EMPATHY AND SELF-CONSTRUALS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY
OF EASTERN AND WESTERN MASTER’S-LEVEL
COUNSELING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the degree of empathy between Eastern and Western master’s-level counseling students and the relationship between the degree of empathy and the level of self-construals among those students. Participants consisted of 101 students enrolled in counseling programs at two universities, one in Thailand (n = 48) and the other in the Midwestern United States of America (n = 53). The participants were administered the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980), used to measure three types of empathy, and the Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Singelis, 1994), used to measure independent and interdependent self-construals. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) revealed that the Western group of participants displayed significantly higher IRI scores on the subscales of Perspective Taking and Empathic Concern than did the Eastern group of participants. Bivariate correlational analyses indicated a significant, positive relationship between the SCS independent scores and the IRI scores on the subscales of Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern, and Fantasy Scale. However, it should be noted that these results cannot be inferred to mean that Western master’s-level counseling students are more empathic than Eastern master’s-level counseling students, or that an independent self-construal leads to increased empathy. Although prior cross-cultural research demonstrated that Western and Eastern persons have different linguistic, cognitive, and affective expressions, follow-up statistical
analyses demonstrated that Western and Eastern participants did not significantly differ in SCS scores (i.e., independent versus interdependent self-construals), which suggested that the sample population was more homogeneous in their cultural orientations than anticipated. Finally, factors unrelated to this study’s research design, such as the degree of training of empathy, may have influenced the results in spurious ways. Because the results showed that Western participants evidenced a greater number of semesters in their master’s-level counseling program than Eastern participants, and the number of semesters of study was significantly positively correlated with IRI scores, perhaps, master’s-level training influenced results over and above participants’ cultural orientation. The implications of these findings for counselor education, supervision, practice and research and recommendations for future cross-cultural empathy research were discussed.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Concept of Empathy

It has been stated that without empathy, there is no foundational support for helping others (Carkhuff, 1969). However, empathy is not a concrete counseling skill or technique. Rather, it is the counselor's attitude or way of being that exudes respect, caring, and understanding to the client in a genuine and nonjudgmental manner (Hill, 2004). Many authors in the counseling profession have asserted that empathy is crucial to the effectiveness of the counselor-client relationship and the overall counseling process (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Cartwright & Lerner, 1963; Chung & Bemak, 2002; Dombrow, 1966; Gladstein, 1977; Katz, 1963; Lafferty, Beutler, & Crago, 1989; Lesser, 1961; Rogers, Gendlin, Kiesler, & Truax, 1967; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Therapeutic empathy enhances a counselor's ability to assist the client in attaining a deeper level of self-awareness and self-understanding, which can have a powerful impact on the client's belief system and worldviews (Carkhuff, 2000; Cormier & Nurius, 2002; Egan, 2002; Ivey, D'Andrea, & Simek-Downing, 2002; Martin, 2000) and can ultimately result in psychological healing, growth, and development in the client (Sinclair & Monk, 2005).

According to Carl Rogers (1957, 1959), empathy is the ability to recognize and understand another person's internal, private world, moving along with the ebb and
flow of this person's changing perceptual experiences, without losing a sense of
separateness. Rogers (1957) considered empathy, exercised by the counselor, to be one of
the six core conditions essential for therapeutic change in the client. Empathy plays a
vital role in all stages of the counseling process, from initially establishing a positive,
therapeutic relationship to promoting exploration of thoughts and feelings to encouraging
the client's willingness to be an active participant in their self-healing process which can
lead to change and a higher level of functioning (Hill, 2004).

Overview of the Components of Empathy

There has been considerable debate as to the composition of empathy. In general,
there are three major perspectives on what constitutes the construct of empathy (Duan &
Hill, 1996). Some view empathy as possessing affective elements (e.g., Allport, 1961;
Batson, 1991; Duan & Hill, 1996; Langer, 1967; Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972; Stotland,
1969). This affective perspective on empathy refers to the identifying, experiencing, and
understanding of emotions in the therapeutic setting (Duan & Hill, 1996).

A second perspective of empathy involves a cognitive element as its primary
composition (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1962, 1981; Borke, 1971; Deutsch & Madle, 1975;
Duan & Hill, 1996; Kalliopuska, 1986; Katz, 1963; Kohut, 1971; Rogers, 1986; Woodall
& Kogler-Hill, 1982). This view refers to the intellectual comprehension of another's
experience (Duan & Hill, 1996). Although it is indicated by some writers that the
cognitive and affective components of empathy are clearly separate and distinctive
(Gladstein, 1983), others view these components as inseparable (e.g., Feshbach, 1975;
Greenberg, Rice, & Elliott, 1993; Greenson, 1960; Katz, 1963; Schafer, 1959; Strayer,
1987).
The third major perspective of the composition of empathy is that it is consists of both cognitive and affective elements (e.g., Brems, 1989; Duan & Hill, 1996; Hoffman, 1977; Shantz, 1975; Strayer, 1987). This perspective refers to the dispositional and situation-specific aspects of empathy, which indicates that empathy can involve experiencing both the cognitive and affective components or can involve experiencing either the cognitive or the affective components, depending on the situation (Duan & Hill, 1996). This view of empathy is supported by research, which demonstrates that cognitive and affective components of empathy inevitably impact each other (e.g., Bower, 1983; Isen, 1984). Davis (1996), a contemporary empathy theorist, defined empathy as "the ability to engage in the cognitive process of adopting another's psychological point of view, and the capacity to experience affective reactions to the observed experiences of others" (p. 45). This researcher adhered to this third major perspective of empathy in an effort to address the multidimensional nature of empathy.

Overview of Empirical Research on Empathy

Although there has been an abundance of literature and research on empathy in the past (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Carkhuff, 2000; Cartwright & Lerner, 1963; Chung & Bemak, 2002; Cormier & Nurius, 2002; Dombrow, 1966; Egan, 2002; Gladstein, 1977; Ivey et al., 2002; Katz, 1963; Lafferty et al., 1989; Lesser, 1961; Martin, 2000; Rogers, 1957, 1959; Rogers et al., 1967; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967), scant research exists on cross-cultural empathy. With the current emphasis on multicultural competence in counselor education and training, research on empathy and cross-cultural issues, such as cultural orientation, becomes exceedingly valuable.
Empathy development continues to be a primary goal of training in most counseling graduate programs (Hill, 2004; Ivey & Ivey, 2007; Okun, Shepard, & Eisenberg, 2000). Past research has indicated that formal counseling training experience has a significant positive impact on the development of empathy (Ottens, Shank, & Long, 1995; Ridgway & Sharpley, 1990) and can be altered within individuals (Batson, Fultz & Schoenrade, 1987; Batson, Turk, Shaw, & Klein, 1995). Lyons and Hazler (2002) indicated that graduate counseling students demonstrated that empathy can either be learned or developed through graduate counselor education, as evidenced by significant differences found between first- and second-year student scores on empathy measures. Research on empathy has indicated that a higher level of empathy in counselors is correlated with a higher level of clinical experience (Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Miller, 1989). This body of research gives credence to the assumption that empathy can be learned and developed. But what continues to be unclear is how an individual's cultural worldview impacts their development of empathy within a master’s-level counseling educational process. Unfortunately, scant research exists for this critical aspect of empathy.

Predictors of Therapeutic Empathy

Research on predictors of therapeutic empathy has primarily focused on individual differences in empathic ability (Duan & Hill, 1996). Much of this research has examined relationships between relatively stable variables of therapists, such as gender, age, cognitive style or personality traits, and levels of empathy experienced within the therapeutic relationship (Duan & Hill, 1996). Research on sex role orientation and
therapeutic empathy indicated that a female sex role orientation was significantly related to empathic emotions (Carlozzi & Hurlburt, 1982; Fong & Borders, 1985). Also, prior research has found a positive relationship between a higher cognitive complexity and cognitive empathy (Heck & Davis, 1973; Lutwak & Hennessy, 1982).

One of the limitations of this empathy research is the exclusive focus on the assumption that individual differences exist and a lack of research on intraindividual differences (Duan & Hill, 1996) and on cross-cultural group differences. The emphasis on individual differences restricts the understanding of how various predictor variables impact empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996). Furthermore, the research is limited by the lack of attention to essential variables such as client-counselor values and value differences that could potentially impact counselor empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996).

Cross-Cultural Empathy

A more recent trend found in current literature on empathy has focused on such multicultural counseling topics as cultural empathy (Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Downing, 1987; Ridley & Lingle, 1996), empathic multicultural awareness (Junn, Morton, & Yee, 1995), cultural role-taking (Scott & Borodovsky, 1990), ethnic perspective taking (Quintana, Ybarra, Gonzalez-Doupe, & Baessa, 2000), and ethnotherapeutic empathy (Parson, 1993a, 1993b). The rationale underlying these research topics is the desire to improve issues in multicultural counseling; particularly, the client-counselor relationship and outcome in a cross-cultural therapeutic setting. These are important topics considering the dynamic growth in recent years of persons of color, including international persons, in the United States of America (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000).
The limitations of the research on cross-cultural empathy are similar to the limitations of research on empathy, in general. Literature on cross-cultural empathy yields complex and multidimensional terms, definitions, and theoretical constructs (Duan & Hill, 1996). Some research on cross-cultural empathy does not adequately define the construct of empathy, making the assumption that the concept of traditional empathy can be applied to multicultural counseling (Pinderhughes, 1984; Ponterotto & Benesch, 1988). The problem with this assumption is that it does not address the impact of cultural values on the process of empathy development within master’s-level counseling students and how this ultimately affects the therapeutic relationship and experience.

