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Seeking Help from Close, Same-Sex Friends: Relational Costs for
Japanese and Personal Costs for European Canadians

by

Kenichi Ito

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Dedication

To my mentors, Dr. Beverley Fehr, Dr. Lisa Sinclair, and Dr. Michael Halldorson, whose guidance, encouragement, and patience greatly fostered my interests in psychology. Your belief in me spurred me to pursue graduate studies and ultimately led to this dissertation. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Abstract

Seeking help from close, same-sex friends can be costly because the act of seeking help sometimes involves the admission of incompetence (i.e., personal costs) and the disruption to close friendships (i.e., relational costs; cf. Fisher, Nadler, & Whicher-Alagna, 1983). Past research suggested that European Canadians are likely to perceive personal costs (cf. Nadler, 1983); whereas, the Japanese are likely to perceive relational costs (cf. Kim, Sherman, & Taylor, 2008). In three studies, I investigated the ways in which people from different cultural backgrounds utilize these culturally specific costs to form expectations of closeness in friendships. In particular, I used the situation sampling method to collect people's everyday experiences of seeking help from close, same-sex friends in Study 1. Participants in Studies 2 and 3 were asked to imagine and rate the costs and norms of seeking the help generated in study 1. Based on the two cultural psychological theories, I hypothesized and found that culturally specific costs of seeking help and people's perceived norms of seeking help simultaneously influenced their expectations of closeness in friendships. The perceptions of personal costs were negatively associated with the perceived norm of seeking help among European Canadian participants, while the perceptions of relational costs were negatively associated with the perceived norm among Japanese participants. In both cultural groups, the perceived norm of seeking help was positively associated with participants' expectations of closeness in friendships. Implications for the prototype interaction-pattern models in close

relationship research and for creating a support program in universities will be

discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

General Introduction

A 26-year-old Japanese international student in Canada developed an ulcer and underwent surgery. During his week-long hospitalization, he decided not to seek support from his close, same-sex friends because he was reluctant to cause them trouble. Based on his life experience of growing up in Japan, it was unthinkable for him to ask friends to look after him when he was sick. Thus, he felt that refraining from bothering friends to help resolve his personal problems was the "right" choice to avoid harming his close friendships. After being released from the hospital, he told his European Canadian friends what had happened, expecting that they would agree with the way that he had handled the situation. His friends' responses however, surprised him. Contrary to his expectations, his friends were disappointed that he worried about bothering them. This anecdote from my personal experience in 2005 is meant to illustrate the fact that seeking help from close, same-sex friends is sometimes perceived as costly in Japanese culture. In particular, the anecdote suggests that Japanese and European Canadian young adults may differ in what constitutes the cost of seeking help from close, same-sex friends.

People often seek help from friends. Students ask classmates to lend them notes from a missed class. Doctors ask other doctors to provide feedback to confirm their diagnoses. Married couples seek advice from their friends to solve marital crises. Such help-seeking behaviours involve an individual's explicit request for aid from another person when they encounter a problem or a need. People seek help with problems that can be more easily resolved or assuaged with the time, effort, or resources of another person (Depaulo, 1983). In this research,

I focused on help-seeking behaviours in close, same-sex friendships, because same-sex friends are a primary source of support among young adults across cultures (Fehr, 1996). For example, 1,500 adolescents in a large-scale survey performed in the former Soviet Union reported that they felt more understood by and were more likely to share private thoughts with close, same-sex friends than their parents, siblings, and favorite teachers (Kon & Losenkov, 1978). Furthermore, French adolescents reported that they discussed a wider range of topics with same-sex friends than with dating partners (Werebe, 1987). Finally, the study of people's lay theories regarding close friendships showed that both Americans (Cole & Baradec, 1996) and Japanese (Maeda & Ritchie, 2003) conceptualized mutual support as an important feature of having friends. These findings suggested the important role of close, same-sex friends in seeking and receiving help among young adults across people with different cultural backgrounds. If there are cultural variations in people's beliefs about seeking help from close, same-sex friends as the anecdote suggests, elucidating diverging effects of the culturally specific beliefs on the closeness in close friendships will benefit research on social support, close relationship, and culture in addition to health professionals who utilize informal support as a coping strategy for life stress.

        The purpose of my dissertation research is to examine, from the perspectives of cultural psychology, reasons why seeking help from close, same-sex friends is sometimes perceived as costly. Past research indicated that reasons for perceiving high costs in seeking help differ between East Asians such as

Japanese and North Americans such as European Canadians (Chentsova-Dutton & Tsai, 2010). For European Canadians, seeking help can be perceived as costly if it is perceived to create an unfair distribution of resources in the relationship. In close friendships, in which people treat each other as equals and offer help without monitoring the balance of cost and benefit (cf. Clark, 1983; Fiske 1992), European Canadians perceive minimal costs for seeking help. Instead they may perceive high costs for seeking help due to habitual concerns for personal aspects of the self (e.g., traits or personal goals; cf. Fisher, Nadler, & Witcher-Alagna, 1983). That is, European Canadians may estimate *personal costs* for seeking help from close, same-sex friends according to their self-evaluation as independent, autonomous, or self-reliant individuals. Japanese, on the other hand, view seeking help from others as costly even in close friendships due to concerns for relational aspects of the self (e.g., others' needs or goals). That is, Japanese may estimate *relational costs* for seeking help from close, same-sex friends according to the degree to which they evaluate themselves as interdependent, supportive of harmonious relationships, or being perceptive about others' welfare (cf. Greenberg & Westcott, 1983). I investigated the reasons for these varying perceptions of costs from two psychological perspectives: a subjective approach (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010) and an intersubjective approach (Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010) to culture. The two approaches differ markedly in terms of the sources from which people find guidance for thinking, feeling, or behaving. A subjective approach posits that people's actions are guided by their internalized view of the self as independent or interdependent,

and thus the perceived costs of seeking help are likely to be associated with their

self-perception. In contrast, an intersubjective approach posits that people act on

what they believe to be the norm among group members, and thus the perceived

costs of seeking help are likely to be associated with perceived norms. In three

studies, I examined whether the two approaches when understood in combination

explain help-seeking practices in European Canadian or in Japanese culture. I

will begin by reviewing existing research on help-seeking behaviours and costs of

seeking help. I will then discuss how the two approaches explain and predict the

impact of seeking subjectively costly help from close, same-sex friends. Finally, I

will discuss the characteristics of a situation that brings out specific psychological

tendencies in a given culture.

Background of Research on Help-Seeking Behaviours

Help-seeking behaviours are distinct from provisions of help. As Gross

and McMullen (1983) pointed out, there are many theories of helping behaviours

that focus only on the mindset of help providers without considering the mindset

of help seekers. For example, in investigating the functionality of altruistic

behaviours, evolutionary psychologists and sociobiologists have argued that

people help other in-group members to increase the reproductive success of the

group as a whole (Hoffman, 1981) or the likelihood of receiving benefits in return

(Trivers, 1971). Similarly, in investigating the process of altruistic behaviours,

social psychologists argue that people help others when the reward outweighs the

cost of helping (Kelly & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959) or when help

providers are fully empathetic with a needy person (Baston & Shaw, 1991).

These lines of research assume that help providers individually determine provisions of help without taking into account the presence or absence of explicit requests or the way in which people request help. The underlying assumption is that people somehow find others who are in need and offer help to them. However, this assumption does not correlate with the experience of people's everyday lives in which those in need frequently seek interpersonal or institutional help to solve problems.

As Gross and McMullen (1983) argued, to formulate a comprehensive theory of helping behaviours, the ways in which help seekers approach and solicit help from potential help providers need to be incorporated into the theory and associated research. Such a theory will aid scholars in the field generate comprehensive hypotheses in regard to the request, the provision, and the reception of helping behaviours. Some questions about the soliciting and offering of help need to be addressed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of helping behaviours as they unfold in people's everyday lives. For example, do people feel more thankful to help providers if they explicitly request help rather than if they wait until help is offered?   Similarly, do help providers evaluate themselves positively when they offer help without being asked?   Research findings to address these questions will allow people to seek or offer help in appropriate situations. With such information, the soliciting and offering of help will be less stressful. In other words, various benefits of helping behaviours will become more accessible.

Research on the reception of help has shown various health benefits for people who receive help from others. For example, receiving help may buffer life stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985), reduce loneliness (Samter, 1992), increase subjective well-being (Adams & Blieszner, 1995), or facilitate problem solving (Costanza, Derlega, & Winstead, 1988). However, evidence also has suggested that people sometimes miss opportunities to receive these benefits because they are concerned about the potential costs of seeking help (DePaulo & Fisher, 1980). I aim to contribute to this line of research by investigating the burden of seeking help for European Canadian and Japanese young adults.

Relational Costs of Seeking Help

In one line of research, social psychologists aiming to elucidate the mindset of help seekers have investigated help seekers' perceptions of relational costs for seeking help. This line of research posits that seeking help from others may disrupt a relationship by creating the perception of unfairness or inequity. According to the equity theory, individuals who participate in a social relationship are concerned with the equitable distribution of resources within that relationship. Individuals in the social relationship are expected to follow rules regarding the fair distribution of resources and are punished for noncompliance (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). The act of seeking help is a kind of behaviour that potentially breaks the rules of fairness, because help seekers benefit more than help providers when help is transacted (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1983). Therefore, relational costs for seeking help are perceived to be high when help seekers create, or expect to create, severe unfairness by seeking help (Gross & McMullen,

1983). When relational costs for seeking help are perceived as high, help seekers feel distress for seeking help and become motivated to restore a fair balance in the relationship, or they are reluctant to seek help from others to avoid distressed feelings (Greenberg & Westcott, 1983; Wilke & Lanzetta, 1970).

Past research provided evidence that help seekers' perception of unfairness in a relationship inhibits help seeking or motivates them to restore a fair balance after seeking help. For example, participants in a study performed by Greenberg and Shapiro (1971) performed two tasks with another person who served as a confederate in the experiment. Through the demonstration of the tasks by experimenters at the beginning of the session, all participants were made aware that their first task was more difficult than the task of the confederate. Thus, they might require help from the confederate to complete the assigned task. The opportunity to restore fairness in relationships was manipulated in the demonstration of the second task, where half of the participants were led to believe that their second task was easier than that of the confederate's, while the other half were led to believe that the second task was equally difficult for both parties. As a result, in deciding whether or not to seek help from the confederate during the first task, one group of participants expected an immediate opportunity to restore fairness through reciprocation in the second task while the other group did not. The results showed that participants who expected no opportunity to reciprocate in the second task were less likely to seek help than those who expected an opportunity to reciprocate. Seemingly, participants who expected no

opportunity for reciprocation anticipated that seeking help from the confederate would create unfairness in the relationship; thus, they hesitated to do so.

In addition to the absence of help seekers' opportunities to restore fairness in a relationship, their interpretations of help providers' costs in providing help were also perceived to create unfairness in a relationship and thus inhibited help seeking. DePaulo and Fisher (1980) demonstrated this phenomenon by leading participants to believe that a potential help provider was busy working on a different task. When participants assumed that the potential help provider was busy, they estimated the help provider's contribution to the relationship to be high. Therefore, they were less likely to seek help than participants who believed that a potential help provider was available to assist. DePaulo and Fisher (1980) interpreted these results to mean that if participants dared to seek help from a busy help provider, the reward for participating in the relationship would be unfairly distributed. The anticipation of this unfairness inhibited participants in the busy-help-provider condition from seeking help.

In some interpersonal relationships, people seem to be less concerned about the fair distribution of resources. Clark (1983) argued that the norm in communal relationships (e.g., friendships, romantic relationships, or kinships) is to be responsive to other's needs. Similarly, Fiske (1992) argued that people who are in communal sharing relationships treat each other as equals and offer help without monitoring the balance of cost and benefit. Based on these arguments, seeking help from close, same-sex friends is unlikely to create the perception of unfairness in a relationship because the norm of the relationship is not a quid pro

quo. Therefore, help seekers perceive minimal relational costs. Experimental

evidence supported the role of relationship types in moderating relational costs.

For example, female participants in Shapiro's (1980) study were asked to form

shapes from small pieces of wood with either a friend or a stranger in either high-

or low-relational cost conditions. In the beginning of the experimental session,

pairs of participants were told that they could earn a chance to win a $15 bonus

based on their performance and that they could seek help from their partner to

perform the task well. In the high-relational-cost condition, participants were told

that their partner would lose the chance to win the prize if they agreed to help,

whereas in the low-relational-cost condition, participants were not given this

information. The results showed that participants who were paired with their

friends sought help regardless of the relational cost conditions, while those who

were paired with strangers sought help less frequently in the high-cost condition

than in the low-cost condition. Similarly, Weinstein, DeVaughan, and Wiley

(1969) observed that, compared to paired strangers, paired friends who cooperated

to achieve a mutual goal were less likely to show signs of offering immediate

repayment even when one person contributed more than the other. In this study,

pairs of friends or strangers in the same class were assigned to work together on

two class projects. After the first project, a teaching assistant provided false

feedback indicating that one person contributed more than the other to receive an

A for the first project. Experimenters' observations during the second project and

participants' self-report after the second project showed that participants were less

likely to assume larger responsibility for the second project if they were paired

with friends rather than strangers. That is, participants who received benefits from their friends remained in a position to seek help from friends. These results suggested that a situation in which interactions created an unfair distribution of resources, such as eliminating a partner's chance to win or contributing less for a mutual goal, was not perceived as an inhibitor for seeking help when help providers were friends.

