

University of Groningen

All human, yet different

Hansen, Nina; Heu, Luzia

Published in:
Social Psychology

DOI:
[10.1027/1864-9335/a000436](https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000436)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Hansen, N., & Heu, L. (2020). All human, yet different: An emic-etic approach to cross-cultural replication in social psychology. *Social Psychology*, 51(6), 361–369. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000436>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.



All Human, yet Different

An Emic-Etic Approach to Cross-Cultural Replication in Social Psychology

Nina Hansen and Luzia Heu

Department of Social Psychology, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Abstract: Only little social psychological research is conducted outside so-called WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic societies) cultures (e.g., in the “Global South”). Although cross-cultural replication of social psychological theorizing and findings is thus essential for higher external validity of the field, *valid* cross-cultural replications are not straightforward to do. Indeed, they require more than “copy-and-pasting” the same research design in different countries. To facilitate valid cross-cultural replications, we present a collection of concrete recommendations that integrate emic and etic approaches: (1) establishing an egalitarian and respectful partnership with representatives of the local community, (2) examining whether constructs carry the same meaning are relevant in and across contexts, and (3) preparing culture-sensitive research materials and procedures. These recommendations aim to inform and improve purely “etic” approaches.

Keywords: culture, theory, research, mixed-methods, replication

It is well-established in social and particularly cultural psychology that the human mind and human behavior do not exist or function in isolation, but that they are embedded in social contexts (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Chiu et al., 2010; Gelfand et al., 2017). However, psychological theories about people often suggest that they are universal by writing about “people” (e.g., Norenzayan & Heine, 2005), while they are mainly tested in Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic societies (so-called WEIRD societies). Importantly, these represent 96% of the study participants, but only 12% of the world’s population (Henrich et al., 2010). By contrast, little research has been conducted in the “Global South”.¹ To improve the generalizability of social psychological theorizing, it is thus highly relevant to conduct more cross-cultural replications (e.g., Maner, 2016; Milfont & Klein, 2018). However, conducting *valid and meaningful* research across cultures is effortful and time-consuming (e.g., Maner, 2016) and psychologists are hardly trained in doing so. As such, cross-cultural replication often means that research materials and procedures are merely “copy-and-pasted” from one cultural context to another – without considering that it is not only the theory of interest that might differ between cultural contexts but also the meanings of concepts, research materials, and procedures. Such *purely* “etic” approaches to cross-cultural

research (i.e., assuming that the psychology of different cultural groups can be compared on similar dimensions; Berry, 1989) may overlook the blind spots of different cultural contexts.

Against that backdrop, this collection of recommendations for cross-cultural replications suggests integrating *emic* research elements (i.e., a perspective assuming that each cultural context is unique and needs to be described by its own concepts; e.g., Heelas & Locke, 1981) into research that pursues the etic aim of examining the generalizability of social psychological theorizing. These elements can prepare and facilitate *meaningful* and *valid* etic cross-cultural research by helping researchers to better understand a novel research context. This is important to adjust research questions, materials, and procedures in culture-sensitive ways, and to be in a better position to eventually interpret research findings. Indeed, emic elements offer important insights in the “unknown unknowns” – that is, all the cultural differences that might confound research results if researchers with their own cultural perspectives do not consider them. We, therefore, suggest to move from the etic endeavor of testing theorizing across cultures to emic approaches to better understand cultural differences, and back to integration of emic and etic elements in theorizing with universal and culture-specific elements in

¹ The “Global South” is an emerging term, which generally refers to countries classified by the World Bank as low or middle income that are located in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America, and the Caribbean. It was introduced as a more value free alternative to “Third World”. However, it is not value free and not clearly defined. Thus, we use the terms “Global North and South” in quotations in our article to reflect the problematic nature discussed here.

an “etic-emic research cycle”. This helps to not only examine the generalizability of existing theorizing but potentially also to *further develop* existing theorizing.

Three Recommendations for Conducting Meaningful Cultural Research

Psychologists tend to be interested in the universality of their theories (e.g., Norenzayan & Heine, 2005), which affords to test these theories across different cultures. Culture is a collective phenomenon that evolves through the dynamic relation between interdependent individuals and their loosely organized ideas and practices (e.g., Chiu et al., 2010). These ideas and practices are further shared and transmitted across generations. More concretely, they include shared beliefs, norms, and values, which influence, and are influenced by, how individuals act, think, and feel (e.g., whether individuals prioritize their work or their social relationships; whether individuals make decisions by themselves or in consultation with their families; Oyserman et al., 2002).

