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# 'Just because you like it doesn't mean I will too:' Cross-cultural similarities in ignoring others' opinions

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Members of East Asian cultures are more likely to conform in public settings than are members of Western cultures. Little research has examined, however, whether East Asians are more likely to privately accept the views held by others. In two studies we gave European American and Korean participants descriptions of unusual food combinations, information about how much one peer had liked the food combinations, or both kinds of information, and asked them to predict how much they would like the foods. When people knew only how another person felt (without a description of the food combinations), both Koreans and Americans based their predictions on the other person's ratings. When people received descriptions of the foods and the ratings of another person, however, both Koreans and Americans based their predictions more on the descriptions than on how the other person felt. In short, we found no cultural differences in the extent to which people use another person's opinion to inform their own opinions.

*Key words: advice, affective forecasting, cross-cultural differences, surrogation.*

Suppose that you are at a restaurant with some friends and one of them says, 'The kabocha squash with sunchokes is delicious here.' How likely will you be to order that entree? Although the answer depends on many things, such as whether you know what a sunchoke is, one determinant is likely to be the culture in which you grew up. Western individualistic cultures stress independence, including the idea that people should resist influence from others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995), and indeed, if one person at a table orders a particular menu item, other diners are likely to order something else (Ariely & Levav, 2000). Members of East Asian collectivistic cultures, however, are more likely to heed the advice of others and order the same thing (Ariely, 2008; Yoon, Suk, Lee & Park, 2011).

This cultural difference in public compliance stems from the desire to appear unique versus maintain social harmony. To Westerners, public behaviour is an opportunity to express one's unique traits, values, and preferences, thus making different choices from others is a way to express uniqueness. To East Asians, public behaviour is an opportunity to express connectedness to others, and making the same choice as others is a way to maintain social harmony (Kim & Markus, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Savani, Markus & Conner, 2008).

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But are there similar cultural differences in how much people use others' opinions to form private preferences? Suppose, for example, that sunchokes don't sound very appetizing, but you overhear someone say that they are a very tasty vegetable. How likely will you be to buy them and cook them for yourself, unobserved by others? And will your cultural background influence your openness to adopting another person's opinion? Little research has addressed cultural differences in what is, arguably, a more fundamental question: the extent to which people are influenced by others when determining how they actually feel, as opposed to the opinions they express publicly. We investigated this question in two studies with college students in the USA and Korea.

Research shows that participants in independent cultures are not very open to taking another person's opinion into account, even when it would be to their advantage to do so. In one study, for example, female college students at a US university were asked to predict how much they would enjoy a 'speed date' with a male student (Gilbert, Killingsworth & Wilson, 2009). Some were given a profile and photograph of the potential dating partner (called 'simulation' information, because the description allowed people to run a mental simulation of how much they would like the person), whereas others were told only how much another woman had enjoyed a speed date with him (called 'surrogation' information, because all that people knew was how a 'surrogate' who had undergone the experience felt). Overwhelmingly, participants believed that the simulation information would allow them to make more accurate forecasts about how much they would like the male student.

Participants who were randomly assigned to receive the surrogation information, however, more accurately predicted how much they actually liked the male student than did participants who were randomly assigned to receive the simulation information. In short, participants did not think that another person's opinion was predictive of their own, when in fact it was.

Are members of collectivistic cultures more willing to use surrogation information to form opinions? One reason they might do so is because they assume, more than do Westerners, that there is more homogeneity of opinion among their peers. This assumption would follow from people's observations that everyone is behaving similarly (e.g. ordering the same dish in a restaurant), as long as people attributed this public behaviour to others' private opinions (e.g. that they truly like sunchokes). Consistent with this view, East Asians show a correspondence bias when situational constraints are not salient, assuming that other people's behaviour reflects their underlying attitudes (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). Further, research shows that priming interdependence increased people's ratings of how similar others are to them (Kühnen & Hannover, 2000). One prediction, then, is that members of collectivistic cultures would be more likely to base their own preferences on someone else's than would members of individualistic cultures, because they think they are more similar to each other in their preferences.[1]

On the other hand, there is reason to believe that there may not be cultural differences in people's willingness to base their own preferences on other people's, particularly in domains such as food preferences, as in our opening example. People in all cultures have ample opportunity to observe that other people have different preferences from their own; in supermarkets, for example, people can see that there are a wide range of food options available for purchase, and can observe that the contents of people's shopping carts are not identical. It also seems likely that East Asians are aware of the pressures to conform in some settings (e.g. when eating in a restaurant with one's boss) and do not assume that people's behaviour in these settings reflects their private preferences (e.g. Choi & Nisbett, 1998; for a review, see Choi, Nisbett & Norenzayan, 1999). If so, then East Asians will not assume more homogeneity of opinion among their peers and may be as unwilling to base their own preferences on another person's as Westerners are.

