Good for Self or Good for Others?
The Well-Being Benefits of Kindness in Two Cultures Depend on How the Kindness is Framed

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Abstract

In light of cultural differences in conceptions of happiness, we investigated whether members of independent (vs. interdependent) cultures would benefit from prosocial behavior when self-focus is highlighted (vs. when other-focus is highlighted). In a 1-week randomized controlled intervention, U.S. ($N = 280$) and South Korean ($N = 261$) participants were randomly assigned to read a news article that described kind acts as good for oneself or good for others, or to read a control article. All participants then performed kind acts throughout the week, and completed pre- and post- measures of subjective well-being, connectedness, competence, and autonomy. Consistent with independent self-construals, U.S. participants who read that kindness was good for themselves showed greater increases in positive affect, satisfaction with life, and feelings of connectedness—and greater decreases in negative affect—than those who read the control article. Future research is needed to continue developing culturally-sensitive designs of positive activities.
Good for Self or Good for Others?

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The pursuit of happiness is a global phenomenon, regularly dominating cultural discourse, popular media, and people’s closely held goals (Diener, 2000). Not surprisingly, psychological scientists have been exploring specific strategies—or positive activities—that can sustainably improve happiness. Positive activity interventions experimentally test the practice of simple, self-administered cognitive and behavioral strategies that can increase subjective well-being by promoting positive feelings, positive thoughts, and positive behaviors (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014). For example, activities such as counting one’s blessings (Chancellor, Layous, & Lyubomirsky, 2015; Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), writing letters of gratitude (Boehm, Lyubomirsky, & Sheldon, 2011; Layous et al., 2017; Layous, Lee, Choi, & Lyubomirsky, 2013; Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm, & Sheldon, 2011; Seligman et al., 2005), and performing acts of kindness (Chancellor, Margolis, Jacobs Bao, & Lyubomirsky, 2018; Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008; Layous et al., 2013; Nelson et al., 2015; Nelson, Layous, Cole, & Lyubomirsky, 2016; Sheldon, Boehm, & Lyubomirsky, 2012) have been shown to reliably boost well-being. If administered optimally, positive activity interventions can also build positive psychological resources such as social connections and meaning in life, as well as ameliorate existing maladaptive symptoms such as anxiety and rumination (Layous, Chancellor, & Lyubomirsky, 2014; Seligman, Rashid, & Parks, 2006; Seligman et al., 2005; Shin & Lyubomirsky, 2016; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009; Taylor, Lyubomirsky, & Stein, 2017).

A notable criticism of current research testing positive activity interventions is that their trials have been conducted on primarily Anglo/European (i.e., Western) samples (Shin &
Lyubomirsky, 2017; but see Layous et al., 2013; Titova, Wagstaff, & Parks, 2017, for exceptions). Because Asians comprise 60 percent of the world’s population (Population Reference Bureau, 2014) and Asian Americans are the fastest-growing minority group in the U.S., there is a critical need to address these groups’ mental health needs (U.S. Census, 2010). For example, South Korea currently has the highest rate of hospitalizations for mental illness and the highest suicide rate for a member country of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (WHO, 2017). Self-administered positive activities may be especially valuable for Asians and Asian Americans because they are relatively less stigmatizing, low-cost, and carry minimal side effects.

Subjective Well-Being in Independent Versus Interdependent Cultures

Although the need for research on strategies to improve mental health among Asians and Asian Americans is clear, investigators should be careful not to assume a one-size-fits-all approach, due to cultural differences in Western and Eastern conceptions of well-being. A widely used definition of subjective well-being in Western (independent) cultures is “a preponderance of positive affect over negative affect” and “a global satisfaction with one’s life" (Diener, 1984). In recent years, however, psychologists have sought to distinguish Eastern notions of well-being from those of Western traditions, defining interdependent subjective well-being as “the global, subjective assessment of whether one is interpersonally harmonized with other people, being quiescent, and being ordinary, and connected to the collective way of well-being” (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015, p. 214).

These differences in conceptions of subjective well-being build upon Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) work on independent and interdependent self-construals. Markus and Kitayama (1991) define an independent self-construal as a view of the self in which Western
individuals see themselves as autonomous entities who assert their rights and act agentically. In contrast, they define the Eastern, interdependent self-construal as a view of oneself as connected, relational, and belonging to a larger social group. These distinct self-views have been found to be associated with socially disengaging and socially engaging behaviors, respectively. Socially disengaging behaviors, such as asserting and protecting one’s rights, acting on the basis of one’s own judgments, and separating or distinguishing the self from the context, have been associated with independence and interpersonal disengagement of the self in the U.S. (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000). Applying the concept of independent self-construal to the pursuit of happiness, subjective well-being in Western cultures is generally characterized by an explicit striving for one’s individual or personal happiness that may involve mastering one’s environment and achieving goals (including social goals) independently (Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004). In other words, with an independent approach to pursuing subjective well-being, the ultimate goal is personal happiness, even if this pursuit may involve other people in the process.

Socially engaging behavior, on the other hand, involves taking one’s proper place, perfecting one’s roles, empathizing with others, acting on the bases of others’ expectations, and blurring the distinction between self and others. This type of behavior is prevalent in East Asian cultures and has been associated with interdependence and interpersonal engagement of the self (Kitayama et al., 2000). Subjective well-being in Eastern cultures thus emphasizes connectedness, group harmony, and the well-being of the collective group (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015; Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004)—that is, the ultimate goal is not one’s distinct personal happiness but rather the well-being of the group through harmonious and fulfilling relationships. As a case in point, American students’ happiness has been found to be highly correlated with interpersonally disengaged emotions such as pride, whereas the happiness of Japanese
counterparts has been found to be more closely linked to interpersonally engaged emotions such as friendly feelings towards others (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006).

