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Compliance With a Request in Two Cultures: The Differential Influence of Social Proof and Commitment/Consistency on Collectivists and Individualists

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University students in Poland and the United States, two countries that differ in individualistic-collectivistic orientation, indicated their willingness to comply with a request to participate without pay in a marketing survey. Half were asked to do so after considering information regarding their own history of compliance with such requests, whereas the other half were asked to do so after considering information regarding their peers' history of such compliance. This was designed to assess the impact of two social influence principles (commitment/consistency and social proof, respectively) on participants' decisions. As expected, although both principles were influential across cultures, the commitment/consistency principle had greater impact on Americans, whereas the social proof principle had greater impact on Poles. Additional analyses indicated that this effect was due principally, but not entirely, to participants' personal individualistic-collectivistic orientations rather than to the dominant individualistic-collectivistic orientation of their cultures.

After an extensive review of the compliance-gaining strategies of compliance professionals (e.g., salespeople, fund raisers, advertisers), Cialdini (1987, 1993) argued that many of these practices are empowered by a relatively small set of psychological principles—social proof, commitment/consistency, reciprocity, authority, scar-

city, and liking. Over a wide range of influence practitioners, professions, settings, and historical eras, compliance practices that engaged one or another of these six principles appeared to be more successful than those that did not employ them. However, the wide-ranging effectiveness of the principles may be called into question when one recognizes that the majority of evidence for their success comes from North America.

Indeed, most social psychological research on social influence has been conducted by North Americans on North Americans (Smith & Bond, 1994). Milgram's experiments on obedience to authority and Asch's conformity experiments, which have been replicated in many nations other than the United States, are notable exceptions (Bond & Smith, 1996; Furnham, 1984; Smith & Bond, 1994). The relative dearth of cross-cultural compliance research is surprising given the significant attention directed toward examining the impact of culture on various other forms of human responding in recent years, such as social loafing (Earley, 1989; Gabrenya, Wang, & Latane, 1985), conceptions of time (Levine,

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1988), self-concept (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), self-enhancement tendencies (Heine & Lehman, 1995, 1997), workplace values (Hofstede, 1980), workplace conformity (Hamilton & Sanders, 1995), self-disclosure (Derlega & Stepien, 1977; Won-Doornink, 1985), and numerous other social psychological variables.

Similarly, the individualism/collectivism (I/C) dimension, the most studied cross-cultural variable in social psychological research in the last decade (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994; Triandis, 1995), has been little examined for its effects on persuasion (Han & Shavitt, 1994). Bond and Smith's (1996) meta-analysis of conformity studies using the Asch line judgment task in 17 countries, although providing insight into the relationship between conformity and I/C, had to introduce I/C as a mediator in a post facto manner because the original researchers did not include this variable in their analyses.

The main purpose of the present research was to investigate the effect of individualistic versus collectivistic tendencies on the effectiveness of selected principles of social influence. We begin by briefly describing some of the defining attributes of the I/C dimension. We then introduce two principles of social influence (social proof and commitment/consistency) that we hypothesize will be differentially affected by I/C orientation.

I/C as a Cultural and Personal Dimension

I/C is considered a core dimension of cultural variability (Han & Shavitt, 1994; Hofstede, 1980; Kim et al., 1994; Smith & Bond, 1994). Members of individualistic societies tend to define the self as autonomous and independent from groups, whereas in collectivistic societies, the self is defined more in terms of group membership (Kim, 1994). Differences also are found in the relationship between personal goals and in-group goals. Personal goals tend to be distinct from and prioritized above in-group goals in an individualistic society. In a collectivistic culture, on the other hand, personal goals and communal goals are more closely related and, when discrepant, the former are subordinated to the latter (Triandis, 1995, 1996). In individualistic nations, attitudes typically take precedence over norms as determinants of social behavior, whereas the opposite is true in collectivistic nations. Furthermore, in an individualistic society, interpersonal relationships are established and maintained primarily on the basis of their individual costs and benefits, whereas relationships are judged primarily on their value to the group and only secondarily with respect to their value to the individual in a collectivistic culture (Triandis, 1995, 1996). In total, as collectivistic orientation increasingly characterizes a society, the focus of

attention, analysis, and comparison falls increasingly on the group rather than on the individual.

Although conceptualizations of I/C were initially applied at the level of nation or culture (Hofstede, 1980), these constructs can also be operationalized at the individual level and have been labeled idiocentrism and allocentrism (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988; Triandis et al., 1993) or independent and interdependent construals of the self, respectively (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Within either an individualistic or collectivistic society, people may differ from one another with regard to their personal I/C orientation. Thus, any investigation of I/C should take into account both the dominant cultural orientation and the personal I/C orientation of research participants. Because nations demonstrate variability in their proportions of individualistic and collectivistic citizens, an interesting question arises, hinted at by Triandis, Leung, Villareal, and Clack (1985): Would an individualist in an individualistic culture (or a collectivist in a collectivistic culture) respond like an individualist in a collectivistic culture (or a collectivist in an individualistic culture)? That is, is I/C-based responding attributable entirely to the dominant cultural orientation of one's society or is there an additional, unique impact due to one's personal I/C orientation? The answer to this question, as it pertained to principles of successful social influence, was one focus of the present research project.

