what participants could do if they experienced any negative feelings caused by participation in the study.

**Differentiation of Self Inventory.** The Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI; Appendix E) was developed by Skowron and Friedlander (1998). It is a 43-item self-report questionnaire. It uses a 6-point likert scale (1 = not at all true of me, 6 = very true of me), with items such as “I’m concerned about losing my independence in intimate relationships.” This questionnaire is used to measure an individual’s level of differentiation of self, which is defined as “the degree to which one is able to balance
(a) emotional and intellectual functioning and (b) intimacy and autonomy in relationships” (Bowen, 1978, as cited in Skowron & Friedlander, p. 235).

The DSI is comprised of four subscales: (a) emotional reactivity, (b) emotional cutoff, (c) fusion with others, and (d) the ability to take an I-position. Emotional reactivity (a) refers to the individual’s ability to remain calm and process their emotions intellectually in the face of anxiety. Poorly differentiated individuals tend to lose themselves in their emotions and have difficulties separating themselves from the emotions of others.

Emotional cutoff (b) refers to the individual’s ability to deal with intense interpersonal relationships. Poorly differentiated individuals tend to distance themselves from significant others when they are faced with intimate relationships. They tend to isolate themselves, deny the importance of their family, and present themselves as extremely independent.

Fusion with others (c) refers to the tendency for poorly differentiated individuals to become overly involved with others. They tend to be rigid in their thoughts and attitudes; above all else, they pursue acceptance and approval from others.

The ability to take an I-position (d) refers to an individual’s ability to think and act for themselves in the face of differing viewpoints. Poorly differentiated individuals tend to succumb to the pressure of others, conform to the thoughts and actions of others, and have difficulties taking and defending a position. Emotional reactivity, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others are reverse scored, and then all
subscales are added together to obtain one differentiation score. Scores on each subscale range from 1 to 6. Possible total scores range from 4 – 24, with higher scores signifying higher levels of differentiation. This research will use all four subscales to calculate the full-scale score for differentiation of self.

Internal consistency estimates using Cronbach’s alpha, calculated by Skowron and Fridlander (1998), suggested high reliabilities for the DSI total scale and for each of the four subscales: DSI = .88; Emotional Reactivity = .83; Emotional Cutoff = .80; Fusion with Others = .82; and I-Position = .80 (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). In support of construct validity, Skowron and Friedlander used a correlation between differentiation of self and chronic anxiety to conclude that the DSI has construct validity. DSI full-scale scores significantly predicted Trait anxiety ($r = .64, p < .0001$). “Correlations between Trait anxiety and the four subscales ranged from .16 ($p < .01$, Fusion with Others) .51 (I-Position), .55 (Emotional Cutoff), and .58 (Emotional Reactivity), all remaining $ps < .0001$” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p. 238).

**State-Trait Anxiety Inventory.** The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Appendix F) was developed by Spielberger, Gorsuch, and Lushene (1970). It is a 40-item, self-report questionnaire. It uses a 4-point likert scale 1 = almost never, 4 = almost always), with items such as “I worry too much over something that doesn’t matter.” This questionnaire is used to measure a person’s state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety is defined as transient feelings of worry or fear that most people experience occasionally. Trait anxiety is defined as a relatively stable tendency of an individual
to react anxiously to stressful events. The State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) is the
most frequently used measure of anxiety, and has been used in over 3,000
publications (Spielberger, 1989).

The STAI has two different scales: the S-anxiety (state anxiety) scale and the
T-anxiety (trait anxiety) scale. The S-anxiety scale measures current level of anxiety.
The T-anxiety scale measures overall level of trait anxiety. Each scale has 20
questions. The score range for both scales is from 20 to 80, with a higher score
indicating a higher level of state or trait anxiety. Taken together, these scales assess
whether an individual is more or less likely to exhibit transitory anxiety, or
characteristic/chronic anxiety. Although this study is only concerned with the T-
anxiety scale, both subscales were administered.

“The test-retest reliability of the STAI subscales ranged from .31 to .86.
Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach’s alpha ranged from 0.86 to
0.95” (Bosholm, 2004, p. 59). “Stability, as measured by test-retest coefficients, is
relatively high for the STAI T-anxiety scale and low for the S-anxiety scale, as would
be expected for [a] measure assessing change in anxiety resulting from situational
stress” (Spielberger, 1983, p. 32).