This is often not considered in cross-cultural psychological studies that “copy-and-paste” a research design and direct translations of materials that have been developed in one cultural context in different countries² to then test whether there are statistical differences (e.g., Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006). This rather etic approach to cross-cultural replication entails the risk (1) of overgeneralizing findings and ignoring the cultural context as well as (2) that cultural differences regarding, for instance, research materials or the process of data collection that are not taken into consideration (i.e., “unknown unknowns”) that could confound research results.

In the current article, we thus suggest an alternative approach that integrates “emic” elements into such an etic perspective (for an integrated emic-etic example see Hruschka et al., 2018). By acknowledging that each cultural context is unique and needs to be described by its own concepts, this approach encourages researchers to engage with the cultural context they are studying, and hence to learn more about cultural peculiarities. This allows to develop research questions, materials, and procedures that may be different across cultures, but help to better capture

concepts of interest because of being more meaningful and relevant within people’s daily realities (i.e., conceptual replication).

Our collection of recommendations aims to facilitate cross-cultural research for those who pursue an *etic* research question (i.e., apply existing theories in a new cultural context), but acknowledge *emic* aspects to improve their cross-cultural research. Indeed, unlike a *purely* emic approach, such an approach allows to compare across cultures. At the same time, unlike a *purely* etic approach, it considers and acknowledges (1) potential cultural differences in meaning, manifestation, or relevance of social psychological concepts, as well as (2) cultural differences that can affect data collection and hence confound research findings. In our view, this can help to more validly examine social psychological phenomena across cultures.

1. Establishing an Egalitarian and Respectful Partnership With Representatives of the Local Community

One common motivation for why researchers engage in cross-cultural replication is to demonstrate that their conclusions do not only hold in their own culture but may also be valid in other populations. Given that they are the experts in their field, this can easily mean that the researcher prepares research materials and procedures, while the research is conducted on location by research “assistants” who are, at best, trained in adhering to the guidelines that the researcher has provided. We argue that there are two reasons why it is important not to take such an approach. For one, remote principal researchers often do not know what they do not know – the so-called “unknown unknowns.” Researchers view the world through their own cultural lens (i.e., collective programming of the mind; Hofstede, 1980) and may therefore overlook aspects in their theorizing and study design that would be relevant in a different cultural context. Through emic research, they can turn them into “known unknowns,” which can be researched. Second, members of an international research team may carry specific power positions and certain responsibilities. Given a history of colonialization, it seems crucial not to impose WEIRD research ideas on other cultural contexts without considering that they might function differently (see also Adams et al., 2015).

² The local ecology people live in (e.g., climate, affluence) plays an important role in shaping culture (Van de Vliert, 2009). This is why culture is often operationalized by sampling from different geographical areas. More specifically, in psychological research, culture is often set equal with country, which is problematic because there is a lot of cultural variation within a country (e.g., between groups from more urban versus more rural areas, groups with different socioeconomic status or religion, different cities or different villages; Cohen, 2009; Hansen et al., 2014). Although countries can serve as useful “containers” of different cultures, researchers should investigate and be aware of potential differences and consider that the specific group that they conducted their research with may not generalize to the entire country.

To conduct research in any new culture, a first indispensable step is therefore to establish a partnership with representatives of the local cultural context. They offer access and understanding of the context, which is crucial for each step of the research from defining the research question to interpreting results. In other words, researchers as well as local partners need each other to be able to conduct meaningful (cross-)cultural research: Researchers come in as experts in research methods and in a specific research field (at least in their culture), while representatives of the local context are the experts regarding the cultural context of interest. As such, they are crucial in accurately identifying the needs of their community and in advising culturally appropriate assessments.

We recommend establishing a partnership between academic researchers and local partners that are based on shared responsibility and control over ideas, processes, and outcomes (for an example of a research partnership to inform and improve research and practice see Numans et al., 2019). An egalitarian dialogue, regular meetings, and communication between all parties are essential (e.g., see the critical communicative methodology to overcome inequalities; Gómez et al., 2010; Huis et al., 2019).

