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Examining relations between shame and personality among university students in the United States and Japan: A developmental perspective

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American and Japanese university students' shame (haji)-related reactions across a number of diverse situations, and the personality correlates of these reactions, were studied. With age, shame ratings decreased significantly in situations describing defects in the "private self" among American students, and haji ratings decreased significantly in situations in which the "public self" was ridiculed or discomforted among Japanese students. Also with age, individual differences in personality, particularly internal self-introspection, played an increasingly important role in predicting shame reactions among American students, whereas among Japanese students, individual personality differences became increasingly unimportant in determining haji-related phenomena. Finally, American students showed an increasing, and Japanese students a decreasing, integration of internal- and external-oriented elements of personality with development. Results are discussed in terms of theories of emotional development and cultural differences in self-concept.

Introduction

The concept of shame has received increasing attention in recent years from researchers addressing a broad range of issues from psychopathology to juridical decisions (Karp, 1998; Tangney, 1993). Although this “self-conscious” emotion has been examined as a normative experience of early adolescence and related to key developmental issues, such as bodily changes during puberty (Rodin, 1992) and the emergence of sexuality (Tangney, 1989), the majority of studies have focused on age-related increases in shame during this period. We know comparatively little about developmental processes associated with decreases in shame-proneness that occur during late adolescence and early adulthood.

Numerous changes in social cognition and self-perception taking place during the adolescent period imply that shame reactions might indeed diminish toward the end of the adolescent years. Compared with their peers in middle childhood, for example, new-found abilities such as self-reflection and social perspective-taking make early and middle adolescents more vulnerable to negative judgements regarding the self (e.g., Harter, 1990). Additionally, novel changes associated with puberty, such as menstruation and breast development in girls and the emergence of sexuality in both sexes, have been found to evoke self-conscious emotions, such as embarrassment and humiliation, as well as shame proper in early and middle adolescents (Tangney, 1989). Thus, it is likely that sensitivity to shame-related phenomena will tend to peak in the period of early or middle adolescence and then begin to decline from late adolescence through young adulthood as adolescent egocentrism wanes (Ryan & Kuczkowski, 1994) and sense of self solidifies (Harter, 1990).

Although such an explanation may accurately describe individuals in Western societies, how might developmental changes in shame vary among members of a non-Western culture, for example, Japan? Japan is an interesting case for several reasons. First, although similar biological and cognitive processes as described earlier would seem to apply equally well to adolescents in Japan, very different socioemotional factors might account for a decline in shame-proneness among American and Japanese children. For example, developing successful social relations and establishing an independent identity are primary goals for American adolescents (Erikson, 1968). By contrast, the major developmental task for the majority of adolescents in Japan is to be a good student and do well in school in order to enter a good university (Ukai, 1988). School-related issues often trigger the most common forms of psychopathology associated with shame (haji) in Japanese adolescents—in particular, school refusal (toko kyohi) and aggression toward parents (katenai boryoku) (e.g., Kikuchi & Horiuichi, 1986). One might then expect to see reductions in shame among Japanese adolescents after entrance to the university, when many of the uncertainties about one’s present academic and future social standing (determined to a much greater extent by one’s university than is the case in Western countries, such as the United States) will presumably have been resolved. University students in the United States and Japan would thus be appropriate populations for studying developmental changes in shame reactions.

Researchers have highlighted the fact that the development of self-conscious emotions like shame is intimately related to the development of self and self-related processes (M. Lewis, 1992). Development of self, in turn, is accompanied by a growing awareness of emotion-related “concerns”—thought to comprise a key component of emotion research (Frijda & Mesquita, 1998)—which are often reflected in the goals, standards, and rules of the society in which one is reared (e.g., Stipek, Recchia, & Mc Clintic, 1992). We may expect to see cultural disparity in shame-related concerns between students in Japan and the United States. For example, it was Benedict’s
(1946) classic study of Japanese culture that introduced the notion of shame as coming primarily from the public exposure of some transgression or from a publicly negative evaluation by others. According to Benedict (1946, p. 223): “A man is shamed either by being openly ridiculed and rejected or by fantasising to himself that he has been made ridiculous”. The strong orientation towards and connection with the “other” implied in the “interdependent”, “public”, or “collective” concept of self, which is believed to characterise East Asian cultures, such as Japan (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989), suggests that Japanese individuals would be most concerned with this kind of public external-oriented shame. In contrast, recent empirical research among American subjects indicates that shame occurs not only in public but often when alone, and involves, not merely ridicule, but also a sense of moral transgression (M. Lewis, 1992; Miller & Tangney, 1994). Although retaining some of its association with a public audience, the modern notion of shame is now characterised by a distinctly internal focus, and a sense that one’s global self is somehow objectionable or defective (H.B. Lewis, 1987; M. Lewis, 1992). The clear orientation towards the “private” or “independent” self, which seeks meaning primarily in the thoughts and feelings of the individual and is viewed as characterising Western cultures, such as the United States (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989), indicates that members of this society would be most concerned with the kind of internal-focused shame in which one’s global defectiveness is highlighted (M. Lewis, 1992).

In the light of the opportunity to examine developmental processes in populations with presumably differing emotional concerns and differing self-construals, in the present study, we compared reactions to potentially shame-evoking situations among university students in the United States and Japan. Western researchers have found that the tendency to experience shame is associated with a number of negative outcomes, including social avoidance/distress, interaction anxiety, and a sense of helplessness to ameliorate a negative action (Lutwak & Ferrari, 1997; Miller & Tangney, 1994). Japanese psychologists as well have linked shame (haji) to various forms of psychopathology such as taijin kyōfu (social phobia) in adults and school refusal in children (Miyake & Yamazaki, 1995). In both societies, then, vulnerability to shame appears to be maladaptive and may be expected to decrease with age. Consistent with M. Lewis’s (1992) theorising on the relation between shame and societal “standards”, however, we may assume that socialisation pressures toward a decrease in shame-proneness would likely focus on those areas of self, reflected in culture-specific antecedent events (Frijda & Mesquita, 1998), which a particular society values most highly. In view of the hypothesised emphasis in Western cultures, such as the United States, on the “private” or “independent” self, and in East Asian cultures, such as Japan, on the “collective” or “public” self (Triandis, 1989), we predicted that shame ratings would decrease significantly with age in situations construed as dealing with characterological defects in the internal private self in the American sample, and in situations construed as dealing with disapproved behaviour of the public presented self in the Japanese sample.

