A cross-cultural comparison of the coexistence and domain superiority of individuating and relating autonomy
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A cross-cultural comparison of the coexistence and domain superiority of individuating and relating autonomy

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The consensus definition of autonomy in the psychological literature emphasizes self-governance through free volition, not separation or independence from others. Since the concept of self may differ cross-culturally, several researchers have tried to incorporate types of self into the notion of autonomy; however, only the dual model of autonomy has been able to do this while retaining an emphasis on volition. The dual model describes two distinct forms of autonomy—individuating and relating—each with superior function in a specific domain of individual functioning. Individuating autonomy represents a volitional capacity to act against social constraints and offers a route to achieve an independent self-identity by expressing individualistic attributes and distinctions. Relating autonomy represents a volitional capacity to act by emphasizing the harmony of self-in-relation-to-others, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and self-transcendence. These two forms of autonomy have been shown to coexist at the individual level in a Taiwanese sample. This study takes the next step, with a cross-cultural test of the coexistence and domain superiority hypotheses of individuating and relating autonomy. Participants included 306 college students from Taiwan and 183 college students from the United States. Structural equation modelling by multigroup analyses confirmed the cross-cultural equivalence of the two-factor individuating autonomy and relating autonomy measurement model. Across both samples the two forms of autonomy were shown to be mutually inclusive and not exclusive or independent. The domain-superior function of each form of autonomy was also confirmed cross-culturally; each form of autonomy has a dominant, but not necessarily exclusive, domain of functioning. Specifically, individuating autonomy was more associated with intrapersonal than interpersonal domain dependent variables, while relating autonomy was more associated with interpersonal than intrapersonal domain dependent variables. Limitations of the study and considerations for future research are discussed.

L'a définition consensuelle de l'autonomie dans la littérature psychologique met l'emphasis sur l'auto-gouvernance à travers la volonté libre, et non pas la séparation ou l'indépendance des autres. Comme le concept de soi peut différer de façon cross-culturelle, plusieurs chercheurs ont essayé d'incorporer les types de soi dans la notion d'autonomie. Cependant, seul le modèle double de l'autonomie a été capable de faire ceci en gardant une emphase sur la volonté. Le modèle double décrit deux formes distinctes d'autonomie, une individualisante et une reliante, chacune avec une fonction supérieure dans un domaine spécifique du fonctionnement individuel. L'autonomie individualisante représente une capacité volontaire pour agir contre les contraintes sociales et offre une voie pour atteindre une identité de soi indépendante en exprimant les attributs individualistes et les distinctions. L'autonomie reliante représente une capacité volontaire pour agir en mettant l'emphasis sur l'harmonie de soi en relation aux autres, sur la qualité des relations interpersonnelles et sur l'auto-transcendance. Il a été observé que ces deux formes d'autonomie coexistent au niveau individuel dans un échantillon taiwanais. Cette étude fait un pas de plus avec un test cross-culturel de la co-existence et des hypothèses de la supériorité du domaine et de l'autonomie reliante. Les participants étaient 306 étudiants du collège provenant de Taiwan et 183 étudiants du collège provenant des États-Unis. La modélisation par équation structurelle avec des analyses multi-groupes a confirmé l'équivalence cross-culturelle de l'autonomie individualisante à deux facteurs et le modèle de mesure de l'autonomie reliante. A travers les deux échantillons, nous avons observé que les deux formes d'autonomie sont mutuellement inclusives, plutôt qu'exclusives ou
indépendantes. La fonction du domaine supérieur de chaque forme d’autonomie a aussi été confirmée cross-culturellement; chaque forme d’autonomie a un domaine de fonctionnement dominant, mais pas nécessairement exclusif. Spécifiquement, l’autonomie individualisante était plus associée avec les variables dépendantes du domaine intrapersonnel, plutôt qu’interpersonnel. Quant à l’autonomie reliante, cette dernière était plus associée avec les variables dépendantes du domaine intrapersonnel. Les limites de l’étude et les implications pour la future recherche sont discutées.