Given the different approaches to well-being observed in Western and Eastern cultures, in the current study, we aimed to test whether framing a validated positive activity (i.e., doing acts of kindness) as good for the self would be additionally beneficial for increasing subjective well-being in a U.S. sample and whether framing it as good for others would be additionally beneficial in a South Korean sample. In other words, by framing a traditional kindness intervention in two different ways, we sought to test cultural differences in the factors that contribute to well-being.

**Kind Acts in Independent and Interdependent Cultures**

Behaving prosocially has been reliably shown to increase well-being in individuals from Western, independent cultures (Dunn et al., 2008; Layous et al., 2013; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, Schkade, 2005; Nelson et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2016; Sheldon et al., 2012). Evidence is mounting, however, that remembering and enacting kindness are positive activities that have the potential to be equally successful in Eastern, interdependent cultures due to their positive focus on others (Layous et al., 2013; Nelson et al., 2015; Otake, Shimai, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui, & Fredrickson, 2006). For example, a study in Japan reported that people increased in subjective well-being and became more kind and grateful after counting their own kind acts over the course of 1 week (Otake et al., 2006). In another study, South Koreans showed similar increases in well-being as did Americans when performing acts of kindness (Layous et al., 2013).

Additionally, self-determination theory postulates that humans have three basic needs—including autonomy (control over one’s choices), competence (feeling that one is effective and skilled), and relatedness (i.e., connectedness; feeling close and connected to others)—and that
the fulfillment of these needs is associated with greater psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Paralleling findings in the U.S., engaging in autonomous prosocial behavior in South Korea led to improvements in participants’ subjective well-being, as well as in feelings of autonomy, competence, and connectedness (Nelson et al., 2015). As a whole, these results suggest that practicing prosocial behaviors is indeed beneficial to individuals from Eastern cultures.

Importantly, not all positive activities work equally well across cultures. As a case in point, when U.S. and South Korean participants were randomly assigned to express gratitude or to perform kind acts, U.S. participants benefitted from both activities, whereas South Koreans benefitted only from performing kind acts but not from expressing gratitude (Layous et al., 2013). The researchers surmised that the South Koreans did not derive as much benefit from practicing gratitude because they felt indebted and/or guilty about being the recipient of others’ kind acts. This interpretation aligns with the idea that interdependent subjective well-being is concerned with the maintenance of interpersonal harmony, the welfare of the collective group, and the fulfillment of role obligations in relationships.

Consistent with this notion, prosocial behavior may boost East Asians’ well-being by contributing to the expected norms of maintaining the well-being of the collective group. By contrast, for Western (i.e., European or North American) individuals, prosocial behavior may serve to boost well-being because it is relatively less expected and/or confirms that one is a good person. Thus, framing prosocial behavior as good for the self may enhance its ability to increase well-being among a Western sample, whereas framing it as good for others may make it more likely to increase well-being among an Eastern sample.
To investigate the idea that members of independent cultures benefit from prosocial behavior when self-focus is highlighted, whereas members of interdependent cultures benefit when other-focus is highlighted, we designed a 1-week randomized controlled intervention. Participants from the U.S. (independent culture) and South Korea (interdependent culture) were randomly assigned to read a news article that described kind acts as good for oneself or good for others, or to read a control article about the benefits of being organized. All participants were then asked to perform kind acts throughout the week and completed both baseline and post-intervention measures of subjective well-being, connectedness, competence, and autonomy.

Hypotheses

First, we predicted that, due to their independent orientation, U.S. participants who read that performing kind acts is good for themselves (i.e., with “good for self” framing) and then perform them would experience greater gains in subjective well-being (namely, increased positive affect, decreased negative affect, and increased life satisfaction), as well as in autonomy, competence, and connectedness, than those who perform kind acts without any framing (i.e., controls; Hypothesis 1).

In contrast, we hypothesized that, due to their interdependent orientation, South Koreans who read that kind acts are good for others (i.e., “good for others” framing) and perform them would experience larger improvements in subjective well-being and need satisfaction than controls (i.e., no framing; Hypothesis 2).

Method

Participants

Two samples of students were recruited for this study. The first group comprised undergraduates ($n = 309$) attending the University of California, Riverside (UCR)—a diverse,
large public university in the United States—who completed the study in exchange for course credit. In this group, 29 participants were removed from the sample because they failed to complete the second time point, leaving a total of 280 participants (67% female), ages 18 to 35 ($M_{age} = 19.2, SD = 1.65$). Fifty-two percent of participants were Asian/Asian American, 28% Hispanic/Latino(a), 7% White/Caucasian, 3% Black/African American, and 10% Other/More than one (see Discussion on implications of ethnic identification of U.S. participants). A chi-square test of independence revealed that the participants who failed to complete the second time point did not vary by condition from those who did complete it, $\chi^2 (2, N = 309) = 1.83, p = .40$.

Drop-out status was examined as a predictor of all of our dependent variables, but no significant differences were found between U.S. participants who remained in the study until the end and those who dropped out after the first timepoint (all $t$s(307) $< |.81|$; all $ps > .42$).

Final sample sizes per condition in the U.S. were as follows: Good for Self ($n = 112$), Good for Others ($n = 87$), and Control ($n = 81$). A statistical power analysis software program, G*Power 3.1, revealed that for a small effect size ($f = .16$) and an alpha value of .05, 280 participants in three groups could detect the effect with 79% power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). Chi-square tests of independence indicated that gender, $\chi^2 (4, N = 279) = 4.37, p = .36$, and ethnicity, $\chi^2 (12, N = 279) = 11.16, p = .52$, did not vary by condition for the U.S. participants.