**Personality correlates**

Various theorists and investigators have related shame-proneness to certain features of personality. For example, one commonality shared both by Benedict (1946) and modern theorists (H.B. Lewis, 1971) is the view that shame involves a sensitivity to social evaluation, which claim is consistent with empirical evidence (Lutwak & Ferrari, 1997). In East Asian societies like Japan, heightened sensitivity to social evaluation may be related to the historical importance of “face” in interpersonal relations, to linguistic distinctions between external facade (tatemae) and true inner feelings (home), and to the key role that other people are hypothesised to play in defining the self among members of the culture (Doi, 1986; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). If shame-proneness is indeed maladaptive in Japan, as postulated earlier, then we would expect that, as the “interdependent”, “public”, or “collective” self-construal develops over time, those aspects of self that make one vulnerable to shame—for example, certain features of personality—would also develop in such a way so as to decrease shame reactions. Therefore, based on the cultural attributes described earlier, we predicted that among Japanese students there would be age-related decreases in fear of social evaluation, as expressed in social anxiety and public self-consciousness (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975), and decreases in concern with impression management, as expressed in high self-monitoring (Snyder, 1974). We also expected developmental disparities in sensitivity to such social evaluation to predict shame ratings in the Japanese sample, especially those related to situations of public self-presentation.

By contrast, the emphasis on defects and attributions of self-blame regarding the global self found in modern descriptions of shame (H.B. Lewis, 1971; M. Lewis, 1992), implies a distinct focus on inner-directed processes and cognitions, as indicated by reports of strong relations between shame, an internal self-focus, and self-blaming attributions among American subjects (Feiring, Taska, & Lewis, 1998). If shame is maladaptive in the United States as it is in Japan, as we have speculated, then we would expect that, as the “private” or “independent” self develops, developmental decreases will be observed in self-related processes—as reflected, for example, in measures of personality—that tend to make Americans more vulnerable to shame. Because the self in Western cultures like the United States is described as being highly internal focused on private thoughts and feelings (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989), we predicted that there would be age-related decreases in private self-consciousness and in both positive and negative internal self-attributions of responsibility among American but not among Japanese students. In addition, based on M. Lewis’s (1992) findings regarding the importance of negative global attributions in the cognitive appraisal of shame, we expected as well to see developmental declines in this type of attribution among students in the United States. Given that shame-related phenomena are seen as requiring a focus on the self (H.B. Lewis, 1971), and self-definition is assumed to change with development (Harter, 1990), we also hypothesised that, for American students, developmental differences in private self-consciousness, negative and positive internal, and negative global attribution would predict shame ratings, especially in situations depicting defects in the internal private self.

**Hypotheses of the study**

In sum, the hypotheses of the present study were as follows. (1) Shame ratings would significantly decrease with increasing age in situations dealing with defects in the internal global self.
among American students, and in situations dealing with awkward behavior of the public presented self among Japanese students. (2) Age-related decreases would be found in ratings of social anxiety, public self-consciousness, and self-monitoring (henceforth termed “public self vulnerability”) among Japanese students, and in ratings of private self-consciousness, negative and positive internal, and negative global self-attributions (henceforth termed “private self vulnerability”) among American students. (3) Age-related differences in public and private self vulnerability would significantly predict shame ratings in situations of discomfiture to the “public self” among Japanese students, and in situations exposing defects in the “private self” among American students, respectively.

Method

Subjects

In the United States, 214 undergraduate students (males, 93; females, 121) were recruited from introductory psychology and social psychology classes at a small university in the Washington, DC area. Of the American students 72% were Caucasian-, 11% were Asian-Pacific-, 8% were Hispanic-, and 4% were African-American. The remaining 5% identified themselves as “other”. All American students possessed a native-speaker fluency in English. (In preliminary analyses, ethnicity was not found to be a significant predictor of any of the key variables in the study. Therefore, ethnicity will not be discussed further.) In Japan, the sample consisted of 250 students (males, 96; females, 154) attending educational psychology and general science classes at a small university in the Matsuyama area. All students in Japan were Japanese. The mean age of the American sample was 19.46 years (SD = 1.42); that of the Japanese sample was 19.94 years (SD = 1.69).

Instruments

Shame measure. The shame measure contained 30 items adapted from one Japanese and two American instruments dealing with the self-conscious emotions. The Japanese instrument consisted of 25 Japanese student-generated situations in which one would feel hazukashii. “Hazukashii” is an extremely broad term with a wide range of meanings in Japanese including “shy”, “embarrassed”, “ashamed”, and “abashed” (Masuda, 1987). It has been translated in other cross-cultural studies both as “shame” (Imahori & Capuch, 1994) and “embarrassment” (Miyake & Yamazaki, 1993). From the 25 Japanese situations comprising the hazukashii scale, we chose 15 items that the first two authors considered to be most appropriate for and understandable to American undergraduates; some of the items seemed to describe characterological defects in the internal global self and others seemed to describe episodes of ridicule and unwanted attention directed at the presented self.

We also included eight situations adapted from the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1989). The authors of the TOSCA originally intended their instrument to engender either shame or guilt in the reader. However, subsequent research has shown that many of the TOSCA items load strongly on a latent shame construct (Ferguson & Crowley, 1997). Finally, seven situations in the present shame measure were adapted from Modigliani’s (1968) scale of embarrasbility. Our choice of the American items was primarily based on their appropriateness for and relevance to Japanese as well as to American undergraduates. For example, one rejected TOSCA item described a situation in which the subject borrows money in order to move away from his/her family, and pays it back as soon as possible. In Japan, it would be unnecessary to borrow money since most Japanese families would pay for the move themselves and there would be no question of their children having to pay them back. Similarly, an item on the embarrassed scale in which a shabbily dressed man accosts the subject on the street and asks for a handout would not apply in Japan where beggars are practically nonexistent.