Many theorists ascribe to a situation-specific perspective of empathy (e.g. Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Greenson, 1960, 1967; Hoffman, 1984a; Rogers, 1949, 1951, 1957, 1959) in which the individual’s affective or cognitive state of empathy varies depending upon the situation. According to Duan, Geen, Wei and Wang (2005), the process of empathy is not solely influenced by the situation, but by the relationship between the situation and the observer’s cultural worldview. For example, an individualist may have difficulty empathizing with a person who insists on sacrificing her or his own needs for the sake of others' needs. In contrast, a collectivist might have difficulty empathizing with an individual who is looking out for himself or herself without taking into account the interests of others. Therefore, it is important to challenge the assumption that the concept of traditional empathy can be applied in all therapeutic relationships by examining factors that can impact the process of empathy development, such as group differences in cross-cultural worldviews.
Introduction to Cross-Cultural Worldview Differences

It is generally assumed that individuals from Western cultures (e.g., American) and Eastern cultures (e.g., Asian) possess distinct philosophical orientations. Triandis (1988) theorized that these philosophical orientations impact thought processes, which influence individuals' attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and values; which comprise a person's worldview. Societies with an Eastern philosophical orientation are considered to be "collectivistic and interdependent" (p. xvii) and possess a global, contextual worldview in which events are interpreted as complicated and intertwined with various contributing factors (Nisbett, 2003). Western societies are considered to be "individualistic or independent" (p. xvii) and possess a worldview in which objects are viewed as separate or in isolation from their context (Nisbett, 2003). A society is labeled collectivistic or individualistic if the majority of its members hold values, beliefs, feelings, emotions, and behavior that constitute collectivism or individualism (Triandis, 1988).

Individualism, considered to be the “counterpart, or antonym” of collectivism, is defined as a social philosophy which emphasizes the significance of the individual above society (Hui & Triandis, 1986, p. 225). In individualistic societies, people value independence from others, personal goals over group goals, and emotional distance from others (Triandis, 1988; 2001). They also value equality in personal relationships and superiority in a hierarchical environment (Triandis, 1988; 2001). An individualist's behaviors sometimes reflect individual attitudes over social norms (Triandis, 1988; 2001).
Collectivism is similar to Adler's (1938/1964) construct of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, or social interest, which motivates the individual to focus on the needs and concerns of others (Crandall, 1980). Individuals raised in a collectivistic culture, perceive themselves as part of the larger whole, esteem interdependence in social relationships, strive for harmony, and value the feelings of others (Triandis, 1988, 2001). Collectivists not only believe in social interconnectedness, but they “feel and experience” this interdependence (Triandis, 1988, p. 231). Collectivists are characterized as having a “feeling of involvement in others' lives” (Triandis, 1988, p. 231). This intense concern for others has been described as “a sense of oneness with other people, a perception of complex ties and relationships, and a tendency to keep other people in mind” (Triandis, 1988, p. 231.)

Introduction to the Concept of Self-Construal

Just as the culture in which one lives and grows influences the development of an individual's cultural worldview, a person's cultural worldview in turn influences the development of a person's self-construal, which is "a constellation of thoughts, feelings, and actions concerning the relationship of the self to others and the self as distinct from others" (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995, p. 624; Yamada & Singelis, 1999). Self-construal is a concept that corresponds to an individual's interpersonal perceptions about the self as he or she relates to others and to the world (Yamada & Singelis, 1999). Self-construal is, therefore, a concept that specifically addresses an interpersonal way of being, which seems more closely related to the interpersonal aspect of empathy within a therapeutic relationship than does the broader concept of cultural worldview. There are two typologies of self-construal, including an independent self-construal and an
interdependent self-construal (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995; Yamada & Singelis, 1999).

Independent Self-Construal

An independent self-construal is "a bounded, unitary, stable self that is separate from social context" (Singelis, 1994, p. 581). An individual from a Western society such as the United States, where the emphasis is on individualism and uniqueness, tends to have a stronger independent self-construal. A person with an independent self-construal tends to focus on their personal abilities, cognitions, and emotions. This type of person tends to view themselves in isolation of others and the context or situation. They tend to be "ego-focused" in their interpersonal interactions with others, unlike a person with a strong interdependent self-construal who tends to be "other-focused" in their interpersonal interactions with others (Singelis, 1994, p. 581).

Interdependent Self-Construal

An interdependent self-construal is "a flexible, variable self that emphasizes (a) external, public features such as statuses, roles, and relationships, (b) belonging and fitting in, (c) occupying one's proper place and engaging in appropriate action, and (d) being indirect in communication and 'reading others' minds'" (Singelis, 1994, p. 581). Individuals with a strong interdependent self-construal perceive themselves as interconnected with others and the situation. They tend to be attentive to others' emotions and have the capability of accurately interpreting the unexpressed feelings of others. Individuals from Eastern societies where the emphasis is on harmony and interconnectedness with others and the environment, tend to have a well developed interdependent self-construal (Singelis, 1994).
Relationship Between Empathy and Cross-Cultural Self-Construal Differences

A focus on the interconnectedness in social relationships, as is characteristic of a collectivistic society, appears to promote a strong interdependent self-construal and a concern with others' emotions (Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1996. The differences in Easterners and Westerners in their emphasis on relationships and the feelings of others, is evident in child-rearing practices (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993; Han, Leichtman, & Wang, 1998; Hoffman, 1982/1987). Asian parents tend to teach their children to pay attention to the actions of others so they can respond in a harmonious manner, whereas American parents tend to teach their children to act autonomously (Han et al., 1998). There is empirical evidence that the effects of this distinctive emphasis on social relationships and others' emotions extend into adulthood (Cohen & Gunz, 2002; Ji, Peng, & Nisbett, 2000; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunti, 1997; Norenzayan, Choi, & Nisbett, 2002).

In research on emotions, findings indicated that adults identified as collectivistic were more accurately able to recognize the feelings and attitudes of others than were the adults who were identified as individualistic (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002). Markus and Kitayama (1991) found that individualists had a higher probability of experiencing "ego focused" emotions, such as anger, frustration, and pride, which came from their own internal frame of reference, while collectivists had a greater tendency to experience "other-focused" emotions, such as sympathy and shame, which used the other person's frame of reference. Duan et al. (2005) suggested that this willingness to focus on others may be the impetus for empathic social interactions. Bemak and Breggin (2002) adhere to the belief that the development of empathy is a lifetime process, impacted by family
members, particularly parents, teachers, religious or spiritual leaders, mentors, and other role models. What is not clear is how this process of empathy development impacts the master’s-level counseling student and their level of empathy throughout their academic counseling program. Unfortunately, this research study (Duan et al., 2005) is the only one that exists that examines the relationship between empathy and cross-cultural worldviews.

Statement of the Problem and Need for the Study

Although many aspects of empathy have been addressed in research, the study of empathy and cross-cultural values has received very little emphasis (Duan et al., 2005). Specifically, only one research study was found that addressed the relationship between empathy and the cultural worldviews of collectivism and individualism (Duan et al., 2005). Furthermore, no research studies were found in which the researchers examined empathy and cultural worldviews or empathy and self-construals between two groups of participants from two different countries.

In their research study on empathy and individualism-collectivism, Duan et al., (2005) examined the relationship among cultural values, empathy dispositions, and empathic experiences. Participants in this research study were 121 introductory psychology students at a university in a Midwestern state of the United States of America. The participants completed a survey that measured individualism-collectivism and empathy dispositions. The second part of the research study, 74 of the original participants were presented with a transcript of a counseling session and were assessed for their experienced empathic emotion and intellectual empathy toward the “client.” The findings of this research (Duan et al., 2005) revealed that collectivism was positively
correlated with dispositional intellectual empathy and empathic emotion and that collectivism predicted experienced empathic emotion. The researchers (Duan et al., 2005) also found that individualism also predicted intellectual empathy and that dispositional intellectual empathy and empathic emotion predicted experienced intellectual empathy and empathic emotion. Duan et al. (2005) offered a caveat regarding the interpretation of findings of their research study on empathy and cultural values due to several limitations regarding the participants. First, the participants were undergraduate college students who were enrolled in introductory psychology courses and were offered extra credit points for their involvement in the study. Secondly, a low percentage of these students completed both parts of the research study. Thirdly, the participants were relatively homogeneous, the majority being Caucasian undergraduate students from a university in a Midwestern state in the United States America, originally from surrounding areas. Because of these demographic issues, data findings revealed very little variation in the participants' cultural values (Duan et al., 2005). These researchers proposed that future empathy research be conducted using participants with greater variance in cultural values (Duan, Geen et al., 2005).

Gaining a better understanding of whether or not an individual's cultural worldview and/or self-construal is related to their level of empathy can have potential implications for counselor education, supervision and training. With this information, counselor educators and supervisors could improve their level of multicultural competence, which could potentially lead to innovative training methods, such as developing role plays or triadic supervision levels, which include the pairing of a person, who has an individualistic cultural worldview or a strong independent self-construal with
a person who has a collectivistic cultural worldview or a strong interdependent self-construal. To the extent that empathy is a learnable and trainable construct, additional knowledge of cultural differences in cross-cultural empathy could assist counselor educators and supervisors to more efficiently utilize the strengths and enhance the limitations of their master’s-level counseling students in this regard.

This research study could also prompt further research on child development of empathy. If socio-cultural factors that influence the learning and development of empathy could be more clearly understood, educational programs for parents and children on ways to enhance empathy development in children could be implemented. If the results of this research study demonstrate cross-cultural differences in empathy, then the general assumption that master’s-level counseling students choose the career of counseling because they already possess a great deal of empathy should be challenged. Individuals entering master’s-level counseling programs have been previously impacted by socio-cultural factors in their lives, which have contributed to their values, beliefs, attitudes, self-construals, and cultural worldviews. It is therefore logical that this phenomenon may differentially impact Eastern counseling students’ empathic development in different ways than their Western peers (Duan et al., 2005; Nisbett, 2003).

Although there is an abundance of research literature on the concept of empathy, the understanding of this concept is far from adequate. This research study may add valuable information to the body of knowledge on empathy. The concept of empathy is complex and multidimensional and the relationship between empathy and self-construal has been unexplored. This research study can help researchers, counselor educators,
counselors and other mental health practitioners gain a more global understanding of empathy, specifically related to culture and self-construals.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not differences in empathy existed between Western and Eastern master’s-level counseling students. Specifically, master’s-level counseling students from the United States of America (Western) and Thailand (Eastern), at various stages in their master’s level counseling education program, were studied. The researcher examined whether or not a relationship existed between self-construals, independent and interdependent, and degree of empathy. Persons from the United States of America and Thailand were chosen because people from the United States of America have been shown to exemplify characteristics of individualistic values and worldviews and higher independent self-construals; whereas people from Thailand have been shown to exemplify characteristics of collectivistic values and worldviews and higher interdependent self-construals (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995; Triandis, 1995). Moreover, recent international research had revealed that, in general, persons in the United States of America and Thailand demonstrated virtually opposite ‘social axioms’ (Bond et al., 2004), cultural worldviews and self-construals that defined interpersonal behaviors, social systems, and ways of relating to one another (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995; Triandis, 1995). Degree of empathy was examined between the two groups of participants, the master’s-level counseling students from the United States of America (Western) and the master’s-level counseling students from Thailand (Eastern). The relationship between self-construal,
both independent and interdependent, and level of empathy was thus studied in Eastern and Western master’s-level students at different stages of their counseling programs.

