


---

# The Reporting of Self-Esteem in Japan and Canada

Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology  
42(1) 155–164  
© The Author(s) 2011  
Reprints and permission:  
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/0022022110386373  
jccp.sagepub.com  


Romin W. Tafari<sup>1</sup>, Sarah C. Shaughnessy<sup>1</sup>,  
Susumu Yamaguchi<sup>2</sup>, and Akiko Murakoshi<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Japanese tend to report lower self-esteem than do Westerners. What this behavioral difference indicates about the private sentiments of individuals in Japan and Western countries such as Canada has been earnestly debated in recent years. Consideration of self-esteem ratings as speech acts or performatives shifts the focus of cultural comparison away from the valence of assumed mental representations and onto the pragmatics of agreement with statements of personal value. This alternative framing highlights the importance of performative pressures and other normative considerations in guiding the speech acts whereby self-esteem is typically measured. To support our claim that the self-esteem ratings of Japanese and Canadians are shaped by contrasting performative pressures, we show that explicit instructions designed to offset these pressures predictably raise or lower reported self-esteem. Implications of the results for the meaning and measurement of self-esteem across cultures are discussed.

## Keywords

self-esteem; speech acts; measurement

In their examination of survey data from 53 countries, Schmitt and Allik (2005) found that Japanese college students scored the lowest of all national samples on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Their finding is consistent with the frequently observed tendency of Japanese to report lower self-esteem than do those from Western countries (e.g., Campbell et al., 1996; Feather & McKee, 1993; Kobayashi & Brown, 2003; Yamaguchi et al., 2007). Interpretation of this behavioral difference has spawned a vigorous debate between researchers who claim that Japanese and other East Asians honestly judge themselves more modestly (or critically) than do Westerners (Falk, Heine, Yuki, & Takemura, 2009; Heine, 2003; Heine & Hamamura, 2007; Kitayama, 2006) and those who claim that the modesty applies to public self-presentation but not private sentiment (Brown, Cai, Oakes, & Deng, 2009; Cai, Brown, Deng, & Oakes, 2007; Kurman, 2003; Yamaguchi, Lin, & Aoki, 2006; Yamaguchi, Lin, Morio, & Okumura, 2008). The debate has been framed around the question of what individuals in different societies *really* feel about themselves. Implicit in

---

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

<sup>2</sup>University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan

## Corresponding Author:

Romin W. Tafari, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto, 100 St. George Street,  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 3G3.

Email: tafarodi@psych.utoronto.ca

this question is the view that avowals about self-esteem are of primary relevance to cultural psychology insofar as they serve as more or less fallible indicators of some occult "representation" of personal identity. Cross-cultural researchers who adopt this view focus on how best to inferentially "look through" the avowals to the private beliefs presumed to lie behind them.<sup>1</sup> From this perspective, the importance of culture is reflected in significant differences in the strength or valence of these beliefs across distinct societies. The concrete behavior by which self-esteem happens to be measured is of less relevance, important only inasmuch as it bears implications for construct validity and psychometric equivalence across cultural groups. The heuristic value of this mentalistic approach to the cross-cultural investigation of self-esteem is well evidenced in the literature, and we do not wish to critique it here. Its sufficiency, however, is another matter. What is interesting about self-esteem from a cultural standpoint is not only what people are understood to believe about their value as individuals but also the performative conventions and force of the speech acts from which these beliefs are inferred. That is, differences across societies in the conditions and consequences of self-esteem talk are as culturally significant in their own right as any implied differences in mental representations. Moreover, tracing the meaning of those representations requires knowing how they are used in rule-governed communication (Wittgenstein, 1958).