The second group comprised undergraduates ($n = 340$) attending Seoul National University (SNU)—a large public university in South Korea—who also completed the study in exchange for course credit. In this group, 67 participants were removed for not completing the second time point, leaving a total of 273 participants (48% female; 99% Korean, 1% other), ages 18 to 30 ($M_{age} = 21.4, SD = 2.63$). A chi-square test of independence revealed that the
participants who dropped out did not vary by condition from the participants who completed, $\chi^2(2, N = 340) = 2.85, p = .24$. Drop-out status did not significantly predict any of our dependent variables (all $t$s(338) $< |1.09|$; all $p$s $> .28$).

Sample sizes per condition in S. Korea were as follows: Good for Self ($n = 88$), Good for Others ($n = 91$), and Control ($n = 94$). For an alpha value of .05, 273 participants in 3 groups can detect a small effect size ($f = .16$) with 78% power. Finally, neither gender, $\chi^2(2, N = 273) = 3.31, p = .19$, nor ethnicity, $\chi^2(2, N = 273) = 2.01, p = .37$, varied by condition for South Korean participants.

**Design and Procedure**

A 3 (Condition: Good for Self, Good for Others, Control) $\times$ 2 (Cultural Background: U.S., South Korea) $\times$ 2 (Time: baseline/pre-intervention, post-intervention) mixed factorial design was used in this study (see Figure 1 for study timeline and measures).

*News Article Conditions: 1) Kindness is good for the self, 2) Kindness is good for others, or 3) Organization is good (control group)*

*Figure 1. Study timeline and measures.*

At baseline, all participants completed demographics and several well-being measures (described below). All measures and intervention instructions were administered in English for
U.S. participants and in Korean for South Korean participants. To create the Korean measures and intervention instructions, the English measures and instructions were translated into Korean by a bilingual speaker and then back-translated into English in order to confirm that the translations contained the same content as the English measures and instructions.

Participants were then randomly assigned to read news articles—all ostensibly from TIME Magazine for U.S. participants and Naver News for S. Korean participants—about how kindness benefits the self (Good for Self condition), how kindness benefits others (Good for Others condition), or how being organized benefits the self (neutral Control condition).¹ As shown in Appendices A and D, the Good for Self group read about evidence that being kind can increase personal happiness, alleviate depression, and boost work productivity, and that these effects occur universally across many cultures. Participants in the Good for Others group read about how being kind can boost the positive emotions, self-esteem, feelings of connectedness, engagement at work, and health of the recipients of kindness, and that these effects are evident across many different cultures (see Appendices B and E). Finally, the Control group read about how organizational skills can increase efficiency, the management of responsibilities, and the attainment of personal goals (see Appendices C and F).

After reading their assigned article, all participants were asked to perform acts of kindness for others. They could perform as many kind acts as they wanted, to whomever they chose, and with or without the beneficiary’s awareness; the only stipulation was that they were to be performed in all in one day. The instructions were as follows:

In our daily lives, we all perform acts of kindness for others. These acts may be large or small and the person for whom the act is performed may or may not be

¹ Prior to the current study, we conducted a similar study in which participants read news articles about how happiness is good for the self, how happiness is good for others, or about how being organized was beneficial and found no significant differences between these framing conditions for any of the outcome variables, PA, NA, SWL, Connectedness, and Competence (all $t_{contrasts} < |1.78|$; all $p_s > .05$).
aware of the act. Examples include helping your parents cook dinner, doing a chore for your sister or brother, helping a friend with homework, visiting an elderly relative, or writing a thank you letter. During one day this week (any day you choose), you are to perform acts of kindness (as many as you want) - all in one day. The acts do not need to be for the same person, the person may or may not be aware of the act, and the act may or may not be similar to the acts listed above. Next week, you will report what acts of kindness you chose to perform. Please do not perform any acts that may place yourself or others in danger.

After 1 week, participants logged back into the survey website, reported the kind acts they had performed that week, and completed post-manipulation measures of all of the constructs assessed at baseline.

**Measures**

**Positive and negative affect.** Participants’ emotions were assessed using the Modified Differential Emotions Scale (mDES; Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003). The mDES requires participants to recall and rate their strongest experience of a variety of positive emotions (e.g., “I have felt amused, fun-loving, silly”) and negative emotions (e.g., “I have felt angry, irritated, annoyed”) during the past week on a 5-point scale (0 = never, 5 = all of the time). The mDES includes a subscale for positive emotions (e.g., amusement, compassion, confidence; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .87$ at baseline; $\alpha = .88$ at post-intervention) and a subscale for negative emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, contempt; $\alpha = .85$ at baseline; $\alpha = .88$ at post-intervention).

**Life satisfaction.** To assess life satisfaction, participants completed the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS consists of five items (e.g., “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”) rated on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Cronbach’s $\alpha$ coefficients were .85 at baseline and .85 at post-intervention.

**Psychological need satisfaction.** Rooted in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), psychological need satisfaction assesses the degree to which people’s core needs are being met (Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001; Sheldon & Hilpert, 2012). The Balanced
Measure of Psychological Needs consists of 18 items, with six each representing autonomy (e.g., “I felt free to do things my own way”), connectedness (e.g., “I felt a sense of contact with people who care for me, and whom I care for”), and competence (e.g., “I felt that I was taking on and mastering hard challenges” (1 = no agreement, 5 = much agreement; Sheldon et al., 2001). Due to relatively low reliability (α = .58 to .67) of the three types of need satisfaction, results were analyzed by examining the three positively-worded items only (and excluding the three reverse-scored items). Studies have suggested that reverse-scored items tend to load onto a separate factor than positively-worded items, compromising the scale’s validity (Gehlbach, 2015). For positively-worded connectedness items, α = .80 at baseline and α = .76 at post-intervention; for positively-worded competence items, α = .81 at baseline and α = .83 at post-intervention; for positively-worded autonomy items, α = .67 at baseline and α = .69 at post-intervention. Because the reliability of positively-worded autonomy items was still low, autonomy was removed when we analyzed the data.