If findings of this study were found to support a relationship between self-construals and degree of empathy among master’s-level counseling students, it was hypothesized that several implications would result. First, the construct of empathy, and its development in professional counselors, would receive renewed interest in the mental health field. Subsequently, additional quantitative and qualitative research on the relationship between socio-cultural factors and the development of empathy could be prompted. Another implication is that multicultural awareness would be expanded in the counseling profession, and counselor trainees would learn about cultural worldviews and self-construals different from their own; including if international socio-cultural differences were related to empathy. And finally, counselor educators and supervisors would gain increased knowledge regarding how to help Western and Eastern counseling trainees optimally develop empathic abilities.

General Research Questions

The researcher studied the overarching question of whether or not group differences in empathy existed between Western (Thai) and Eastern (American) master’s-level counseling students. This study addressed the following two research questions in which investigated this phenomenon:

1. Are there significant mean group differences in degree of empathy between Western and Eastern master’s-level counseling students?

2. Is there a significant relationship between degree of master’s-level counseling students’ independent and interdependent self-construals and their degree of empathy?
Definition of Terms

Operational definitions for key terms utilized in this study are presented in the following section:

1.  *Collectivistic Worldview*: an overall perspective used to describe any moral, political, or social values that stress human interdependence and the importance of a collective, rather than the importance of separate individuals. An individual with a collectivistic worldview tends to focus on community and society and seeks to give priority to group goals over individual goals. A collectivistic worldview is considered to be the antipole of an individualistic worldview (adapted from Wikipedia, 2007).

2.  *Counselor*: An individual who has earned a graduate degree in a counseling program, such as community counseling, school counseling, counselor education, marriage and family counseling, or mental health counseling.

3.  *Cross-Cultural*: comparing or studying individuals who self-identify as belonging to two or more different cultures (Merriam-Webster, 2007).

4.  *Cultural Worldview*: a collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by a culture (adapted from The American Heritage Dictionary, 2007).

5.  *Eastern*: groups of people, identified by their native country (e.g., China, Japan, and Thailand) or continent (e.g., Asia), or race who generally share a collectivistic worldview, in which group members are predominantly socialized to perceive themselves as members of the larger social group and to place the group's concerns over their own.
6. *Empathy:* "the ability to engage in the cognitive process of adopting another's psychological point of view, and the capacity to experience affective reactions to the observed experiences of others" (Davis, 1996, p. 45).

7. *Independent Self-Construal:* "a bounded, unitary, stable self that is separate from social context" (Singelis, 1994, p. 581).

8. *Individualistic Worldview:* an overall perspective used to describe any moral, political, or social values that stress human independence and the importance of individual self-reliance and liberty. An individual with an individualistic worldview tends to focus on individual goals and desires and opposes most external interference with an individual's choices - whether by society, the state or any other group or institution. (adapted from Wikipedia, 2007).

9. *Interdependent Self-Construal:* "flexible, variable self that emphasizes (a) external, public features such as statuses, roles, and relationships, (b) belonging and fitting in, (c) occupying one's proper place and engaging in appropriate action, and (d) being indirect in communication and reading others' minds" (Singelis, 1994, p. 581).

10. *Master’s-Level Counselor Education Program:* For the purpose of this study, counselor education programs are defined as master’s-level graduate education and training programs in community counseling, school counseling, counseling psychology, marriage and family counseling, or mental health counseling.
11. *Master’s-Level Counselor Education Students:* Master’s-level counselor education students are defined as students enrolled in a master’s-level graduate counselor education program and current students in this program at the time of the data collection process.

12. *Self-Construal:* "a constellation of thoughts, feelings, and actions concerning one's relationship to others, and the self as distinct from others" (Singelis, 1994, p. 581).

13. *Socio-Cultural Factors:* Socio-cultural factors are environmental or external factors from an individual's, characteristic of their society and culture that affect their values, beliefs, attitudes and worldviews.

14. *Western:* groups of people, identified by their native country (e.g. Australia, Great Britain, and the United States) or continent (e.g. North America), or race, who generally share an individualistic worldview in which the members are primarily socialized to perceive themselves as independent individuals and to prioritize their personal goals.

15. *Worldview:* the overall perspective from which an individual perceives and interprets the world (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2007).

**Overview of the Remainder of the Study**

A review of literature related to cross-cultural empathy and philosophical differences between collectivistic versus individualistic cultural worldviews was included in Chapter II. This review consisted of the examination of theoretical and empirical studies relating to empathy, cross-cultural worldviews, and master’s-level counselor education, supervision, and training. Also, a theoretical rationale for this study was
presented. Chapter III consisted of a description of the methodological framework for this study, including the general research design, research questions, hypotheses, participants, data collection procedures, instrumentation, and methods of data analyses. Chapter IV consisted of a presentation of the results of the statistical data analyses utilized in this study in reference to the research hypotheses presented in Chapter III. Included in the fifth and final chapter was an overview of this study comprised of a summary and conclusion related to the statistical results, a discussion of these results, contributions and limitations of this study. Implications of the findings were also included for counselor education, supervision, and training, and clinical practice, as well as recommendations for future research.

Researcher Subjectivity Statement

The background and personal interests of the researcher have guided this study. The researcher is not only licensed as a Professional Clinical Counselor with Supervision designation but has actively provided counseling services in an agency and in private practice to clients from diverse backgrounds for the past several years. In clinical practice, the researcher has experienced the importance of empathy as a crucial condition, positively impacting the effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship and the counseling process. The researcher has also been a counselor educator for numerous years and has taught the Techniques of Counseling course several times. In this course, the goal is for the master’s-level counseling students to develop and improve their counseling skills; empathy being emphasized among these skills. Because the researcher possesses a developmental perspective on empathy, has observed individual differences in empathy in master’s-level counseling students, and has a desire to increase multicultural awareness
and competencies related to clinical practice and counselor education, the researcher made the decision to pursue research on empathy and self-construals in master’s-level counseling students sampled from Eastern and Western cultures.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction to the Differences Between Eastern and Western Philosophies

In comparing literature written by philosophers, historians, anthropologists, and psychologists on the philosophical differences between Easterners and Westerners, it has been observed that although there is often an assumption of universal thinking, perceiving, and behavior patterns, there is mounting evidence that cultural differences are substantial (e.g., Chan, 1967; Cohen, 1997; Cole & Scribner, 1974; Cousins, 1989; Dien, 1997; Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Fung, 1983; Gries & Peng, 2002; Hansen, 1983; Hofstede, 1980; Hsu, 1953, 1981; Huntington, 1996; Lin, 1936; McNeil, 1962; Munro, 1985; Nakamura, 1964/1985; Nisbett, 2003; Shore, 1996; Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995; Triandis, 1972, 1988, 1995; Wang, 1979). Those people who adhere to Western philosophies are considered to be primarily Americans, Europeans, and Australians. People from Asian countries, such as China, Korea, Japan, and Thailand, as well as some Latin American countries, are believed to possess Eastern philosophies (Triandis, 1995). For the most part, scholars from various disciplines agree upon the nature of differences between Eastern and Western philosophies (e.g., Chan, 1967; Cohen, 1997; Cole & Scribner, 1974; Cousins, 1989; Dien, 1997; Fiske et al., 1998; Fung, 1983; Gries & Peng, 2002; Hansen, 1983; Hofstede, 1980; Hsu, 1953, 1981; Huntington, 1996; Lin, 1936; McNeil, 1962; Munro, 1985; Nakamura, 1964/1985).
The substantive differences in Eastern versus Western cultural worldviews, as well as empirical research and theory related to these differences and how they impact empathy, will be elaborated on below.

**Eastern Versus Western Cultural Worldviews**

Culture is defined as a collection of "beliefs, customs, habits, and language shared by people living in a particular time and place" (Kenrick, Neuberg, & Cialdini, 2002, p. 58). Cultures influence individuals' cognitions, emotions, and behaviors (Fiske et al., 1998). Transmitted from generation to generation are cultural norms, such as values, beliefs, and behaviors (Kagawa-Singer & Chung, 1994) that impact the manner in which individuals conceptualize their world (Ivey et al., 1987). In this way culture influences an individual's development of their worldview (Ibrahim, 1985).

Worldviews consist of attitudes, beliefs, opinions, concepts, and values that influence an individual's thought processes, decision-making abilities, perceptions, conceptualizations, behaviors, and interpretations of events (Sue & Sue, 2003). Through the learned framework of their worldviews, individuals can gain an understanding of others that can impact social interactions (Chung, Bemak, & Kilinc, 2002). Distinct worldviews can be examined for the purpose of learning more about the ways in which two cultural groups experience the world in different ways (Chung et al., 2002). Cultural worldviews can be thought of as self-reinforcing and homeostatic systems, in which social practices influence the development of worldviews, which significantly impact cognitive processes, which in turn, give credence to the worldviews and social practices of a particular culture (Nisbett, 2003).
*Westerners Think Differently, and Why*, Nisbett (2003) provides a scholarly account of the intricacies behind Eastern (i.e., collectivistic) and Western (i.e., individualistic) worldviews.

**Collectivistic worldview.** Easterners tend to have a collectivistic worldview (Earley, 1989; Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995; Triandis, 1995). People with a collectivistic worldview tend to view the world in a global, situation-specific manner (Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). They perceive and interpret events as being complex and impacted by many variables and believe that all events are connected (Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). This also relates to Easterners' philosophical view of resonance. People of Eastern cultures believe that actions, even those considered to be relatively insignificant, (i.e., the ripple effect of a stone being thrown into a body of water) have the potential to substantially impact not only another object or individual, but also mankind, the earth, the heavens, and even the universe (Lin, 1936).

