Culture, Family and Feelings of Closeness

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Background

- Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943).

- Loneliness is found to be associated with depression (Cacioppo, Hughes, Waite, Hawkley, & Thisted, 2006), stress and poor interpersonal relationships (Heinrich, & Gullone, 2006).
Intimacy and Loneliness difference...

Americans disclose more than Chinese in different conversations, and to different people (Chen, 1992)

Chinese students had higher scores on depression and loneliness than American students (Anderson, 1999).
Cultural Emphasis and Family Construction

- Independent vs. Interdependent view (Markus and Kitayama, 1991)
- Family honor (Chao, 2000).
- Family configuration -- one-child policy
Family configuration…

Many believe that only-children are spoiled, lonely, self-centered and dependent (Falbo, 2011).

Influence of family size: the availability of parental resources decreases as the number of siblings increases (Douglas, 1995)

Influence of same sex sibling and opposite sex sibling (Ann, Deborah and John, 1983)
My hypothesis…

Chinese emphases on interdependence will lead to their feelings of closeness and interdependence to others. They also may feel lonely. While the American emphases on independence will lead to the opposite pattern.

Children with same-sex sibs and children with more than 1 sibling feel less close and more lonely than children without same-sex sibs and children with just 1 sibling or none at all.
Procedure -- participants


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 or 1 sib</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 1 sibs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of sib</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same-sex sib</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposite-sex sib</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedure--measurements

- A cover page requesting demographic information.
- Closeness: the actual and the ideal PICS the Miller Social Intimacy scales for parent and for best friend.
- Loneliness: the UCLA Loneliness Scale
- Cultural emphases: the Self Construal Scale on Interdependence versus Dependence.
2 X 2 ANOVA on loneliness
main effect of culture NS
main effect of family configuration NS
culture x family configuration p = .04

Results - Loneliness

![Graph showing loneliness levels for Chinese and American siblings.](image-url)
Results

2 X 2 ANOVA on loneliness
main effect of culture NS
main effect of family configuration NS
culture x family configuration p = .0292

-Loneliness

![Bar graph showing loneliness levels by family size and culture](image_url)
Results--Closeness

- **Parents**
  - Chinese: 4.5
  - American: 3.5
  - $P = 0.0009$

- **Siblings**
  - Chinese: 4
  - American: 3
  - $P < 0.05$

- **Peers**
  - Chinese: 3.5
  - American: 3
  - $P = 0.0222$
Conclusions

- Cultural effects & closeness
- Family size & loneliness
- Same sex sibs & loneliness
Limitations…

- Only children
- Interdependence vs. Independence
- Chinese participants’ understanding of the questions
- Validity and reliability of Self-report
- Being Away from home affects feelings of closeness and loneliness.
Future Directions...

- Other social factors...other possible measures of closeness and loneliness

- The connection between Loneliness and Closeness

- Solutions to ameliorate loneliness and promote closeness.
Thank you!