So how does the cross-cultural comparison of self-esteem involve speech acts? Self-esteem is most often measured using self-report items. This method relies on the illocutionary act of agreement (or disagreement) with reflexive evaluative statements such as "I like myself" and "I'm a worthy person." The extent to which a respondent agrees with each written statement is typically conveyed using standard rating scales. Agreement in this context amounts to a tacit speech act directed at an indefinite and (most often) absent other. The question of whether a respondent is agreeing truthfully with the statements cannot be reduced to a matter of fit with a mental representation, as if agreement were the straightforward result of comparing each statement with a corresponding record in a cognitive register. Rather, even the most honest response involves the "speaker's" implicit understanding of its performative force, of what it means as a *social act* to agree to a certain degree with a particular statement in a particular speech context (Searle, 1969). The perceived "rightness" of agreement necessarily takes into account what it is fair, justified, or appropriate to say in that context. As Austin (1962) puts it in his classic study of performatives:

It is essential to realize that 'true' and 'false' . . . do not stand for anything simple at all; but only for a general dimension of being a right or proper thing to say as opposed to a wrong thing, in these circumstances, to this audience, for these purposes and with these intentions. (p. 145)

According to this view, the sincerity of self-reports cannot be divorced from the conventions and implicit rules that define and regulate them as socially meaningful speech acts. And to refer to conventional, rule-governed behavior is to refer to the heart of culture. In other words, the normative habits and considerations that direct how members of a speech community talk about their self-esteem, including agreeing and disagreeing with written statements, are as or more revealing of their cultural logic as are any inferences about the valence of their mental representations. It is this pragmatic significance of self-esteem that we wish to foreground here.

Returning to the issue of Japanese versus Western comparisons, we suggest that self-esteem talk that occurs in the context of measurement is guided by different performative pressures in Japan than in Western countries. The first difference pertains to the significance of the implicit interrogator, the researcher(s) responsible for the study in which the respondent, usually a student, is a participant. The highly status-conscious Japanese can be expected to adopt a subordinate,

self-effacing orientation in answering the questions of this assumed *sensei* (professor) interlocutor within the rigidly maintained hierarchy of the Japanese academy (Nakane, 1970). In providing suitably modest responses about themselves, participants would be showing due respect to the researchers (Lebra, 2004). This would be less so for Westerners, who adopt a more egalitarian approach to academic relations. Second, the assertive and competitive “marketing orientation” that guides much of nonintimate social life in Western societies encourages the display of self-confidence, uniqueness, freedom from shame, and personal importance (Fromm, 1947; Hewitt, 1998; Lasch, 1984; Rieff, 1966). The Japanese, in contrast, prefer indirect and other mediated forms of self-promotion (Kuwayama, 1992; Lebra, 2004; Mouer & Sugimoto, 1986). Finally, the linguistic and ritual emphasis on *kenson* (modesty) and *enryo* (reserve or restraint) in Japanese self-presentation finds only a weak parallel in Western social life. These differences imply that the willingness of Japanese to agree with statements of personal value is curtailed by strong normative pressure against speech acts that might be perceived as inappropriately self-assertive, vain, or even impudent (Brown & Kobayashi, 2003; Kudo & Numazaki, 2003; Kurman, 2003). In contrast, Westerners’ fears of being perceived as weak, insecure, or inadequate by the implicit questioner would militate in the opposite direction, promoting agreement with these same statements. Both groups would be responding “sincerely,” for the most part, but relative to the weight of different performative implications. After all, one does not use a rating scale to indicate agreement by looking up a corresponding numerical representation in one’s head. The use of such scales to express complex and often poorly articulated thoughts and feelings is a highly modulated affair, guided by dispositional sensitivities and consideration of what seems “right” to say in the situation. As such, any direct comparison of Japanese and Western self-esteem scores that fails to account for the contrasting performative pressures that bear on their production as speech acts will result in distorted conclusions premised on a false symmetry of meaning.

To provide evidence for the cultural pragmatics of self-esteem talk described above, we asked Canadian and Japanese students to complete different versions of a self-esteem measure. One version explicitly countered any performative pressure toward modesty; another countered any pressure toward self-promotion. We expected the two groups to be affected differently by these versions in responding to the self-esteem statements, reflecting their contrasting normative orientations.

## Method

### Participants

Participants were 163 students (86 women and 77 men) of Western European ethnicity at the University of Toronto in Canada and 164 students (82 women and 82 men) of Japanese ethnicity at Gakushuin University and the University of Tokyo in Japan. Age ranged from 17 to 24 years, with a mean of 19.46 for Canadians and 18.80 for Japanese. Participants were tested in small groups and received either course credit or a modest cash payment for their time.

