

The Role of Individualism-Collectivism in Empathy: An Exploratory Study

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The relationship of individualism and collectivism, empathy dispositions, and empathic experiences among college students in the United States was examined. First, 121 participants completed a survey that measures individualism-collectivism and empathy dispositions. Four weeks later, 74 of them participated in the second part of the study, a laboratory session, in which they were presented with a transcript of a counseling session. Their experienced empathic emotion and intellectual empathy toward “the client” in the session were assessed. The survey results showed that collectivism was correlated positively with dispositional intellectual empathy and empathic emotion. The laboratory session

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revealed that collectivism predicted experienced empathic emotion and that individualism predicted intellectual empathy. In addition, dispositional intellectual empathy and empathic emotion predicted experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion respectively. Implications of the findings in counseling across cultures were discussed.

Empathy has been and continues to be one of the most studied concepts in psychology. A tremendous amount of research has addressed the nature of empathy (e.g., Rogers, 1959), the development of empathy (e.g., Feshbach, 1975), the social function of empathy (e.g., Batson & Coke, 1981), therapeutic values of empathy (e.g., Gladstein, 1983), factors that are related to individuals' capacity for empathy (e.g., Davis, 1983), and their experience of empathy (e.g., Duan, 1993). However, recent reviews have noted that little, if any, research attention has been given to the role of cultural values in empathy (e.g., Duan & Hill, 1996). Because empathy is usually developed and experienced in specific cultural contexts, neglecting the effects of cultural values may limit the accuracy and consistency of research findings in this area.

Empathy can be viewed as an individual disposition or as an experience that is situation-specific (see Duan & Hill, 1996). The former refers to the individual's capacity to take another's perspective and/or to feel another's emotions (Davis, 1980; Hogan, 1969), and the latter as responding vicariously to a stimulus person (Batson & Coke, 1981; Stotland, 1969) or as sensing another's private world as if it were one's own (Rogers, 1959; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Both of these types of empathy can be further differentiated as either intellectual or emotional in nature, or as containing both domains. Duan and Hill (1996) observed that both intellectual and emotional elements of dispositional empathy and empathic experience were identifiable and should be distinguished

to avoid confusion. They proposed that the terms of intellectual empathy, defined as the ability or experience of taking another's perspective, and empathic emotion, referring to the ability or experience of feeling another's emotions, be used to label specific types of empathy dispositions or empathic experiences. They further postulated that in whatever form, empathy was likely influenced by individuals' cultural orientations. Accordingly, we examined dispositional intellectual empathy, dispositional empathic emotion, experienced intellectual empathy, and experienced empathic emotion as so defined in this study in relation to individualism-collectivism cultural orientations.

Individual differences in empathy can occur both in one's capacity for empathy and in experienced empathy in specific situations (Duan & Hill, 1996). It has been observed that some individuals have a stronger disposition for empathy than others (e.g., Davis, 1983), and that in some situations individuals are more likely to experience empathy than in other situations (Hoffman, 1990). As a disposition or as an experience, empathy is related to various stable personal characteristics, such as age (Feshbach, 1975), sex (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983), sex role orientation (Carlozzi & Hurlburt, 1982), and personality type (Jenkins, Stephens, Chew, & Downs, 1992). Empathic experience has also been found to vary with situational variables such as perceived responsibility of the victim (Hoffman, 1990), nature of the victim's emotion (Batson, Eklund, Chermok, Hoyt, & Ortiz, 2007; Duan, 2000), and the mood of the empathizer (Duan & Kivlighan, 2002). However, whether individuals with different cultural orientations such as individualism and collectivism differ in their disposition to empathize and their experience of empathy in specific situations has not been examined. Further, the relationship between dispositional empathy and empathic experience is not clear. The assumption that the higher dispositional empathy is, the more likely that empathic experience will occur has not been sufficiently tested.

