CAN YOU HELP ME?

AMERICAN RATINGS OF JAPANESE AND AMERICAN

SOCIAL SUPPORT SITUATIONS

by

Sandra Frentrup

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with Distinction.

Spring 2010

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Sandra Frentrup

Approved:_____
        Beth Morling, Ph.D.
        Professor in charge of the thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved:_____
        Lawrence Cohen, Ph.D.
        Committee member from the Department of Psychology

Approved:_____
        Nancy Jordan, Ph.D.
        Committee member from the Board of Senior Thesis Readers

Approved:_____
        Ismat Shah, Ph.D.
        Chair of the University Committee on Student and Faculty Honors

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Beth Morling for her support and guidance in completing my thesis research. I would also like to thank the Undergraduate Research Program at the University of Delaware for providing funding for this research project.

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ABSTRACT

Previous research on social support has found that Asians seek support less than European Americans. The present research investigates the extent to which cultural differences in social support are encoded in the culture-specific situations and in the people within a culture. We used the method of situation sampling. Social support situations of college students from both the US and Japan were presented to 133 US college students. Each situation was followed by a 6-question rating scale questionnaire. It was hypothesized that US situations would have higher ratings of personal choice than Japanese situations overall while Japanese situations would have higher ratings of obligation than US situations overall. Ratings of obligation and personal choice would be more similar for Japanese situations than for US situations. The findings were consistent with the hypotheses, with the exception of requested, emotional support in Japan, in which personal choice was high and obligation relatively low. In the future, this study will be repeated with Japanese college students.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

"Psyche and culture, person and context …require each other, and dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up" (Shweder, 1990, p.1). According to cultural psychology, people must be studied considering the immediate context in which they live, because the context can affect the way an individual perceives the world. That context-influenced individual consequently influences his or her context. Social support has been the subject of much research, but cultural differences in social support have not been extensively studied. "It seems likely that people from all cultures are benefited by social support but that there may be cultural differences in how people seek and receive social support from their social networks" (Kim, Sherman, & Taylor, 2008, p. 522). The present study will apply the perspective of cultural psychology to examine the differences in social support in both the people and cultures of the US and Japan.

In the present study I will be investigating differences in social support situations from the US and Japan. To begin to answer the question if social support from these two cultures is experienced differently, American college students were presented with social support situations of college students from both cultures and rated them on six dimensions: stress, burden, obligation, personal choice, opportunity to repay, and competence.

Concepts of the Self

Social support is common throughout much of the world. However, the ways in which it is given and received may vary widely by culture. At least some of this difference may lie in the context of the self, either independent or interdependent. Contexts in the

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Western world can be classified as independent, while many Asian nations, among others, are identified as interdependent. As described by Markus and Kitayama (1991) those with independent selves are autonomous individuals who act in response to their own personal feelings and thoughts. How an independent person responds in social situations is seen as a reflection of their internal attributes rather than of other people or the situation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 226). In an independent context, personal choice is emphasized. In contrast, those with interdependent selves are closely intertwined with others in social relationships. Their actions are often guided by what they perceive others' thoughts and feelings to be. People with interdependent selves are motivated to be involved in interpersonal relationships in which they both create and fulfill obligations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 227). In this context, obligation is emphasized.

In order to maintain their relationships, people with interdependent selves must be more "aware of others and focusing on their needs, desires, and goals" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 229). There is a belief that in aiding others' goal fulfillment, one's own goals will also be achieved. Because reciprocity is such an integral part of an interdependent person's relationships, the number of people who fall within one's "in-group" may be much smaller than the number of people considered as close friends for people with independent selves (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 229). Because of this small, cohesive in-group present in interdependent contexts, there may also be greater opportunity to repay social support. Because people with interdependent selves are involved in relationships with a greater emphasis on reciprocity, providing social support, regardless of whether it is asked for, may be motivated by feelings of obligation not found among the recipients of social support with independent selves.

Obligation and Personal Choice in Social Support Provision

Cultural differences in friendship may also help to explain cultural differences in social support. Adams and Plaut (2003) studied friendship in the United States

(independent culture) and Ghana (interdependent culture) and found that these cultures have markedly different views of friendship. While a large friend network in the US is valued for the greater support it provides, for Ghanaians, a large friend network also creates more obligations to provide support. In general, those in interdependent cultures tend to maintain smaller, closer friend groups than those in independent cultures. As a result, people in interdependent cultures may be more responsive to their friends' needs, but this responsiveness may be driven by obligation, not personal choice.

In addition to Adams and Plaut's findings of cultural differences in social support, there is other evidence for how cultural context might play a role in the obligation and personal choice of support provision. Miller et al. (1990) examined the moral judgments of Indian and American participants about situations where a person failed to provide support. The scenarios varied by the relationship of the person who did not provide support to the person in need and by the severity of the need. In general, the Indians perceived the minor and moderate need situations as needier than the Americans did. This may reflect a cultural propensity to provide aid without being asked, which may suggest that Indians (and people in interdependent cultures in general) may be more hesitant to seek support as it is more readily provided out of obligation. In minor need situations or distant relationship situations, the Indians viewed providing support as a personal obligation more than Americans, further supporting the notion that people in interdependent cultures are more responsive to others' needs out of obligation. Overall, Indians felt a moral obligation when a need was unmet, regardless of the severity of the need or the relationship with the person in need. By contrast, Americans considered need and role in determining their moral obligations, indicating a greater degree of personal choice in providing support (Miller et al., 1990, p. 43).

Consistent with the findings of Adams and Plaut (2003), friendship and group membership in interdependent cultures carries obligations, while friendships in independent cultures allow for more personal choice. Because Indians (and people in interdependent

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cultures) are members of a group, they are obligated to that group and respond to its needs. However, Americans (and people in independent cultures) view themselves as autonomous, with their focus on the individual rather than the group, and meeting others' needs is seen as a matter of personal choice.

In support provision, the relationship between the provider and recipient matters, such that individuals in interdependent contexts generally consider their relationship to another when determining support provision while individuals in independent contexts do not. Not only does the relationship between two individuals affect support provision, it also impacts support seeking. In a number of studies it was found that European Americans are willing to seek support regardless of their relationship to another individual. By contrast, Asians and Asian Americans are concerned with relational consequences in support seeking (Kim et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2008; Taylor et al., 2004).

In a series of studies in 2006, Kim, Sherman, Ko, and Taylor investigated cultural differences in social support seeking as related to personal relationships. In the first study, participants were asked to describe a personal health issue in the past year and answer questions about their coping. The results indicated that Asian Americans seek social support less than European Americans and find the support less effective when it is sought. In another study by Kim et al. (2006), participants were primed with either self goals, in group goals, out group goals, or no goals and their willingness to seek social support as well as their expectation of support seeking outcomes were examined. European American support seeking was unaffected by the relational prime, while Asian Americans were less willing to seek social support when primed with in group goals. Asian Americans also thought the support would be less effective when primed with in group goals. These findings of relational concern regarding Asian American support seeking were replicated in a third study.

Individuals in independent cultures can "ask for social support with little caution because they share the cultural assumption that individuals should proactively

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pursue their well-being and that others should have the freedom to choose to help according to their own volition" (Kim, Sherman, & Taylor, 2008, p. 519). It is expected then that in the present study US situations will be rated as having much more personal choice in support provision than obligation, and more choice than Japanese situations overall. In contrast, individuals from interdependent cultures tend to be "more cautious about bringing personal problems to the attention of others for the purpose of enlisting their help because they share the cultural assumption that individuals should not burden their social networks and that others share the same sense of social obligation" (Kim et al., 2008, p. 519). We expect that support will be rated as provided out of obligation more in Japanese situations than in US situations, but will not necessarily exceed personal choice within Japanese situations.