### Procedure

Materials were presented in English to Canadian participants and in Japanese to Japanese participants. Considerable care was taken in translation, including back-translation checks and adjustments. Participants completed a questionnaire consisting of several parts, two of which are relevant here. The response format for both parts was a 7-point Likert-type scale anchored with *strongly disagree* (1) and *strongly agree* (7).

*Filler attitudes.* To compare the cultural groups on general response tendencies, 20 purely subjective attitude statements were used. All were unrelated to self-esteem. Examples include the following: "Orange juice tastes better than apple juice," "Spring is the best season of the year," and "Television comedy is more entertaining than television drama." Participants indicated degree of agreement with each statement.

*Self-esteem.* Two correlated dimensions of global self-esteem were measured using Tafarodi and Swann's (2001) Self-Liking/Self-Competence Scale-Revised (SLCS-R). The SLCS-R consists of eight statements reflecting agentic, efficacy-based self-esteem, or *self-competence* (SC), and eight statements reflecting self-esteem as socially defined worth, or *self-liking* (SL). Examples include the following: "I am highly effective at the things I do" (SC), "I sometimes deal poorly with challenges" (SC-reversed), "I am secure in my sense of self-worth" (SL), and "It is sometimes unpleasant for me to think about myself" (SL-reversed). The SLCS-R accounts for virtually all the true-score variance of the more widely used Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), with the SC and SL subscales each independently accounting for a sizable share (Tafarodi & Milne, 2002). It has received considerable cross-cultural validation, including in Japan (Shimada, 2007). Each participant completed one of four versions of the SLCS-R, which differed only in their instructions. These versions defined the four conditions of the study. In the *control* condition, standard instructions were used: "Please indicate how much you agree with each of the 16 statements below." In the *anti-inflation* condition, the following was added:

Some people misrepresent their true attitudes toward themselves when responding to these items. They attempt to appear *more* confident and comfortable with themselves than they really are. Please do *not* engage in such false positivity, as it will render your responses unusable and threaten the validity of this study. We are only interested in knowing how you *truly* think and feel about yourself on the inside, as negative as those thoughts and feelings may be. So please take care to avoid appearing more confident and comfortable with yourself than you really are.

In the *anti-modesty* condition, the addition appeared as:

Some people misrepresent their true attitudes toward themselves when responding to these items. They attempt to appear *less* confident and comfortable with themselves than they really are. Please do *not* engage in such false modesty, as it will render your responses unusable and threaten the validity of this study. We are only interested in knowing how you *truly* think and feel about yourself on the inside, as positive as those thoughts and feelings may be. So please take care to avoid appearing less confident and comfortable with yourself than you really are.

The emphasis on misrepresentation and falsity should not be taken to suggest that we expected participants in the control condition to respond dishonestly. Rather, the emphasis was merely tactical, aimed at providing an admonition sharp enough to overcome what we presumed to be strong performative pressures. Similarly, reference below to "inflated" and "deflated" self-esteem scores should be understood in the relative sense only; these terms do not imply anything about the sincerity of respondents. Finally, in the *honest peer* condition, participants were asked to respond to the statements as if they were the average student of their age and gender at their university responding with "complete honesty" about how he or she "truly" feels about himself or herself.

After completing the questionnaire, participants were debriefed on the nature and purpose of the study. The testing session lasted approximately 30 minutes.