**Self-Construal Scale.** The Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Appendix G) was
developed by Singelis (1994). It is a 30-item, self-reporting questionnaire to measure
a person’s self-construal as interdependent or independent. It uses a 7-point likert scale (1
= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), with items such as “I will sacrifice my self
interest for the benefit of the group I am in”. Interdependence is defined
interchangeably with collectivism as an emphasis on subordination of personal goals to those of the in-group (Triandis, 1988), and independence is defined interchangeably with individualism as an emphasis on giving priority to personal goals over those of the in-group.

The SCS has two different subscales: interdependence and independence, with 15 questions each. Each participant receives two scores: one for interdependence and one for independence. These two scores are obtained by adding the items within each subscale, and then dividing each score by 15 to obtain a mean score for each subscale. Singelis (1994) notes that these two aspects of the self are separate factors, not opposite poles of a single construct. Therefore, each aspect of the self needs consideration. The two subscales, independent and interdependent, obtained Cronbach alpha reliability scores of .69 and .73, respectively (Singelis, 1994).

There are numerous indications that the SCS is a valid measure of construal of self (Singelis, 1994). Face validity for both scales is high, as the wording of the questions directly focuses on the constructs they are meant to measure. For example, the item “I feel it is important for me to act as an independent person” assesses the participant’s need to feel unique and independent from others. This is central to the independent self, or individualist culture. The item “My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me” assesses the participant’s need to feel connected with others. This is central to the interdependent self, or collectivist culture.

To test construct validity, Singelis (1994) administered the SCS to a group of Asian Americans and Caucasians and then compared their scores. Construct validity
was indicated when the results of this comparison were consistent with Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) characterizations of Asians (S1: \( n = 208, M = 4.91; \) S2: \( n = 95, M = 4.94 \)) as more interdependent than North Americans (S1: \( n = 49, M = 4.37; \) S2: \( n = 30, M = 4.47 \)), and North Americans (S1: \( n = 49, M = 5.14; \) S2: \( n = 32, M = 5.06 \)) as more independent than Asians (S1: \( n = 210, M = 4.55; \) S2: \( n = 93, M = 4.73 \)), \( p < .01 \) for Sample 1 and \( p < .05 \) for Sample 2).

**Procedure**

Participants were given a packet with an identifying number on the front that corresponds to the numbers on the questionnaires inside the envelopes. Each packet contained two informed consent forms (Appendix A), one to return to the researcher and one to keep for their own records. They also included a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), instructions (Appendix C), debriefing form (Appendix D) Differentiation of Self Inventory (Appendix E), the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Appendix F), and the SCS Scale (Appendix G). The instructions told them to complete the questionnaires in the order they were placed inside the envelope in a single session and to not consult with anyone until they completed the questionnaires. The instructions also told the participants to put the signed informed consent form (Appendix A) in a separate envelope and to seal it before completing the questionnaires. The instructions informed the participants to open the small envelope labeled “Debriefing statement, OPEN LAST” last. The demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) was always placed just before the debriefing form (Appendix D) in the envelopes.
To control for presentation order, the three questionnaires of interest in this study (the Differentiation of Self Inventory, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, and the SCS Scale) were counterbalanced across participants. The researcher was blind to the order of the questionnaires inside the envelopes that were given to each participant.

**Analyses**

Data was analyzed using a multiple regression, with the dependent variable chronic anxiety, and the independent variables cultural orientation and differentiation of self. This study was correlational and nonexperimental. Analyses were run at the .05 probability level. Analyses were run on SPSS for Windows (Version 14.0).
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Participants

Descriptive statistics for scores on all measures are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Mean (M)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>76.97</td>
<td>17.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>160.51</td>
<td>20.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualist</td>
<td>58.44</td>
<td>11.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivist</td>
<td>56.21</td>
<td>8.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A regression analysis was used to test hypothesis one that participants who identify themselves as more individualist would report higher levels of differentiation than participants who identify themselves as more collectivist. Individualism and collectivism were used to predict differentiation of self scores. Results are shown in Table 4.