Individuals, regardless of ethnicity, cultural heritage, or nationality, may vary in value structures and cultural orientations, which can be thought of as enduring organizations of beliefs concerning preferred modes of conduct (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). Many theorists believe that cultural value structures serve as prototypes from which attitudes and behaviors are manufactured (Homer & Kahle, 1988). According to Triandis (1995), individualism and collectivism are two value structures that may affect all individual behaviors and interpersonal relationships in all societies. As viewed by Hofstede (1980), individualism is the tendency to place one's own needs above the needs of one's in-group, and collectivism reflects a tendency to place the needs of one's in-group above one's own needs. It is important to note that besides cross-cultural or cross-national differences — i.e., some nations are more or less individualistic than collectivistic or than other nations (e.g., U.S. citizens are generally more individualistic than Chinese citizens; see Schwartz, 1992) that are well recognized, individuals in any given culture also possess both the individualistic and collectivistic tendencies in various degrees. In other words, individuals can be both individualistic and collectivistic and they differ from each other in the level of individualism and collectivism both within and across cultures (Triandis, 1995).

Empirical evidence supports that levels of individualism and collectivism affect individuals' social behaviors. For instance, Kitayama and Markus (1994) observed that individualists were more likely than collectivists to feel "ego-focused" emotions, such as anger, frustration, and pride, which used the individual's internal attributes as the primary referent. Collectivists, on the other hand, were more likely than individualists to experience "other-focused" emotions such as sympathy, shame, and feelings of interpersonal communion, which used another person as the primary referent. Ross (1977) discovered the so-called Fundamental Attribution Error (i.e., the observer's tendency to attribute the actor's

behavior to internal causes or dispositions) was more common in America, where individualism was more prevalent than collectivism, than in India, where collectivism was more salient than individualism. Moreover, self-serving bias was also found to be more common among Americans than among Japanese, who were more collectivistic than individualistic (Kashima & Triandis, 1986). Triandis, Leung, Villareal, and Clack (1985) also found that American students who had a strong collectivistic orientation scored lower on alienation, anomie, and loneliness than those with a strong individualistic orientation.

It appears reasonable to expect that individuals' individualism-collectivism orientations relate to both empathy dispositions and empathic experiences. As a disposition, empathy contains an "other-focused" orientation that would allow the individual to stay prepared to notice and experience other people's experiences. This orientation is compatible with the "concern" for others (Hui & Triandis, 1986) in collectivism. Being willing to place the needs of others above one's own may facilitate an individual's readiness to empathize. Individualism, on the other hand, does not appear compatible with empathy because of its "ego-focused" (Kitayama & Markus, 1994) orientation. The tendency to place one's own needs above those of others is inconsistent with the willingness and readiness to see and feel others' experiences. Thus in comparison, collectivism is more likely to be a correlate of empathy dispositions than individualism.

As a situation-specific experience, empathy involves observing another person's experience, positive or negative, and experiencing what the other person experiences, either in a cognitive or an affective mode. This process can be affected by how the observer views the situation (e.g., Hoffman, 1990) and, possibly, how consistent the situation is with the observer's cultural orientation. For instance, a strong collectivist may be more likely to empathize with someone who sacrifices his/her

own interest for the interest of his/her group than a strong individualist, who would be more likely to empathize with someone who asserts his/her own rights at the price of the in-group's interest than a strong collectivist. Moreover, research also supports that empathic experiences may be related to individuals' empathy disposition (Archer, Diaz-Loving, Gollwitzer, Davis, & Foushee, 1981), introspection (Goldberg, 1983), motivation (Macrae & Milne, 1992), propositional knowledge (Straver, 2007) and situational appraisals (Lazarus, 1991). It seems that individualism-collectivism may influence empathic experiences through any of these processes.

This study explored the following research questions: (a) Are individualism and collectivism related to empathic dispositions, in the forms of dispositional empathic emotion and dispositional intellectual empathy? (b) How do individualism and collectivism predict situation-specific empathic experiences (intellectual empathy and empathic emotion) toward a person presented in a cultural context? (c) How are dispositional intellectual empathy and empathic emotion related to experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion? We hoped to gather evidence to support the argument that individualism and collectivism have a role in both empathy dispositions and empathic experiences.