Culture and Seeking Help

A drawback of these studies is that most of the participants were from Western cultural backgrounds. Recent research on cultural variations in help-seeking behaviours indicated that East Asians perceive higher relational costs for seeking help than their North American counterparts (see Kim, Sherman, & Taylor, 2008 for review). For example, when asked to report means to reduce their personal stress in an open-ended survey, Koreans, Asian immigrants in the United States, and second-generation Asian Americans were less likely to mention help from others as a way of reducing personal stress than were European Americans (Taylor, Sherman, Kim, Jarcho, Takagi, & Dunagan, 2004).

Evidence from cross-cultural studies of help seeking has indicated that East Asians may not conceptualize relational costs as creating unfairness in relationships. Even in close relationships, in which the perceived fair distribution of resources has been shown to be less important than in other types of relationships, East Asians perceive high relational costs for seeking help. For example, Taylor et al. (2004) showed that, among Asian immigrants and Asian Americans, their relational concerns were negatively correlated with their

decisions to seek help from others. The relational concerns included five factors: disrupting the harmonious relationship with help providers, deterioration of the problem due to help providers' overreactions, help seekers' fear of negative evaluation by help provider, help seekers' desire to maintain positive self-image and avoid embarrassment in front of help providers, and beliefs in obligation to handle one's personal problems without causing trouble for others. The higher these relational concerns in seeking help, the less likely the Asian participants were to enlist help from others as a solution for their personal problems.

Cultural variations in the relational concerns associated with seeking help are especially pronounced in the case of seeking help from close others. Taylor, Welch, Kim, and Sherman (2007) provided empirical evidence for cultural variations in the relational concerns for seeking help with physiological measurements. Throughout their study, Asian immigrants, second-generation Asian Americans, and European Americans performed stressful tasks, such as mental arithmetic and public speaking. During the intermission period, an experimenter asked participants to think about ingroup members and write a letter seeking their help with the tasks. By writing such a letter, participants were induced to be concerned about their relationship with potential help providers. The results showed that when Asian groups were induced to think about soliciting help explicitly, even from "people to whom they were close" (Taylor et al., 2007, p. 833), they felt distressed for seeking help. Specifically, Asian groups reported higher levels of distress and showed increased cortisol levels when they wrote letters soliciting help from close others than did participants in the control

condition, who were not tasked to write letters. In contrast, European Americans' distress levels for seeking help from close others were similar to those of participants in the control condition.

East Asians also perceived high relational concerns and thus inhibited help seeking when their help-seeking behaviours impeded the goals of those from whom they are seeking help. In one study, for example, Kim, Sherman, Ko, and Taylor (2006) recruited European and Asian American participants. An experimenter asked one-third of the participants to describe ingroup goals and another third to describe personal goals. The remaining third were not asked to describe any goals. After being primed with different goals, all participants wrote about the greatest social stressor they were currently facing. Participants then rated their agreement with various coping strategies to manage the stressor. The results showed that Asian American participants who were primed with ingroup goals were less likely than those primed with personal goals to seek help from others as a strategy to combat the stressor. Asian Americans might have hesitated to report seeking help from others as a coping strategy because they thought that requesting help to achieve personal goals was inappropriate in pursuing harmonious relationships with others, especially when their ingroup members had a different goal.

These findings suggested a specific perception of relational costs associated with East Asians' help-seeking behaviours. In particular, East Asians were highly concerned about disturbing their social network by seeking help from close others and were cautious about help seeking (cf. Kim et al., 2006). Based

on these findings the relational costs, which equity theorists defined as the degree

of unfair distribution of resources, fail to account for East Asians' concerns for

seeking help from close others. Rather, relational costs for East Asians may refer

to the degree to which the act of seeking help undermines interdependence,

disrupts harmonious relationships with help providers, or indicates ignorance to

others' welfare. Because East Asians experience distinct relational costs for

seeking help from close others compare to their North American counterparts,

they were more likely to be inhibited from seeking help from others even in close

relationships.

Two Theories of Culture and Mind

The evidence I have presented thus far has implied that the unfair

distribution of resources in relationships falls short as an explanation of the

perceived relational costs for seeking help among Japanese young adults. I argue

that their perceived relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends

can be explained by using two approaches to the study of culture in tandem, one

based on the view of the self and the other based on the perceived norm.

Subjective Approach to Culture

In examining Japanese young adults' perception of relational costs for

seeking help from close, same-sex friends, it is necessary to understand their view

of the relationship between the self and social relationships. Cultural differences

in views of the relationship between the self and others are one of the most widely

studied topics in cultural and cross-cultural psychology. Many of the researchers

noted earlier in this paper interpret cultural variations in help-seeking behaviours

through the concept of interdependent versus independent view of the self. A

consistent implication of these studies is that East Asians tend to view the self as

connected to or interdependent with their close others. Social relationships are an

important part of who they are; thus, East Asians prioritize the maintenance of

harmonious relationships with close others over their personal goals, needs, or

beliefs (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010). Because relational costs for seeking

help are seen to violate this interdependent view, East Asians who seek help from

close, same-sex friends may be sensitive to such costs. Being able to perceive

relational costs for seeking help, East Asians can avoid incongruity between their

view of the self and their actions. This interdependent view of the self and social

relationships is often contrasted with that of North Americans. North Americans

tend to view the self as a distinct, autonomous, and unique entity that is

meaningful and independent of social relationships. In this view, individuals are

expected to have sets of distinct attributes that remain consistent across various

situations, and social relationships are formed on the basis of personal interests

and goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010). Relational costs for seeking help

from close, same-sex friends are inconsequential to North Americans' self-views,

because the costs are not seen to violate this independent view. This approach to

cultural variation in psychological processes implies that one's view of the self,

which is shared among people who live in a given cultural environment, is

internalized through interaction with its members, such as caregivers, peers, or

friends.

Based on these two distinct models of the self, it is logical to expect that people who hold different views of the self perceive relational costs of seeking help differently, and that they expect distinct consequences of seeking help on their relationships. More specifically, Japanese individuals who internalized the importance on maintaining harmonious relationships evaluate an act of seeking help based on the degree to which the action threatens their harmonious relationship with potential help providers (cf. Kim et al., 2006). In other words, as East Asians perceive higher relational costs for seeking help, they expect lower closeness in the relationships because their acts of seeking help are more likely to disrupt the harmonious relationships. Therefore, I expected that Japanese individuals' perceived relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends would be negatively associated with their expectation of closeness in friendships. Conversely, European Canadians perceive relational costs as unrelated or inconsequential to subsequent closeness in close, same-sex friendship because they have not internalized to value the maintenance of harmonious relationships as firmly as Japanese individuals. Therefore I expected no association between European Canadians' relational costs and their expectation of closeness in friendships.

Intersubjective Approach to Culture

Recently, another group of cultural psychologists proposed an alternative model to explain the relationship between culture and mind. A basic premise of the intersubjective approach to culture proposed by Chiu et al. (2010) is that sometimes people act on what they perceive to be the common beliefs, values, or

practices in their culture. Chiu et al. (2010) argued that such intersubjective

perception is a mental representation of cultural ideas where members of a given

culture acquire guidance from their social environment to coordinate their

behaviours within that culture. Intersubjective perception is distinct from the

internalized subjective representations of culture that have been widely studied in

the area of cross-cultural or cultural psychology, such as indiocentrism versus

allocentrism (Triandis, 1995) or interdependent self versus independent self

(Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In contrast to these internalized representations of

culture that people firmly hold and use to find behavioural guidance within the

self, intersubjective perception is a loosely shared social representation of cultural

traditions that people use to find behavioural guidance outside the self.

The idea that people act on what is commonly practiced in their

environment has received much attention in research on social influence. For

example, participants in Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren's (1990) study were more

likely to litter after witnessing a confederate litter in a dirty parking lot than when

the confederate simply walked through the dirty parking lot. The results

demonstrated that when people observe what others do in a specific situation, they

can infer the norm for that situation and will act accordingly. In the absence of a

reference to the norm in a situation, people can create the norm by using the

actions of another person as the reference. In his study of informational social

influence and social norms, Sherif (1936) used the autokinetic effect and showed

that, when each member of a group publically stated his or her opinion regarding

ambiguous issues, their opinions tended to converge over time. Furthermore,

according to Hardin and Higgins (1996), these skills needed to extract and create

norms are important because people need to socially verify their experiences in

order to understand "the ways, whats, and whys of the world" (p. 30). According

to their shared reality theory, there are four ways of socially verifying individuals'

experiences when they act on a common practice. First, a common action is

reliable to the extent that others reproduce the same action. By receiving

encouragement or agreement from others, people can verify that their action will

be replicated by other members. For example, a student may be encouraged to

wear school t-shirts because when doing so, she has received compliments.

Second, a common action is valid to the extent that others do the same thing if

they are in the same situation. For example, a student may be socially validated

in wearing school t-shirts by finding friends who wear the same shirts. Third, a

common action is generalizable to the extent that underlying reasons for the

action are the same across time or situations. For example, a student who wears

school t-shirts only when supporting the school sports team will be reinforced in

doing so if she finds her friends do the same. The fourth means of verifying

actions based on a common practice is predicated on the first three: engaging in a

common action helps the actor anticipate the outcome of the action because it is

reliable, valid, and generalizable.

In addition to social verification, whether or not people act on a common

practice influences relational outcomes. Hardin and Conley (2000) argued that

individuals become close or intimate with each other as they establish common

beliefs, values, or practices in their relationships and thereby act as such.

Research has supported this argument by showing that people are likely to align

themselves with the opinions of others when they are motivated to become close

to them. For example, female participants in an experiment conducted by

Sinclair, Huntinger, Skorinko, and Hardin (2005) were asked to interact with a

female partner who appeared to hold a stereotype-consistent view of women. The

female partners' attitudes toward women were communicated to participants by

having them view the partner's responses to questionnaires. In the questionnaires,

for example, the partner strongly agreed with the statement: "Women should be

cherished and protected by men." (Sinclair et al., 2005, p.163). Before their

interactions, participants in experimental group were also told that they shared the

same birthday. This ostensibly coincidental similarity with the partner was

designed to heighten the participants' motivation to establish closeness with the

partner. After these manipulations, an experimenter asked participants to

complete the questionnaires for their partners to view. The participants'

responses to the questionnaires revealed that they had portrayed themselves as

holding more stereotype-consistent view of women than those who did not share a

birthday with the partner. Similarly, Prentice and Miller (1993) found that male

university students who erroneously construed the norm of their university to be

pro-drinking were less likely to express anti-drinking attitudes. In addition,

students who held anti-drinking attitudes were more likely to be socially isolated.

These findings support Hardin and Conley's (2000) argument that interpersonal

relationships would be distant in the absence of attempts to establish common

beliefs, values, or practices between individuals. In other words, to satisfy their

motivation to affiliate with others, people will act on what they perceive to be common practices, even if such actions are at odds with their personal beliefs.

When these findings are applied to Japanese individuals' perceived relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends, it can be argued that they may perceive high relational costs when the act of seeking help deviates from common actions in the relationship. In other words, Japanese individuals may assume that seeking uncommon help from close, same-sex friends will communicate dissatisfaction with established common beliefs, values, or practices in friendships. In this case, help seekers will perceive the high relational costs because they expect that their friendships with help providers would become strained as a result of going against common actions in the friendships. Therefore, I hypothesize that Japanese individuals' perceived relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends are be negatively associated with their expectation of subsequent closeness in their relationships with help providers. However, I also hypothesize that their perception of common actions in friendships should mediate this association. Given the evidence suggesting that relational costs are not salient among European Canadians when they seek help from close, same-sex friends, I expect their perceived relational costs to be associated with neither subsequent closeness nor perception of common actions.

Subjective Approach and Intersubjective Approach

I maintain that subjective and intersubjective approaches will simultaneously explain the reasons why Japanese, but not European Canadians, perceive high relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends. The

subjective approach posits that the fundamental mindset (i.e., independent vs.

interdependent self-view) makes a set of psychological tendencies more available

than the other sets of psychological tendencies to people with different cultural

backgrounds (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). From this perspective, it is reasonable

to assume that Japanese individuals who conceptualize the self as interdependent

will be more prone to perceive relational costs than European Canadians who

conceptualize the self differently. In contrast, the intersubjective approach posits

that people achieve desired goals of interpersonal closeness (Hardin & Conley,

2000) or being accepted by other group members (Yamagishi, Hashimoto, &

Schug, 2008) by socially verifying personal experiences. From this perspective, it

is also reasonable to assume that Japanese will choose whether to seek help based

on how common the help-seeking behaviour is viewed. The comparison of the

explanatory power of these two approaches is the second purpose of this

dissertation. I will discuss this issue further in the General Discussion based of

the results of current study.