The regression equation was significant with 22% of the variance explained (F = 21.59, df = 149, p = .00). Both individualism and collectivism significantly predicted differentiation of self, with individualism positively correlated and
collectivism negatively correlated. The beta coefficients indicate that the individualism variable (beta = .4) was a stronger predictor of differentiation of self than was the collectivism variable (beta = -.25).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualist</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivist</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis two was that participants who identify themselves as more individualist and report higher levels of differentiation will experience less anxiety than participants who identify themselves as more collectivist and report higher levels of differentiation. A regression analysis was run using anxiety as the dependent variable with individualism, collectivism, and differentiation of self as predictor variables.

Results were significant with R2 = .45, indicating that 45 % of the variance was explained (F = 40.32, df = 3, 148, p = .00). Beta coefficients and related statistics are shown in Table 5.

Individualism neared significance, inversely predicting anxiety (beta= -.127, t = -1.89, p = .061), but was not a strong predictor. Collectivism was significantly positively related to anxiety (beta = .18, t = 2.77, p = .006). However, differentiation
of self was the best predictor of anxiety (beta = -.55, t = -7.89, p = .000), and was significantly negatively related to anxiety. As for the strength of the predictors, differentiation of self was found to be the strongest predictor of anxiety, followed by collectivism, then individualism. This supports hypothesis 1, as participants who identified themselves as more individualist reported less anxiety than collectivist participants, and those who reported higher levels of differentiation also reported less anxiety than participants who reported lower levels of differentiation.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualist</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-1.89</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivist</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>-7.89</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between three variables: differentiation of self, anxiety, and culture. In this study, the primary research question was: What is the relationship of differentiation of self and individualism/collectivism to anxiety? This question was answered by determining (a) whether high individualism yields higher differentiation of self than does high collectivism, and (b) whether high individualism and high differentiation of self combined yields less anxiety than does high collectivism and high differentiation of self combined.

Prior to a discussion of the results, it is important to note that Bowen himself said that he never intended for the differentiation scale to be a tool for measuring differentiation of self levels. He stated that differentiation of self is not quantifiable, and that the richness of the concept would be destroyed by any attempts to measure it (Bowen, 1976). “There is no way to chi square a feeling and make it qualify as a scientific fact... rather than applying the scientific method to subjective human data” we would be better off using our resources helping clients (Bowen, 1976, p. 340). He also noted that “it is impossible to do a differentiation of self estimate except over a period of years or an entire segment of life” (Bowen, 1976, p. 432). In the words of another researcher, “Having presented Bowen’s position on this, I will now attempt to quantify what Bowen himself has said is not quantifiable” (Bosholm, 2004, p. 82).
The results of this study strongly support the position of Bowen (1978) that those with low differentiation of self tend to experience higher levels of chronic anxiety. He proposed that “the average level of chronic anxiety of a person and of a family parallels the basic level of differentiation of that individual and family [and] the lower the level of basic differentiation, the higher the average level of chronic anxiety” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 115). Differentiation of self was significantly inversely related to anxiety. Additionally, of the differentiation of self, anxiety, and cultural identity variables, differentiation of self was found to be the best predictor of anxiety (beta = -.55, t = -7.89, p = .000). These findings coincide with the relationship Bowen discovered between differentiation of self and anxiety.

Collectivism was significantly positively related to anxiety. Prior to discussion about why this might be, the limitations of this study must be addressed. In order to make an honest study of how collectivism interacts with differentiation of self and anxiety, it is necessary that one obtains access to a population that is purely, or at least primarily, comprised of people who reside in a fundamentally collectivist culture. With a predominantly Caucasian (36.2 %) and Hispanic (20.4%) sample, and participants who currently reside in the United States (an essentially individualist culture) this objective may not have been realized. Additionally, it is important to note that the participants in this study who identify themselves as more collectivist are doing so in a society that promotes values contrary to that type of culture. Having said this, it is difficult to determine whether the anxiety felt by participants who identify as more collectivist can be attributed to the fact that low differentiation of self will
induce anxiety in individualist and collectivist cultures, or if it should be attributed to the fact that these participants are experiencing a clash of cultural value systems. It is possible that having a collectivist upbringing and/or heritage while living in an individualist society may in and of itself bring about a certain amount of anxiety as one struggles to reconcile the two belief systems.