Acculturation. To assess level of acculturation, Asian and Asian American participants in the U.S. completed a short version of the Suinn-Lew Asian Self Identity Acculturation scale (SL-ASIA; Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo, 1992). The SL-ASIA consisted of 11 items (e.g., “Whom do you now associate with in the community?”) rated on a 5-point scale (1 = Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals, 5 = Almost exclusively Anglos, Black, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups). An average was computed, with higher scores on this measure indicating greater acculturation. Cronbach’s α coefficient was .80.

Results

2 For negatively-worded connectedness items, α = .44 at baseline and α = .43 at post-intervention; for negatively-worded competence items, α = .60 at baseline and α = .70 at post-intervention; for negatively-worded autonomy items, α = .57 at baseline and α = .63 at post-intervention.
Preliminary Analyses

We split the data by culture and analyzed participants’ baseline levels of all dependent variables for significant differences among conditions. (See Tables 1 and 2 for baseline and posttest means of all dependent variables.) No differences were found. However, when we explored baseline differences by culture, collapsing across conditions, we found that the U.S. participants started with much higher baseline scores in positive affect, $F(1, 643) = 65.71, p < .001$, life satisfaction, $F(1, 643) = 19.83, p < .001$, connectedness, $F(1, 643) = 12.66, p < .001$, and competence, $F(1, 643) = 12.85, p < .001$. Because Americans and Koreans seemed to fundamentally differ in their initial subjective well-being and need satisfaction, we decided to analyze our results separately by culture.

Manipulation Check

To ensure that the framing kindness articles were different in the ways that we intended (e.g., vis-à-vis their implied benefits to self vs. others), we asked independent raters to judge the English and Korean articles for the number of good-for-others benefits and the number of good-for-self benefits. ICCs for the English and Korean raters ranged from .69 to .98 for the 3 articles, which are considered good to excellent reliabilities (Fleiss, 1986). As intended, in both the English and Korean articles, more good-for-self benefits ($M = 7.00$ and $M = 6.33$ for English and Korean, respectively) than good-for-others benefits ($M = 0.67; M = 2.00$) were counted in the good-for-self article; more good-for-others benefits ($M = 6.67; M = 6.00$) than good-for-self benefits ($M = 1.00; M = 4.00$) were counted in the good-for-others article; and, finally, more good-for-self benefits ($M = 6.33; M = 10.33$) than good-for-others benefits ($M = 0.00; M = 0.00$) were counted in the control article.

Changes in Subjective Well-Being, Connectedness, and Competence
Using the data set combined from both cultures, we also examined whether any dependent variables differed as a function of time, condition, and culture. The $F$-test for the Time X Condition X Culture interaction was significant for life satisfaction, $F(2, 547) = 4.51, p = .01$, and connectedness $F(2, 547) = 3.27, p = .04$. However, in view of our hypotheses, we were most interested in the planned contrast analyses reported below.

**United States.** To test Hypothesis 1, we first calculated difference scores by subtracting Time 1 from Time 2 dependent variables—namely, positive emotions, negative emotions, life satisfaction, connectedness, and competence.\(^3\) We then conducted planned contrasts on these difference scores to compare the Good for Self (+1), Good for Others (0), and Control (-1) conditions in both the U.S. and South Korean groups. The results of these analyses are shown in Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3. In support of Hypothesis 1, U.S. students who read that kindness was good for themselves showed greater increases in positive affect, $t_{\text{contrast}}(277) = 3.25, p = .001$, satisfaction with life, $t_{\text{contrast}}(277) = 2.80, p = .01$, feelings of connectedness, $t_{\text{contrast}}(277) = 2.58, p = .01$, and greater decreases in negative affect, $t_{\text{contrast}}(277) = -2.19, p = .03$, than those who read that organization was good (control). No differences were found between conditions in the U.S. for competence, $t_{\text{contrast}}(277) = .55, p = .58$.

Notably, our U.S. sample included students from diverse backgrounds, including members of interdependent cultures, limiting the validity of the comparisons we could make to Asian students in Asia. In fact, only 7% of our sample identified as White/Caucasian, the prototypical race/ethnicity associated with individualism, whereas 52% identified as Asian/Asian American and 28% as Hispanic/Latino(a)—ethnic groups that have interdependent cultural roots (Schwartz, 2007; Shin & Lyubomirsky, 2016). To address this sample characteristic, we ran the

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\(^3\) Standardized difference score contrasts (Time 1 was standardized by Time 1 SDs and Time 2 was standardized by Time 2 SDs) produced the same (significant) results as the unstandardized contrasts reported in this paper.
analyses exclusively with Asian Americans and found that the Asian Americans in our U.S. sample responded more similarly to the U.S. sample than they did to the South Korean sample. The only variable on which Asian Americans differed from the U.S. sample as whole—albeit marginally—was negative affect, $t_{\text{contrast}}(142) = 2.39, p = .09$. The other variables showed a similar pattern of effects as the U.S. sample as a whole.