For example, in social relationships, Easterners tend to emphasize the complex, interconnected nature between people, not only within the immediate family, but in the extended family, in the community, in their country, and in the world (Norenzayan et al., 2002; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). In contrast to logical thought, Easterners tend to utilize a dialectical approach to relationships (Basseches, 1980; Peng, 2001; Riegel, 1973). They tend to accept and integrate conflicting views, contradictions, and oppositions, attempting to find a balance in their reasoning processes (Nisbett, 1992; Nisbett, Fong, Lehman, & Cheng, 1987). This perspective helps Easterners to maintain
harmony, which is highly valued, particularly in their interpersonal relationships (Norenzayan et al., 2002; Ji et al., 2000; Miller & Bersoff, 1995).

*Individualistic worldview.* Westerners tend to have an individualistic worldview. These individuals often view an object or person separate from its contextual environment (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). An individual with this type of cultural worldview maintains the belief that she or he can control the behavior of another and is generally in control of his or her own behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). An individualistic person is focused on personal goals and often believes barriers to attaining these goals lie in relationships and group memberships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Each individual is believed to possess unique attributes and it is desired to be different from others in significant ways (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). This type of individual tends to perform more effectively in circumstances in which he or she has some freedom of choice to influence outcomes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). People from individualistic cultures value equality in personal relationships and superiority in hierarchical relationships (Triandis 1995). These individuals seek to build their self-esteem through their personal achievements (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). They believe in justice and fairness and that the same rules should be applicable to all people, regardless of circumstances (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995).

*Eastern Versus Western Self-Construals*

Within the conceptual framework of a person's cultural worldview, comprised of beliefs, attitudes, and values, lies a person's self-construal, which is the embodiment of
interpersonal perceptions. The concept of self-construal is defined as “a constellation of thoughts, feelings, and actions concerning the relationship of the self to others and the self as distinct from others” (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995, p. 624). It is believed that a person’s self-construal is shaped by that person’s cultural worldview which in turn has been previously shaped by the culture in which an individual lives, grows, and develops (Yamada & Singelis, 1999). Specifically, a person’s self-construal determines how that person has learned to relate to others and to the world (Yamada & Singelis, 1999). The two typologies of self-construal are independent and interdependent (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995; Yamada & Singelis, 1999).

**Independent self-construal.** An independent self-construal is “a bounded, unitary, stable self that is separate from social context” (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995, p. 626). An individual with a strong independent self-construal tends to focus on internal abilities, cognitions and emotions, the expression of the unique self, acknowledging one’s own internal attributes, pursuing personal goals, and communicating in a direct, assertive manner (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Additionally, when a person with a strong independent self-construal refers to others, he or she typically emphasizes the other’s individual dispositions rather than the relationship between the individual and others or between the individual and his or her context (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). What is not clear is if this tendency to focus on self rather than others, or on another in isolation of others or the social context, might enhance or limit a person’s ability to empathize with others.

**Interdependent self-construal.** An interdependent self-construal is a "flexible, variable self" that emphasizes (a) external, public features such as status, roles, and
relationships; (b) belonging and fitting in; (c) occupying one's proper place and engaging in appropriate action; and (d) being indirect in communication 'reading others' minds'" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; as cited in Singelis & Sharkey, 1995, p. 627). A person with a strong interdependent self-construal is often characterized by a sense of interconnectedness, not only with others, but also with the context or situation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). The person with a strong interdependent self-construal believes that situations shape the individual and others (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). A person with a predominant interdependent self-construal typically strives for harmony in interpersonal relationships, communicates indirectly with others, and attends to others’ emotions and cognitions, whether verbalized or not (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Perhaps an individual with a predominant interdependent self-construal, who has a strong sense of interconnectedness with others and attends to others’ spoken and unspoken thoughts and feelings, could have a stronger capacity to empathize with others. However, these interdependent, collectivistic characteristics, including the belief that situations shape the individual and others could also limit the ability to empathize with others.

**Self-Construals and Their Impact on Eastern Versus Western Interpersonal Relationships**

According to Singelis (1994), an independent self-construal reflects the individualistic characteristics of social separateness and uniqueness most often associated with individuals from Western cultures. The concept of an interdependent self-construal was developed to embody the collectivistic characteristics of interrelatedness and connectedness most often associated with persons from Eastern cultures (Singelis, 1994). For example, research using the Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Singelis, 1994) was
conducted with participants who were either Asian Americans or Euro-Americans. Each participant was given a score for independence and for interdependence by averaging items on each subscale of the SCS. As hypothesized, Asian Americans scored significantly higher on the interdependent items than did the Caucasian Americans. These results have been replicated in subsequent research studies (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995; Singelis & Triandis, 1985).

It is therefore concluded that Easterners tend to perceive themselves as part of a global context of relationships, in which each individual, object, or event is part of a complicated, interconnected network (Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). In this way, Easterners tend to enhance the development of a strong interdependent self-construal (Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Easterners strive to maintain harmony in these relationships, acknowledging interconnectedness, conflicting perspectives, contradictions, and oppositions, which they accept and integrate into their notion of finding the Middle Way (Hsu, 1953; Lin, 1936). In contrast, Westerners tend to enhance the development of a strong independent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Westerners tend to view the individual as in isolation of others. The goal of the Westerner in social relationships is to achieve independence from others, striving for either equality or superiority in relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Westerners are likely to ignore or minimize the impact of contextual factors in interpersonal relationships and believe they are able to control many of these situational factors (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Original assumptions about self-construal indicated an "either-or"
conceptualization in which a person is thought to have either an interdependent or an independent self-construal but not both (Singelis, 1994).

In past research, findings had indicated that independent and interdependent self-construals were two opposite extremes of a unitary bipolar dimension (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). However, there exist several research studies that have indicated that independent and interdependent self-construals are separate dimensions (Bontempo, 1993; Hui, 1988; Roland, 1988; Triandis, 1988). In other words, each individual is believed to possess both an independent and an interdependent self-construal in varying strengths. The strength of an individual’s independent and interdependent self-construals is considered to be dependent upon the impact of that individual’s culture, which is believed to emphasize the development of one of these self-construals over the other (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Of particular relevancy to this research study is the impact of self-construals on the development and experience of empathy, which is an important aspect of interpersonal relationships (Davis, 1983a, 1983b).

To date, there is very little research on the relationship between cultural worldviews or self-construals and empathy; however, there are several research studies on cross-cultural differences between people from Eastern and Western cultures. These research studies provide empirical evidence for cross-cultural differences between Easterners and Westerners on various factors such as self-construals (Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwarz, & Nisbett, 2000), cognitive processes such as perceptions (Cohen & Gunz, 2002; Fernald & Morikawa, 1993), attributions (Choi & Nisbett, 1998) and memory (Han et al., 1998), child-rearing practices (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993), interpretation of communication cues (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002), and affective processes such as the
experiencing of sensitivity to others' feelings (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Peng & Ellsworth, 1998), and the ability to recognize emotions in others (Bagozzi, Wong, & Yi, 1999; Peng, Keltner, & Morikawa, 2002).

Although the relationships between some of these factors and empathy have not been specifically researched, there is substantial evidence in both literature and research regarding the connection between child-rearing practices and empathy development (Bemak & Breggin, 2002; Hoffman, 1987), cognitive processes and empathy (e.g. Barrett-Lennard, 1962, 1981; Borke, 1971; Deutsch & Madle, 1975; Kalliopuuska, 1986; Katz, 1963; Kohut, 1971; Rogers, 1986; Woodall & Kogler-Hill, 1982), and affective processes and empathy (e.g., Allport, 1961; Langer, 1967; Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972; Stotland, 1969). Because the following review of research includes studies that include cross-cultural differences between people of Eastern and Western societies examining such factors as child-rearing practices and cognitive and affective processes, the relationships between these variables and empathy will be explored and inferred based upon theory.

Review of the Related Research on Cross-Cultural Differences in Worldviews

Results of various research studies (Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwarz et al., 2000; Nisbett, 2003; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1988) have revealed significant differences in strengths of independent and interdependent self-construals, between groups of individuals from Eastern and Western societies. Self-construals consist of an individual’s cognitions, emotions, and behaviors and are a significant part of a person’s worldview.
**Differences in Independent Versus Interdependent Self-Construals**

Ji, Schwarz et al. (2000) conducted an investigation of the differences between Easterners and Westerners in their ability to attend to and report on their own and their peers' behaviors. Westerners have a self-focused construal and tend to refer to their own internal resources of cognitions, emotions, and behaviors rather than referring to others' cognitions, emotions and behaviors (Ji, Schwarz et al.). In contrast, Easterners, due to their interdependent nature, tend to closely monitor their own and others' behaviors in order to maintain social harmony (Ji, Schwarz et al.). It was hypothesized that these differences in construal would lead to Easterners demonstrating a greater awareness of their own and others' behaviors, whereas Westerners would rely on estimation for these behaviors (Ji, Schwarz et al.). This is exactly what the researchers found. It was concluded that members of Eastern cultures, considered to be collectivistic and interdependent, have more detailed information regarding their own and others' behaviors as compared to members of Western cultures, who were considered to be individualistic and independent (Ji, Schwarz et al.).

Han et al. (1998) examined differences between Chinese and American children, aged four and six years, in autobiographical memory and story recall of daily life events. The researchers (Han et al.) based their perspective on autobiographical memory and recall on the social interaction model. According to this theoretical perspective, verbal recall is reliant on the process of child development as influenced by significant adults (Han et al.). Children learn how to describe life events, developing a narrative structure and establishing a personal history from autobiographical memories by discussing past events with adults with whom they have significant relationships (Han et al.). The
researchers (Han et al.) acknowledged the impact of distinct cultural worldviews on the outcome of this study.