Cohen and Wills (1985) found in their literature review that being involved in a social network is important to general well being but does not serve specific support functions (p. 327), while more intimate or enduring relationships buffer stressful events (p. 321). Cohen and Wills' findings may not be supported when considering social support in an interdependent context. The "social network" that, in an independent context is good only for general well being, in an interdependent context may be more intimate and enduring and could serve to buffer stressful events in one's life. Indeed, in a study by Kim et al. (2006), Asian Americans reported that social support would be less effective. However, having a "more intimate and enduring" social network could also increase support provision obligation and likewise decrease one's personal choice in providing support.

Support Requests and Visibility in North American Samples

Just as support provision can be motivated by different factors, support receipt can result in different outcomes. Awareness of support receipt can have negative effects. Bolger et al. offered a number of possible explanations why this is the case. One suggestion

is that receiving support makes "recipients aware that their distress and incompetence are publicly visible" resulting in a negative evaluation by others (Bolger et al., 2000, p. 959). While receiving support may challenge one's feelings of competence in American support situations, I would expect that receiving support may actually produce higher ratings of competence in Japanese situations as it may signify connectedness with one's in-group.

Bolger et al. (2000) conducted a daily dairy study where they collected information from couples in which one was finishing law school and preparing for the bar examination. Bolger et al. found that invisible support is most effective, that is, when support has been provided but the recipient does not report receiving any support. Shrout et al. (2006) identified a number of potential costs to support receipt, which include challenging the recipient's sense of competence and autonomy, drawing attention to the problem, and making the recipient feel indebted to the provider (Shrout et al., 2006, p. 116).

In a series of studies, Bolger and Amarel (2007) investigated the effects of receiving subtle visible support for North American samples, such that the recipient is aware of it happening but does not register it as support. They found that stress was "significantly greater for visible than invisible support" (Bolger & Amarel, 2007, p. 464). However, the participants also found visible support to be significantly more supportive than invisible support. Fisher et al. (1982) found that support is more helpful when it is offered rather than when it is requested because it does not require the individual in need to admit his or her inadequacies, thereby protecting the individual's feelings of competence. Because people in interdependent contexts, such as the Japanese, have a supportive in-group surrounding them, having to actively seek support from these people may have especially negative effects because they are unaccustomed to having to do so. Therefore, it is expected that requested support situations will be rated as affording higher feelings of stress than situations in which the support is not requested, especially those from Japan.

In North American samples, receiving support can cause increased negative mood because it focuses on the problem, diminishes the recipient's autonomy and creates feelings of indebtedness (Gleason et al., 2003, p. 1036). Negative mood may also deter a person from seeking support if he or she does not anticipate being able to repay the support (Fisher et al., 1982). These negative effects can be counteracted when the recipient is unaware of the support provision or they are able to reciprocate by giving support to the provider, which reestablishes some independence and feelings of competence (Gleason et al., 2003). Close relationships are beneficial in that they provide an opportunity for support reciprocation (Gleason et al., 2003). While Gleason et al. only researched American participants, it is reasonable to assume that one's "in-group" in an interdependent cultural context provides a similar opportunity for reciprocity.

In North American samples, awareness of receiving social support can lead a person to feel indebted to their supporter or they may feel as though they have over benefited (Bolger & Amarel, 2007). I expect ratings of burden to be especially high in situations in which the support is requested, regardless of culture, because it explicitly draws attention to one's need. The burden may be especially high in Japanese situations because of greater obligation between individuals in a relationship. Ratings of burden may be moderated by the opportunity to repay the support as this would allow the individual to compensate for over benefiting from the support.

Support

Although East Asians are less likely to ask for help than European Americans (Kim et al, 2006), evidence suggests that they may benefit from implicit support. Implicit support is "the emotional comfort one can obtain from social networks without disclosing or discussing one's problems vis-à-vis specific stressful events" (Taylor et al., 2007, p. 832). Explicit support is "the advice, instrumental aid, or emotional comfort one can recruit from social networks" (Taylor et al., 2007, p. 832). In their study, Taylor et al. (2007)

exposed Asians, Asian Americans, and European Americans to situations of explicit support, implicit support, and a control. They found that Asians and Asian Americans experienced more distress and had higher levels of cortisol in the explicit support condition than in either the implicit support or control conditions. Conversely, European Americans experienced less distress in explicit support conditions in comparison to implicit support and control conditions. In addition, European Americans had higher cortisol levels in the implicit support condition and it took longer for their cortisol level to return to baseline than in the explicit support and control conditions.

Even when individuals receive the same type of support, the meaning behind it may vary by culture. For instance, in a study by Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita, Reyes, and Morling (2008), it was found that Asians value emotional support because it reinforces the self as interdependent while European Americans value emotional support because it indicates worthiness and independence. Also, Asians particularly benefit from perceived support that is not requested because it indicates genuine concern for the individual by others. In contrast, European Americans view perceived support as indicative of social dependency and try to protect their independence by actively seeking support (Uchida et al., 2008). "Social support is probably most effective when it takes the form that is congruent with the relationship expectations prevalent in a given culture" (Kim et al., 2008, p. 525).

<u>**Summary**</u>

Much social support research has been conducted with American participants. The findings of these studies have generally indicated that Americans benefit most from invisible support. Although visible support is actually rated as more helpful, it is also more stressful. For Americans, being aware of support receipt produces feelings of indebtedness and incompetence, particularly if they do not anticipate being able to reciprocate.

Past studies that compared American and Asian social support have found marked cultural differences. Americans will seek support regardless of relationship, while

Asians and Asian Americans are much more hesitant to seek social support at all, because of the potential negative relational consequences. In fact, Asians benefit from perceived support that was not requested while Americans are negatively affected by perceived support that was not requested and may actively seek support to avoid these negative consequences (Uchida et al., 2008). Also, Asians benefit from implicit support while Americans benefit from explicit support (Taylor et al., 2007). The effects of social support are at least partially determined by how the support is delivered and in what context. The present study will further explore some of the cultural differences in social support.

Introduction to the Present Study

The method used in this study was situation sampling, a technique that involves two stages of data collection. In the first stage, social support situations were collected from college students at the University of Delaware in the US and Kyoto University in Japan. Then a random sample of these situations were presented to a new group of college students in the United States with a set of questions to examine the enduring psychological and cultural aspects of social support provided in each culture. These questions addressed levels of stress, feelings of obligation (of both the recipient and provider of support), personal choice of the provider, opportunity to reciprocate, and feelings of competency of the recipient. In this thesis I analyzed data only from the second stage of the process, and only from the US responses. A future study will collect and analyze data from Japanese responses.

By collecting situations pertaining to the topic of interest, in this case support, in both cultures and then presenting those to new participants also from both cultures, one is able to examine the extent to which any differences present are found in the culture or are found in the psyches of individuals in those cultures. For instance, if both American and Japanese participants rate American situations of support as containing more personal choice in support provision than Japanese situations, then it can be inferred that at least

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some of the previously discovered difference is present in the *situations*, and therefore the culture, themselves, not just in the *people* of that culture. Likewise, if Japanese respondents rate obligation higher in both US and Japanese situations than American respondents, then it can be inferred that at least some of the difference is present in the *psyche* of the people from that culture, that they detect more obligation in all support situations. However, we will not be able to look at such psyche differences until all data are collected.

Hypotheses

Participants rated the support situations on six scales: burden, opportunity to repay, competence, stress, obligation, and personal choice. We made the following predictions.

Japanese situations will be rated with more feelings of burden than US situations, particularly when the support is requested.

Japanese situations will be rated as affording more opportunity to repay the support than US situations.