## Results

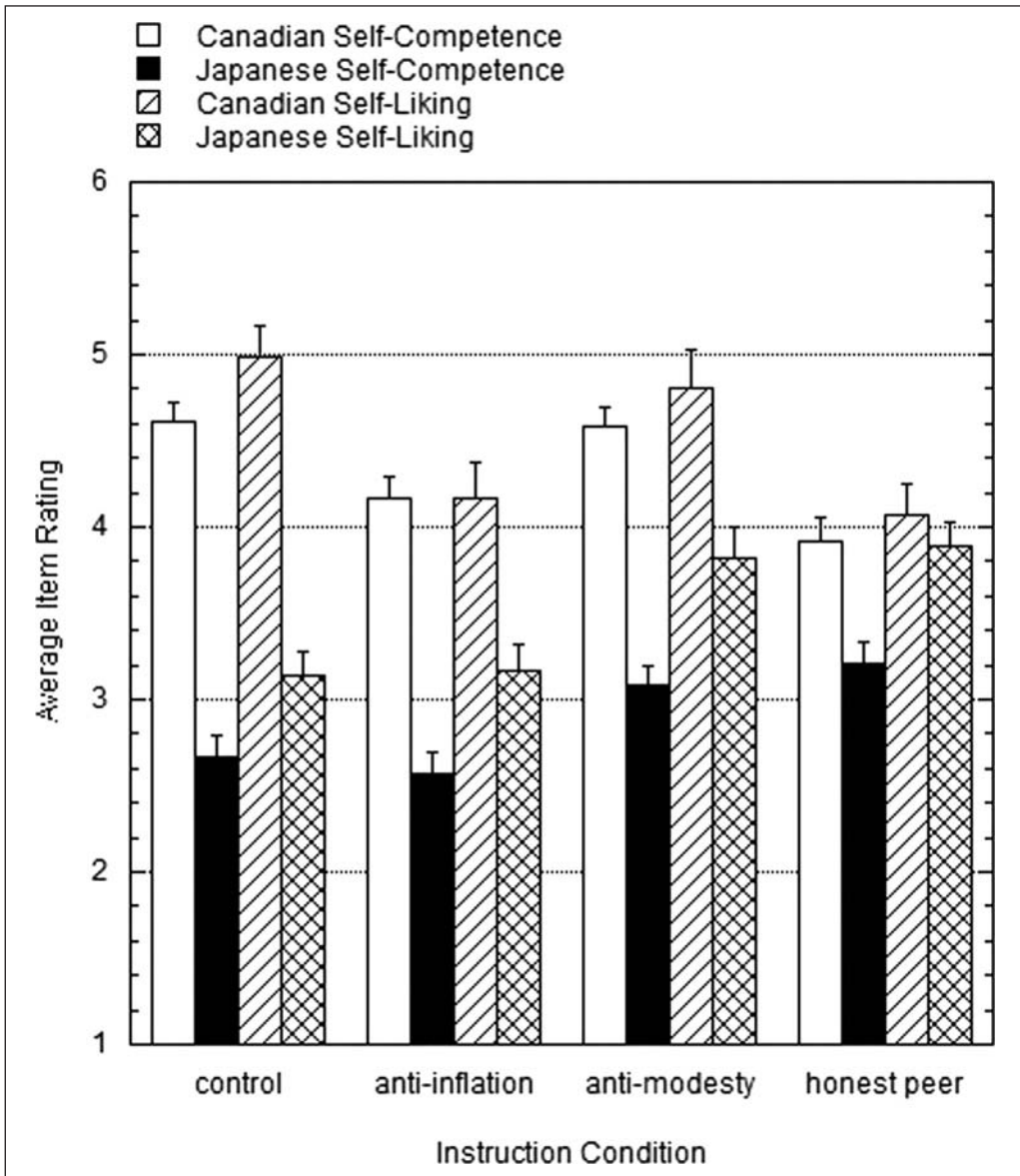
### General Response Tendencies

Canadians and Japanese agreed equally at the Bonferroni-corrected level of  $p < .0025$  with 15 of the 20 filler attitude statements. Response patterns to these mean-equivalent statements were examined more closely for any cultural disparities in scale use that might cloud substantive differences in self-esteem scores. Specifically, Canadian and Japanese participants were compared on the total number of times each scale point (1 to 7) was used in responding to the 15 statements. No significant differences were found at the Bonferroni-corrected level of  $p < .007$ , suggesting similar response tendencies.