The authors explain that a Western cultural worldview typically encompasses a strong independent self-construal, which emphasizes the uniqueness of inner attributes and encourages the individual to be different from others (Han et al., 1998). People with an Eastern cultural worldview tend to have a strong interdependent self-construal, in which they focus on their relationships with others (Han et al., 1998; Nisbett, 2003; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1988). Due to the influence of a Western cultural worldview taught to children by significant adults, it was predicted by these researchers that Western children would have a greater tendency to engage in self-expression and the reporting of self-relevant autobiographical memories (Han et al., 1998). In contrast, Eastern children were predicted to share less personal information and focus more on information related to relationships (Han et al., 1998). Findings indicated that American children were three times more likely than Chinese children to make references to themselves versus references to others (Han et al., 1998). Another significant difference found was that Chinese children described events using small details in a brief manner, whereas American children described fewer events but the events they did discuss were of personal interest to them (Han et al., 1998). Moreover, American children made twice as many statements regarding their personal thoughts and feelings, such as their likes/dislikes and how they felt about certain events, as did the Chinese children (Han et al., 1998).

Based upon these findings, it can be concluded that children from an Eastern culture (i.e., China) have a greater tendency to have strong interdependent self-construals
and a predominant focus on others rather than on themselves. In contrast, it can be concluded that children from a Western culture (i.e., America) have a greater propensity to have strong independent self-construals with an emphasis on the self rather than on others. It seems reasonable to assume that an individual whose focus is on others rather than on self would have a greater ability to empathize with another person rather than an individual with a predominant self-focus. A person who tends to be self-focused may have greater difficulty “walking in someone else’s shoes” than a person who is “other-focused.”

Differences in Perceptions of Events

Cohen and Gunz (2002) conducted a research study on students' perceptions of events. The participants were North American students, who were mostly Canadian and Asian students, including students from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Korea, and various South and Southeast Asian countries. The participants were asked to recall details of 10 different events in which each participant was the center of attention (Cohen & Gunz). The investigators (Cohen & Gunz) found significant differences in the recall of events between the North American students and the Asian students. The findings indicated that the North American students were significantly more likely to recall the event from their personal perspective looking outward (Cohen & Gunz). The Asian students were more likely to describe each event from a third-person perspective or as an observer might perceive the event (Cohen & Gunz).

The findings of this research study (Cohen & Gunz, 2002), indicated that individuals from Eastern cultures (i.e., Asian students) were able to perceive events as if they were observing these events from another person’s perceptual framework. In
contrast, the findings demonstrated that individuals from Western cultures (i.e., Canada and America) have a tendency to perceive events from a personal perspective (Cohen & Gunz). It seems intuitive that a person with a greater ability to perceive an event from a third-person perspective (from the outside looking in), as evidenced by the Eastern students, could have a stronger capacity to empathize with others than a person who perceives events through a personal filter with a first-person perspective, as exhibited by the Western students. A person who tends to see things his or her own way may have difficulty trying to understand another person’s internal world.

* Differences in Perceptions of Objects Versus Relationships

Fernald and Morikawa (1993) conducted research on child-rearing practices in the homes of Japanese and American mothers with infants either 6, 12, or 19 months old. These researchers (Fernald & Morikawa) requested that the mothers remove all toys from the play area and then play with their infants with toys that the researchers had brought, including a stuffed dog and pig, a car, and a truck. The researchers (Fernald & Morikawa) found significant behavioral differences between the Japanese and American mothers. The American mothers typically labeled each of the toys, assigning nouns to each (i.e., “piggie,” “doggie”), whereas the Japanese mothers were twice as likely to interact in play with their infants by using verbs and teaching the infants social norms, greetings, and empathy (Fernald & Morikawa). The researchers (Fernald & Morikawa) concluded that the American infants were being taught that the world consists mainly of objects and Japanese infants are being taught that the world is mainly about relationships and interactions with others. Based upon Hoffman’s (1982, 1987) developmental model of empathy development, it seems that teaching an infant to focus on relationships,
interactions with others, and empathy in play, as demonstrated by the Japanese mothers, could lay a crucial foundation for the development of empathy.

Differences in Dispositional Versus Situational Attributions

Choi and Nisbett (1998) examined correspondence biases in attitude attributions, also known as the fundamental attribution errors (FAE), in Americans and East Asians. An FAE is made when an individual assumes that another person's behavior is due to the person's disposition rather than attributing the person's behavior to a significant situational factor (Nisbett, 2003). The participants consisted of 202 introductory to psychology students at the University of Michigan and 195 introductory to psychology students at So-Gang University in Seoul, Korea (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). There were three conditions in this study, including a no-choice condition and two additional conditions in which the salience of situational factors was manipulated, consisting of the exposure condition, and the exposure plus arguments condition (Choi & Nisbett, 1998).

In the no-choice condition, the participants were told that a target person had been directed to write an essay either supporting or opposing capital punishment that did not necessarily reflect their true attitude toward this subject (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). Participants in the exposure condition were told to write an essay either supporting or opposing capital punishment regardless of their own true attitudes before they read the target person's essay on the same subject (Choi & Nisbett). The researchers (Choi & Nisbett) believed that this manipulation would lead to participants’ increased ability to relate to the target person in the no-choice condition, realizing that the target person's essay may not accurately reflect the true attitude of the target person. In the exposure plus arguments condition, participants were asked to write an essay either supporting or
opposing capital punishment, regardless of their true attitudes, utilizing four arguments (Choi & Nisbett). Additionally, the participants were told that the target person was also directed to write an essay based on the four arguments (Choi & Nisbett). The purpose of this manipulation was to increase the salience of situational factors in this condition (Choi & Nisbett). Each of the participants was asked to read an essay then make inferences regarding the target person's true attitude toward capital punishment (Choi & Nisbett). The purpose of this study as explained to the participants was "an attempt to understand how accurately people make judgments about another person's personality and attitude based on little information" (Choi & Nisbett, 1998, p. 951).

The results of this research study indicated that, regardless of the condition in which they were placed, American participants were significantly more likely to attribute the target person's behavior to dispositional factors rather than situational factors; therefore, their probability of making an FAE was heightened (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). However, the Korean participants were significantly more likely to attribute the target person's behavior to situational factors, which significantly decreased the probability of their making an FAE (Choi & Nisbett, 1998).

The tendency of the Western participants (i.e., Americans) to attribute a person’s behavior to dispositional factors could inhibit their ability to empathize with this person due to holding the belief that the person exhibited a particular behavior as a result of a stable personality trait. Eastern participants (i.e., Korean), who demonstrated the tendency to attribute a person’s behavior to situational factors, could have a greater capacity for empathy due to the belief that a person’s behavior can change from situation to situation.
This issue can be particularly prevalent in a counselor-client relationship. For example, if a client is incarcerated and the counselor attributes his or her behaviors to a personality trait or disorder, the counselor may hold little or no hope for behavioral change and may not have much empathy in terms of being truly able to interpersonally relate to this client. However, if a counselor attributes this client’s behavior to situational factors, such as economic factors (e.g., the client stole to feed his or her children), then the counselor may have a greater capacity to empathize with this client.

*Differences in Reliance on Indirect Versus Direct Communication Cues*

Sanchez-Burks and his colleagues (2002) analyzed the reactions of both Korean and American employees to evaluations they received from their employers. Relational concern was considered a key factor in impacting a person's motivation to attend to indirect communication cues in the work setting with the purpose of saving face and maintaining harmony in interpersonal relationships (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002). People from collectivistic cultures who valued interdependence were shown to rely on more indirect communication cues than those individuals from individualistic cultures who valued independence (Sanchez-Burks et al.). It was hypothesized that people from Eastern cultures (e.g., Koreans) would be more likely than people from Western cultures (e.g., Americans) to attend to indirect communication cues in the work setting (Sanchez-Burks et al.). Findings suggested that the Korean employees focused on their employer's feelings and were better able to infer from the evaluation ratings how the employers felt about them (Sanchez-Burks et al.). The American employees had a greater tendency to accept the evaluation ratings at face value and did not report attempting to understand the emotions behind the employer's ratings of them (Sanchez-Burks et al.). The people from
Eastern cultures demonstrated a greater attempt to understand their employer’s emotions connected with their employee evaluations than did people from Western cultures (Sanchez-Burks et al.).

**Differences in Degree of Sensitivity to Others’ Feelings**

Masuda and Nisbett (2001) examined the context sensitivity differences between Japanese and American students in their response to observing underwater video scenes involving fish. These underwater scenes consisted of a focal fish which moved across a background of fish, animals, and seascape, including rocks and coral (Masuda & Nisbett). When the participants were asked to report what they had observed, the Japanese participants reported observing more of the background details and more relationships between the focal fish and the background than did the American participants (Masuda & Nisbett). Also, the Japanese participants reported more feelings and motivations of the fish than did the American participants. It was concluded from the results that East Asians have a greater tendency than Americans to orient themselves to the environment and relationships among objects within the environment (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001).

The degree of sensitivity to others' feelings in Chinese and American students was examined in Peng and Ellsworth’s study (1998). These researchers (Peng & Ellsworth, 1998) showed the participants pictures of fish swimming in various interactional patterns. For example, one fish would move toward a group of fish or a group of fish would move away from an individual fish that approached the group (Peng & Ellsworth). The researchers (Peng & Ellsworth) requested that the participants report on how the individual fish and group of fish were feeling during various interactions. The Chinese students were compliant in completing this task and they appeared to complete it with
ease (Peng & Ellsworth). The American students, however, had difficulty completing this task and seemed confused about what to report regarding their perceptions of the feelings of the group of fish (Peng & Ellsworth). Thus, evidence exists that persons with an Eastern worldview more readily relate to and identify with the experiences of others in their environment.

Individuals from Eastern cultures (i.e., Japan) demonstrated a tendency to focus on the environment and on interactional patterns between the objects involved (e.g., fish) and the environment (Peng & Ellsworth, 1998). Chinese students demonstrated an ability to empathize with the fish, easily complying with the request to report their perceptions of the emotions of the fish. Those from Western cultures (i.e., America) had a tendency to remain fixated on a focal fish and had difficulty reporting on their perceptions of the emotions of the fish (Peng & Ellsworth, 1998). This enhanced ability of people from Eastern cultures to recognize emotions in others was also found when Eastern and Western participants in a research study examined human faces (Peng et al., 2002).