Cultural Affordance

Because both theories of culture and mind discussed above assume the

effect of situations (i.e., help-seeking behaviours) to bring out specific estimation

of costs, it is vital to review a wide variety of help-seeking behaviours in

examining the hypotheses derived from the two theories. In other words, the two

theories assume that the effects of relational costs are situated with specific

contexts of help-seeking behaviours. From the subjective approach, relational

costs for seeking help is likely to depend on the degree to which a particular help-

seeking behaviour violates subjective views of the self. In contrast, from the

intersubjective approach, relational costs for seeking help is likely to depend on

the degree to which a particular help-seeking behaviour is perceived as common

practice. With this in mind, I used the situation sampling method, in which

participants were asked to generate as many situations of research interest (help-

seeking behaviour for this research) as possible. Randomly sampled situations

were then presented to a different set of participants for ratings. Past research

using the situation sampling method successfully produced actions that were

embedded in cultural contexts. For example, Japanese participants reported more

self-critical behaviours (Kitayama, Markus, Matusmoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997),

emotional experiences highlighting interpersonal connections (Kitayama,

Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006), and experiences of adjusting to others (Morling,

Kitayama, Miyamoto, 2002) than American participants. One of the strengths of

the situation sampling method over questionnaires and scenario methods is that

items are created with a bottom-up approach to minimize researchers' demand

characteristics. Instead of creating questionnaire items or scenarios based on

abstract theoretical frameworks, the situation sampling method uses situations

generated by samples from a target population as questionnaire items for a

different sample. In this way, the items mirrored participants' everyday

situations.

The effect of situations in evoking unique psychological tendencies

implies that Japanese individuals' actions are embedded in and specific to

interactions between them. That is, Japanese individuals perceive relational costs

based on the degree to which the self-view or social norms are perceived to be

violated in Japanese interactions. In fact, according to Morling and Lamoreaux's

(2008) meta-analysis, culturally specific beliefs and practices are reflected in

cultural variations of objects in physical and social environments, such as

religious texts (Tsai, Miao, & Seppala, 2007), Olympics press coverage (Markus,

Uchida, Omoregie, Townsend, & Kitayama, 2006), paintings (Masuda, Gonzalez,

Kwan, & Nisbett, 2008), magazine advertisements (Kim & Markus, 1999),

physical environment (Miyamoto, Nisbett, & Masuda, 2006), and popular song

lyrics (Rothbaum & Tsang, 1998). Based on these findings, I hypothesize that the

effect of Japanese participants' perceived relational costs is specific to help-

seeking behaviours generated by other Japanese.

Summary and Hypotheses

The purpose of the present research is to examine reasons why people

sometimes perceive high costs when they seek help from close, same-sex friends.

This research aims to contribute to the understanding of helping behaviours by

investigating help seekers' perception, which has rarely been incorporated into

previous theories of helping behaviours. In particular, I have examined whether

perception of costs is associated with inward perception of the self or outward

perception of the norms. Past research on relational costs for seeking help posited

that people perceive high relational costs when the act of seeking help is

perceived to create an unfair distribution of resources in relationships with help

providers. Because close, same-sex friends are lenient with the balance of cost

and benefit in their relationships, it is logical to assume that people pay little

attention to reciprocate when seeking help from close, same-sex friends.

However, recent research on cultural variations in help-seeking behaviours has

suggested this not to be the case in all cultures. East Asians have been found to

be highly sensitive to relational costs even when seeking help from close others.

      To examine Japanese participants' perceived relational costs for seeking

help from close, same-sex friends, I propose two sets of hypotheses from two

distinct approaches to culture. From the perspective of the subjective approach,

East Asians tend to view the self as interdependent with their social relationships.

Because the act of seeking help may harm their relationship with the help

provider (i.e., a part of an interdependent view of the self), they perceive high

relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends. Following this

logic, I hypothesize that Japanese individuals' perceived relational costs for

seeking help are negatively associated with expected closeness in their close

friendships. From the perspective of the intersubjective approach, East Asians

perceive high relational costs for seeking help because the act of seeking help

may deviate from common actions in their relationships. Such deviation is

perceived to be costly because help seekers may be ostracized within the

relationships for taking the action of seeking help. Therefore, I hypothesize that

Japanese individuals' perceived relational costs for seeking help are negatively

associated with the perception of the commonness of help-seeking behaviours in

relationships (i.e., the more uncommon the act of seeking help is perceived to be,

the higher their perception of relational costs). The perceived commonness

should in turn be positively associated with the expected closeness in

relationships. That is, seeking uncommon help is associated with a low expected

closeness in relationships. I have used both approaches simultaneously in this

research for a deeper understanding of cultural variations in help-seeking

behaviours.

I examined the two hypotheses using the situation sampling method rather

than existing questionnaires or scenario methods. Past research comparing the

subjective approach with the intersubjective approach investigated the perceived

commonness of *values* or *beliefs* such as collectivism, dispositionism, or

regulatory focus with modified questionnaires or scenarios (Zou, Tam, Morris,

Lee, Lau, & Chiu, 2009; Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2009). The current

research using the situation sampling method has allowed me to augment past

research by targeting the perceived commonness of *behaviours.* Furthermore, in

addition to minimizing demand characteristics, this method has allowed me to

investigate the effect of situations to draw out culturally specific psychological

tendencies. That is, I expect that the effect of Japanese individuals' perceived

relational costs will be specific to Japanese interactions.

Overview of Studies

In three studies, I tested whether perceived costs for seeking help from

close friends influenced the expectation of closeness in their relationships with

help providers. I also tested the mediating effect of the perceived commonness of

seeking help. I recruited European Canadian and Japanese undergraduate

students to represent people who tend to view the self as independent or

interdependent, respectively. I targeted the university student population because

they were likely to experience significant social and academic stresses as a result

of the transition from high school to university (Mattanah, et al., 2010). For many

students, this transition may be the greatest adjustment they have ever made in

their lives. The current research aimed to help facilitate students' successful

transitions by examining reasons why seeking help from friends was sometimes

perceived as costly. In Study 1, participants were asked to describe their

experiences of seeking help from close, same-sex friends in an open-ended

format. For each description, they answered several questions, which enabled me

to identify help-seeking behaviours specific to same-sex friendships. The primary

purpose of Study 1 was to identify help-seeking behaviours that European

Canadians or Japanese transact with their friends. The responses were coded and

analyzed in terms of frequency, characteristics, and relational costs. In Study 2, I

asked a different set of European Canadian and Japanese participants to imagine

seeking the help reported by the participants in Study 1. Participants were then

asked to rate relational costs, expected closeness in the relationship, and their

perceptions of commonness for each help-seeking behaviour. The purpose of

Study 2 was to test the mediating effect of Japanese participants' perceived

commonness of help-seeking behaviours and predictions based on the subjective

approach against predictions based on the intersubjective approach. In Study 3, I

aimed to replicate the patterns of the Study 2 results with European Canadian

participants. Specifically, I investigated the effect of personal costs, which will be

discussed in the introduction to Study 3.

CHAPTER 2

Generation of Help-Seeking Behaviours

The main purpose of Study 1 was to identify help-seeking behaviours in the social environment of European Canadians and Japanese in same-sex friendships. In addition, I aimed to replicate the results of past cross-cultural studies, which showed that East Asians were more concerned with relational costs for seeking help from close others than were North Americans.

Study Description and Results

Participants included 123 European Canadian undergraduate students (65 males and 58 females) at the University of Alberta and 110 Japanese undergraduate students (66 males, 43 females, and 1 non-response) at the Kyoto University and the Kobe University. The average age of Canadian participants was 19.38 ($SD = 3.21$) and ranged from 17 to 48 years; that of Japanese participants was 20.69 ($SD = 2.16$) and ranged from 18 to 32 years. Canadian participants received partial course credit and Japanese participants received a $5 gift certificate for their participation. Participants completed an on-line questionnaire in groups of 5 to 20 people. Participants in each group responded to the questionnaire at separate workstations. To limit responses to experiences with close friends, participants were first asked to read the following passage as a definition of close friends. I created this passage based on the findings that humans use the skill to take other people's perspective to help others from very early stages of life (Dunn, 2004; Tomasello, 2009) and arguments that closeness in friendships are achieved and maintained through mutual exchanges of support (Burleson, & Samter, 1994; Clark, 1983). Then they were asked to think of same-sex friends whose relationship with them was as intimate as the one described.

A close friend is someone who doesn't have to be told when I am

in trouble. They sense it. If something is worrying me, my friend

will say "I can see you're upset about something. What's wrong?"

without me having to say anything. For example, if they come

around and see that I am working on a tough assignment, they

immediately notice that I am in trouble. I would do the same for

my friend. If my friend is upset or worrying about something, I can

sense it right away.

Participants were then asked to report their experiences of asking a favour

of close, same-sex friends, which they expected that their friends would grant.

For each favour requested, participants responded to four elements of the favour:

(a) whether or not their friend actually granted the favour, (b) the

inappropriateness of the favour if asked outside of a close friendship (9-point

scale), (c) the degree of trouble the favour inflicted upon their friend (9-point

scale), and (d) the subsequent intimacy levels in the friendship after the help

request (9-point scale). Participants answered the questionnaires in their native

language. The English version of the questionnaire was first translated into

Japanese and then back-translated into English for consistency. Any

disagreements in translations were resolved through discussions among

translators.

Frequencies of Help-Seeking Behaviours

Participants reported 1,407 help-seeking behaviours in total ($M = 6.04$), a

number comparable to that obtained in previous situation sampling studies (e.g.,

Fehr, 2004; Kitayama et al., 1997). To limit help-seeking behaviours specific to

friendship interactions, I selected help-seeking behaviours that were highly

inappropriate had the favour been asked outside of a close, same-sex friendship

(i.e., rating of 5 or greater on question b). Low ratings on the inappropriateness of

seeking help outside of friendships suggested that participants could have sought

the help from members of other relationships. Thus, I eliminated any unnecessary

bias in the data by removing such elements of help-seeking behaviours. I also

excluded favours that were not granted by friends. Such favours might have been

so unusual in friendships that participants' friend refused to grant them. As a

result, 355 help-seeking behaviours (25.2%), of which 197 were reported by

Canadian participants and 158 were reported by Japanese participants, were

excluded from further analysis. Five Canadian participants and seven Japanese

participants did not report any help-seeking behaviours specific to friendship

interactions. I then analyzed the frequency of help-seeking behaviours in the two

cultural groups and found that Japanese participants reported fewer help-seeking

behaviours ($M = 3.83$, $N_{Situation} = 396$) than did European Canadians ($M = 5.56$

$N_{Situation} = 656$), $t(219) = 4.06$, $p < .001$. This result corroborated a previous study

in which East Asians perceived higher relational concerns and thereby were less

likely to seek help from close others compared to North Americans (Taylor et al.,

2007).

Perceived Relational Costs and Closeness in Relationships

I selected behaviours that were shared within each cultural group.

Following previous situation sampling studies (Fehr, 1988; 2004), coders

identified identical or synonymous behaviours and categorized them into groups.

That is, if two or more participants in the cultural groups reported the same help-seeking behaviours, they were considered culturally shared behaviours. In

contrast, if only one person reported a given behaviour, it was considered an

idiosyncratic behaviour. Idiosyncratic behaviours were excluded from the

analysis because they could be unique to a specific person, which would create

large variability due to individual differences and interfere with the examination

of systematic patterns within and between cultures. A native English speaker and

a native Japanese speaker independently coded Canadian or Japanese help-seeking behaviours, respectively. I, who am a Japanese-English bilingual, coded

both Canadian and Japanese help-seeking behaviours. A help-seeking behaviour

was considered as shared within each cultural group if both the coders and I

agreed that two or more participants reported the behaviour. An inter-rater

reliability analysis using the Cohen's Kappa statistic showed fair to good

consistency for both Japanese ($\kappa = .51$, $p < .001$) and Canadian ($\kappa = .40$, $p < .001$)

help-seeking behaviours (Fleiss, 2003). As a result, 489 idiosyncratic (or

culturally uncommon) help-seeking behaviours (46%), of which 326 were

reported by Canadian participants and 163 were reported by Japanese participants,

were excluded from the analysis. Examples of idiosyncratic help-seeking

behaviours include the following: "Ask a friend to keep an eye on my partner

when I was out of town," or "Ask a friend to send me a letter instead of an e-mail

to get in touch with me." Nine Canadian and 17 Japanese participants reported

only idiosyncratic help-seeking behaviours.

Following coding, I tested the cultural variations of the effect of perceived relational costs for seeking help on the subsequent closeness in friendships. I used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) because the HLM considers random numbers of help-seeking behaviours that were correlated within each participant (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002; Nezlek, 2001; 2003). That is, perceived relational costs for seeking help from friends were not independent observations and thus they violated an assumption of ordinary least-squares techniques, such as a multiple regression analysis (see Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002 for detail). As such, HLM was more appropriate than multiple regressions for the design of Study 1 (cf. Nezlek, 2003).

