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## **Development of Emotions as Organized by Culture**

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Emotions can be seen as both biologically prepared and socio-culturally shaped. Evidence on cultural differences in manifestations of emotions abound; however, the role of culture in emotion development has not yet been systematically studied and integrated in a theory on the socialization of emotions. Emotion development includes the understanding of emotions and their meaning, appraisal of emotion-evoking situations, knowledge of appropriate emotion expression, and regulation of emotions. Emotion development and emotion regulation are bi-directionally influential through the development of links between emotions and cognition, and the emerging coherent patterns of emotions, cognitions, and regulatory behavior (Saarni, 1999). Research on the socialization and development of emotions and regulation usually focuses on parenting (warmth, sensitivity) and family (e.g., emotional expressivity) (e.g., Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992; Saarni, 1999) and is restricted to European-American samples.

The cultural organization of emotion development is assumed here to be related to the prevailing cultural model of self-construal—the independent or the interdependent self. In many Western cultures, the model of independence dominates, regarding the self as an independent, separate organism. In contrast, in many non-Western cultures the cultural model of interdependence prevails, defining the self by social relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). While both independence and interdependence are

universal values, there is between- and within-culture variation in their relative importance. Persons with an independent self-construal experience and express their emotions as internal personal characteristics striving for autonomy and individualistic self-assertion. Person with an interdependent self-construal experience and express emotions as a means for maintaining interpersonal harmony rather than as an authentic representation of emotions; they view emotions as part of self-other relationships, reflecting social reality rather than inner personal experiences (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). Thus, the prevailing cultural model of the self assumed influences the appraisal, experience, expression, regulation, and developmental pathways of emotions.

To give an example of cultural differences in the meaning of emotions, in Western cultures, positive and negative emotions are usually seen as being in opposition to each other while in Asian cultures positive and negative emotions can coexist as complementary components (positively correlating) (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Miller & Bersoff, 1995). When the meaning of positive emotions is based on the cultural model of the independent self, happiness is often related to ego-focused, socially "disengaging emotions" (individual success, autonomy; self esteem; pride). When the model of the interdependent self prevails, positive emotions are often experienced as interpersonally "engaging emotions" (success in tasks of interdependence, good social relations) (see Kitayama, 2001, for comparisons of US and Japanese samples).

This difference in cultural meanings has consequences for the assumption of culturally invariant patterns of appraisal in self-conscious emotions such as pride and shame. According to the cultural model of the independent self, a positive self-conscious emotion in the context of independence is pride. "Pride . . . signals and reinforces the accomplishments of the independent self. . . . Pride is one of the emotions that best predicts general well-being in Western samples" Mesquita & Karasawa, 2004, p. 162). Pride signals a disengaged emotion characterized by independence in achieving identity-goal congruence. In contrast, according to the cultural model of the interdependent self, positive emotions are defined through socially engaged emotions based on connectedness to other people and adjustment to social relationships. Identity-goal congruence is achieved by maintaining harmony in the group, and promoting group-members' goals (focusing on avoidance of interpersonal conflict). Therefore, pride is only evaluated as a positive emotion when one's achievements serve others' goals or when success is not attributed to the self but to the joint efforts of the group (social honor) (Markus & Kitayama, 2002). Otherwise, pride indicates an undesirable, isolating social distance between the self and others.

In the cultural model of independence, shame is a negative emotion reducing self-esteem. In contrast, in cultures favoring an interdependent self, shame is a positive emotion which indicates social engagement, relatedness, striving for social conformity, and motivation to perform better in the future; this underlines the preference of self-critical, continuous effort (Mesquita & Karasawa, 2004). Therefore, different from the independent self construal, pride does not fit with the interdependent self-construal but shame does. Shame is a socially engaged,

positive, and more articulated emotion for Chinese children, while for US children shame signals failure to achieve self-esteem, a major task of independence. Accordingly, the development of pride- and shame-related emotions (appraisal and action components) differs for US and Chinese persons (Mascolo, Fischer, & Li, 2003).

Similarly, the expression of anger is discouraged in Asian cultures since it threatens relationship harmony while anger is tolerated in the US as part of self-assertion (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole, Mizuta & Hiruma, 1996). Intra- and intercultural comparisons by Cole, Bruschi, and Tamang (2002) showed that the appraisal of anger-evoking situations by Brahman and US children appeared to be similar, while Brahman (Nepal) children refrained more from communicating anger in line with values of interdependence. Tamang (Nepal) children appraised situations such that they even did not feel anger. Thus, even though their appraisal differed, Nepali children acted in accordance with the cultural model of interdependence (and secondary control); this is in contrast to the model of independence (and primary control) in the US which encourages children's expression of anger. This and other studies underline the role of religious beliefs as influencing children's emotion development (Weisz, Weiss, Walter, Suwanlert, Chaiyasit & Anderson, 1988, for Buddhist influence).

Given these cultural differences, it seems fruitful to go beyond the dichotomy of positive and negative emotions and differentiate between socially "engaging" (other-focused) and "disengaging" (self-focused) emotions and their respective associations with independent/interdependent self-construal and related psychological processes such as autonomy/relatedness, or primary/secondary control.