**Differences in Ability to Recognize Others' Emotions**

Peng et al. (2002) researched the ability to recognize conflicting emotions in facial expressions in Japanese and American participants. Participants were presented pictures of faces and were asked to describe what types of emotions these faces were expressing (Peng et al.). These researchers (Peng et al.) found a significant difference in recognition of emotions in faces between the Japanese and American participants. The Japanese participants were significantly more likely than the American participants to report observing both positive and negative emotions in the same face (Peng et al.). Thus, it can be inferred that persons with an Eastern worldview may be more capable of seeing
the ‘big picture’ (i.e., a more comprehensive vicarious experience) when understanding
others’ emotions.

Another study examining the recognition of conflicting emotions was conducted
by Bagozzi et al. (1999). These investigators (Bagozzi et al.) requested that Chinese,
Korean, and American participants rate their emotional states at the present moment and
their typical emotional states in general. Again, significant differences were found
between the Asian and American participants in their report of conflicting emotional
states (Bagozzi et al.). The Korean and Chinese participants were significantly more
likely to report experiencing both positive and negative emotional states simultaneously
in both the "present moment" condition and "in general” (Bagozzi et al.). There was no
relationship between the intensity of the positive and negative emotional states and
Eastern participants’ ability to recognize and report a full range of emotional expression
(Bagozzi et al.). In other words, the Asian participants sometimes reported both strong
positive and strong negative emotional states experienced simultaneously (Bagozzi et al.).
In contrast, the American participants demonstrated a more dualistic (i.e., less balanced
or comprehensive) pattern of describing emotions (Bagozzi et al.). They typically
reported experiencing either a positive emotional state or a negative emotional state in
both the "present moment" and "in general" conditions, but never both positive and
negative emotional states simultaneously (Bagozzi et al.).

In the counseling setting, often clients report experiencing “mixed feelings,” or a
combination of both positive and negative feelings. If a counselor is not able to recognize
both positive and negative emotions in their client, the counselor’s ability to empathize
with this client may be limited.
Summary of Research on Differences in Eastern Versus Western Worldviews

Consistent cognitive and affective differences have been found in research between people from Eastern and Western cultures (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Cohen & Gunz, 2002; Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwartz et al., 2000; Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Peng & Ellsworth, 1998; Peng et al., 2002; Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002). These differences were evident throughout the developmental lifespan; in infancy, in childhood, in college-aged students, and in adults (Cohen & Gunz, 2002). Although, in the several studies reviewed (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Cohen & Gunz, 2002; Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwartz et al., 2000; Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Peng & Ellsworth, 1998; Peng et al., 2002; Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002), nationalities of Eastern participants varied (i.e., Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Taiwanese, South East Asian), the Western participants in most of these research studies were from the United States of America, with the exception of one research study in which the participants were North Americans, including participants from both the United States of America and Canada (Cohen & Gunz, 2002).

The consistent theme running through each of these research studies is that cognitive and affective differences between people from Eastern and Western societies were attributed to their distinct worldviews and self-construals (Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwarz et al., 2000; Nisbett, 2003). People from Eastern cultures with collectivistic worldviews were found to have stronger interdependent self-construals (Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwarz et al., 2000). Individuals with strong interdependent self-construals typically viewed themselves in relationship to others and to situational factors in an effort to maintain interpersonal harmony (Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwarz et al., 2000). People from
Western cultures with individualistic worldviews generally had stronger independent self-construals (Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwarz et al., 2000). These persons primarily attended to personal interests and personal goals in isolation of others and situational factors (Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwarz et al., 2000).

In this regard, people from Eastern cultures were significantly more likely to focus on the interconnectedness of themselves with others, and themselves and others with situational factors; whereas Westerners placed more emphasis on personal interests, goals, attributes, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and dispositions (Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwarz et al., 2000). In reference to feelings and emotions, people from Eastern cultures demonstrated a greater reported sensitivity to others' feelings than did Americans. People from Eastern cultures also exhibited an ability to recognize conflicting emotions in facial expressions within the same face (Peng et al., 2002). They were also capable of identifying both positive and negative emotional states simultaneously within themselves, unlike their American counterparts who typically ‘chose’ one emotion in examining another person's facial expressions, and either a positive or a negative emotional state within themselves, regardless of the context (Peng et al., 2002).

Review of Psychosocial Theory Related to Cross-Cultural Differences in Worldviews

According to literature on psychosocial theory and cross-cultural differences in worldviews, the differences found between individuals from Eastern and Western societies are not only reflective of their respective cultures, but they also serve to prime or reinforce the individuals’ development of cultural worldviews and independent and interdependent self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Nisbett, 2003; Singelis, 1994;

Differences in Social Practices

Given the research cited above, there seems to be truth in the statement "training for independence or interdependence starts quite literally in the crib" (Nisbett, 2003, p. 57). It is common for infants to share a bed with their parents in Eastern cultures. However, in Western cultures infants often are placed in a crib in a separate bedroom from their parents while sleeping (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Western parents further encourage the development of independence in their children by offering them a myriad of choices (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Eastern parents typically make decisions for their children and do not offer them a plethora of alternatives (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

From infancy onward, Western parents tend to teach their children to focus on objects, in isolation of other objects or the context, which promotes the development of independence (Ji et al., 2002). Eastern parents emphasize the feelings of others and social interactions and relationships, which encourages the development of interdependence (Ji et al., 2002). Methods of teaching communication skills to children also differ between parents from Eastern and Western cultures (Ji et al., 2002). Western parents tend to teach
their children to adopt a "transmitter" perspective in communicating with others, whereas Eastern parents teach their children a "receiver" perspective in communicating with others (Ji et al., 2002). The "transmitter" perspective involves teaching the child to communicate his or her ideas directly and clearly, without regards to the situation (Nisbett, 2003, p. 60). The fault in miscommunication in Western societies is thus attributed to the person transmitting the message (Ji et al., 2002). The "receiver" perspective in Eastern cultures involves teaching children that the person who hears a message is responsible for comprehending and analyzing it for potential multiple meanings (Nisbett, 2003, p. 60). It is logical to assume, therefore, that persons with an Eastern worldview gain life-long practice attuning themselves to and understanding the communications of others. In this regard, children in Eastern societies are taught to communicate with others indirectly (Ji et al., 2002). These differences in parental teachings of communication skills are additional example of the ways in which an independent or an interdependent self-construal can develop. Beyond infancy and childhood, people from Eastern and Western cultures are consistently being exposed to cues that either prime interdependence or independence (Ji et al., 2002).

*Differences in Linguistic/Language Usage*

The analysis of linguistics reveals socio-cultural differences between Eastern and Western societies. For instance, there is no Chinese word for “individualism” (Nisbett, 2003, p. 52). The Chinese word that comes closest to the translation of “individualism,” means “selfishness” (Nisbett, 2003, p. 52). In Japan, the word “I” is rarely used. Instead, Japanese refer to themselves in the third person, using a word to describe their role within a particular context (Imai & Gentner, 1994). For example, when a Japanese father talks to
his son, he might refer to himself as Otosan, which means father. This same man might refer to himself as Boku or Ore when speaking with college peers. Eastern linguistics reflect the person’s philosophical view that they are a different person when interacting with different people (Imai & Gentner, 1994). Therefore, persons with Eastern worldviews may be better able to differentiate what another person says versus what he or she means because of an awareness that each person has many different components, each of which must be understood in a unique way.

Linguistic differences exist between Easterners and Westerners when asked to give self-descriptions as well. For example, North Americans will typically describe their personality traits, the roles with which they identify, and the activities in which they like to participate (Gelman & Tardif, 1998; Gentner, 1981; Imai & Gentner, 1994). North Americans do not often integrate contextual information into their self-descriptions. In contrast, Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans typically describe themselves in terms of situational information, often describing their social roles (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). In one study, twice as many Japanese as Americans referred to other people in their descriptions of self (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). Again, this reflects the belief that persons with an Eastern worldview tend to focus on and consider other people’s roles, interactions, and interpersonal cues more than persons with a Western worldview.

In Western languages, the emphasis is placed on subjects or nouns (Tardif, 1996). According to a linguistic anthropologist, Shirley Brice Heath (1982), middle-class American parents tend to teach their children language by categorizing or naming objects, independent of the context. For example, a parent might point out “dog” or “cat,” without describing what the dog or cat are doing or the relationship between the dog or
cat and their surroundings (Heath, 1982). East Asian languages tend to be focused on a topic (Tardif, 1996), on verbs (Heath, 1982; Tardif, 1996), and on the contextual factors (Heath, 1982; Kitayama et al., 2003). Words or phrases often have multiple meanings that are not clearly understood unless the context is described (Kitayama et al., 2003; Kuhnen et al., 2001). When asked to describe an underwater scene, East Asians had the tendency to construct a sentence establishing the context, whereas Westerners most often described a focal object, such as a fish in the foreground (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001).

**Differences in Thought Processes**

Dialectical thought, which can be traced back to ancient China, emphasizes contradictory viewpoints that are resolved or transcended in order to find truth in both (Becker, 1986). Eastern dialectical thought can best be described in terms of the following three interrelated principles: the principle of change, the principle of contradiction, and the principle of relationship, or holism (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). The principle of change is based on the Eastern perspective that the world is in constant flux and reality is ever-changing and when something seems to be in a constant state, it is on the verge of change (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). The principle of contradiction is related to the principle of change (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Because the world is constantly changing, opposites exist and it is important to view these opposites as not only opposing forces, but also as interdependent alternatives to truth (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). The principle of relationship, or holism, is an Eastern way of thinking that results from the interconnectedness of the principles of change and contradiction (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Because change is inevitable and there are opposing alternatives to truth, events and objects are viewed as
interdependent and are not thought to exist in isolation (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). These three principles of dialectical reasoning minimize the importance of individual parts and emphasize the relationships between these parts (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Easterners use dialectical thought to view events in their proper contexts, to understand the relationships among objects and events, and to embrace contradictory viewpoints as a means of instruction (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Easterners use dialectical thinking to achieve their goal of reasoning, which is the Middle Way. Easterners use a "both/and approach" in their thought processes (Nisbett, 2003, p. 205).

In contrast, Westerners use logical thought to isolate and categorize objects and events (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). When Westerners are presented with contradictory viewpoints, they often choose one view as right and the other as wrong, also known as the "either/or approach" (Nisbett, 2003, p. 205). This manner of Western thinking is captured in the following laws: the law of identity and the law of noncontradiction (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). The law of identity states that an object is itself and not anything else (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). The law of noncontradiction holds that a proposition is definitively either true or false (Peng & Nisbett, 1999).