US situations will receive higher ratings competence when the support received is requested, while Japanese situations will have higher ratings of competence when they report receiving support that is not requested.

US situations of support will receive higher ratings of stress than Japanese situations overall, especially when the support is not requested.

Ratings of obligation will be higher in both Japanese and US situations when the support is requested than when it is not requested. Ratings of personal choice will be higher in both Japanese and US situations when the support is not requested than when it is requested. US situations will have higher ratings of personal choice than Japanese situations overall, while Japanese situations will have higher ratings of obligation than US situations overall. Ratings of obligation and personal choice will be more similar for Japanese situations than for US situations.

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Chapter 2

METHOD

<u>Overview</u>

The method used in this study was situation sampling. Support situations were previously collected in the US and Japan. For the present study, these situations were rated by American participants. In the future this study will be repeated with Japanese participants.

<u>Situations</u>

In the first stage, Morling and Uchida (2009) asked 350 college students from the University of Delaware in the US and 335 college students from Kyoto University in Japan to describe situations in which they received social support. Participants then indicated for each situation whether the support was requested or not. Then undergraduate research assistants coded the situations for the type of support received. Each situation was coded for one or more of the three categories of support: emotional, instrumental, or informational. As defined by Cohen and Wills (1985), *emotional support* is knowing that one is loved and cared for. *Instrumental support* is receiving tangible goods or financial resources (Cohen & Wills, 1985). *Informational support* is receiving advice or guidance and "help in defining, understanding, and coping with problematic events" (Cohen & Wills, 1985, p. 313). Research assistants fluent in the language of the support situations coded the situations then the Japanese support situations were translated into English by an American graduate student fluent in Japanese.

The American and Japanese support situations were then sampled to create the questionnaire for this study. The support situations were selected randomly from the full set

of Japanese and US support situations. We selected up to five situations from each cell of a 2 (situation county) x 3 (support type) x 2 (support request) design. Situation country is either the US or Japan. Support type is emotional, informational, or instrumental. Support request was whether the support was asked for or not, as identified by the author of the situation. Refer to Table 1 for examples of each type of support. Ultimately, we sampled from the set of situations four times to avoid making the questionnaire too long, resulting in four sets of the questionnaire, each with a unique combination of support situations.

Although we attempted to sample five situations of each type for each set, there were not enough Japanese "emotional support" situations to do so (there were only ten total of this kind of situation). In this case, we used all ten situations, distributing them evenly over the four sets (see Table 2). In addition, the full sample of US informational support situations were used because there were only 19 of these total. In sum, there were approximately 10 situations of each type of support from each country on each set. Five of these were "asked for" support and five were "not asked for" support.

After creating the four sets (with about 60 situations on each), we created a reverse ordered set to control for any order effects, resulting in eight sets total.

Table 1. Examples of Different Types of Social Support from the United States and Japan

	Japan		United States	
	Asked	Not Asked	Asked	Not Asked
Emotional	When I said I wanted to eat Korean food out, my friend went with me even though they had another small commitment. Even after that we went out (which was selfish on my part) and it was a blast.	I wrote a journal entry on my Facebook (one where I wasn't feeling well, and was depressed, though I didn't outright express it in the entry), and many of my friends commented by saying "Come over to my house again!"	Last week, I was feeling especially stressed out with my classes and completely homesick....Two days before the weekend, my dad said that he would come down to visit...He took the time out of his busy schedule to come visit me and to see my singing group perform...he said he wanted to...be there for me....	The cat I have had for 11 years and had grown to be close with died. My girlfriend supported me by talking me through it every day until it was better. I initially felt terrible, but after talking I felt much better.
	I was so busy once I became exhausted, and when it got to the point where I didn't know what I should do, I called my parents and talked on and on about my problems. I calmed down and was able to turn my feelings around. Firmly listening to what I had to say as well as talking about my good points cleared up my anxiety and made me feel at ease.	My friend who realized I was feeling down took the time to talk to me and give me some advice. She said "Let's forget our troubles" and spent several hours hanging out with me in the shopping district of the city. In the end I felt so much better. Even though I never said anything about feeling down, the fact that my friend is kind enough to realize it made me so happy.	I was unsure of which major to pick, so I asked my dad for help...He encouraged me and allowed me to choose whichever major I wanted. It made me feel more confident to decide, knowing I had his support.	When I was sick last week, my girlfriend came to see me from her school in the city...She...stood by my side and gave me support because being sick away from home is not easy and she understood that. She did not pressure me to go out and do anything. She just remained at my side. It made me feel very happy and loved, especially because I did not even ask for the support.

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Table 1 continued

	Japan		United States	
	Asked	Not Asked	Asked	Not Asked
Instrumental	One time, when going to hang out with our friends, my friend kindly let me ride on the back of her bike when I asked her, since I don't have a bike.	I was trying to get my bicycle from the rack. The bike next to mine was…caught on mine, and when it looked like I would not be able to move it at all, my friend who was with me helped me out. I have a very close relationship with this friend.	My mom helped me when I was at work. I worked really late and my mom woke up and came to get me from the mall because I didn't have my car. She had to wake up and come drive to me. I really appreciate her for being there whenever I need her.	I needed a ride home for the weekend and could not find one. My uncle called me up and said he would drive down, get some dinner with me, and drive back up. This was really out of his way and I really appreciated him using his resources for me.
	I was the manager of a mixer, but…I couldn't do the seating arrangements or the reservations. When I asked friend T…he graciously offered to make the reservations, take care of the seating arrangements, and do the planning.… I felt both sorry and hugely grateful for the help.	When I left my friend's house after being there very late, my friend took me home because he said it was dangerous for a girl to go home alone. I was so happy he did that for me.	I asked my friend to come with me on a double date…For the most part, my friend did not say anything bad, except when he almost told her about another girl that I was seeing. During the date, I was fairly relaxed but tensed up when my friend began talking about this other girl.	I got in a big argument with someone a few weeks ago. It was a stupid fight but we were yelling at each other. Without even asking my best friend stepped in and defended me. It made me really happy. She had my back no matter what and helped me win the argument.

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Table 1 continued

	Japan		United States	
	Asked	Not Asked	Asked	Not Asked
Informational	Since I didn't know the computer operations for my information technology class, I asked my friend who was sitting next to me. Upon doing so, my friend taught me the operating methods and I was able to solve the problem. I felt grateful for the help. Around me there were other students, a number of TAs and the teacher.	When I was looking at shoes in a shoe store, the clerk came up to me. I didn't particularly intend to buy anything; I was just looking, so it was such a waste. The clerk kept on pushing this and that on me. This also annoyed me.	I have recently been stuck deciding between majors and classes to take over the upcoming semester. My advisor has spoken with me countless times to give me advice and help me weigh out all the options. She has truly been a big help and I feel as if I may have made up my mind.	I [sent] a school transfer application out and my mom and dad have been particularly supportive of my choice. They've helped me decide where [to apply]... They just wanted me to be happy and sat down with me on several occasions to look over choices and think of what they could do to make my decision less difficult.
	...I had a chance reunion with a boy in the Law Department at the university who had gone to school with me. I asked him what books would be good for a student studying introductory law, and he ended up going with me to the bookstore. There, I got a lot of advice from him, and he chose some good books...	When I was conducting an experiment in the research lab, I was using a machine for the first time and didn't exactly know how to operate it. I tried various things until finally a grad student showed me how. I was thinking I would steadily have gotten it through trial and error, so his help was a bit appreciated but also a bit of a hindrance.	In a class where I get 2 possible rewrites to try for an A, I received a B on my paper. I approached my professor as to what I needed to do to get an A and he took 10 minutes after class to show me what I could do differently. I rewrote it and got an A...	My cousin gave me good advice about college and life during fall break. I did not ask for help, but it was useful. It was nice to know that he was looking out for me.