At the beginning of the English-language version of the measure, students were asked: “To what extent would you feel shame in each of the following situations?” After each item was a closed-ended range, ranging from 1 (“feel no shame”) to 5 (“feel extreme shame”). As a translation of the English word “shame”, we chose the Japanese word haji, which the Kenkyusha’s New Japanese–English Dictionary (Masuda, 1987) translates as “shame”, “disgrace”, “dishonour”, “humiliation”. A number of authors writing on the relation between culture and emotion in Japan have rendered “haji” as “shame” (Kitayama, Markus, & Matsumoto, 1995; Miyake & Yamazaki, 1995). Additionally, it was on haji that Benedict (1946) based her original cultural disquisition.

Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS; Fenigstein et al., 1975). To assess how subjects experience and reflect upon the self, and specifically, to measure the degree to which private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety predicted students’ reactions to various shame-related situations, we used the SCS. The SCS contains 23 items that are rated on a scale ranging from 1 (“extremely uncharacteristic of me”) to 5 (“extremely characteristic of me”). The scale yields three factors: Social anxiety, defined as discomfort in the presence of others; public self-consciousness, referring to the awareness of others’ reactions to the self; and private self-consciousness, measuring one’s attention to one’s inner thoughts and feelings. Two-week test-retest reliability is reported to range from .73 to .84 (Fenigstein et al., 1975). More recent studies also report high reliability ratings for the SCS (Mittal & Balasubramanian, 1986). Other studies as well have used the SCS as a correlate of shame-related phenomena (Watson, Morris, Ramsey, & Hickman, 1996).

Self-Monitoring Scale (SMS; Snyder, 1974). This is a 25-item scale, assumed to measure the concept of self-monitoring, that has been used in a number of studies investigating a variety of domains of social behaviour and interpersonal relationships (e.g., Kraus, 1995; Krosnick & Sedikides, 1990). Due to controversy regarding both the validity of the concept of self-monitoring and the internal structure of the scale itself (e.g., John, Cheek, & Klohnen, 1996), some researchers have suggested that a revised 18-item scale should be used instead.

1 The actual question in the instrument read “To what extent would you feel shame and embarrassment in each of the followig situations?” After each item were two closed-ended scales, one related to shame and one to embarrassment, ranging from 1 (“feel no shame/embarrassment”) to 5 (“feel extreme shame/embarrassment”). We included scales of embarrassment along with those of shame to encompass the possibly broad meaning of haji in Japanese. However, for reasons of space and conceptual focus, in the present paper we report only responses related to shame.
of the original 25 items (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). More recent investigations, however, explicating the self-monitoring concept through the use of alternative methods, such as Q-sort ratings (e.g., John et al., 1996), indicate that the original 25-item SMS is preferable to the revised shorter version. In the current study, preliminary factor analyses on the original 25-item measure conducted separately for each culture failed to produce sufficiently similar factor structures from which to create cross-culturally valid subscales. We thus decided to use the full SMS (Cronbach alpha in the United States was .68; in Japan, it was .59).

Attribution Style Questionnaire (ASQ; Peterson et al., 1982). To assess the relations between students' attributional style and their reactions to the shame-related situations, we employed the ASQ. This is a self-report measure presenting subjects with six bad events (e.g., you cannot get all the work done that others expect of you) and six positive events (e.g., you do a project that is highly praised). Subjects are asked to rate the cause of each event on 7-point scales according to its externality versus internality, instability versus stability, and specificity versus globality. Higher scores indicate higher levels of internality, stability, and globality, respectively. Cronbach alpha for the individual dimensions of the ASQ have been reported in the .70 to .85 range (Peterson & Seligman, 1987). Researchers such as Tangney et al. (1992) have also studied shame and attributional style using the ASQ.

All measures, except the ASQ, were rendered into the other language by the first and third authors, then back-translated by an objective translator. Professional translation and back-translation of the ASQ was arranged by Martin E.P. Seligman and Peter E. Sherman.

Results

Creation of age-related groups
To test for developmental differences, we divided both Japanese and American samples into three age groups: 19 years and under; 20-year-olds; and 21 years and older. In Washington, there were 118 students in the first group, mean age = 18.42 years, SD = 0.56; 38 students in the second group, mean age = 20.00 years, SD = 0.00, and 57 students in the third group, mean age = 21.28 years, SD = 1.04. In Matsuyama, there were 112 students, mean age = 18.88 years, SD = 0.32; 77 students, mean age = 20.00 years, SD = 0.00; and 60 students, mean age = 21.85 years, SD = 2.43, in the first, second, and third groups, respectively.

Mean ratings on the shame (haji) items
A cursory examination of the mean ratings on the 30 shame (haji) items among students in the two cultures showed that the two items that drew the highest shame ratings among Washington students were “Friend’s House” (M = 4.38, SD = 0.82) in which one breaks something while visiting a friend’s house and hides it, from the TOSCA; and “Run Away” (M = 4.18, SD = 0.88) in which one runs away from a difficult situation and feels oneself to be a weak person, from the hazukashii scale. Among Matsuyama students, the two highest rated haji items were “Mother” (M = 4.45, SD = 1.07) where one’s mother comes to visit and follows one to one’s classes, from the hazukashii scale. Consistent with predictions, the two most shameful items for Washington students seem to indicate characterological defects in the private self, whereas those for the Matsuyama students seem to suggest situations of discomfort to the public self.

Factor analyses
To better understand cross-cultural differences in response patterns to the 30 shame-related situations, we performed principal-axis factor analysis with a varimax rotation on the shame and haji ratings separately in each culture. Examination of a scree plot and eigenvalues indicated that in both locations three factors would fit the data best. In Washington, the first six eigenvalues from the factor analysis were 7.18, 3.20, 1.59, 1.47, 1.18, and 1.05, accounting for 23.9, 10.7, 5.3, 4.9, 3.9, and 3.5% of the variance, respectively. In Matsuyama, the first six eigenvalues were 6.59, 2.80, 1.81, 1.35, 1.31, and 1.20, accounting for 22.0, 9.3, 6.0, 4.5, 4.4, and 4.0% of the variance, respectively.