The differences in thought processes between people from Eastern and Western cultures are not only reflective of their distinct cultural worldviews and self-construals but also help to reinforce the worldviews and self-construals emphasized by a particular culture (Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). The Western "either/or approach" is typical of an independent self-construal and the Eastern "both/and approach" is consistent with an interdependent self-construal (Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). From an interpersonal standpoint, it is logical that persons with Western worldviews impose limits on their own...
understanding of others because of sociocultural learning. That is, Westerners attempt to isolate another’s experience, largely independent of context, and determine another’s experience in a concrete way (Peng, 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Due to using an either/or approach, one cannot be simultaneously happy and sad, or comforted and fearful. Therefore, once the ‘correct’ experience (i.e., another’s emotions) has been determined, further understanding and empathy may be limited. Due to differences in interpersonal relationship styles, collectivistic versus individualistic worldviews, and independent versus interdependent self-construals, it is likely that Eastern and Western persons differ in their overall degree of empathy.

The Construct of Empathy and Its Relationship to Cross-Cultural Worldviews

Empathy development is largely influenced by an individual’s cultural worldview (Duan et al., 2005; Eisenberg, 2000; Hoffman, 1982a, 1982b; Nisbett, 2003). Within an individual’s cultural worldview, various socio-cultural factors exist which possess the potential to influence individuals’ degree of empathy (Duan et al., 2005).

Overview and Definition of Empathy

The concept of empathy has been embraced as an important factor in the helping relationship. Psychoanalytic theorists view empathy as a crucial part of the psychoanalytic cure (Greenson, 1967, 1978; Kohut, 1977; Stewart, 1956) and of the establishment of the working alliance (Bordin, 1979; Greenson, 1967; Reik, 1964). Humanistic theorists have considered empathy to be a "necessary and sufficient condition" for change to occur within the therapeutic relationship (Carkhuff, 1969, 1980; Carkhuff & Truax, 1965; Egan, 1975; Rogers, 1957, 1986). Decades of research have followed Roger's writings (1957) regarding the role of empathy in psychotherapy. The
results of this research have generally supported the importance of empathy in bringing about positive outcomes within the therapeutic relationship (Duan & Hill, 1996). Many authors in the counseling profession have asserted that empathy is crucial to the effectiveness of the counselor-client relationship and the overall counseling process (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Cartwright & Lerner, 1963; Chung & Bemak, 2002; Dombrow, 1966; Gladstein, 1977; Katz, 1963; Lafferty et al., 1989; Rogers et al., 1967; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Therapeutic empathy enhances a counselor's ability to establish a therapeutic relationship with the client (Rogers, 1975, 1986), and assists the client in attaining a deeper level of self-awareness and self-understanding (Rogers, 1975, 1986), which can have a powerful impact on the client's belief system and worldviews (Carkhuff, 2000; Cormier & Nurius, 2002; Egan, 2002; Ivey et al., 2002; Martin, 2000) and can ultimately result in psychological healing, growth, and development in the client (Sinclair & Monk, 2005).

Empathy, as it is used today within the field of counseling, has evolved from various disciplines including counseling, psychology, philosophy, sociology, social work, and anthropology (Chung & Bemak, 2002). Although the construct of empathy originated centuries ago (as evidenced by the existence of the Greek word *ematheia*), the word *empathy* in the English language did not exist until the early 20th century (Chung & Bemak, 2002). Interestingly, the Greek word *ematheia* means to gain understanding by experiencing another's internal world, which is essentially the same definition used to describe the traditional concept of empathy as currently implemented in the professional mental health disciplines (Chung & Bemak, 2002). However, Edward Bradford Titchener (1909), an American experimental psychologist, derived the English word, empathy,
from the German art concept *Einfunlung*, which means perspective taking, or projecting oneself mentally into what one is visually observing (such as a painting) with the purpose of gaining a better understanding. Titchener (1924) applied this concept of perspective taking to psychology, with an emphasis on perceptual awareness and experiencing the feelings of another object or person.

Titchener's perspective on empathy continued to be the predominant view in psychology throughout the 1920s and early 1930s (e.g., Downey, 1929; Kohler, 1929). Mead (1934) added the cognitive component of understanding what one perceived and identified the concept of the self-other differentiation quality of empathy. Throughout psychological history, the concept of empathy has crossed theoretical boundaries, as evidenced by its importance to gestalt theorists (e.g., Kohler, 1929), psychodynamic theorists (e.g., Kohut, 1977), and humanistic theorists (e.g., Rogers, 1959).

According to Carl Rogers (1959, 1957/1986), empathy is the ability to recognize and understand another person's internal, private world, moving along with the ebb and flow of this person's changing perceptual experiences, without losing a sense of separateness. Rogers (1957) considered empathy, exercised by the counselor, to be one of the six core conditions essential for therapeutic change in the client. Empathy plays a vital role in all stages of the counseling process, from initially establishing a positive, therapeutic relationship to promoting exploration of thoughts and feelings to encouraging the client's willingness to be active participants in their self-healing process which can lead to change and a higher level of functioning (Hill, 2004).
The Construct of Empathy

According to Duan and Hill (1996), theorists vary in their perspective on whether empathy is a relatively stable personality trait or general ability (e.g., Book, 1988; Buie, 1981; Danish & Kagan, 1971; Easser, 1974; Feshbach, 1975; Hoffman, 1982, 1984b; Hogan, 1969; Mead, 1934) or whether it is a situation-specific cognitive-affective state (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Greenson, 1960, 1967; Hoffman, 1984a; Rogers, 1949, 1951, 1957, 1959). Psychoanalytic theorists (e.g., Buie, 1981; Easser, 1974; Sawyer, 1975), psychotherapy researchers (e.g., Danish & Kagan, 1971; Dymond, 1950; Hogan, 1969; Rogers, 1957) and social and developmental psychologists (e.g., Aronfreed, 1970; Davis, 1983a, 1983b; Feshbach, 1975; Kestenbaum, Farber, & Sroufe, 1989; Mead, 1934) are among those who hold the perspective that empathy is a trait or general ability (Duan & Hill, 1996). This view of empathy encompasses the theory that empathy is acquired through nature or through development (Duan & Hill, 1996). Theorists who believe empathy is a relatively stable personality trait or general ability believe that master’s-level counseling students enter their counseling education and training programs with a relatively stable level of empathy that has developed throughout their childhood and adolescence.

The underlying assumption of the situation-specific cognitive-affective state theory of empathy is that the ability to empathically experience the internal world of another varies from situation to situation and does not depend on one's developmental level of empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996). Those who believe that empathy is situation-specific are some social psychologists (e.g., Batson & Coke, 1981; Gould & Sigall, 1977; Jones & Nisbett, 1971; Regan & Totten, 1975; Stotland, 1969; Toi & Batson, 1982) and
those researchers interested in situational factors and intraindividual differences in empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996). From this theoretical perspective, master’s-level counseling students can be trained or can learn to increase their level of empathy for others, both cognitively and affectively.

Components of Empathy

There has been considerable debate as to the composition of empathy. In general, there are three major perspectives on what constitutes the construct of empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996). Some view empathy as possessing affective elements (e.g., Allport, 1961; Langer, 1967; Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972; Stotland, 1969). The affective perspective on empathy refers to the identifying, experiencing, and understanding of emotions in the therapeutic setting (Duan & Hill, 1996).

A second perspective of empathy involves a cognitive element as its primary composition (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1962, 1981; Borke, 1971; Deutsch & Madle, 1975; Kallionpiskia, 1986; Katz, 1963; Kohut, 1971; Rogers, 1986; Woodall & Kogler-Hill, 1982). This view refers to the intellectual comprehension of another's experience (Duan & Hill, 1996). Although it is indicated by some writers that the cognitive and affective components of empathy are clearly separate and distinctive (Gladstein, 1983), others view these components as inseparable (e.g., Feshbach, 1975; Greenberg et al., 1993; Greenson, 1960; Katz, 1963; Schafer, 1959; Strayer, 1987).

The third major perspective of the composition of empathy is that it is consists of both cognitive and affective elements (e.g., Brems, 1989; Hoffman, 1977; Shantz, 1975; Strayer, 1987). This is a more inclusive and perhaps a more therapeutically useful perspective of empathy, one which indicates that empathy can involve experiencing both
the cognitive and affective components (or either of these components alone), depending on the situation and one’s response to it (Duan & Hill, 1996). This view of empathy is supported by research, which demonstrates that cognitive and affective components of empathy inevitably impact each other (e.g., Bower, 1983; Davis, 1983a, 1983b; Isen, 1984).

For the purposes of this research study, this inclusive perspective of empathy was used. Empathy was viewed as a cognitive and affective vicarious experience of another. In addition, this research study focused on the stable dispositional characteristics of empathy. Dispositional tendencies to relate to others empathically are comprised of two components (Davis, 1996). The genetic component is an inherited or biological (e.g., temperamental) capacity to empathize with others (Davis, 1996). The environmental component of empathy embodies the socialization experiences encountered throughout one’s early development (Davis, 1996). These socialization experiences impact the expression of empathy in an individual (Davis, 1996). Although degree of empathy may certainly fluctuate over time depending on various psychosocial factors, and expressions of empathy can develop (i.e., be taught) throughout one’s lifetime, individuals differ dispositionally (for bio-psychosocial reasons) in quantity and quality of empathy toward others (Davis, 1996).

**Overview of Empirical Research on Empathy**

Although it is generally accepted that the concept of empathy is an important part of the therapeutic relationship, several theoretical obstacles surrounding the research of this concept have been delineated (Duan & Hill, 1996; Gladstein, 1983; Sexton & Whiston, 1994). These theoretical obstacles include inconsistencies in defining the
concept of empathy (Sexton & Whiston, 1994), empathy instruments that appear to measure different aspects of empathy, questionable validity and reliability of certain empathy measures, and subsequent mixed findings in empathy research (Gladstein, 1983).

