

Cultural Differences in Compliments

by

Karen Choi

A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Psychology

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2011

© Karen Choi 2011

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Cultural differences in compliments were examined across five studies. The results are consistent with cultural differences in self-enhancement and self-criticism and suggest that compliment responses may reflect underlying differences in self-views. Asian golfers were less accepting and more rejecting of compliments about a tournament win than European golfers (Study 1). Cultural differences in responses to compliments about close others were found to mirror those about the self. Asian Canadian mothers were less accepting and more rejecting of compliments about their children than were European Canadian mothers (Study 2). Study 3 examined cultural differences in response to compliments that focus on natural ability (person-praise) versus those that focus on effort (process-praise). European Canadians were more accepting and less rejecting of person-praise compliments about their basketball shooting ability than Asian Canadians, whereas no differences were found in responses to process-praise compliments. Cultural differences in giving compliments were examined using both cultural artifacts (Study 4) and self-report (Study 5). The results are consistent with previous research on differences in implicit theories of ability. Chinese graduation cards contained more process- than person-praise compliments, whereas the reverse was true of American cards (Study 4). Chinese parents indicated that they would be more likely to select and Chinese students indicated that they would be more likely to receive graduation card messages containing process- versus person-praise compliments (Study 5). American parents and students showed no effects of type of compliment.

Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Michael Ross, without whom this research would not have been possible. Thank you for always challenging me to look beyond p -values and to think like a scientist. I would also like to thank Mark Zanna and Richard Eibach for their helpful suggestions on earlier versions of this thesis. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the generous support that I have received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Dedication

For my parents.

Table of Contents

Author's Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Tables.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Overview of the Present Research.....	6
Study 1: Golfers' Responses to Compliments.....	11
Method.....	11
Results.....	13
Discussion.....	17
Study 2: Compliments about the Self versus Compliments about One's Children.....	18
Method.....	19
Results.....	24
Discussion.....	30
Study 3: Person-Praise versus Process-Praise Basketball Compliments.....	31
Method.....	33
Results.....	35
Discussion.....	44
Study 4: Greeting Card Compliments.....	46
Method.....	47
Results.....	48
Discussion.....	51
Study 5: Giving and Receiving Person-Praise versus Process-Praise Compliments.....	53
Method.....	53
Results.....	55
Discussion.....	61
General Discussion.....	62
References.....	66
Appendix A: Compliment Responses as a Function of Culture and Condition (Say vs. Feel; Study 2)....	71
Appendix B: English and Chinese Graduation Card Messages (Study 5)	72

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> Golf tournament winners' responses to compliments as a function of culture (Study 1).....	16
<i>Figure 2.</i> Participants' responses to compliments as a function of culture (Study 2).....	28
<i>Figure 3:</i> Path coefficients for the mediation model that tested whether trait ratings mediated the effect of culture on compliment acceptance (Study 2).....	29
<i>Figure 4.</i> Path coefficients for the mediation model that tested whether trait ratings mediated the effect of culture on compliment rejection (Study 2).	29
<i>Figure 5.</i> Participants' responses to person-praise compliments as a function of culture (Study 3).....	40
<i>Figure 6.</i> Participants' responses to process-praise compliments as a function of culture (Study 3)	40
<i>Figure 7.</i> European Canadian participants' responses to compliments as a function of condition (Study 3).....	41
<i>Figure 8.</i> Asian Canadian participants' responses to compliments as a function of condition (Study 3)...	41
<i>Figure 9.</i> Participants' acceptance of person-praise compliments as a function of culture and pre-compliment shooting percentage (Study 3).....	42
<i>Figure 10.</i> Participants' rejection of person-praise compliments as a function of culture and pre-compliment shooting percentage (Study 3).....	42
<i>Figure 11.</i> Participants' acceptance of person-praise compliments as a function of culture and pre-compliment shooting percentage (Study 3).....	43
<i>Figure 12.</i> Participants' rejection of person-praise compliments as a function of culture and pre-compliment shooting percentage (Study 3).....	43
<i>Figure 13.</i> Card compliment themes as a function of culture (Study 4).....	50
<i>Figure 14.</i> Mean likelihood of selecting person- and process-focused themed graduation card messages as a function of parents' culture (Study 5).....	59
<i>Figure 15.</i> Mean likelihood of receiving person- and process-focused themed graduation card messages as a function of students' culture (Study 5).....	60

List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of Mean Differences in Compliment Acceptance and Rejection across Cultures (Studies 1-5).....	73
Table 2: Summary of Mean Differences in Compliment Acceptance and Rejection within Cultures (Studies 1-3).....	74
Table 3: Summary of Mean Differences in Person- versus Process-Praise Compliments within Cultures (Studies 3-5).....	75
Table 4: Zero-Order Correlations among Types of Ratings (Study 1, Unmatched Tournaments).....	76
Table 5: Zero-Order Correlations among Types of Ratings (Study 2).....	77
Table 6: Partial Correlations between Types of Ratings Controlling for Trait Ratings (Study 2).....	78
Table 7: Zero-Order Correlations among Primary Dependent Measures (Study 3).....	79
Table 8: Partial Correlations between Types of Ratings Controlling for Pre-Compliment Shooting Percentage (Study 3).....	80
Table 9: Zero-Order Correlations among Primary Dependent Measures (Study 4).....	81
Table 10: Zero-Order Correlations between Mean Likelihood Ratings (Study 5).....	82

Introduction

Compliments are pervasive in everyday conversation in Western countries. They are often expressions of admiration and praise, and frequently a means of providing motivation or encouragement (Herbert, 1990; Manes, 1983; Wolfson, 1983). Compliments convey a positive evaluation about an individual on a certain domain, and are thus, expected to elicit a positive response. It is therefore somewhat surprising when this outcome is not always achieved as responses to compliments can vary markedly from agreement and positive elaboration to outright rejection.

Although research on this topic has been limited, cultural background has been identified as an important factor in determining how individuals may respond to compliments (Barnlund & Araki, 1985; Chen, 1993; Daikuhara, 1986). Culture has been defined as “a pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, categorizations, self-definitions, norms, role definitions, and values” among a group of people (Triandis, 1996, p. 408). Although culture is conceptually distinct from nationality, individuals who share a particular language and live in the same country often also share a common culture. Research suggests that East Asians (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans) tend to reject or downplay compliments, whereas Westerners (e.g., Canadians and Americans) tend to accept compliments.¹ This research has been conducted primarily by linguists who are interested in the sociolinguistic rules and syntactic patterns that regulate responses to compliments (Wolfson, 1983; Wolfson & Manes, 1980; Yu, 2005). Linguists interpret their findings as indicating that compliment responses are governed by culturally dictated politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Chen, 1993; Gu, 1990; Leech, 1983; Pomerantz, 1978). Responses by East Asians are thought to be guided largely by a modesty maxim in which the primary concern is with giving face or respect to the complimenter by denigrating oneself (Chen, 1993; Gu, 1990). In contrast, Westerners are believed to respond mostly in

¹ The terms ‘East Asians’ and ‘Westerners’ are frequently used in the literature to refer to individuals of East Asian descent (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, etc.) and individuals of European descent (European-Americans, European-Canadians etc.), respectively. Throughout this thesis, I will adopt these terms when discussing the cultural groups in general, but will use more descriptive terms (e.g., Asian Canadians vs. European Canadians) when discussing specific samples from the studies.

accordance with an agreement maxim: people create solidarity between the complimenter and themselves by expressing appreciation and agreement (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1984; Leech, 1983; Pomerantz, 1978).

From a social psychological perspective, however, responses to compliments are complex social behaviours that can reflect a number of both interpersonal and intrapersonal factors. The goal of the current research was to examine how well-documented and robust cultural differences in motivation and self-views may provide an alternative account for the way East Asians and Westerners respond to compliments. Furthermore, I sought to extend past research by comparing responses to different types of compliments (i.e., self compliments vs. family compliments and person-praise vs. process-praise compliments), and by examining the potential impact of compliments on subsequent performance.

Many linguistics studies of compliments have examined types of response strategies (e.g., accepting vs. rejecting) within one cultural group only (e.g., Daikuhara, 1986; Holmes, 1988). Cross-cultural comparisons were offered through discussions of how the current findings contrasted with those of previous studies, as opposed to direct statistical comparisons. These studies also tended to rely heavily on participants' self-report or the observational recall of field researchers. Despite their weaknesses, these studies yielded rich qualitative data with remarkably consistent findings. Researchers who have examined the responses to compliments by Westerners have reported a strong tendency towards accepting compliments among Americans (Herbert, 1988) and New Zealanders (Holmes, 1988). In contrast, researchers studying East Asians have found that Koreans (Han, 1992), Japanese (Daikuhara, 1986), and Taiwanese (Wang & Tsai, 2003) are far more likely to reject compliments than to accept them. One researcher, however, reported a strikingly different pattern of results. Chen (2003) presented Taiwanese Mandarin speakers with hypothetical compliment scenarios and asked them to indicate what they would consider to be "socially appropriate" responses. Participants reported far more accepting (81% - 88%) than rejecting responses (11% - 19%). These findings dramatically contrast with those from other studies with Taiwanese Mandarin speakers (Yu,

2004) and Mainland Chinese Mandarin speakers, and contradict the notion that East Asians are guided primarily by modesty. The author argued that the discrepancy between his findings and those of other researchers is evidence for intra-cultural variations among different groups of Mandarin speakers. However, these results could be reconciled in a different way. Chen examined perceptions of socially acceptable responses, whereas the other researchers sought to examine actual responses to compliments. Taken together, these results may suggest that Taiwanese do indeed consider acceptance to be a socially appropriate and thus polite response—just not one that they happen to use frequently.

In addition to the single culture studies, there have been a handful of studies in which researchers have directly contrasted responses to compliments by East Asians and Westerners (Barnlund & Araki, 1985; Cedar, 2006; Chen, 1993; Yu, 2004). Barnlund and Araki (Study 1; 1985) conducted semi-structured interviews with Japanese and Americans. In recalling the last compliment they received, Japanese reported responding with more rejection than acceptance, whereas the reverse was true for Americans. Similarly, in two studies that examined responses to hypothetical scenarios, both Mainland Chinese (Chen, 1993) and Taiwanese Chinese participants (Yu, 2004) responded with less acceptance and more rejection than their American counterparts. In a study that investigated responses to an interviewer's compliments, Cedar (2006) reported that 80% of responses by Americans involved acceptance or positive elaboration (i.e., playing up the compliment), whereas only 50% of responses by Thais did. It is worth noting, however, that participants in this study received multiple compliments, the number and topic of which were not reported in the article, and that the study sample size was small. Also, Cedar did not statistically compare the results from the two cultures and the data provided in the article are unanalyzable according to conventional statistical analysis. Furthermore, as with many of the other studies, the interviewers and coders in this study were not necessarily blind to participants' ethnicity.

In all of the studies reported above, researchers interpreted the findings using one model of politeness or another (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Gu, 1990; Leech, 1983; Pomerantz, 1978).

Responses to compliments, as with any public response, are subject to politeness norms and impression management concerns. However, cultural differences in responses to compliments may also reflect differences in motivation and self-evaluation. A meta-analysis of cross-cultural studies of self-enhancement indicated that the motivation to view oneself positively is much more evident among Westerners than among East Asians (Heine & Hamamura, 2007). East Asians not only lack self-enhancement motivation, but possess a general motivation to engage in self-criticism and pursue self-improvement (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). In line with these motivational differences, East Asians report lower self-esteem (Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Heine, Takata, & Lehman, 1997), and make more external attributions for success and fewer external attributions for failure (Anderson, 1999; Endo & Meijer, 2004) than their Western counterparts. Japanese persist more after failure, whereas European Americans persist more after success (Heine et al. 2001). Cultural differences in self-enhancement and self-criticism are also reflected in child-rearing practices. European-American mothers focus more on their children's past successes, whereas Taiwanese mothers focus more on their children's failures (Miller, Wang, Sandel, & Cho, 2002; Wang, 2004). Some of these cultural differences have been replicated on unobtrusive behavioural measures (e.g., amount of time spent viewing feedback; number of trials viewed before judging whether one outperforms or has been outperformed by others), and thus, cannot be attributed solely to self-presentational concerns (Heine et al., 2001; Heine, Takata, & Lehman, 2000; Takata, 2003).

I propose that cultural differences in responses to compliments reflect these underlying differences in motivation and self-views. Self-enhancement and self-criticism motivations may have both direct effects on responses to compliments and indirect effects through self-views. Self-enhancement motivations could promote greater acceptance of compliments because compliments directly satisfy individuals' needs for self-enhancement. In addition, self-enhancement motivations could elicit positive self-views. Such positive self-views would, in turn, yield greater acceptance of compliments because the compliments seem justified. Self-criticism motivations could also have dual

effects. Self-criticism motivations could lead individuals to directly reject compliments because compliments offer praise rather than disparagement. As well, self-criticism motivations could promote negative self-views. These negative self-views would, in turn, yield less accepting responses to compliments because praise seems unjustified. In sum, cultural differences in both motivation and self-views should lead East Asians to be less accepting and more rejecting of compliments than Westerners are. Within cultures, Westerners are predicted to be more accepting than rejecting of compliments, where as the reverse is expected to be true for East Asians.

Self compliments versus family compliments

To date, research has focused exclusively on compliments relevant to the self. However, compliments can also be addressed to one individual, but be about another. Common examples of these types of compliments include praise about one's spouse or children. This is a particularly interesting type of compliment to examine within a cross-cultural context. The East Asian self-concept is thought to be highly collectivistic and interdependent, whereas the Western self-concept is considered individualistic and independent (Kitayama, et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Some researchers have suggested that East Asians may show enhancement on dimensions relevant to the interdependent self (i.e., ratings of one's group or group-serving biases; Hewstone, Bond, & Wan, 1983; Muramoto & Yamaguchi, 1997). In line with this thinking, East Asians may be hypothesized to be rejecting of compliments about the self, but accepting of compliments about close others. Westerners' tendency to be independent and individualistic (Kitayama, et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) suggests that they may be more self-enhancing when responding to self-compliments than when responding to compliments about close others. Previous research, however, has shown that even Westerners often incorporate close others into their own self-concept (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). It is possible, then, that the motivations guiding responses to self-compliments may also guide those about close others. Therefore, an alternative prediction would be that East Asians may be as rejecting of family compliments as self compliments, whereas Westerners would be as accepting of family compliments as self compliments.

Person-praise versus process-praise compliments

The current studies also examined cultural differences in response to person-praise and process-praise compliments. Dweck and her colleagues first proposed the person-process distinction in their studies of children's responses to praise and criticism (Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998). Person feedback (e.g., "You're a great singer.") is broad; it promotes the belief that abilities are innate and fixed (entity theory). Process feedback (e.g., "Your singing was wonderfully clear and on pitch.") relates to effort and how people do things; it encourages the belief that abilities are malleable and can be improved (incremental theory; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Children praised for intelligence were more likely to hold entity beliefs about intelligence, whereas those praised for hard work were more likely to hold incremental beliefs about intelligence (Muller & Dweck, 1998).

Relevant to the current research, there appear to be cultural differences in people's tendency to endorse incremental versus entity theories of personality and ability. East Asians hold stronger incremental beliefs than North Americans, who tend to hold stronger entity beliefs. Korean participants report that personality is more malleable than do American participants (Norenzayan, Choi, & Nisbett, 2002). East Asian high school students are more likely than their American counterparts to report that hard work is the primary determinant of achievement in math (Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). Similarly, Japanese students report that effort accounts for a greater proportion of intelligence than American students do (Heine et al., 2001).

Generalizing from these findings, I proposed that East Asians and Westerners will have differential preferences for person-praise and process-praise compliments. To an East Asian, person-praise compliments may seem too global and too strong. Process-praise compliments may be preferred because they limit the praise to specific acts. Westerners, who hold strong entity theories, may expect compliments to be phrased in a person-praise way. In such cases, process-praise, which focuses on effort instead of natural ability, may seem insufficient or even a "back-handed" compliment, suggesting that hard work was needed to compensate for a lack of talent.

Overview of the present research

I examined cultural differences in compliments in a series of five studies using varied methodologies. Study 1 compared responses to compliments among East Asian and Western female golfers. Previous studies have primarily relied on participants' self-reports and involved compliments for everyday events. Furthermore, cultural differences were not directly compared in the few linguistics studies that involved real-world observations. The goal of Study 1 was to extend previous self-report studies by examining cultural differences in responses to compliments within a real-world context where the focus of the compliment was an objective and personally important outcome. East Asian golfers were expected to be less accepting and more rejecting of compliments than Western golfers. Western golfers were expected to be more accepting than rejecting of compliments, whereas East Asian golfers were predicted to be more rejecting than accepting of compliments.

The purpose of Study 2 was to compare responses to compliments about the self (self compliments) to compliments about a close other (the respondents' children). If East Asians enhance on dimensions relevant to the interdependent self (e.g., Hewstone, Bond, & Wan, 1983; Muramoto & Yamaguchi, 1997), then East Asians may reject compliments about the self, but accept compliments about close others. Previous research has also shown that people often incorporate close others into their own self-concept (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Therefore, an alternative prediction is that East Asians would respond to compliments about close others as they would to compliments about the self—with less acceptance (or more rejection) relative to Westerners. The predictions for Westerners were similarly equivocal. On the one hand, Westerners are thought to be independent and individualistic (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), which would suggest that they may be more self-enhancing when responding to self compliments than when responding to compliments about close others. However, even Westerners often incorporate close others into their own self-concept (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Therefore, cultural differences in compliments about one's children may mirror those of self compliments, with Westerners being more accepting and East Asians being more rejecting.

An additional goal of Study 2 was to examine the possible association between perceived accuracy to compliment responses. If, as I hypothesized, cultural differences in acceptance and rejection of compliments reflect, in part, cultural differences in self-evaluations then the compliment responses of both groups should correlate with their judgments of the accuracy of the compliments. Compliments that are considered accurate should be accepted more and rejected less in both cultural groups. Furthermore, consistent with a social psychological perspective, perceptions of accuracy should mediate cultural differences in compliment responses—Westerners should be more accepting and less rejecting of compliments than Easterners because Westerners perceive the compliments to be more accurate. A linguistics perspective, on the other hand, proposes that compliments reflect politeness strategies, rather than beliefs about the accuracy of the praise. Such a view suggests that compliment responses may be relatively independent of perceived accuracy. Westerners could express agreement with the complimenter by accepting praise that they judge to be either accurate or inaccurate. East Asians could express modesty by rejecting both accurate and inaccurate compliments.

In Study 1, participants received primarily process-praise compliments (how they performed and their approach to the golf game). In Study 2, participants responded to person-praise compliments about intelligence or attractiveness. In Studies 3, 4, and 5, I examined cultural differences in person- and process-praise compliments more systematically.

The purpose of Study 3 was to examine cultural differences in responses to person-praise and process-praise compliments in a basketball context. Participants in the person-praise condition were complimented for having good basketball ability. Participants in the process-praise condition were complimented for having worked hard on their shooting. European Canadians were predicted to be more accepting and less rejecting of compliments than Asian Canadians. I expected this cultural difference to be especially pronounced following person praise, because Westerners are particularly accepting of person praise and East Asians are particularly rejecting of person praise. A second goal of Study 3 was to examine the potential effect of prior performance on cultural differences in

compliment responses. If cultural differences in responses to compliments reflect self-evaluations and not simply politeness strategies, then both cultural groups should show greater acceptance (and less rejection) of compliments when performance is high rather than low. These results, if found, would extend those of Study 2 by demonstrating that compliment responses reflect both perceived accuracy of the compliments (Study 2) and objective measures of performance (Study 3).