These factors were interpreted as representing three possible foci for shame-related phenomena: One factor, termed “private self” shame, comprised situations construed as suggesting a characterological or moral flaw in the internal, private self; another factor, termed “public self” shame, included socially awkward and publicly conspicuous situations in which the presented self becomes the object of public ridicule, disapproval, or unwanted attention; the third factor, conceived of as “empathic self” shame, was composed of situations in which one felt shame (haji) for or through others. Because the “empathic self” factor was not of theoretical interest in the present analysis, it will be omitted from further discussion.

The majority of items comprising each of the two remaining factors were similar in both locations, although in each factor there were a number of cross-culturally discordant items. For example, the “private self” factor contained 14 items in Washington and 12 items in Matsuyama. Between these two factors, there were 10 items in common in the two locations, all of which loaded higher than .30 and none of which loaded on another factor. We combined these 10 items to form the “private self” shame scale. A similar process of choosing concordant and omitting discordant items across the two locations was followed in creating the “public self” shame scale. That is, the “public self” factor contained 10 items in Washington and 11 items in Matsuyama, of which 8 items, all loading higher than .30, were common to both locations. These 8 items comprised the “public self” shame scale.

Cronbach’s alpha for the “private self” shame scales was .80 in Washington, and .83 in Matsuyama; for the “public self” shame scales, the alphas were .81 and .71 in Washington and Matsuyama, respectively. The composition of the shame scales

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Footnote: Due to a clerical error, only the first five positive and the first five negative situations were included in the ASQ measure in the United States. Japanese data exist on all 12 ASQ questions. The findings we report, however, are based on the same 10 items in both cultures. Analyses of the 12 ASQ items in Japan showed no significant differences between mean ratings for the two omitted questions and those for the remainder of the questions among Japanese students. Additionally, previous research on the ASQ among American samples (e.g., Peterson et al., 1982) reveals no difference in students' response to these questions compared to any other of the ASQ questions. We do not believe, therefore, that the omission significantly affected the present findings.
Reactions to the shame scales

Means and standard deviations of students' ratings of shame and *haji* in the “private self” and “public self” situations, broken down by location, age group, and gender, appear in Table 1. We examined main and interaction effects of these three variables in relation to the shame ratings by means of a $2(\text{culture}) \times 3(\text{age group}) \times 2(\text{gender})$ analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted separately for the two types of situations. For shame (*haji*) ratings in the “private self” situations, the analysis revealed significant main effects for location, $F(1, 451) = 10.08, p < .01$, and gender, $F(1, 451) = 19.74, p < .001$. Follow-up analyses indicated that Washington students expected to feel more shame than Matsuyama students expected to feel *haji* in the “private self” situations. Women, overall, were more likely to expect to feel shame (*haji*) in these situations than were men. Also, there was a significant Location $\times$ Age Group interaction, $F(2, 451) = 5.64, p < .01$. Follow-up analyses showed that, consistent with Hypothesis 1, Washington students' shame ratings in the “private self” situations significantly decreased with age; those of Matsuyama students increased nonsignificantly.

For shame (*haji*) ratings in the “public self” situations, there were significant main effects of location, $F(1, 454) = 514.40, p < .001$, age group, $F(2, 454) = 4.10, p < .05$, and gender, $F(1, 454) = 12.86, p < .001$. Follow-up analyses indicated that Matsuyama students were far more likely to expect to feel *haji* in the “public self” situations than their Washington counterparts expected to feel shame. In terms of age group, 19- and 20-year-olds reported higher shame ratings than 21-year-olds. Also, similar to results for the “private self” scale, women had significantly higher shame (*haji*) ratings in the “public self” situations than did men. Additionally, a significant Location $\times$ Gender interaction emerged, $F(1, 454) = 7.47, p < .01$. According to the follow-up analyses, Matsuyama but not Washington women were more likely to report higher shame (*haji*) ratings than their male peers. To examine the predictions of Hypothesis 1 more closely, we also did follow-up analyses on age differences within the two locations separately and found, as expected, significant decreases in shame (*haji*) ratings with age among Matsuyama but not among Washington respondents. However, the magnitude of the within-culture decrease was small compared to the overall cross-cultural differences, and so the Age Group $\times$ Location interaction was not significant.

To summarise, a significant Location $\times$ Age Group interaction with follow-up analysis supported the prediction of Hypothesis 1 that Washington but not Matsuyama students' shame ratings in the “private self” situations would decrease with age. Although a similar interaction did not reach statistical significance in the “public self” situations, planned comparisons on the Japanese data also showed, as predicted, a significant developmental decrease in Japanese but not American students' ratings of shame (*haji*) in these situations.

Personality measures

Factor analysis. We next considered the relations between the shame (*haji*) ratings and the personality correlates. To determine the relevance for the Matsuyama students of Fenigstein and colleagues’ (1975) Self-Consciousness Scale, we performed a factor analysis on the scale items separately by location. In accord with past research (Fenigstein et al., 1975; Mittal & Balasubramanian, 1986), three factors emerged from the factor analysis in both cultures. These factors were viewed as representing “public self-consciousness”, “social anxiety”, and “private self-consciousness”. The public self-consciousness factor contained eight items in the United States and seven items in Japan, of which six items were found to be in common. These six items made up the Public Self-Consciousness Scale. The Social Anxiety Scale comprised six items and the Private Self-Consciousness Scale comprised seven items that were common in the two locations. As noted earlier, .30 was used as the cut-off for minimum loadings on the factors. Cronbach alphas on the SCS scales ranged from .68 to .83 in the two samples.

Developmental differences in mean ratings. Mean scores and standard deviations on students’ responses to the personality measures, broken down by location and age group, are presented in Table 2. Developmental trends in the mean ratings are consistent with the predictions of Hypothesis 2. In Washington, age-related decreases can be observed in American students’ ratings of private self-consciousness, of negative and positive internal, and of negative global self-attributions.