2. Ensuring That Your Research Constructs Carry the Same Meaning and Are Relevant

The second recommendation is to find out whether a research question that has been developed in one cultural context (i.e., usually WEIRD countries) is suitable and relevant in a different cultural context as well. Taking an etic approach, cross-cultural research is often interested in mean differences or associations between psychological constructs across cultures (e.g., Berry, 1989). However, before such statistical comparisons are made, it is important to investigate whether constructs of interest do actually carry the *same meaning* in a different cultural context and whether they are of any *relevance* there. We suggest that this first step is crucial before psychologists can continue to investigate their research questions.

For instance, the term “women’s empowerment” is commonly used in the public sphere by governments, NGOs, and educational institutions. It is part of the fifth Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. For laypeople, however, this is a very abstract concept. Indeed, many languages do not even have a word for it.

Furthermore, unpublished interviews and focus group discussions with different people from Sri Lanka suggest that there are multiple Sinhalese translations for the English word “self-esteem”, but they do not directly map onto the English term self-esteem (i.e., they have a slightly different

connotation) and are hardly used in everyday language (Heu, 2015). This relates to findings from interviews with Taiwanese and US-American mothers and grandmothers (Cho et al., 2005): All participants knew and understood the concept of self-esteem, but Taiwanese mothers and grandmothers perceived self-esteem as peripheral in childrearing, while fostering self-esteem was perceived as quite central to childrearing by US-American mothers. As such, even though the concept of self-esteem seemed to carry a similar meaning across cultures, theorizing about self-esteem might not be universal and may need further specification (e.g., for whom, which aspect, which consequences) in certain non-WEIRD contexts (for a critique see Heine et al., 1999; Stankov & Lee, 2014).

Approaches to Gaining Insight Into Meaning and Relevance

These two examples illustrate the importance of gaining a better understanding of the meaning and relevance of a scientific concept across cultures. It is hence important to consider voices from the culture of interest. Clearly, one important source of information is the expertise that local collaborators bring in. As members of the local community (or at least familiar with their culture), they tend to know whether there are direct translations, indirect translations, or other related constructs and whether they are relevant in people’s daily lives. Additionally, there are also alternative ways, which we will discuss next.

One quite simple and effortless way of gaining a first impression of existence, meaning, and relevance of a concept is the “dictionary approach” (e.g., Allport & Odbert, 1936). This approach is based on the assumption that concepts that are salient and socially relevant will eventually become encoded in language. The more important a concept is, the more likely it will be expressed as a word, and the more likely it is that there are multiple words expressing the same or similar concepts.

Notably, this approach is only useful for *written* languages (many languages or local dialects do not have a written form), and in which these written languages are well documented in dictionaries. This approach cannot be used to analyze colloquial or exclusively oral languages (for a discussion on limitations of the dictionary approach see John et al., 1988). Nevertheless, it can serve as a useful starting point for a better understanding of a concept in a different culture.

Indeed, a more insightful approach is to prepare quantitative cross-cultural research by qualitative interviews or focus group discussions (i.e., conduct mixed-methods research; Creswell, 2009) to examine which meaning a psychological concept carries and whether it is comparable across different cultures. Interviews can provide insight into personal experiences with, and thoughts about a concept,

while focus group discussions can allow examining social norms about it.

One recent example is a qualitative cross-cultural study to examine similarities and differences in the meaning of the word “loneliness” and the experiences that it describes (Heu et al., 2020). In 42 in-depth interviews in five different countries (i.e., India, Egypt, Bulgaria, Israel, and Austria), participants were asked to talk about their own loneliness experiences, what they perceived had caused and resolved their loneliness, or how they would explain what loneliness is to someone who had never felt lonely. This allowed us to examine whether participants themselves defined loneliness in similar ways across cultures and whether their experiences were comparable in terms of related emotions, situations that caused it, and situations that could reduce loneliness.

Another example refers to our research on “women’s empowerment”. As mentioned above this is a very abstract construct, used in the public sphere. To find out what kind of meaning this construct carries and what it would entail in a given cultural context, we asked women in in-depth interviews or focus group discussions to describe and share stories about a strong woman in their community, what she looks like, how she lives, and what she does (action), and name a strong woman they know (e.g., Huis et al., 2019; Kurtiş et al., 2016). In another project, we asked women to share their advice for their daughter, or what kind of future they envision for them. This allowed us to find specific aspects of empowerment that are relevant to women in their daily life. Interestingly, a commonly used indicator of empowerment is intra-household decision-making on expenditures; specific investments may be relevant in one but not another cultural context (Huis et al., 2017). To sum up, this emic approach helped us to develop a cultural-specific understanding of empowerment in the current context and informed our work to develop cultural-sensitive researcher materials and procedures.