Another reason to believe that East Asians and Westerners may refer to other people's opinions to a similar extent comes from a study in which participants had the option of selecting a pen of a unique colour or a common colour. When Japanese participants made their choice in private, they were more likely to select a pen of a unique colour than when their choice was monitored by others (Yamagishi, Hashimoto & Schug, 2008). This finding suggests that like Westerners, East Asians have unique preferences that they act on when their behaviour is not socially constrained, and because of this, they may be as unwilling to adopt other people's preferences as Westerners are (see also Kim, Chiu, Peng, Cai & Tov, 2010).

There is surprisingly little research on cultural differences in people's use of others' opinions to form private preferences. We addressed this question in two studies that examined food preferences in the USA and Korea. Participants in both cultures were given descriptions of novel food combinations and information about how much one other person liked the foods. The *cultural differences* hypothesis predicts that when estimating their own liking, Americans will ignore how the other person felt and use the descriptions of the foods, whereas Korean participants will be more likely to assume that their own liking will match the other person's. Alternatively, the *cultural similarity* hypothesis suggests that both Americans and Koreans will discount how the other person felt and stick to their theories about their own preferences.

## Study 1

### Method

*Pilot testing.* We searched for two novel food combinations that met these criteria: that the foods were equally familiar in both the USA and Korea, that people in both cultures who received descriptions of the food combinations predicted that they would like one (A) more than the other (B), and that people in both cultures who actually tasted the food combinations preferred B over A. This allowed us to pit simulation information (how much people thought they would like the foods based on descriptions of them) against contradictory surrogation information (how much another person liked the foods), to see which one people used more. The two food combinations that met these criteria the best were (1) plain yoghurt on a piece of cheddar cheese and (2) an apple slice with a piece of onion. The pilot testing revealed that college students in both cultures were equally familiar with these ingredients, that most people thought that they would prefer the yoghurt and cheese to the apple and onion, but that when they actually tasted these food combinations, most people preferred the apple and onion.

*Participants.* One hundred and two Americans (59 males; $M_{age}$ = 19.01) and 82 Koreans (55 males; $M_{age}$ = 21.13) participated in the study. American participants were European American undergraduates at the University of Virginia and Korean participants were undergraduates at Seoul National University, Korea. American students were recruited from the Psychology Participant Pool and received partial course

credit for their participation. Korean students were recruited through a flyer in a student activity building and received a free drink for their participation.

*Procedure.* American participants completed the study in a psychology laboratory whereas Korean participants did so in the hallway of the student activity building. Participants were randomly assigned to a simulation, surrogation, or both condition. In the simulation condition, American participants were given these descriptions of the foods: 'Plain Yoghurt and Cheese' and 'Apple Slice with Onion.' Because most plain yoghurts are sweetened in Korea, but unsweetened in the USA, Korean participants were given these descriptions: 'Unsweetened Plain Yoghurt and Cheese' and 'Apple and Onion.'

In the surrogation condition participants were not told anything about the foods other than how much one randomly chosen person had enjoyed each one after tasting it (the foods were labelled 'Food Combination A' and 'Food Combination B'). These were actual ratings, on a seven-point scale (*1 = not at all, 7 = very much*), from randomly chosen pilot participants who came to a laboratory and tasted the foods, matched for the participants' university (e.g. Korean participants received the ratings from a Korean pilot participant). For example, participants learned that another person had rated one of the food combinations a '3' and the other a '5.' Participants in the both condition received a description of the foods (identical to what people in the simulation condition received) and ratings of the food from one randomly chosen person (identical to what people in the surrogation condition received). All participants then selected the food combination that they would prefer to eat.[2]