Compliance-gaining strategies may be categorized according to the underlying psychological principles through which they operate. Of the six fundamental psychological principles of social influence identified by Cialdini (1987, 1993), two seemed especially linked to collectivistic and individualistic motivations: social proof and commitment/consistency, respectively.

Social Proof

According to the principle of social proof, one way that individuals determine appropriate behavior for themselves in a situation is to examine the behavior of others there, especially similar others (Cialdini, 1993; Goethals & Darley, 1977; Miller, 1984). It is through social comparison with referent others that people validate the correctness of their opinions and decisions (Festinger, 1954). As a consequence, people tend to behave as their friends and peers have behaved. This principle has been shown to guide such diverse actions as returning a lost wallet (Hornstein, Fisch, & Holmes, 1968), littering in a public place (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990), donating funds to charity (Reingen, 1982), approaching a frightening dog (Bandura, Grusec, & Menlove, 1967), engaging in promiscuous sexual activity in a "safe" versus "unsafe" manner (Buunk & Baker, 1995; Winslow, Franzini, & Hwang, 1992), and even in

deciding whether and how to commit suicide (Garland & Zigler, 1993; Phillips & Carstensen, 1988).

Because the critical source of information within the principle of social proof is the responses of referent others, compliance tactics that employ this information should be especially effective in collectivistically oriented nations and persons. Some evidence in this regard comes from a study by Han and Shavitt (1994), which shows that advertisements that promoted group benefits were more persuasive in Korea (a collectivistic society) than in the United States (an individualistic society). These data must be seen as only suggestive for our hypothesis, however, because the selected (and successful) advertisements in Korea encouraged purchases by pointing out the advantages to one's group of buying the advertised product rather than by pointing out that one's group had a history of buying it. It is this latter information that would reflect directly on our hypothesis. Regrettably, neither the Han and Shavitt (1994) study nor any other study of which we are aware has investigated the relative impact of purely social proof-based appeals across cultures or persons differing in I/C orientation. A seeming exception is the highly informative meta-analysis done by Bond and Smith (1996) on conformity in the Asch line-judging paradigm. The analysis showed a strong positive effect of cultural value toward collectivism on conformity to group judgments. However, it is not possible to determine from this finding the extent to which the increase in conformity in collectivistic cultures was due to personal I/C orientation as we hoped to do in the present study.

Commitment/Consistency

Social psychologists have long considered the desire for consistency within one's attitudes, beliefs, and actions a central motivator of human conduct (Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1946, 1958; Newcomb, 1953). Most people prefer to be consistent with what they have already said and done; thus, after committing themselves to a particular position—especially when the commitment is active, public, and freely chosen—people are more likely to behave in ways that are congruent with that position (Aronson, 1992; Cialdini, 1993). As a consequence, future behavior is likely to resemble past behavior because this past behavior occurred.

As opposed to the social proof principle (wherein motivating information comes from the prior responses of one's peers), within the commitment/consistency principle, the motivating information comes from one's own prior responses. Accordingly, the impact of social influence practices that embody the commitment/consistency principle should be especially strong in individualistically oriented cultures and individuals. That is, in instances in which the individualized self is both the

focus and the standard, one's own behavioral history should be heavily weighted in subsequent behavior.

One compliance tactic that relies on the commitment/consistency principle for its effectiveness is the foot-in-the-door technique (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). This technique begins with a request that is so small that it is almost always successful. After the initial compliance (commitment) is attained, a larger, related request is then made. Agreement to perform the second request is usually enhanced by this technique and is often interpreted as resulting from a desire to be consistent with the initial commitment (Cialdini, 1993). Dillard's (1991) review of five meta-analyses of the tactic indicated good support for its reliability. However, the reviewed studies were conducted almost exclusively on North American samples, leaving unanswered the question of the relative effectiveness of the technique across cultures. Furthermore, none of the studies examined the role of participants' personal I/C orientation on their responding. In total, as with the social proof principle, existing research sheds little light on the question of whether commitment/consistency-based compliance tactics are more successful when directed at populations characterized by an individualistic orientation than when targeted at collectivists.

Overview and Predictions

Our overall purpose was to investigate the differential effects of individualism and collectivism on compliance resulting from the principles of social proof (SP) and commitment/consistency (C/C) in a pair of cultures expected to differ in I/C orientation (Poland and the United States). To do so, we inquired into the willingness of Polish and U.S. college students to comply with a request to participate in a 40-minute marketing survey. They did so while taking into account information about prior compliance with such requests of either their peers or of themselves. Prior compliance was varied along a continuum ranging from complete past compliance to no past compliance. We also inquired into their willingness to comply if the marketing survey required collaborative, group answers rather than individual answers to survey questions.

Poland was selected for inclusion because, along with other Central and Eastern European nations, it has largely been ignored in previous cross-cultural research on I/C. Yet, despite popular belief that there has been a dramatic shift toward individualism in Poland, strong collectivistic elements have persisted (Reykowski, 1994, 1998).