The effect of prior performance was predicted to be comparable for person- and process-praise compliments and among both cultural groups. Regardless of the type of compliment and culture, compliments given after a successful performance should be accepted more and rejected less than those given after a less successful performance. An alternative hypothesis is that prior performance may only predict responses to compliments that are generally accepted by a specific cultural group (East Asians and process-praise or Westerners and person-praise). It seems likely, however, that even if East Asians are rejecting of person-praise compliments in general, they may still reject compliments for poorer performances more vehemently than compliments for more successful performances. Similarly, even if Westerners are less accepting of process-praise than person-praise compliments, they may still accept process-praise compliments more after a successful performance than after a less successful performance.

Finally, Study 3 examined the impact of compliments on subsequent performance, and importantly, whether such impact varies by culture. To my knowledge, Study 3 was the first study to investigate the impact of compliments on performance across cultures. Praise that is consistent with one's implicit views of ability was predicted to improve performance by increasing motivation to perform well. In some cases, praise that is inconsistent with one's implicit theories may even be demotivating. For example, praise about effort may be discouraging rather than encouraging to entity theorists if it is interpreted as suggesting a lack of natural ability. In support of this view, ability praise has often been found to increase performance and self-efficacy among Westerners (Schunk, 1994; 1996). Western children who were told that they were "very good" and had "excellent ability" in mathematics improved their performance more than those who were told that they had worked hard

(Miller, Brickman, & Bolen, 1975). Because Westerners have been shown to hold stronger entity views of abilities, I predicted that these individuals would show better performance after receiving person- than process-praise compliments. I also hypothesized that Asian Canadians would show a greater improvement in performance after receiving process- than person-praise compliments. East Asians tend to hold an incremental belief of ability (Heine et al., 2001; Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Norenzayan, Choi, & Nisbett, 2002) and a strong self-improvement motivation (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). Therefore, compliments about hard work and effort may be especially motivating for Asian Canadians and may lead to greater effort and improved outcomes on subsequent performances.

Studies 1-3 examined people's responses to compliments. The purpose of Study 4 was to investigate the other side of compliment behaviour by assessing how East Asians and Westerners compliment other people. In Study 4, I examined compliments in Chinese and American greeting cards. Cultural researchers in recent years have emphasized the need to examine cultural phenomena at both the level of the individual and the sociocultural environments in which they live (e.g., Adams & Markus, 2004; Cohen, 2007; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008; Oyserman, Coons, & Kimmelmier, 2002). Therefore, a content analysis of greeting cards was selected to add to the self-report data from the previous studies. The words and images in Chinese and American graduation cards were analyzed for the presence of person-praise and process-praise compliment themes. Chinese cards were predicted to reflect stronger process-praise themes, whereas American cards were predicted to reflect stronger person-praise themes.

The purpose of Study 5 was to extend the findings of Study 4 by demonstrating cultural differences in preferences for cards containing either person- or process-praise compliment themes. An online survey firm recruited Chinese and European-American participants. Chinese participants were predicted to prefer process- over person-praise graduation cards. European Americans were predicted to prefer the reverse. Chinese participants were also expected to prefer process-praise

themed cards more than European Americans would, whereas European Americans were expected to prefer person-praise cards more than Chinese participants would.

Study 1: Responses to Compliments among Golfers

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine responses to compliments within a real-world context—golf tournament wins by East Asian and Western golfers. A number of features of this naturalistic context made it particularly powerful for examining responses to compliments, and differentiate it from previous compliment research. First, the compliments in this context involved a domain of great personal relevance. The respondents in this study were all elite golfers; therefore, the domain being complimented was not only of high importance, but also carried with it significant financial and career-related rewards. In contrast, previous studies on compliments have tended to involve self-reported responses to compliments about everyday events such as compliments about appearance, possessions, etc. (e.g., Barnlund & Araki, 1985; Chen, 1993). Second, in golf tournaments, there is a clear and unambiguous winner; thus, the compliments could not easily be dismissed as subjective. I am unaware of any previous studies of compliment responses to an objectively measured outcome. East Asian golfers were predicted to be less accepting and more rejecting of compliments than Western golfers. Within cultures, Western golfers were expected to be more accepting than rejecting of compliments, whereas the reverse was predicted to be true for East Asian golfers.

Method

Participants

The final sample consisted of 40 female golf tournament winners (19 East Asian; 21 European). The sample was exclusively female because of the lack of East Asian male golfers in men's golf.² The East Asian sample was comprised of individuals who were of East Asian descent (14 Korea; 1 Taiwan; 4 U.S.). The Western sample consisted of individuals who were of European

² There do not appear to be gender differences in giving or receiving compliments among Japanese and Americans (Barnlund & Araki; 1985). Similarly, no gender differences were found in any of the studies included in this thesis. In contrast, one study reported that Taiwanese men were most likely to reject a compliment by disagreeing with it, whereas Taiwanese women were most likely to respond by questioning the compliment (Wang & Tsai; 2003). These findings suggest that Asian male golfers may reject compliments even more strongly than their female counterparts.

descent (1 Australia; 1 England; 1 Ireland; 1 Germany; 1 Norway; 1 Scotland; 3 Sweden; 12 U.S.).

The Western sample ($M = 30.43$, $SD = 9.38$) was significantly older than the East Asian sample ($M = 21.00$, $SD = 3.82$), $F(1, 38) = 16.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .31$.

Procedure and Materials

Written transcripts of interviews with East Asian and Western female golf tournaments winners were examined for examples of compliments and responses to compliments. These transcripts were obtained from an online database created by ASAP sports (www.asapsports.com), a company that specializes in verbatim transcripts of press conferences and player interviews at sporting events. Between March 2002 and March 2009, there were 78 transcripts involving tournaments won by Western golfers (i.e., North American or European) and 46 involving tournaments won by East Asian golfers (i.e., Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese etc.). Seventy-three percent of the transcripts ($n = 90$ out of 124) included at least one example of a compliment by either the interviewer or event moderator. The proportion of interviews that included at least one compliment did not differ by culture, $X^2 < 1$. At least one example of a compliment was included in 71% ($n = 55$ of 78) of the interviews with Western winners and 76% ($n = 35$ of 46) of the interviews with East Asian winners. The compliments typically involved a combination of praise for the golfer's performance and congratulations for her win (e.g., "Congratulations on your first win on the LPGA tour. You became the 5th Rolex first-time winner this year, and you played four rounds in the 60s. How are you feeling right now?").

In golf, the top players tend to dominate the game, with a few of players winning multiple events. In the current study, 40 unique winners (19 East Asian; 21 European) were included in the 90 transcripts examined. For each dependent variable, I averaged across all compliments that participants received, including both multiple wins and multiple compliments per win. Golf tournaments can also vary markedly by prestige, difficulty, and prize money. I analyzed the amount of tournament prize money as a proxy for tournament importance and prestige. In all cases, the interviewers who provided the compliments to the golfers were of European descent.

Coding of compliments and responses to compliments. Coders were blind to both the experimental hypotheses and players' ethnicity. All references to players' names or ethnicity were removed from the coding material beforehand. Two Asian-Canadian coders and two European-Canadian coders independently read and rated each compliment and its corresponding compliment response. The strength of each compliment was rated using a 7-point scale (1 = *slight praise*; 7 = *extreme praise*). Coders' ratings of compliment strength showed good agreement (interrater $r = .91$).³

Each compliment response was rated on two dimensions: the extent to which it indicated acceptance of the compliment (e.g., agreement, additional self-praise, emphasis on the significance of the win, etc.) and the extent to which it indicated rejection of the compliment (e.g., disagreement with compliment, self-criticism, minimization of the significance of the win, etc.). Compliment acceptance and rejection ratings were reported on two separate 5-point scales (1 = *not at all*; 2 = *slightly*; 3 = *moderately*; 4 = *very*; 5 = *extremely*). Examples of responses to compliments include: "I mean, I had played really great today. I made birds on the first hole and made an eagle on 7." and "This year, I didn't play very well, but at the end of the year, winning such a big event is a very nice way to end the year." The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for acceptance and rejection ratings was .88 and .83, respectively, indicating good reliability among the coders.

Results

As noted earlier, Western golfers were significantly older than their East Asian counterparts. However, there were no significant correlations between age and any of the primary dependent variables (r s: age and compliment strength = .13, $p = .43$, age and compliment acceptance = .19, $p = .24$, age and compliment rejection = -.17, $p = .30$). Also, controlling for age did not alter any of the results reported below. Therefore, age will not be reported in any of the subsequent analyses.

³ Using a random subset of the compliments in this study ($n = 30$), two independent coders (one Asian and one European Canadian) found that the compliments in this study were primarily process-praise focused, $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. Also, the type of compliments received by the golfers (person-praise vs. process-praise) did not appear to differ by culture, $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$.

Each player was treated as a single unit of analysis—for each dependent variable I averaged across all compliments that participants received, including both compliments across multiple wins and multiple compliments per win. For example, I created a summary compliment strength score for each player by averaging across compliment strength for all compliments received by that player and across all tournaments. Summary compliment acceptance and rejection scores were computed in a similar fashion.

Frequency of tournament wins and compliments

Two separate one-way between-subjects analyses of variances (ANOVAs) were conducted on the total number of tournament wins per player and the total number of compliments received by each player. Results indicated that, on average, players won 2.45 ($SD = 2.42$) tournaments and received a total of 2.90 ($SD = 3.33$) compliments. Neither of these dependent variables differed by culture, both F s < 1 , (tournament wins per player: $\eta_p^2 < .01$, $M_{Western} = 2.67$, $SD = 3.18$; $M_{East Asian} = 2.21$, $SD = 1.13$; compliments per player: $\eta_p^2 < .01$, $M_{Western} = 3.05$, $SD = 4.38$; $M_{East Asian} = 2.74$, $SD = 1.66$).

Tournament importance or prestige

The average prize money for each tournament was \$276,721 ($SD = \$106,727$). A one-way between-subjects ANOVA indicated that the amount did not differ by culture, $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, ($M_{Western} = \$273,880$, $SD = \$67,013$; $M_{East Asian} = \$279,782$, $SD = \$140,695$).

Compliment strength

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA revealed that compliments were moderately strong ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.17$) and did not differ by culture $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, ($M_{Western} = 4.15$, $SD = 1.33$; $M_{East Asian} = 3.97$, $SD = 1.00$).

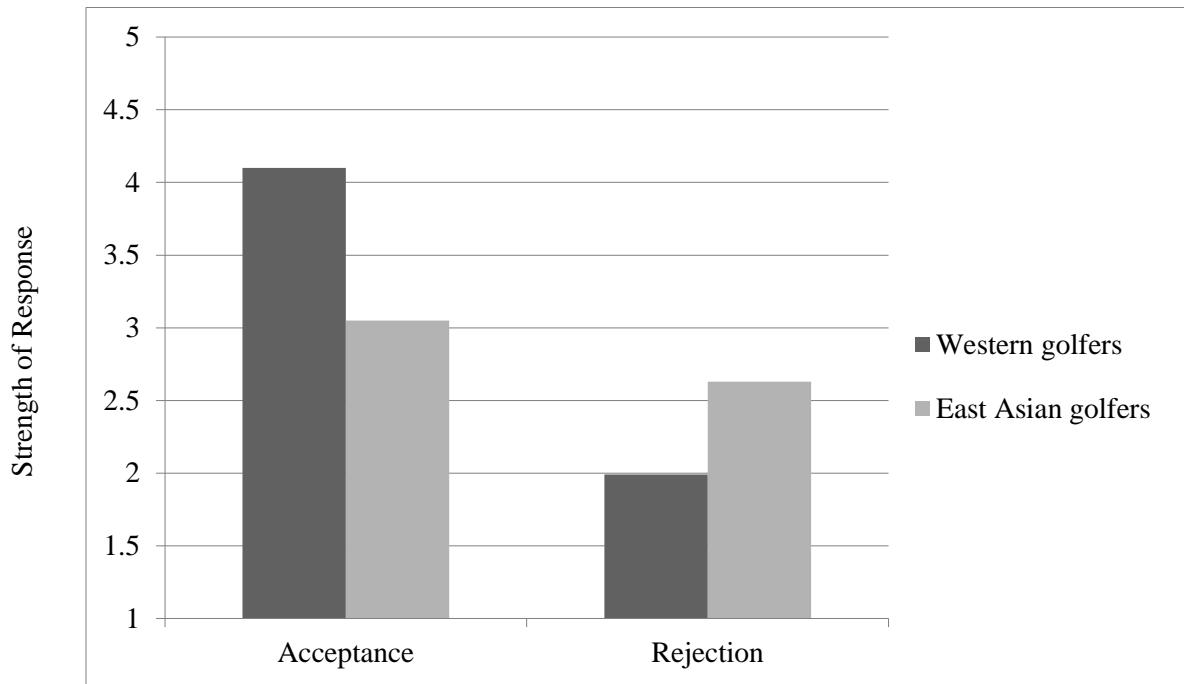
Acceptance and rejection of compliments

Responses to compliments were analysed using a 2 (culture: East Asian vs. Western) x 2 (response type: acceptance vs. rejection) mixed ANOVA, with response type as the within-subjects

variable. Across all participants, responses to compliments reflected greater acceptance ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.02$) than rejection ($M = 2.29$, $SD = .92$), $F(1, 38) = 42.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .53$. However, this main effect of response type was qualified by the predicted culture by response type interaction, $F(1, 38) = 18.81$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .33$ (see Figure 1). Western golfers were significantly more accepting of compliments than East Asian golfers, $F(1, 38) = 14.33$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .27$, ($M_{Western} = 4.10$, $SD = .95$; $M_{East Asian} = 3.05$, $SD = .80$). East Asian golfers were more rejecting of the compliments than Western golfers, $F(1, 38) = 5.26$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$, ($M_{East Asian} = 2.63$, $SD = .93$; $M_{Western} = 1.99$, $SD = .82$). Western golfers were significantly more accepting than rejecting of the compliments, $F(1, 20) = 59.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .75$, whereas East Asian golfers were more even-handed in their response, $F(1, 18) = 2.30$, $p = .15$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. Furthermore, the culture by response type interaction remained significant even when prize money and compliment strength were included in the analyses as covariates.

Although the amount of prize money did not differ between culture, and the results were unchanged even when controlling for prize money, it remains possible that the tournaments won by East Asian and Western golfers may have differed in other ways. Such differences could potentially have systematically influenced how players responded to the compliments. To address this issue, I repeated the critical analyses using only those instances in which a win by an East Asian player could be matched to a win by a Western player from the same tournament ($N = 24$). In cases where players won the same tournaments multiple times, transcripts were matched such that a win by an East Asian golfer occurred closest in time to a win by a Western player. For example, if an East Asian golfer won a tournament in 2001 and a Western golfer won the same tournament in 2003 and 2008, the transcripts of the win for 2001 would be matched with that for 2003. Even when matched by tournament, the predicted culture by response type interaction remained significant, $F(1, 22) = 6.68$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$, and revealed a pattern of means similar to that of the unmatched results.

Figure 1. Tournament winners' responses to compliments as a function of culture (Study 1).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Discussion

Study 1 demonstrated the predicted cultural differences in responses to compliments within a naturalistic setting. Western golfers were significantly more accepting and less rejecting of compliments than East Asian golfers. These results are particularly compelling because they involve compliments about an unambiguous and objectively measured success. Within culture comparisons revealed that Western golfers were more accepting than rejecting of compliments, whereas East Asian golfers accepted and rejected compliments to a similar degree. The more even-handed response style exhibited by East Asian golfers is consistent with previous research demonstrating a tendency among East Asians towards a dialectical style of thinking in which two seemingly contradictory beliefs are not necessarily seen as incompatible (Peng & Nisbett, 1999).

The golfers in this study were responding to the interviewers' compliments about their performance in a highly public context (televised interviews). Therefore, in addition to reflecting self-views, as I hypothesized, participants' compliment responses may also have reflected politeness strategies, as suggested by linguists (Daikuhara, 1986; Holmes, 1988), or the golfers' attempts to present themselves favorably to the viewing audience. East Asian golfers may have downplayed the compliments to display modesty to the viewing audience, whereas Western golfers may have played up their acceptance of the compliments to appear agreeable.

Other limitations of this study include the lack of control over the compliments given and the exclusively female sample. The issue concerning the lack of control over the nature of compliments was partially addressed by examining the strength of compliments given. Results revealed that the compliments given to East Asian golfers were similar to those provided to Western golfers. Furthermore, controlling for compliment strength did not alter any of the findings. Therefore, differences in compliment acceptance and rejection between the two cultural groups cannot be attributed to differences in the strength of the compliments. Study 2 addresses the limitations of Study 1 by including participants of both sexes and examining cultural differences using a more controlled and less public paradigm.

Study 2: Compliments about the Self versus Compliments about One's Children

“Here's a question I often get... 'Who are you doing all this pushing for —your daughters—...or yourself?' I find this a very Western question to ask (because in Chinese thinking, the child is an extension of the self).”

Chua (2011, p.148)

In addition to addressing the limitations of Study 1, the primary purpose of Study 2 was to examine whether cultural differences in responses to compliments about the self extend to compliments about family members.

Self-compliment participants were men and women 15-30 years of age, and other-compliment participants were mothers of children ranging in age from 15-30 years old. The participants were either Asian or European Canadians. Participants were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire assessed how they would respond to two hypothetical scenarios involving compliments about intelligence and attractiveness, respectively. In the other-compliment condition, the praise was directed at participants' children. In the self-compliment condition the praise was directed at the self. The use of hypothetical compliments ensured that each participant would be responding to compliments of the same type and strength of praise. Attractiveness and intelligence were selected because these domains have previously been identified as comparable in importance to Asian and European Canadians (Heine & Lehman, 1999).

I hypothesized that Asian-Canadian participants would be less accepting and more rejecting of self compliments than European-Canadian participants. Asian Canadians were also predicted to respond to compliments about close others as they would to compliments about the self, reflecting interdependence and a collectivistic self-construal (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). An alternative hypothesis would be that Asian Canadians may regard other-compliments as an

opportunity to enhance on a dimension relevant to the interdependent self (Hewstone, Bond, & Wan, 1983; Muramoto & Yamaguchi, 1997). Therefore, Asian Canadians may be more accepting of compliments about close others than compliments about the self. The predictions for European Canadians were similarly equivocal. On the one hand, Westerners are thought to be individualistic and view the self as independent (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), which may suggest that they would be more self-enhancing when responding to self compliments than when responding to compliments about close others. However, research has shown that even Westerners often incorporate close others into their own self-concept (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Therefore, compliments about one's children may mirror those of self compliments for both cultural groups, with Westerners being more accepting and East Asians being more rejecting of compliments.