## Results and discussion

Consistent with our pilot testing, in the simulation condition a majority of both Koreans and Americans preferred the yoghurt and cheese to the apple and onion (see Table 1). Also as expected, participants had the opposite preference in the surrogation condition. That is, when they had only the preferences of another person to go by (and no descriptions of the food), participants in both cultures assumed they would feel the same way as the other person would, leading to a preference for the apple and onion. We conducted a logistic regression on these results with the dependent variable coded as 0 = chose apple and onion and 1 = chose yoghurt and cheese, with predictor variables of Culture (US = –1, Korea = 1), Condition (–1 = simulation condition, 1 = surrogation condition), and the Culture x Condition interaction. The effect of Condition was highly significant, $B = -0.63$ ($SE = 0.20$), *Wald* $\chi^2(1, N = 114) = 9.55$, odds ratio (OR) = 0.53 (95% confidence interval (CI) = [0.36, 0.79]), $p = 0.002$, reflecting the fact that participants in both cultures were more likely to pick apple and onion in the surrogation condition than in the simulation condition. The main effect of Culture was also significant, $B = 0.45$ ($SE = 0.20$), *Wald* $\chi^2(1, N = 114) = 4.85$, OR = 1.57 (95% CI = [1.05, 2.34]), $p = 0.03$, reflecting the fact that, contrary to our pilot testing, Koreans chose yoghurt and cheese more often than Americans did. Importantly, however, the Culture by Condition interaction was not significant, $B = 0.18$ ($SE = 0.20$), *Wald* $\chi^2(1, N = 114) = 0.78$, OR = 1.20 (95% CI = [0.80, 1.79]), $p = 0.38$.

The critical test of the hypotheses is in the both condition, where participants received simulation and surrogation information. Here, participants used the former more than the latter in both the USA and Korea, supporting the cultural similarity hypothesis. This is evidenced by the fact that participants' choices in the both condition were very similar to participants' choices in the simulation condition (see Table 1). A logistic regression that compared these two conditions found no significant effect of Condition, Culture, or the interaction between the two, *Wald* $\chi^2 < 1.34$, OR < 1.26, *p*s > 0.25.

Another way of demonstrating that people in the both condition disregarded the other people's preferences is to compare the surrogation condition to the both condition. A logistic regression revealed a significant effect of Condition, $B = 0.86$ ($SE = 0.20$), *Wald* $\chi^2(1, N = 114) = 18.30$, OR = 2.36 (95% CI = [1.59, 3.50]), $p < 0.0005$, reflecting the fact that participants in the both condition chose the yoghurt and cheese significantly more often than did participants in the surrogation condition. The main effect of

**Table 1** Study 1: Proportion of participants who chose each food combination

| | | USA | | | Korea | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Food | | Simulation | Surrogation | Both | Simulation | Surrogation | Both |
| Apple Slice with Onion | Count | 12 | 26 | 14 | 9 | 16 | 7 |
| | % within condition | 46.2% | 81.2% | 31.8% | 33.3% | 55.2% | 26.9% |
| Plain Yoghurt & Cheese | Count | 14 | 6 | 30 | 18 | 13 | 19 |
| | % within condition | 53.8% | 18.8% | 68.2% | 66.7% | 44.8% | 73.1% |

Culture was nearly significant, $B = 0.37$ ($SE = 0.20$), *Wald* $\chi^2(1, N = 114) = 3.47$, OR = 1.45 (95% CI = [0.98, 2.15]), $p = 0.063$, but the Culture by Condition interaction was not, $B = -0.26$ ($SE = 0.20$), *Wald* $\chi^2(1, N = 114) = 1.62$, OR = 0.77 (95% CI = [0.52, 1.15]), $p = 0.20$.

We also examined the likelihood that participants in the surrogation and both conditions chose the food the surrogate preferred. Most of the surrogates preferred the apple and onion to the yoghurt and cheese, but there was some variation, and the question is, did participants choose the food the surrogate liked the best? (In 11 cases the surrogates gave the two foods identical ratings; these are removed from this analysis.) Not surprisingly, in the surrogation condition, when participants had only the surrogate's ratings to go by, 96% selected the food combination the surrogate preferred, with no difference between cultures: 100% in the USA, 92% in Korea, $\chi^2$ (1, $N = 56$) = 2.39, $p = 0.12$, Phi = 0.21. In the both condition, however, only 56% selected the food combination the surrogate preferred, with no difference between cultures: 54% in the USA, 61% in Korea, $\chi^2$ (1, $N = 64$) = 0.31, $p = 0.58$, Phi = 0.07. Note that this does not mean that 56% of the people in the both condition used the surrogation information, because for some of these participants, their theory about what they would prefer was in the same direction as the surrogate's preference (e.g. both the surrogate and the participant preferred the yoghurt and cheese). The fact that fewer participants chose what the surrogate preferred in the both versus the surrogation condition, however, supports the hypothesis that when simulation and surrogation information differs, many people use the former, and that this tendency does not differ across cultures. Collapsing across cultures, the difference between the surrogation and both conditions was highly significant, $\chi^2$ (1, $N = 120$) = 25.71, $p < 0.0005$, Phi = 0.46.