We had four main hypotheses. First, we expected that information about peers' prior compliance (SP) would affect participants' compliance levels more in the collectivistic nation of Poland than in the individualistic

United States, whereas information about one's own prior compliance (C/C) would have the opposite effect, exerting more influence in the United States than in Poland. It is important to note that we did not expect that the principles would operate in an either-or fashion, with the influence of one excluding the influence of the other. Rather, we anticipated that both principles would be effective in both cultures but that their relative impact would differ in the two countries.

Second, we expected that within a culture, willingness to comply based on one's peers' (SP) or one's own (C/C) prior compliance would be importantly determined by the participants' personal I/C orientation. That is, we predicted that collectivists in both countries would be more affected than individualists by peers' compliance histories, but that individualists in both countries would be more affected by their own histories. Unknown was the extent to which participants' willingness to comply would be accounted for by their personal I/C orientations versus the dominant I/C orientation of their nation. The lack of a clear prediction in this regard was due to our failure to locate prior systematic evidence on the question. However, our third hypothesis was that the majority of the I/C effect would be attributable to the personal dimension. This expectation was based on our view that even societal-level forces affect behavior through their influence on one's personal psychology.

Fourth, we predicted that when the marketing survey was known to require collaborative responses, collectivists, regardless of nationality, would be more willing to participate. That is, we expected that the tendency of collectivists to use others' responses as grounds for their own would make them more amenable than individualists to group-based responding.

METHOD

Participants

Participants consisted of 505 undergraduates in several psychology classes at Arizona State University in the United States and at the University of Silesia in Poland. They participated in a study described as a two-fold investigation into factors affecting (a) willingness to participate in a survey and (b) perceptions of social relationships. In Poland, the sample included 109 males and 161 females; the U.S. sample included 63 males and 172 females. A preliminary data analysis revealed no significant differences due to gender, $F(1, 503) = .04, ns$. Consequently, this factor is not treated further.

Design

A $2 \times 2 \times 3$ factorial design with one continuous variable was used in this study. Two categories of national culture (United States, Poland), two categories of social

influence principle (social proof, commitment/consistency), and three levels of each social influence variable (high, moderate, low intensity) were included. In addition, personal I/C orientation was incorporated as a continuous fourth factor. Participants were randomly assigned to the two social influence principles and participated in each of the three levels of influence intensity within that principle.

Procedure

After the study was introduced in class, each participant read the following scenario in his or her native language:

Imagine that you are walking out of the student union at your university and that an individual approaches you. This person is a representative from the Coca-Cola Company and asks you to participate in a survey. The representative explains that Coca-Cola is studying consumer preferences for a particular brand of soft drink. You will be asked to answer a few questions about the product, taste a small amount of it, and answer more questions such as "How familiar are you with this brand of soft drink?" "Have you heard or seen advertisements for it?" "When was the last time you saw this brand at the store?" and a variety of similar questions. The representative asks you to participate in the survey today, which will take approximately 40 minutes.

At the completion of the scenario, participants responded anonymously to a questionnaire that incorporated the major independent and dependent variables. The questionnaire manipulated the type of social influence principle that participants experienced (SP or C/C) and the intensity with which they experienced it (high, moderate, or low). In addition, the questionnaire included items that measured willingness to participate in the marketing survey. Finally, the questionnaire measured participants' personal I/C orientation by registering their responses to the Cultural Orientation Scale (COS) (Bierbrauer, Meyer, & Wolfradt, 1994). All written materials were translated into Polish by a bilingual, native Polish speaker and were reviewed and validated by a second bilingual, native Polish speaker.

Independent Variables

Nation. Participants' nation of origin was varied by administering the experimental materials to native students in the United States and Poland.

Personal I/C orientation. Participants' personal I/C orientation was measured by the COS. Bierbrauer et al. (1994) report a total Cronbach's alpha reliability of .86 for this scale. We opted for the COS because it had been validated as a measure of personal I/C orientation on European respondents. The COS consists of 13 pairs of

questions designed to assess both the perceived presence of individualistic/collectivistic tendencies in a culture and their evaluation. The first question of each pair measures the participant's perception of the frequency of specific behaviors in the participant's native country, such as consulting one's family before making an important decision. Responses are made on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*always*). The second question in each pair assesses the individual's evaluation of this behavior using a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (*very bad*) to 6 (*very good*). For the current study, the COS was used without modification (see Bierbrauer et al., 1994) and the overall measure of I/C orientation, which averages responses to all 26 items, was used.

Type of social influence principle. Approximately half of the participants were instructed to rate their willingness to comply with the survey request while taking into account information about their peers' (SP) prior compliance with such survey requests and about half while considering information about their own (C/C) prior compliance with such survey requests.

Intensity of the social influence principle. Participants in the SP condition indicated their willingness to comply with the survey request three times: once when considering that in the past all their classmates had complied with similar requests (high intensity), once when considering that about half had complied (moderate intensity), and once when considering that none had complied (low intensity). Similarly, participants in the C/C condition indicated their willingness to comply when considering that in the past they themselves had always complied, had complied about half of the time, and had never complied with similar requests. Thus, the intensity variable was manipulated as a within-subjects factor.¹

Dependent Variables

Willingness to comply. Participants indicated their willingness to comply with the marketing survey request first on 9-point scales ranging from 0 (*no likelihood*) to 8 (*very high likelihood*). They did so three times, once for each level of the intensity factor.