Finally, I assessed participants' ratings of the importance of the complimented traits and the degree to which the target possessed them (i.e., perceived accuracy). I predicted that both cultural groups would find it important to possess the complimented traits, which would suggest that cultural differences in acceptance and rejection of the compliments are unlikely attributable to differences in perceived importance. I also predicted that Asian Canadians would rate the compliment recipient as possessing less of the complimented trait than would European Canadians. This finding would be consistent with research demonstrating stronger self-enhancement motivation among Westerners (Heine & Hamamura, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and stronger self-critical motivation among East Asians (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, Norasakkunkit, 1997; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). More important, I predicted that cultural differences in compliment responses would be mediated by participants' trait ratings. That is, Asian Canadians are predicted to be less accepting of compliments because they perceive these compliments as less accurate. This finding would support the social psychological perspective that cultural differences in compliment responses reflect underlying differences in self-views across cultures.

Method

For ease of communication, I labeled participants who responded to compliments about themselves as “self-compliment participants” and participants who completed the survey about their children as “mother participants.”

Participants

Self-compliment participants. Ninety-three participants between the ages of 15 and 30 were recruited from a kiosk at Pacific Mall, an East Asian mall located in Markham, Ontario. Although the store owners at Pacific Mall are almost exclusively East Asian, the ethnicity of the mall visitors is more diverse. The final sample consisted of 57 Asian Canadians (20 males; 37 females) and 34 European Canadians (17 males; 17 females). Thirty-six Asian-Canadian participants indicated that they were born in an East Asian country (12 China; 16 Hong Kong; 3 Singapore; 2 Taiwan; 1 Thailand; 1 Macau; 1 Philippines) and 21 indicated that they were born in a North American country (20 Canada; 1 U.S.). Foreign-born Asian-Canadian participants reported living in Canada for an average of 9.09 years ($SD = 6.84$). Of the 34 European-Canadian participants, 33 indicated that they were born in Canada and one participant indicated that he was born in Europe. The data from two participants were excluded from analyses because they were neither of East Asian nor European ethnicity. The proportion of male to female participants did not differ by culture, $\chi^2 < 1$. The European sample ($M = 25.33$, $SD = 8.77$) was significantly older than the East Asian sample ($M = 20.28$, $SD = 4.70$), $F(1, 79) = 11.47$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$.

Mothers' sample. Mothers were recruited from two sources. Fifty-three mothers were recruited from a kiosk at Pacific Mall (36 Chinese Canadian; 17 European Canadian). Because of the difficulty of recruiting European Canadian mothers at Pacific Mall, an East Asian heritage mall, an additional 35 mothers (9 Chinese Canadian; 26 European Canadian) were recruited using a snowball sampling procedure, which is outlined below. The final sample consisted of eighty-eight mothers (45 Chinese Canadian; 43 European Canadian). The data from two participants were excluded from analyses because they were neither of East Asian nor European ethnicity. To be eligible for the study, mothers were required to have at least one child who was between the ages of 15 and 30 years old.

Participants who had more than one child in this age range were randomly assigned to complete the survey about one of their children. The majority of Chinese-Canadian mothers indicated that they were born in an East Asian country (6 China; 24 Hong Kong; 1 Japan; 1 Taiwan; 1 Macau; 9 Canada; 1 U.S.; 2 did not indicate their country of birth). Chinese-Canadian mothers reported living in Canada for an average of 18.00 years ($SD = 8.96$). Among the Chinese-Canadian mothers, 23 completed the survey about their daughter and 22 completed the survey about their son. The majority of European-Canadian mothers indicated that they were born in Canada (39 Canada; 2 Russia; 1 Belarus, 2 did not indicate country of birth). Among European-Canadian mothers, 21 completed the survey about their daughter and 22 completed the survey about their son. The proportion of mothers who completed the survey about their sons and daughters did not differ by culture, $X^2 < 1$. The age of participants' children also did not differ by culture, $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, ($M_{European} = 19.95$, $SD = 7.37$; $M_{East Asian} = 21.34$, $SD = 5.25$).

Procedure, materials, and measures

A kiosk was set up at the mall and displayed a poster requesting a) participants between the ages of 15 and 30 years old and b) mothers with children between the ages of 15 and 30 years old. Participants completed a questionnaire packet that contained two compliment scenarios, questions about the traits being complimented, and demographic items. Self-compliment surveys involved hypothetical compliments directed at the participant that were given by the participants' mothers' friend. Surveys that were distributed to mothers involved hypothetical compliments directed towards the participant about her child that were given by the participants' friend. The two versions of the survey were nearly identical with only a few exceptions that are noted below. Mothers who were recruited via a snow-ball sampling method completed the materials in the form of an anonymous, mail-back questionnaire. Research assistants in other labs and acquaintances of the researchers recruited these participants and distributed the anonymous mail-back questionnaires to qualified individuals. The recruiters were not acquainted with one another. All participants received a \$5 gift certificate in appreciation of their time.

Scenarios. Each participant read about an intelligence compliment scenario and an attractiveness compliment scenario, which were presented in counterbalanced order.

Self-compliment scenarios began as follows:

Imagine that you are having lunch with your mom when your mom sees a friend of hers, May, whom you have never met. May walks over and says hello. After chatting with you for awhile, May says, “You are very intelligent.”

Scenarios distributed to the mothers began as follows:

Imagine that you and your son [daughter] are having lunch when you see a friend of yours, May, whom your son [daughter] has never met. May walks over and says hello. After chatting with your son [daughter] for awhile, May turns to you and says, “Your son [daughter] is very intelligent.”

In the attractiveness compliment scenario, “very intelligent” was replaced with “very good looking” for male participants and “very pretty” for female participants. The materials for Asian-Canadian participants were identical to those for European-Canadian participants with one exception: the word “lunch” was replaced with “dim sum” in the scenarios read by Asian-Canadian participants. This was to encourage a match between the ethnicity of the participant and May, the hypothetical person giving the compliments.⁴

After reading each scenario, participants were asked to indicate how they would respond to the compliment. Participants were asked, “What would you say in response to this compliment?” and were instructed to “write down the exact words that you would say.”⁵

Mother participants were asked to rate how attractive and intelligent they thought their child was, using scales of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very*). Mother participants also indicated how important they

⁴ A pilot study (Asian Canadians = 10; European Canadians = 10) confirmed that Asian Canadians expected May to be Asian, whereas European Canadians expected May to be Caucasian.

⁵ Participants were also randomly assigned to either describe what they would say in response to the compliments or how they would privately feel about the compliments. Results revealed that acceptance and rejection scores did not differ across the two measures and including condition (say vs. feel) as an independent variable did not alter any of the results. Therefore, I collapsed across these conditions in subsequent analyses (see Appendix A for results of a Culture x Condition x Response Type ANOVA on compliment responses).

considered it to be for their child to be attractive and intelligent (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very important*). Self-compliment participants rated their own level of attractiveness and intelligence, and perceived importance of being attractive and intelligent using the same scales.

Survey language. All children and European mothers completed the survey in English. Asian-Canadian mothers, who were all of Chinese ethnicity, completed the questionnaire packages in either Chinese ($n = 30$) or English ($n = 15$). Because English is a second language for many of the Chinese mothers, these participants were offered a choice of survey language to accommodate their varied levels of English proficiency. The Chinese surveys were created by having one research assistant translate the original English surveys into Chinese and then a second research assistant back-translated them into English to ensure their equivalence in meaning. Any inconsistencies between translated and original responses were resolved through discussion.

Coding of responses to compliments. Chinese open-ended compliment responses were first translated into English by a bilingual research assistant. A second bilingual research assistant then verified the English translations by comparing them to the original Chinese responses. Any inconsistencies between the translated and original responses were resolved through discussion. Two Asian-Canadian coders and two European-Canadian coders rated participants' open-ended responses to compliments. All coders were blind to both the hypotheses of the study and participants' ethnicity.

Coders rated the extent to which participants' responses indicated acceptance and rejection of the compliment, using two separate 5-point scales (1 = *not at all*; 2 = *slightly*; 3 = *moderately*; 4 = *very*; 5 = *extremely*). Responses that included additional praise (e.g., "I received the highest mark in my class.") were given high acceptance scores and low rejection scores, whereas responses that included self-criticism (e.g., "I am overweight and have bad skin.") were given low acceptance scores and high rejection scores. Responses that indicated partial acceptance and rejection (e.g., "I am only attractive if I dress up" and "I am smart in some ways but not in others.") were rated accordingly. Some examples of responses to compliments by mothers included: "Yes, she is [intelligent], she was at the top of her class in high school."; "No, no, no. He's not [attractive]. He's too fat." The average

ICC for acceptance ratings and rejection ratings was .94 and .93, respectively, indicating that reliability among coders was substantial.

Results

Preliminary analyses indicated that neither child gender (child gender among mother participants and own gender among self-compliment participants), nor type of compliment (attractiveness or intelligence) moderated any of the results. Therefore, I averaged across these variables in all subsequent analyses.

Survey language

Chinese mothers had the option of completing the survey in either Chinese ($n = 30$) or English ($n = 15$). To examine whether Chinese mothers responded differently on our primary dependent variables depending on language, I conducted two separate between-subjects ANOVAs on compliment acceptance and compliment rejection, with survey language as the independent variable. Chinese mothers responding in Chinese ($M = 2.31, SD = .81$) were equally accepting of compliments as those responding in English ($M = 2.63, SD = .96$), $F(1, 43) = 1.31, p = .26, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Similarly, there was no effect of survey language on Chinese mothers' degree of compliment rejection, $F(1, 43) = 1.30, p = .26, \eta_p^2 = .03$ ($M_{\text{Chinese survey}} = 1.94, SD = .87$; $M_{\text{English survey}} = 1.63, SD = .91$). Therefore, I collapsed across survey language in the analyses below.

Ratings of importance of complimented traits

Average trait importance ratings were examined using a 2 (culture: Asian Canadians vs. European Canadians) x 2 (participant type: mother vs. self) between-subjects ANOVA. The results revealed a significant main effect of culture, $F(1, 163) = 6.36, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .04$, and a main effect of participant type, $F(1, 163) = 6.29, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Asian Canadians ($M = 5.12, SD = 1.29$) considered it more important to be higher on the complimented traits than did European Canadians ($M = 4.71, SD = 1.12$). Therefore, if Asian Canadians were found to be less accepting and more rejecting of compliments than European Canadians, it is unlikely that these results were due to Asian

Canadians dismissing the complimented traits as unimportant. Mothers ($M = 5.14, SD = 1.11$) also considered it more important to be higher on the traits than did self-compliment participants ($M = 4.75, SD = 1.32$). The culture by participant type interaction was not significant, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .001$.

Ratings of the degree to which compliment recipients possessed the complimented traits

Average trait ratings were examined using the same 2 x 2 ANOVA. The results revealed a significant main effect of culture, $F(1, 174) = 34.46, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .17$, and a main effect of participant type, $F(1, 174) = 20.66, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .11$. Across participant type, European-Canadian participants ($M = 5.71, SD = .87$) rated the compliment recipient (child or self) as possessing higher levels of the complimented traits than did Asian-Canadian participants ($M = 4.77, SD = 1.11$). Across cultures, mothers ($M = 5.57, SD = 1.00$) considered their children to be higher on the complimented traits than self-compliment participants ($M = 4.80, SD = 1.10$) considered themselves to be. The culture by participant type interaction was not significant, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .01$.

Acceptance and rejection of compliments

Responses to compliments were analysed using a 2 (culture: Asian Canadians vs. European Canadians) x 2 (response type: acceptance vs. rejection) x 2 (participant type: mother vs. self) mixed ANOVA, with response type as the within-subjects variable. The results revealed a main effect of culture, $F(1, 175) = 6.41, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Across type of ratings (accepting vs. rejecting), European Canadians ($M = 2.12, SD = .04$) reported higher ratings than Asian Canadians ($M = 2.08, SD = .04$). There was also a main effect of response type, $F(1, 175) = 137.94, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .41$. Across all participants, responses were accepted ($M = 2.69, SD = .92$) more than they were rejected ($M = 1.57, SD = .78$). These main effects were qualified by the predicted culture by response type interaction, $F(1, 175) = 48.33, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$, and a participant type by response type interaction, $F(1, 175) = 4.00, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Each of these two-way interactions was decomposed using a series of simple effects analyses.

First, I examined the predicted culture by response type interaction (see Figure 2). European Canadians were significantly more accepting of the compliments than Asian Canadians, $F(1, 177) = 51.86, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .23$, ($M_{European} = 3.19, SD = .72; M_{Asian} = 2.31, SD = .88$). In contrast, Asian Canadians were more rejecting of the compliments than their Western counterparts, $F(1, 177) = 29.53, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$, ($M_{Asian} = 1.83, SD = .86; M_{European} = 1.24, SD = .49$). Simple effect analyses revealed that both European and Asian Canadians were more accepting than rejecting of the compliments, $F(1, 76) = 248.89, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .77$, and $F(1, 101) = 10.05, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .09$, respectively, although this difference was reduced for Asian Canadians.

I then examined the participant type by response type interaction. Mothers were more accepting of compliments about their children than children were accepting of compliments about themselves, $F(1, 177) = 7.33, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$, ($M_{Mothers} = 2.88, SD = .90; M_{Children} = 2.51, SD = .91$). Mothers and children did not differ on degree of compliment rejection, $F(1, 177) = 2.31, p = .13, \eta_p^2 = .01$, ($M_{Mothers} = 1.49, SD = .74; M_{Children} = 1.66, SD = .80$). Also, both mothers and children were more accepting than rejecting of the compliments, $F(1, 87) = 72.89, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .46$, and $F(1, 90) = 28.61, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .24$, respectively.

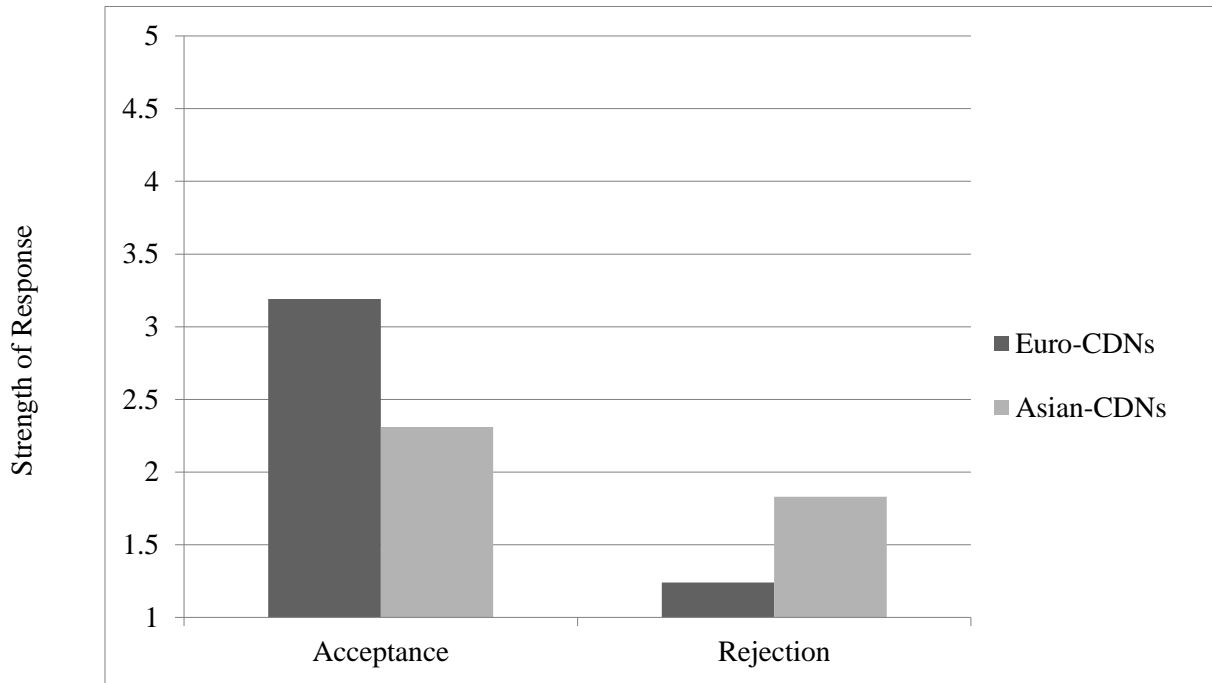
Mediation analyses

Next, I examined whether participants' trait ratings mediated the association between culture and responses to compliments. I conducted two mediation analyses—one for compliment acceptance and another for compliment rejection. Each series of analyses involved three separate regressions. First, the total effect of culture on acceptance was tested by regressing culture onto acceptance/rejection. Second, culture was regressed onto trait ratings. Third, both culture and trait ratings were entered simultaneously as predictors of acceptance/rejection. Finally, I used Sobel's test to determine whether trait ratings significantly mediated the association between culture and compliment acceptance, and culture and compliment rejection.

Compliment acceptance. The first regression analysis indicated that European Canadians were significantly more accepting of compliments than Asian Canadians, $\beta = .48, t(177), p < .001$. The second analysis indicated that European Canadians reported higher trait ratings than Asian Canadians, $\beta = .42, t(177), p < .001$. When both culture and trait ratings were entered as predictors in the regression equation, trait ratings predicted compliment acceptance, $\beta = .38, t(177), p < .001$, and the effect of culture on compliment acceptance was reduced, $\beta = .31, t(177), p < .001$. Sobel's test confirmed that, as predicted, trait ratings significantly mediated the effect of culture on compliment acceptance, $z = 4.23, p < .001$ (see Figure 3).

Compliment rejection. The first regression analysis indicated that Asian Canadians were significantly more rejecting of compliments than European Canadians, $\beta = -.37, t(177), p < .001$. The second analysis indicated that European Canadians reported higher trait ratings than Asian Canadians, $\beta = .42, t(177), p < .001$. When both culture and trait ratings were entered as predictors in the regression equation, trait ratings predicted compliment rejection, $\beta = -.28, t(177), p < .001$, and the effect of culture on compliment rejection was reduced, $\beta = -.26, t(177), p < .001$. Sobel's test confirmed that, as predicted, trait ratings significantly mediated the effect of culture on compliment rejection, $z = -3.25, p = .001$ (see Figure 4).

Figure 2. Participants' responses to compliments as a function of culture (Study 2).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Figure 3. Path coefficients for the mediation model that tested whether trait ratings mediated the effect of culture on compliment acceptance (Study 2).