In addition, we also experimented with new ways of measuring experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion. In their review, Duan and Hill (1996) noted that empathy research had struggled with overcoming various assessment flaws and biases and/or the influences of social desirability. They recommended that situation-specific empathic experiences be assessed specifically as they were defined. In this study, we used this theory-driven approach and estimated experienced intellectual empathy as the degree to which the observer took the perspective of a target person. The attribution research in social psychology has consistently demonstrated that such attributional biases reflect the

degree to which the observer takes the actor's perspective (Jones & Nisbett, 1972). Moreover, past attempts to use this method have presented evidence for its validity (e.g., Duan, 2000; Duan & Kivlighan, 2002; Rose, 2000). For instance, Duan and Kivlighan (2002) showed that a counselor's intellectual empathy measured by this method predicted the client's evaluation of counseling session outcome.

To assess experienced empathic emotion, which is defined as the degree to which the observer felt the target person's emotions, we also followed Duan and Hill's (1996) recommendation and used the congruence between the observer's emotions and their perception of the target's emotions to estimate empathic emotion. Theoretically, this congruence reflects the observer's experience of vicarious emotions as a result of observing another person's situation, which is how experienced empathic emotion is defined in this study. Supportive evidence for this method of assessment includes the demonstration that a counselor's experienced empathic emotion predicted the client's evaluation of counseling session outcome (Duan & Kivlighan, 2002).

Method

Research Design

This study contained a survey and a laboratory session. The survey was administered to assess participants' individualism and collectivism and empathic dispositions. Four weeks after the survey, the laboratory session was conducted. Participants were presented with a "therapy session transcript" in which a "client" expressed a sense of worthlessness as a result of how she was treated by her family. Participants' experienced empathic emotion was assessed by asking them to report their own emotions and their perceptions of the client's emotions after reading the transcript. Their experienced intellectual empathy was assessed by asking them to make attributions for the client's difficulty.

Participants

A total of 121 students (31 males, 90 females) between 19 to 26 years old from introductory psychology classes at a large mid-western state university in the U.S. participated in the survey. Among them, there were 117 Caucasians (96.7%), 2 African Americans (1.7%), 1 Latino American (0.8%), and 1 Asian American (0.8%). Four weeks later, 74 participants of the survey (17 males, 57 females; 72 Caucasians, 1 African American, 1 Latino American) returned for the laboratory session of the study. The main reason that the other 47 participants did not return for the laboratory session was related to various scheduling and communication difficulties.

Survey Instruments

The Value Survey (Schwartz, 1992) was used to measure individualism and collectivism. The scale contains 56 value adjectives with brief definitions. An example item is “Equality (equal opportunity for all).” Respondents were asked to rate each item “as a guiding principle in my life” on a 9-point scale (7 = supreme importance, 6 = very important, 5 & 4 unlabeled, 3 = important, 2 & 1 unlabeled, 0 = not important, -1 = opposed to my values). The 56 items load onto 10 subscales (tradition, conformity, benevolence, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, and universalism). Individualism was assessed by summing the total scores for power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction, and collectivism by those for tradition, conformity, and universalism. Benevolence and security represent mixed interests and were not included in either individualism or collectivism. The possible score range for individualism was -21 to 147 and that for collectivism is -19 to 133. The higher score refers to higher level of individualism or collectivism.

Schwartz (1992) reported satisfactory internal consistency of the

scale (with Cronbach alphas ranging from .59 to .79 in multi-national studies). The construct validity of the scale was demonstrated by the finding that people from collectivistic societies (e.g., People's Republic of China) scored higher on collectivism items than on individualism items, and that people from individualistic societies (e.g., the U.S.) scored higher on individualism items than on collectivism items (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). Moreover, the scale also proved to measure a universal value structure across multiple nations as the value structure theory predicts (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987).

Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) (Davis, 1979) was used to measure empathic disposition. The IRI consists of 28 statements comprising 4 subscales: (a) perspective taking (PT), defined as the tendency to adopt psychological point of view of others; (b) empathic concern (EC), defined as the ability to experience "other-oriented" feelings of sympathy or concern for others; (c) fantasy (FS), assessing the tendency to transpose oneself into the experience of fictitious characters; and (d) personal distress (PD), referring to "self-oriented" feelings of anxiety. For the purposes of this study, only PT (to assess dispositional intellectual empathy) and EC (to measure dispositional empathic emotion) subscales were used. An example item for PT is "I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision," and one for EC is "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me."