The results of Study 1 are more in line with a cultural similarity than a cultural differences hypothesis. The pattern of results was quite similar for Americans and Koreans: when we pitted their theories about which foods they would prefer against the preferences of another person, participants in both cultures relied more on their theories than on the other person.

Study 1 had at least two limitations, however, that we addressed in Study 2. First, the patterns of predicted and actual liking for the yoghurt and cheese versus apple and onion were not as similar among Americans and Koreans as we had hoped. In order to investigate possible cultural differences further, it would be better to align the stimuli more closely across cultures. Second, it could be argued that our measure of people's willingness to use surrogation information, in the both condition, was not very sensitive. We created a situation in which people's theories about whether they would prefer A or B were the opposite of another person's preferences, and then asked them to choose A or B. It is possible that people did change their view of how much they would like the foods to some extent, but not enough to reverse their choice. In Study 2 we included a more sensitive measure of change to provide a stronger test of whether there are reliable cultural differences in the use of surrogation information.

## Study 2

### Method

*Participants.* Thirty-seven Americans (22 females; $M_{age} = 19.62$) and 35 Koreans (21 females; $M_{age} = 19.91$) participated in the study. American participants were European American undergraduates at the University of Virginia and Korean participants were undergraduates at Seoul National University, Korea. All the participants were recruited from psychology participant pools. Twenty American participants entered a lottery to win $50, and the rest of the participants received partial course credit for their participation. Twelve Korean participants were ineligible because they did not give ratings of both 3 and 5 to unfamiliar food combinations, which, for reasons described below, was a necessary component of the design.

*Procedure.* All participants completed the study on a computer running a Qualtrics survey program (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). The Americans did so individually in a laboratory or online, whereas the Koreans did so individually in a laboratory. We replicated the both condition of Study 1 with the following changes: participants first rated how much they would like several individual foods (from 25 to 31 foods, depending on culture), such as peanuts and coffee, all on a seven-point scale (*1 = not at all, 7 = very much*). They then predicted how much they would enjoy eating several food combinations (either 23 or 24 combinations, depending on culture) using the same scale.[3] Some of the food combinations were familiar, such as French Fries and ketchup. The target combinations were unusual, such as coffee mixed with vinegar and Coca Cola mixed with milk.

Participants were then asked to rate two of the food combinations again, after learning how a randomly chosen student at their university had rated the combinations on the same seven-point scale, after coming to the lab and actually tasting them. To emphasize that this was a randomly chosen student, we asked participants to click on a button, after which they saw a spinning wheel with the words, 'Please wait for a moment. Our computer server is randomly picking one person among [UVa, Seoul National University] students who TASTED each food combination.' Participants then saw a description of a food combination (e.g. 'Apple Slice with Onion') and the rating that the randomly

chosen student had given it (e.g. 'After tasting this food combination, participant ID 29 rated it a 5 (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).' Unlike in Study 1, this surrogation rating was not a real rating by a randomly chosen student from the same university, but one that we selected to be different from participants' predictions, as described below. Participants then re-rated their preference for that food combination on the seven-point scale, allowing us to see how much they shifted their ratings (if at all) toward the surrogate's.

The two food items that participants re-rated were selected on the basis of their initial ratings. In the Korean sample (which was run first), the computer randomly picked one unfamiliar food combination that participants had rated a 3 and one that they had rated a 5. All participants learned that the food they had rated a 3 was rated a 5 by the randomly chosen student, whereas the food they had rated a 5 was rated a 3 by the randomly chosen student. In other words, participants learned that the students' preferences were the opposite of their own. In the American sample the same procedure was followed with one change. Because pilot testing (and the Korean version of the study) revealed that a sizeable number of participants never gave a rating of 3 and 5 to two or more food combinations, we broadened the selection criteria, selecting foods that participants had rated a 2 and 4, 2 and 5, 3 and 4, or 2 and 3. In each case they learned that the randomly chosen student had rated their lower-rated food 2 points higher and their higher-rated food 2 points lower. After receiving the surrogation information and re-rating the two food combinations, participants indicated which of the two food combinations they would prefer to eat. Finally, the same manipulation check and demographic questions as in Study 1 were administered.