Additionally, the mean acculturation level of our Asian American participants was above the midpoint (3.07 on a 5-point scale), indicating that many of them identified at least to a moderate degree with American culture. We conducted regression analyses using acculturation level as a moderator and found that none of the outcome variables were affected by the acculturation level of the Asian Americans. These results support our rationale for using the U.S. participants as our independent cultural sample, despite the high proportion of Asian Americans in the sample. Nevertheless, to provide a sharper contrast to participants residing in Asia, future investigations should aim to include more Western-residing participants with Anglo or European roots.

South Korea. We conducted parallel analyses (using the following contrast weights: Good for Others [+1], Good for Self [0], and control [-1]) to test Hypothesis 2; the results are shown in Table 2 and Figures 2 and 3. Failing to provide support for this hypothesis, South Korean students who read that kindness was good for others did not show greater increases in
positive affect, life satisfaction, connectedness, or competence—or decreases in negative affect—compared to those in the control group (all $t_{contrasts} < |1.35|$; all $ps > .18$).

**Discussion**

This study tested whether individuals from independent cultures would benefit in subjective well-being, connectedness, and competence when self-related rewards of prosocial behavior are underscored, while those from interdependent cultures would benefit when other-related rewards are underscored.

**Summary of Findings**

Supporting Hypothesis 1, U.S. participants who performed acts of kindness after reading that they were good for “them” reported greater increases in positive affect, life satisfaction, and connectedness, as well as decreases in negative affect, than those who performed kind acts after reading a neutral framing. The article content may have helped explicate to individualists that they should be motivated to be prosocial because it could be a vehicle for the explicit pursuit of their happiness and also boost their self-esteem. Our results are consistent with the concept of independent subjective well-being, in that members of individualist cultures may benefit from prosocial behavior when it is explicitly framed as a way by which to pursue their personal happiness (Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004). Another possibility is that the benefits of kindness for others are obvious, so reading an article that frames kindness as good for others was not additionally motivating compared to reading an article that frames kindness as good for oneself. Indeed, these results provide additional evidence in support of the existing research that prosocial behavior is an effective way to increase well-being in individualist cultures (Dunn et al., 2008; Layous et al., 2013; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, Schkade, 2005; Nelson et al., 2015, 2016; Sheldon et al., 2012).
Our study, however, failed to support Hypothesis 2 for any of the outcome variables — namely, South Korean students who performed acts of kindness after reading that they were good for others did not increase in well-being, connectedness, and competence compared to those who performed acts of kindness after reading the neutral framing. Perhaps South Koreans do not experience additional gains in well-being from considering kind acts as good for others (vs. performing them without reasons/framing) because, due to their interdependent values, the benefits to others are obvious and pointing them out does not provide any further advantage (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Another possible explanation is that the Good-for-Others article presented the benefits of doing kind acts for others’ individual well-being, rather than their benefits to interdependent well-being, such as group harmony. To better appeal to the concepts of well-being shared by members of interdependent cultures, future studies that manipulate the framing of positive activities for collectivist cultures might consider incorporating the benefits for in-group relationships and the group as a whole. Additionally, framing kindness as good for others for South Koreans—especially within close relationships—may not be useful, because it might signal to them that those relationships are distant (Zhang, Li, Bai & Li, 2018). Finally, we may not have found significant well-being differences in South Korea (but did in the U.S.) because research shows that Americans tend to use more “extreme” (e.g., never or always) responses on rating scales, whereas Koreans, with their preference for low-arousal emotions, are more likely to select answer choices in the middle or neutral point of the scale (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995; Mayer, Elliot, Haas, Hays, & Weinick, 2016).

**Limitations and Future Directions**

A limitation of our study was that we measured the individual well-being of our American and South Korean participants rather than their interdependent well-being. Hence, we
may not have measured what South Koreans actually value as well-being or happiness. To assess interdependent subjective well-being from an emic approach, future investigators could incorporate a measure like the Interdependent Happiness Scale (IHS), which has been designed and validated in both Western and Eastern countries (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015). This scale is designed to answer the questions, “Are we happy or not?” or “Am I making others happy?” rather than “Am I happy?” By incorporating the IHS or similar measures, future researchers may be able to capture not only the happiness of individual participants, but also their experiences of group harmony and collective well-being, which are critical to the experience of interdependent subjective well-being. Despite this limitation, there is evidence that the IHS is strongly positively correlated with life satisfaction ($r = .61$) and positive affect ($r = .61$) and negatively correlated with negative affect ($r = -.60$), which were measured as outcomes in our study (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015).

Similarly, because collectivists value the appraisal of their lives by close others (Suh, Diener, & Updegraff, 2008), future investigators may wish to consider using alternative measures of life satisfaction that include asking collectivist participants how close others (e.g., family members) would evaluate their lives instead of merely asking how they themselves evaluate their own lives (as we did in the current study). Furthermore, it has also been suggested that researchers who study emotions in members of Asian cultures inquire about psychosomatic symptoms, which might allow Asians to convey their emotions indirectly and thus minimize disruption to relational harmony (Shin & Lyubomirsky, 2016; e.g., see the literature on somatization: Hong, Lee, & Lorenzo, 1995; Kleinman, 1982; Park & Bernstein, 2008; Parker, Cheah, & Roy, 2001; Zhou et al., 2015).
Finally, although all three U.S. groups performed kind acts, the control group, which read about the benefits of being organized, displayed decreases in positive affect, satisfaction with life, and connectedness. We found it interesting that these control participants decreased in subjective well-being even after performing kind acts; perhaps, this occurred as a result of a mismatch between what they were led to believe was good for them (organization) and the task they were asked to carry out (kind acts). South Koreans, however, may not have been as affected by this mismatch due to their patterns of dialectical thought and/or respect for authority (Lu & Gilmour, 2004). To further unpack these results, future research could include comparison conditions with alternative ways of framing kind acts, such as a more neutral control article about kind acts (but not their benefits), or no framing at all. Finally, our U.S. participants who read that organization was good (and subsequently performed kind acts) did not show any differences in competence from participants who learned that kindness is good for the self. We speculate that students who read that organization is helpful may have practiced more organizational skills in addition to kind acts during the intervention period, which, in turn, may have helped maintain their sense of competence.