In HLM, levels indicate the structure of the data. Smaller numbers refer to lower levels in the hierarchy or nested variables within the grouping variable. For this study, each participant was used as a grouping variable and perceived relational cost for each help-seeking behaviour was a nested variable. The level 1 (help-seeking behaviour) model was as follows:

$$\text{Closeness}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}*(\text{Relational Costs}_{ij}) + r_{ij},$$

where Closeness_{ij} is the subsequent closeness for participant j who sought help i from friends, and β_{0j} is a random coefficient that represents the intercept for participant j. Because I centered the relational costs around each participant's mean, β_{0j} represents the adjusted mean closeness for participant j. β_{1j} is a random coefficient for the relational costs for each help-seeking behaviour within participant j, and r_{ij} represents error.

Cultural variations on the effect of relational costs on subsequent

closeness in friendships were tested in the following Level 2 (participant) model:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*(\text{Culture}_j) + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}*(\text{Culture}_j) + u_{1j,}$$

where β_{0j} (participant j's mean closeness) and β_{1j} (random coefficient for the

perceived relational costs within participant j) were predicted by participants'

cultural backgrounds (CND = 1; JPN = -1).[1]

In predicting coefficients for perceived relational costs, β_{1j}, there was a

significant effect of participants' cultural backgrounds, $\gamma_{11} = .13$, $t(187) = 2.75$, p

$< .001$. Probing this cross-level interaction between perceived relational costs and

participants' cultural backgrounds showed a significant negative association

between perceived relational costs and subsequent closeness for Japanese

participants, $\gamma_{11} = -.20$, $t(185) = -3.07$, $p < .001$. For European Canadian

participants, however, this effect was not significant, $\gamma_{11} = .05$, ns (see Figure 1).

Again, this pattern was consistent with previous findings that East Asians

perceived high relational concerns for seeking help from close others.

Characteristics of Help-Seeking Behaviours.

Participants' descriptions of help-seeking behaviours (i.e., favours) were

coded following criteria developed in previous research on receiving help from

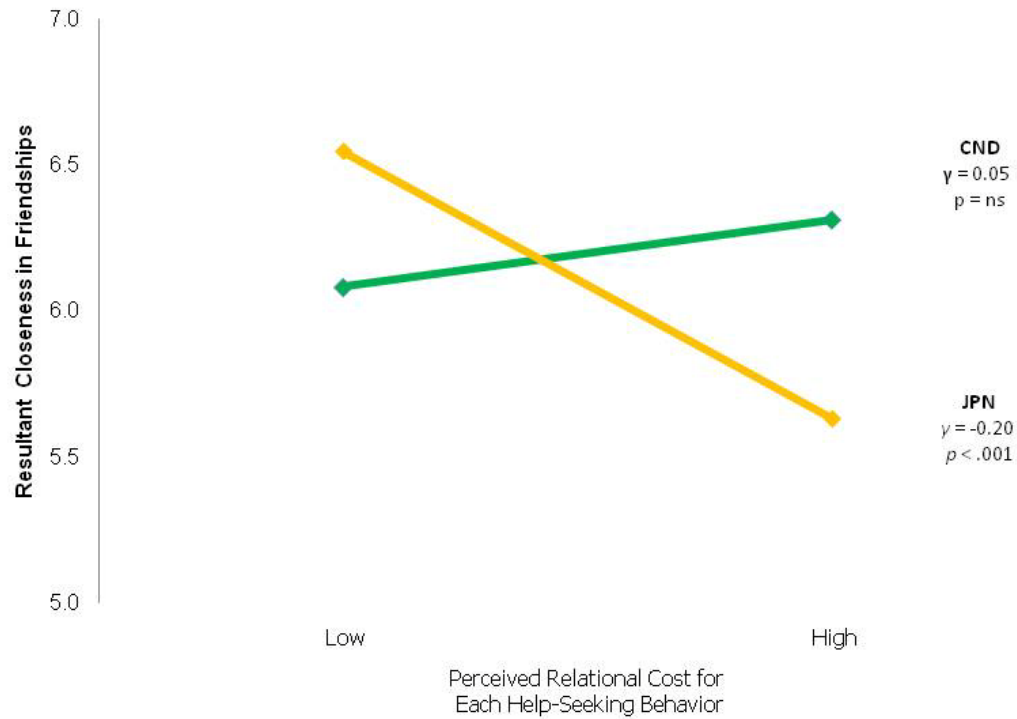friends. Behaviours were first

Figure 1. Participants' ratings on resultant closeness in friendships as a function of their perceived relational costs in Study 1. High and low perceived relational costs indicate 1SD above or below the mean. CND refers to Canadian participants' results and JPN refers to Japanese participants results.

classified into three categories: instrumental help, emotional help, and

informational help (Fleming & Baum, 1986; Kahn & Antonucci, 1980; Taylor,

2007). Instrumental help refers to giving or receiving material or physical

assistance such as lending or giving time and money, or providing a shelter.

Emotional help refers to giving or receiving nurturance, comfort, or warmth

through which one feels valued or cared for such as expressing liking, respect, or

trust. Informational help refers to giving or receiving aid in understanding

problems or reducing ambiguity in the environment such as validation of actions

or opinions. I then added a fourth category, shared activity, to account for help-

seeking behaviours in which the coders and I identified a coherent theme. This

category refers to a request to partake in events, such as "Ask my friend to go

traveling together" or "Ask a friend to come with me when I appealed my grade

directly to a professor." An inter-rater reliability analysis using the Kappa

statistic showed excellent consistency for both Japanese ($\kappa = .85$, $p < .001$) and

Canadian ($\kappa = .86$, $p < .001$) help-seeking behaviours (Fleiss, 2003).[2]

I performed multinomial logistic regressions on the total number of

responses in each type of help-seeking behaviours (instrumental, emotional,

informational, and shared activity) as outcomes and participants' cultural

backgrounds (European Canadian vs. Japanese) as predictors. The results

revealed a significant main effect of participants' cultural backgrounds, $\chi^2(3,$

$N_{Situation} = 517) = 29.95$, $p < .001$, which indicated that the two cultural groups

differed in the number of help-seeking behaviours classified in different

categories. Figure 2 depicts the proportion of help within each cultural group.
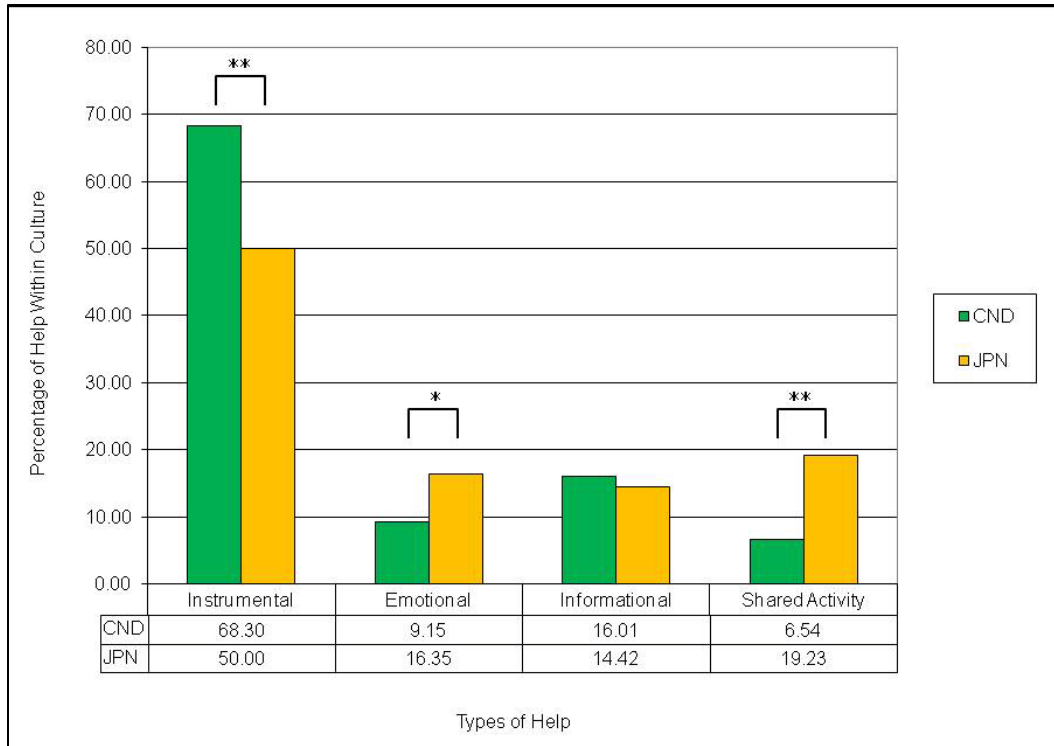
Figure 2. Percentage of total responses in four types of help-seeking behaviours

within each cultural group in Study 1. CND refers to Canadian participants'

results and JPN refers to Japanese participants results. ** *p* < .01. * *p* < .05.

European Canadian participants reported more instrumental help than did Japanese participants, $t(515) = 4.28$, $p < .001$; Japanese participants reported more emotional help and shared activity than did European Canadian participants, $t(515) = 2.44$, $p < .05$, and $t(515) = 4.59$, $p < .001$, respectively. Finally, the two cultural groups reported a similar proportion of informational help, $t < 1$, $p < $ ns.[3]

Discussion

Study 1 aimed to identify help-seeking behaviours in friendships among European Canadian and Japanese young adults. I asked participants to describe their experiences of seeking help from close, same-sex friends, and report their perceptions of relational costs for seeking help and subsequent closeness in friendships. The results were consistent with previous studies of help-seeking behaviours in North American and East Asian cultures (e.g., Taylor et al., 2007). The frequency of seeking help from friends showed that Japanese participants reported fewer experiences of seeking help compared to European Canadians. This finding suggests that Japanese participants felt inhibited to seek help, presumably because they perceived high relational costs. Moreover, Japanese participants, but not European Canadian participants, showed a negative association between perceived relational costs and subsequent closeness in friendships. Participants' reports of closeness in friendships were markedly different when they perceived high relational costs for seeking help. Japanese participants reported significantly lower closeness in friendships than did European Canadian participants. These results are consistent with my hypothesis based on the subjective view of the self. East Asians perceived high relational

costs even when seeking help from close, same-sex friends because it is incongruent with their self-perceptions. Japanese participants might feel less close to their friends as they perceived higher relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends because the relational costs indicate the degree of violating their interdependent view of the self. However, the intersubjective approach suggests an alternative explanation of these findings. That is, Japanese participants' perceived relational costs may have been associated with how common a particular help-seeking behaviour was in their friendships. I precluded this question in Study 1 because participants might have overestimated the commonality of their undesirable behaviours as the research on the false consensus effect documents (Marks & Miller, 1987). Therefore, I examined this possibility in Study 2.

CHAPTER 3

Study 2 – **The Effect of Relational Costs of Seeking Help**

From the intersubjective approach to culture, people sometimes act based on what they perceive to be commonly believed, valued, and practiced in their culture (Chiu et al., 2010). By acting according to common actions, people acquire social verification from other members (Hardin & Higgings, 1996). By acting against such norms people risk social isolation (Prentice & Miller, 1993). This approach is distinct from the subjective approach, which posits that people's actions are based on their subjective views of the relationship between the self and others. In the intersubjective approach, people's actions are based on the expected responses of others. If individuals expect others to consider an action to be common in relationships, they will more likely act on it because the action will be socially verified and contribute to forming closeness in relationships. If individuals are in situations where they have to act on what others may consider uncommon, such as the case for seeking help with high relational costs, they are likely to expect low closeness in their relationships. In particular, I hypothesized relational costs would be negatively associated with the commonness of help-seeking behaviours in relationships. The commonness would be, in turn, positively associated with subsequent closeness expectations in relationships. Going back to the opening example of the Japanese international student who hesitated to seek help from his friends because the relational costs were high, his perceived relational costs were associated with his perception of "ask a friend to nurse me when I was sick" being uncommon. If he dared to seek the uncommon help, he believed it would do harm to the friendship.

I tested this hypothesis in Study 2. In testing the mediating effect of commonness, I used the help-seeking behaviours sampled in Study1. I selected 40 help-seeking behaviours (20 JPN-generated vs. 20 CND-generated) and asked Japanese and European Canadian participants to imagine seeking this help from close friends. For each help-seeking behaviour, participants reported perceived relational costs, subsequent closeness expectations in friendships, and commonness of the behaviour.

Methods

Seventy-seven European Canadian undergraduate students (37 males and 40 females) at the University of Alberta and 76 Japanese undergraduate students (35 males and 41 females) at the Kyoto University participated in Study 2. The average age of Canadian participants was 19.30 ($SD = 1.70$) and ranged from 17 to 26 years. That of Japanese participants was 18.86 ($SD = .89$) and ranged from 18 to 22 years. Canadian participants received partial course credit and Japanese participants received a $5 gift certificate for their participation. Participants completed an on-line questionnaire in groups of 5 to 20 people. Participants in each group responded to the questionnaire at separate workstations.