Willingness to collaborate. Participants then indicated the extent to which their willingness to comply would change if the marketing survey required collaborative group answers to its questions. They did so on a second 9-point scale ranging from 0 (*much less likely*) to 8 (*much more likely*).

RESULTS

A general linear model was used for all of the analyses. Greenhouse-Geisser's epsilon was used to compensate for the overestimation of degrees of freedom for the within-groups factor of principle intensity.

Nation and Compliance

Our first hypothesis was that the effect of a manipulation of the SP principle would be stronger in Poland (a more collectivistic culture) than in the United States (a more individualistic culture), whereas the effect of a manipulation of the C/C principle would be stronger in the United States than in Poland.² This hypothesis was tested as a three-way interaction among the variables of nation, type of social influence principle, and intensity of the principle. That interaction proved significant, $F(2, 1002) = 4.36, p < .05$. The lower level, two-way interactions showed that, as predicted, the effect of the SP manipulation was stronger in Poland than in the United States, $F(2, 428) = 3.48, p < .05$, and that the effect of the C/C manipulation was marginally stronger in the United States than in Poland, $F(2, 574) = 2.31, p = .12$. The analysis also revealed a highly significant main effect for intensity of the principle, $F(1, 501) = 181.91, p < .001$. An examination of the compliance data depicted in Figures 1a and 1b shows that both principles had linear effects on compliance decisions in each nation. In all four comparisons, the most compliance appeared at the highest level of principle intensity (in the all/always conditions), and the least compliance appeared at the lowest level of principle intensity (in the none/never conditions); all p s for these linear trend comparisons $< .001$. None of the nonlinear trend effects approached significance, all F s < 1 . In sum, although both SP and C/C had a significant impact on compliance in both nations, their relative strengths differed such that SP was more effective in Poland than in the United States and C/C was more effective in the United States than in Poland.

I/C and Compliance

Our second and third hypotheses were that, across cultures, participants' willingness to comply on the basis of SP versus C/C information would be importantly affected by their personal I/C orientations and that the effect of personal I/C orientation would account for the majority of the effect observed for national I/C orientation. To test these hypotheses, we included personal I/C orientation (as measured by COS score) in the general linear model along with nation, type of social influence principle, and intensity of the principle and found, in support of our third hypothesis, that nation no longer predicted compliance; indeed, no main effect or interaction involving nation remained significant once personal I/C was included in the model. Instead, the three-way interaction that had included nation was replaced by a three-way interaction that included personal I/C score, $F(2, 976) = 4.64, p < .05$. That three-way interaction was composed of a pair of two-way interactions, both of which were consistent with our second hypothesis. First, collectivists were more likely to make their decisions to

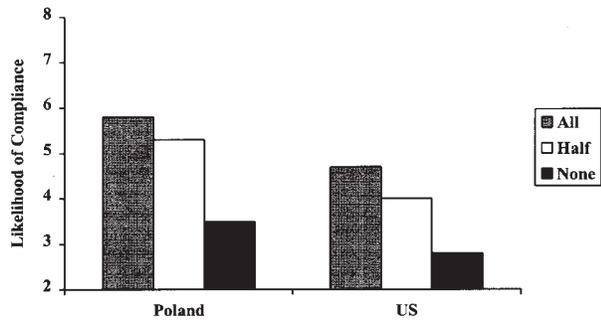


Figure 1a Effect of social proof on likelihood of compliance in Poland and the United States.

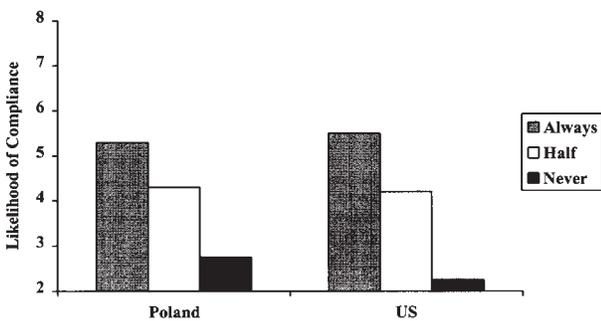


Figure 1b Effect of commitment/consistency on likelihood of compliance in Poland and the United States.

comply on the basis of SP principle intensity than were individualists, $F(2, 420) = 6.62, p < .01$. Second, individualists were marginally more likely to make their own decisions to comply on the basis of C/C principle intensity than were collectivists, $F(2, 564) = 2.07, p = .14$. These interaction patterns are presented in Figures 2a and 2b.

The marginal character of the interaction between personal I/C orientation and C/C principle intensity spurred us to look separately at the form of the interaction among Polish and American participants. The interaction pattern was close to conventional significance and was as predicted in the United States in that individualists were more affected by information concerning their own past compliance than were collectivists, $F(2, 226) = 2.82, p = .08$. In Poland, however, the interaction did not approach significance, $F(2, 334) < 1$. Instead, there was only a significant main effect for I/C orientation, $F(1, 167) = 4.48, p < .05$, such that collectivists were more likely to comply than individualists. To explore whether comparable national differences occurred within the SP condition data, we examined the personal I/C orientation by SP intensity interactions in Poland and in the United States. Both interaction pat-