Table 2. Breakdown of Type of Support and Asked or Not Asked by Country on Each Form

| | | Japan | | | | United States | | | |
		Emotional	Instrumental	Informational	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational
Form A	Asked	$n = 3$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$
	Not asked	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 4$
Form B	Asked	$n = 3$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$
	Not asked	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$
Form C	Asked	$n = 2$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$
	Not asked	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$
Form D	Asked	$n = 2$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$
	Not Asked	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$	$n = 5$

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Participants

College students from the University of Delaware ($n = 140$, 67 males, 73 females, mostly European American) participated in this study for course credit. Participants were asked to answer six questions about each support situation. Three participants were eliminated from the study after completion because they finished too quickly for the task provided. Another three were eliminated after completion because they indicated that they were raised outside the United States. Another participant was eliminated after completion due to a consistent pattern of responses. After these exclusions $n = 133$ (65 males, 68 females).

In 2010-11, we will be translating the same questionnaires into Japanese and collecting data in Japan. For this thesis I will only be discussing results from the American sample.

Materials and Procedure

Each participant received a questionnaire with the approximately sixty social support situations followed by six questions. The questions addressed stress, burden on the support provider, obligation of and personal choice of the support provider, opportunity to reciprocate the support, and competence. Depending on the question, slightly different response scales were used. The first situation was followed by a long version of the questions that fully explained the rating scales. Every situation thereafter had a shortened version of the questions. Both versions of the six questions are in Appendix A.

The questions were developed collaboratively, to ensure that they were translatable into both Japanese and English. The question addressing competence has been used previously by Morling et al. (2002).

Chapter 3

RESULTS

Analytic Strategy

This was originally a 2 (situation country, within subjects) x 2 (support request, within subjects) x 3 (support type, within subjects) x 4 (set, between subjects) x 2 (order, between subjects) x 2 (gender, between subjects) design. Gender and order variables did not interact with the dependent variables so we collapsed across these variables, resulting in a 2 (situation country) x 2 (support request) x 3 (support type) x 4 (set) design. We analyzed each of the six dependent variable questions in separate analyses. One exception was obligation versus choice, which we analyzed together.

Burden Ratings

Main effects.

There was a main effect for situation country such that US situations ($M = 1.83$) were rated higher on degree of burden than Japanese situations ($M = 1.72$) (F (1, 129) = 12.75; $p = 0.001$). There was a main effect for support request (asked for or not) such that "asked for" support situations ($M = 1.92$) were rated higher on burden than "not asked for" support situations ($M = 1.62$) (F (1, 129) = 161.98; $p < 0.001$). There was a main effect for support type such that instrumental support created the highest feelings of burden ($M = 2.05$), followed by emotional ($M = 1.68$) and then informational ($M = 1.59$) support types (F (2, 128) = 117.33; $p < 0.001$).

Two-way interactions.

These main effects were qualified by two, two-way interactions. There was an interaction between situation country and support request ($F (1, 129) = 7.59$; $p < 0.01$). "Asked for" support situations were rated higher on burden than "not asked for" support situations from both countries, but the difference was especially large in the US situations. There was also an interaction between situation country and support type ($F (2, 128) = 9.02$; $p < 0.001$) such that informational support carried more feelings of burden in the US than in Japan.

Three-way interaction.

These main effects and two-way interactions were further qualified by a three-way interaction between situation country, support request, and support type ($F (2, 128) = 4.49$; $p < 0.05$). Table 3 shows the means. For instrumental and informational support in both the US and Japanese situations, the difference in burden between "asked for" support and "not asked for" support is of about the same magnitude. However, for emotional support, "asked for" support situations were rated much higher on burden than "not asked for" support situations from the US, but only slightly higher in the Japanese situations.

We could speculate that providing emotional support, which requires the provider's presence, may require more of a personal commitment from the provider than either informational or instrumental support, which only require giving advice or tangible assistance. Emotional support situations in the US where the support is requested may especially carry feelings of burden because there is no "in group," "out group" distinction. Because Americans do not make this distinction, there is no "in group" that can always be relied upon, thus creating more feelings of burden when one

does need emotional assistance. These findings are contradictory to the results of Kim et al.'s (2006) studies which indicated that European Americans do not consider relationship when seeking support while Asian Americans do. It will be interesting to see how Japanese participants rate burden in these situations, particularly whether they detect the same U.S. difference in burden by support request or not.

Table 3. Means (Standard Deviations) on Burden Ratings by Situation Country, Support Request, and Support Type) For significance tests, see text.

	Japan			United States		
	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational
Asked	1.75(0.85)	2.17(0.72)	1.59(0.65)	1.93(0.82)	2.26(0.71)	1.83(0.75)
Not asked	1.57(0.71)	1.88(0.77)	1.35(0.65)	1.46(0.78)	1.88(0.76)	1.60(0.74)

<u>Interactions with set.</u>

All of the main effects and interactions found interacted with set (p's $\leq$ 0.001). (There were four sets that contained the same types of situation by support request and support type from both countries, but the situation content was different in each set). Therefore, the main effects and interactions did not replicate perfectly across the four different samples. In some cases (e.g. support request main effect), the main effect was simply of a different magnitude but in the same direction in all four sets. In others (e.g. situation country by support type interaction) unfortunately, the patterns reversed between the sets. I will discuss this result further in the discussion.

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Repay Ratings

Main effects.

There was a main effect for situation country such that US situations ($M =$ 2.83) were rated higher in opportunity to repay than Japanese situations ($M = 2.61$) (F (1, 129) = 75.28; $p < 0.001$). There was a main effect for support request (asked for or not) such that "asked for" support situations ($M = 2.77$) were rated higher in opportunity to repay than "not asked for" support situations ($M = 2.68$) (F (1, 129) = 20.98; $p < 0.001$). There was a main effect for support type such that instrumental support situations afforded the most opportunity to repay the support ($M = 2.93$), followed by emotional ($M = 2.80$) and then informational ($M = 2.43$) support types (F (2, 128) = 122.58; $p < 0.001$).

Two-way interactions.

These main effects were qualified by three, two-way interactions. There was an interaction between situation country and support request (F (1, 129) = 114.50; $p < 0.001$). In Japanese situations, "asked for" support was rated as having a higher opportunity to repay than "not asked for" support, but the reverse was true in the US. Also, "asked for" support received the same rating for opportunity to repay in both US and Japanese situations. In contrast, "not asked for" support in US situations was rated as having a much higher opportunity to repay than "not asked for" support in Japanese situations. There was also an interaction between situation country and support type (F (2, 128) = 45.40; $p < 0.001$) such that informational support was rated as having a much greater opportunity to repay in US situations than in Japanese situations. There was a third interaction between support request and support type (F (2, 128) = 19.26; p < 0.001). The opportunity to repay the support was much more similar for "not asked

for" support situations than for "asked for" support situations. Also, "asked for" support situations were rated as having more opportunity to repay than "not asked for" support situations for emotional and instrumental support, but the pattern was reversed for informational support.

Three-way interaction.

These main effects and two-way interactions were further qualified by a three-way interaction between situation country, support request, and support type (F (2, 128) = 4.34; $p < 0.05$). Table 4 shows the means. In the US situations, there was no difference in opportunity to repay for emotional and instrumental support by support request. However, informational support in US situations was rated as affording a much higher opportunity to repay when the support was not asked for than when it was requested. In Japanese situations, there was more opportunity to repay in situations where the support was asked for than when it was not requested. This result was especially strong for emotional and instrumental support situations. In general, US situations were rated as having more opportunity to repay the support than Japanese situations, except for emotional and instrumental support that was requested.