Stimuli Selection

To create a sufficient range of commonness, I used the average of the coders' reports for the number of people who described synonymous or identical behaviours in Study 1.[4] Japanese participants' behaviours were sorted into 20 distinct frequency groups that ranged from 2 to 17.5, and Canadian participants' behaviours were sorted into 18 distinct frequency groups that ranged from 2 to 16.

Smaller numbers indicated that fewer participants reported the same behaviours. I

first randomly selected one behaviour from each of the 38 frequency groups. I

then randomly selected one Canada-generated behaviour from the upper half of

the frequency groups and another from the lower half of the frequency groups to

avoid presenting participants with an uneven number of behaviours. As a result, I

selected 20 behaviours that were generated by Canadian participants and 20

behaviours that were generated by Japanese participants that roughly

corresponded to the actual frequency distributions of behaviours in the two

cultural groups (Cohen, 2007; see Appendix A and Appendix B).

Procedure

Participants were presented with 40 help-seeking behaviours and were

asked to imagine seeking the help from their close, same-sex friends. The

"typical close friendships" passage used in Study 1 was also presented to

participants before they answered the questions. For each help-seeking

behaviour, participants were asked to rate (a) the degree of commonness of the

behaviours (9-point scale), (b) the degree of trouble the favour would inflict upon

their friend (9-point scale), and (c) the expected intimacy levels in the friendship

after the help request (9-point scale).

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Results

</div>

I analyzed data in two steps. First, I tested whether the Study 1 results

were replicable. That is, Japanese participants' perceived relational costs for

seeking help from friends were negatively correlated with their estimates of

subsequent closeness in friendships, unlike European Canadians' perceived

relational costs. Second, I tested whether the commonness of help-seeking behaviours mediated the relationship between Japanese participants' perceived relational costs and closeness in friendship. Relevant means are presented in Table 1. A main effect of, and interactions involving gender were not significant, thus I focused on the models without gender as a factor.

Moderation Analysis

In the first step, a multiple regression method was used to analyze data because participants' ratings on perceived relational costs were continuous. I first regressed participants' ratings on subsequent closeness expectations in friendships on the cultural origins of help- seeking behaviours (Canada-generated vs. Japan-generated), cultural backgrounds of participants (European Canadians vs. Japanese), participants' ratings of relational costs, and interactions among three predictors. Ratings on relational costs were centered around the grand mean. The results of this analysis revealed a significant 3-way interaction, $B = .27$, $t = 6.18$, $p < .001$, which suggested that the two cultural groups responded to Canada-generated and Japan-generated help-seeking behaviours differently. Thus, I separated responses to the Canada-generated behaviour and the Japan-generated behaviours and analyzed the associations between ratings of relational costs and subsequent closeness expectations in friendships. For Japan-generated help-seeking behaviours, I found a significant interaction between participants' cultural backgrounds and their ratings on relational costs, $B = .30$, $t = 2.06$ $p < .05$. A simple slope analysis for Japanese participants showed that they reported lower subsequent closeness in friendships as they perceived higher relational costs for

Table 1

Mean (SD) ratings on Commonness, Relational Costs and Closeness in response

to Canada-Generated and Japan-Generated Help-Seeking Behaviours in Study 2

Help-Seeking Behaviours	Commonness		Relational Costs		Closeness	
	Canadians	Japanese	Canadians	Japanese	Canadians	Japanese
Canada-Generated	4.77 (1.76)	5.02 (0.93)	4.13 (1.16)	5.16 (0.78)	5.85 (0.67)	5.38 (0.60)
Japan-Generated	4.62 (1.46)	5.71 (1.03)	4.30 (1.11)	5.19 (0.79)	5.51 (0.68)	5.47 (0.65)

seeking help, $B = -.36$, $t = -2.33$ $p < .05$. The pattern replicated Japanese

participants' results in Study 1. In contrast, Canadian participants' ratings on

relational costs were not associated with their ratings of subsequent closeness in

friendships, $t < 1$, ns (see Figure 3a). For Canada-generated help-seeking

behaviours, I found a significant interaction between participants' cultural

backgrounds and their ratings on relational costs, $B = .30$, $t = 2.98$ $p < .01$.

Simple slope analysis for Japanese participants showed that they reported lower

closeness in friendships as they perceived higher relational costs for seeking help,

$B = -.37$, $t = -2.46$ $p < .01$. In contrast, Canadian participants' ratings on

relational costs were not associated with their ratings on subsequent closeness in

friendships, $B = .17$, $t = 1.68$ $p = .10$ (see Figure 3b).

Overall, the patterns replicated the Study 1 results. Even when

participants imagined seeking help, Japanese participants reported lower

closeness in friendships as they perceived higher relational costs for seeking help

from their friends. In response to help-seeking behaviours that were generated by

members of cultural groups different from their own, Japanese participants

showed the same pattern in their responses to help-seeking behaviours of their

own culture. Japanese participants' responses to foreign help-seeking behaviours

will be discussed in the discussion in conjunction with their perceived

commonness of help-seeking behaviours.

Mediated Moderation Analysis

In the second step, I used the mediated moderation analysis (Muller, Judd,

& Yzerbyt, 2005) to examine the mediation effect of European Canadian and

Figure 3a. Participants' ratings on resultant closeness expectations in friendships as a function of their perceived relational costs in response to Japan-generated help-seeking behaviours in Study 2. High and low perceived relational costs indicate 1SD above or below the mean. CND refers to Canadian participants' results and JPN refers to Japanese participants' results.
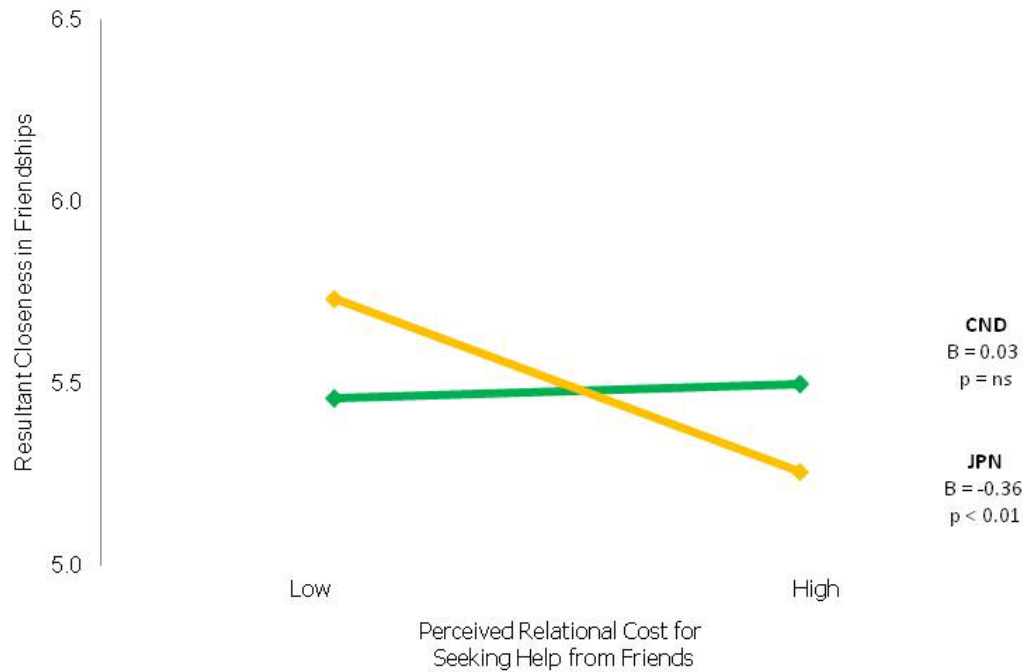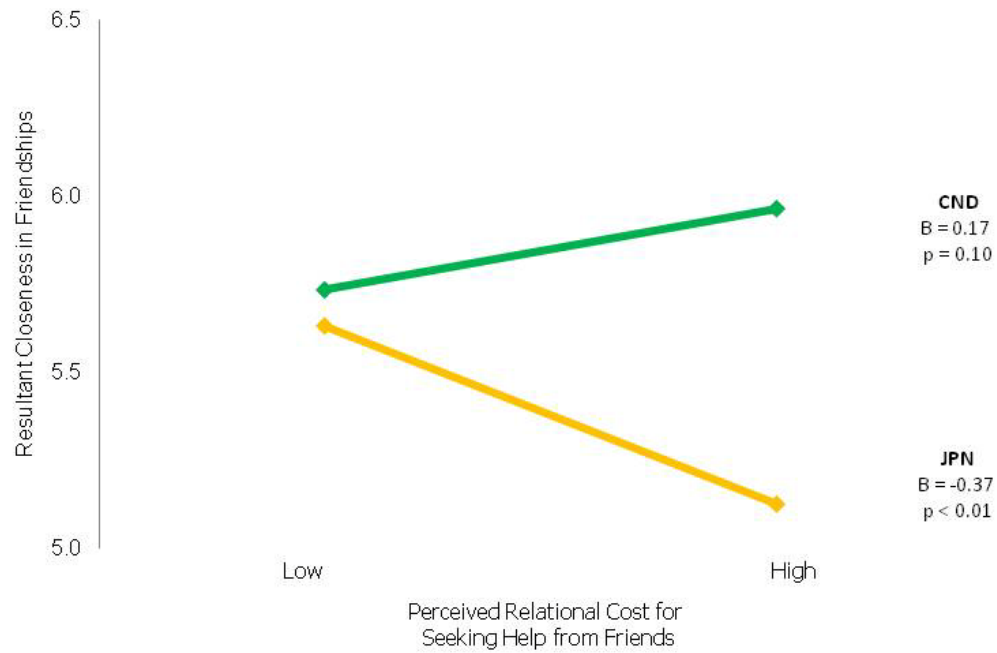
Figure 3b. Participants' ratings on resultant closeness expectations in friendships as a function of their perceived relational costs in response to Canada-generated help-seeking behaviours in Study 2. High and low perceived relational costs indicate 1SD above or below the mean. CND refers to Canadian participants' results and JPN refers to Japanese participants' results.

Japanese participants' ratings on commonness of help. The analysis revealed a

mediated moderation effect for Japan-generated help-seeking behaviours. As

shown in Figure 4, Japanese participants' ratings on relational costs was

negatively associated with their ratings on commonness of the help, $B = -.43$, $t =$

3.13 $p < .001$. Commonness of the help was positively associated with their

ratings on subsequent closeness in friendships after controlling for the effect of

relational costs, $B = .54$, $t = 3.40$ $p < .001$. That is, as Japanese participants

perceived higher costs for seeking help, they reported the help to be less common

in their friendships. By imagining seeking such uncommon help, Japanese

participants expected less closeness in their friendships. Because of the mediating

effect of the commonness, the residual effect of relational costs on closeness

ratings became non-significant, $B = -.13$, ns, $Sobel\ z = 2.30$, $p < .05$.[6] This

supported the hypothesis based on the intersubjective approach to culture that

Japanese participants' perceived relational costs for seeking help from close,

same-sex friends was associated with norms in their friendships. Seeking costly

help from close, same-sex friends was in turn associated with less closeness in

friendships because the action deviated from common practices in their

friendships. The mediation effect was not significant for European Canadian

participants' responses to Japan- generated, help-seeking behaviours.[5] For

Canada-generated help-seeking behaviours, the mediated moderation effect was

not significant, $Sobel\ z = 1.58$, $p = .11$.[7]

Discussion

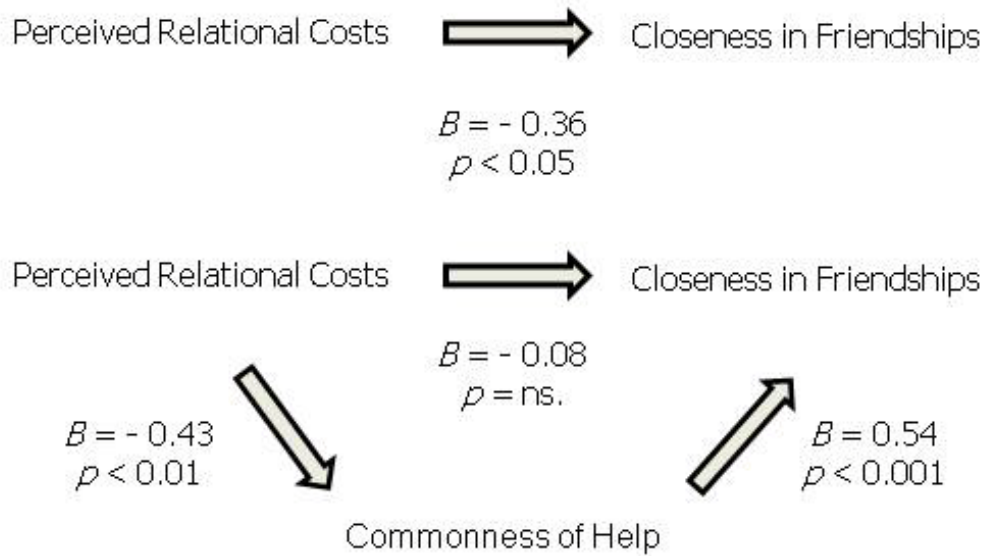In Study 2, I tested hypotheses derived from two distinct approaches to

Figure 4. Mediation model for Japanese participants' responses to JPN-generated

help-seeking behaviours being tested in Study 2.

culture to examine why Japanese perceive high relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends. On the one hand, a subjective approach posits that Japanese individuals are expected to share the notion that they must avoid causing friends trouble because such action disrupts harmonious relationships or their interdependent view of the self. Based on this approach, relational costs for seeking help may indicate degrees of violating Japanese individuals' views of the self as interdependent with close others. Therefore, I hypothesized that relational costs for seeking help would be directly associated with their expectation of subsequent closeness in friendships. Seeking help with high-perceived relational costs is harmful for friendships that represent an important part of who they are. On the other hand, an intersubjective approach to culture posits that Japanese will act on what they perceive to be commonly practiced in their friendships because acting according to the social norm would verify their behaviours, create social bonds, and avoid social isolation. Based on this approach, relational costs for seeking help indicate degrees of violating the perceived norm in Japanese friendships. Therefore, I hypothesized that perceived relational costs for seeking help would be indirectly associated with their expectation of closeness in relationships via their perceived commonness of the help. That is, Japanese individuals would perceive higher relational costs as the help became less common. Seeking uncommon help, in turn, would predict expectations of less closeness in relationships.