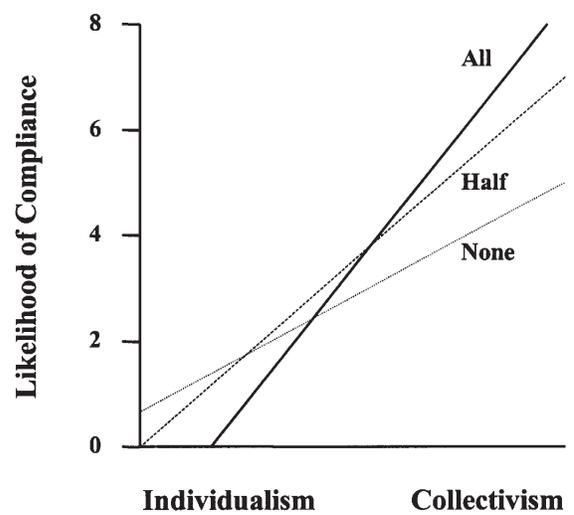


Figure 2a Effect of social proof and individualism/collectivism on likelihood of compliance.

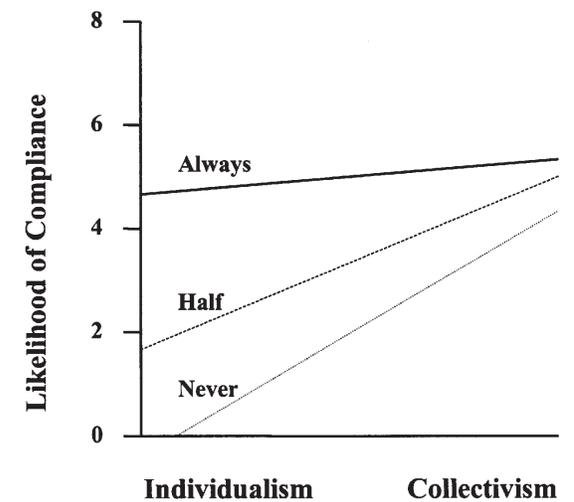


Figure 2b Effect of commitment/consistency and individualism/collectivism on likelihood of compliance.

terns were similar and as predicted, with information regarding the compliance history of one's group having more of an impact on collectivists' than individualists' compliance decisions in the United States, $F(2, 220) = 3.43, p < .05$, and in Poland, $F(2, 196) = 3.33, p < .06$. The patterns for all four of the interactions are presented in Figures 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d.

In sum, for the most part, the relationships between personal I/C orientation and the two influence principles appeared as anticipated: Compared to individualists, collectivists' compliance decisions were more affected by the compliance histories of their peers, and

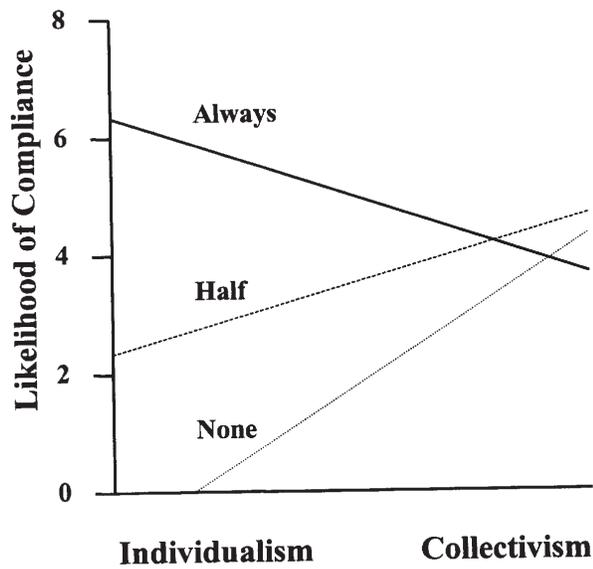


Figure 3a Effect of commitment/consistency and individualism/collectivism on likelihood of compliance in the United States.

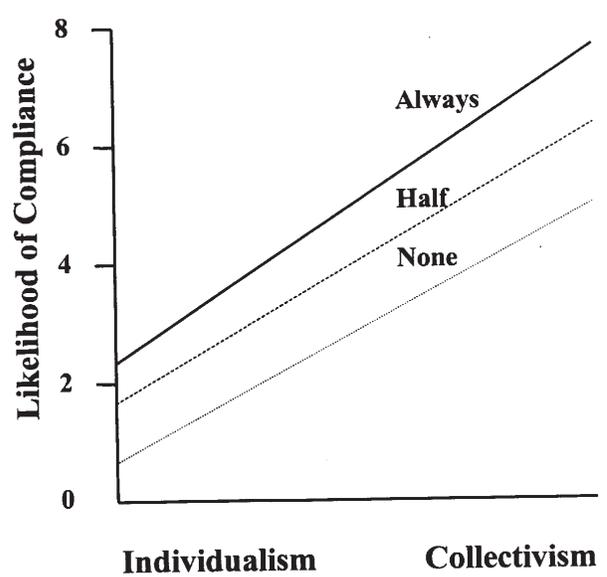


Figure 3b Effect of commitment/consistency and individualism/collectivism on likelihood of compliance in the Poland.