**Concluding Words**

The present study contributes to the sparse body of research about subjective well-being in independent versus interdependent cultures. Our results are consistent with the notion that Americans appear to value independent subjective well-being, while raising questions about what interdependent subjective well-being looks like in modern South Korea. With mental health concerns on the rise in Asian countries, we urge researchers to investigate the optimal design and implementation of positive activity interventions in interdependent cultures.
References


Table 1

**Cell Means (Standard Deviations) and Results of Planned Contrast Analyses on U.S. Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Self (+1)</th>
<th>Other (0)</th>
<th>Control (-1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time 1 M (SD)</td>
<td>Time 2 M (SD)</td>
<td>Time 1 M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive affect (mDES)</td>
<td>3.33 (0.65)</td>
<td>3.46 (0.62)</td>
<td>3.45 (0.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative affect (mDES)</td>
<td>2.24 (0.72)</td>
<td>2.12 (0.79)</td>
<td>2.32 (0.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction With Life</td>
<td>4.46 (1.16)</td>
<td>4.68 (1.22)</td>
<td>4.56 (1.29)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>3.77 (0.77)</td>
<td>3.82 (0.76)</td>
<td>3.78 (0.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>2.99 (0.86)</td>
<td>3.15 (0.82)</td>
<td>3.05 (0.96)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p < .05. ** *p < .01.
Table 2

_Cell Means (Standard Deviations) and Results of Planned Contrast Analyses on South Korean Sample_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Time 1 M (SD)</th>
<th>Time 2 M (SD)</th>
<th>Time 1 M (SD)</th>
<th>Time 2 M (SD)</th>
<th>Time 1 M (SD)</th>
<th>Time 2 M (SD)</th>
<th>t (df)</th>
<th>p</th>
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<tr>
<td>Well-being</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Positive affect (mDES)</td>
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<td>3.02 (0.60)</td>
<td>3.00 (0.59)</td>
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<td>3.09 (0.58)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative affect (mDES)</td>
<td>2.40 (0.73)</td>
<td>2.28 (0.85)</td>
<td>2.26 (0.75)</td>
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<td>2.28 (0.72)</td>
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<td>Satisfaction With Life</td>
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<td>4.12 (1.10)</td>
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<td>4.24 (1.14)</td>
<td>4.26 (1.08)</td>
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<td>-1.04 (270)</td>
<td>0.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need Satisfaction</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>3.47 (0.79)</td>
<td>3.55 (0.71)</td>
<td>3.63 (0.72)</td>
<td>3.46 (0.77)</td>
<td>3.58 (0.82)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
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<td>2.85 (0.91)</td>
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<td>2.82 (0.84)</td>
<td>2.78 (0.91)</td>
<td>0.79 (270)</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p* < .05. **p** < .01.
Figure 2. Changes in subjective well-being for the Self, Other, and Control conditions in the U.S. and South Korea. 
Note. US = United States, SK = South Korea. Self = Good-for-Self framing, Other = Good-for-Other framing, Control = Organization is good framing. Data represent mean (+/- SE) change from baseline to post-intervention.
Figure 3. Changes in connectedness and competence for the Self, Other, and Control conditions in the U.S. and South Korea. Note. US = United States, SK = South Korea. Self = Good-for-Self framing, Other = Good-for-Other framing, Control = Organization is good framing. Data represent mean (+/- SE) change from baseline to post-intervention.
Kind acts can be beneficial for the self as well as others

Jennifer Grohovac | 12:01 AM ET

Over the ages, both scientists and philosophers have debated whether a kind act can be truly altruistic (i.e., done solely for the benefit of others with no benefit to the self). Our research suggests that, even if this is an unintended consequence, performing kind acts benefits the giver in important ways.

First, many studies have found that people who perform kind acts for others actually become happier themselves and experience declines in depressive symptoms.

For example, in one experiment, people who were randomly assigned to make someone else happier throughout the week (versus doing a neutral task) showed increases in gratitude and feelings of connectedness with others, which, in turn, was related to boosts in well-being over time. Even just stopping to take account of the kind acts you perform throughout the week can lead you to become happier.

Generosity also has benefits in important contexts like work and school. Specifically, people who are kind to coworkers are more engaged with their work than the coworkers who benefit from these kind acts and children who are helpful in the classroom gain more friends than children who do something that’s just fun for them.

Furthermore, studies have shown that the benefits of engaging in generous behavior are found in many different cultures, suggesting the universality of the effect. Thus, the kind acts you do for others will actually benefit yourself in multiple ways. Doing good pays off!
Kind acts may benefit others in more ways than one

Jennifer Brook

Studies have shown that recipients of kind acts benefit in ways unrelated to the initial kind act.

For example, if you surprise one of your classmates with a cup of coffee, he will benefit by having much-needed caffeine at his 8am class, but research suggests that he will also benefit by experiencing more positive emotions (e.g., joy, contentment) and self-esteem and by feeling more connected to you.

In one study, people who were randomly chosen to receive acts of kindness from their colleagues at work showed increases in positive emotions and engagement in work.