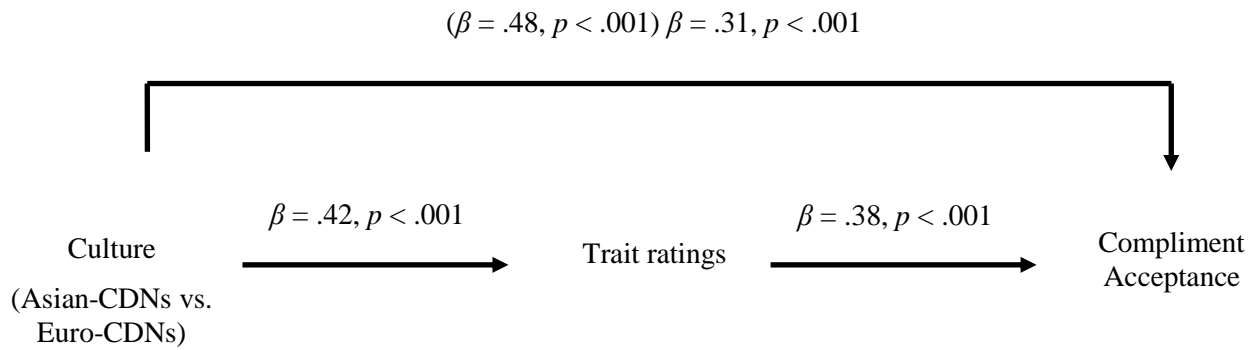
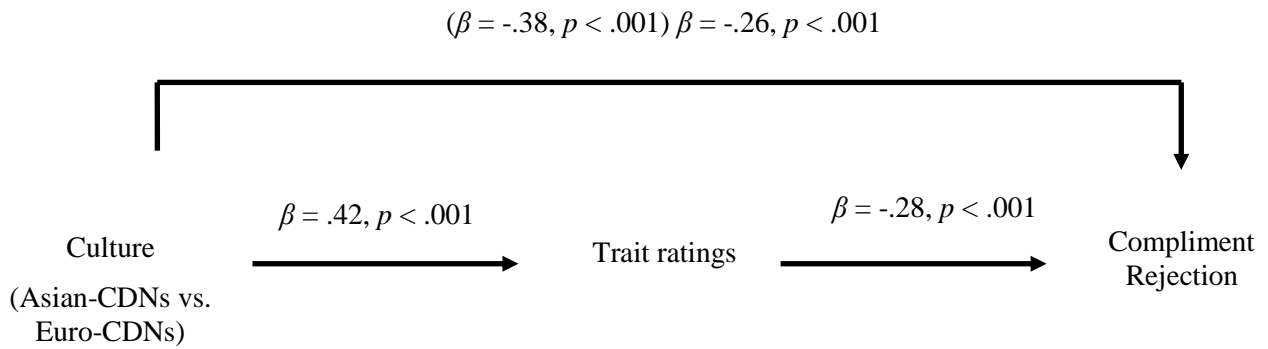


Figure 4. Path coefficients for the mediation model that tested whether trait ratings mediated the effect of culture on compliment rejection (Study 2).



Discussion

Study 2 examined cultural differences in responses to compliments using a methodology that offered greater experimental control over that which was used in Study 1. The results indicated that, as predicted, Asian Canadians were less accepting and more rejecting of both compliments about themselves and compliments about their children as compared to European Canadians. Within cultures, European Canadians were more accepting than rejecting of compliments. Unexpectedly, this finding was also true of Asian Canadians, albeit to a significantly lesser degree. The results of Study 2 extended the findings of Study 1 by demonstrating cultural differences in response to self-compliments among both men and women. In addition, the ways in which European and Asian Canadian mothers responded to hypothetical compliments about their children was similar to how East Asian and Western golfers (Study 1), and Asian Canadian and European respondents (Study 2), responded to hypothetical compliments about themselves. The data are consistent with the hypothesis that both East Asian and Western mothers incorporate their children into their own self-concepts (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992).

Cultural differences in compliment responses were mediated by participants' trait ratings. The findings suggest that European Canadians were more accepting (and less rejecting) of compliments than Asian Canadians, in part, because European Canadians considered the compliments to be more accurate. The data challenge the linguistic perspective that compliment responses merely reflect the public politeness strategies of the different cultural groups. If compliment responses reflect only public politeness strategies rather than beliefs about the accuracy of compliments, then trait ratings should not predict compliment responses. According to the politeness theory interpretation of cultural differences (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Chen, 1993; Gu, 1990; Leech, 1983; Pomerantz, 1978), Asian Canadians would have displayed modesty by rejecting compliments and European Canadians would have expressed agreement by accepting compliments, regardless of whether they considered the compliments to be accurate or not.

Study 3: Person-Praise versus Process-Praise Basketball Compliments

“Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work hard.”

Kevin Durant (NBA basketball player)

In Study 1, Western golfers were found to be more accepting of compliments about a tournament win than East Asian golfers. The compliments that the golfers received were primarily about how they performed or their approach to the game (process-praise compliments). In Study 2, European Canadians were found to be more accepting of compliments about intelligence and attractiveness than Asian Canadians. The compliments in Study 2 involved praise about traits (person-praise compliments; intelligence and attractiveness). Therefore, taken together, the results of Study 1 and 2 seem to suggest that East Asians may be less accepting of both person-praise and process-praise compliments than Westerners. The purpose of Study 3 was to conduct a direct examination of responses to person and process praise. Participants in this study were given either a person- or process-praise compliment regarding their performance on a basketball-shooting task. This particular task was selected over more commonly used experimental feedback tasks (e.g., anagrams) because it is unrelated to language and thus well-suited for use in cross-cultural studies. Participants in the person-praise compliment condition were complimented on having good basketball ability. Participants in the process-praise compliment condition were complimented on having worked on their shooting. Consistent with the results of Studies 1 and 2, European Canadians were predicted to be more accepting and less rejecting of both types of compliments, with differences expected to be more pronounced following person-praise than process-praise compliments.

Study 3 also sought to examine the possible effect of prior performance on cultural differences in responses to compliments. I hypothesized that both cultural groups would show greater acceptance (and less rejection) of compliments when performance is high than when it is low. This hypothesis is consistent with the results of Study 2, which demonstrated that cultural differences in

compliment responses were due in part to cultural differences in the perceived accuracy of the compliments. A significant effect of prior performance would lend further support for the social psychological view that cultural differences in compliment responses reflect underlying differences in self-evaluations across cultures. Study 3 also allowed for a comparison of the possible effect of prior performance on responses to person- versus process-praise compliments. I hypothesized that the effect would be comparable for both types of compliments and across both cultural groups. That is, both person- and process-praise compliments would be accepted more and rejected less after successful performances than less successful ones. The type of compliment was predicted to impact cultural differences in responses to compliments (i.e., degree of acceptance and rejection), but not the association between responses to compliments and prior performance. Consistent with this prediction, Study 2 found that although Asian Canadians were less accepting and more rejecting of person-praise compliments than European Canadians, both groups showed greater acceptance (and less rejection) of compliments that they considered to be accurate.

Finally, Study 3 examined the potential impact of person-praise and process-praise compliments on subsequent performance, and importantly, whether such impact varies by culture. Westerners tend to believe abilities are fixed (entity theory), whereas East Asians tend to believe abilities are malleable and improvable with effort (incremental theory; Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Norenzayan, Choi, & Nisbett, 2001). Praise that is consistent with participants' implicit theories of ability is hypothesized to be motivating and is expected to be associated with improved performance. In line with this hypothesis, Western children who received ability praise about their math skills showed greater improvement in their performance than those who received effort praise (Miller, Brickman, & Bolen, 1975). Therefore, European Canadians in Study 3 were expected to perform better after receiving person-praise than process-praise compliments. In contrast, process-praise compliments were predicted to be especially motivating to Asian Canadians, who are likely to attribute their basketball shooting ability more to effort than natural ability. Thus, performance among

Asian Canadians was predicted to be higher following a process-praise compliment than a person-praise compliment.

Method

Participants

Forty-six Asian Canadians and 34 European Canadian male undergraduate students at the University of Waterloo participated in this study. Participants were limited to males because far fewer women played basketball on a regular basis. Also, possible interaction effects between participant gender and experimenter gender were avoided by selecting only male participants. Participants were recruited in one of two ways: 1) via posters on campus (e.g., at student residences, recreational facilities, etc.); 2) via emails sent to University of Waterloo intramural basketball teams. Potential participants were informed that volunteers were needed for a study that examines basketball shooting. Interested individuals were referred to an online pre-screening questionnaire that assessed demographic characteristic (e.g., age, gender, and ethnicity) as well as basketball playing frequency and self-ratings of basketball ability. Participants indicated how frequently they played basketball by selecting one of the following responses: less than once a month, once a month, once every two weeks, once per week, more than once per week. Participants also rated their basketball ability relative to the average undergraduate (1 = *beginner*; 3 = *intermediate*; 5 = *advanced*; 7 = *expert*). Only male participants of either East Asian or European ethnicity who rated their basketball ability as intermediate or above and reported playing basketball at least once a week were invited to participate in the study. The latter two restrictions were imposed to increase the likelihood that the compliments about basketball-shooting would be seen as believable and involved a domain of importance to participants.

The study took place at an indoor basketball court within the university recreation centre. Participants were asked to shoot a basketball multiple times from the free throw line and then to complete a short basketball survey. All participants received \$5 for their participation, and their names were entered in a draw for \$100.

Procedure and materials

Each student participated individually and his session was videotaped. The camera was focused on the participant's face and body as he stood in front of the free throw line. Participants were told that the study involved shooting a basketball, but they were not specifically informed that there would be two shooting sessions (i.e., pre- and post-compliment). Awareness of a post-compliment session may have influenced participants' response to compliments about their initial performance. Some participants may have felt that acceptance of the compliment would exert additional pressure to perform well on the subsequent shooting session or "jinx" it. As part of the pre-compliment session, participants were asked to shoot the basketball 10 times from the free throw line. The primary purpose of this session was to provide an opportunity for complimenting participants. However, it also served to establish participants' baseline shooting percentages against which their post-compliment shooting percentages could be compared.

In the initial shooting session (pre-compliment), participants were asked to take 10 shots from the free throw line. Participants were then randomly assigned to receive one of two types of feedback. In the *process-praise compliment condition*, the experimenter said to the participant, "I can see that you have been working on your shots. You can shoot don't you think?" In the *person-praise compliment condition*, the experimenter said, "I can see you're good at this. You can shoot don't you think?" The second statement of each of these compliments was intentionally phrased as a question in order to encourage participants to provide a compliment response. During the post-compliment session, participants were asked to take an additional 10 shots from the free throw line. Finally, participants completed a short basketball survey.

Two experimenters conducted this study. The primary experimenter, who supervised the shooting sessions and provided the compliments, was blind to the experimental hypotheses of the study. It was critical that this experimenter be blind to the hypotheses because his behaviour may have otherwise unwittingly influenced the results. To avoid possible in-group or out-group effects as a function of experimenter and participant ethnicities, I selected a Black male as the primary

experimenter because he did not belong to the ethnic groups included in the study. The experimenter was tall and wore a campus recreation centre t-shirt to lend credibility to his feedback. The second experimenter was responsible for recruiting and debriefing participants.

Coding of responses to compliments

Three research assistants (one European, one East Asian, and one Black) independently assessed participants' compliment responses by viewing the videos. As in Studies 1 and 2, assistants rated participants' acceptance and rejection of the compliments on two separate 5-point scales (1 = *not at all*; 2 = *slightly*; 3 = *moderately*; 4 = *very*; 5 = *extremely*). The ICC for acceptance and rejection ratings was .80 and .82, respectively, indicating good reliability among coders.

Results

Prescreen self-reported basketball ability

European Canadians ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.11$) and Asian Canadians ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.22$) rated their basketball ability as being between intermediate and expert. The cultural groups did not differ significantly in their self-reported basketball ability, $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. The lack of a significant main effect of culture may reflect a reduction in response variance resulting from having preselected only individuals who reported their basketball ability as intermediate or higher.⁶

Pre-compliment shooting percentages

Participants' pre-compliment shooting percentages were examined using a 2 (culture: Asian Canadians vs. European Canadians) x 2 (condition: person- vs. process-praise compliment) between-subjects ANOVA. The mean pre-compliment shooting percentage was 53% ($SD = 16.42$). Asian and European Canadian participants did not differ in their baseline pre-compliment shooting percentages, $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$. The culture by condition interaction was not significant, $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, which confirmed that random assignment was successful.

Acceptance and rejection of person- and process-praise compliments

⁶ The main effect of culture was significant when examining self-reported basketball ability using the entire pre-selection sample, $F(1, 208) = 6.44$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Asian Canadians ($M = 3.79$; $SD = 1.34$) rated their basketball ability significantly lower than did European Canadians ($M = 4.31$; $SD = 1.40$).

Participants' compliment responses were examined using a 2 (culture: Asian Canadians vs. European Canadians) x 2 (response type: acceptance vs. rejection) x 2 (condition: person- vs. process-praise compliment) mixed ANOVA, with response type as the within-subjects variable. A main effect of response type indicated that compliments were accepted ($M = 2.41, SD = .79$) more than they were rejected ($M = 2.02, SD = .85$), $F(1, 76) = 6.88, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .08$. The culture by response type interaction was not significant, $F(1, 76) = 2.34, p = .13, \eta_p^2 = .03$. However, the predicted Culture x Response Type x Condition interaction did approach significance, $F(1, 76) = 2.88, p = .09, \eta_p^2 = .04$. To further examine the three-way interaction, a Culture x Response Type ANOVA was conducted within each compliment condition. These analyses allowed me to examine cultural differences in responses to person- and process-praise compliments separately.

The culture by response type interaction was significant within the person-praise compliment condition, $F(1, 37) = 5.66, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .13$ (see Figure 5). European Canadians were marginally more accepting of person-praise compliments than Asian Canadians, $F(1, 37) = 3.82, p = .06, \eta_p^2 = .09$, ($M_{European} = 2.63, SD = .89; M_{Asian} = 2.13, SD = .69$). Asian Canadians were significantly more rejecting of person-praise compliments than European Canadians, $F(1, 37) = 5.30, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .13$, ($M_{Asian} = 2.30, SD = .85; M_{European} = 1.73, SD = .62$). Within cultures, European Canadians were more accepting than rejecting of the person-praise compliments, $F(1, 15) = 6.89, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .32$, whereas Asian Canadians were more even-handed in their response, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 = .02$.

The Culture x Response Type ANOVA within the process-praise condition revealed only a main effect of response type, $F(1, 39) = 4.41, p = .04, \eta_p^2 = .10$. Process-praise compliments were accepted ($M = 2.49, SD = .79$) more than they were rejected ($M = 1.98, SD = .89$). Neither the main effect of culture, nor the culture by response type interaction were significant, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 = .01$ and $F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .001$, respectively (see Figure 6). Simple effects analyses revealed that Asian and European Canadians did not differ in either their acceptance, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .001$, or rejection of process-praise, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .01$. Asians Canadians tended to be more accepting ($M = 2.46, SD = .80$) than rejecting (M

= 1.93, $SD = .76$) of process-praise compliments, $F(1, 22) = 3.26, p = .09, \eta_p^2 = .13$, whereas European Canadians were equally accepting ($M = 2.52, SD = .79$) and rejecting ($M = 2.04, SD = 1.05$) in their response, $F(1, 17) = 1.48, p = .24, \eta_p^2 = .08$.

The predicted Culture x Response Type x Condition interaction was also decomposed in a different way—by conducting a Response Type x Condition ANOVA within each culture. These analyses enabled me to interpret differences in responses to person- and process-praise compliments among European and Asian Canadians separately. Across conditions, European Canadians were more accepting ($M = 2.57, SD = .83$) than rejecting ($M = 1.89, SD = .88$) of compliments, $F(1, 32) = 6.79, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .18$. Neither the main effect of condition, nor the response type by condition interaction was significant among European Canadians, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 = .02$ and $F < 1, \eta_p^2 = .02$, respectively (see Figure 7). The Response Type x Condition ANOVA among Asian Canadians revealed a different pattern of means. Among Asian Canadians, neither the main effect of condition nor response type was significant, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .01$ and $F < 1, \eta_p^2 = .02$, respectively. However, the response type by condition interaction did approach significance, $F(1, 44) = 2.93, p = .09, \eta_p^2 = .06$ (see Figure 8). Asian Canadians were marginally more accepting than rejecting of process-praise compliments, $F(1, 22) = 3.26, p = .08, \eta_p^2 = .13$, but even-handed in their response to person-praise compliments, $F < 1, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Asian Canadians tended to be less accepting of person-praise compliments ($M = 2.13, SD = .69$) than process-praise compliments ($M = 2.46, SD = .80$), $F(1, 44) = 2.31, p = .14, \eta_p^2 = .05$. These participants also tended to be more rejecting of person-praise compliments ($M = 2.30, SD = .85$) than process-praise compliments ($M = 1.93, SD = .76$), $F(1, 44) = 2.51, p = .12, \eta_p^2 = .05$.

Do compliment responses reflect prior performance?

I hypothesized that prior performance would relate to the compliment responses of both cultural groups such that compliments would be accepted more and rejected less when performance is high rather than low. In order to investigate this hypothesis more clearly, I conducted separate analyses for acceptance and rejection of person- and process-praise compliments.

The relation of prior performance to responses to person-praise compliments

The possible effect of prior performance on cultural differences in responses to person-praise compliments was examined by conducting two separate analyses—one for acceptance and one for rejection of person-praise compliments. For each of these analyses, the interaction between culture and prior performance was represented by multiplying culture, which was dummy coded (Asian Canadian = 0, European Canadian = 1), with mean-centered pre-compliment shooting percentages.

Acceptance of person-praise compliments. A regression analysis was conducted to ascertain whether or not the association between culture and acceptance of person-praise compliments depended on participants' prior performance. The results of this analysis are depicted in Figure 9. As previously indicated by the Culture x Response Type ANOVA, European Canadians were more accepting of person-praise compliments than Asian Canadians, $\beta = .31$, $t(35) = 2.25$, $p = .03$. A significant main effect of prior performance indicated that across cultural groups, participants who performed well were more accepting of the compliments than those who performed poorly, $\beta = .46$, $t(35) = 2.60$, $p = .01$. The culture by prior performance interaction was not significant, $\beta = .05$, $t(35) < 1$, suggesting that the cultural difference in compliment acceptance did not depend on prior performance.

Rejection of person-praise compliments. The results of the regression analysis of rejection of person-praise compliments are depicted in Figure 10. Asian Canadians were more rejecting of person-praise compliments than European Canadians, $\beta = -.35$, $t(35) = -2.56$, $p < .01$. The main effect of prior performance was also significant, indicating participants who performed well were less rejecting of the compliments than those who performed poorly, $\beta = -.57$, $t(35) = -3.50$, $p < .01$. The interaction was not significant, $\beta = .03$, $t(35) < 1$, suggesting that the cultural difference in compliment rejection did not depend on prior performance.

The relation of prior performance to responses to process-praise compliments

Next, I examined the possible cultural differences in responses to process-praise compliments. Asians may be more accepting of process-praise because it is consistent with an

incremental theory of abilities. Therefore, it is possible that cultural differences in response to process-praise compliments may be weaker than those in response to person-praise compliments. As with the prior analyses, I also conducted regression analyses to test whether cultural differences in acceptance and rejection of process-praise compliments were related to prior performance.