Participants rated each of the 28 statements on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "0" (does not describe me well) to "4" (describes me very well). The four subscale scores are obtained by summing the scores for each of the items that are associated with the subscale. The possible range of each subscale score is 0 to 28, with higher scores indicating higher empathic disposition.

Davis (1980) reported satisfactory psychometric properties for the IRI. The internal reliability of the subscales ranged from .71 to .77, and test-retest reliability from .62 to .71. The convergent and discriminant validity were also established by showing that the four subscales displayed “a distinctive and predictable pattern of relationships” (Davis, 1983, p. 113) with measures of social functioning, self-esteem, emotionality, and sensitivity to others. Over the years, the IRI has been used widely in empathy research (e.g., Geller & Johnston, 1995; Trobst, Collins, & Embree, 1994).

Stimulus Material

In the laboratory session of the study, participants read a portion of a counseling session transcript. The transcript was edited to present a counseling client who was struggling with some family conflicts. The client was described as a Caucasian female and a 21-year-old college student. In conversing with the therapist, the client expressed feelings of worthlessness as a result of being “verbally abused” by her siblings and unprotected by her parents in her childhood. She was emotional, crying in the session. Her anger toward her family was apparent but she indicated having difficulty expressing it.

In order to select the emotions that the “client” felt for our empathic emotion measure, we pre-tested the transcript by asking 20 graduate students of counselor education to read it and describe how they perceived the client was feeling. Six emotions were identified by 40% or more of these students: sadness, anger, hurt, worthlessness, inadequacy, and isolation.

Impression Questionnaire

An impression questionnaire was developed to gather information on participants’ perceptions, impressions, and attributions about the client

after they read the session transcript. Participants were first asked to indicate the degree to which they felt a series of emotions. The emotion list contained 20 emotions, including the six “client” emotions that had been identified. Participants’ responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “not at all” (1) to “extremely” (7). On the second page of the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they thought the client felt each of the 20 emotions on the same Likert scale.

Finally, the questionnaire assessed participants’ impression of the client via a set of questions including two pairs of attribution questions. One pair asked “To what extent do you think the client’s difficulties were due to her personal characteristics (or the circumstances surrounding the situation)?” and the other “To what extent do you think the client’s sense of worthlessness was due to her internal causes (or external causes)?”. Participants’ responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “not at all” (1) to “extremely” (7). The index of intellectual empathy was calculated by subtracting internal attribution score from external attribution score. This method was derived from the attribution theory stating that people have general tendency to make internal attribution for others’ behaviors (Jones & Nisbett, 1972). Logically, the degree to which one over-attributes another person’s behavior to external reasons reflects “perspective taking.” In fact, the validity of this method was supported by Duan (2000), Duan and Kivlighan (2002), and Rose (2000).

Procedure

The survey was conducted by administering the Value Survey and IRI, along with a brief demographic sheet, in classrooms before or after regular lectures. A research assistant told the potential participants that they were invited to participate in a study of two parts on “how our values and attitudes are related to how we form impressions of others and how we interpret other people’s situations.” Participants were also

informed that the survey they were to complete was the first part of the study. All participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study as well as the expectation that they would be called to come back for the second part of the study should they decide to participate.

Four weeks after the survey, all participants were called to come back for the second part — the laboratory session. About 61% of them returned; the most common reason for those who did not come back was scheduling difficulties.

The participants of the laboratory session were divided into groups of 8 to 12. They were informed that we were interested in studying how individuals' impression of someone could be affected by the type of information (an overall summary vs. specific details) they learned about the person as well as their own values and attitudes. They were told that they happened to be assigned to the “specific details” condition. After they signed the informed consent document, they were presented with a segment of a counseling session transcript to read, followed by the Impression Questionnaire. All participants were fully debriefed before being dismissed.