The results of Study 2 support the hypothesis derived from the intersubjective approach to culture. In particular, Japanese participants' responses

to Japan-generated help-seeking behaviours showed a hypothesized mediation effect. As Japanese participants perceived higher relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends, they reported lower commonness of the help-seeking behaviours. The lower commonness of the help was, in turn, associated with lower closeness in friendships. That is, the results fit better with the intersubjective approach than the subjective approach. The effect of Japanese participants' perceived relational costs indicated a violation of norms in friendships rather than an incongruity between their actions and the interdependent view of the self. Going back to the opening example of the Japanese international student who hesitated to seek help from his friends, the results of Study 2 showed that he hesitated to seek help because he perceived the act of "ask a friend to nurse me when I am sick" to be uncommon in his friendship. If he dared to seek such help, he would have expected to become distant from his friend because he would overstep the norm in the friendship.

CHAPTER 4

Study 3 **– Personal Costs for Seeking Help**

The focus of Studies 1 and 2 was to examine reasons why Japanese individuals perceive high relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends. I found that Japanese participants' perceived relational costs were associated with their perceptions of common practices in their friendships. Therefore, I argued that a function of Japanese participants' perceived relational costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends was to select socially accepted or verified help-seeking behaviours in their culture. In other words, their perception of relational costs underlies their perceived commonness of help-seeking behaviours in the Japanese culture. However, the results of European Canadians in Studies 1 and 2 did not indicate such effect of perceived relational costs on their expected closeness in friendships. In Study 3, I investigated the personal costs for seeking help that may underlie European Canadians' perceived commonness of help-seeking behaviours in their culture.

Alternative to relational costs, past research on help-seeking behaviours has identified various personal costs for seeking help from others. Personal costs for seeking help refer to the degree to which one experiences inferiority to others or perceive oneself as not being self-reliant as a result of seeking help (cf. Nadler, 1983). For example, North Americans perceived high costs when they sought help to overcome problems that were central to their identity (Lee, 2002; Tessler & Schwalts, 1972). They were also reluctant to enlist socially powerless individuals or people from a lower social class as their potential help providers (Druian & DePaulo, 1977). Finally, North Americans were likely to consider help from help providers who had similar attitudes with them as unnecessary

because they feel inferior when they compare themselves to such help providers

(Fisher, Harrison, & Nadler, 1978). Based on these findings, Nadler (1983)

argued that, for North Americans, seeking help from others implies the help

seekers' failure or incapability to handle difficulties in their lives and involves

admitting incompetence and inferiority to help providers. Such personal costs for

seeking help are especially high when help providers are close, same-sex friends

because they serve as meaningful, social comparison targets for help seekers' self-

evaluation (Fisher, Nadler, & Whicher-Alagna, 1983).

　　　　Numerous studies with the subjective approach to culture have also

documented that people who view the self as independent and self-reliant such as

North Americans tend to focus on personal characteristics. For example, they

tend to describe themselves consistently across different situations based on

personal attributes rather than their roles in groups (Cousins, 1989; Kanagawa,

Cross, & Markus, 2001). They identify their own image faster than that of close

others (Sui, Liu, & Han, 2009). They tend to report emotional experiences

highlighting the autonomy of individuals (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa,

2006). Finally, their emotions tend to intensify and influence their subsequent

judgments after being primed to focus on the self rather than family (Chentsova-

Dutton & Tsai, 2010).

　　　　These findings imply that seeking help from close, same-sex friends is

associated with personal costs rather than relational costs for European

Canadians. Therefore, I generated two hypotheses from the subjective and

intersubjective approaches to culture. From the subjective approach, European

Canadians tended to view the self as a distinct, autonomous, and unique entity

that is meaningfully independent of their social relationships. Under this view,

seeking help from close, same-sex friends implies their possible dependence,

inferiority, or incompetence. To avoid such a negative state, European Canadians

may consider that help providers are not close friends so future interactions with

them can be avoided. Therefore, as European Canadians perceive higher personal

costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends, they will report expectations

of lesser closeness in their friendships. In contrast, from an intersubjective

approach, the personal costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends

indicates their violation of common practices in their friendships. Acting against

common practices in friendships would inhibit building social bonds; thus, help

seekers feel less close to help providers. Following this logic, I hypothesized that

European Canadians' perceived personal costs for seeking help would be

indirectly associated with their expectations of closeness in their friendships via

their perceived commonness of the help. In other words, I hypothesized that the

perceived commonness would mediate the association between European

Canadians' perceived personal costs and closeness expectations.

Method

Sixty-eight European Canadian undergraduate students (31 males and 37

females) at the University of Alberta participated in Study 3. The average age of

participants was 19.26 ($SD = 2.17$) and ranged from 17 to 27 years. Participants

received partial course credit for their participation and completed an on-line

questionnaire in groups of 5 to 20 people. Participants in each group responded to

the questionnaire at separate workstations. I used the same sets of help-seeking

behaviours (20 Canada-generated and 20 Japan-generated) that were used in

Study 2. For each help-seeking behaviour, participants were asked to rate (a) the

degree of commonness of behaviours (9-point scale), (b) the degree of trouble

they would inflict upon their friend (9-point scale), (c) the expected intimacy

levels in the friendship after the help request (9-point scale), and (d) the expected

degree of feeling good about themselves for requesting help (reverse item: 9-point

scale).[8]

Results

I used a series of multiple regression analysis to examine the hypothesized

mediating effect of perceived commonness of the help (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Relevant means were shown in Table 2. To show that the effect of participants'

perceived personal costs for seeking help from their friends were above and

beyond the effect of their perceived relational costs, I included participants'

ratings on relational costs in the first step in all analyses. As shown in Figure 5, I

found a marginally significant effects of personal costs on closeness for Canada-

generated help-seeking behaviours, $B = -.18$, $t = -1.38$, $p = .08$, after controlling

for the effect of perceived relational costs. Because European Canadian

participants reported higher personal costs for seeking help from friends, they

expected lower closeness in their friendships. However, participants' ratings on

personal costs was also negatively associated with the commonness of help-

seeking behaviours, $B = -.44$, $t = -3.84$ $p < .01$, after controlling for the effect of

perceived relational costs. The ratings on the commonness of the behaviours

were, in turn, positively associated with their expectation of subsequent closeness

in friendships after controlling for the effect of personal costs and relational costs,

Table 2

Mean (SD) Ratings on Commonness, Relational Costs, Personal Costs and Closeness in response to Canada-Generated and Japan-Generated Help-Seeking Behaviours in Study 3

Help-Seeking Behaviours	Commonness	Relational Costs	Personal Costs	Closeness
Canada-generated	4.54 (1.63)	4.36 (1.19)	4.09 (0.87)	5.76 (0.53)
Japan-generated	4.46 (1.27)	4.46 (1.13)	3.88 (0.82)	5.39 (0.60)

$B = .22$, $t = 1.68$, $p = .05$. Because of this mediating effect, the residual effect of personal costs on the closeness ratings became non-significant, $t < 1$.[9] The mediation effect was marginally significant, *Sobel z* = 1.53, $p = .06$. For Japan-generated help-seeking behaviours, I also found a significant relationship between participants' ratings on personal costs and subsequent closeness of friendships, $B = -.32$, $t = -2.69$, $p < .01$, after controlling for the effect of perceived relational costs. However, the mediation effect of the commonness of the behaviours was not significant, *Sobel z* = 1.09, $p = .14$.[10]

Discussion

The results of Study 3 supported the hypothesis based on the intersubjective approach to culture. European Canadian participants' responses to Canada-generated help-seeking behaviours showed a hypothesized mediation effect. As European Canadians perceived higher personal costs for seeking help from close, same-sex friends, they reported lower commonness of help-seeking behaviours. The lower commonness of the help was associated with lower closeness expectations in friendships. That is, European Canadian participants' perceptions of common practices were associated with their expectations of closeness in friendships because normative behaviours tended to build social bonds and avoid social isolation. This pattern was observed after I included the effects of the perceived relational costs in the first step of all regression analyses. Such results suggested participants' perceived personal costs, rather than relational costs, form a basis for help-seeking behaviours in Canadian culture. In other words, Canadian young adults tended to decide to seek help from their close, same-sex
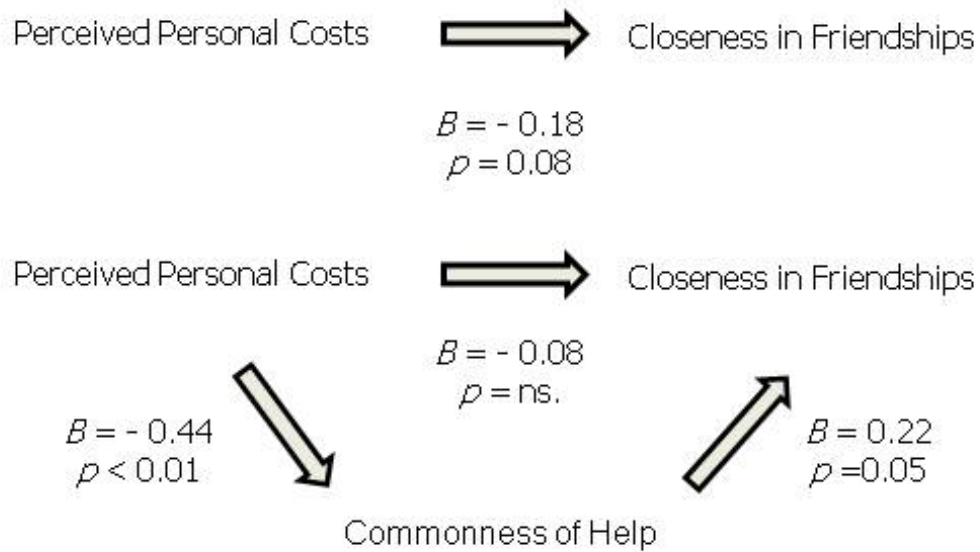
Figure 5. Mediation model for participants' responses to CND-generated help-seeking behaviours being tested in Study 3 after controlling the effect of perceived relational costs.

friends based on damages to positive views of themselves. By replicating

Japanese participants' patterns of mediation in Study 2, the results of Study 3

offer support for the explanatory power of the intersubjective approach to culture.

CHAPTER 5

General Discussion

In these three studies, I examined different reasons why seeking help from close, same-sex friends was sometimes perceived to be costly across cultures. In such, two cultural psychological approaches, the subjective approach and the intersubjective approach, provided distinct hypotheses for the reasons. From the subjective approach (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; 2010), seeking help from close, same-sex friends could be perceived to be costly for Japanese if seeking help disrupts harmonious friendships. Disrupting harmonious friendships undermines Japanese individuals' view of the self as interdependent with others within their social networks. Therefore, seeking help from close, same-sex friends was sometimes perceived to be costly. For European Canadians, seeking help involved public admission of dependence, incompetence, or inferiority in some situations. Such admission undermined their view of the self as independent from others within their social networks. Therefore, seeking help from close, same-sex friends was sometimes perceived to be costly. By contrast, from an intersubjective approach (Chiu et al., 2010), seeking help from close, same-sex friends could be perceived as costly if the act of seeking help deviates from common practices in relationships. Seeking uncommon help from close, same-sex friends may be seen as reluctance to build social bonds. Members of the two cultural groups differ in their perceived costs for seeking help because their perceived commonness of help is different from one cultural group to the other.

Testing the hypotheses based on the two approaches, I sampled a wide range of European Canadian and Japanese young adults' experiences of seeking help from close, same-sex friends in Study 1. Using the help-seeking behaviours

reported in Study 1, I tested the effect of relational costs for seeking help on

Japanese participants' expectations of closeness in Study 2. In Study 3, I tested

the effect of personal costs for seeking help on Canadian participants'

expectations of closeness. Holistically interpreting the results of the three studies,

I argue that both approaches are needed to understand the reasons why seeking

help from close, same-sex friends is sometimes perceived to be costly. Following

is a discussion of the implications of the intersubjective approach and the

subjective approach, respectively.