### *Results and discussion*

To examine how much participants were influenced by surrogation information (the randomly chosen student's taste ratings), we computed the difference between their first rating of the food combination (before they received the surrogation information) and their second rating (after they received the surrogation information). For example, if a participant initially rated the food a 3, he/she learned that another person had rated it a 5. If he/she subsequently rated it a 4, this person received a score of 4–3 = 1, indicating that he/she had moved one scale point in the direction of the surrogation information. If a participant initially rated the food a 5, he/she learned that another person had rated it a 3. If he/she subsequently rated it a 4, this person received a score of 4–5 = −1, indicating that he/she had moved one scale point in the direction of the surrogation information. In order to directly compare movement toward the high and low surrogate rating, we reversed the sign of the latter scores, such that in all cases, positive numbers indicate movement toward the surrogate.

As seen in Table 2, participants adjusted their ratings toward the surrogate's ratings to some extent. Averaging across cultures and the direction of the surrogate's ratings, the mean adjustment was 0.71 ($SD = 0.68$), which differed significantly from zero, $t(59) = 8.02$, $p < 0.0005$, Cohen's $d = 1.03$. Consistent with Study 1, however, there was no evidence that Korean participants adjusted more than American participants. A 2 (Culture: USA vs. Korea) × 2 (Direction: higher versus lower surrogate rating) between-within ANOVA revealed that neither a main effect of Culture nor a Culture x Direction interaction was significant, $F$s$(1, 58) < 0.31$, $p$s$ > 0.58$, $\eta_p^2 < 0.006$. The main effect of direction of change was significant, $F(1, 58) = 4.01$, $p = 0.050$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.07$, reflecting the fact that participants in both cultures modified their ratings more when the surrogate gave a food a lower rating than when the surrogate gave a food a higher rating, possibly reflecting a greater sensitivity to negative than positive information (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer & Vohs, 2001).

It should be noted that in the Korean sample we selected only food combinations that had initially been rated a 3 and 5, whereas we broadened the selection criterion in the American sample. This had little influence on the results: the amount that Americans changed their ratings was very similar among those who initially rated the selected foods 3 and 5, compared to those who initially gave the foods different ratings, and did not differ significantly, $F(1, 35) = 0.16$, $p = 0.690$, $\eta_p^2 < 0.005$.

After rating their preferences for the two food combinations, participants were asked to indicate which one they would prefer to eat. As predicted, most participants (73%) chose the food that they had originally preferred, even though they knew that the other student had the opposite preference. This percentage was actually higher among

**Table 2** Study 2: Change in preference ratings

| Movement toward food with: | | USA ($n = 37$) | Korea ($n = 23$) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Higher Surrogate Rating | *M (SD)* | 0.59 (1.09) | 0.39 (1.31) |
| Lower Surrogate Rating | *M (SD)* | 0.89 (0.91) | 0.91 (0.79) |

Note. Positive scores indicate movement toward the surrogate rating.

Koreans (78%) than Americans (70%), though the difference was not significant, $\chi^2$ (1, $N = 60$) = 0.46, $p = 0.496$, Phi = 0.09. In other words, although participants altered their ratings of the food to some extent after receiving the surrogation information, most of the Americans and Koreans picked the food they had originally preferred over the one the surrogate preferred.

## General discussion

Participants in our studies were faced with a dilemma: someone else liked a food combination that did not sound very appetizing to them (e.g. an apple slice with a piece of onion), whereas that same person disliked a food combination that participants thought would be appetizing (e.g. plain yoghurt with cheese). Not surprisingly, European American participants tended to discount how the other person felt and relied on their own theories about what they would like. This finding is consistent with research findings that Western cultures stress independence and a lack of reliance on others. More surprising is that Korean participants discounted the other person's opinion to a similar degree as did the European Americans. This finding is inconsistent with research findings that members of East Asian cultures are more likely to select what others do in social settings (Ariely, 2008; Yoon *et al*., 2011).

As noted, however, previous research has focused on public compliance in group settings, in which East Asians' goal is to maintain social harmony. Although a diner might join others in ordering the kabocha squash with sunchokes, that doesn't mean that this person believes that he or she will actually like it (Savani *et al*., 2008; Yoon *et al*., 2011). Consistent with this view, research has shown that East Asians are more likely to evaluate themselves positively when in private than when in public (Kim *et al*., 2010), suggesting that there is a divide between public expression and privately held beliefs (Cai *et al*., 2011). To our knowledge, however, the present studies are the first to examine how Westerners and East Asians use others' opinions when forming private preferences.