Results

Analyses of the Survey Data (N = 121)

The descriptive analysis of the survey data showed that the survey sample's individualism ($M = 101.81$, $SD = 17.07$) and collectivism ($M = 100.95$, $SD = 15.95$) orientations were roughly equal in strength with both being closer to the high end of the continuum than to the low end. Dispositional empathic emotion ($M = 22.24$, $SD = 1.77$) and dispositional intellectual empathy ($M = 23.23$, $SD = 2.65$) scores were also close to each other in strength and closer to the high end of the scale than to the low end.

The correlations between the two cultural orientations (individualism and collectivism) and empathic dispositions for the survey sample are presented in Table 1, which shows that collectivism positively correlates with both dispositional intellectual empathy and dispositional empathic emotion. Stronger collectivistic orientation is associated with higher empathic dispositions. Individualism does not correlate with either of the empathic dispositions.

Table 1. Correlations Among Individualism, Collectivism, and Empathic Dispositions

Variables	Collectivism	Individualism	Dispositional intellectual empathy
Individualism	.46***		
Dispositional intellectual empathy	.29***	.18	
Dispositional empathic emotion	.21*	-.06	.38***

Note: $N = 121$, * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

To further examine whether individualism and collectivism predicted empathic dispositions, simultaneous multiple regression analyses were performed predicting dispositional intellectual empathy and dispositional empathic emotion. The results (see Table 2) showed that collectivism was a significant predictor for both dispositional intellectual empathy, $F(2, 119) = 5.44, p < .005$, and dispositional empathic emotion, $F(2, 119) = 4.81, p < .005$. Individualism emerged as a significant predictor for dispositional empathic emotion only, $F(2, 119) = 4.79, p < .05$.

Analyses with the Laboratory Session Data (N = 74)

Experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion indexes were first calculated. Experienced intellectual empathy was calculated by subtracting the degree to which participants attributed the client’s

**Table 2. Results of Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis:
Predicting Empathic Dispositions**

Predictors	B	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Predicting dispositional intellectual empathy (<i>N</i> = 121)					
Collectivism	4.2	.26	2.62	.010	
					.09
Predicting dispositional empathic emotion (<i>N</i> = 121)					
Individualism	-2.5	-.20	-2.02	.046	
Collectivism	4.1	.30	3.01	.003	
					.08

difficulties and feeling of worthlessness to her personal characteristics and internal causes from that to the situational and external causes. The index scores ranged from -9 to 10 ($M = 1.09$, $SD = 3.94$). Theoretically, attributing the client's situation equally to internal and external reasons would be at a mid-point on the "self-serving" ("client-serving" in this case) and "other-serving" continuum. Attributions that placed more emphasis on the "client-serving" end of the continuum would indicate the client's perspective being taken (Houston, 1990; Jones & Nisbett, 1972). Because the index was calculated by subtracting internal attribution for a negative situation (self-blaming) from external attribution (other-blaming), higher scores indicated higher levels of intellectual empathy.

To obtain a measure of experienced empathic emotion toward the "client," a congruence score between participants' emotion scores they assigned to themselves and those assigned to the client on the six identified emotions (sadness, anger, hurt, worthlessness, inadequacy, and isolation) was calculated. This congruence score estimates the degree to which the participant felt the "client's" emotions vicariously. We adopted the recommendation by Nunnally (1978) and used the distance between the participant and the perceived "client" emotion profiles to estimate profile similarity. In this case, the distance was the square root

of the summed squared differences between the participant's and the perceived "client's" scores on each of the six emotions multiplied by -1 . The scores ranged from -2.45 to -14.32 ($M = -9.83$, $SD = 2.51$).

The results of a correlational analysis showed that experienced intellectual empathy was correlated with dispositional intellectual empathy ($r = .23$, $p < .05$) and that experienced empathic emotion was related to dispositional empathic emotion ($r = .27$, $p < .05$). The analysis failed to reveal any significant correlation between experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion.

To examine the degree to which individualism and collectivism and empathy dispositions predicted participants' empathic experiences, simultaneous multiple regression analyses were performed. The results showed that dispositional intellectual empathy and individualism predicted experienced intellectual empathy, $F(2, 72) = 4.38$, $p < .05$, and that dispositional empathic emotion and collectivism predicted empathic emotion, $F(2, 72) = 5.26$, $p < .01$ (see Table 3).