Interpretations of the Results from the Intersubjective Approach to Culture

        The results lent support to the hypotheses based on the intersubjective

approach to culture. The results obtained in Studies 2 and 3 showed that

participants' perceived commonness of the help-seeking behaviours mediated the

association between their ratings on costs for seeking help and expected closeness

in friendships. That is, regardless of participants' cultural backgrounds, the

perceived norm of help-seeking behaviours formed a basis of their expectations of

closeness in their relationships. In other words, if Japanese and European

Canadian young adults need to avoid deteriorating their friendships by seeking

help from their close, same-sex friends, they tended to consult the perceived norm

in their friendships to verify for which chore help is commonly sought. If the

chore they needed help with was one that was common, then they were likely to

seek help from friends. If the chore is one that is uncommon, then they are likely

to avoid seeking help from friends and find alternatives, or they may prepare to

terminate the friendships.

This interpretation from an intersubjective approach to culture explains actions of people with different cultural backgrounds in terms of their perceptions of common practices, values, or beliefs in their culture (Chiu et al., 2010). From this perspective, people in a given culture navigate themselves in a complex cultural environment based on what they perceived to be common, widespread, or frequent in their social environment. People rely on their perception of common practices, values, or beliefs in their culture to socially verify their actions (Hardin & Higgins, 1996), form trust with others (Hardin & Conley, 2000; Sinclair, Huntinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005), and avoid being ostracized by other members of the culture (Yamagishi, Hashimoto, & Schug, 2008). The results of the current studies showed that people formed expectations of closeness in their relationships based on what they perceived to be common help-seeking behaviours in their friendships. Cultural variations were most apparent in the contents of norm in friendships or what European Canadians and Japanese perceived to be common help-seeking behaviours in friendships, which will be discussed next. These results strongly supported an intersubjective approach to culture.

Interpretations of the Results from the Subjective Approach to Culture

The results also supported the subjective approach to culture to the extent that Japanese participants' relational costs and European Canadian participants' personal costs formed a basis for the contents of norm in friendships. That is, depending on the participants' cultural background, the underlying theme of the norm in their relationships was different. Japanese participants constructed a part

of their social reality in accordance to the theme of interdependence, such as the maintenance of harmonious relationships or prioritizing ingroup goals over personal goals. Canadian participants did so according to the theme of independence, such as being self-reliant, competent, or superior to others.

This interpretation supports the notion of mutual constitution between mind and culture, which researchers with the subjective approach propose (Kitayama, Duffy, & Uchida, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 2010; Shweder, 2003). Mutual constitution refers to the idea that people require "inputs from sociocultural meanings and practices" (Markus & Kitayama, 2010, p.423) to be a whole person. As that person reflects on the input, he or she reinforces or changes the sociocultural meanings and practices that allowed him or her to be a whole person in the first place. Shweder (2003) argued similarly that people create social reality as they reflect on the inputs from sociocultural meanings and express their reflection in their environment. The results of the current studies showed evidence of mutual constitution. Japanese who became interdependent through interactions with their sociocultural environment, organized the sociocultural practices (i.e., the norm of the help) based on interdependent concerns (i.e., relational costs). Similarly, European Canadians, who became independent through interactions with their sociocultural environment, organized the sociocultural practices based on independent concerns (i.e., personal costs). As a result, Japanese and Canadian participants reinforced the theme underlying the norm of seeking help within their respective cultures.

Cultural Affordance

The norm that allows people to expect the future state of affairs, as well as the cycle of mutual constitution between mind and culture, may create a distinct social environment in a given culture. That is, Japanese and European Canadians' perceived commonness of help-seeking behaviour that allowed them to expect closeness in friendships as well as their concerns for distinct costs that are reinforced by acting according to their expectations shape the social environment in which they live. Therefore, observed patterns of associations among perceived relational costs, perceived commonness of help-seeking behaviours, and expected closeness in friendships were limited to interactions between members of the same cultural groups.

According to the notion of cultural affordance proposed by Kitayama and his colleagues (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Kitayama et al., 1997; Kitayama et al., 2006; Morling et al., 2002), everyday situations prevalent in a given culture highlight and elaborate values and beliefs that are loosely shared among members of that culture. Mature members of the culture are those who acquire ways of thinking, feeling, and relating that enable them to navigate themselves appropriately within the culturally specific confines of situations. In other words, the characteristics of situations elicit dominant ways of thinking, feeling, and relating in a given culture. Past studies showed that situations in North American cultures were likely to highlight self-enhancement, socially disengaging emotions (i.e., emotions deriving from self-reliance), or primary control (i.e., influencing social environment), whereas situations in East Asian cultures were likely to highlight self-criticism, socially disengaging emotions (i.e.,

emotions deriving from relational harmony), or secondary control (i.e., adjusting to social environment).

The patterns of the mediation effect in Studies 2 and 3 supported the notion of cultural affordance, because the commonness of the help was strongly associated with the expected closeness in friendships when Japanese or Canadian participants responded to local help-seeking behaviours.[11] Specifically, the results of Study 2 showed that only when Japanese participants responded to Japan-generated help-seeking behaviours did their ratings on commonness of the help mediated the effect of perceived relational costs on expected closeness in friendships. Similarly, the results of Study 3 showed that the mediation effect was significant, albeit marginal, only when Canadian participants responded to Canada-generated help-seeking behaviours. These patterns of results suggests that there is a consensus within each cultural group in terms of which local help-seeking behaviours, characterized by commonness, promote or hinder closeness in friendships. In other words, both Canadian and Japanese participants loosely shared the associative beliefs between the commonness of local help-seeking behaviours and subsequent closeness with other members of respective cultural groups, but such associative beliefs were not shared for foreign help-seeking behaviours. In order to be a mature member of a given culture as suggested by the notion of cultural affordance, people may need to develop these associative beliefs between characteristics of behaviours and the consequences of the behaviours.

The lack of consensus regarding the associative beliefs for foreign help-seeking behaviours was possibly related to specific characteristics of help-seeking behaviours. Recall that in Study 1, characteristics of help-seeking behaviours showed both cultural similarities and variations. Overall, both European Canadian and Japanese participants reported tangible, instrumental help more frequently than they reported the other types of help. Within the overall similarity across the two cultural groups, there were noteworthy differences. Canadian participants were more likely to report the instrumental help but were less likely to report emotional help and shared activities compared to Japanese participants. In other words, compared to Japanese participants, Canadian participants were more inclined to seek help that directly removed their personal problems (i.e., instrumental help) but were less inclined to seek help that indirectly aided them in dealing with their personal problems alone (i.e., emotional help and shared activity; cf. Fleming & Baum, 1986; Iso-Ahola & Park, 1996). Taylor (2007) argued that North Americans were likely to view friends and help from friends as their personal resources. From this perspective, Canadians' high likelihood of seeking direct help from friends to deal with their problems was reasonable to the extent that help seekers consume less energy when they receive direct help compared to indirect help. Consequently, they can capitalize on their resources efficiently. For Japanese participants, indirect help was preferred to direct help, perhaps because they minimized the relational costs for seeking help by taking some responsibilities for their personal problems. Because of these different characteristics of help-seeking behaviours, the behaviours generated by members

of different cultures included one that they infrequently encounter. For example, "ask a friend to help me move" was the most frequently reported favour by European Canadians, but only one Japanese participant reported this favour. As a result, participants' responses to foreign help-seeking behaviours might have contained larger individual differences in the association between participants' perceived commonness and their expected closeness in friendships than their responses to local help-seeking behaviours.

Implications

The above interpretations of the current results suggest theoretical and applied implications. First, the current research provided an awaited cross-cultural comparison of the prototype interaction-pattern model in the area of close relationship research. Fehr (2004) proposed the prototype interaction-pattern model of intimacy in close friendships that specifies the mental structure of common practices. According to this model, people organize various behaviours based on the prototypicality of the behaviours. Some behaviour is more representative of one category than the other. For example, "If I need to talk, my friend will listen" (Fehr, 2004, p. 270) is more prototypical or more representative behaviour for creating intimacy in a friendship than "If I am sad, my friend is sad, too" (Fehr, 2004, p. 271). Fehr showed that Canadian participants were able to delineate behaviours based on the degree of prototypicality, responded more quickly to prototypical behaviours than non-prototypical behaviours, and expected negative outcomes for breaking the structure of prototypes by failing to execute highly prototypical behaviours.

The current research has suggested the influence of culture on the prototype interaction-pattern model in two ways: organization and contents. As the prototype interaction-pattern model predicts, the current results indicate that both European Canadian and Japanese participants may have a mental structure of help-seeking behaviours. The results of Studies 2 and 3 showed a significant association between participants' perceived commonness and their expectations of closeness in friendships, confirming Fehr's (2004) model. However, as the subjective approach to culture (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; 2010) predicted, Japanese organized the mental structure based on their concerns for interdependence, whereas European Canadians organized it based on their concerns for independence. This suggested that the way in which people view the self in relation to others is likely to shape the structure of prototypicality organization of interaction patterns. Furthermore, as both subjective and intersubjective approaches predicted, the effect of participants' perceived commonness on their expected closeness was limited to help-seeking behaviours generated in their local culture. That is, a mediation effect of perceived commonness of help-seeking behaviour was found only when Japanese responded to Japan-generated behaviours and when Canadians responded to Canada-generated behaviours. This suggests that contents of mental structure are different across cultures.

Another implication of the current research was that findings may help create a better support program in universities. According to Census Canada (Shaienks, Gluszynski, & Bayard, 2008), students in Alberta were at the highest

risk of dropping out from post secondary education in Canada. By December 2005, 25% of young adults between ages 24 and 26 who attended university and 32% of young adults who attended college in Alberta discontinued their post secondary education. The census data suggested possible reasons such as gender, size of hometown community, family structure, and high-school engagement and achievement. The census also raised the importance of students' first-year experience. Dropouts tended to have trouble meeting deadlines, poor study habits, and lower grades during their first year of post secondary education. Finally, dropouts also reported their feelings that they were unable to find a suitable program within their first year.

Research on social support has provided valuable information to decrease the number of dropouts. Past findings revealed a number of positive impacts the reception of help had on university students. For example, university students whose friends value mutual support were less likely to be rejected by others and to experience less loneliness than the students with unsupportive friends (Samter, 1992). Similarly, first-year students who participated in a peer-support discussion group for the transition to university life reported significantly higher availability of help from peers and lower loneliness than students who did not participate in the discussion group (Mattanah et al., 2010). However, it is possible that some first-year university or college students missed an opportunity to receive available help because they were concerned about the perceived personal or relational costs. The results of the current study have contributed to this line of research by indicating the importance of students' perception of commonness associated with

seeking help. According to the current results, students may feel less strain if the

help provider mentions how common it is to seek help when students have trouble

meeting deadlines or correcting their study habits, rather than attempting to

reduce the costs for seeking help. Such evidence would contribute to creating

accessible support programs in post secondary education for a larger number of

students.

Finally, current results suggest a possible way to remedy Japanese

psychological disorders such as taijin kyofusho. Taijin kyofusho refers to a

Japanese culture-specific social anxiety disorder characterized with a fear of

offending, displeasing, or embarrassing others by one's body parts or functions

(American Psychiatric Association, 2000). According to Maeda and Nathan

(1999), individuals who are diagnosed with taijin kyofusho tend to fear that their

odors, eye contact, facial expressions, or physical features offend their interaction

partners. Therefore, these individuals become convinced that they are disrupting

harmonious relationships, and they avoid or fear interacting with others. Taijin

kyofusho patients were often treated with Japanese indigenous therapy such as

Morita therapy (Maeda & Nathan, 1999) or medications (Nagata, Wada, Yamada,

Iketani, & Kiriike, 2005).

The findings of the current study imply an alternative reason for taijin

kyofusho from social cognitive perspective. That is, people who are diagnosed

with taijin kyofusho may have dysfunctional cognitions about which behaviour

leads to closeness in interpersonal relationships. As I reported, Japanese

participants' normative beliefs about behaviours were organized based on

relational costs. Actions based on the normative beliefs were, I turn, associated with expectations of closeness in the relationship. Taijin kyofusho patients may perceive high relational costs for most of their actions in interpersonal relationships and perceive their actions to be obnoxiously uncommon. Therefore they become convinced that their actions will offend others. In order to relieve some of the symptoms of taijin kyofusho, behavioural cognitive therapy that rectifies maladaptive cognition may be useful.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the current studies. First, the current studies were correlational in nature. To enhance the confidence of my interpretation, I needed to experimentally test the role of relational costs for Japanese and the role of personal costs for European Canadians on their perceived commonness of the help and subsequent closeness in friendships. The second limitation of the current studies was the generalization of current results to other members of East Asian or North American cultures. The hypotheses of the current studies are deductively formulated based on the past findings from Canadian, European and Asian American: Korean, Chinese, Japanese, or Hindu Indian participants. Whether the current results from Japanese and European Canadian participants apply to all these groups of people needs further investigation. It is possible that people in a society, a region within a society, or a community within a region within a society use distinct help-seeking behaviours and organize them based on different themes, depending on their self-view and on the expected responses of others. Thus future studies may benefit from

investigating the pattern in specific target groups rather than comparing East versus West.