It is possible that collectivist people who live in an individualist culture may feel pressured by the dominant culture to emulate those individualist principles, directly and indirectly (perhaps even by a culturally encapsulated therapist). Coming from a society which views individualism as selfish and egotistical, collectivists may experience an inner conflict of whether to assimilate and take on the new culture’s characteristics, or maintain their culture of origin’s belief system. This inner conflict can lead to struggles within the family, especially in cases where there is disagreement as to which culture should be adhered to. All of these factors may play a part in the anxiety that a collectivist person may experience while living in an individualist culture, which may not have anything to do with that person’s differentiation of self level.

Future research may also more closely examine this issue, by exploring how collectivist people score on the fusion with others sub scale in the differentiation of self inventory. A further study of this may clarify whether there appears to be a blurring of boundaries that comes with collectivism, and whether being part of a whole, rather than an individual part, brings about a feeling of not knowing where one ends and another person begins. Perhaps Bowen’s idea of enmeshment and fusion
with others, which, ideologically, brings about negative emotions and a weak sense of self, persists in cultures where one is expected to defer from self to others, but does not elicit negative emotions in collectivist cultures where such is expected and valued. Furthermore, studying anxiety and differentiation of self among people who identify as collectivist and yet reside in predominantly individualist cultures could provide insight into whether living in the midst of such colliding value systems causes one a significant amount of distress.

It is also entirely possible that similar results would be found among collectivist participants, and that Bowen’s tenet that low differentiation of self leads to high anxiety would manifest itself amongst a population where it is characteristic to defer one’s own needs to the needs of a group. Perhaps the melding of one’s own identity into the identity of a group causes emotional strain, even when it is expected and rewarded by the whole. The relationship between collectivism and differentiation of self, specifically low differentiation of self, would be an interesting study to follow up with. Recognizing how they differ could open a door to understanding whether or not differentiation of self is even a relevant concept in collectivist cultures.

It may be that the idea of collectivism is entirely different from the idea of low differentiation. Where “low differentiation of self” conjures a negative connotation, perhaps “collectivism” paints a very different picture. It may be that collectivism, while promoting a deference to the needs of the group and discouraging individualism, provides something emotionally that compensates for the lack of individual identity.
The goal of this study was to determine whether the widely accepted idea that high differentiation of self leads to low anxiety applies to individuals who affiliate themselves with a more collectivist culture. However, the question itself has been raised and researched primarily by professionals who are personally accustomed to a more individualist culture. It is possible that a theory with origins in an individualist culture may be predisposed to assumptions which are made from an individualist perspective. The research question originated from this concern: individualist ideals may be projected onto collectivist cultures, when those ideals may consequently cause more harm than benefit to those who do not embrace individualist archetypes. Due to the limitations of this study, primarily the lack of access to members of collectivist cultures, this question has not adequately been addressed. Future research could expand the sample, reaching out to collectivist populations that could provide increased understanding as to whether or not low differentiation of self leads to higher anxiety in collectivist cultures.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that the results have potentially raised more questions than they have answered. And although the main questions of this study were not answered conclusively, the researcher considers this study to be a success, as all good research questions should lead to greater understanding of what should be studied next. There are many questions raised which, if answered, could have far reaching implications for how cultural identity is addressed in a therapeutic setting. Gaining a more thorough understanding of how cultural identity affects differentiation of self (including whether the concept is even relevant in other
cultures) may be a value to those who are working with people in other cultures, or who are struggling to reconcile their own culture with the mainstream culture in which they live. In short, conducting this study has been of great value both to the researcher, and potentially to professionals who work with people who identify with collectivist ideals.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

1. This research study is designed to assess culture and relationships. If I agree to participate, I will complete questionnaires regarding myself, my culture, and my relationships.

2. I understand that I am free to discontinue participation at any time and I can skip any questions that make me feel uncomfortable. Even if I withdraw from the study, I will still receive any entitlements that have been offered, such as extra credit.

3. If I agree to participate, I understand that there is no guarantee that I will benefit from this research.

4. If I agree to participate, I understand that the study will last about ____ minutes.

5. I understand that I will be given additional information about this study when participation is complete. I can also obtain written information about the outcome of the research at the end of May 2008 by contacting the researcher at ktpease82@sbcglobal.net.

6. I understand that all information will be kept secure and will be guarded against inappropriate disclosure, and will be accessible only to the researcher and her supervisor, Kurt Baker, Ph.D.