Table 3. Results of Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis: Predicting Empathic Experiences

Predictors	B	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Predicting experienced intellectual empathy (<i>N</i> = 74)					
Dispositional intellectual empathy	-.13	-.26	-2.1	.04	
Individualism	.21	.32	2.02	.03	
					.12
Predicting experienced empathic emotion (<i>N</i> = 74)					
Dispositional empathic emotion	-.23	-.31	-2.5	.02	
Collectivism	-.19	.26	2.01	.04	
					.15

Discussion

The findings of the study provided evidence for the relationship between individualism-collectivism orientation and empathy dispositions, between individualism-collectivism orientation and empathic experiences, and between empathy dispositions and empathic experiences. The finding that collectivism was positively correlated with both dispositional intellectual empathy and dispositional empathic emotion but individualism was related to neither one supported the argument that empathic dispositions are more consistent with collectivistic values than with individualistic values. Perhaps a collectivistic value orientation prepares the individual to empathize with others both intellectually and emotionally by directing the individual to the needs and interests of others, which is an integral and essential part of any empathy process. On the other hand, individualism, with its self- or ego-focus, may compete with the individual's readiness for empathy by orienting his/her attention away from what others may feel or think. As many cultural value theorists believe (e.g., Homer & Kahle, 1988; Triandis, 1995), our findings support that individualism and collectivism have a significant role in individuals' attitudes and behavior tendencies, such as their empathy dispositions. Being dispositionally empathic is consistent with being collectivistic because the "other-focus" is shared by both of these processes, whereas being empathic is inconsistent with being individualistic because the latter process contradicts the former by prioritizing individual interests above those of others.

It is interesting that individualism predicted experienced intellectual empathy and that collectivism predicted experienced empathic emotion. This finding has to be understood in the context of the cultural characteristics of the therapy session transcript that was presented to the participants. The client in the session apparently was struggling with an issue that was more individualistic than collectivistic in nature. She felt

victimized by her siblings' verbal abuse and parents' lack of protection, and indicated anger toward her family. Such subjective experience is not as likely in the context of collectivism as in that of individualism. Facing this value-laden situation, the observers' individualistic cultural orientation could facilitate their understanding of the client's individualistic perspective. Perhaps taking someone's perspective is likely to occur when the observer faces a situation that fits his/her values. "I would feel the same way in that situation" could lead to appreciation and understanding of the client's experience. However, this consistency in individualistic values did not lead to increased empathic emotion. It is possible that understanding someone's emotions and feeling the emotions do not always occur simultaneously, particularly when those emotions are negative. Understanding a negative emotion is perhaps easier, less involving, and less expensive than feeling it (Duan, 2000). Feeling someone else's negative emotion can ruin one's own mood, which contradicts the self-protection need of individualism. It has been supported by research that individuals seek to maintain their good mood, if possible (Isen, 1984).

The collectivistic orientation, on the other hand, predicted empathic emotion, although it did not facilitate perspective taking. It is possible that the inconsistency between the other-focus of collectivism and the individualistic value orientation illustrated in the client's presentation prevented the observer from seeing the world "as if one were the other person" (Rogers, 1959, p. 210) or "assuming the internal frame of another" (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). However, the other-focus of collectivism can help the observer to simply see that the other is in pain and to feel the vicarious pain. This finding also seems to indicate that under certain circumstances, observers do not necessarily need to understand an actor's perspective or reason for feeling pain in order to feel the vicarious pain or other emotions that imply pain. This speculation may explain the finding that experienced intellectual empathy and experienced empathic

emotions were not correlated. Perhaps there are universal expectations about what pain feels like and one may feel another's pain when focusing on the other person's interest or welfare even without fully understanding or agreeing with this other person's reasons.