La definición consensuada de autonomía en la literatura psicológica enfatiza auto-gobernanza mediante una voluntad libre, y no separación o independencia de los demás. Dado que el concepto de yo puede ser distinto en diferentes culturas, varios investigadores han intentado incorporar los tipos de yo dentro del concepto de autonomía, sin embargo, sólo el modelo dual de autonomía ha sido capaz de conseguirlo, enfatizando el concepto de voluntad. El modelo dual describe dos distintas formas de autonomía, individualización y relación, con superioridad de cada una de ellas en un dominio específico de funcionamiento individual. La autonomía individual representa la capacidad de actuar contra las limitaciones sociales y ofrece un camino para conseguir una identidad independiente expresando atributos individuales junto con distinción de los demás. La autonomía relacional representa la capacidad de actuar enfatizando la armonía del yo-en-relación-con-los-demás, la calidad de las relaciones interpersonales y auto-trascendencia. Se demostró que estas dos formas de autonomía coexisten a nivel individual en una muestra taiwanesa. Este trabajo es el segundo paso en el estudio de la hipotética coexistencia y superioridad en un dominio de las dos formas de autonomía, individual y relacional, entre culturas. Los participantes fueron 306 estudiantes universitarios de Taiwán y 183 estudiantes universitarios de los Estados Unidos. El modelo estructural de ecuaciones mediante un análisis multigrupal confirmó la coexistencia y la equivalencia del modelo bifactorial de autonomía, individual y relacional, entre culturas. En ambas muestras, las dos formas de autonomía fueron mutualmente inclusivas y no exclusivas o independientes. La función superior de una forma u otra, dependiendo del dominio, también se confirmó entre culturas, cada forma de autonomía tiene su dominante, pero no necesariamente exclusivo, dominio de funcionamiento. Específicamente, la autonomía individual se asoció más con las variables dependientes del dominio intrapersonal y no interpersonal mientras que la autonomía relacional se relacionaba más con las variables dependientes del dominio interpersonal y no intrapersonal. Se discuten las limitaciones del presente estudio y las cuestiones que deberían de ser consideradas en las futuras investigaciones.

Keywords: Autonomy; Relatedness; Cross-cultural; Adolescence.

Healthy autonomy is generally defined in the psychological literature as self-governance or agency that involves acting willingly without coercion, instead of in terms of separation or independence, which entail breaking away from significant others and having a well-defined boundary of self (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003; Kagitcibasi, 2005). The emphasis is on the free volition of the self, rather than on disconnection of the self.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro theory of human motivation that focuses on the degree to which behaviour is volitional. It highlights two key criteria for autonomy: an orthogonal relationship between autonomy and relatedness, and the concept of self as an agent that initiates and endorses personal behaviour with volition (Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995). SDT pioneered the agency perspective of autonomy by moving away from defining autonomy as separation.

Cross-cultural psychologists argue that the dominant concept of self may vary by culture, and so, based on the two key criteria, have proposed that more than one orientation toward autonomy may exist. For example, Markus and Kitayama (2003) extended their previous distinction between independent and interdependent types of self in order to describe what motivates a person’s actions. They proposed two models of agency: disjoint agency, in which an individual’s actions express personal desires, goals, and distinctiveness, and conjoint agency, in which individuals engage in active referencing of others to affirm their place in the social order. However, they partially emphasized the effect of the type of self on a person’s pattern of action rather than considering volition in relation to agency, and they confounded agency with independence or individualism in both definition and measurement. Although their two models of agency are directed by different types of self, the models, especially the conjoint model, do not consider the individual’s volition.