7. The current study is designed to reduce the possibility of negative experiences as a result of participation. If I have any concerns, anxiety, discomfort, or distress as a result of participation, I understand that I may contact the Stanislaus County Mental Health Hotline (209-525-6225). If I am a student at California State University, Stanislaus (CSUS), I may also contact the Student Counseling Center at 209-667-3381.

8. The possible benefit of participation in this research is that I may learn more about psychology research and how scientific research is conducted.
9. I understand that I will be given a blank, unsigned copy of this consent form at the beginning of this study.

10. I understand that I may contact the researcher, Katie Pease, through her supervisor, Kurt Baker, Ph. D (209-667-3386) in the department of psychology at CSUS if I have any questions or concerns. If I have questions regarding participants’ rights, I may contact Dr. Suzanne Burns of the CSUS Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs (209-667-3493).

I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and have freely consented to participate in scientific research being conducted by Katie Pease.

Signature: ___________________________                 Date: __________________
APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for participating in this study. The researcher is interested in culture and relationships.

Please complete the questionnaires in a single session. Please complete them in the order they were placed inside the manila envelope and follow the directions below carefully.

Please do not consult with anyone until you have completed the questionnaires and have sealed and returned the manila envelope provided.

1. First, please read the informed consent. If you agree to participate, please sign and return one copy of the informed consent. Place the informed consent form in the envelope provided and seal the envelope. This form will be kept separate from your data.

2. Second, after sealing the envelope with the signed informed consent, please complete the questionnaires in the order they were placed inside the manila envelope. Please these questionnaires in the manila envelope.

3. Third, seal the manila envelope that has all of the questionnaires you completed.

4. Fourth, open the small envelope labeled “Debriefing Statement, OPEN LAST.” You may keep this debriefing statement.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you would like information regarding the outcome of this study, please contact the researcher at ktpease82@sbcglobal.net or through the CSUS Psychology Department (209-667-3386).
APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age: ________

2. Gender:
   1. Female
   2. Male

3. What ethnic group do you identify with most?
   1. African American
   2. Arabic American
   3. Asian American
   4. Assyrian American
   5. European American
   6. Mexican American or Central American
   7. Native American
   8. Pacific Islander
   9. I do not identify with any particular ethnic group
   10. Other __________________________

4. How much education have you completed?
   1. Did not complete high school/GED
   2. High school/GED
   3. Some college or professional program
   4. Undergraduate degree
   5. Graduate/Doctorate degree

5. What is the highest level of education either of your parents has completed?
   1. Did not complete high school/GED
   2. High school/GED
   3. Some college or professional program
   4. Undergraduate degree
   5. Graduate/Doctorate degree

6. What is your annual gross income?
   __________________________
   52
7. What is the annual gross income of your parents?
_______________________

8. What is the occupation of your parents?
   Mother: ____________________
   Father: ____________________
APPENDIX D

DEBRIEFING

Thank you for participating in today’s study. This study was designed to answer the question of whether people from both individualist and collectivist cultures experience chronic anxiety when they are not highly differentiated. Past research suggests that people from individualist cultures who are not highly differentiated tend to experience more symptoms of chronic anxiety than people from individualist cultures who are highly differentiated. However, past research has yet to identify whether this is true for people from collectivist cultures. The current study is designed to assess whether people from collectivist cultures experience chronic anxiety when they are not highly differentiated.

All of the information collected in this study will be kept safe from inappropriate disclosure. There will be no way to identify your responses in the data archive. The current research is not interested in any individual responses; instead, the current research looks at the general patterns that emerge when the data are aggregated together.

Your participation is greatly appreciated and it will help psychologists learn more about idealization and long-distance relationships. Please do not discuss the nature of this study with others who may later participate in it, as this could affect the validity of the findings.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Kurt Baker, Ph.D (209-667-3386). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the California State University, Stanislaus (CSUS) Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs (209-667-3493). If you have any concerns or anxiety due to participation in this study, you may contact the Stanislaus County Mental Health Hotline (209-525-6225) or the National Hopeline Network (1-800-784-2433) free of charge. If you are a CSUS student, you may contact the Student Counseling Center (209-667-3381).