3. Preparing Cultural-Sensitive Research Materials and Procedures

From a purely etic perspective, it seems intuitive to improve the comparability of research results by using exactly the same validated scales and procedures across different research contexts. However, data collection across cultures is not trivial. Mere “copy-and-pasting” will, from our experience, likely result in less comparability and invalid data if research participants do not understand research materials. Importantly, without knowing whether a construct is meaningful and relevant, “copied” research materials may trigger arbitrary responses (rather than non-responses) because, based on our experience, people will try to

respond even if they do not understand a question or answer options. Particularly if a researcher is not personally involved in the data collection, she or he might then try to interpret “cultural differences” that are rather results of participants’ confusion. A widespread problem in cross-cultural research (which tends to take a more etic perspective) is “measurement invariance” (for a critical discussion see Boer et al. 2018; for recommendations see Fischer & Poortinga, 2018). This describes that a quantitative measure does not assess the same underlying construct in different cultures. Because of that, it is important to take into account local circumstances and to closely collaborate with the local researchers (see also above). In this section, we discuss multiple recommendations to improve validity and eventually also comparability of cross-cultural data through culture-sensitive research materials and procedures.

Culture-Sensitive Research Materials

Research materials often require translation for cross-cultural research. Communicating in a foreign language can influence how people feel, think, and even behave (e.g., Hayakawa & Keysar, 2018; Hayakawa et al, 2017). For instance, research showed that communicating in a foreign language leads to less vivid mental imagery than in one’s native tongue. This emphasizes the importance of conducting research in people’s native tongue. Although seemingly trivial, this can be complex in the field. Many countries in the “Global South” have many different official languages or local dialects. Notably, only a few such languages also exist in a written form, while many others are just oral languages. For example, Ethiopia has 88 different languages, which are about 77 locally spoken tongues. This is important to consider when selecting the geographical region that research should be conducted. Relatedly, we recommend that research materials should not only be translated into the formal language of a cultural group but should also be adjusted to their specific colloquial terms and linguistic level.

Furthermore, to improve cross-cultural validity and facilitate interpretation of research findings, we recommend using concrete, everyday examples and simple response options in research materials (in line with Kitayama, 2002; König et al., 2007; Peng et al., 1997). This is because abstract Likert scales, which are so characteristic of social psychological research and can otherwise be a reliable tool to assess attitudes, feelings, or subjective judgments, imply multiple problems when conducting cross-cultural research.

For one, validated social psychological instruments often contain items that are kept at a highly abstract level. This is because social psychological concepts usually manifest themselves in a broad range of different concrete situations. However, for research participants who are not familiar with thinking at more abstract levels, these items

can be difficult to understand. The E in WEIRD stands for Educated, implying that comparatively many people in WEIRD cultures have received secondary or even tertiary education (i.e., they have finished high school or pursued university studies), during which they were trained to think in abstract terms. By contrast, in non-WEIRD cultures, more people have followed different paths of education, potentially increasing the difficulty of understanding abstract items.

Due to this high level of abstraction, such scales are also prone to referring to systematically different sets of concrete situations in different cultural contexts (Peng et al., 1997). For instance, when asked to think about “their family,” many European city dwellers would probably rather think of their nuclear family (i.e., partner, children, maybe their own parents), whereas many South-East Asian villagers would probably rather think of their extended family (i.e., parents, children, partner, in-laws, etc.).

Furthermore, Likert-type response scales typically involve an element of comparison. For instance, individuals are more likely to answer *very much* to the question of whether they trust strangers if they perceive to trust strangers *more* than others who they compare themselves to (e.g., other family members, norms that are portrayed in the media, peers). That is, the meaning of this individual response in practice (e.g., daring to take public transport alone versus leaving one’s sleeping baby outside a café) will depend on the cultural context a person lives in.

In general, concrete situations or decisions that are common in people’s daily life will offer meaningful insights into the thinking, feeling, and acting of people. Besides using self-reports, behavioral observations can offer important insights around the world. For example, inviting people to an interview, offering them a sweet, and observing how they dispose of the wrapping as an indicator of littering (e.g., Farage et al., 2020) or the coding of couple interactions during a task to investigate the relational dynamics and signs of agency can offer meaningful and relevant insights of behavior (e.g., Huis et al., 2019).