### Cultural Differences in Self-Esteem

Gender did not qualify the differences reported below. The correlation of SC and SL was similar for Canadians ( $r = .53$ ) and Japanese ( $r = .57$ ), Fisher's  $z = -.51$ ,  $p = .61$ , with no significant differences across instruction conditions. Predicted differences in self-esteem scores were derived from our claim that Western reports are often inflated in accordance with self-presentational speech norms, whereas Japanese reports are often moderated or deflated by a contrasting normative emphasis. Insofar as this is correct, Canadians should score higher in both SC and SL than do Japanese in the control condition. In the anti-inflation condition, however, instructions that explicitly counter the aggrandizing force of Western norms should decrease Canadian scores while having no effect on Japanese scores, which *ex hypothesi* are not inflated to begin with. Symmetrically, antimodesty instructions that counter the humbling force of Japanese norms should raise Japanese scores while having no effect on Canadian scores, which are not deflated to begin with. Furthermore, Canadian scores in the anti-inflation condition and Japanese scores in the anti-modesty condition should be comparable to each group's scores in the honest peer condition, where self-presentational concerns are largely absent. Finally, Canadian scores "relieved" by anti-inflation instructions and Japanese scores "relieved" by anti-modesty instructions should be equivalent, as should Canadian and Japanese scores in the honest peer condition.

To test the above predictions, separate ANOVAs were conducted on SC and SL scores as predicted by country and instruction condition. The cell means<sup>2</sup> and standard errors appear in Figure 1. The results for SC revealed effects for country,  $F(1, 319) = 282.36$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\omega^2 = .43$ , condition,  $F(3, 319) = 5.10$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $\omega^2 = .02$ , and Country  $\times$  Condition,  $F(3, 319) = 9.51$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\omega^2 = .04$ . As the interaction qualifies the main effects, it was decomposed into a set of planned comparisons that matched our predictions. Consistent with expectation, Canadian SC in the control condition (mean item rating = 4.61) was clearly higher than Japanese SC in the same condition (2.67),  $F(1, 319) = 129.05$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $r^2 = .29$ . Also as expected, Canadian SC was lower in the anti-inflation condition (4.17) than in the control condition,  $F(1, 319) = 6.66$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ , whereas Japanese SC (2.57) was unaffected,  $F(1, 319) = .59$ ,  $p = .56$ . Symmetrically, Japanese SC was higher in the antimodesty condition (3.09) than in the control condition,  $F(1, 319) = 5.76$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ , whereas Canadian SC (4.59) was unaffected,  $F(1, 319) = .01$ ,  $p = .91$ . The predicted equivalence of Canadian SC in the anti-inflation and honest peer (3.92) conditions was also confirmed,  $F(1, 319) = 2.19$ ,  $p = .14$ , as was the equivalence of Japanese SC in the antimodesty and honest peer (3.21) conditions,  $F(1, 319) = .50$ ,  $p = .48$ . The predicted equivalence of Canadian SC in the anti-inflation condition and Japanese SC in the anti-modesty condition, however, was not supported,  $F(1, 319) = 38.69$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $r^2 = .11$ , nor was the equivalence of Japanese and Canadian SC in the honest peer condition,  $F(1, 319) = 17.46$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $r^2 = .05$ . Specifically, Canadians remained higher than Japanese in SC even after normative pressure was relieved.



**Figure 1.** Means and Standard Errors for Self-Liking and Self-Competence as a Function of Country and Instruction Condition

The ANOVA on SL scores revealed effects for country,  $F(1, 319) = 64.93, p < .0001, \omega^2 = .15$ , condition,  $F(3, 319) = 4.52, p = .004, \omega^2 = .03$ , and Country  $\times$  Condition,  $F(3, 319) = 7.50, p < .0001, \omega^2 = .05$ . Again, the interaction was decomposed into planned comparisons in line with our predictions. Parallel to the results for SC, Canadian SL in the control condition (4.99) was clearly higher than Japanese SL in the same condition (3.14),  $F(1, 319) = 54.91, p < .0001, r^2 = .15$ . Also as predicted, Canadian SL was lower in the anti-inflation condition (4.17) than in the control condition,  $F(1, 319) = 11.02, p = .001, r^2 = .03$ , whereas Japanese SL (3.17) was unaffected,  $F(1, 319) = .01, p = .91$ . Symmetrically, Japanese SL was higher in the antimodesty