Table 1

Means (and standard deviations) of shame and haji ratings in the “private self” and “public self” situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups:</th>
<th>Washington</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Matsuyama</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>21 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>4.07 (0.52)</td>
<td>4.04 (0.60)</td>
<td>3.81 (0.54)</td>
<td>3.79 (0.71)</td>
<td>3.39 (0.81)</td>
<td>3.88 (0.50)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>3.73 (0.70)</td>
<td>3.59 (0.77)</td>
<td>3.48 (0.53)</td>
<td>3.35 (0.85)</td>
<td>3.26 (0.91)</td>
<td>3.64 (0.84)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>3.92 (0.63)</td>
<td>3.83 (0.71)</td>
<td>3.67 (0.56)</td>
<td>3.69 (0.76)</td>
<td>3.33 (0.85)</td>
<td>3.74 (0.72)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>2.32 (0.77)</td>
<td>2.04 (0.64)</td>
<td>2.20 (0.63)</td>
<td>4.10 (0.58)</td>
<td>3.84 (0.63)</td>
<td>3.86 (0.44)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>2.15 (0.71)</td>
<td>2.28 (0.63)</td>
<td>1.95 (0.73)</td>
<td>3.68 (0.60)</td>
<td>3.36 (0.68)</td>
<td>3.46 (0.75)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2.25 (0.75)</td>
<td>2.15 (0.64)</td>
<td>2.09 (0.68)</td>
<td>4.00 (0.61)</td>
<td>3.64 (0.69)</td>
<td>3.63 (0.69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $N_s$ = Washington: females: 19 yrs, 67; 20 yrs, 20; 21 yrs, 33; males: 19 yrs, 51; 20 yrs, 18; 21 yrs, 24. Matsuyama: females: 19 yrs, 84; 20 yrs, 39; 21 yrs, 25; males: 19 yrs, 26; 20 yrs, 31; 21 yrs, 35.
Table 2
Means (and standard deviations) of students’ ratings on the personality measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups:</th>
<th>Washington</th>
<th>Matsuyama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Consciousness Scale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social anxiety</td>
<td>2.85 (0.85)</td>
<td>2.86 (0.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private self-cons.</td>
<td>4.15 (0.67)</td>
<td>4.03 (0.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public self-cons.</td>
<td>3.86 (0.66)</td>
<td>3.56 (0.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attributions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative global</td>
<td>4.28 (1.04)</td>
<td>4.39 (0.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative internal</td>
<td>4.31 (0.91)</td>
<td>4.37 (0.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative stable</td>
<td>4.14 (0.87)</td>
<td>4.18 (0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive global</td>
<td>5.16 (0.78)</td>
<td>5.28 (0.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive internal</td>
<td>5.39 (0.76)</td>
<td>5.23 (0.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive stable</td>
<td>5.46 (0.73)</td>
<td>5.22 (0.66)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Similarly, in Matsuyama, ratings of social anxiety and public self-consciousness decline with age. Only Matsuyama students' scores on self-monitoring show a contradictory rising tendency.

Creation of the “vulnerability” indexes. To represent more clearly the contrasting clusters of personality measures hypothesised to reflect culture-specific vulnerabilities to shame (haji), in the different types of situations, we created composite indexes of these theoretical constructs. After first standardising all the relevant variables, we then summed the standardised scores of private self-consciousness, negative and positive internal, and negative global self-attribute to create a “private self-vulnerability” (PRSV) measure. Likewise, we summed those of social anxiety, public self-consciousness, and self-monitoring to create a “public self-vulnerability” (PSV) measure. Students’ mean scores on these measures, broken down by location, age group, and gender appear in Table 3.

A 2(location) × 3(age group) × 2(gender) ANOVA conducted on the PRSV measure revealed a significant main effect of location, F(1, 442) = 7.34, p < .01. Follow-up analysis indicated that Matsuyama students scored significantly higher on PRSV than their Washington peers. Given that the PRSV was meant to indicate a tendency for internal self-reflection—hypothesised to be associated with the “private” or “independent” self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989)—the fact that students in Matsuyama exhibited higher scores on the PRSV than students in Washington was surprising. Additionally, a significant Location × Age Group interaction emerged, F(2, 442) = 3.38, p < .05. Follow-up tests showed that, consonant with the predictions of Hypothesis 2, among Washington students, scores of internal self-reflection (PRSV) in the “private self” situations decreased significantly, and among Matsuyama students, actually increased significantly with age.

A 2(location) × 3(age group) × 2(gender) ANOVA was conducted on the PSV measure as well. There was a significant main effect of gender, F(1, 447) = 4.52, p < .05, with women scoring higher than men on the PSV scale in the “public self” situations. Although we made no specific predictions, it might be expected that Matsuyama students, as members of a “collectivistic” culture, would score higher on PSV—which indicates a sensitivity to public evaluation—than their “individualistic” Washington counterparts. As was the case with the PRSV results, the lack of cross-cultural differences in the PSV scores was surprising. Additionally, a Location × Gender Interaction, F(1, 447) = 5.84, p < .05, revealed that Matsuyama but not Washington women were significantly more sensitive to external evaluation (PSV) in “public self” situations than their male counterparts. Lastly, a significant three-way interaction between location, age group, and gender.
emerged, $F(1, 447) = 3.75, p < .05$. In partial support of Hypothesis 2, PSV ratings of Matsuyama males decreased with age, whereas those of Matsuyama females remained basically unchanged, with gender differences being especially large among the 21-year-old group (see Table 3). Overall gender differences in PSV among Washington students were not significant, nor was there any one age group in which Washington males and females differed significantly.

To summarise, consistent with Hypothesis 2, measures of personality correlate representing a tendency for internal self-reflection (PRS) decreased significantly with age in the “private self” situations among Washington students. Also in line with Hypothesis 2, Japanese males’ vulnerability to public evaluation—as reflected in the PSV personality scale—showed a significant developmental decline. Overall cross-national differences in students’ scores on both the PRSV and PSV scales were contrary to general stereotypes of “individualistic” and “collectivistic” cultures.

Shame (haji) and personality

Universal personality vs. culture-specific effects. To understand the extent to which culture as compared to universal vulnerabilities of personality accounted for the variance in shame (haji) ratings in the different types of situations, we conducted a multiple regression analysis with the full sample using location, age group, gender, PRSV and PSV as the independent variables, and the shame (haji) ratings in the “private self” and “public self” situations as the dependent variables in two separate equations.