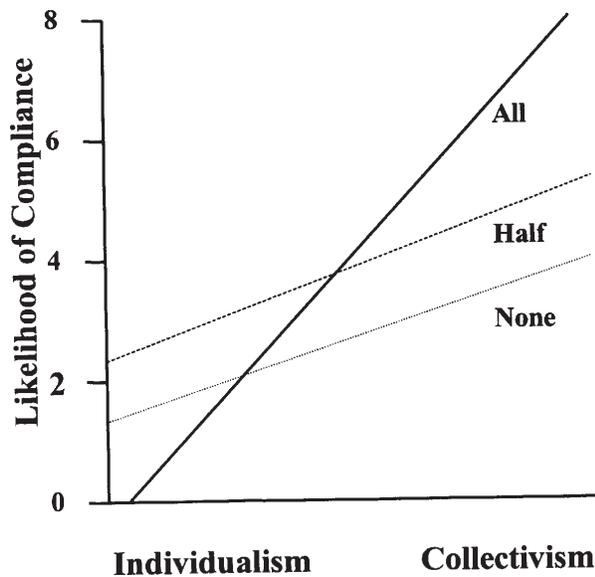


Figure 3c Effect of social proof and individualism/collectivism on likelihood of compliance in the United States.

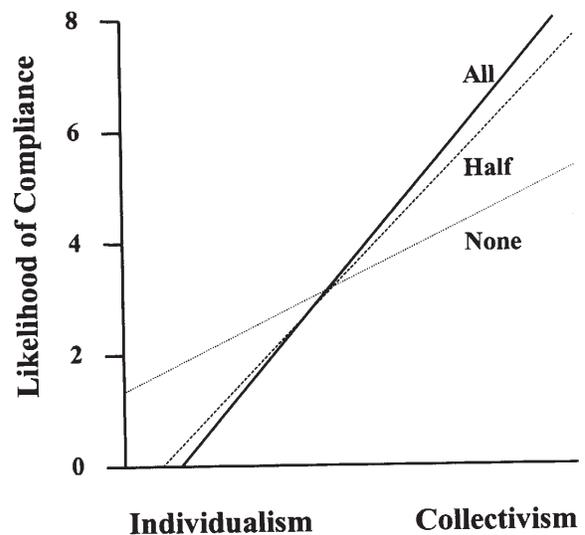


Figure 3d Effect of social proof and individualism/collectivism on likelihood of compliance in Poland.

this was the case in both the United States and Poland. In contrast, compared to collectivists, individualists' compliance decisions were more affected by their own compliance histories; unexpectedly, however, this was only the case in the United States.

Required Collaboration and Compliance

Our fourth hypothesis was that when collaboration with others was a necessary feature of the requested task, collectivists, regardless of nationality, would be more

willing than individualists to comply with the request. To test that hypothesis, we asked participants, as described previously, to indicate their likelihood of compliance with the survey request given that answers to the survey questions would have to reflect group consensus. The hypothesis was supported by a main effect for personal I/C orientation, indicating that willingness to comply under the group consensus requirement was greater among collectivists, $F(1, 491) = 10.30, p < .01$. However, this main effect was qualified by an interaction of personal I/C orientation and type of social influence principle, $F(1, 491) = 6.45, p < .05$, the form of which is depicted in Figure 4. Tests of simple effects within the interaction revealed that the tendency for collectivists to be more favorable than individualists to collectivistic responding was significant only for participants who had previously been focused on their peers' compliance histories (SP condition) in the experimental scenario, $F(1, 210) = 13.54, p < .01$; there was no hint of such an effect among participants who had been previously focused on their own compliance histories (C/C condition), $F < 1$. No other effects proved significant. In sum, the predicted tendency of collectivists to be more willing than individualists to perform a collaborative task was canceled by a prior focus on oneself rather than on one's group as a standard for decision.

Investigation of a Puzzling Result

Overall, there was a main effect of collectivism on compliance such that collectivists tended to comply more than individualists, $F(1, 488) = 15.18, p < .001$. As hypothesized, in the SP conditions, collectivists tended to comply more than individualists in both the all/always and half conditions; this was expected because collectivists should naturally be more responsive to evidence of peers' prior compliance than individualists. However, it was surprising that in the none condition for SP, in which participants learned that none of their classmates had agreed to participate in previous similar surveys, collectivists still complied more than individualists, $F(1, 492) = 6.38, p < .05$.

One possible explanation for this anomaly is that because of their orientation toward social interdependency (Triandis et al., 1988), collectivists may possess a stronger social responsibility norm than individualists. According to this norm, people should give aid to those who are dependent on them for it (Berkowitz, 1972) or to compensate for those who are less efficient or less able (Smith & Bond, 1994). That is, they should assume the responsibility for helping others, especially when no one else has agreed to help. If collectivists do feel more social responsibility than individualists, perhaps they were more willing to comply in the none condition of our