In sum, we and others recommend (1) to develop concrete scenario items that represent typical daily situations of people (e.g., portraying typical habits, decision-making, or behavior rather than for example asking about de-contextualized, abstract attitudes), and (2) to ask people to respond in a yes-no format (*yes/no*, *agree/disagree*, *like/dislike*; e.g., see Dutt et al., 2016; Kitayama, 2002; König et al., 2007; Peng et al., 1997), and (3) to develop behavioral measures.

Assessing Suitability of Research Materials

After developing research materials, we strongly advise to pilot-test them among members of the cultural group of interest. To that aim, the “thinking aloud” technique has proven to be particularly suitable (e.g., Crutcher, 1994; Ericsson & Simon, 1980), in which research participants are asked to say whatever comes to their mind as they complete a task. This technique is based on work by early pioneers of scientific psychology, such as William James and Wilhelm Wundt, who used introspective reports of individual experiences to gain insight into individuals’ consciousness, learning, and problem-solving. To date, the thinking aloud method is used to gather data in usability testing in product design and development, psychology, and a range of social sciences. It can be particularly useful to examine the suitability of a research method in cross-cultural research because it can help to learn more about what people think of or connect to another. Systematically asking respondents about how they are perceiving or responding to situations, questions, stimuli provides important information whether study materials are meaningful and relevant or can help to point at solutions (so-called cognitive interviewing; Beatty & Willis, 2007). For example, researchers carefully adjusted the standard protocol to investigate social discounting (the tendency to bear greater costs to benefit socially close others; Jones & Rachlin, 2006)³ in communities in low-literacy, low-numeracy farming communities in northwestern Bangladesh (Hruschka et al., 2018). Based on observations and conversations, they developed and pre-tested a new hands-on protocol with concrete and visually intuitive artifacts, which represented real payoffs of decisions (and not hypothetical money on paper). They decided to use rice as currency to ask participants to distribute it instead of money as money would elicit envy and could jeopardize the relationship of the researchers with the community.

If local enumerators support the data collection, an alternative option is to combine their training with the testing of research materials. During a workshop, enumerators can first fill in the study materials themselves and then discuss which questions are not clear yet. After revising the study materials accordingly, pairs of enumerators can then interview each other – once as an ADD interviewer and once as an interviewee. Based on their experiences, materials are again clarified, after which enumerators conduct one or two interviews in the field. This allows to thoroughly making enumerators familiar with the study materials and procedures while, at the same time, assessing

³ Social discounting has been documented in more than 50 studies (Tiokhin et al., 2019). However, these studies have almost exclusively relied on highly educated populations in the United States and Europe as well as some highly educated populations from China, India, and Singapore (Hruschka et al., 2018). First, cross-cultural research with different populations suggests that there might be cultural differences with respect to this effect. More precisely, the effect of social distance on generosity may be less important. In these cultures, individual behavior in relationships may dependent more on formal duties than on personal feelings.

whether study materials are meaningful and instructions are clear.

Culture-Sensitive Procedures

As social psychologists, we are trained to identify and rule out potential confounding variables, implying that, when replicating an effect, we try to recruit participants and collect data in ways that are as similar as possible. However, it might not always be possible or even problematic to conduct an exact replication. An exact replication in cross-cultural research could practically exclude a large part of the world's population and possibly introduce bias into responses. In some cases, conceptual replications might be more suitable. Conceptual replications re-test the same theoretical idea or hypothesis using different populations, different ways of manipulating variables, different ways of measuring variables, or using different study designs. In the following, we will describe some aspects to make decisions between exact and conceptual replications and things to consider when doing conceptual replications (e.g., what to leave similar and what to change).

For instance, it is most common in cross-cultural research to use online tools for data collection. However, this excludes many populations around the world where access to the Internet is limited and only few people own a computer. For example, 87% of the population in high-income countries (North America and most European countries) have access to the Internet in comparison to only 16% of the population in low-income countries (e.g., several African, Asian, and Latin-American countries in 2017; World Bank, 2020a).⁴ Even if one decides to opt for a paper-pencil approach, it is important to consider that literacy rates strongly differ. Whereas the large majority of Europeans can be assumed to be literate, only 61% of the population above 15 years in low-income countries was literate in 2019 (World Bank, 2020b). These differences restrict options for cost-effective research in diverse cultural groups.