Similarly, research shows that the happier people are, the more likely they are to report that other people help and support them. For example, The Gallup World Poll shows that in the four highest-ranking countries for life satisfaction (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and the Netherlands), 95% of respondents felt they had relatives or friends they could count on to help them in times of trouble. In contrast, only 55% of respondents in the four lowest-ranking countries (Togo, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe) reported having this type of social support.

Furthermore, people who say they have social support are more likely to have superior health (e.g., less likely to be depressed or anxious, more likely to recover from an illness or accident, and less likely to have high blood pressure).

Thus, knowing how important your generosity is to the happiness and health of others will encourage you to lend a hand whenever you can!
Appendix C

Get Organized! A Path to Greater Success

Jennifer Rivenburg 12:05 AM ET

Studies have shown that organization can have an impact on your health and personal goals.

Is getting organized really such a big deal? Who among us, after all, has the time or energy to do what it takes to reap the benefits of being organized?

We all know the obvious reasons why eliminating clutter and better managing our time is important, but have you stopped to consider how getting organized and living an orderly life can have a huge impact on your health and daily living?

As an example, consider what happens when you miss an important appointment because you forgot to write it down or when you miss an important deadline because you didn’t realize how long the assignment would take. Your stress level peaks and you are at risk for elevating your blood pressure. As your body tenses up, you become scattered, tense and irritable. When your world is chaotic, your mind feels muddled and confused.

Unplanned life events have a way of throwing even the most organized individual off course. But if you are not organized to begin with, anything that leaves you off track in your life will lead to a feeling of imbalance. You become weighed down with weariness and distress. You are not functioning at your potential.

Making the choice to be organized will reduce clutter in your environment and in your mind. For example, if you organize the books, files, articles, notes or papers that you need for school or work, you will know exactly where to find the things that you need which will allow you to perform tasks more efficiently and swiftly. Your time becomes manageable and you have the ability to prioritize your daily tasks and responsibilities. Everything just starts to fall into place.

Personal goals that you once believed were beyond your reach will now be attainable. Planning for the next day or for the near future becomes exciting as each day brings you closer to your goals and ambitions. Getting organized is cost-effective. Taking the time to plan and evaluate will prevent you from spending money frivolously by making unwarranted purchases, thus leaving you with more money to spend on those things you really need or want.

Those are just a few of the many benefits of being organized. Anyone can choose to learn better organizational skills and habits. There are numerous getting organized resources available on this site, as well as other websites, to help you with becoming more organized in general or if you desire help in a specific area of your life, such as time management.

Once you decide to make getting organized a way of life, you will see a marked difference in many areas of your life—job, school, time, money, health, hobbies, and relationships. Although taking the first step may seem daunting, starting in one domain (e.g., writing down what you need to do this week) and being consistent will keep you moving forward and you will soon reap the benefits of being organized and efficient.
(서울=연합뉴스) 전준성 기자 = 지난 수세기 동안, 과학자들은 친절함이 행동의 전형적인 형태가 아니라고 여겨 왔으며, 이것은 타인의 행동에 영향을 끼치지 않는다고 보았다. 그러나, 최근의 연구결과에 따르면, 친절 함은 행동의 전형적인 형태가 아니라고 여겨지지 않으며, 이것은 타인의 행동에 영향을 끼치는 것으로 나타났다.

예를 들어, 한 연구에 따르면, 일주일간 타인을 친절하게 대해 사람들은 긍정적인 과제를 한 사람들을보다 감사할이나 유대감을 더 크게 느꼈고, 그로 인해 행동이 시간에 걸쳐 중대되는 것으로 나타났다. 심지어 한 주 동안 실천한 친절한 행동을 생각하는 것만으로도 더욱 행복해질 수 있었다.

지정이나 학교라고 같이 중요한 사회적 상황에서도 이렇게 하지 않아도 친절함을 보유하는 사람들은 타인과의 관계를 형성하는 사람들보다 일할 때 더 열심히 하며, 학문적 성과도 더 뛰어난다. 이는 자신의 재미만을 찾는 아이들보다 친구가 더 많은 것으로 나타났다.

또한, 이러한 관계에서 타인의 행동이 변신 스스로에게도 유익하다는 것은 다양한 문화에서 발견되어 온 보편적인 현상으로 보았다. 결국, 타인을 위해 봉사하는 친절한 행동이 여러 모로 자기 스스로에게도 유익하다고 할 수 있다. 좋은 일을 하면 보답을 받는 것이다.
Appendix E

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Other-Kind Article

아래의 기사를 읽어주십시오.
로딩에 다소 시간이 걸릴 수 있습니다.

NAVER 뉴스

12/07(목) 오후 6:10
주요뉴스: 마린가 마저도 패퇴

생활/문화
건강/의료
자동차/자동차
도로/교통
여행/여가
음식/음료
패션/뷰티
공연/예시
책
교육
날씨
생활/문화 일반
속보

연합뉴스
"천절한 행동은 타인에게 어려모로 이로워"
기사발표 2016-12-07 07:22 | 최종수정 2016-12-07 11:15 | 기사조회 1473

(서울=연합뉴스) 정준성 기자 = 연구들에 따르면, 타인의 친절을 경험한 사람들은 그들이 경험한 친절한 행동 자체의 부정한 면에서도 해택을 얻는 것으로 나타났다.

예를 들어, 만취한 학생이 친구로부터 커피를 얻어 마신다면, 이럴 때 수입에 필요한 커피를 싸구려 할 수 있게 될 뿐만 아니라, 더 긍정적인 정서를(기쁨, 만족 등)을 경험하게 되고, 타인과 유대감을 느끼며 자존감이 강화한다고 연구자들은 밝혔다.