In contrast, Kagitcibasi (2005) included volition in agency by crossing autonomy and interpersonal distance. These two dimensions can only categorize individuals into four distinct types, including autonomous-separate and autonomous-related. Kagitcibasi’s framework does not allow the possibility of the coexistence of both types of autonomy within an individual. These two
Theoretical frameworks do not grasp the subtle relationship between the core aspects of autonomy within an agency perspective. The appropriate strategy for simultaneously dealing with autonomy and interpersonal distance is not to pit one against the other or to consider the intersection of each dimension with equal status.

A new framework, the dual model of autonomy, integrates SDT and cross-cultural theories to specify how interpersonal distance influences the expression of autonomy (Yeh, Liu, Huang, & Yang, 2007; Yeh & Yang, 2006). As with SDT, the basis of autonomy in the dual model is firmly anchored in the identified self. The dual model accepts SDT's postulate that the self is the boundary determining the locus of causality for behaviour, but goes a step further to consider different types of self, which then expands the potential forms of autonomy. The two forms of autonomy in the dual model were inspired by the work of both Kagitcibasi and Markus and Kitayama, but the model goes beyond their work in defining interpersonal distance as a switch regulating different patterns of autonomous behaviour. In this regard, separateness and relatedness can not only be equally agentic and volitional, but can also coexist as two functional forms of autonomy within an individual.

Although it is possible to specify the different orientating effects of interpersonal distance on autonomy with a focus on behaviour using Markus and Kitayama's (2003) two models of agency, the dual model goes a step further to encompass capacities that promote the exercise of volition, which assures that autonomy is the basis of its theoretical framework.

The dual model: Individuating and relating autonomy

According to the dual model, autonomy entails an ongoing process of developing particular positive capacities (Yeh et al., 2007). The integrative capacities of cognition, function, and emotion enable individuals to achieve autonomy through the exercise of their own volition (Noom, Deković, & Meeus, 2001). That is, an autonomous individual is able to specify alternative options, develop personal values and goals, and make decisions relating to self-identity (cognitive); develop strategies to promote self-identity (functional); and commit to a self-identity by showing consideration and feeling confidence in a goal (emotional).

Two forms of autonomy are posited in the dual model (Yeh & Yang, 2006): Individuating autonomy (IA) represents an orientation towards developing a capacity to act volitionally against social constraints and offers a route for individuals to achieve their own self-identity by expressing individualistic attributes and distinctions. Relating autonomy (RA) represents an orientation towards developing a capacity to act volitionally with a focus and emphasis on the harmony of self-in-relation-to-others, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and self-transcendence.

IA clearly differs from detachment and disengaging from relationships (Yeh & Yang, 2006), which are associated with independence in the SDT framework. Instead, IA corresponds to concentration on achieving personal goals and individuality through one's own volition. RA differs from public conformity and compliance; it corresponds to incorporating significant others' opinions into self-identify through reflection.

Two forms of autonomy within an individual

Markus and Kitayama (2003) and Kagitcibasi (2005) suggested that individuals could simultaneously possess two different self-construals (independent and interdependent) and thus could employ two forms of agency. They expected that the dominant model of agency a person uses to act and to understand the world would depend on that person's sociocultural context and, conversely, that cultures may be characterized by the dominance of a particular model of agency.

It has been argued that a comprehensive understanding of cultural influences on individual behaviour requires investigation and analysis at the individual level as well as at cultural or societal levels (Smith, Bond, & Kagitcibasi, 2006). However, little research has been conducted to examine the two forms of autonomy at the individual level due to limitations in the conceptual and measurement frameworks. One exception is Yeh and Yang (2006), who explicitly focused on individuals instead of groups to demonstrate the coexistence of two forms of autonomy at the individual level and provided evidence of the domain of superiority for each form of autonomy for Taiwanese adolescents. Their results show that a single individual may develop the capacity to employ both IA and RA, which allows volitional management of situations that vary in the spectrum from separation to relatedness. In this way, individuals can satisfy psychological needs for individuality and connectedness. That is, an individual may at times act from an orientation towards IA, which allows authentic expression of
the distinctiveness of the self from others, and at times from an orientation towards RA, which incorporates significant others and allows for volitional fulfilment of personal responsibilities. A medium positive correlation ($r = .36$ to $.61$ among several samples of different ages and sex) has been identified between the two forms of autonomy (Yeh et al., 2007; Yeh & Yang, 2006), which implies that the more IA one possesses, the more RA one will possess, and vice versa. It appears that IA and RA are mutually inclusive and coexist within individuals in order to handle various types of situations, whether they belong to the intrapersonal or interpersonal domain.