It is important to note that participants in our studies did not completely ignore how others felt. First, when that was the only information they had about the food items (in the surrogation conditions), they relied on it. Second, participants in Study 2, who received both simulation and surrogation information, shifted their ratings to some extent after learning that another participant had rated the food combination differently than they did (see Table 2). This result is consistent with previous studies in which British and Australian participants were asked how happy they would be if they had a particular health problem, after learning the average happiness of 10 people who had experienced this problem (Walsh & Ayton, 2009). Participants used the surrogation information (the other people's happiness) to some extent, but were still influenced by their theory about how happy they would be. Similarly, in our studies, participants shifted their ratings to a small degree, but for the most part not enough to change their minds about which food they would prefer.

We should note the limitations of the findings. The fact that we found no cultural differences in the use of surrogation information is subject to the limitations of any null finding, one of which concerns the power of the studies. When small, nonsignificant differences are found, it is always possible that the difference would be significant with a larger sample size. This is particularly an issue in Study 1, in which we found a small nonsignificant effect in the direction of the cultural differences hypothesis: in the both condition, slightly more Koreans (61%) than Americans (54%) preferred the same food as the surrogate. Although this difference might become significant with a larger sample, we note that the effect size was very small (phi = 0.07) and that it would require approximately 1600 participants for it to be significant at a power level of 0.80. In Study 2, the small, nonsignificant effect of culture was in the opposite direction to the cultural differences hypothesis. That is, as seen in Table 2, Koreans were *less* likely to change their preference in the direction of the surrogate than Americans were. Because the difference was in the wrong direction, it is unlikely that a larger sample size would reverse it to a significant degree. Nonetheless, the results should be interpreted with caution, because null findings can occur for many reasons even when an effect is true.

It is also possible that the results are distinctive to food preferences and would not generalize to other types of stimuli. Because food is fundamental to survival, people may be less willing to overrule their own preferences in favour of someone else's in that domain, compared to other domains such as books, movies, or political figures. People might also be more willing to adopt others' opinions about stimuli that are more closely related to their social identity. For instance, people can be rather easily swayed by others in selecting brand clothes and famous high-end restaurants, and we cannot rule out the possibility that there are cultural differences in such influences. In addition, the fact that our studies were limited to college students might have contributed to the null findings. Considering that rapid socioeconomic change may have led to a shift in East Asian cultural values in an individualistic direction, especially among young people, college students may not be a representative sample of a collectivistic culture (Greenfield, 2009).

Another unanswered question is whether the results would differ if people were given larger samples of other people's opinions. In our studies, participants learned how one other person felt. What if they learned that five or 10 or 100 others had all preferred the apple slice with onion to the yoghurt and cheese? Surely, as the amount of consensus

increases, people will be more likely to heed others' opinions. And, possibly, East Asians will require smaller samples than Westerners will in order to abandon their personal theories and assume that they will feel the same as others.

Although further research is needed with larger and more diverse samples, for now we can conclude that the question of cultural differences in how people use others to form preferences is not as straightforward as one might assume, based on previous research on interdependence. Just because members of East Asian cultures publicly conform in order to promote social harmony does not necessarily mean that they would adopt the opinion of those around them.

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## End notes

1. Consistent with this view, Mercier, Yama, Kawasaki, Adachi, and Van der Henst (2012) found that Japanese participants were more likely to rely on another person's response when answering factual questions (e.g. the year that the United Nations was established) than were French participants. However, as the authors pointed out, this may have been due to the fact that the questions were more difficult for the Japanese than the French participants.
2. After choosing which food they preferred, all participants received descriptions of the foods and rated how much they liked them. These ratings yielded data similar to participants' choices; thus we do not discuss them further in order to conserve space. In addition, after choosing between yoghurt and cheese versus apple and onion, Korean participants were asked to choose between another set of foods: yoghurt and cheese versus almonds mixed with strawberry jam. We included this choice to more closely mimic the pattern of preferences Americans had for yoghurt and cheese versus apple and onion. Koreans' pattern of results on this choice was similar to the pattern of their choices for yoghurt and cheese versus apple and onion, though not as strong. The results on these measures (and the complete data sets of both studies) are available from the authors.
3. Although most of the food items were the same in both cultures, some food items differed to increase the probability that there would be a range of liking ratings of the unusual food combinations in each culture.

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