

Culture and Self-Concept Stability: Consistency Across and Within Contexts Among Asian Americans and European Americans: Comment on English and Chen (2008)

*Synopsis*

Previous research studies revealed that Asian Americans (ASA) had an inconsistent self-concept across situations, when compared to a self-concept of European Americans (EUA). However, the authors argued that ASA might have a consistent self-concept across time, like EUA. Thus, they designed four studies to test the characteristics of self-concepts of ASA and EUA. The research hypotheses were that ASAs' self-concepts were less consistent across situations and equally consistent across time, like EUAs' self-concepts.

Participants in all studies were undergraduates. They rated self-concept measures, such as self-descriptions, self-enhancement, and self-view importance, across situations (in study 1a and 2a). In across situations, participants were randomly separated to rate either selected two situational or relationship contexts. In addition, participants in some studies rated their self-concepts as across two times, which had an average interval of 25 weeks. The authors used Fisher's *r*-to-*z* transformed correlation coefficients of self-concepts of either two situational or relationship contexts to measure the consistency across situational or relational situations. They also used the transformed correlation of two times to measure the consistency across times.

Analyzing by an Ethnicity (EUA vs. ASA) x Context Type (Situational or Relational Perspectives) Factorial ANOVA in four studies, the results partially supported hypotheses. ASAs' self-concepts have significantly lower consistencies indexes across relational, but not situational, situations than EUAs' self-concepts in all measures. In addition, ASAs' and EUAs' self-concepts were not significant different in both situational and relational consistency indices

across times in all measures. The authors discussed that East Asians people tended to hold flexible self-concepts which were consistent across time. The role of culture that affected the difference in self-concepts consistencies across ethnicity was also discussed.

### *Comments*

Tom asked me about the implication of this research. I answered that this finding made us understand the nature of ASAs which viewed themselves inconsistent across situations. Also, I tried to explain the future directions of this research about the reason of inconsistency self-concepts in ASAs. Derek asked me whether the ASAs were first- or second-generation. He explained that ASAs might more consistent in their self-concepts if they were not first-generation. I agreed that this point did affect the research results. I told him that the half of participants was first-generation and the other half was later-generation. Kris commented on this research that there were only two types of relationship, which were friends and mothers, including in this research. It might be too early to claim about inconsistent self-concepts. This research result might only explain the different view when ASAs interacted with their mothers. I totally agreed with him and I added that the situation and relational difference in this research had difference in strength of independent variables. This might be explained why there was no significant difference across situations in self-concepts.

### *Contributions to others articles*

I asked Tom about analyzing simple main effect in his research. I asked Derek about self-selection that might be confounding variables in his research in explaining significant result. I asked Kris how the research can be applied in the real world.