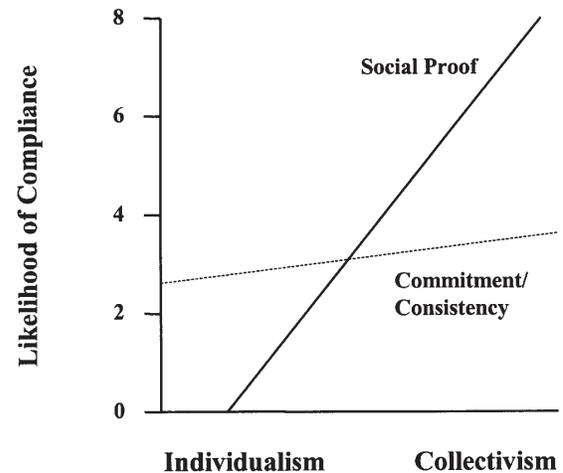


Figure 4 Effects of individualism/collectivism on likelihood of compliance among participants previously focused on social proof or commitment/consistency when group collaboration was required.

study precisely because no one else had been willing to help the survey requester. This left them with the social responsibility for helping. To test our hypothesis, we conducted a follow-up investigation that was designed to examine the possibility that collectivists' willingness to comply in the none condition occurred, in part, out of a desire to be socially responsible by helping when no one else had been willing to help the survey requester.

The sample for our follow-up investigation consisted of 73 male and female undergraduates from Arizona State University who were exposed to the same experimental materials as participants in the original SP intensity conditions of our study, with one exception: Whereas the original SP intensity condition materials varied the proportion of classmates who had participated in previous similar surveys, the materials of the modified SP intensity conditions varied the proportion of classmates who indicated that they liked participating in such surveys. Participants were asked to consider that after several classmates participated in similar types of surveys in the past, each of them, about half of them, or not one of them said that they liked participating in the surveys. In this way, with the amount of prior helping held constant, participants could respond more directly to information about the reactions of similar others.

Our hypothesis was tested through a comparison of trends between the two types of SP information in the all, half, and none conditions. Although the trends for the all condition, $F(1, 187) = .8, ns$, and half condition, $F(1, 187) = 2.17, p = .14$, did not differ between the two kinds of SP information, they did differ for the none condi-

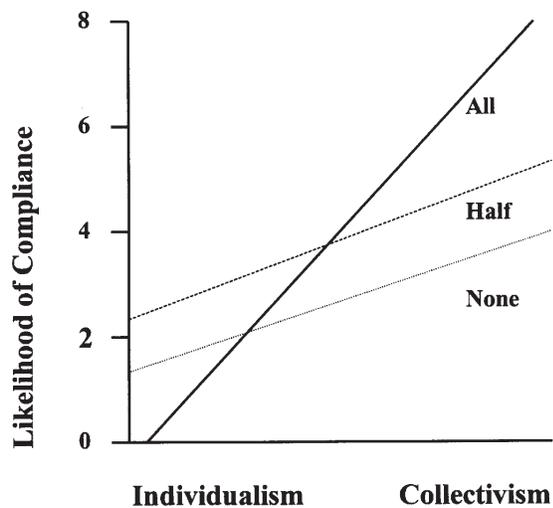


Figure 5a Compliance based on information about others' compliance.

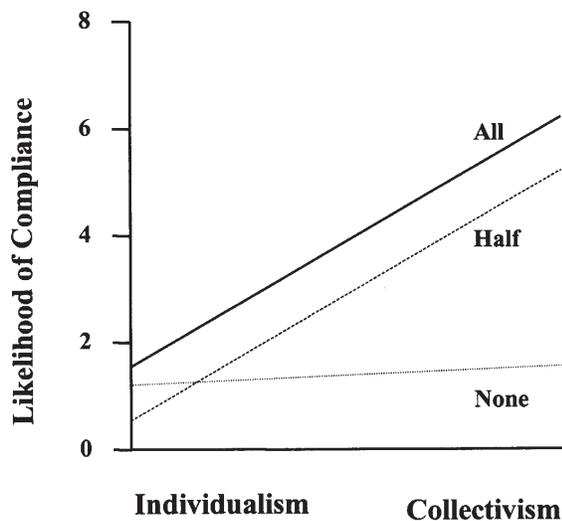


Figure 5b Compliance based on whether others liked their own experience of compliance.

tion, $F(1, 187) = 25.13, p < .001$, such that collectivists were no longer more willing to comply than individualists. Figures 5a and 5b present the form of these effects. Thus, when participants were exposed to social comparison information that did not imply differences in the

amount of helping still needed, this unconfounded information guided their responding commensurately.

DISCUSSION

Several insights emerge from the results of this research. First, information both about one's own and one's peers' histories of compliance had powerful effects on future willingness to comply with a related request in Poland and the United States. Thus, both the principles of social proof and commitment/consistency appear to be important determinants of compliance decisions in each society. Nonetheless, the decisional weight assigned to these two kinds of information differed depending on the participants' nationality. Evidence of what one had done in the past was relatively more impactful in the United States than in Poland, whereas evidence of what one's peers had done was relatively more impactful in Poland than in the United States. This pattern can be understood in terms of the greater tendencies toward individualism in the United States and toward collectivism in Poland.

Indeed, when participants' personal I/C scores were included in the data analysis, all statistical differences in compliance patterns between the two nations were eliminated. Thus, the majority of the I/C-based effect on our compliance data can be attributed to participants' personal I/C orientations rather than to the dominant I/C traditions of their respective nations. In general, irrespective of nationality, collectivists were more influenced by their peers' compliance histories and individualists were more influenced by their own compliance histories in deciding how to respond to a new compliance opportunity. A close analysis of the data revealed one exception to this general conclusion, however. Unlike their U.S. counterparts, Polish individualists and collectivists were not differentially influenced by information about their prior compliance decisions.