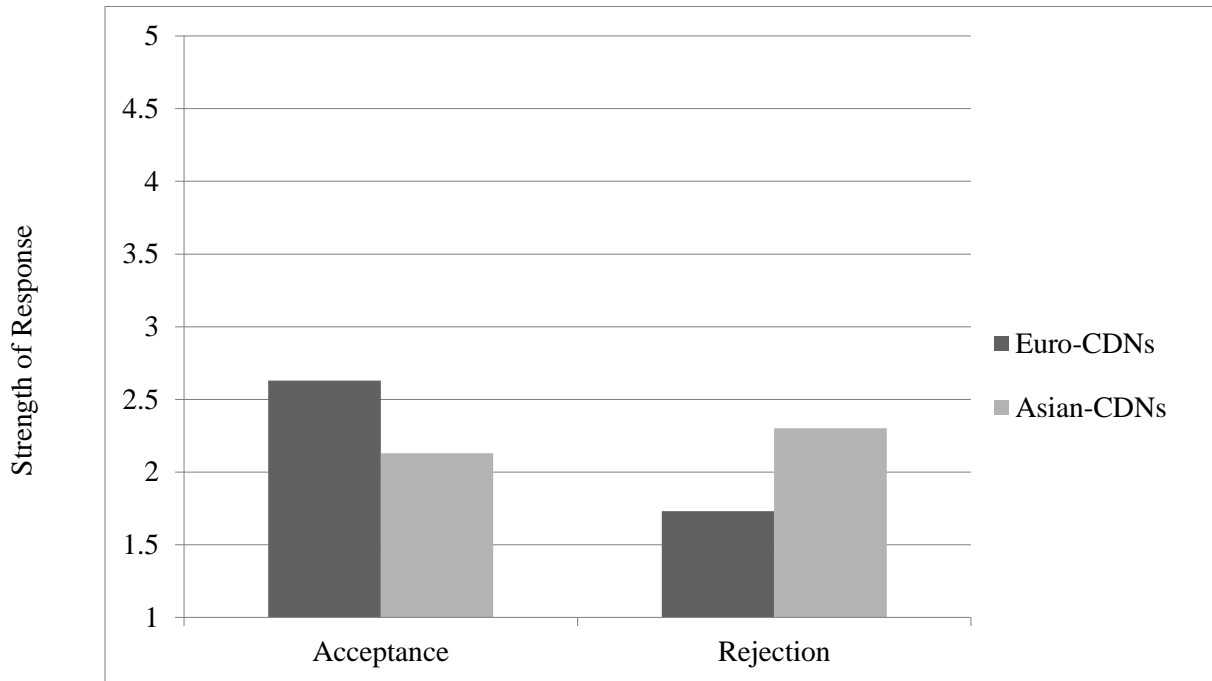
Acceptance of process-praise compliments. The results of the regression analysis are depicted in Figure 11. European Canadians and Asian Canadians were equally accepting of process-praise compliments, $\beta = .04$, $t(37) < 1$. The main effect of prior performance was not significant, $\beta = .27$, $t(37) = 1.12$, $p = .27$. Participants who had performed poorly were not significantly less accepting of process-praise compliments than those who had performed better. Culture also did not interact with prior performance, $\beta = -.10$, $t(37) < 1$.

Rejection of process-praise compliments. European and Asian Canadians were equally rejecting of process-praise compliments, $\beta = -.08$, $t(37) < 1$ (see Figure 12). Neither the main effect of prior performance nor the culture by prior performance interaction were significant, $\beta = -.12$, $t(37) < 1$ and $\beta = -.19$, $t(37) < 1$, respectively.

Post-compliment shooting percentages

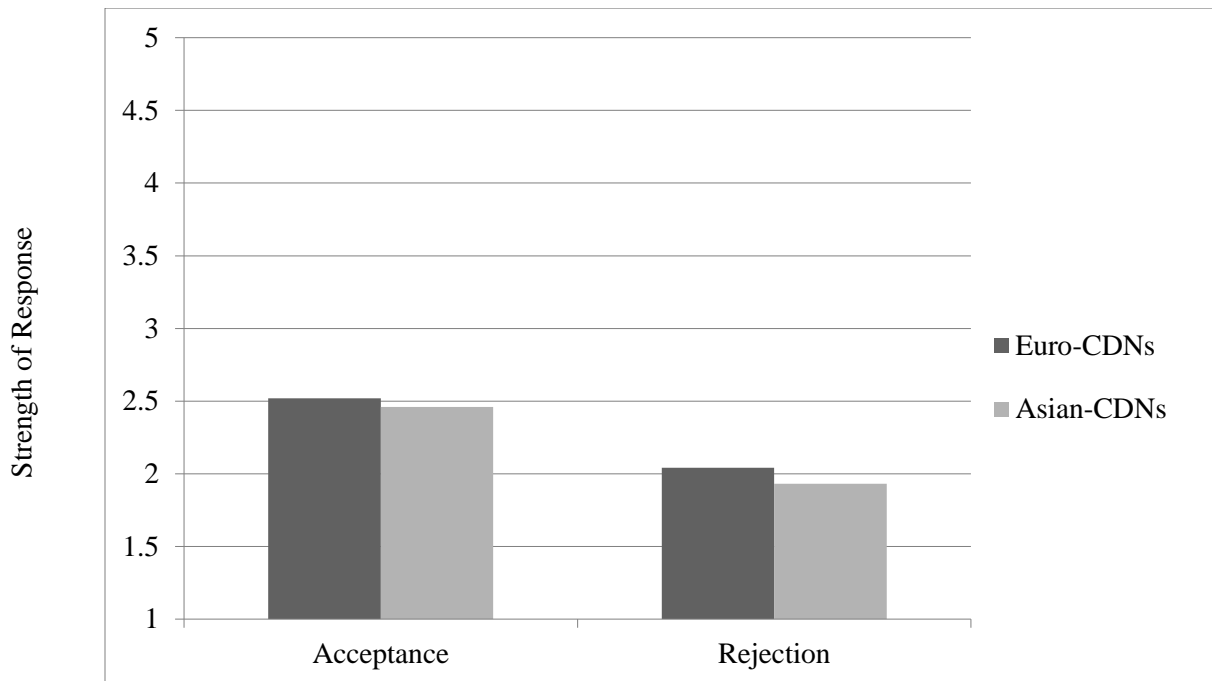
Participants' post-compliment shooting percentages were examined using a 2 (culture: Asian Canadians vs. European Canadians) x 2 (condition: person- vs. process-praise compliment) between-subjects analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), with participants' pre-compliment shooting percentages entered as a covariate. The main effect of condition approached significance, $F(1, 75) = 2.72$, $p = .10$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Overall, participants tended to perform better after receiving a process-praise compliment ($M = 66.1\%$, $SD = 19.48\%$) than a person-praise compliment ($M = 57.69\%$, $SD = 20.45\%$). The culture by condition interaction was not significant, $F < 1$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, suggesting that both Asian and European Canadians showed a similar tendency to perform better after receiving a process-praise compliment.

Figure 5. Participants' responses to person-praise compliments as a function of culture (Study 3).



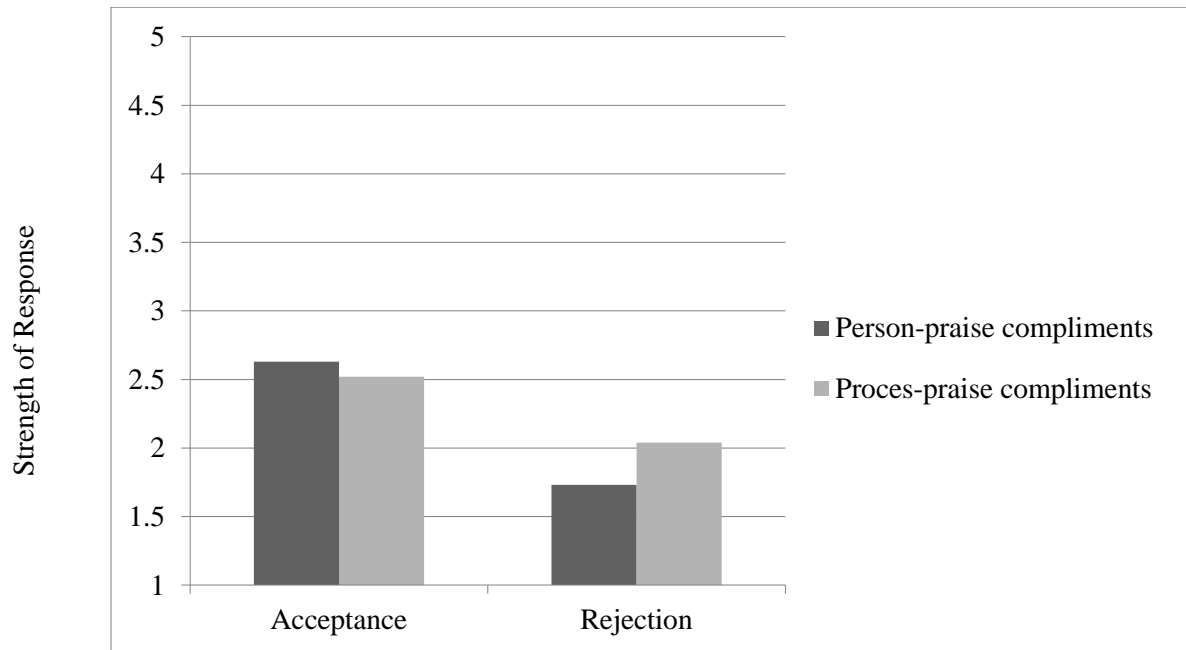
Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Figure 6. Participants' responses to process-praise compliments as a function of culture (Study 3).



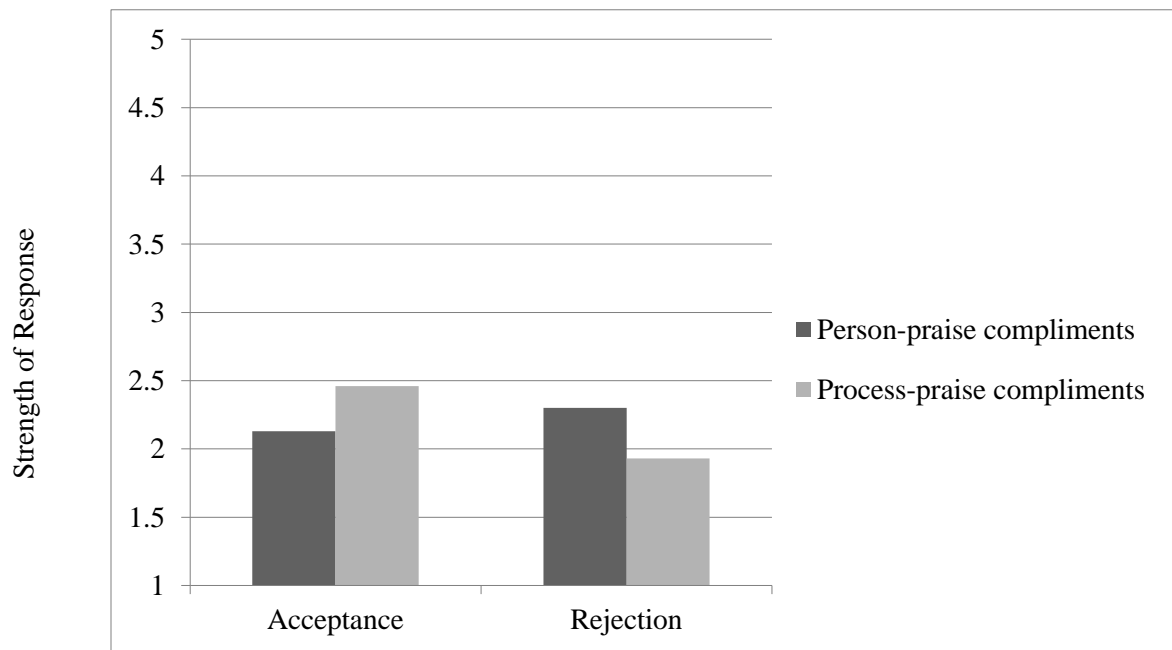
Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Figure 7. European-Canadian participants' responses to compliments as a function of condition (Study 3).



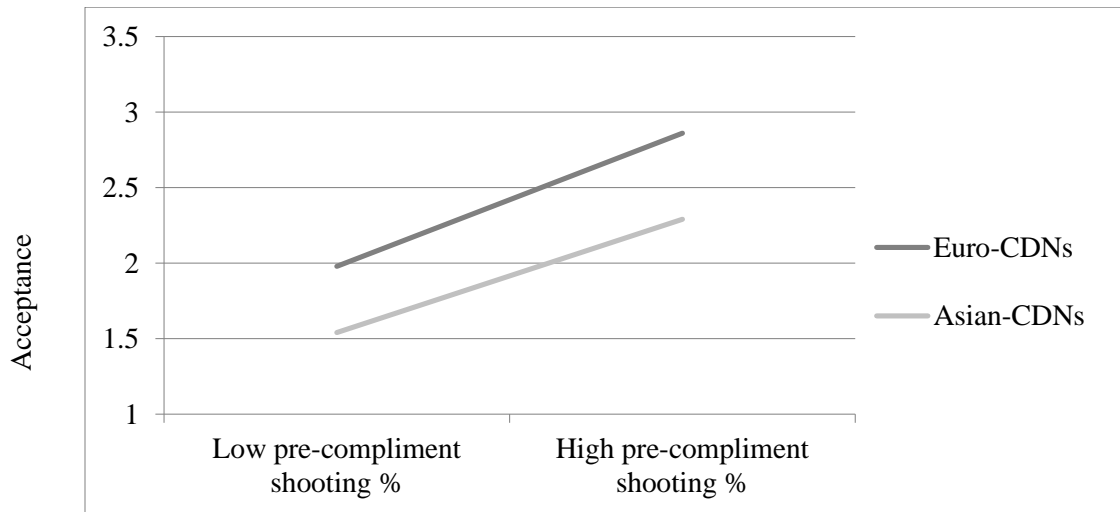
Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Figure 8. Asian-Canadian participants' responses to compliments as a function of condition (Study 3).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

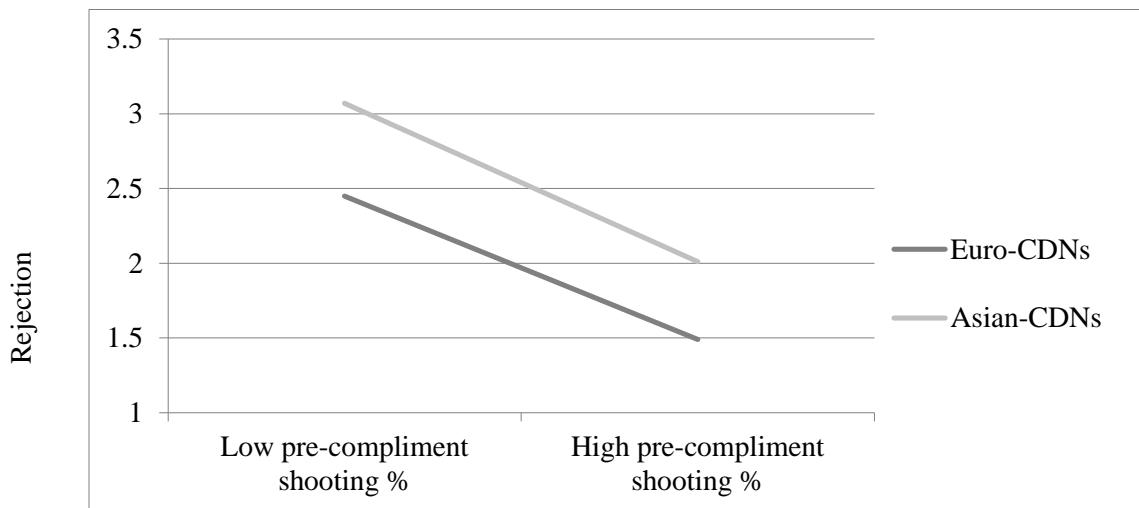
Figure 9. Participants' acceptance of person-praise compliments as a function of culture and pre-compliment shooting percentage (Study 3).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Note. Pre-compliment shooting percentages were plotted for values one standard deviation above and below the mean.

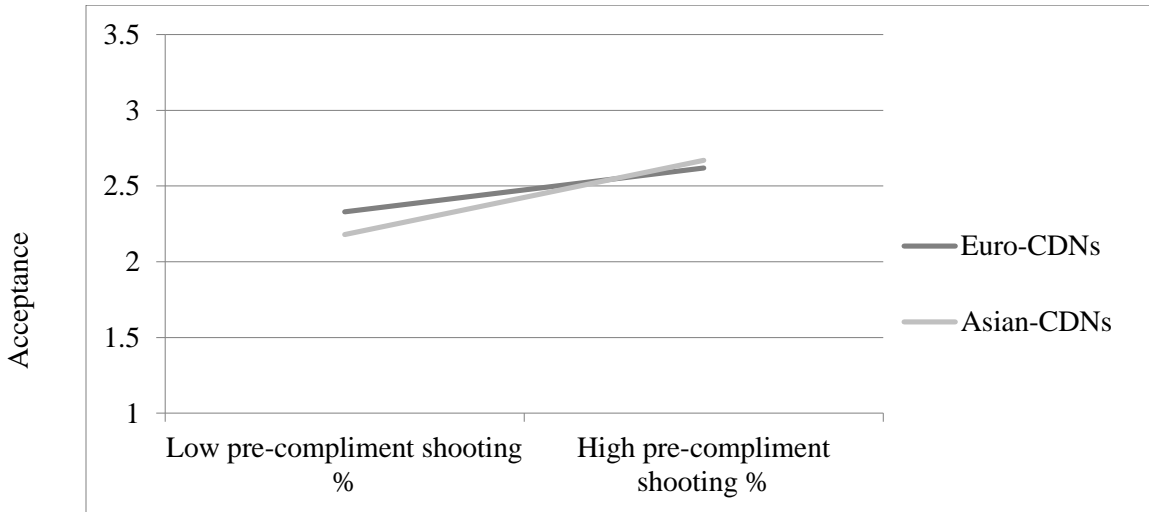
Figure 10. Participants' rejection of person-praise compliments as a function of culture and pre-compliment shooting percentage (Study 3).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Note. Pre-compliment shooting percentages were plotted for values one standard deviation above and below the mean.

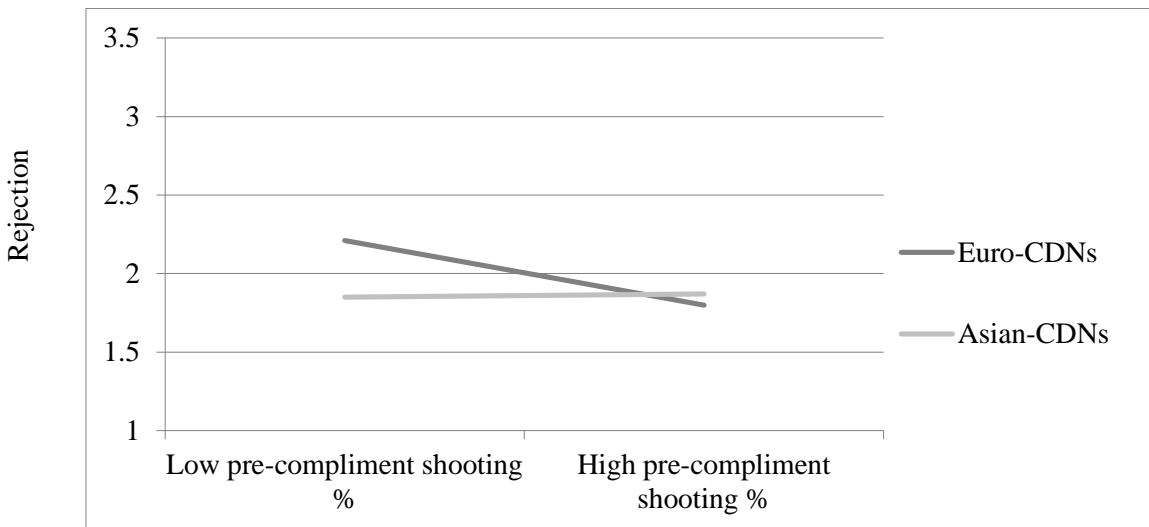
Figure 11. Participants' acceptance of process-praise compliments as a function of culture and pre-compliment shooting percentage (Study 3).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Note. Pre-compliment shooting percentages were plotted for values one standard deviation above and below the mean.

