



Self-Construal in a Higher Education Culture

Salam Priyanka Devi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India.

Introduction:

Culture plays important role in human behavior and the context of academic culture should not be treated exceptional (Ogbu, 1982; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson & Covarrubias, 2012). Academic cultural norms are dominant by independent middle-class cultural norms (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1992).

On the other hand, most of ethnic minority students are first-generation college learners and they come from working-class background where they more practice interdependence norms. And also endorsing interdependent self and emphasize more on adjusting with others, exerting self-control, and take charge. Expressing self and influencing environment is not the central of this model.

In contrast, independent self prefer to express unique self, exerting environmental under control, be responsive and influencing others.

Being from a different culture, speaking a different language, and experiencing other shortcoming by their own group members, they are more concerned and bothered about what others may think about them. As a consequence, sometimes they are restricted to share their opinions and experiences in front of others and subsequently develop a fear of being negatively judged.

Kincheloe (1999) revealed that poor and marginalized students failed at school because they experience cultural inferiority in mainstream society. Students from ethnic minority and marginalized background are often representing first-generation college learners in their family.

Attaining colleges means they have to encounter with faculty and students of different social background from them. They have to acquire new forms of cultural capital that other students had already possessed.

Major difference in academic experience of various populations lies in the cultural discontinuity between their cultural background and the culture of institution.

They start questioning whether they belong and succeed at the new environment. Thus, we argue that this different self construal and fear of being negatively judge can be debilitating their academic experience and individual self-expression.

Hypothesis:

We hypothesize that there will be significant main effect of person culture (i.e. independent self vs. interdependent self) on self-expression. Second, there will be significant effect of fear of being negatively judged on person self-expression. And, there will be significant interaction effect of these three variables.

Method:

Participants. The participants were 120 undergraduate and graduate at two central universities, Delhi.

Materials, procedure and design. Self-construal scale were used from Singelis, T.M. (1994).

Brief fear of negative evaluation scale by Carleton, McCreary, Norton, & Asmundson (2006).

And the value of self-expression scale were use from Kim & Sherman (2007). First we distributed self-construal scale, after that fear of negative evaluation scale and followed by self-expressive scale. We used factorial ANOVA mixed design.

Results

Our first hypothesis is found to be significant at $F(1,116) = 5.57, p < .05$, that means student different self-construal have impact on self-expression.

Our second hypothesis is also found to be significant at $F(1, 116) = 39.6, p < .01$.

And the third hypothesis, the interaction effect is also found to be significant at $F(1, 116) = 50.06, p < .01$.

Conclusion:

Different culture has possessed different beliefs and self-expression. Optimistic position of interdependent self is not passive or unable to work with their own mind; rather they actively protect their self-worth from prejudice and discrimination.

Moreover, many of ethnic minority or members of interdependent culture, those who explicitly express their own thought may be neither encouraged nor viewed positively (Kim & Sherman, 2007).

They are more concerned on what other may thinks about them if they make any mistake. And as a consequence they subjectively developed fear of being negatively judge. Since little empirical work has been done in this area, more research is needed.