In the “private self” situations, all of the variables emerged as significant predictors of shame (haji) ratings except age group. The $R^2$ of the final model was .18. The relative contribution of location versus that of the personality indexes to the shame (haji) ratings were assessed by removing each of the pertinent variables one at a time, then rerunning the analysis and calculating the change in the $R^2$-squared values. For each new analysis, we replaced the variable previously removed and then removed the next variable in question. Using this procedure, we calculated that PRSV accounted for 53% of the variance in shame ratings in these situations. The two most powerful predictors were location and PSV. Using the removal procedure described earlier, PSV again was found to account for 6% of the variance; by contrast, location alone explained 53% of the variance.

Culture-specific effects. Because evidence for a “universal” effect of personality on shame ratings was weak, at best, in the “private self” circumstances, and relatively nonexistent in the “public self” situations, and because a chief goal of the study was to explore cultural variation in developmental processes related to shame, we performed another set of multiple regression analyses on the shame scales separately in the two cultures. To test whether age-related differences in the self-vulnerability indexes predicted overall shame (haji) ratings in the two locations—as expected in Hypothesis 3—in these analyses, main effect variables of age group, gender, PRSV, and PSV were entered into the equation, as well as interaction terms of Age Group by Gender, Age Group by PRSV, and Age Group by PSV. The results of the regression analyses appear in Table 4.

Consistent with the expectations of Hypothesis 3, the interaction of Age Group by PRSV was a significant predictor of shame ratings in the “private self” situations among Washington students, $\beta = .33, p < .05$. More specifically, as can be seen in Table 5, the correlations between PRSV and shame ratings in the “private self” situations among Washington students grew stronger overall ($r = .27$, $p = .44$, $p = .42$) with increasing age. In contrast, among Matsuyama students, these correlations generally grew weaker ($r = .33$, $r = .38$, $r = .09$) with age. Although the interaction between age group and PRSV did not reach statistical significance in Matsuyama, $t$-tests on the magnitude of differences between the correlations of PRSV and haji at 19 years and 21 years among Matsuyama students showed the discrepancy to be statistically significant, $t = 4.07, p < .001$. These results suggest that significant cross-cultural differences exist in the developmental processes linking shame (haji) reactions in the “private self” situations to individual differences in personality. In addition to the Age Group by PRSV interaction, PSV was also a significant variable in these scenarios for the Washington students. Among Matsuyama students, both PRSV and PSV predicted shame ratings in the “private self” circumstances.

In the “public self” situations, for the Washington students,

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Washington</th>
<th></th>
<th>Matsuyama</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>$t$</td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSV</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>2.77**</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group × PRSV</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>2.05*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public self</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>3.90***</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSV</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>2.02*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group × PSV</td>
<td>−.33</td>
<td>−2.03*</td>
<td></td>
<td>−.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRSV, private self-vulnerability; PSV, public self-vulnerability.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.*
the interactions of Age Group × PRSV (with a positive beta) and Age Group × PSV (with a negative beta) were significant, along with the PSV ratings. Table 5 shows that, although correlations between PRSV and shame ratings in the “public self” situations grew stronger (.10, .26, .35), those between PSV and “public self” shame grew generally weaker (.42, .25, .27) with age among the Washington respondents. This again contrasts with the results in Matsuyama, where, despite the lack of a significant interaction between age group and the vulnerability indexes, the magnitude of correlations between PRSV and “public self” haji ratings, and between PSV and “public self” haji ratings both decreased significantly between 19 years and 21 years (.20, .26, −.01, t = 4.49, p < .001; .47, .56, .32, t = 2.08, p < .05, respectively). Thus, in Matsuyama, with development, individual differences in personality become increasingly unrelated to haji reactions in both “private self” and “public self” situations. As noted earlier, for the Matsuyama students, contrary to Hypothesis 3, none of the interactions with age group was a significant predictor in the “public self” circumstances; rather, PSV scores and age group separately predicted haji ratings in these situations, along with gender (being female).

It should also be noted that, although the magnitude of the correlations between the PRSV and PSV tended to increase nonsignificantly overall among the Washington students (.32, .07, .45), that among Matsuyama students decreased significantly with age, in particular, between 19 years and 21 years (.35, .32, .13, t = 3.41, p < .001). Again, such results seem to point to meaningful cross-cultural differences in the nature of personality development, specifically, the integration of external awareness and internal attribution, among university-age students in the two locations.

To summarise, consistent with Hypothesis 3, a developmental increase in the relationship between shame reactions and PRSV significantly predicted shame ratings in both the “private self” and “public self” situations among Washington students. Contrary to expectations, no interactions with age group emerged as meaningful predictors of haji ratings in the “public self” situations among Matsuyama students. Rather, correlations between the personality scales and both haji scales decreased significantly with age in Matsuyama. Similarly, with age, correlations between the personality scales themselves tended to increase among Washington students and decrease among Matsuyama students.

### Discussion

**Developmental decreases in shame-proneness**

As predicted in Hypothesis 1, shame ratings decreased significantly with age in situations construed as dealing with defects in the internal global self in the Washington sample. In situations construed as dealing with disapproved behaviour of the public self, the Location × Age Group interaction effect on shame (haji) ratings did not reach statistical significance. Several authors, however, have argued that multivariate techniques have low power in revealing interactions and tend to underestimate “real-world” effects (e.g., McClelland & Judd, 1993). In line with this reasoning, univariate analyses showed a significant decrease in haji ratings with age in the Matsuyama sample. On the whole, our data support the notion that a decrease in shame (haji)-proneness during late adolescence and early adulthood is likely to revolve around those aspects of self-definition— instantiated in standards, rules, and goals—that are considered to be most important in a particular society (M. Lewis, 1992). Furthermore, these results show that such a decrease in reactions to shame (haji)-related phenomena occurs at roughly the same time in development for both Washington and Matsuyama students. Given that shame (haji)-proneness has been associated with a number of negative attributes in both cultures (e.g., Miyake & Yamazaki, 1995; Tangney, 1993), it may be beneficial for both Japanese and Americans to achieve a certain level of invulnerability to specific types of shame as they get older. Our results suggest that the kinds of situations in which such invulnerability is likely to be seen vary by culture.