Figure 12. Participants' rejection of process-praise compliments as a function of culture and pre-compliment shooting percentage (Study 3).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Note. Pre-compliment shooting percentages were plotted for values one standard deviation above and below the mean.

Discussion

Study 3 involved a direct comparison of cultural differences in response to person-praise and process-praise compliments. The results were generally consistent with previous research on cultural differences in implicit theories of abilities (Norenzayan, Choi, & Nisbett, 2002). As predicted, European Canadians were more accepting and less rejecting of person-praise compliments than Asian Canadians were. Within cultures, European Canadians were more accepting than rejecting of person-praise compliments, whereas Asian Canadians were even-handed. Asian and European Canadians did not differ significantly in either their acceptance or rejection of process-praise compliments. However, Asian Canadians tended to be more accepting than rejecting of process-praise compliments, whereas European Canadians did not differ in their response.

Prior performance had no effect on the association between culture and person- or process-praise compliments. However, a main effect of prior performance indicated that participants who performed well on the basketball shooting task were more likely to accept and less likely to reject person-praise compliments than those who performed poorly. These results are consistent with those of Study 2 in which cultural differences in acceptance and rejection of person-praise compliments (attractiveness and intelligence) were mediated by perceptions of accuracy. Prior performance was not found to be related to either acceptance or rejection of process-praise compliments in Study 3. It is worth noting that the process-praise compliment in Study 3 was quite mild. A compliment about “working on your shots” may have been perceived by some participants as more of an offer of encouragement than praise. Such an interpretation would explain why the process-praise compliment in this study was equally accepted by both Asian and European Canadians, and by individuals who performed well and those who performed less well.

Study 3 also examined the potential impact of person- and process-praise compliments on subsequent performance. Performance tended to be better after process- than after person-praise compliments among both cultural groups, although this difference did not achieve statistical significance ($p = .10$). This finding is consistent with my hypothesis that Asian Canadians would

benefit most from compliments that are consistent with an incremental theory of ability, but inconsistent with my prediction that European Canadians would benefit most from compliments consistent with an entity theory of ability (i.e., person-praise compliments). Unlike traditional domains for assessing implicit theories of ability (e.g., intelligence and math ability), the basketball domain may be one where Westerners may also hold strong incremental theories. It is generally accepted that even the most talented professional basketball players practice a great deal. Both Asian and European Canadians in Study 3 may have held incremental beliefs about basketball ability, and been more encouraged by person-praise compliments than person-praise compliments. Interestingly, Study 3 also suggests that Asian Canadians, but not European Canadians, show a preference for the type of feedback that is associated with improved performance for both groups—process-praise compliments. Asian Canadians tended to be more accepting and less rejecting of process- than person-praise compliments, whereas European Canadians were equally accepting and rejecting of both types of compliments.

Study 4: Greeting Card Compliments

“Everybody seems to think art is spontaneous. But Tiger Mom, you taught me that even creativity takes effort.”

Sophia Chua-Rubinfeld (2011, daughter of Amy Chua; Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother)

Studies 1-3 provided convergent evidence for the cultural differences in responses to compliments using varied methodology (naturalistic observations, experimental designs, and self-report measures). Study 4 sought to examine the other side of compliment exchanges—namely, providing compliments. Much cross-cultural research has relied heavily on participants’ self-reports. In recent years, some leading cultural psychologists have advocated studying cultural phenomena not just within individuals’ psyches (motivations, emotions, cognitions and behaviours), but also within the sociocultural environments in which these individuals live and interact (e.g., Adams & Markus, 2004; Cohen, 2007; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). In keeping with this view, Study 4 examined cultural differences in giving compliments by analyzing the words and images presented in Chinese and American graduation cards. Graduation cards were chosen because they provided a context for offering both person-praise and process-praise compliments. Consistent with cultural differences in implicit theories, Chinese graduation cards were predicted to contain stronger process- than person-praise compliment themes in both words and images, whereas American greeting cards were expected to reveal the opposite pattern. The greeting cards were also hypothesized to differ in the number of persons or individuals present in the card illustrations. Consistent with cultural differences in individualism versus collectivism (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 2001), Chinese cards were expected to contain a greater number of persons than American cards. These results, if found, would also suggest that Westerners view graduation as a personal achievement attained through the person’s own abilities, whereas East Asians view it as a more of a collective achievement attributable to the efforts of both the self and others.

Method

Graduation cards were obtained from American Greetings, an American greeting card company, and Evercare Ltd., a Chinese greeting card company. The American greeting cards were either purchased from a Carlton Cards store, a Canadian subsidiary of American Greetings ($n = 22$), or accessed online via the American Greetings website ($n = 17$). The Chinese greeting cards were either purchased from an Evercare Ltd. Store in Kowloon, Hong Kong ($n = 3$), accessed online via the company website ($n = 5$), or taken from an Evercare Ltd. greeting card catalogue ($n = 7$), which was provided by the Hong Kong store. Unfortunately, American Greetings was unable to provide a greeting card catalogue. All available graduation themed cards from the various sources were included in this study. In total, 15 Chinese graduation cards and 39 American graduation cards were coded and analyzed.

All cards were transcribed to ensure that coders were blind to their cultural origins. The transcriptions included the card message and a written description of the illustrations used in the card. For example, an American graduation card was described as follows: Card message: ‘Congratulations to a one-of-a kind, class-of-your-own kind of graduate. You’re amazing!’ Card picture: ‘One cat wearing a graduation hat’.” A bilingual research assistant translated all Chinese card messages into English. A second bilingual research assistant then verified the accuracy of the translations. Any minor discrepancies in the translations were resolved through discussion.

Coding scheme for graduation cards

Card messages were rated on the extent to which they expressed person-focused or process-focused themes, using two separate 7-point scales (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very much*). Statements high in person focus emphasized the abilities or characteristics of the recipient of the card. For example, “Celebrating each and every one of your exceptional brain cells,” “Always knew you were brilliant,” and “Look out, World—smart person coming through!” In contrast, statements high in process focus emphasized growth and improvement rather than dispositional qualities. For example, “Congratulations on your hard work and dedication,” and “Those difficult days have resulted in

today's success and created a beautiful memory. Congratulations!" Some statements reflected both person- and process-focused themes and were rated accordingly (e.g., "Congratulations on your achievement. It takes a special kind of person to aim so high and get so far.").

To examine potential differences in the themes of pictures shown on the cards, coders assessed the frequency of process-focused images (e.g., ladders, winding roads, scenes related to gardening, climbing, or studying) and person-focused images (e.g., an individual standing on a pedestal or shooting star). Coders also tallied the number of individuals present in the description of the card illustrations. All people and anthropomorphized characters were included in the count.

Two female European-Canadian coders and two female Chinese-Canadian coders, who were blind to the hypotheses, independently read and coded the English transcriptions of the greeting cards. They were provided with definitions of person- and process-praise compliment themes, and some examples of messages and images that reflect these themes to various degrees. Coders were instructed to base their coding on their own judgments of whether the coding material reflected these themes as they had been outlined. The reliability among coders was good as indicated by high ICCs on ratings of person- and process-praise compliment themes (ICCs = .87 and .92, respectively), frequency ratings of person- and process-praise images, (ICCs = .86 and .83, respectively), and number of individuals in the card illustrations (ICC = .91). Composites for each of the dependent variables were created by averaging across coders' responses.

Results

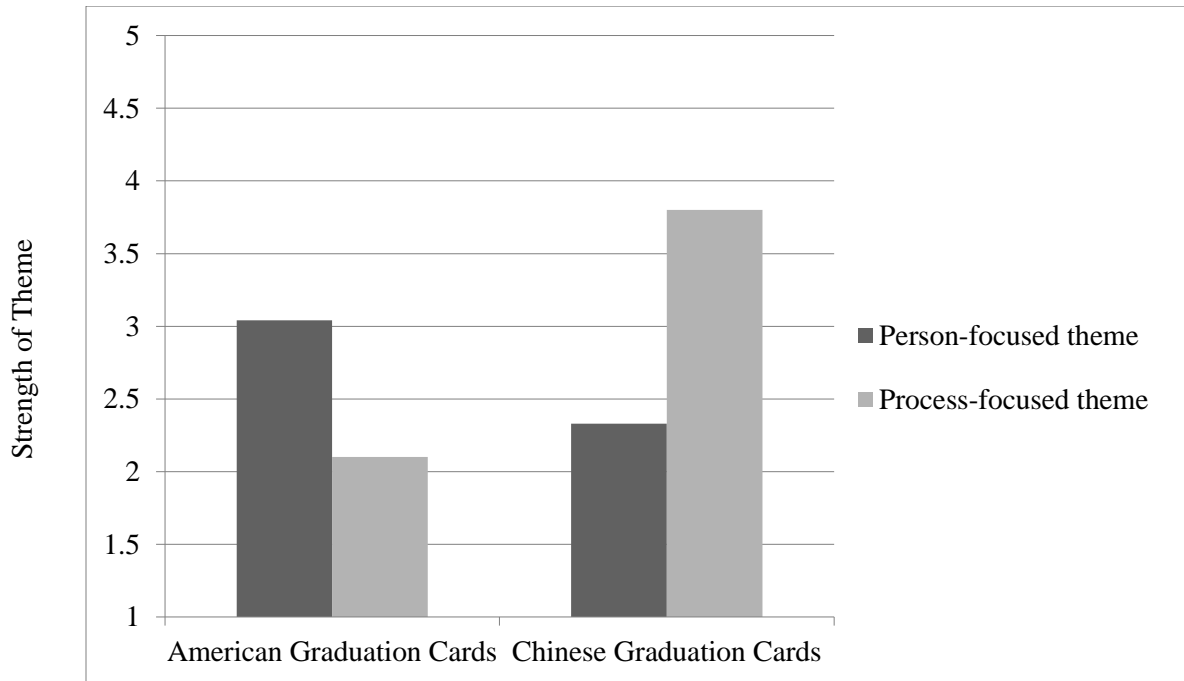
I first examined coders' ratings of the strength of person-praise versus process-praise compliment themes present in the card messages by conducting a 2 (culture: Chinese vs. American) x 2 (compliment theme: person-praise vs. process-praise) mixed ANOVA, with theme as the within-subjects variable. As predicted, the culture by theme interaction was significant, $F(1, 52) = 11.85, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$ (see Figure 13). The messages on American graduation cards contained stronger person- ($M = 3.04, SD = 1.83$) than process-praise compliment themes ($M = 2.10, SD = 1.42$), $F(1, 38) = 5.39, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .12$, whereas the reverse was true for Chinese graduation cards, ($M_{person-praise}$

= 2.33, $SD = 1.05$; $M_{process-praise} = 3.80$, $SD = 1.75$), $F(1, 14) = 13.49$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .49$). Comparison of themes between the cultures indicated that Chinese cards contained stronger process-praise messages than the American cards, $F(1, 52) = 13.57$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$, but that the strength of person-praise messages did not differ across cultures, $F(1, 52) = 1.96$, $p = .17$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$.

An examination of the card images using the same 2 x 2 ANOVA revealed a significant culture by theme interaction, $F(1, 52) = 6.74$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. Simple effect analyses revealed that Chinese graduation cards contained more process-praise themed images ($M = .90$, $SD = .71$) than person-praise themed images ($M = .58$, $SD = .46$), $F(1, 14) = 5.03$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$. Although in the predicted direction, the difference in frequencies of person-praise themed ($M = .24$, $SD = .40$) and process-praise themed images ($M = .16$, $SD = .31$) on American cards did not achieve significance, $F(1, 38) = 1.00$, $p = .32$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. The illustrations on Chinese cards contained both more process-praise images and more person-praise images than did the American cards, $F(1, 52) = 28.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .36$, and $F(1, 52) = 7.44$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, respectively.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was conducted on the number of individuals present in the card illustrations with culture as the independent variable. A significantly greater number of individuals were present in illustrations on Chinese cards ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.82$) than on American cards ($M = .65$, $SD = 1.11$), $F(1, 52) = 17.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$.

Figure 13. Card compliment themes as a function of culture (Study 4).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

Discussion

As predicted, Chinese graduation cards were more process-focused than person-focused, whereas the reverse was true of American greeting cards. The comparison of card illustrations was also generally consistent with the hypotheses. Chinese graduation cards included more process-focused images than person-focused images, whereas American cards did not differ in types of images. Both person-focused and process-focused images were rare on American graduation cards. These cards apparently relied more heavily on the text than the images to convey their message regarding person- versus process-focused themes.

Chinese and American cards also differed in the number of characters present in the card illustrations. Chinese cards included approximately three times as many characters per card as compared to American cards, which averaged about one character per card. These findings are consistent with cultural differences in focal versus holistic attention (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001), individualism versus collectivism (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 2001), and individual versus group attributions (Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999). Taken together with the primary findings, these results suggest that Westerners view graduation as individual achievements attained mostly through the card recipient's traits and abilities, whereas East Asians perceive such accomplishments as collective achievements attributable to the efforts of both the card recipient and others.

The primary limitation of Study 4 is that although it demonstrated differences in the availability of person- and process-praise cards in Western and East Asian societies, it did not directly address whether such availability reflects the preferences of individuals within the respective cultures. It is possible, for example, that the available cards represent outdated values within a culture and are unlikely to be selected by the current members of that culture. Also, the relatively small sample of cards selected in this study may not be representative of the types of cards that are generally available in each culture. Therefore, Study 5 sought to assess whether cultural differences in the availability of process- and person-focused cards found in Study 4 indeed reflect actual consumer preferences. Once

again, I selected graduation cards because these cards celebrate an event with similar features across East Asian and Western contexts. Graduation cards are routinely given to members of both cultures to celebrate the successful completion of academic studies. These cards are typically given to a graduating student by an older adult (e.g., family member, mentor, etc.). Finally, I indirectly addressed issues concerning the comparability of the greeting cards in Study 4 by using an experimental paradigm that presented Chinese and American respondents with identical card messages.

Study 5: Giving and Receiving Person-Praise versus Process-Praise Compliments

I assessed cultural differences in the card selection preferences of parents of university students, as reported by both the parents themselves and undergraduate students. The parents reported how likely they would be to buy cards containing various graduation messages for their children. The students reported how likely they would be to receive cards from their parents containing the various messages. The card messages differed in their themes: half were process-focused and half were person-focused. Consistent with Study 4, I hypothesized that Chinese parents would choose process-over person-focused graduation cards, whereas the reverse was predicted to be true of American parents. I expected cultural differences in selection preferences to be evident in the evaluations of both the parents and the students. Such results would buttress the findings of Study 4 by suggesting that cultural differences in process-focused and person-focused themes are not limited to the availability of such cards, but reflect the purchasing preferences of individuals in the respective cultures. Finally, I also assessed card-giving frequency among parents and students within the past 12 months. By comparing these frequencies across cultures, I could examine whether Chinese and Americans engage in the cultural practice of card giving to a similar degree.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited through an online survey company. All participants had previously registered with the company for the purpose of being contacted about future participation in paid surveys and had indicated their ethnicity and other demographic information. American participants were registered with Toluna/Greenfield Online and Chinese participants were registered with either Toluna or its subsidiary, Ciao. Qualified participants were sent an email inviting them take part in the current study. Chinese participants completed the survey in Chinese and American participants completed the survey in English. All participants received points with Toluna/Greenfield Online for their participation. American participants received 1,200 points and Chinese participants received 1,600 points. These points could be redeemed for a variety of rewards including gift

vouchers (e.g., Amazon, HMV, and Dangdang), music downloads, and prize draw tickets (i.e., lotteries). Although the specific types of rewards and their redemption rates varied by country, the level of compensation appeared comparable. In addition, all participants were entered into a sweepstakes for one of five cash prizes (i.e., one \$2,500 prize, one \$1,000 prize, one \$500 prize, and two \$250 prizes in U.S. dollars).

Participants were recruited on the basis of information they had provided Toluna/Greenfield Online upon registration. Parents in the card-giving sample were married and had a child between the ages of 18 and 23, who was in university. Students in the card-receiving sample were university undergraduates between the ages of 18 and 23. Thus, four groups of participants took part in this study: Chinese parents ($n = 62$; 24 women and 38 men), American parents ($n = 50$; 33 women and 17 men), Chinese students ($n = 52$; 26 women and 26 men), and American students ($n = 50$; 24 women and 26 men). All Chinese participants were of East Asian ethnicity, and were born and lived in China. The U.S. sample consisted of non-Asian Americans ($n = 100$). All American participants resided in the United States, and all but two were born in the United States.

Materials

Four process-focused and four person-focused card messages were created based on actual card messages from the American and Chinese graduation cards used in Study 4 (see Appendix B). I relied exclusively on card messages in this study because of the difficulty in finding culture-free images that expressed the relevant card themes. Process-focused graduation card messages highlighted the recipient's hard work and emphasized the importance of improvement and growth. Person-focused graduation card messages emphasized the recipient's innate abilities or dispositional qualities. All materials were first prepared in English and then translated into Chinese by a bilingual research assistant. The translated materials were then back translated into English by another bilingual research assistant. Discrepancies in translation were resolved through discussion.

Procedure

Parents were asked to imagine that they and their spouse were selecting a graduation card for their son or daughter who was about to graduate from university. Parents who had more than one child currently in university were asked to think about their child who was closest to graduation. Students were asked to imagine that they were about to graduate from university and their parents were selecting a graduation card for them. All participants were presented with a list of the eight graduation card messages in random order. Parents were asked to indicate on 10-point scales (1 = *not at all*; 10 = *very*) how likely they and their spouse would be to select each card message for their child upon his or her graduation. Using the same 10-point scales, students were asked to indicate how likely their parents would be to select each message. Two separate indices were computed by averaging across participants' likelihood ratings for the four process-themed and the four person-themed messages. Cronbach's alpha for the person-themed likelihood index and the process-themed likelihood index was .58 and .65, respectively.

I included two items to assess card-giving behaviour more generally. Parents rated how likely they would be to give a card to their child upon his/her graduation, using a 10-point scale (1 = *not at all*; 10 = *very*). These participants also indicated the number of personal greeting cards (e.g., birthday, wedding, get well etc.) that they had given to others within the past 12 months. Students rated how likely their parents would be to give them a graduation card using a 10-point scale (1 = *not at all*; 10 = *very*). Students also indicated the number of greeting cards that they had received from their parents within the past 12 months.

Finally, participants completed demographic items. Participants rated their relative socioeconomic status on a 5-point scale (1 = *low*; 3 = *middle*; 5 = *high*). Parents indicated the highest education level that they had attained on a 5-point scale [1 = no formal education; 2 = *elementary education*; 3 = *high-school education*; 4 = *college/university education (bachelor's degree)*; 5 = *post-graduate education (master's degree, doctorate)*]. Students indicated the highest education level that their mothers and fathers had attained.

