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Cross-Cultural Study of Friendship: U.S. and Korea

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Poster Presentation P3

CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF FRIENDSHIP: US AND KOREA

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The present study explores different friendship characteristics among Korean and American college students. The concepts of Individualism and Collectivism, which have been applied to previous cross-cultural studies, will be examined in this study also in attempt to explain why differences in friendship characteristics exist across cultures. We expect to find in this study that Korean and American students emphasize different characteristics as important in friendships. Whereas Americans may emphasize enhancement of self-worth (i.e. friendships makes oneself feel better) as important in a friendship, Koreans may emphasize instrumental aid as an important factor in friendship. Other characteristics such as intimacy, disclosure, exclusivity, etc are also compared across the two cultures. Cross-cultural research in Korea and the U.S. has been completed, with 41 Korean participants from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, and 88 participants from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. 2 questionnaires were administered to all participants, The Friendship Quality Questionnaire and Individualism and Collectivism scale, along with the Friendship Interview. The Friendship Quality Questionnaire and the Friendship Interview asked questions about the same 2 friends the participant indicated as being his/her closest friend. The Individualism and Collectivism questionnaire assess the participant on how individualistic or collectivistic he/she is. Analyses of the data are expected to show considerable differences between Korean and American friendship characteristics. The present study will apply Individualism and Collectivism to explain some aspects of the results, but will also emphasize the limitations of the concepts as well. We are expecting to demonstrate that these concepts may be too narrow to apply to every aspect of a culture, and will attempt to explore other explanations for the differences in friendship characteristics that are emphasized across the 2 cultures.