This culture-specificity in the organization of emotional experience according to independent and interdependent self-construal (including moral emotions such as happiness when fulfilling one's duty; Miller & Bersoff, 1995) suggests effects from different socialization processes. For example, praise has often been regarded an important aspect of parenting in Western contexts since it should foster positive self-regard in the child via emotions of pride. However, in cultures where pride indicates a disengaged (negative) emotion, parents may restrict praising to situations when the child shows socially engaged behavior based on sensitivity to other's expectations in line with values of interdependence.

Another example is the assumption that the open expression of emotions (e.g., early family emotional discourse) fosters children's emotional competence. This assumption may not apply in cultures where the open expression of emotions is inhibited in favor of concern for others. Thus, whether inhibition of emotions signals problematic emotion development needs to be evaluated in relation to the cultural model of the self and related socialization of autonomy/relatedness and empathy. In Western cultures, the expression of emotions is usually considered an act of authentic self-presentation while in many non-Western cultures the modulation or inhibition of emotional expression is socialized and motivated by a concern for social consequences (emotions as inner state versus interpersonal experience). For example, Chinese do not differ from American adults in their physiological reactions but

usually show a lower frequency, intensity, and duration in the expression of emotions. This may be due to their respective socialization experiences according to different models of self. Chinese as compared to US mothers value harmonious and balanced social interactions as goal for emotion development and regulation more highly (Wang & Fivush, 2005): Among mother-child dyads in the US, conversations about past experiences of negative emotions indicate that children are socialized to develop an autonomous sense of self and regulate negative emotions through emotional understanding. In contrast, conversations of Chinese dyads reveal that emotion regulation is based on relatedness and acceptance of social norms. Such differences in socialization have consequences, for example, for the inhibition of ego-based anger expression due to the social need for harmony and related sensitivity for other's expectations in cultures where the interdependent self-construal prevails.

Related cultural differences in socialization of emotions can be expected with respect to attachment—a basic aspect of parent-child relationships. Cultures differing in the model of the self and the manifestation of emotions can be assumed to also differ in caretakers' sensitivity and children's development. In their critical discussion of

*Research on self-regulation of preschool age children:*



*Expecting Gift (Germany)*



*Receiving Gift (Empty Box; Germany)*



*Receiving Gift (Empty Box; India)*

attachment theoretical assumptions, Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, and Morelli (2000) have pointed out the culture-specific meaning of the caretaker's sensitivity and its respective function for the child's development. Mothers' sensitivity and related success in regulating their children's emotions (reducing distress) varies according to the cultural context. For example, Japanese mothers' proactive sensitivity (anticipation-guided; soothing the infant before she signals negative emotions) allows for more effective emotion regulation than does German mothers' reactive sensitivity (responsiveness) (Friedlmeier & Trommsdorff, 1999; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993). This proactive sensitivity can be seen as the basis for the development of the interdependent self-construal and related emotion development (Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003; Rothbaum & Trommsdorff, in press).

These results indicate culture-specific paths in the development of emotions and regulation, including different functions of interpersonal in contrast to intra-personal regulation. This partly contradicts the often repeated assumption that emotion regulation develops first interpersonally (the caretaker initiating the regulation) and later is replaced by intra-personal regulation (Thompson, 1994). However, in cultures favoring the interdependent self-construal, emotion regulation follows the goal of accommodating the expectations of relevant other persons (secondary in contrast to primary control). The development of emotion regulation in these cultures is a process of (internalized) interpersonal co-regulation based on empathy and anticipation as part of the interdependent self-construal. In contrast, caretakers' socialization strategies to promote intra-personal self-regulation characterize the developmental path for the independent self.

These examples illustrate that culture-specificities of emotion development may enrich existing theoretical approaches. However, we are still far from a culturally-informed science of the socialization of emotions. One reason is methodological problems. Difficulties in the measurement of emotion, emotion regulation, and their development (e.g., quantitative and qualitative aspects; validity of verbal and behavioral measures; their coherence across situations and development) are multiplied by challenges in cross-cultural studies (e.g., control of biases; functional equivalence of concepts and methods across

cultures). Another reason is the difficulty in questioning and in going beyond familiar theoretical concepts and assumptions.

For a science of emotion, we need to know how the experience, expression, and regulation of emotions are linked to cultural values and socialization conditions in individual development. Different paths for the development of emotions and regulation are to be expected in contexts differing in the cultural model of the self. For example, parenting attributes that lead to optimal emotion development in certain cultures may have dysfunctional effects in others. Also, single variables (such as self-construal) cannot explain cultural differences in emotion development unless these are studied in relation to other psychological factors (e.g., autonomy/relatedness; control orientation; empathy). Therefore, theoretical approaches to the socialization and development of emotions and regulation need to integrate other relevant research, focus on universalities and culture-specific pathways, inter-cultural and intra-cultural differences, and overcome ethnocentric biases. Will developmental psychology meet the challenge to contribute to a science of emotions?

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