Results

Comparability of the samples

American parents were significantly older ($M = 50.10$, $SD = 10.12$) than Chinese parents ($M = 43.54$, $SD = 4.56$), $F(1, 108) = 20.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$. Chinese parents ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .76$) reported higher relative socioeconomic status than American parents did ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .71$), $F(1, 109) = 14.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. Level of education was also higher among Chinese ($M = 3.98$, $SD = .46$) than American parents ($M = 3.57$, $SD = .65$), $F(1, 109) = 15.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. The samples differed significantly on gender proportions, $X^2(1, 112) = 8.25$, $p < .001$. Of the Chinese parents, 39% ($n = 24$) were women and 61% ($n = 38$) were men. Of the American parents, 66% ($n = 33$) were women and 34% ($n = 17$) were men. The parent samples also differed marginally on proportions of child gender, $X^2(1, 112) = 5.86$, $p = .05$. Among American parents, 60% completed the survey about their daughters ($n = 30$) and 36% about their sons ($n = 18$). Four percent ($n = 2$) did not state their child's gender. In contrast, the child gender proportions were more even among Chinese parents: 42% completed the survey about their daughters ($n = 26$), 42% about their sons ($n = 26$), and 16% ($n = 10$) did not state their child's gender. There were no cultural differences in either child's age ($M = 19.39$, $SD = 1.74$), $F(1, 97) = 2.87$, $p = .09$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, or the estimated number of months until the child's graduation ($M = 28.76$, $SD = 14.54$), $F(1, 98) = .72$, $p = .40$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Both groups indicated that they would be likely to give their child a graduation card upon his/her graduation. However, American parents ($M = 9.51$, $SD = 1.12$) indicated that they were more likely to give a card than Chinese parents did ($M = 8.02$, $SD = 2.02$), $F(1, 109) = 21.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$. American parents ($M = 8.64$, $SD = 3.24$) also reported giving a greater number of greeting cards to others over the past 12 months than did Chinese parents ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 3.32$), $F(1, 110) = 36.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$.

Chinese students ($M = 21.81$, $SD = 1.36$) were significantly older than American students ($M = 20.00$, $SD = 1.81$), $F(1, 100) = 32.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$. The student samples did not differ on gender proportions, $X^2(1, 102) = .41$, $p = .84$. Relative socioeconomic status did not differ between the two groups of students and fell within the "middle" range ($M = 3.17$, $SD = .76$), $F(1, 99) = .72$, p

= .40, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Mother's level of education was higher among American ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .64$) than Chinese students ($M = 3.21$, $SD = .64$), $F(1, 100) = 10.51$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Father's level of education was also marginally higher among American ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .74$) than Chinese students ($M = 3.37$, $SD = .77$), $F(1, 99) = 3.61$, $p = .06$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Chinese students ($M = 16.88$ months, $SD = 9.51$) expected to graduate sooner than American students ($M = 30.98$ months, $SD = 22.53$), $F(1, 93) = 16.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. American students ($M = 8.34$, $SD = 2.55$) believed that their parents would be more likely to give them a card when they graduated than Chinese students did ($M = 5.92$, $SD = 3.27$), $F(1, 100) = 17.26$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. American students ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 2.96$) also reported receiving a greater number of greeting cards from their parents in the past 12 months than did Chinese students ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 2.01$), $F(1, 98) = 11.58$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$.

Overall, the Chinese and American samples were found to differ significantly on quite a few variables. To investigate possible effects of these differences, I entered each variable as either a covariate or a factor in preliminary analyses. None of these variables moderated or altered the results reported below.

Parents' likelihood of selecting process- versus person-focused card messages

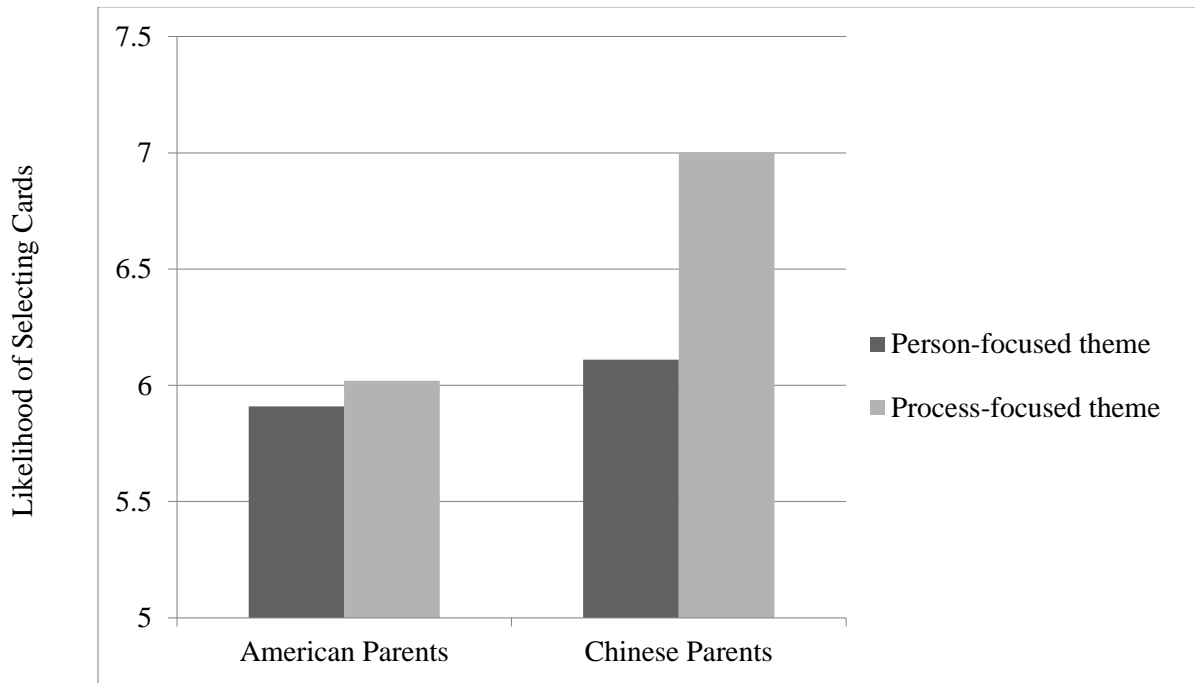
A 2 (culture: Chinese vs. American) x 2 (card theme: process-focused vs. person-focused) mixed ANOVA was conducted on parents' likelihood indices, with card theme as a within-subjects variable. Across cultures, parents were more likely to select process-themed ($M = 6.56$, $SD = 1.80$) than person-themed ($M = 6.02$, $SD = 1.81$) card messages for their children, $F(1, 110) = 6.37$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. The main effect of card theme was qualified by the predicted Culture x Theme interaction, $F(1, 110) = 3.95$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$ (see Figure 14). Chinese parents expressed greater likelihood of selecting process-themed ($M = 7.00$, $SD = 1.40$) than person-themed ($M = 6.11$, $SD = 1.71$) card messages for their children, $F(1, 61) = 9.97$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$. In contrast, likelihood ratings did not differ by card theme among American parents ($M_{person-focused} = 5.91$, $SD = 1.94$; $M_{process-focused} = 6.02$, $SD = 2.08$), $F(1, 49) = .16$, $p = .69$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. Comparisons between cultures revealed that Chinese

parents expressed greater likelihood of selecting process-themed card messages than American parents did, $F(1, 110) = 8.88, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .08$. There was no cultural difference in likelihood ratings for person-themed card messages, $F(1, 110) = .32, p = .58, \eta_p^2 < .01$.

Students' likelihood of receiving process- versus person-focused card messages

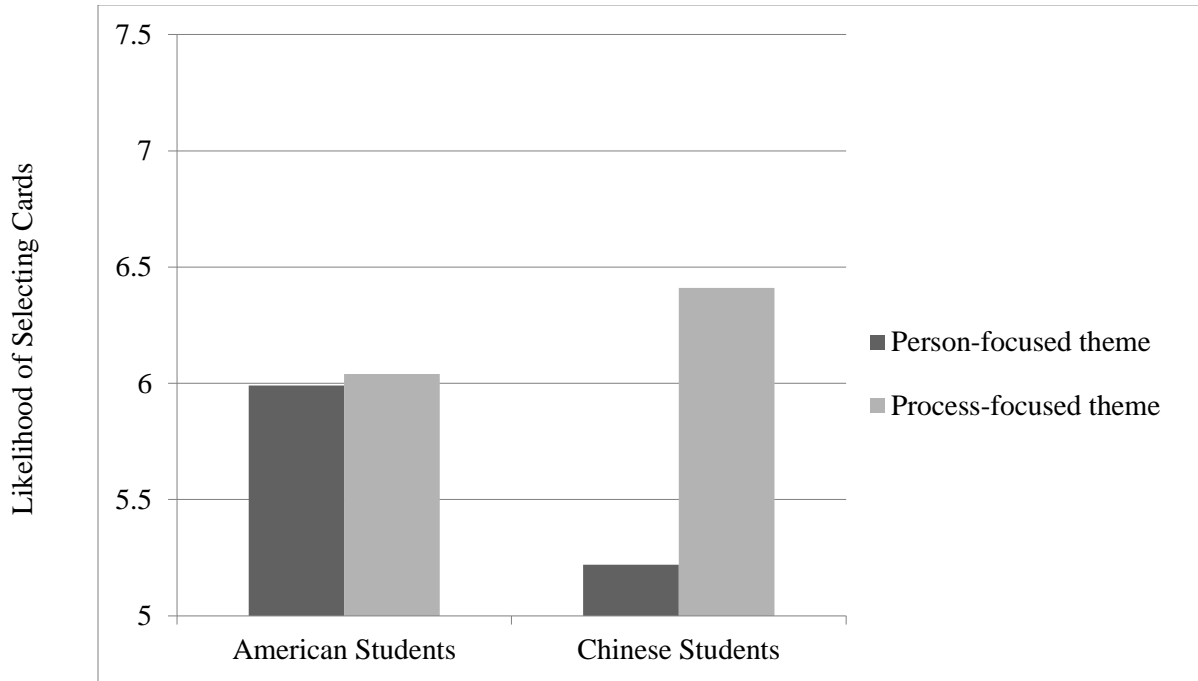
A 2 (culture: Chinese vs. American) x 2 (card theme: process-focused vs. person-focused) mixed ANOVA was conducted on students' likelihood indices, with card theme as a within-subjects variable. A main effect of card theme revealed that students reported a greater likelihood of receiving process-themed ($M = 6.22, SD = 1.63$) than person-themed ($M = 5.60, SD = 1.98$) graduation card messages from their parents, $F(1, 99) = 8.76, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .08$. As predicted, the Culture x Theme interaction was significant, $F(1, 99) = 7.40, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .07$ (see Figure 15). Chinese students perceived a greater likelihood of receiving process-themed ($M = 6.41, SD = 1.67$) than person-themed ($M = 5.22, SD = 2.26$) graduation card messages from their parents, $F(1, 50) = 14.21, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$. In contrast, likelihood ratings did not differ by card theme among American students ($M_{person-focused} = 5.99, SD = 1.58; M_{process-focused} = 6.04, SD = 1.59$), $F(1, 49) = .03, p = .86, \eta_p^2 < .01$. American students reported a greater likelihood of receiving person-themed graduation cards than Chinese students did, $F(1, 99) = 3.87, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$. However, there was no cultural difference on students' likelihood ratings for process-themed card messages, $F(1, 99) = 1.28, p = .26, \eta_p^2 = .01$.

Figure 14. Mean likelihood of selecting person- and process-focused themed graduation card messages as a function of parents' culture (Study 5).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very*).

Figure 15. Mean likelihood of receiving person- and process-focused themed graduation card messages as a function of students' culture (Study 5).



Scale ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very*).

Discussion

Chinese respondents in Study 5 revealed a clear preference for process- over person-focused graduation cards. These results are consistent with those from Study 4 and suggest the greater availability of process-focused cards in Hong Kong may indeed reflect purchasing preferences of East Asian consumers. The findings for American participants were less in line with my hypothesis. Although the messages in American cards in Study 4 revealed a strong person focus, American parents in Study 5 showed no systematic preference for person-focused graduation card messages. American students also reported that they would be equally likely to receive person- and process-focused messages from their parents. It is possible that American participants are indeed as satisfied with process- as with person-focused graduation messages. A discussion by Chiu and his colleagues on individual difference measures of implicit theories provides some support for this conjecture (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997). Even American participants who endorse entity items tend to endorse incremental items as well. Chiu and his colleagues suggest that incremental items may be “highly compelling and perhaps more socially desirable” (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997, p. 22). In addition, graduation marks the completion of years of schooling, numerous hours of studying, as well as countless assignments and exams. In this context, an appreciation for hard work and persistence may be salient to members of both cultural groups.

One limitation of this study is that it utilized students and parents of students who are not yet graduating. It is conceivable that the tendency to focus on person- versus process-praise may differ depending on the stage of task completion. Individuals may tend to be more process-focused when an activity is ongoing, but shift toward their culturally dominant focus when the activity has been completed. Had this study employed a sample of students and parents of students who were already eligible for graduation, the evaluations of Western participants may have been more consistent with the results of previous studies—greater preference for person- versus process-praise. Thus, the results of this study may have underestimated the cultural differences in true market preferences of people when they are buying (or receiving) graduation cards.

General Discussion

The findings from the current studies provide convergent evidence of cultural differences in both compliment giving and compliment receiving behaviours. Study 1 examined golfers' responses to compliments about a tournament win. The use of a naturalistic context differentiates this study from previous research, which has relied heavily on self-report. As predicted, Western golfers were more accepting and less rejecting of compliments than East Asian golfers. This finding was especially impressive considering that compliments about tournament wins are based on objective criteria. Study 2 demonstrated that cultural differences in responses to compliments about the self also extend to responses to hypothetical compliments about one's children. As with self compliments, Asian Canadian mothers were less accepting and more rejecting of hypothetical compliments about their children than were European Canadian mothers.

Study 3 examined cultural differences within a basketball-shooting context. To my knowledge, this was the first study to conduct a direct comparison of compliment responses to person- and process-praise compliments across cultures. Research on implicit theories of ability has demonstrated that within cultures, East Asians tend to hold stronger incremental than entity beliefs, whereas the reverse is true for Westerners (Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Heine et al., 2001). Previous research also suggests that entity and incremental theorists differentiate more on endorsement of entity beliefs than incremental beliefs (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995). In line with these findings, European Canadians were more accepting and less rejecting of person-praise compliments than Asian Canadians, whereas the cultural groups did not differ in responses to process-praise compliments. Comparisons within cultures were also consistent with research on implicit theories. European Canadians were more accepting than rejecting of person-praise compliments, whereas Asian Canadians were even-handed. In contrast, Asian Canadians tended to be more accepting ($p = .09$) than rejecting of process-praise compliments, whereas European Canadians were equally accepting and rejecting.

Cultural differences in offering compliments were examined using cultural artifacts and preference judgments, in Studies 4 and 5, respectively. Chinese graduation cards were found to contain more process- than person-praise compliments, whereas the reverse was true of American cards (Study 4). Consistent with these findings, Chinese parents indicated that they would be more likely to select and Chinese students indicated that they would be more likely to receive graduation card messages containing process- versus person-praise compliments (Study 5). American parents and students showed no effects of type of compliment.

Cultural differences in emphasis on person- versus process-praise were generally consistent across studies (see Table 3). East Asian participants and contexts exhibited a clear focus on process- versus person-praise. Chinese graduation cards contained more process- than person-focused messages and images (Study 4). Chinese participants indicated they were more likely to give and receive process-praise than person-praise graduation cards (Study 5). When responding to compliments, Asian Canadians tended to be more accepting and less rejecting of process-praise than person-praise (Study 3). On the other hand, Western participants and contexts emphasized either a stronger focus on person- than process-praise, or an equal focus on both types of praise. The messages and images on American graduation cards focused more on person- than process-praise (Study 4). American participants were nonsignificantly more likely to indicate that they would give and receive person-praise than process-praise graduation cards (Study 5). Finally, European Canadians accepted and rejected both types of compliments to similar degrees (Study 3).

Why do cultural differences in compliments exist?

Overall, East Asians were found to be less accepting and more rejecting of compliments than Westerners. However, the question remains as to why these differences exist. Previous research on cultural differences in compliments is limited and has been conducted primarily by linguists. As such, these differences in compliment responses have been attributed to variations in politeness strategies across cultures (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Chen, 1993; Gu, 1990; Leech, 1983; Pomerantz, 1978). The tendency for East Asians to reject or downplay compliments is thought to reflect politeness by

expressing modesty (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Gu, 1990). In contrast, Westerners' tendency to accept compliments is believed to indicate politeness by expressing agreement with the complimenter (Holmes, 1984; 1988).

From a social psychological perspective, cultural differences in responses to compliments may reflect well-documented and robust cultural differences in motivation and self-views. The tendency for European Canadians in my studies to accept compliments may reflect a general motivation to view the self-highly (Heine & Hamamura, 2007; Heine, Kitayama, & Lehman, 2001; Heine & Lehman, 1997, 1999; Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Ross, Heine, Wilson, & Sugimori, 2005). Asian Canadians' rejection (and less acceptance) of compliments may reflect a general motivation to engage in self-criticism and pursue self-improvement (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). In line with a social psychological perspective, cultural differences in responses to person-praise compliments were mediated by perceptions of accuracy (trait ratings in Study 2). Responses to person-praise compliments were also dependant on objective measures of prior performance (Study 3) in both Western and East Asian samples. However, prior performance did not predict responses to process-praise compliments in Study 3 (i.e., "I can see you've been working on your shots."). Conceivably, participants who performed less well interpreted the process-praise compliment as an offer of encouragement rather than praise. The finding that accuracy and prior performance predict responses to compliments not only supports a social psychological perspective, but render the linguistics perspective that compliment responses reflect socially dictated politeness strategies less viable as a complete explanation of the current data. It is noteworthy that a social psychological perspective recognizes that compliments are complex social behaviours that may reflect a number of both interpersonal and intrapersonal factors.

Impact of compliments

Study 3 examined the impact of person- and process-compliments on subsequent performance. Does receiving a compliment improve performance? Does the type of compliment

matter? Do different compliments affect individuals from different cultures differently? One possible hypothesis is that compliments that match recipients' implicit theories may have the most positive impact on performance—Westerners would improve more after receiving person-praise compliments and East Asians would improve more after receiving process-praise compliments. The results of Study 3, however, suggest that process-praise may be more beneficial than person praise for both cultural groups. This finding is consistent with and extends previous research demonstrating greater persistence among Western children who received process-praise than those who received person-praise (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). The absence of a control group makes it difficult to determine whether process-praise improved performance or person-praise worsened performance. Furthermore, although the immediate effects of compliments on behaviour were assessed in this research, the effects of compliments on other outcome measures such as liking for feedback, affect, self-evaluations of ability, and feelings of self-efficacy have yet to be examined. It is plausible that some of these outcome measures may demonstrate a stronger consistency with cultural differences in implicit theories than others. For example, Westerners may prefer person-praise and feel better about themselves after receiving it than after process-praise despite the fact that process-praise may improve subsequent performance more than person-praise.

In conclusion, the present studies indicate that East Asians and Westerners differ in their acceptance and rejection of compliments. I extended previous research by demonstrating these differences across various types of compliments (i.e., self compliments vs. family compliments and person-praise vs. process-praise compliments), and by examining the impact that these compliments may have on subsequent performance. I present these studies as preliminary evidence that cultural differences in compliments may reflect underlying differences in motivation and self-views.