Regardless of support type, Japanese situations afforded more opportunity to repay the support when it was requested than when it was not, while this pattern was more variable for US situations. It seems that Japanese situations seem to carry a promise of repayment when the support is requested that is not present in US situations.

Table 4. Means (Standard Deviations) on Repay Ratings by Situation Country, Support Request, and Support Type) For significance tests, see text.

| | Japan | | | United States | | |
	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational
Asked	2.91(0.77)	3.10(0.54)	2.28(0.71)	2.85(0.69)	2.97(0.68)	2.49(0.63)
Not asked	2.60(0.59)	2.71(0.62)	2.09(0.59)	2.85(0.73)	2.93(0.64)	2.88(0.63)

Interactions with set.

All of the main effects and interactions found interacted with set (p's $\leq$ 0.001). Therefore, the main effects and interactions did not replicate perfectly across the four different samples. In some cases (e.g. situation country main effect), the main effect was simply of a different magnitude but in the same direction in all four sets. In others (e.g. support request by support type interaction) the patterns reversed between the sets. I will discuss this result further in the discussion.

Competence Ratings

Main effects.

There was a main effect for situation country such that US situations ($M = 0.17$) were rated higher in competence than Japanese situations ($M = 0.09$) ($F (1, 129) = 6.27$; $p < 0.05$). There was a main effect for support request (asked for or not) such that "not asked for" support situations ($M = 0.17$) were rated higher in competence than "asked for" support situations ($M = 0.09$) ($F (1, 129) = 6.81$; $p = 0.01$). There was a main effect for support type such that emotional support situations had the highest

feelings of competence ($M = 0.20$), followed by instrumental ($M = 0.14$) and then informational ($M = 0.06$) support types (F (2, 128) = 7.73; $p = 0.001$).

Two-way interactions.

These main effects were qualified by three, two-way interactions. There was an interaction between situation country and support request (F (1, 129) = 27.53; $p < 0.001$). In Japanese situations, surprisingly, "asked for" support was rated higher in feelings of competence than "not asked for" support, but the reverse was true in US situations. There was also an interaction between situation country and support type (F (2, 128) = 29.99; $p < 0.001$). Japanese situations of emotional support were rated highest in competence, followed by instrumental and informational. The reverse was reported in US situations; informational support was rated highest in competence followed closely by instrumental support and then emotional support, which was rated much lower. There was a third interaction between support request and support type (F (2, 128) = 11.63; $p < 0.001$). The competence ratings (highest to lowest) for "asked for" support situations were emotional, instrumental, and then informational, while for "not asked for" support situations the ratings were instrumental, emotional, and finally informational support. Emotional support situations were rated higher in competence when the support was requested. Conversely, instrumental and informational support situations were rated higher in competence when the support was not requested.

Three-way interaction.

These main effects and two-way interactions were further qualified by a three-way interaction between situation country, support request, and support type (F (2, 128) = 4.13; $p < 0.05$). Table 5 shows the means. In the US situations, "not asked

for" support always created higher feelings of competence than "asked for" support. This is surprising given the results from Bolger et al. (2000) that indicated that invisible support is the most beneficial type of support for Americans. In this study American situations afforded greater feelings of competence when the support received was not requested, but according to Bolger et al.'s findings, this should create lower feelings of competence. The same was true in Japanese situations except for emotional support, where the pattern reverses. Also, Japanese situations of informational support, regardless of support request, are the only situations that were rated less than "neutral" on competence. In general, US situations were rated higher than Japanese situations in competence by support type, regardless of support request.

Table 5. Means (Standard Deviations) on Competence Ratings by Situation Country, Support Request, and Support Type) For significance tests, see text.

	Japan			United States		
	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational
Asked	0.49(1.04)	0.02(0.93)	-0.13(0.91)	0.01(1.06)	0.06(1.03)	0.10(1.01)
Not asked	0.11(0.95)	0.12(0.95)	-0.06(0.82)	0.18(1.03)	0.34(0.91)	0.31(0.97)

In contrast to Bolger's findings I suspect requesting emotional support may be particularly difficult in US situations. With the focus on independence in the United States, requesting emotional support may be particularly difficult because it implies an inability or a struggle to deal with personal or internal problems, more so than requesting informational or instrumental support. Conversely, Japanese situations

may particularly carry higher feelings of competence when emotional support is asked for because it is a way to connect more deeply with a person in one's "in group." It is also possible that requested support in Japanese situations is more subtle and reflects *amae*, the "assurance of another person's good will [which] permits a certain degree of self-indulgence" (Bester, trans., in Doi, 1973). Because the request is more subtle, and even culturally expected, competence would not be threatened. Being more a part of one's "in-group" and more dependent on those individuals in Japan would increase competence, while the same type of situation creating a reliance on others may decrease feelings of competence in the United States.

Interactions with set.

All of the main effects and interactions found interacted with set (p's < 0.001). Therefore, the main effects and interactions did not replicate perfectly across the four different samples. In some cases (e.g. situation country main effect), the main effect was replicated in three of the four sets. In others (e.g. support request by support type interaction) unfortunately, the patterns reversed between the sets. I will discuss this result further in the discussion.

Stress Ratings

It is important to note that the scale for stress ranged from -3 (I would feel calm and relaxed) to +3 (I would feel very stressed). Although the results reported do vary, all are negative. This means that some subsets of situations made the respondent "less calm" but none actually created feelings of stress.

Main effects.

There was no main effect for situation country. There was a main effect for support request (asked for or not) such that "asked for" support situations ($M = -0.50$) were rated higher in stress than "not asked for" support situations ($M = -0.65$) (F (1, 129) = 21.15; $p < 0.001$). There was a main effect for support type such that informational support situations had the highest feelings of stress ($M = -0.41$), followed by emotional ($M = -0.54$) and then instrumental ($M = -0.77$) support types (F (2, 128) = 34.08; $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the instrumental support situations were likely the least serious situations prior to receiving support.

Two-way interactions.

These main effects were qualified by three, two-way interactions. There was an interaction between situation country and support request (F (1, 129) = 9.68; $p < 0.01$). In both US and Japanese situations, "asked for" support was rated less calm than "not asked for" support. However, the difference in stress levels between "asked for" support and "not asked for" support was larger in US situations than in Japanese situations. There was also an interaction between situation country and support type (F (2, 128) = 26.41; $p < 0.001$). In Japanese situations, emotional and instrumental support were rated the same and "more calm" than informational support. In US situations, instrumental support was rated most calm followed by informational support and then emotional support. Also, US situations were rated more calm than Japanese situations in instrumental and informational support, but the reverse was true for emotional support. There was a third interaction between support request and support type (F (2, 128) = 8.46; $p < 0.001$). "Not asked for" support situations were rated more calm than "asked for" situations of instrumental and informational support.

For emotional support situations, there was very little difference in stress ratings by support request. In both "asked for" and "not asked for" support situations, instrumental support was rated the most calm. In "not asked for" support situations, emotional and informational support situations are rated equally calm, whereas emotional support situations were more calm than informational situations when the support was requested.

<u>Three-way interaction.</u>

These main effects and two-way interactions were further qualified by a three-way interaction between situation country, support request, and support type (F (2, 128) = 10.17; $p < 0.001$). Table 6 shows the means. "Asked for" support in US informational support situations was rated much less calm than "not asked for" support. In Japanese instrumental support situations, "asked for" support was rated much less calm than "not asked for" support. Emotional support that was "asked for" was rated much less calm in US situations than in Japanese situations. Likewise, informational support that was "not asked for" was rated much less calm in Japanese situations than in US situations.