Third, although I maintain that Japanese participants' ratings on relational costs and European Canadian ratings on personal costs derived from violating their internalized or subjectively endorsed values, beliefs, or standards, their ratings may originate in what they perceived to be common among group members. That is, participants might have misperceived their responses to questionnaire as their own private ones without knowing that they were acting on their expectations of what other cultural members would commonly respond. Such misperception occurred because people tend to privately accept and hold group members' opinions to be true when they believe group members are knowledgeable (e.g., Sherif, 1936). Under such conditions, they confuse the source of information because their personal attitudes towards the opinions are now congruent with the group members. Future study is needed to clarify the process of internalization of cultural ideas and develop a method to dissociate people's private acceptance of others' opinions from internalized values.

Finally, I used a conservative coding scheme in Study 1 to target help-seeking behaviours with which people in a given culture were familiar. As a result, the final list of help-seeking behaviours was trimmed down to 40% of the original list. One might argue that ignoring 60% of the help-seeking behaviours underestimates the range of help-seeking behaviours in a given culture. I agree that the behaviours I excluded from the analysis deserve further investigation. However, I also maintain that the percentage of idiosyncratic behaviours was

reasonably large because participants differed in various dimensions that might

influence their need for support, such as socioeconomic status, dwellings,

residential mobility, support networks, and personality. Despite the large

proportion of idiosyncratic behaviours, I successfully identified four

characteristics of help-seeking behaviours: instrumental, emotional,

informational, and shared activity support. It was remarkable to discover that

people within a given culture encountered similar situations in their everyday

lives. Therefore, I concluded that it was worth investigating the way in which

people used the knowledge of shared help-seeking behaviours to navigate

themselves within their culture.

Of course, the results regarding the characteristics of help-seeking

behaviours must be interpreted with caution. Although most operational

definitions include combinations of instrumental, emotional, and informational

help, the boundaries between the types vary across studies. First, a behaviour is

categorized into different types depending on the area of research. In research on

leadership, for example, setting a goal for coworkers or aiding in solving a

problem is classified as instrumental help (Halpin & Winer, 1957). However,

researchers in social support have included such aids in informational help

(Goldsmith, 2004). Second, a behaviour can comprise characteristics of multiple

types of help. For example, disclosing personal issues to a friend can be both

emotional and informational. Sharing a personal issue helps build trust and

makes one feel understood and cared for by his or her friend (i.e., emotional

support; Samter & Burlenson, 1984). At the same time, disclosing personal issues

may lead to reciprocal disclosure so that help seekers gain knowledge about the

help providers (i.e., informational support; Miell & Duck, 1986). Although the

boundaries are ambiguous, it is clear that the types of behaviour provide a useful

classification scheme. That is, "help" in friendships is giving or receiving one, or

a combination, of these types of help.

Future Study

To establish causal links between perceived costs, the commonness of

help-seeking behaviours, and expectations of closeness in friendships, I propose

the following two future studies. In the first study, I aim to demonstrate causal

links between the commonness of help-seeking behaviours and expected

closeness in friendships. I will recruit Japanese and European Canadian

participants and provide them with three sets of random numbers attached to the

help-seeking behaviours used in Studies 2 and 3. The first set of random numbers

will be labeled as relational costs, the second set will be labeled as personal costs,

and the third set will be labeled as commonness in friendships. In such, each

help-seeking behaviour will be associated with three random numbers. Then,

participants will be told that the assigned numbers are the average of each

variable from a previous study. Participants will be asked to imagine seeking the

help and report their expected closeness in friendship after the request. I expect to

find that the random number labeled as commonness will predict participants'

expected closeness above and beyond the number labeled as relational or personal

costs for both cultural groups. Such evidence will increase my confidence that the

common practices in relationships form a basis for closeness expectations in a given culture.

In the second study, I aim to demonstrate causal links among perceived costs, the commonness of help-seeking behaviours, and expectations of closeness in friendships. In this study, Japanese and European Canadian young adults will be presented with the help-seeking behaviours used in Studies 2 and 3. For each help-seeking behaviour, I will assign a random number. A third of the participants will be told that the assigned numbers represent averaged relational costs from a previous study, another third of the participants will be told that the number represents averaged personal costs, and the final third will be asked to simply memorize the number with the help-seeking behaviour. For each help-seeking behaviour, participants will be asked to rate how common the help-seeking behaviour is in their friendships and their expectations of closeness as a result of seeking the help. The three variables will be causally linked as hypothesized if Japanese participants associate bogus relational costs with their perceived commonness, and European Canadian participants associate bogus personal costs with their perceived commonness. That is, bogus numbers described as relational costs will predict Japanese participants' perceived commonness. Similarly, bogus numbers described as personal costs predict Canadian participants' perceived commonness. Their perceived commonness, in turn, will predict expected closeness as a result of seeking help.

Final Remarks

The current research investigated the reasons why seeking help from close, same-sex friends was sometimes perceived to be costly from the perspectives of cultural psychology. In particular, two theoretical approaches to the study of culture and mind were compared for their explanatory power. On the one hand, the subjective approach conceptualizes the self as a foundation of cultural beings (Markus & Kitayama; 1991, 2010). On the other hand, the intersubjective approach conceptualizes that people achieve their goals by anticipating how others have responded or will respond (Chiu et al., 2010). I maintain that both approaches contribute to explain the process of help-seeking behaviours in close, same-sex friendships. That is, people's conceptualization of the self in relation to others sets the type of relevant costs when they seek help from close, same-sex friends. Based on these culturally salient costs, they anticipate how others will respond when they seek help. Finally, by anticipating the responses of others, people will achieve the desired goals of living in a culture.

Endnotes

[1] I also ran a model including participants' gender and an interaction between gender and culture in level 2 models. There was a significant effect of gender predicting adjusted mean of closeness, β_{0j}, $\gamma = -.15$, $p < .05$. This main effect was qualified by the interaction between gender and participants' cultural backgrounds, $\gamma = -.15$, $p < .05$. Comparing the means, although female participants tended to report higher closeness than did male participants, this tendency was more pronounced for Canadian participants than Japanese participants.

[2] Twenty-three Canadian help-seeking behaviours and 23 Japanese help-seeking behaviours on which the coders and I disagreed were considered as ambiguous and discarded from analysis. One Canadian participant and four Japanese participants only listed ambiguous situations.

[3] Gender was also included in the analysis based on previous research showing that support interactions of females were different from that of males (Kunkel & Burleson, 1998). There was a main effect of participants' gender, $\chi^2(3, N_{Situation} = 509) = 18.68$, $p < .001$. Female participants were more likely to report emotional help, $t(507) = 3.87$, $p < .001$, and less likely to report informational help, $t(507) = 2.44$, $p < .01$, than male participants. The interaction effect between participants' cultural backgrounds and gender was not significant, $\chi^2(3) = 5.86$, $p = .12$.

[4] Suppose the coder A found 18 participants who reported "Asking a friend to help me move" as the favor they requested of their close, same-sex

friends, and the coder B found 17 participants who reported this favor. Then,

"Asking a friend to help me move" was assigned 17.5 as its frequency score.

[5] Though the effect of mediation was not significant, I analyzed the pattern

of associations for European Canadian participants for an illustrative purpose. In

contrast to Japanese participants, the association between Canadian participants'

ratings on relational costs and commonness of help-seeking behaviours was not

significant, $B = -.12$, $p = .13$. However, their ratings on commonness were

positively associated with closeness in friendships, $B = .38$, $t = 3.75$ $p < .001$.

[6] When Japanese participants' ratings on relational costs were used as a

mediator variable with their ratings on commonness of help-seeking behaviours

being a predictor variable, the mediation effect was not significant, *Sobel z* < 1,

ns. When Japanese participants' ratings on closeness in friendships were a

predictor variable with their ratings on relational costs being an outcome variable,

their ratings on commonness mediated the relationship between the two, *Sobel z* $<$

2.03, $p < .05$. This direction of causality must be examined experimentally with

manipulating Japanese participants' perceived relational costs.

[7] For illustrative purposes, I conducted mediation analysis for Canadian

and Japanese participants' responses to Canada-generated help-seeking

behaviours. For Canadian participants, the association between their ratings of

relational costs and commonness was not significant, $B = -.06$, $p =$ ns. After

controlling for the effect of relational costs, their ratings of commonness was

positively associated with their closeness in friendships, $B = .26$, $t = 3.17$ $p < .01$.

In contrast, for Japanese participants, they perceived help-seeking behaviours to

be more common as they perceived higher relational costs, $B = -.32$, $t = -1.93$ $p <$ .05. After controlling for the effect of relational costs, their commonness ratings were positively associated with closeness in friendships at the marginally significant level, $B = .26$, $t = 1.58$ $p = .06$. The residual effect of relational costs on closeness in friendships remained significant, $B = -.29$, $t = -1.87$ $p < .05$. As a result, their ratings of commonness partially mediated the negative relationship between relational costs and closeness in friendships though the effect of mediation was non-significant, *Sobel z* $= 1.22$, $p = .22$.

[8] I phrased the question item of personal costs in a reverse manner in order to avoid unnecessary reactance to admit evaluating themselves negatively (cf. Hamamura, Meijer, Heine, Kamaya, & Hori, 2009).

[9] When European Canadian participants' ratings on personal costs were used as a mediator variable with their ratings on commonness of help-seeking behaviours being a predictor variable, the mediation effect was not significant, *Sobel z* $= 1.53$, $p = .13$. When European Canadian participants' ratings on closeness in friendships were a predictor variable with their ratings on personal costs being an outcome variable, their ratings on commonness mediated the relationship between the two at the marginally significant level, *Sobel z* < 1.82, $p = .07$. This direction of causality must be examined experimentally with manipulating participants' perceived personal costs.

[10] For illustrative purposes, I conducted mediation analysis for European Canadian participants' responses to Japan-generated help-seeking behaviours. The ratings on personal costs were significantly associated with the ratings on the

commonness of help-seeking behaviours, $B = -.33$, $t = -2.76$, $p < .01$. However,

the commonness of help-seeking behaviours was not associated with their ratings

on closeness in friendships, $B = .15$, $t = 1.19$, $p = .24$ after controlling for the effect

of personal costs. As a result, the residual effect of personal costs on their

closeness expectation in friendships remained to be significant, $B = -.27$, $t = -2.17$,

$p < .05$.

[11] See footnotes 10 and 12 for the analysis.

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Appendix A

Canada-generated Help-seeking Behaviours used in Study 2

(Ordered based on estimated commonness based on the result of Study 1.

Lower number indicates uncommonness)

1. Asking a friend to do laundry at his/her place when my washing machine was not working

2. Asking a friend to help fix my car

3. Asking a friend to come to a funeral with me for support

4. Asking a friend to help me get a job where he/she works

5. Asking a friend to babysit my younger sibling while I was away

6. Asking a friend to back me up when I got in a fight

7. Asking a friend for a ride home when I was stranded

8. Asking a friend to talk to a person of opposite sex I liked for me

9. Asking a friend to help organize a party for a mutual friend

10. Asking a friend to tell a lie to my parents in order to keep me out of trouble

11. Asking a friend to edit my long paper

12. Asking a friend to let me stay at his/her place for a few days

13. Asking a friend to pick me up from a party

14. Asking a friend to watch my pets while I was out of town for a week

15. Asking a friend for a ride to or from work

16. Asking a friend to keep a secret of mine from others

17. Asking a friend to pay for a meal when I forgot my wallet

18. Asking a friend to lend me some of their clothes

19. Asking a friend to lend me a small amount of money

20. Asking a friend to help me move

Appendix B

Japan-generated Help-seeking Behaviours used in Study 2

(Ordered based on estimated commonness based on the result of Study 1. Lower

number indicates uncommonness)

1. Asking a friend to wake me up by calling me in the morning

2. Asking a friend to let me stay at his/her parents' place when I am going to

   his/her hometown though my friend has already moved out

3. Asking a friend to nurse me when I was sick

4. Asking a friend to help complete my assignment though he was not taking

   the class

5. Consulting a friend regarding issues about a group of friends

6. Asking a friend to make time to teach me the materials covered in a class

7. Asking friend to hang out when I am bored

8. Asking a friend to listen to me vent for hours until late at night

9. Asking a friend to do the school work that I was supposed to do

10. Asking a friend to go shopping with me

11. Consulting a friend about my personal problems when he/she is preparing

    for a final exam

12. Asking a friend to lend me a large amount of money when I lost my wallet

    when we were travelling together

13. Asking a friend to let me stay at his/her place after a party

14. Asking a friend to come with me when I appealed my grade directly to a

    professor

15. Asking a friend to let me stay overnight without prior notice

16. Consulting a friend regarding my problems in romantic relationship

17. Asking a friend to come to events/places with me although he/she was not

    interested in going

18. Asking a friend to let me copy his/her assignment

19. Asking a friend to pick up handouts from class for me

20. Asking a friend to let me copy his/her notes for a class