References

- Adams, G. & Markus, H. R. (2004). Toward a conception of culture suitable for a Social Psychology of Culture. In M. Schaller & C. S. Crandall (Eds.), *The psychological foundations of culture* (pp. 335-360). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Anderson, C. A., (1999). Attributional style, depression, and loneliness: A cross-cultural comparison of American and Chinese students. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25(4), 482-499.
- Aron, A., Aron, E. N. & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of other in the self scale and the structure of interpersonal closeness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63(4), 596-612.
- Barnlund, D. C., & Araki, S. (1985). Intercultural encounters: The management of compliments by Japanese and Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 16(1), 9-26.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. New York, NY, US: Cambridge University Press.
- Cedar, P. (2006). Thai and American responses to compliments in English. *The Linguistics Journal*, 1(2), 6-28.
- Chen, C., & Stevenson, H. W. (1995). Motivation and mathematics achievement: A comparative study of Asian-American, Caucasian-American, and East Asian high school students. *Child Development*, 66(4), 1215-1234.
- Chen, R. (1993). Responding to compliments: A contrastive study of politeness strategies between American English and Chinese speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 20(1), 49-75.
- Chiu, C., Hong, Y., & Dweck, C. S. (1997). Lay dispositionism and implicit theories of personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(1), 19-30.
- Chua, A. (2011). *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. New York: Penguin Press HC.
- Chua-Rubinfeld, S. (2011). *Why I love my strict Chinese mom*. Retrieved from http://www.nypost.com/p/entertainment/why_love_my_strict_chinese_mom_uUvfmLcA5eteY0u2KXt7hM
- Cohen, D. (2007). Methods in cultural psychology. In S. Kitayama & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of Cultural Psychology* (pp. 196-236). New York: Guilford.
- Daikuhara, M. (1986). A study of compliments from a cross-cultural perspective: Japanese vs. American English. *Penn Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 2(2): 103-134.
- Dweck, C., Chui, C., & Hong, Y. (1995). Implicit theories and their role in judgments and reactions: A world from two perspectives. *Psychological Inquiry*, 6, 267-285.
- Dweck, C. S., & Leggett, E. L. (1988). A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review*, 95(2), 256-273.

- Endo, Y. & Meijer, Z. (2004). Autobiographical memory of success and failure experiences. In Y. Kashima, Y. Endo, E. S. Kashima, C. Leung, & J. McClure (Eds.), *Progress in Asian Social Psychology*, (Vol. 4, pp. 67-84). Seoul, Korea: Kyoyook-Kwahak-Sa Publishing Company.
- Gu, Y. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14(2), 237-257.
- Han, C. (1992). A comparative study of compliment responses: Korean females in Korean interactions and in English interactions. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 8(2), 17-31.
- Heine, S. J., & Hamamura, T. (2007). In search of East Asian self-enhancement. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 11, 4-27.
- Heine, S. J., & Lehman, D. R. (1997). The cultural construction of self-enhancement: An examination of group-serving biases. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(6), 1268-1283.
- Heine, S. J., Kitayama, S., & Lehman, D. R. (2001). Cultural differences in self-evaluation: Japanese readily accept negative self-relevant information. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32(4), 434-443.
- Heine, S. J., Kitayama, S., Lehman, D. R., Takata, T., Ide, E., Leung, C., & Matsumoto, H. (2001). Divergent consequences of success and failure in Japan and North America: An investigation of self-improving motivations and malleable selves. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(4), 599-615.
- Heine, S. J., & Lehman, D. R. (1999). Culture, self-discrepancies, and self-satisfaction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25(8), 915-925.
- Heine, S. J., Lehman, D. R., Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1999). Is there a universal need for positive self-regard? *Psychological Review*, 106(4), 766-794.
- Heine, S. J., & Renshaw, K. (2002). Interjudge agreement, self-enhancement, and liking: Cross-cultural divergences. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(5), 578-587.
- Heine, S. J., Takata, T., & Lehman, D. R. (2000). Beyond self-presentation: Evidence for self-criticism among Japanese. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26(1), 71-78.
- Herbert, R. K. (1990). Sex-based differences in compliment behavior. *Language in Society*, 19(2), 201-224.
- Hewstone, M., Bond, M. H., & Wan, K. C. (1983). Social facts and social attributions: The explanation of intergroup differences in Hong Kong. *Social Cognition*, 2(2), 142-157.
- Holmes, J. (1984). Modifying illocutionary force. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 8(3), 345-365.
- Holmes, J. (1988). Paying compliments: A sex-preferential politeness strategy. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12(4), 445-465.

- Kamins, M. L., & Dweck, C. S. (1999). Person versus process praise and criticism: Implications for contingent self-worth and coping. *Developmental Psychology, 35*(3), 835-847.
doi:10.1037/0012-1649.35.3.835
- Kitayama, S., Markus, H. R., Matsumoto, H., & Norasakkunkit, V. (1997). Individual and collective processes in the construction of the self: Self-enhancement in the United States and self-criticism in Japan. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*(6), 1245-1267.
- Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Manes, J. (1983). Compliments: A mirror of cultural values. In N. Wolfson, E. & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 96-102). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98*(2), 224-253.
- Masuda, T., & Nisbett, R. E. (2001). Attending holistically versus analytically: Comparing the context sensitivity of Japanese and Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*(5), 922-934. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.81.5.922
- Menon, T., Morris, M. W., Chiu, C., & Hong, Y. (1999). Culture and the construal of agency: Attribution to individual versus group dispositions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*(5), 701-717.
- Miller, R. L., Brickman, P., & Bolen, D. (1975). Attribution versus persuasion as a means for modifying behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 31*(3), 430-441.
- Miller, P. J., Wang, S., Sandel, T., & Cho, G. E. (2002). Self-esteem as folk theory: A comparison of European American and Taiwanese mothers' beliefs. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 2*(3), 209-239.
- Morling, B. & Lamoreaux, M. (2008). Measuring culture outside the head: A meta-analysis of cultural products. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 12*(3), 199-221.
- Mueller, C. M. & Dweck, C. S. (1998). Praise for intelligence can undermine children's motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*(1), 33-52.
- Muramoto, Y., & Yamaguchi, S. (1997). Another type of self-serving bias: Coexistence of self-effacing and group-serving tendencies in attribution in the Japanese culture. *Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 37*(1), 65-75.
- Norenzayan, A., Choi, I., & Nisbett, R. E. (2002). Cultural similarities and differences in social inference: Evidence from behavioral predictions and lay theories of behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28*(1), 109-120.
- Oishi, S., & Diener, E. (2003). Culture and well-being: The cycle of action, evaluation and decision. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*(8), 939-949.

- Oyserman, D., Coon, H., & Kimmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking individualism and collectivism: Evaluation of theoretical assumptions and meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(1), 3-73.
- Peng, K., & Nisbett, R. E. (. (1999). Culture, dialectics, and reasoning about contradiction. *American Psychologist*, 54(9), 741-754.
- Pomerantz, A. (1978). Compliment responses: Notes on the co-operation of multiple constraints. In J. Schenkein (Ed.), *Studies in the organization of conversational interaction* (pp. 79-112). New York: Academic.
- Ross, M., Heine, S. J., Wilson, A. E., & Sugimori, S. (2005). Cross-cultural discrepancies in self-appraisals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(9), 1175-1188.
- Schunk, D. H. (1994). Self-regulation of self-efficacy and attributions in academic settings. In D. H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Self-regulation of learning and performance: Issues and educational application* (pp. 75-99). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Schunk, D. H. (1996, April). *Attributions and the development of self-regulatory competence*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.
- Stevenson, H. and J. Stigler (1992). *The learning gap: Why our schools are failing and what we can learn from Japanese and Chinese education*. New York, NY: Summit Books.
- Tafarodi, R. W., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (1996). Individualism-collectivism and global self-esteem: Evidence for a cultural trade-off. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 27(6), 651-672.
- Takata, T. (2003). Self-enhancement and self-criticism in Japanese culture. An experimental analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 34(5), 542-551.
- Triandis, H. C. (1996). Individualism-collectivism and personality. *Journal of Personality*, 69(6), 907-924.
- Triandis, H. C. (2001). The psychological measurement of cultural syndromes. *American Psychologist*, 51(4), 407-415.
- Wang, Q. (2004). The emergence of cultural self-constructs: Autobiographical memory and self-description in European American and Chinese children. *Developmental Psychology*, 40(1), 3-15.
- Wang, Y., & Tsai, P. (2003). An empirical study on compliments and compliment responses in Taiwan mandarin conversation. *Concentric: Studies in Linguistics*, 29(2), 118-156.
- White, K., & Lehman D. R. (2005). Culture and social comparison seeking: The role of self-motives. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(2), 232-242.
- Wolfson, N. (1983). An empirically based analysis of complimenting in American English. In N. Wolfson, E. & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 82-95). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

- Wolfson, N., & Manes, J. (1980). The compliment as a social strategy. *Papers in Linguistics*, 13(3-4), 391-410.
- Yu, M. (2005). Sociolinguistic competence in the complimenting act of native Chinese and American English speakers: A mirror of cultural value. *Language and Speech*, 48(1), 91-119.
- Yu, M. (2004). Interlinguistic variation and similarity in second language speech act behavior. *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(1), 102-119.

Appendix A

Compliment Responses as a Function of Culture and Condition (Say vs. Feel; Study 2)

Participants in Study 2 were randomly assigned to describe either what they would say in response to a compliment or how they would privately feel about a compliment. To examine whether participants' responses varied as a function of whether they described what they would say or how they would feel, a 2 (culture: Asian Canadians vs. European Canadians) x 2 (response type: acceptance vs. rejection) x 2 (condition: say vs. feel) mixed ANOVA, with response type as the within-subjects variable, was conducted. The predicted culture by response type interaction remained significant, $F(1, 175) = 50.71, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .23$. Results also revealed a culture by condition interaction, $F(1, 175) = 6.57, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .04$, which was uninformative because it collapsed across compliment acceptance and rejection. No other effects involving condition were significant, all F s < 1, suggesting that responses did not vary by whether participants reported what they said or how they felt and provide justification for collapsing across condition in subsequent analyses.

Appendix B

English and Chinese Graduation Card Messages (Study 5)

Process-Focused Card Messages

1. **Congratulations! Hard work and dedication really pay off.**
祝贺！努力与奉献终于有了回报。
2. **Hard work + Persistence = Success. Congratulations.**
努力 + 坚持 = 成功。恭喜你。
3. **Your hard work in the past really hasn't gone to waste. Congratulations on your successful study and best wishes for a blossoming future.**
过往的努力果然没有白费。恭祝学业有成，前程似锦。
4. **Those difficult days in the past have become beautiful memories because of today's accomplishments. Congratulations!**
那些艰难的日子却因为今天的成果而成为美丽的回忆。恭喜！

Person-Focused Card Messages

1. **To one of the best and brightest! Congratulations on your graduation.**
致最棒最聪明的人！恭喜你毕业了。
2. **Brilliant and talented you! Congratulations!**
恭喜卓越而有才华的你！
3. **Congratulations to an outstanding and one-of-a-kind graduate. You were just born to do great things!**
恭喜一名杰出和独一无二的毕业生。你生来就是做大事的人！
4. **Celebrating each and every one of your exceptional brain cells. Happy graduation!**
为你每一个优良的脑细胞而庆贺。毕业快乐！

Table 1

Summary of Mean Differences in Compliment Acceptance and Rejection across Cultures (Studies 1-5)

Study	Dependent variable	Direction of means	Significance	Statistics
Study 1	Acceptance of process-praise compliments	Western golfers > Asian golfers	significant	$F(1, 38) = 14.33, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .27$
	Rejection of process-praise compliments	East Asian golfers > Western golfers	significant	$F(1, 38) = 5.26, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .12$
Study 2	Acceptance of person-praise compliments	European Canadians > Asian Canadians	significant	$F(1, 177) = 51.86, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .23$
	Rejection of person-praise compliments	Asian Canadians > European Canadians	significant	$F(1, 177) = 29.53, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$
Study 3	Acceptance of person-praise compliments	European Canadians > Asian Canadians	marginal	$F(1, 37) = 3.82, p = .06, \eta_p^2 = .09$
	Rejection of person-praise compliments	Asian Canadians > European Canadians	significant	$F(1, 37) = 5.30, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .13$
	Acceptance of process-praise compliments	European Canadians > Asian Canadians	nonsignificant	$F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .001$
	Rejection of process-praise compliments	European Canadians > Asian Canadians	nonsignificant	$F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .01$
Study 4	Strength of person-praise card messages	American cards > Chinese cards	nonsignificant	$F(1, 52) = 1.96, p = .17, \eta_p^2 = .04$
	Strength of process-praise card messages	Chinese cards > American cards	significant	$F(1, 52) = 13.57, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .21$
	Frequency of person-praise images	Chinese cards > American cards	significant	$F(1, 52) = 28.92, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .36$
	Frequency of process-praise images	Chinese cards > American cards	significant	$F(1, 52) = 7.44, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .13$
Study 5	Likelihood of giving person-praise cards	Chinese parents > American parents	nonsignificant	$F(1, 110) = .32, p = .58, \eta_p^2 < .01$
	Likelihood of giving process-praise cards	Chinese parents > American parents	significant	$F(1, 110) = 8.88, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .08$
	Likelihood of receiving person-praise cards	American students > Chinese students	significant	$F(1, 99) = 3.87, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$
	Likelihood of receiving process-praise cards	Chinese students > American students	nonsignificant	$F(1, 99) = 1.28, p = .261, \eta_p^2 = .01$

Table 2

Summary of Mean Differences in Compliment Acceptance and Rejection within Cultures (Studies 1-3)

Study	Type of compliment	Direction of means	Significance	Statistics
Study 1	Process-praise	Western golfers: accept > reject	significant	$F(1, 20) = 59.89, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .75$
	Process-praise	East Asian golfers: accept > reject	nonsignificant	$F(1, 18) = 2.30, p = .15, \eta_p^2 = .11$
Study 2	Person-praise	European Canadians: accept > reject	significant	$F(1, 76) = 248.89, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .77$
	Person-praise	Asian Canadians: accept > reject	significant	$F(1, 101) = 10.05, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .09$
Study 3	Person-praise	European Canadians: accept > reject	significant	$F(1, 15) = 6.89, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .32$
	Person-praise	Asian Canadians: reject > accept	nonsignificant	$F < 1, \eta_p^2 = .02$
	Process-praise	European Canadians: accept > reject	nonsignificant	$F(1, 17) = 1.48, p = .24, \eta_p^2 = .08$
	Process-praise	Asian Canadians: accept > reject	nonsignificant	$F(1, 22) = 3.26, p = .09, \eta_p^2 = .13$

Table 3

Summary of Mean Differences in Person- versus Process-Praise Compliments within Cultures (Studies 3-5)

Study	Dependent variable	Direction of means	Significance	Statistics
Study 3	Acceptance	European Canadians: Person-praise > process-praise	nonsignificant	$F < 1, \eta_p^2 < .01$
	Rejection	European Canadians: Process-praise > person-praise	nonsignificant	$F(1, 32) = 1.05, p = .31, \eta_p^2 = .03$
	Acceptance	Asian Canadians: Process-praise > person-praise	nonsignificant	$F(1, 44) = 2.31, p = .14, \eta_p^2 = .05$
	Rejection	Asian Canadians: Person-praise > process-praise	nonsignificant	$F(1, 44) = 2.51, p = .12, \eta_p^2 = .05$
Study 4	Strength of card messages	American card messages: person-praise > process-praise	significant	$F(1, 38) = 5.39, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .12$
	Strength of card messages	Chinese card messages: process-praise > person-praise	significant	$F(1, 14) = 13.49, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .49$
	Frequency of card images	American card images: person-praise > process-praise	nonsignificant	$F(1, 38) = 1.00, p = .32, \eta_p^2 = .03$
	Frequency of card images	Chinese card images: process-praise > person-praise	significant	$F(1, 14) = 5.03, p = .04, \eta_p^2 = .26$
Study 5	Likelihood of giving cards	American parents: Process-praise > person-praise	nonsignificant	$F(1, 49) = .16, p = .69, \eta_p^2 < .01$
	Likelihood of giving cards	Chinese parents: process-praise > person-praise	significant	$F(1, 61) = 9.97, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .14$
	Likelihood of receiving cards	American students: process-praise > person-praise	nonsignificant	$F(1, 49) = .03, p = .86, \eta_p^2 < .01$
	Likelihood of receiving cards	Chinese students: process-praise > person-praise	significant	$F(1,50) = 14.21, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$

Table 4

Zero-Order Correlations among Types of Ratings (Study 1, Unmatched Tournaments)

East Asian Golfers (<i>n</i> = 19)			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1. Acceptance	-	.03	.25
2. Rejection		-	.46*
3. Compliment Strength			-
Western Golfers (<i>n</i> = 21)			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1. Acceptance	-	.01	.45*
2. Rejection		-	.07
3. Compliment Strength			-

**p* < .05.

Table 5

Zero-Order Correlations among Types of Ratings (Study 2)

	Asian Canadians (<i>n</i> = 102)			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1. Acceptance	-	-.57**	.35**	.40**
2. Rejection		-	-.11	-.30*
3. Trait importance			-	.39**
4. Trait ratings				-
	European Canadians (<i>n</i> = 77)			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1. Acceptance	-	-.61**	.17	.40**
2. Rejection		-	-.13	-.23*
3. Trait importance			-	.26*
4. Trait ratings				-

p* < .05. *p* < .001.

Table 6

Partial Correlations between Types of Ratings Controlling for Trait Ratings (Study 2)

Asian Canadians (<i>n</i> = 102)		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Acceptance	-	-.51**
2. Rejection		-
European Canadians (<i>n</i> = 77)		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Acceptance	-	-.58**
2. Rejection		-

**p* < .001.

Table 7

Zero-Order Correlations among Primary Dependent Measures (Study 3)

Asian Canadians (<i>n</i> = 34)			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1. Acceptance	-	-.67***	.39**
2. Rejection		-	-.36*
3. Pre-compliment shooting percentage			-
European Canadians (<i>n</i> = 46)			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1. Acceptance	-	-.61***	.28
2. Rejection		-	-.42*
3. Pre-compliment shooting percentage			-

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 8

Partial Correlations between Types of Ratings Controlling for Pre-Compliment Shooting Percentage (Study 3)

Asian Canadians (<i>n</i> = 34)		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Acceptance	-	-.61*
2. Rejection		-
European Canadians (<i>n</i> = 46)		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Acceptance	-	-.56*
2. Rejection		-

**p* < .001.

Table 9

Zero-Order Correlations among Primary Dependent Measures (Study 4)

Chinese graduation cards (<i>n</i> = 39)				
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1. Process-praise theme	-	.48†	.64*	.33
2. Person-praise theme		-	.50†	.67**
3. Process-praise images			-	.63*
4. Person-praise images				-
American graduation cards (<i>n</i> = 15)				
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1. Process-praise theme	-	-.19	.49**	-.13
2. Person-praise theme		-	-.11	.14
3. Process-praise images			-	.11
4. Person-praise images				-

†*p* < .07. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01.

Table 10

Zero-Order Correlations between Mean Likelihood Ratings (Study 5)

	Chinese Students (<i>n</i> = 52)		Chinese Parents (<i>n</i> = 62)	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Process-praise messages	-	.38**	-	-.02
2. Person-praise messages		-		-
	American Students (<i>n</i> = 50)		American Parents (<i>n</i> = 50)	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Process-praise messages	-	.26†	-	.56***
2. Person-praise messages		-		-

†*p* < .07. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.