condition (3.82) than in the control condition,  $F(1, 319) = 7.02, p = .008, r^2 = .02$ , whereas Canadian SL (4.81) was unaffected,  $F(1, 319) = .52, p = .47$ . The equivalence of Canadian SL in the anti-inflation and honest peer (4.07) conditions was also confirmed,  $F(1, 319) = .15, p = .70$ , as was equivalence of Japanese SL in the antimodesty and honest peer (3.89) conditions,  $F(1, 319) = .07, p = .79$ . Unlike the results for SC, the predicted equivalence of Canadian SL in the anti-inflation condition and Japanese SL in the antimodesty condition was confirmed,  $F(1, 319) = 1.89, p = .17$ , as was the equivalence of Japanese and Canadian SL in the honest peer condition,  $F(1, 319) = .57, p = .45$ . In short, Canadians and Japanese were equivalent in SL after normative pressure was relieved.

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide the basis for two comparative pictures of self-esteem in Japan and the West, one conservative and the other more radical. We begin with the conservative picture. When warned against self-promotion, Canadians but not Japanese agree less strongly than they would otherwise with assertions of both efficacy-based and social self-worth. When warned against modesty, Japanese but not Canadians agree more strongly than they otherwise would with these same assertions. The responsiveness of each group to only the admonition that counters what we have argued is that group's dominant normative concern provides evidence for the guiding force of those concerns in standard testing conditions. This interpretation is supported, for both Canadians and Japanese, by the equivalence of appropriately "relieved" scores and those attributed to the typical peer responding with complete honesty. Minimally, these results appear to argue against the metric equivalence of standardly obtained self-esteem ratings in Japan and Western countries such as Canada. These ratings appear to be guided by rather different incentive structures and default strategic concerns in the two cultural contexts (Yamagishi, Hashimoto, & Schug, 2008; Yamagishi & Suzuki, 2010). Assuming that the directive interventions used as counterforces in the present study had the effect of increasing metric similarity by relieving contrasting performative pressures, comparison of "inflated" Japanese scores with "deflated" Canadian scores provides a much better test of cultural difference in the strength or valence of private self-evaluation. Comparison of Japanese and Canadians on the degree of private self-regard attributed to the average peer provides a corroborative second test, insofar as this judgment can be assumed to be free of self-presentational constraints. By these two yardsticks, Japanese appear to be comparable to Canadians in self-liking but lower in self-competence. This pattern mirrors Schmitt and Allik's (2005) findings in comparing survey data from 10 highly collectivistic and 10 highly individualistic countries. One reason for the observed difference in self-competence may be the concession in autonomy and self-determination that results from a stronger moral emphasis in Japan than in the West on subordinating personal desires and ends to interpersonal concerns (Tafarodi, Lang, & Smith, 1999; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). Sustained across development, this concession or yielding may curtail gains in self-competence.

The second comparative picture is more troubling. The contrasting performative pressures that apply to "talking," however tacitly, about personal value in Japan and Canada imply that the indigenous concepts corresponding to the scientific construct of self-esteem have rather different meanings. Any functionalist approach to the specification of self-esteem as a reflexive propositional attitude must focus on its observable antecedents and consequences. Clearly, if communication of the attitude is conditioned by contrasting rational considerations across cultures, and what is and is not said involves different causal contingencies, then one can fairly ask whether we are really dealing with the same attitude. In addressing this question, reliance on physicalistic analogies should be avoided. Self-esteem is not a substance like water or gold that exists independent of our indigenous understandings of it. Nor is it a natural kind, reflecting objective divisions

in the physical world. Functionalism aside, self-esteem is defined by its intentional content, by what it is *about* in the minds of the encultured individuals who think and speak it (Tafarodi & Ho, 2006). However reified it has become as a scientific abstraction, its original and ultimate reference is to the subjectivity of those who experience it. Accordingly, we cannot afford to ignore its subjective meaning as revealed in social practices, especially speech acts. If cultural groups talk about self-esteem in clearly different ways and to different social effect, as may well be the case in comparing Japan and Western nations such as Canada, then the inference that they are not talking about the same thing becomes hard to resist. Admittedly, the results of a single behavioral study do not make a conclusive case for the inconsistency of intentional content across groups. They do, however, invite serious consideration of this possibility and of the formidable ontological challenge it presents to the quantitative comparison of self-esteem across cultures.