If you would like to learn more about differentiation of self, chronic anxiety, and cultural affiliation, I suggest the following references:


APPENDIX E
DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF INVENTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Not at all true of me</th>
<th>Very true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>People have remarked that I'm overly emotional.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I have difficulty expressing my feelings to people I care for.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I often feel inhibited around my family.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I need to remain pretty calm even under stress.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I'm likely to suddenly or subtly conflict between two people whom I care about.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him or her for a time.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No matter what happens in my life, I know that I'll never lose my sense of who I am.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I need to distance myself when people get too close to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>It has been said (or could be said of me that I am very attached to my parents).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I wish that I weren't so emotional.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I usually do not change my behavior simply to please another person.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My spouse or partner could not tolerate it if I were to express to him or her my true feelings about some things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Whenever there is a problem in my relationship, I'm anxious to get it settled right away.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>At times my feelings get the best of me and I have trouble thinking clearly.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>When I am having an argument with someone, I can separate my thoughts about the issue from my feelings about the person.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I'm often uncomfortable when people get too close to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>It's important for me to keep in touch with my parents regularly.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>At times, I feel as if I'm nothing as emotional roles change.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I'm not happy about change.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I'm concerned about losing my independence in intimate relationships.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I'm overly sensitive to criticism.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>When my spouse or partner is away for too long, I feel like I am missing a part of me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I'm fully self-accepting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I often feel that my spouse or partner wants too much from me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I'm not always certain of my parents' expectations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>If I have an argument with my spouse or partner, I try to think about it all day.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I'm able to see my spouse or partner even when I feel pressured by them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>When one of my relationships becomes very intense, I feel the urge to run away from it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Arguments with my parents or children can still make me feel avoid.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>If someone is upset with me, I can't seem to let it go easily.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I'm less concerned that others approve of me than I am about doing what I think is right.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I would never consider breaking any of my family members for emotional support.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I find myself thinking a lot about my relationship with my spouse or partner.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I'm very small, having been hurt by others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>My self-esteem really depends on how others think of me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>When I'm with my spouse or partner, I often feel smothered.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or upset.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I'm often worried about the kind of impression I make.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>When things go wrong, I know it is a sign that I am not doing things right.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I feel things are normal when others do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I usually do what I believe is right regardless of what others say.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Our relationship might be better if my spouse or partner would give me the space I need.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differentiation of Self Inventory Subscale Correlation (unpublished means reverse scores):
- Emotional Reactivity: 3.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 3.1, 2.6, 2.3, 2.2, 2.7, 2.3, 2.5, 2.3
- Interpersonal Conflict: 3.2, 4.2, 4.1, 4.3, 4.2

Received September 22, 1997
Revision received February 16, 1998
Accepted February 16, 1998
APPENDIX F

SELF-CONSTRUAL SCALE

INSTRUCTIONS

This is a questionnaire that measures a variety of feelings and behaviors in various situations. Listed below are a number of statements. Read each one as if it referred to you. Beside each statement write the number that best matches your agreement or disagreement. Please respond to every statement. Thank you.

1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE  4 = DON'T AGREE OR DISAGREE  5 = AGREE SOMEWHAT
2 = DISAGREE               6 = AGREE
3 = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE      7 = STRONGLY AGREE

___ 1. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.
___ 2. I can talk openly with a person who I meet for the first time, even when this person is much older than I am.
___ 3. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.
___ 4. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.
___ 5. I do my own thing, regardless of what others think.
___ 6. I respect people who are modest about themselves.
___ 7. I feel it is important for me to act as an independent person.
___ 8. I will sacrifice my self interest for the benefit of the group I am in.
___ 9. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood.
___10. Having a lively imagination is important to me.
___11. I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education/career plans.
___12. I feel my fate is intertwined with the fate of those around me.
___13. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met.
___14. I feel good when I cooperate with others.
___15. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.
___16. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.
___17. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.
___18. Speaking up during a class (or a meeting) is not a problem for me.
___19. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor (or my boss).
___20. I act the same way no matter who I am with.
___21. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me.
22. I value being in good health above everything.

23. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group.

24. I try to do what is best for me, regardless of how that might affect others.

25. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.

26. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

27. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

28. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.

29. I act the same way at home that I do at school (or work).

30. I usually go along with what others want to do, even when I would rather do something different.