Despite the correlation, IA and RA remain distinct; each has a dominant function in a specific domain. Specifically, in the competing model analysis (Yeh & Yang, 2006), IA was more associated than RA with adjustment variables in the intrapersonal domain, such as the global and personal aspects of self-esteem, the personal aspect of happiness, and internalizing problems (mainly anxiety and depression), whereas RA was more associated with adjustment variables in the interpersonal domain such as social skills and externalizing problems (mainly aggression and delinquent behaviour).

Yeh and his colleagues focused on teenagers and college students in their studies because individuality, autonomy, and connectedness are particularly important during this period of development. This study extends Yeh and Yang’s (2006) study of Taiwanese adolescents, which demonstrated the coexistence and domain superiority of IA and RA at an individual level, with a cross-cultural sample. A sample from the United States (US) was chosen for comparison with a Taiwanese sample as the American cultural context differs greatly from that of Taiwan. This cross-cultural design also allows examination of cultural similarities and differences in the two orientations to autonomy. Humans universally share a need for autonomy, but they may manifest their autonomy flexibly to achieve a relatively more independent or interdependent self-identity, depending on their motives or situations. Since all people have aspects of both types of identity, we hypothesize that for individuals of all cultures, IA and RA are mutually inclusive, not exclusive. Specifically, we expect the two forms of autonomy to have a medium positive correlation across individuals from both cultures, so that a high-autonomy person tends to have high scores on both forms of autonomy, and a low-autonomy person tends to have low scores on both forms (Hypothesis 1).

As in Yeh and Yang’s (2006) study, each form of autonomy is expected to correspond to a dominant domain of functioning. Specifically, for both cultures examined, IA is expected to be more associated with adjustment variables in the intrapersonal domain, and RA is expected to be more associated with adjustment variables in the interpersonal domain.

To test this hypothesis, we chose two well-validated measures of personal adjustment as dependent variables: reciprocal filial belief, a positive outcome variable belonging to the interpersonal domain (Yeh & Bedford, 2003), and somatic-psychological symptoms, which are recognized as intrapersonal domain outcome variables with high cross-cultural validity (Lin, 1989) that are negatively associated with autonomy. Reciprocal filial belief refers to the affection and respect with which children treat their parents. It is based on universal values such as love, empathy, benevolence, and intimacy, which have been recognized as core elements for intergenerational harmony across several cultures. Individuals with strong reciprocal filial belief tend to see empathy and self-disclosure as being important to interpersonal relationships (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). Somatic and psychological symptoms refer to feelings of alienation, depression, and somatic complaints. Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is that RA is more positively associated with reciprocal filial belief than IA is, and IA is more negatively associated with somatic-psychological symptoms than RA is.

**METHOD**

**Participants and procedure**

Participants included 306 college students from Taiwan (103 males and 203 females aged 18 to 23 years, $M = 20.2$, $SD = 1.45$) and 183 college students from the US (88.52% Caucasian, 96 males and 87 females aged 18 to 23 years, $M = 19.5$, $SD = 0.92$) who had lived with their parents for the past 6 months. Students still living with their parents were targeted because other family events (such as the frequency and intensity of parent–child conflict) were also inquired about in the survey, although these variables were not included in the analysis due to nonequivalence of the measurement models for the two samples. The Chinese version of the questionnaire was translated into English by a bilingual American and then back-translated by a bilingual Taiwanese. Participants filled out the questionnaire for extra
credit in a psychology course. They were assured of the confidentiality of their answers.