### Acknowledgements

We thank Mitsuko Yakabi for her assistance with translation.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared that they had no conflicts of interests with respect to their authorship or the publication of this article.

### Financial Disclosure/Funding

This research was supported by a Standard Research Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (410-2002-0370) and a Short-Term Research Fellowship from the Japan Foundation to the first author.

### Notes

1. A related strategy that has grown fashionable in recent years is looking past speech altogether to the unconscious representation of personal value that some have argued is reflected in the facility to make certain kinds of semantic distinctions. We will not discuss this so-called *implicit* self-esteem here, as its content and theoretical status remain unclear (Bosson, Swann, & Pennebaker, 2000; Krizan, 2008; Rudolf, Schöder-Abé, Schütz, Gregg, & Sedikides, 2008; Tafarodi & Ho, 2006).
2. Means represent average item rating on the 7-point response scale. Thus, a mean of 4 represents neither disagreement nor agreement with the SC or SL statements.

### References

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bosson, J. K., Swann, W. B., Jr., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2000). Stalking the perfect measure of self-esteem: The blind men and the elephant revisited? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*, 631-643.
- Brown, J. D., Cai, H., Oakes, M. A., & Deng, C. (2009). Cultural similarities in self-esteem functioning: East is East and West is West, but sometimes the twain do meet. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 40*, 140-157.
- Brown, J. D., & Kobayashi, C. (2003). Introduction: Culture and the self-enhancement bias. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 34*, 492-495.
- Cai, H., Brown, J. D., Deng, C., & Oakes, M. A. (2007). Self-esteem and culture: Differences in cognitive self-evaluations of affective self-regard? *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 10*, 162-170.
- Campbell, J. D., Trapnell, P. D., Heine, S. J., Katz, I. M., Lavalley, L. F., & Lehman, D. R. (1996). Self-concept clarity: Measurement, personality correlates, and cultural boundaries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 141-156.
- Falk, C. F., Heine, S. J., Yuki, M., & Takemura, K. (2009). Why do Westerners self-enhance more than East Asians? *European Journal of Personality, 23*, 183-203.