Even if the design of a study would allow members of a cultural group to participate, they may be reluctant to do so if research procedures are culture-insensitive. Particularly research topics that are stigmatizing (e.g., mental illness) or otherwise culturally sensitive (e.g., premarital romantic relationships) may deter from participation. Although such reluctance to participate can of course not always be ruled out, it can be reduced by cautiously choosing research settings and interviewers. For example, in one of our projects we developed a short training to manage one's income-generating activity for women as well as their partners.

We expected that inviting couples to the training should strengthen the position of women in this cultural context more than inviting women alone (Huis et al., 2019). Prior to the training, we visited couples at home but interviewed them separately. Female members of the research team interviewed women to learn about their personal challenges with respect to managing the income-generating activity with their husband. At the same time, other members interviewed the husbands outside to find out what would motivate him to join business training. This way the women had a safe space to share their ideas, while their partners were also involved in the research (creating trust). A few days later, we invited couples to a short training session in a community building. Establishing a relationship and building trust is particularly relevant in settings of stronger interdependence. It is noteworthy that the concept of "privacy", which is important to create an atmosphere of trust in research in the "Global North", can have quite a different meaning in the "Global South". People in many cultures of the "Global South" are often hardly ever alone, and the request to be alone with a research participant can cause confusion or irritation because any setting in which only family members are present is often considered "private".

This is not only relevant to consider with an eye to gaining enough research participants, but also regarding the ethical responsibility to ensure participants' safety. Under certain political circumstances, it may even be dangerous for participants to share their answers (e.g., in a few countries it is prohibited by law to talk about children's and women's rights; asking women about intimate partner violence is a sensitive topic and requires careful thing how to invite, where to conduct interviews, and how to offer support if needed). Choosing a knowledgeable and trustworthy collaborator is crucial.

It is also important to adapt procedures – including the choice of suitable enumerators – because similar procedures may elicit biased responses. In our unpublished interviews and focus group discussions about self-esteem in Sri Lanka, we observed that participants often provided responses to demonstrate their knowledge of the western concept of "self-esteem" (Heu, 2015). As such, they appeared to try to please the European researcher, which is likely to have suppressed their usual attitudes or opinions.

Finally, across the world, people have daily obligations and leisure activities that compete with their participation in psychological research. As such, it is important to understand how they can profit from, and be motivated to, participate within their own reality of life. For instance,

⁴ We have frequently been contacted by researchers whether we could help collecting data in the "Global South". In many cases, researchers are looking for opportunities to collect data online to keep data collection procedure the same. However, these reality constraints (see above) will exclude many other cultures.

in WEIRD cultures, it is common to *financially* recompensate participants for the time and effort they have invested. People from WEIRD cultures live in societies that are based on a system of market pricing (Fiske, 1992). Many cultures in the “Global South”, however, are based on a system of communal sharing (Fiske, 1992). Paying participants money for their participation may interfere with the cultural norms of exchange. Offering other goods (e.g., food) or offering a small gift to compensate for their time might be culturally more appropriate. This again highlights the central role of local collaborators – in this case, to discuss and determine together what a culturally sensitive way to compensate participants would be.⁵

Discussion and Conclusion

In this tutorial, we have offered a collection of recommendations to test the cross-cultural generalizability of social psychological theorizing and research in meaningful and valid ways. We provide three key recommendations that all aim to improve researchers’ understanding of a research context through integrating emic aspects of conducting cross-cultural research into the etic endeavor of testing social psychological theorizing across cultures. Specifically, we recommend (1) to establish an egalitarian and respectful partnership with representatives of the local community, which is a precondition to further improve the next two steps in the research process. (2) We recommend to examine whether research constructs carry the same meaning and are relevant in a different cultural context, and (3) to prepare suitable and cultural-sensitive materials and procedures.

Although our recommendations aim to facilitate more valid cross-cultural research, we believe that they can offer additional benefits. Working together with collaborators from different cultures with different culturally shaped minds can (1) instigate new research ideas, (2) help to better understand psychological mechanisms in culturally diverse countries, and (3) can even provide new insight into WEIRD psychology. After all, as cultural beings, researchers are likely to consider theorizing that fits their own cultural worldviews. They may hence not consider aspects that would be relevant to include in their theorizing, but that are only obvious to members of different cultures. After all, as much as WEIRD researchers tend to assume that their theorizing and conclusions reached with WEIRD populations can be applied to non-WEIRD cultural groups, wisdom and theorizing from non-WEIRD cultures may help

to better understand the psychology of WEIRD people. We hope that our recommendations can help to facilitate better reciprocal learning, and prevent an understanding of cross-cultural replication as imposition of WEIRD thinking on other cultures (in line with the important endeavor to decolonize psychological research; Adams et al., 2015).