### Private and public self-vulnerability indexes

In accord with Hypothesis 2, age-related discrepancies were observed in key elements of personality theoretically assumed to reflect developmental concerns of differing construals of self in the United States and Japan. More specifically, Washington students’ vulnerability to “private self” shame (PRSV) decreased significantly, whereas that of Matsuyama students increased significantly with age. The cultural disparity in developmental trajectories on this personality scale may be related, at least in part, to the development of other self-related processes, in particular, culture-specific attitudes toward self-enhancement and self-criticism. A number of investigators have found Americans to be more likely than Japanese to make attributions conducive to self-enhancement, and Japanese to be more likely than Americans to make attributions conducive to self-effacement and self-criticism (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). As socialisation proceeds, it would seem to be adaptive for Americans to become less self-critical and self-effacing in order to be able to asset

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### Table 5

Correlations among shame scales and personality measures by age group and location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>PRSV</th>
<th>PSV</th>
<th>Private self</th>
<th>Public self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Washington, above the diagonal; Matsuyama, below the diagonal. PRSV, private self-vulnerability; PSV, public self-vulnerability; Private self, shame ratings in “private self” situations; Public self, shame ratings in “public self” situations. All scales are coded such that higher scores indicate higher values on the given dimension.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
themselves with confidence and succeed in a competitive-based society, and for Japanese to become more self-critical and self-effacing so as to be able to accommodate themselves more easily to the social environment and succeed in a cooperative-based society. In the context of cultural self-enhancement and self-effacing tendencies, then, it is reasonable that Matsuyama students’ scores on the PRSV measure increased, and those of Washington students decreased, with age.

Also in partial support of Hypothesis 2, PSV ratings showed a significant decrease with age among Matsuyama males but not among Matsuyama females. One explanation of these findings is that they reflect existing differences in gender socialisation in Japan. Although most Japanese male university students are preparing on graduation to enter positions of lifetime employment, in which social anxiety and public self-consciousness might hinder free and productive interaction with colleagues at work, the majority of their female counterparts are still regarded by many employers as “temporary” employees and “second class citizens”, most of whom are expected to quit their jobs when they get married, pregnant, or reach a certain age (Cannings & Lazonick, 1994). Because shyness, tentativeness, and emotional responsiveness, which are likely to accompany high scores on the PSV scale, are also attributes associated with the “traditional Japanese woman” (Iwao, 1993) and presumably attractive to prospective marriage partners, it may be adaptive for Japanese females to maintain high levels of PSV through the university years. Future studies of haji reactions in Japan might benefit from examining diverse female populations, including high school, university, and newly married women who are also university graduates to explore further the role of gender socialisation in the developmental decrease of this self-conscious emotion.

**Relations between the vulnerability indexes and the shame (haji) scales**

In line with the predictions of Hypothesis 3, age-related difference in PRSV was a significant predictor of Washington students’ shame ratings in the “private self” situations. In particular, the relationship between students’ scores on the PRSV and their shame reactions in these circumstances became significantly stronger with development. These results are consistent with numerous studies among American subjects suggesting that a strong focus on the internal private self is one of the hallmarks of the Western conception of shame (e.g., H.B. Lewis, 1971; M. Lewis, 1992). Our results suggest that, among Washington students, as the “private self” develops with age, the strength of the association between internal self-focus and shame increases.

Contrary to the expectations of Hypothesis 3, however, no interactions between age group and either of the self-vulnerability scales emerged as a significant predictor of haji ratings in the “public self” situations among students in Matsuyama. Rather, age group and PSV separately, along with gender (being female), were the significant variables. One reason why the interaction between PSV and age group might not have been a meaningful predictor is that, as can be seen in Table 5, the correlations between PSV and haji ratings in the “public self” circumstances, although declining considerably with development, still remained significant at every age level. It should, nevertheless, be noted that correlations between both self-vulnerability scales and haji ratings in both “private self” and “public self” situations significantly decreased with age among the Matsuyama students. This contrasts with students in Washington for whom the magnitude of correlations between PRSV and shame ratings in both “self” situations significantly increased with age.

These age-related disparities in the relations between shame (haji) and the self-vulnerability scales seem to suggest very different developmental paths for the role of personality in shame (haji)-related phenomena among university-age students in the two locations. More specifically, with development, elements of personality among Washington students, especially those reflecting a focus on the internal private self, become increasingly more important, whereas all elements of personality—at least of those we measured—among Matsuyama students become increasingly less important for predicting shame (haji) reactions. Our findings are in accord with a considerable literature suggesting that, with the development of the person in Western societies like the United States, there is an increasing focus on the individual’s behaviour in specific interpersonal situations; by contrast, in East Asian societies like Japan, social reactions, including self-conscious emotions, such as haji, are seen as becoming increasingly determined more by social role and situation than by individual differences in personality (e.g., Lebra, 1976; Shweder & Bourne, 1984). The literature also implies that, with development, the increasing focus on the individual leads members of Western (American) cultures to seek to forge a consistent self that is more or less constant across situations; similarly, the increasing influence of situational factors, with age, is thought to lead members of East Asian (Japanese) cultures to seek to separate the external facade of social behaviour (tatemae) from the internal feelings of the individual person (honne) (e.g., Doi, 1986). In the present study, such differences in sense of self may be reflected in the overall developmental increase in correlations between PRSV and PSV among Washington students (especially at ages 19 and 21 years), and the contrasting developmental decrease in these correlations among their Matsuyama peers.

**Universal vs. culture-specific findings**

Although our analysis and discussion have focused on cross-cultural differences in development, our data also provide evidence of universal factors in the relations between shame (haji) and personality. For example, when we used multiple regression to test for main effects on shame (haji) ratings in the “private self” situations, although the overall percent of variance explained was rather small (18%), the variance accounted for by the two self-vulnerability indexes combined was more than that accounted for by location. By contrast, in the “public self” situations, culture accounted for almost nine times the variance explained by PSV. Follow-up analyses showed that Japanese students’ haji ratings were much higher than the shame ratings of their American peers in these circumstances. One interpretation of the large percentage of variance explained by location is that the meaning of haji in the “public self” situations is very different from that of “shame”.