- Feather, N. T., & McKee, I. R. (1993). Global self-esteem and attitudes toward the higher achiever for Australian and Japanese students. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 56, 65-76.
- Fromm, E. (1947). *Man for himself: An inquiry into the psychology of ethics*. New York: Henry and Holt Company.
- Heine, S. J. (2003). Making sense of East Asian self-enhancement. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 34, 596-602.
- Heine, S. J., & Hamamura, T. (2007). In search of East Asian self-enhancement. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 11, 1-24.
- Hewitt, J. P. (1998). *The myth of self-esteem: Finding happiness and solving problems in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Kitayama, S. (2006). Does self-esteem matter equally across cultures? In M. H. Kernis (Ed.), *Self-esteem issues and answers: A sourcebook of current perspectives* (pp. 376-382). New York: Psychology Press.
- Kobayashi, C., & Brown, J. D. (2003). Self-esteem and self-enhancement in Japan and America. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 34, 567-580.
- Krizan, Z. (2008). What is implicit about implicit self-esteem? *Journal of Research in Personality*, 42, 1635-1640.
- Kudo, E., & Numazaki, M. (2003). Explicit and direct self-serving bias in Japan: Reexamination of self-serving bias for success and failure. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 34, 511-521.
- Kurman, J. (2003). Why is self-enhancement low in certain collectivist cultures? An investigation of two competing explanations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 34, 496-510.
- Kuwayama, T. (1992). The reference other orientation. In N. R. Rosenberger (Ed.), *Japanese sense of self* (pp. 121-151). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lasch, C. (1984). *The minimal self: Psychic survival in troubled times*. New York: Norton.
- Lebra, T. S. (2004). *The Japanese self in cultural logic*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Mouer, R., & Sugimoto, Y. (1986). *Images of Japanese society: A study in the social construction of reality*. London: KPI Limited.
- Nakane, C. (1970). *Japanese society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rieff, P. (1966). *The triumph of the therapeutic: Uses of faith after Freud*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rudolf, A., Schöder-Abé, M., Schütz, A., Gregg, A. P., & Sedikides, C. (2008). Through a glass, less darkly? Reassessing convergent and discriminant validity in measures of implicit self-esteem. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 24, 273-281.
- Schmitt, D. P., & Allik, J. (2005). Simultaneous administration of the Rosenberg self-esteem in 53 nations: Exploring the universal and culture-specific features of global self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89, 623-642.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Shimada, T. (2007). Jisonkanjyou no bunkasa to sono benmeihouryaku eno eikyou: Bunka souhan kasetsu no kenshou [Cultural differences in self-esteem and their impact on accounting tactics: Testing the cultural trade-off hypothesis]. *Human Communication Studies*, 35, 35-56.
- Tafarodi, R. W., & Ho, C. (2006). Implicit and explicit self-esteem: What are we measuring? *Canadian Psychology*, 47, 195-202.
- Tafarodi, R. W., Lang, J. M., & Smith, A. J. (1999). Self-esteem and the cultural trade-off: Evidence for the role of individualism-collectivism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 30, 620-640.
- Tafarodi, R. W., & Milne, A. B. (2002). Decomposing global self-esteem. *Journal of Personality*, 70, 443-483.
- Tafarodi, R. W., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (1996). Individualism-collectivism and global self-esteem: Evidence for a cultural trade-off. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 27, 651-672.
- Tafarodi, R. W., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2001). Two-dimensional self-esteem: Theory and measurement. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 31, 653-673.

- Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.; 3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Yamaguchi, S., Greenwald, A. G., Banaji, M. R., Murakami, F., Chen, D., Shiomura, K., et al. (2007). Apparent universality of positive implicit self-esteem. *Psychological Science, 18*, 498-500.
- Yamaguchi, S., Lin, C., & Aoki, S. (2006). Self-esteem in cultural contexts: The case of the Japanese. In Q. Jing, M. R. Rosenzweig, G. d'Ydewalle, H. Zhang, H.-C. Chen, & K. Zhang (Eds.), *Progress in psychological science around the world. Vol. 2: Social and applied issues* (pp. 319-330). New York: Psychology Press.
- Yamaguchi, S., Lin, C., Morio, H., & Okumura, T. (2008). Motivated expression of self-esteem across cultures. In R. M. Sorrentino & S. Yamaguchi (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation and cognition across cultures* (pp. 369-392). New York: Academic Press.
- Yamagishi, T., Hashimoto, H., & Schug, J. (2008). Preferences versus strategies as explanations for culture-specific behavior. *Psychological Science, 19*, 579-584.
- Yamagishi, T., & Suzuki, N. (2010). An institutional approach to culture. In M. Schaller, A. Norenzayan, S. J. Heine, T. Yamagishi, & T. Kameda (Eds.), *Evolution, culture, and the human mind* (pp. 185-203). New York: Psychology Press.

### Bios

**Romin W. Tafarodi**, PhD, is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Toronto. He is interested in the cultural conditioning of subjectivity and social perception.

**Sarah C. Shaughnessy** earned her PhD in social psychology at the University of Toronto. Her research interests include ethnic identity, acculturation, and social comparison.

**Susumu Yamaguchi**, PhD, is a professor of social psychology at the University of Tokyo. He is a co-founder and past president of the Asian Association of Social Psychology. His research interests include implicit and explicit self-esteem, control orientation, and the indigenous Japanese concept of *amae*.

**Akiko Murakoshi** received her MA in social psychology from the University of Tokyo. She now works as a researcher at the Railway Technical Research Institute in Japan. Her research is concerned with the safety, comfort, and convenience of train passengers.