Measures

Dual autonomy. The dual autonomy scale developed by Yeh and Yang (2006) measures IA and RA. It contains 12 items, with 2 items for each capacity (cognitive, functional, and emotional) in each orientation (see Appendix A). Participants indicated their degree of agreement with each item on a 6-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The alpha reliabilities for the US and Taiwanese subgroups were, respectively, .71 and .80 for IA, and .80 and .77 for RA.

Somatic-psychological symptoms. Lin (1989) developed a checklist to measure feelings of alienation (eight items, e.g., feel lonely, feel unable to trust others), depression (nine items, e.g., feel sad, cry ever once in a while), and somatic complaints (nine items, e.g., have a headache for no particular reason). Participants indicated how often during the past 2 weeks they had experienced the symptoms using a 5-point frequency scale from 0 (never) to 4 (almost every day). The reliabilities of the alienation, depression, and somatic complaints subscales were .80, .81, and .71 for the US group and .83, .83, and .78 for the Taiwanese group.

Reciprocal filial belief. This scale is composed of eight items measuring reciprocal filial belief (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). Participants rated the importance of each item to them on a 6-point scale from 1 (extremely unimportant) to 6 (extremely important). Sample items are “Support my parents to make their livelihood more comfortable” and “Frequently concerned about my parents’ health”. Participants responded to the scale twice, once for each parent. The alpha coefficients for the US and Taiwanese groups were .81 and .90 on the father subscale, and .83 and .86 on the mother subscale.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1. Results indicated that both forms of autonomy in both cultures were significantly negatively related with somatic-psychological symptoms and significantly positively associated with reciprocal filial belief.

For each sample, the measurement models were free-estimated for the two autonomies and also for the dependent variables (somatic-psychological symptoms and reciprocal filial belief). The estimation method for all models was maximum likelihood. The results indicated sufficient model fit and a medium latent correlation between the two autonomies in both samples: US, \( \chi^2(53) = 131.59, p < .01, \text{CFI} = .92, \text{SRMR} = .078, \phi_1 = .53 \); Taiwan, \( \chi^2(53) = 150.33, p < .01, \text{CFI} = .94, \text{SRMR} = .072, \phi_2 = .49 \). The results of the measurement models for the dependent variables showed that the data fit satisfactorily for each sample: US, \( \chi^2(4) = 1.60, p = .081, \text{CFI} = 1.00, \text{SRMR} = .015 \); Taiwan, \( \chi^2(4) = 11.43, p = .02, \text{CFI} = .99, \text{SRMR} = .024 \).

Next, the equivalence of the measurement models was evaluated across the samples. Two of the 12 factor loadings (IA4 and RA2) in the two autonomies model were nonequivalent. After removing these two items, measurement equivalence was confirmed, \( \Delta \chi^2(10) = 13.49, p = .24 \), with acceptable indices of model fitness, \( \chi^2(79) = 198.94, p < .01, \text{CFI} = .94, \text{SRMR} = .080 \). When this 10-item measure was used for subsequent SEM analyses, the medium inter-factor correlation of the two autonomies was still maintained in both US (\( \phi_1 = .51 \)) and Taiwanese (\( \phi_2 = .54 \)) samples. Hypothesis 1 was supported. Measurement equivalence was also acceptable in the dependent variable models, \( \Delta \chi^2(5) = 7.89, p = .16 \).