As mentioned before with the competence ratings, the differences between the US and Japanese situations about emotional support may stem from the independent versus interdependent view of the self. With the focus on independence in the United States, requesting emotional support may be particularly difficult because it implies an inability or a struggle to deal with personal or internal problems, resulting in higher feelings of stress. Conversely, a Japanese person may feel less stress than an American when requesting emotional support because it is a way to connect more deeply with a person in one's "in group."

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Table 6. Means (Standard Deviations) on Stress Ratings by Situation Country, Support Request, and Support Type) (Scale from -3 to +3) For significance tests, see text.

| | Japan | | | United States | | |
	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational	Emotional	Instrumental	Informational
Asked	-0.85(1.25)	-0.55(1.12)	-0.32(1.07)	-0.26(1.32)	-0.73(1.26)	-0.27(1.20)
Not asked	-0.62(1.17)	-0.92(1.04)	-0.34(0.99)	-0.43(1.25)	-0.89(1.12)	-0.73(1.17)

Interactions with set.

All of the main effects and interactions found interacted with set (p's < 0.001) except for the situation country by support request interaction. Therefore, the main effects and interactions did not replicate perfectly across the four different samples. In some cases (e.g. support request main effect), the main effect was replicated in three of the four sets. In others (e.g. situation country by support type interaction) unfortunately, the patterns reversed between the sets. I will discuss this result further in the discussion.

Obligation versus Choice Ratings

After initial analysis of the obligation and personal choice dimensions it was apparent that these two variables were inversely related, such that high ratings on obligation typically went with low ratings on choice. Some research suggests that

Americans especially tend to treat obligation and choice as inverses of each other; we expect Japanese respondents to treat them more independently (Miller et al., 1990). Nevertheless, we analyzed these two variables together in a 2 (situation country) x 2 (support request) x 3 (support type) x 2 (obligation versus choice) ANOVA.

Several main effects and one interaction were found that are of little theoretical interest. Specifically, there was a main effect for situation country such that US situations ($M = 2.31$) were rated higher on both obligation and personal choice than Japanese situations ($M = 2.21$) ($F (1, 129) = 56.63$; $p < 0.001$). There was a main effect for support type such that instrumental support situations were rated highest overall in both obligation and choice ($M = 2.284$), followed by emotional ($M = 2.279$) and then informational ($M = 2.22$) support types ($F (2, 128) = 10.51$; $p < 0.001$). These main effects were further qualified by a three-way interaction between situation country, support request, and support type ($F (2, 128) = 8.31$; $p < 0.001$). The remaining effects are of more theoretical interest.

<u>Main effects.</u>

There was a main effect for "obligation versus choice" such that acting out of personal choice ($M = 3.22$) was rated much higher than acting out of obligation ($M = 1.30$) ($F (1, 129) = 644.66$; $p < 0.001$) across situation types.

<u>Two-way interactions.</u>

This main effect was qualified by three, two-way interactions. There was an interaction between situation country and "obligation versus choice" ($F (1, 129) = 44.65$; $p < 0.001$). The difference between obligation and choice was larger in US situations ($M = 2.03$) than in Japanese situations ($M = 1.81$). There was also an

interaction between "obligation versus choice" and support request (F (1, 129) = 48.56; $p < 0.001$) such that the difference between obligation and choice was larger for "not asked" support situations ($M = 2.06$) than for "asked for" support situations ($M = 1.98$). There was a third two-way interaction between "obligation versus choice" and support type (F (2, 128) = 39.24; $p < 0.001$) such that the difference between obligation and choice was largest for emotional support situations ($M = 2.12$) followed by instrumental ($M = 1.91$) and informational ($M = 1.75$) support types.

Three-way interactions.

These main effect and two-way interactions were further qualified by three, three-way interactions. The effect of most theoretical interest was an interaction between "obligation versus choice," situation country, and support request (F (1, 129) = 28.57; $p < .001$). Figure 1 shows this result.

In the Japanese situations there is virtually no difference in obligation versus choice by support request. Obligation decreases and personal choice increases only very slightly when the support is not requested versus when it is requested. In contrast, there is a large difference in obligation versus choice in the US situations by support request. Obligation decreases and personal choice increases substantially when the support is not requested versus when it is requested (see Figure 1). In the US there is an emphasis on the independence of the individual, so when support is not requested, there is much personal choice, and little obligation, in providing that support. The American ratings of the situations indicate that they recognized less choice in Japanese than American support provision. American support situations seem to carry greater feelings of choice and lesser feelings of obligation than Japanese support situations.

There was another interaction between "obligation versus choice," situation country, and support type (F (2, 128) = 9.68; $p < 0.001$). Of less theoretical interest because these was no interaction with culture was the interaction between "obligation versus choice," support request, and support type (F (2, 128) = 9.24; $p < 0.001$).
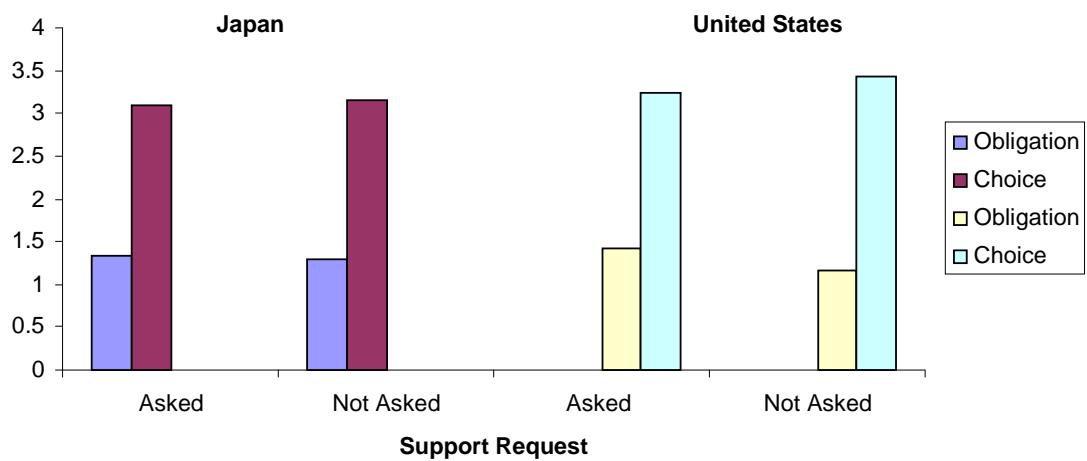

Figure 1. Three-way interaction between situation country, support request, and "obligation versus choice."

Four-way interaction.

The three-way interaction between "obligation versus choice," situation country, and support request was modified by a four-way interaction (F (2, 128) = 8.43; $p < 0.001$). Figure 2 shows this result. The original, three-way interaction remained virtually the same, except in the "asked for" emotional support type.

The four-way interaction is essentially the same as the three-way (depicted in Figure 1) except that there are slight differences by support type. Personal choice in US situations that was "not asked for" was rated equally high across the support types and had higher ratings than both US "asked for" support types and all support situations in Japan. There is also a very large difference between obligation and choice in the "not asked for" US situations. The difference between obligation and personal choice is generally smaller in Japanese situations than in American situations, especially when the support is requested. The exception to this is requested emotional support in Japanese situations. This difference is also fairly large in American requested emotional support situations.