In conclusion, we hope that this collection of recommendations will offer researchers some concrete starting points to plan, design, and conduct cross-cultural replications in meaningful and valid ways. Ideally, this will motivate more researchers to examine the generalizability of their theorizing and research in close and respectful collaboration with natives, to foster reciprocal learning and help establish a more universal yet diverse social psychology.

References

- Adams, G., Dobles, I., Gómez, L., Kurtiş, T., & Molina, L. E. (2015). Decolonizing psychological science: Introduction to the special thematic session. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology: Special Thematic Section on Decolonizing Psychological Science*, 3(1), 213–238. <https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v3i1.564>
- Allport, G. W., & Odbert, H. S. (1936). Trait-names: A psychological study. *Psychological Monographs*, 47(1), Article 211.
- Beatty, P. C., & Willis, G. B. (2007). Research synthesis: The practice of cognitive interviewing. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71(2), 287–311. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfm006>
- Berry, J. (1989). Imposed etics-emics-derived etics: The operationalization of a compelling idea. *International Journal of Psychology*, 24(6), 24, 721–735. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207598908247841>
- Boer, D., Hanke, K., & He, J. (2018). On detecting systematic measurement error in cross-cultural research: A review and critical reflection on equivalence and invariance tests. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49(5), 713–734. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022117749042>
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (2nd ed., Vol. 3, pp. 3–44). Elsevier.
- Chiu, C.-Y., Gelfand, M. J., Yamagishi, T., Shteynberg, G., & Wan, C. (2010). Intersubjective culture: The role of intersubjective perceptions in cross-cultural research. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 482–493. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610375562>
- Cho, G. E., Sandel, T. L., Miller, P. J., & Wang, S. H. (2005). What do grandmothers think about self-esteem? American and Taiwanese folk theories revisited. *Social Development*, 14(4), 701–721. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2005.00325.x>
- Cohen, A. B. (2009). Many forms of culture. *American Psychologist*, 64(3), 194–204. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015308>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Crutcher, R. J. (1994). Telling what we know: The use of verbal report methodologies in psychological research. *Psychological Science*, 5(5), 241–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.1994.tb00619.x>

⁵ Although not central to this collection of recommendations, we also note that different research contexts can offer different challenges in terms of collecting and storing data. Decisions about equipment to record data, should be made depending on local climate, as well as the availability of internet and power outlets.