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Individuating autonomy</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>–.34**</td>
<td>–.29**</td>
<td>–.13</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relating autonomy</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–.27**</td>
<td>–.16*</td>
<td>–.11</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Alienation</td>
<td>–.20**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–.12*</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Depression</td>
<td>–.21**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–.13*</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Somatic complaints</td>
<td>–.081</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–.07*</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reciprocal filial belief</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>–.14*</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–.10</td>
<td>–.05</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>4.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>4.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.54</td>
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</table>

Numbers below the diagonal are from the Taiwanese sample (n = 306); those above are from the US sample (n = 183). * p < .05; ** p < .01.
The structural models showed that (see Figure 1) IA was significantly associated only with somatic-psychological symptoms ($\gamma_{11}$ for Americans and Taiwanese was $-0.44$ and $-0.22$, respectively, both $p<.01$), and not with reciprocal filial belief ($\gamma_{12}$ was $0.05$ and $-0.08$, both $p>.05$). RA was significantly related to reciprocal filial belief ($\gamma_{22}$ for Americans and Taiwanese was $0.46$ and $0.45$, both $p<.01$) but not to somatic-psychological symptoms ($\gamma_{21}$ was $0.00$ and $-0.05$, both $p>.05$). The results indicate that in both samples, IA was more associated with somatic-psychological symptoms, an adjustment variable of the intrapersonal domain, than with reciprocal filial belief, an adjustment variable of the interpersonal domain. The reverse was true for RA. Hypothesis 2 was supported. We also checked the effect differences between the two samples; the differences of all four gamma effects were not significant $D\chi^2(1) = 2.12, 1.02, -0.01, 0.14$, for $\gamma_{11}, \gamma_{12}, \gamma_{21}, \text{and } \gamma_{22}$, respectively, all $p>.05$.

A latent mean structure analysis on the final test model did reveal some cultural differences. Americans had a significantly higher latent mean on IA ($\kappa = 0.49, t = 6.75, p<.01$) and on RA ($\kappa = 0.35, t = 5.81, p<.01$) and a lower latent mean on somatic-psychological symptoms ($\kappa = -0.19, t = -3.60, p<.01$) than the Taiwanese. Although the former had a higher latent mean on reciprocal filial belief than the latter, it did not reach a significance ($t = 1.67, p>.05$).

## DISCUSSION

Volitional capacity is a necessary element of autonomy. When the interpersonal distance element is incorporated, two different forms of autonomous functioning are manifest. This study demonstrated that these two forms of autonomous functioning, individuating and relating autonomy, are mutually exclusive and not distinct or independent for both US and Taiwan samples. This finding implies that the two forms of autonomy should be treated as intertwined capacities rather than as two poles of a single capacity within an individual. An individual may possess both forms of autonomy simultaneously. Furthermore, in general, people who possess stronger capacity in one form of autonomy also tend to have greater capacity in the other form.

This study confirmed the domain-superior function of each form of autonomy cross-culturally. As expected, individuating autonomy was more strongly associated with intrapersonal domain adjustment variables, and relating autonomy was more associated with interpersonal domain adjustment variables. Although each form of autonomy was shown to exhibit domain superiority, it should not be concluded that each is beneficial only to that particular domain because, in the model, each also had an indirect association with the other dependent variable through its positive correlation with the other form of autonomy. As Yeh and Yang (2006) demonstrated, both forms of autonomy are beneficial to intrapersonal as well as interpersonal adjustment. They are part of coexisting differentiation processes for adolescent development. One process allows more complicated cognition, confident emotion, and flexible function in individuality, and the other allows greater capacity to manage cognitions and behaviors harmoniously that conflict with others.

Our findings are consistent with Imamoglu’s (2003) finding that optimal psychological functioning is associated with being both related and individuated, as well as with Gardner, Gabriel, and Lee’s (1999) finding that the independent self and the interdependent self may coexist in an individual. Gardner et al.’s research only investigated the ability to construe the self, not the capacity to act with volition, as is the case with individuating and relating autonomy. In the future, it would be interesting to make use of Gardner et al.’s findings to probe whether, in a given situation, the exercise of individuating or relating autonomy follows self-construal as an independent or interdependent self, respectively.