Arguing against this explanation, however, is the fact that empirical research indicates that the phenomenological experience of shame and haji are quite similar (de Rivera, 1989). Also, data from the present study suggest considerable cross-cultural overlap, both in patterns of shame (haji) ratings across different types of situations (factor analyses), and in the
personality correlates associated with these ratings among students in Washington and Matsuyama. Another possibility for the strong effect of culture on shame (haji) ratings in the “public self” circumstances is that, for some reason presumably related to the Japanese concept of self, many of these public situations are imbued with the moral resonance and sense of internal defectiveness typically associated with the Western sense of “private self” shame. This explanation seems to us more plausible and promising in terms of future cross-cultural and developmental research. In either case, our data suggest that, at least in one class of situations, universal elements of personality are more important than culture in predicting reactions related to shame (haji) among Japanese and American university-age students. Such results are consistent with other studies documenting similarities between numerous aspects of shame (haji) reactions in the United States and Japan (de Rivera, 1989).

Although a number of predictions based on hypothesised differences in cultural construals of self were borne out by the data, disconfirming evidence was found as well. For example, certain theorists suggest that individuals with “independent” self-construals, found most often in Western cultures like the United States, are more likely than their peers with “interdependent” self-construals, found most often in East Asian cultures like Japan, to seek meaning in behaviour and process emotions by reference to internal thoughts and feelings (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In the current study, however, Matsuyama students scored significantly higher on the PRSV scale—which was meant to reflect a tendency for introspection and internal attribution—than did Washington students. Similarly, although members of supposedly “collectivistic” cultures like Japan are thought to be more likely than their peers in supposedly “individualistic” cultures like the United States to seek meaning in the opinions and feelings of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), we found no cross-cultural differences in students’ response to the PSV scale—which was meant to reflect sensitivity to others’ evaluation. Such contradictory findings add to those of a growing body of literature critical of cultural labels like “individualism” and “collectivism” that are based on global stereotypes and are insensitive to domain-specific considerations (Wainryb & Turiel, 1995).

**Limitations of the study**

There are several limitations to the present study. First, the question still remains as to whether shame in Japan is truly different from shame in the United States, or whether the word “shame” is simply different from the word “haji”? We attempted to answer this question, in part, by examining personality correlates, but such controls may have been insufficient. In the future, a phenomenologically oriented study is needed that seeks to identify various facets of the actual experience associated with shame (haji) among members of the two cultures. A second limitation was the choice of personality measures. Because this was an initial investigation, we selected well-known Western scales to establish a modicum of measurement reliability. Future investigators should develop more culturally fair instruments that may be better at picking up subtle personality differences associated with the experience of self-conscious emotions, especially among Japanese students.

**Conclusion**

The present study has addressed, at least in part, the question of what it is that develops in the emotional development of shame (haji) in late adolescence and early adulthood among university students in Washington and Matsuyama. In the Washington results, we saw that age-related changes in individual differences in cognitive appraisal—specifically, a tendency toward internal attribution and introspection (PRSV)—predicted overall shame ratings in both “private self” and “public self” situations. These findings clearly support developmental theorists, such as M. Lewis (1992), who advocate an attributional understanding of shame. However, in the Matsuyama results the question of what develops is less clear. Our data showed that individual differences in both internal self-introspection (PRSV) and sensitivity to external evaluation (PSV) became increasingly unrelated to haji ratings in both types of situations among Matsuyama students. Such results suggest that, with age, social situations and social roles—rather than individual differences in personality—become more and more important in dictating the nature of social behaviour in East Asian cultures such as Japan. Thus, simply by having a certain level of self-awareness (PSV) Japanese individuals may learn to behave correctly vis-à-vis haji, irrespective of their personal attributional tendencies. This growing dissonance between personal attribution style and socially dictated responses is mirrored in the developmental decrease in correlations between the PRSV and PSV scales among the Matsuyama students.

The foregoing analysis highlights the limitations of applying Western attribution-based notions of shame to members of non-Western societies, such as Japan. These results also indicate the need for greater theoretical refinement regarding the precise nature of the relationship among age, the adoption of societal standards, and self-attributions as they relate to emotional development. Future research comparing the emergence of shame (haji) in young American and Japanese children, who may be less aware of social cues and cultural values, will help clarify the differential role played by societal standards versus individual cognitive appraisal in the development of self-conscious emotions among members of the two cultures.

References


Appendix

Situations comprising the emotion scales

Privage self shame scale (10 items)

When you rely too much on someone else and feel that you are not an independent person. (Rely on) (J)
When you make plans to meet a friend for lunch, and at 5 o’clock you realise you stood him/her up. (Lunch) (T)
When you break something at a friend’s house and then hide it. (Friend’s house) (T)
When you run away from a difficult situation and think to yourself that you’re weak. (Run away) (J)
When you wait until the last minute to plan a school project, and it turns out badly. (Project goes badly) (T)
When you make a commitment to diet, but then, when passing a baker, you buy a dozen doughnuts. (Diet) (T)
When you feel you’re an ignorant person and know nothing. (Ignorant) (J)

When you make a mistake on a school project you are doing with other students, and find out that a fellow student on the project is blamed for the error. (Mistake) (T)
When you hurt another person’s feelings and see yourself as someone who doesn’t empathise with others. (Hurt another) (J)
When you are out with a group of friends and make fun of a friend who is not there. (Make fun) (T)
Public self shame scale (8 items)

When you are unable to stop coughing while listening to a lecture. (Cough) (E)
When your appearance is dishevelled and you think that other people are probably thinking that you’re ridiculous. (Ridiculous) (J)
When you walk into a bathroom at someone else’s house and discover it is occupied by a member of the opposite sex. (Bathroom) (E)
When you’re sleeping in class and as you wake up, you make a loud sound and everyone laughs at you. (Sleep in class) (J)
When your mother has come to visit you and accompanies you to all your classes. (Mother) (E)
When you trip and fall while entering a bus full of people. (Trip and fall) (E)
When you confidently assert something that turns out to be wrong, and you think people are laughing at you. (Assert something) (J)
When you are immersed in your own world and suddenly feel that someone is looking at you. (Own world) (J)

Note: Phrases in parentheses indicate abbreviated labels used as variable names. (J), Japanese scale; (E), embarrassability scale; (T), TOSCA.