- Dutt, A., Grabe, S., & Castro, M. (2016). Exploring links between women's business ownership and empowerment among Maasai women in Tanzania. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 16(1), 363–386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12091>
- Ericsson, K., & Simon, H. (1980). Verbal reports as data. *Psychological Review*, 87(3), 215–251. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.87.3.215>
- Farage, L., Uhl-Hädicke, I., & Hansen, N. (2020). *Trash is everywhere despite high problem awareness: A field experiment in the Gambia about psychological predictors of littering*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Fischer, R., & Poortinga, Y. H. (2018). Addressing methodological challenges in culture-comparative research. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49(5), 691–712. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022117738086>
- Fiske, A. P. (1992). The four elementary forms of sociality: Framework for a unified theory of social relations. *Psychological Review*, 99(4), 689–723. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.99.4.689>
- Gelfand, M. J., Harrington, J. R., & Jackson, J. C. (2017). The strength of social norms across human groups. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(5), 800–809. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617708631>
- Gómez, A., Racionero, S., & Sordé, T. (2010). Ten years of critical communicative methodology. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 3(1), 17–43. <https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2010.3.1.17>
- Hansen, N., Postmes, T., Tovote, K. A., & Bos, A. (2014). How modernization instigates social change: Laptop usage as a driver of cultural value change and gender equality in a developing country. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 45(8), 1229–1248. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022114537554>
- Hayakawa, S., & Keysar, B. (2018). Using a foreign language reduces mental imagery. *Cognition*, 173, 8–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2017.12.010>
- Hayakawa, S., Tannenbaum, D., Costa, A., Corey, J. D., & Keysar, B. (2017). Thinking more or feeling less? Explaining the foreign-language effect on moral judgment. *Psychological Science*, 28(10), 1387–1397. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617720944>
- Heelas, P., & Locke, A. (1981). *Indigenous Psychologies: The anthropology of the self*. Academic Press.
- Heine, S. J., Lehman, D. R., Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1999). Is there a universal need for positive self-regard? *Psychological Review*, 106(4), 766–794. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.106.4.766>
- Henrich, J., Heine, S., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2–3), 61–83. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X0999152X>
- Heu, L. (2015). *The dose is the poison. An exploration of the meaning of self-esteem in Sri Lanka* Unpublished internship report of the University of Groningen.
- Heu, L., Hansen, N., van Zomeren, M., Levy, A., Ivanova, T., Gangadhar, A., & Radwan, M. (2020). *Loneliness across countries with different levels of social embeddedness: A qualitative study*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's Consequences: International differences in work related values*. Sage Publications.
- Huis, M. A., Hansen, N., Otten, S., & Lensink, R. (2017). A three-dimensional model of women's empowerment: Implications in the field of microfinance and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, Article 1678. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01678>
- Huis, M. A., Hansen, N., Otten, S., & Lensink, R. (2019). The impact of husbands' involvement in goal setting training on women's empowerment: First evidence from an intervention among female microfinance borrowers in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 29(4), 336–351. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2404>
- Hruschka, D. J., Hackman, J. V., Munira, S., Jesmin, K., & Tiokhin, L. (2018). Learning from failures of protocol in cross-cultural research. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(45), 11428–11434. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1721166115>
- John, O. P., Angleitner, A., & Ostendorf, F. (1988). The lexical approach to personality: A historical review of trait taxonomic research. *European Journal of Personality*, 2(3), 171–203. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2410020302>
- Jones, B., & Rachlin, H. (2006). Social discounting. *Psychological Science*, 17(4), 283–286. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01699.x>
- Kitayama, S. (2002). Culture and basic psychological processes – Toward a system view of culture: Comment on Oyserman et al. (2002). *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(1), 89–96. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.1.89>
- König, C., Steinmetz, H., Frese, M., Rauch, A., & Wang, Z. M. (2007). Scenario-based scales measuring cultural orientations of business owners. *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, 17(2), Article 211. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00191-006-0047-z>
- Kurtiş, T., Adams, G., & Estrada-Villalta, S. (2016). Decolonizing empowerment: Implications for sustainable well-being. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 16(1), 387–391. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12120>
- Maner, J. K. (2016). Into the wild: Field research can increase both replicability and real-world impact. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 66, 100–106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2015.09.018>
- Matsumoto, D., & Yoo, S. H. (2006). Toward a new generation of cross-cultural research. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(3), 234–250. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00014.x>
- Milfont, T. L., & Klein, R. A. (2018). Replication and reproducibility in cross-cultural psychology. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49(5), 735–750. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022117744892>
- Norenzayan, A., & Heine, S. J. (2005). Psychological universals: What are they and how can we know? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131(5), 763–784. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.131.5.763>
- Numans, W., Van Regenmortel, T., & Schalk, R. (2019). Partnership research: A pathway to realize multistakeholder participation. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919884149>
- Oyserman, D., Coon, H. M., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking individualism and collectivism: Evaluation of theoretical assumptions and meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(1), 3–72. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.1.3>
- Peng, K., Nisbett, R. E., & Wong, N. Y. (1997). Validity problems comparing values across cultures and possible solutions. *Psychological Methods*, 2(4), 329–344. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.2.4.329>
- Stankov, L., & Lee, J. (2014). Overconfidence across world regions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 45(5), 821–837. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022114527345>
- Tiokhin, L., Hackman, J., Munira, S., Jesmin, K., & Hruschka, D. (2019). Generalizability is not optional: Insights from a cross-cultural study of social discounting. *Royal Society Open Science*, 6, Article 181386. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.181386>
- Van de Vliert, E. (2009). *Climate, affluence, and culture*. Cambridge University Press.
- World Bank. (2020a, November 20). *The World Bank data on individuals using the Internet (% of population)*. International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>
- World Bank. (2020b, November 20). *The World Bank data on literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS>

History

Published online December 16, 2020

Acknowledgments

We thank Kai Epstude for inviting and inspiring this tutorial and Martijn van Zomeren for constructive and inspiring ideas on an earlier draft.

Nina Hansen

Department of Social Psychology
University of Groningen
Grote Kruisstraat 2/1
9712TS Groningen
The Netherlands
n.hansen@rug.nl

<https://econtent.hogrefe.com/doi/pdf/10.1027/1864-9335/a000436> - Wednesday, March 24, 2021 2:45:37 AM - IP Address:89.205.132.86