The cross-cultural validation of Yeh and Yang’s results on an individual level does not trivialize the possibility of cultural differences in development of autonomy or social functions at a group or cultural level. For example, at the group mean level, the extent of individuating autonomy for Taiwanese was lower than for Americans, a result that might be expected. However, the relating autonomy of the Americans was higher than that of the Taiwanese, an unexpected result. Compared to Americans, Taiwanese are more likely to highlight the value of relational harmony (Triandis, 1989), suggesting that relational autonomy would be higher for Taiwanese than for Americans.

It is possible that the unexpectedly high score on relating autonomy for the Americans was a function of the scale’s focus on relations with parents instead of on other people in general. That is, many past US studies examining autonomy and relatedness have not specifically examined relatedness with parents. In fact, several studies have found that adolescent
Figure 1. SEM model of relations between the two forms of autonomy and somatic-psychological symptoms and reciprocal filial belief criteria. (Standardized solution of measurement invariant model across both groups; the first coefficient is from the US sample, the second is from the Taiwan sample; *p<.05.)
attachment to parents, even in the US, is associated with well-being (Chou, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000), and that Americans are high in familism (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002).

The US sample in this study was limited to students residing with at least one parent, which represents a non-normative leaving home pattern for American college students that may be connected to lower autonomy (Seiffge-Krenke, 2006). Furthermore, the sample was drawn from a town in the south, where there are many people with conservative religious beliefs associated with emphasis on family values and discipline. Students still living with their parents may be more conservative than those who are already living independently or on campus. These factors may have come together to produce the unexpectedly strong results on RA for our US sample. A future study should explore these factors, especially in light of Cukur, Guzman, and Carlo’s study (2004) in which religiosity was associated positively with conservative values and collectivism across three cultures.

In addition, a cross-cultural difference was not found either in a greater effect of individuating autonomy on personal well-being for Westerners or in a greater effect of relating autonomy on reciprocal filial piety for Asians. This result may also be due to the reasons just outlined. A sample that is more representative of American college students should be considered in a future study.

This study has some limitations that should be considered in interpreting the results. First, only two adjustment variables (reciprocal filial belief and somatic-psychological symptoms) were included as criteria. Other intrapersonal and interpersonal adjustment indicators should be included in future research, such as academic achievement, inspiration, and relationship quality or satisfaction. Second, our findings are subject to method variance confounds because only self-report data were collected. It is important to use experimental methods in future studies to test the intrapersonal-interpersonal functional claim of the two forms of autonomy, which would also enable the inference of effects, rather than merely associations. Third, while this study provides strong support for the contention that both forms of autonomy can coexist and serve similar and important functions in different cultures, with only Taiwanese and American participants, our evidence cannot provide a definite conclusion as to whether the two forms of autonomy can coexist in individuals from all cultures. Samples from other collectivist and individualist cultures are needed to clarify the issues.

Despite these limitations, this study is the first to provide cross-cultural data on individuating and relating autonomy. As this study evidenced, Americans and Taiwanese should be described in terms of both their individuating and relating autonomy at an individual level, rather than being relegated exclusively to only one form of autonomy.

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**APPENDIX A**

*Individuating autonomy items (IA):*
I always feel confident about my own decisions. (E)
I always know what I want. (C)
I am highly capable of controlling the immediate environment around me and thus am able to achieve my goals. (F)
*I am always able to find the most beneficial way of doing things for myself. (F)*
It is easy for me to make a decision advantageous to myself. (C)
Trying new things is not difficult for me. (E)

*Relating autonomy items (RA):*
It is meaningful for me to fulfill my duty as a son or daughter. (E)
*I try to coordinate with my parents to resolve things even when we disagree. (C)*
My parents and I can smoothly discuss the way we interact with each other. (F)
When making a decision, I evaluate the practicalities of both my ideas and my parents’ suggestions. (C)
I feel more confident about a decision when taking my parents’ suggestions into consideration. (E)
I am always able to make things satisfactory for both parties even when my parents’ expectations are different from mine. (F)

C = cognitive, F = functional, E = emotional; *nonequivalent factor loadings across US and Taiwan samples.