The results that dispositional intellectual empathy predicted experienced intellectual empathy and dispositional empathic emotion predicted experienced empathic emotion illustrated another source of individual differences. Those who had strong dispositional intellectual empathy were likely to take the perspective of another, and those who had strong dispositional empathic emotion tended to feel the emotions of another. Although it is not a new finding that individuals with stronger empathy dispositions tend to be more empathic in general (e.g., Davis, 1983) than those with weaker empathy dispositions, the domain-specific nature of this relationship is interesting. Dispositional intellectual empathy was only related to experienced intellectual empathy, whereas dispositional empathic emotion was only related to experienced empathic emotion. Interestingly, there was no correlation between experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion. It is likely that individuals can separate their intellectual and emotional processes when empathizing with others. This result supports past observations that experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion are "two modes of empathy" (Smither, 1977, p. 254) and can be independent from each other (Duan, 2000; Gladstein, 1983).

The measures of experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion used in this study showed promise. Both of these measures theoretically reflected the definitions of the constructs and empirically varied in relation to the differences in individualism-collectivism orientations and empathic dispositions as we expected. Moreover, using these measures, we were able to keep the purpose of the assessment from the participants, which were perceived as desirable for empathy

measures (Duan & Hill, 1996). Participants' lack of knowledge about the purpose of the measures can help reduce the effect of social desirability and that of self-perception errors.

Cross-cultural Implications of the Study

The result of this study demonstrates that individualism and collectivism are correlates of individuals' empathy dispositions and their experienced empathy toward others in the U.S. It suggests that differences in cultural values may be one explanation for individual differences in empathy among Caucasian Americans. Most likely, such correlated relationship between individualism-collectivism cultural orientation and empathy disposition and experience is both a within- and cross-racial, ethnic, cultural, and national group phenomenon. It seems that accurate understanding of individuals, Asian or Westerners, should go beyond the stereotypical belief that Asians are collectivistic and Westerners individualistic. Individual differences in individualism and collectivism exist in all cultures, and should not be overlooked in studying any individuals or groups in any cultures, including understanding people from collectivistic Asian cultures.

In counseling training and practice, both client and counselor empathy has an important role. As this study suggests, the knowledge of individuals' individualism and collectivism cultural orientations may help the understanding of their empathy dispositions and empathy experiences. In some ways, considering this culture-empathy connection is of particular importance in today's Asian cultures, as more and more Western cultural ideology and practices have made their into the Asian societies. The deviation from traditional Asian collectivism and magnetism toward individualism are both expected as a result. Therefore, training counselors to stay attuned to his/her own as well as the client's cultural orientation may help improve counselor's ability to empathize with their clients accurately. It is clearer than ever that considering the role of cultural

orientations in counseling should be an integral part of any counseling training and practice.

Limitations

Caution should be exercised in interpreting the results of this study due to the following limitations. First, the participants were all college students who needed the research credit they earned by their participation to pass an introductory psychology course. The possibility cannot be ruled out that some of the participants did not express themselves accurately in filling out the survey. Second, only 61% of the survey participants participated in the laboratory session of the study. Although “scheduling difficulties” were listed as the major reason, we do not know if, and what, other biases contributed to this decision. Further, the data were collected on a mid-western campus in the U.S., where the majority of undergraduate students were Caucasians and from surrounding areas. The variation in their individualism-collectivism orientations was relatively small (i.e., the score range for individualism was 66 to 102 out of the possible range of –21 to 147 and that for collectivism was 61 to 103 out of the possible range of –19 to 133). Finally, it should be noted that the sample size was relatively small and the result can only be interpreted in the context of an explorative study. It is strongly indicated that future empathy research may benefit from examining the role of cultural orientations in samples that have a wider range of variation or are drawn from multiple cultural groups including those with generally more collectivistic values.

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個人主義和群體主義價值觀在共情共感中的作用：
一項探索性研究

本研究探討美國大學生對個人主義價值觀、群體主義價值觀、共情共感傾向和共情共感體驗的關係。121 位參與者首先接受了個人主義／群體主義價值觀及共情共感傾向的測量。四週後，當中的 74 位參與者參加了第二輪研究，閱讀了一段心理輔導紀錄，然後評估他們對紀錄中的案主的共情共感體會。結果表明，群體主義價值觀與共情共感傾向呈正相關。群體主義價值觀可以預測共情體驗，而個人主義價值觀可以預測共感體驗。此外，共情傾向和共感傾向可分別預測共情體驗和共感體驗。本文還討論了研究結果在跨文化心理輔導中的應用。