Why should this be? Although our study provided no data directly relevant to this question, we can offer a speculation based on prior research. An examination of Figure 3b indicates that the data pattern of the Polish participants differed from that of U.S. participants (and from prediction) primarily because Polish individualists did not base their compliance estimates on their compliance histories. This may have been the case because, in a collectivistic society, how one has behaved in the past may not be an accurate reflection of one's own preferences. Because of strong pressures to conform to group norms and to foster group goals, even individualistic members of collectivistic societies may have frequently failed to act in accord with their personal norms and goals (Triandis, 1995, 1996) and, hence, may not see a

strong correlation between their prior actions and personal predilections.

For example, Bontempo, Lobel, and Triandis (1990) demonstrated a stronger intention of Brazilians than North Americans to do what was expected of them, even if both groups had personal orientations toward individualism (idiocentrism). Thus, the prior compliance of Polish individualists may not have been highly informative as to what they would decide when asked to comply under little group pressure, as was the case in our study. Whether our speculation is or is not correct, future research should examine this intriguing feature of our data because it suggests that I/C-based behavior is best understood as a joint function of cultural and personal I/C orientations.

A final insight of our findings also highlights the joint action of influences on behavior—in this instance, situational and dispositional influences. Recall that our prediction that collectivists would be more favorable than individualists toward collaborative responding held true only when participants had been focused on others as standards of comparison (i.e., in the SP condition). When participants had been previously focused on themselves (i.e., in the C/C condition), this tendency was entirely eliminated. We interpret this outcome in terms of research on the activation/deactivation of dispositional motives by situational factors. There is substantial evidence that existing dispositions (e.g., traits, attitudes, values) either are or are not good predictors of responding depending on whether aspects of the situation focus people on or away from the sources of these dispositions (Bargh, 1997; Cialdini et al., 1990; Deaux & Major, 1987; Kenrick & Funder, 1988; Sedikides & Skowronski, 1991).

Thus, it is likely that the strong tendency of collectivists in our SP condition to prefer group responding occurred because their dispositionally collectivistic orientations had been recently activated (primed) by situational circumstances that focused them on collectivistic norms. It seems equally likely that the lack of a similar tendency among the collectivists in our C/C condition occurred because situational circumstances had focused them away from collectivistic norms and in another direction. That is, it is sometimes easy to forget that priming procedures not only activate focal constructs in consciousness but also deactivate competing or incompatible constructs (Anderson & Spellman, 1995; Macrae, Bodenhausen, & Milne, 1995; Tipper, 1992). The lesson of this facet of our findings is that to properly predict the pattern of I/C-based responding, like almost any form of complex human responding, one must take into account the interaction of dispositional and situational

forces (Diener, Larson, & Emmons, 1984; Mayer & Sutton, 1996; Snyder & Ickes, 1985).

Future research could profitably take two directions. First, follow-up work could seek to replicate and build on the outcomes of the present study using different methodological approaches. For instance, one potential weakness of our methodology is that we did not register participants' behavior in an actual compliance setting but measured their expressed willingness to comply in a structured compliance scenario. Fortunately, the anonymous nature of participants' responses addresses this weakness in one important way by reducing motivations for socially desirable responding. That is, there is good evidence that individuals accurately record their attitudes and intentions on self-report measures except when there are strong self-presentational reasons to misrepresent them (Cialdini & Baumann, 1981; Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995) and that in the absence of these strong social desirability pressures, intentions are good predictors of behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). However, future studies should test the cross-situational robustness of our results by examining the impact of I/C orientation on the effectiveness of existing compliance tactics that embody the C/C and SP principles. One might expect, for example, that the foot-in-the-door technique (Dillard, 1991; Freedman & Fraser, 1966), which spurs subsequent compliance by inducing initial compliance, would be more successful on individualistic targets who use their own prior actions as a principle basis for decisions about further actions. Conversely, one might expect the list technique (Reingen, 1982), which stimulates compliance by showing participants (long or short) lists of others who have already complied, would be more successful on collectivistic targets.

A second direction for future research would be to examine cross-culturally the relative effectiveness of other principles of social influence besides C/C and SP. That is, it would be interesting to test whether principles based on interpersonal relations, such as hierarchical authority, are relatively more potent in communal cultures than principles that are not based in the interpersonal domain, such as scarcity. Whatever the direction of subsequent work on the topic, investigations of the functioning of social influence principles across cultures would continue to help fill a regrettably large gap in knowledge.

NOTES

1. To ensure that the invariant presentation order of the levels of intensity (from high to moderate to low) did not affect our results, we exposed a sample of 58 U.S. participants to a pair of alternate orders (low, moderate, high; moderate, high, low). When their compliance

responses were compared to those of participants in our main study, no order effects approached significance.

2. An analysis of Cultural Orientation Scale (COS) data on Polish and U.S. participants confirmed that average COS scores were significantly higher (more collectivistic) in Poland ($M = 92.61$, $SD = 8.07$) than in the United States ($M = 87.60$, $SD = 10.39$), $F(1, 494) = 36.54$, $p < .001$.

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