There seems to be something about emotional support that affords the provider more personal choice in providing the support, regardless of culture. I suspect that emotional support requires the most of the individual and is potentially more difficult to "fake." That is, one can provide instrumental or informational support competently, whether one really wants to or not, while emotional support might require more genuine concern. Such concern is not likely to be perceived as "obligatory" by Americans; they may think emotional support is freely chosen no matter what. It will be interesting to see if Japanese participants perceive this same pattern.
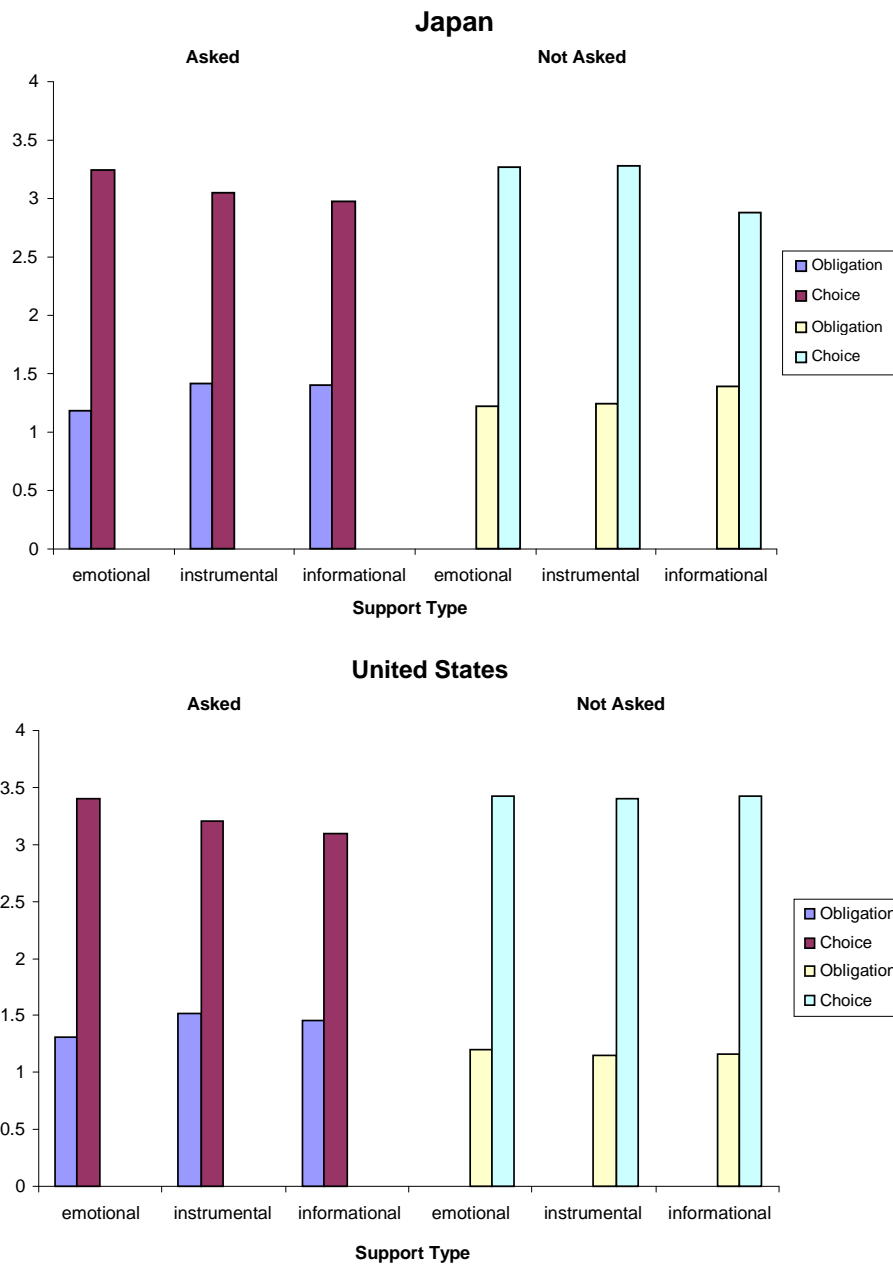
Figure 2. **Four-way interaction between situation country, support type, support request, and "obligation versus choice."**

Interactions with set.

Some of the main effects and interactions interacted with set (p's ≤ 0.05). The exceptions to this finding are the "obligation versus choice" and support type main effects and the three-way interaction between "obligation versus choice," situation country, and support request (Figure 1).

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper was to examine the extent to which cultural differences in social support are carried in the situations, or settings, common to a culture. In this study, the American college participants who rated the support situations represented the "American psyche," while the situations rated represented both Japanese and American culture. From this research it is apparent that the American participants did notice a cultural difference in the social support situations and the future half of this study will allow a look at "psyche" because it will include Japanese participants. However, the results of the present study suggest that some of the differences in support are present in the culture, not just in the people.

Burden, Obligation, and Personal Choice

As would be expected, burden on the support provider was rated higher when the support was requested than when it was not request, regardless of support type or situation country. Of more theoretical interest is the finding that US situations create more feelings of burden than Japanese situations. This finding contradicts Kim, Sherman, and Taylor's (2008) finding that Asians and Asian Americans are more hesitant to seek social support due to concern for relational consequences. However, to the extent that support in the Japanese situations is provided by a member of the individual's "in group," lesser feelings of burden could be expected. The Japanese situations in this study might have carried a greater sense of reciprocal obligation than

the US situations, thereby decreasing feelings of burden (Miller et al., 1990). Also, from a cursory review of the support situations it seems that a larger percentage of the US situations involve more serious problems requiring greater support, which could also have impacted the burden ratings. If we control for the magnitude of the support in a future study, this burden difference may disappear or reverse, in line with Kim et al.'s findings.

The difference between burden ratings for US and Japanese situations was especially high for emotional support that was requested, with the US situations rated higher on burden. Emotional support may require more of a commitment than either instrumental or informational support, so it may be especially burdensome to ask for emotional assistance in the United States because there is no "in group" on which Americans can always rely.

For all situations, regardless of situation country, support type, or support request, ratings of personal choice were higher than ratings of obligation in providing support. However, the difference between obligation and personal choice was greater in US situations than in Japanese situations, indicating more personal choice, less obligation, or both. Similarly, the difference between obligation and personal choice was greater when the support was not requested than when it was requested, which is to be expected.

The three-way interaction between situation country, support request, and "obligation versus personal choice" is particularly interesting. In Japanese situations, in both obligation and personal choice ratings, there is very little difference whether the support was requested or not. This means that in Japanese situations, American respondents see equivalent levels of obligation or personal choice, regardless of

support request. Similarly, the difference between obligation and personal choice is only slightly higher when the support is not requested than when it is requested.

In US situations, obligation is much higher when the support is requested than when it is not requested. In fact, US situations were rated as containing more obligation when the support is requested than Japanese situations. Personal choice, on the other hand, is much higher in US situations when the support is not requested than when it is requested and personal choice in the US situations is higher overall than in Japanese situations. It seems that US situations carry a greater sense of choice than Japanese situations. However, when Americans do request support these is more obligation to provide it than in Japanese situations, perhaps because there is no "in group" equivalent in the US that serves as a more constant support system. Also, the difference between obligation and personal choice is much greater in US situations when the support is not requested than when it is requested, indicating that when an individual does not explicitly seek support, the obligation in US situations decreases and personal choice increases.

The four-way interaction, which adds support type, shows much the same pattern of results except that emotional support that is requested in both US and Japanese situations stands out as breaking the pattern. In emotional support situations, there is considerably less obligation and more personal choice than other support types. This may be the case because providing emotional support requires more personal commitment than either informational or instrumental support and is difficult to provide without truly caring about the other person. This reduces the obligation of the support provider and increases their choice.

Opportunity to Repay

The American ratings of the support recipient's opportunity to repay indicate that there is an equal opportunity to repay support that is requested in both US and Japanese situations. However, in the US situations, support that is not requested has a higher opportunity to repay while the reverse is true in Japanese situations. This finding is especially strong for US situations of informational support. The opportunity to reciprocate on informational support that is not requested may be especially high in the US situations because it allows the support recipient to choose when to repay the support and in what domain. This allows the individual to preserve both their independence and personal choice and to select a domain in which they feel particularly competent on which to reciprocate the informational support. Japanese situations had a greater opportunity to repay than US situations only for emotional and instrumental support that was requested. Kim et al. (2006) found that Asian Americans seek support less than North Americans. Asking for support in Japan may open the door for the support provider to request support in the future. Because one individual has requested support of another, they may expect the individual who provided them with support to feel more comfortable requesting support in the future when needed, increasing the opportunity to repay.