또한 한 연구에 따르면, 무작위 선정을 통해 동료의 친절을 경험하게 된 사람들이 더욱 긍정적인 정서를 느끼고, 일이 더욱 풍부하였다.

유사한 맥락으로, 항목한 사람들은 손목로부터 더 많은 지지와 도움을 받는다고 보고하는 것으로 보여진다. 예를 들어, 결합 조사에 따르면, 체에 대한 만족도가 가장 높은 나라는(덴마크, 덴마크, 네덜란드)에서 대중들의 95%가 이와 같은 성과를 할 때 의미할 수 있는 친지나 친구가 있다고 답했다. 반면, 산에 대한 만족도가 가장 낮은 내 라(프랑스, 프랑스, 시에레리온, 잉글랜드)에서는 55%만이 이러한 사회적 자원을 보고했다.

하지만 최근 사회적 자원을 받고 있다고 답하는 사람들들은 상대적으로 더 긍정적 특성을 높이기, 일 수술하거나 일 불안하고, 질병이나 사고로부터 회복가능성이 높으며, 고혈압이 적게 나타나.

관대함이 타인의 행동과 객관에 이르게 중요한 영향을 미친다는 사실을 알게 된다면 타인을 도와주고 삶의 매력이 생기지 않을 수 있을 것이다.
Appendix F

생성의 지름길, 점리하는 속관

(서울=연합뉴스) 정준영 기자 = 기존 연구에 따르면 정리하는 습관은 개인의 목표와 건강에 영향을 미치는 것으로 밝혀졌다.

체계적으로 정리하는 일이 정말 그렇게 중요하다면, 사실 정리정돈을 할 만한 시간을 여유와 에너지를 갖고 있는지 않다.

여수생인 것들을 차근 차근 사건을 관리하는 것이 해 중요하다는 일지만, 그것들이 건강과 일상에 얼마나 큰 영향을 미치는지 생각해보는 것은 도움이다.

한 예로, 매일 매일 안에 했어야 중요한 일같은 봉점을 놓칠 때, 또는 일이 엉망이나 오래 관할자 이상을 떠들어 보았을 때 이런 일이 일어날까 스트레스는 쌓이고, 혐오감은 오른다. 봉이 정직하고, 신망해지고, 건정되고, 학게 난다. 카오스 속에서 마음은 혼란스럽다.

예상치 못한 사고를 겪으면 체계적인 사고조차 헤매다니게 된다.

하지만 이제 다시 시작하기 위한 체계가 없어졌지 않으니, 깨끗이 말든 곧

그런 것이 깶자는 느낌으로 다가온다. 표모와 집산의 과로감에 힘들었다. 당장적 능력을 발휘하지 못한다.
제계적인 영리는 수면 친환경과 아이러니 이러한 마법의 점성사나입계까지
최적화 것이다. 예를 들면, 직장이나 학교에서 필요한 책, 파일, 기사, 
데모, 서류 등을 정리해두면, 필요한 것을 어디서 찾아야 할지를 알게 
되고, 그릴세 더욱 효율적으로 신속하게 일을 할 수 있게 된다. 이에
따라 시간관리가 가능해지고, 일과의 책임의 우선순위를 정할 수 있게 
된다. 모든 것이 제 자리로 향하게 된다.

한 한 소생하다 느끼던 특별히도 도달 가능해질 것이다. 힘들한 특별히
가벼워질수록 미리 계획하는 일이 신나질 것이다. 화리로써
비용을 효율적으로 할 수 있다. 계획과 영가를 통해 불필요한 구매를
할 수 있고, 따라서 경제적으로 원하는 것을 할 수 있는 금전적
여유가 생긴다.

여러한 것들은 정신의 많은 해학 중 일부에 불과하다. 누구나 정신하는
방법과 음란을 베풀 수 있다. 여러 웹사이트에서 정신과 관련하여
전반적으로 도움을 주는 정신뿐 아니라 시각관리 등 특정 부분에 대한
리소스를 제공하고 있다.

체계적으로 정신의 생활을 하기 시작하면 직장, 학교, 시간, 돈, 건강, 
취미, 대인관계 등에서 많은 변화가 일어날 것이다. 첫 걸음은 어쩔지먼,
이번에 할 일을 적는 등 각 기능 정신을 시작하여 꾸준히 실천하면,
다른 부분에서도 쉽게 적용할 수 있게 되고, 한 체계적이고 효율적인 생활이
주는 해학을 누릴 수 있게 될 것이다.

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Click Count: 0 clicks

Kindness Instructions

일상 생활에서 우리는 모두 타인을 위한 천진한 행동들을 한다. 이러한 행동은 클 수도 있고, 작을 수도 있으며, 우리
가 친절을 베풀다는 사실을 상대방이 알 수도 있고, 모르 수도 있습니다. 천진한 행동의 예로 부모님께서 식사 준비
하시는 것을 드나, 형제자매의 일을 거느리거나, 친구의 숙제를 도와주거나, 연세 드신 친척분을 방문하거나, 감
사 면지를 쓰는 일 등이 있습니다.

또는는 일주일 중에 원하는 하루를 선택하여, 그 하루 동안 가능한 한 많은 천진한 행동들을 베푸십시오. 상대방이
항상 같은 사람이어야 할 필요는 없으며, 상대방이 귀하의 행동을 알거나 모르거나, 귀하의 행동이 위의 예시들과 비
슷하거나 다르거나 상관없이 합시다.

일주일 후의 설문에서 귀하는 어떠한 천진한 행동을 했는지를 보고하게 될 것입니다. 
본인이나 타인을 위해 베푸는 행동은 하지 말아주세요.