Stress, Competence, and their Interplay

Of the three support types, Japanese situations have the highest ratings of competence when receiving emotional support, while US situations have the lowest ratings of competence when receiving emotional support. In Japanese situations, requesting emotional support may provide an opportunity to connect more meaningfully with a person from one's "in group," which in turn could result in greater

feelings of competence. By contrast, Americans value independence and may feel inadequate if they need to ask for help, particularly emotional support because this is usually provided for a strictly personal problem. Competence ratings were higher for all support types in US situations when the support was not requested. The same was true for Japanese situations, except for emotional support, for which competence was higher when the support was requested and also the highest in competence overall. The US result is particularly surprising in light of Bolger et al.'s (2000) research which found invisible support to be most beneficial. Invisible support is support that is not noticed but delivered. This is actually a bit different from support that is not asked for and noticed. In Bolger's study (2000), support that was not asked for but was received without the recipient noticing it created higher feelings of competence than support that was not asked for but was received and noticed. In our study, support that was not asked for and receipt was noticed was rated higher in competence than support that was asked for and noticed. It seems that asking for support may be worst of all, perhaps because it draws even more attention to one's problems or inadequacies. Not only are other people aware of them, but the individual must explicitly express their needs to others.

The difference between our findings and those of Bolger may also stem from a difference in methodology. In Bolger's study, they collected data from both the support recipient and support provider. In our study, we collected support data only from the support recipient. Situations that might have qualified as invisible support in Bolger's study might not have even been registered by our participants as support. Because our support situations were self reported by the recipient only, they may not have recalled any situations of invisible support, which by their very nature should not

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be recalled as support. Invisible support situations would not be remembered as support so they would not be reported in our study.

All of the results for the stress ratings were negative, meaning that none of the situation types were rated as stressful. Rather, they varied in feelings of calmness. None of the situations were rated as creating feelings of stress, but some were rated as "less calm" than others. Consistent with Bolger et al.'s (2000) findings support that was requested created higher feelings of stress (or rather lower feelings of calm) than support that was not requested. For both Japanese and US situations, requesting support is more stressful than not. This may be the case in Japan because asking for support may be viewed as a disruption to the "in group" relationship or an indication of two people being "out of sync," which could create more stress. Asians and Asian Americans tend not to request support because they are concerned about the relational consequences of doing so (Kim et al., 2008). With this relational concern in mind, requesting support in Japanese situations may be particularly stressful. Requesting support in the US may imply a lack of competence or independence which would create feelings of stress for Americans. US situations were rated "less calm" than Japanese situations when emotional support was provided, particularly when the support was requested. In American situations, requesting emotional support may be interpreted as an inability to deal with one's own problems, creating feelings of stress. By contrast, we can speculate that requesting emotional support in a Japanese support situation may help the individual to connect with others in his or her in-group, which would increase feelings of calm.

When looking at competence and stress ratings together by support request and situation country an interesting pattern emerges. US situations were rated as both

higher in competence and "more calm" when the support was not requested. Japanese situations in which the support was not requested were rated as lower in competence but more calm than support that was requested. In US situations it seems that competence and stress ratings may hang together while in Japanese situations there may be something else at work. This other factor might be the "in group" dynamic in Japanese culture. If one receives support without requesting it, it means that your troubles are apparent to others, reducing competence, but also that others are aware of your needs, reducing stress because of the connectedness with one's in group.

<u>Limitations</u>

The biggest limitation in this research is the fact that virtually all of the main results interact with set. In selecting support situations for each of the four sets, situation country, support request, and support type were all taken into account; each set contains a random draw of each. These interactions indicate that the findings do not replicate across the four sets of situations. However, there is also no reason to believe that the sets would differ in any meaningful way. Future analyses, judged to be too complex for the scope of this project, will use different techniques for understanding why the sets differ. Content analyses may show some sets to contain more severe situations than others.

Another limitation of this research is that all of the support situations were provided by college students and were rated only by college students. Although cultural differences were found in this study, we can only say conclusively that these differences are found among college students. In order to generalize these findings to the cultures at large, this study should be repeated with participants of different ages.

Future Research

Given more time, it would be pertinent to conduct further analyses on these data. The severity of the situation as well as the relationship to the person in need of the person who provided support may moderate the results. I would expect that the severity of the situation would particularly affect ratings of burden and stress. The relationship between the support provider and support recipient might affect ratings of obligation and personal choice, opportunity to repay, competence, and burden. That is, these effects might be particularly strong for Japanese situations because of the "in group" "out group" distinction made in this culture.

As of now, the results of this study are somewhat incomplete as only an American sample has rated the support situations. In the future, the same forms and questionnaires will be administered to a Japanese sample of college students to complete this research. Without the Japanese sample, it is difficult to draw conclusions about psyche versus culture contributions. For now, we can only describe whether Americans can detect differences between US and Japanese situations, and we found that they can. This is quite promising for the future half of the study.

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THE APPENDIX

Long version of questionnaire (presented on the first page)

To what extent would you feel stress in this situation? Indicate the extent of your feelings of stress on the scale below. If this situation would not affect your feelings of stress, circle N/A below.

I would feel calm and relaxed			N/A			I would feel very stressed
3	2	1	0	1	2	3

In this situation, would receiving this support make you feel obligated to the support giver, burdened, or troubling another? Indicate your feelings of obligation, burden, or troubling another on the scale below.

I would feel not at all much obligated, burdened, or troubling others				I would feel very obligated, burdened, or troubling others
0	1	2	3	4

To what extent did the person who gave help in this situation act out of obligation (moral or legal obligation)? And to what extent did the person who gave help act out of personal choice?

Person giving support support did not act out of obligation				Person giving acted very much out of obligation
0	1	2	3	4

Person giving support support did not act out of out of personal choice				Person giving acted very much personal choice
0	1	2	3	4

(long version continued)

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In this situation, would you feel you had an opportunity to reciprocate on the support? Or would there not be an opportunity to reciprocate on the support? Indicate your feelings about the opportunity for reciprocity on the scale below.

There would be no opportunity   There would be certain
opportunity to reciprocate/repay   to reciprocate/repay

0   1   2   3   4

In this situation, would receiving this support make you feel competent or efficacious? Or would receiving this support make you feel incompetent or inefficacious? Indicate your feelings of competence and efficacy on the scale below. If this situation would not affect your feelings of competence and efficacy, circle "neutral" below.

I would feel incompetent/   I would feel competent/
Inefficacious   neutral   efficacious

3   2   1   0   1   2   3

Short version of questionnaire (presented on subsequent pages)

In this situation:

I would feel   I would feel
calm and relaxed   N/A   very stressed

3   2   1   0   1   2   3

I would feel not at all   I would feel very
much obligated, burdened,   obligated, burdened,
or troubling others   or troubling others

0   1   2   3   4

Person giving support   Person giving support
did not act out of   acted very much
obligation   out of obligation

0   1   2   3   4

Person giving support   Person giving
support did not act out of   acted very much
personal choice   out of personal choice

0	1	2	3	4

There would be no opportunity
to reciprocate/repay

There would be certain opportunity
to reciprocate/repay

0	1	2	3	4

I would feel incompetent/
Inefficacious

neutral

I would feel competent/
efficacious

3	2	1	0	1	2	3