According to Gladstein (1977, 1983) these theoretical obstacles primarily exist due to variations in the conceptualization of empathy. Some researchers have emphasized the cognitive aspects of empathy, while others have focused on the affective aspects, and still others have included both the cognitive and affective aspects of empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996; Gladstein, 1983; Rogers, 1975). In tracing the evolution of the concept of empathy from 1958 to 1978, Barrett-Lennard (1981) also found a communicative skill component of empathy that had developed. These different components of empathy have led to differing operational definitions of empathy in research, depending upon the researcher's perspective of empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996).

What also has led to some of the mixed findings in empathy research was the development of various measures of empathy, attempting to reflect one or more of the components of empathy (Gladstein, 1983). Kurtz and Grummon (1972) correlated commonly used empathy scales, such as the Affective Sensitivity Scale (Kagan et al., 1967), Carkhuff's (1969) Empathic Understanding in Interpersonal Process Scale, and Barrett-Lennard's (1962) Relationship Inventory. Kurtz and Grummon (1972) indicated that there were no statistically significant relationships found among these measures of empathy. Ham (1980) researched the relationship between the Affective Sensitivity Scale (Kagan et al., 1967) and Hogan's (1969) Empathy Measure and also found no statistically significant relationship. It was concluded from these research findings that these scales
were measuring different components of the same construct of empathy. For example, the Affective Sensitivity Scale (Kagan et al., 1967) was believed to measure the affective component of empathy and Hogan's Empathy Measure (1969) was purported to measure the cognitive component of empathy (Gladstein, 1983).

The validity and reliability of Truax's (1966) Accurate Empathy Scale and Carkhuff's (1969) Empathic Understanding Scales were also challenged (Gladstein, 1983). Some of the problems found were research design issues including problems with the training of the raters and inconsistencies between the stated operational definitions of empathy and the measure of empathy that was selected (Chinsky & Rappaport, 1970; Feldstein & Gladstein, 1980; Fridman & Stone, 1978; Gladstein, 1977; Gormally & Hill, 1974; Hill & King, 1976).

Other criticisms of empathy measures are related to the nature of self-report measures, which are widely used in empathy research. It has been argued that self-report empathy scales tend to measure ideal empathy rather than actual empathy; being prone to issues of social desirability (Duan & Hill, 1996). Based upon the results of Gladstein's (1977) meta-analyses of empathy and counseling outcome studies, it is suggested that future research on empathy include both affective and cognitive components in order to effectively capture the multidimensional nature of the concept of empathy. It has been suggested by Gladstein (1977) that researchers carefully and purposefully select the measure of empathy that best reflects their operational definition of empathy and desired counseling outcome.
Research on Cross-Cultural Differences in Empathy

According to Duan et al. (2005), cross-cultural empathy is the ability of an individual to relate to the cognitive perspective and affective experience of person from a different culture. The development of a person's capacity to empathize with others is influenced by an individual's "specific, cultural context" (Duan et al., 2005, p. 3). This cultural context, or cultural worldview, is comprised of various socio-cultural factors, which have been indicated as having an impact on the development and experience of empathy (Eisenberg, 2000; Hoffman, 1982a, 1982b; Nisbett, 2003). Socio-cultural differences (between Eastern and Western persons) regarding factors that may affect degree of empathy are evident throughout the literature (Nisbett, 2003). These differences are found in Eastern versus Western persons’ unique philosophies about life and wellness, social practices, linguistics/language, and thought processes (Nisbett, 2003). These differences are not only reflective of a particular culture, but they also impact individuals’ development of cultural worldviews and self-construals, which prime or reinforce either an independent or interdependent way of interacting with the world.

The relationship between an individual's level of empathy and their self-construals has not been adequately addressed in the literature. In fact, only one research study has been found which examines cross-cultural values and differences in empathy (Duan et al., 2005). Based upon the findings of this research (Duan et al., 2005) and on literature and research which provided evidence for cognitive and affective differences found between Eastern and Western participants on factors such as the ability to attend to others’ behaviors (Ji, Schwarz et al., 2000), autobiographical memory and story recall of daily life events (Han et al., 1998), perception of events (Cohen & Gunz, 2002), child-
rearing practices (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993), attitude attributions (Choi & Nisbett, 1998), reliance on indirect versus direct communication cues (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002), sensitivity to others’ feelings (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001), ability to recognize emotions in others’ facial expressions (Peng et al., 2002), and the recognition of conflicting emotions (Bagozzi et al., 1999), it seems intuitive that differences could be found between degree of empathy between Eastern and Western groups of master’s-level counseling students.

Duan et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between cultural values, empathy dispositions, and empathic experiences in participants that identified with either individualism or collectivism. In this study participants were 121 introductory to psychology students at a large mid-western state university. The participants, 96% of whom were Euro-Americans, completed a measure of individualism-collectivism and a measure of empathic disposition. The second part of the study, conducted 4 weeks after the participants completed the measures, included a session in which the participants were given a transcript of a counseling session. After reviewing the transcript, the participants were assessed for their intellectual empathy and experienced empathy toward the target person or "client". The researchers found that collectivism was positively related to dispositional intellectual empathy and experienced empathy and that collectivism predicted degree of experienced empathic emotion. Individualism was found to predict intellectual empathy. It was concluded that cultural worldviews and values differentially impact empathy dispositions and experienced empathy toward a target person (Duan et al., 2005).
Duan et al. (2005) offered a caveat regarding the interpretation of their research findings on empathy and cultural values, due to several limitations. The first limitation involved the selection of participants of this study, who were given the opportunity to become involved in this research study as a means of earning extra credit points for their college introductory to psychology course. The potential problem in using this population of participants is that some of the participants may have inaccurately completed their research survey. A second limitation of this study was the relatively low percentage of participants (61%) who completed both parts of the research study. The factors that contributed to 39% of the participants choosing not to complete the laboratory session part of the study was unknown (Duan et al., 2005).

The third limitation of this research study (Duan et al., 2005) was the relative homogeneity of the participants. The majority of the participants were Euro-American undergraduate students at a Midwestern university. Most of these students were from areas surrounding the university. Because of these demographic issues, data findings revealed very little variation in the participants' cultural values. Therefore, although these researchers did study collectivism versus individualism, they did not necessarily study Eastern versus Western worldviews or self-constuals and its relationship to empathy. These researchers proposed that future empathy research be conducted using participants with greater variance in cultural values. Ideally, individuals who were raised in Eastern versus Western cultures would be compared regarding degree of empathy in order to examine a more differentiated and culturally diverse population.
Summary of the Related Literature

Empathy is defined as "the ability to engage in the cognitive process of adopting another's psychological point of view, and the capacity to experience affective reactions to the observed experiences of others" (Davis, 1996). The capacity for empathy is believed to be comprised of both stable dispositional characteristics and learned characteristics, which are influenced by situation-specific factors (Davis, 1996). Socialization experiences therefore impact one’s dispositional traits during the development of empathy (Davis, 1996). Hoffman (1987), who has developed one of the most comprehensive developmental models of empathy to date, theorized that the beginning of empathy development begins at birth and continues into early adulthood. Hoffman (1982) postulated four major stages of empathy development in children. From infancy to late childhood, the child develops his or her capacity for empathy for others (Hoffman, 1982). From infancy to the first year of life, the child is believed to be in the global empathy stage in which the infant begins to develop a perception that others exist (Hoffman, 1982). The second stage, from one to two years of age, involves the development of egocentric empathy, in which the child realizes the distinctiveness between self and others (Hoffman, 1982). From age two to three years, the child develops empathy for another's feelings (Hoffman, 1982).

From 3 to 10 years of age, the child's cognitive sense of others becomes increasingly complex, at which stage role taking develops (Hoffman, 1982). Increased role taking leads to a more advanced level of empathic responding in which the child learns to appropriately deal with conflicting emotions (Hoffman, 1982). Because language develops at a rapid pace during this timeframe, the process of empathy
development is enhanced (Hoffman, 1982). During this stage, the child gains an ability to empathize with another's feelings (Hoffman, 1982).

From 10 years of age to adulthood, the individual develops a person identity and is able to comprehend that others can remain as constants in their lives over time and across various situations (Hoffman, 1982). At this stage, the capacity for the highest level of empathy is developed in which the individual can empathize more abstractly with another's general condition as well as with another's feelings (Hoffman, 1982). For example, an individual at this stage of empathy development achieves the capacity to empathize with groups of people, such as the handicapped or homeless (Hoffman, 1982).

Similar to the development of empathy, individuals begin to develop their sense of independence and interdependence at birth (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In America, it is a common parenting practice to have an infant sleep in a separate bed and often in a separate room (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In Eastern cultures, infants and young children often sleep in the same bed as their parents (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Western parents reinforce independence in their children by giving them choices, whereas Eastern parents generally make decisions for their children, which tends to foster interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). When American mothers play with their toddlers, they tend to focus on labeling or naming objects (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993). In contrast, Japanese mothers tend to emphasize feelings and the child's relationship to objects (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993). The Western focus on objects, without attention paid to the context in which the object is embedded, tends to promote independence in children (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The Eastern concentration on the relationship of
objects in a contextual manner tends to promote interdependence and a capacity to reflect on others’ experiences (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

In Western cultures, children are taught that they are unique and possess special gifts and talents (Kim & Markus, 1999). They are often taught to figure out personalized ways of ‘making it’ or being successful (Kim & Markus, 1999). This way of thinking tends to foster independence and a self-focused mindset (Kim & Markus, 1999). In contrast, children from Eastern cultures are taught to blend together harmoniously, including understanding one’s social role (and appropriate role-specific actions), evaluating the social context, and perceiving others’ needs (Kim & Markus, 1999). Japanese schoolchildren are trained to analyze themselves critically to improve their social relationships (Kim & Markus, 1999). This focus on others tends to enhance a sense of interdependence (Kim & Markus, 1999).

Because children in a collectivistic society are raised in an interdependent manner, they tend to develop an identity defined by relationships and group memberships (Triandis, 1995), and a stronger interdependent self-construal (Singelis, 1994). The emotional life of a person raised with a collectivistic worldview tends to be "other-focused" (Triandis, 1995, p. 71). In contrast, children raised in an individualistic society, raised to value independence, have a tendency to form an identity based on their own possessions and inner experiences (Triandis, 1995) and tend to develop a stronger independent self-construal (Singelis, 1994). The emotions of a person raised in an individualistic society are most often "ego-focused," which tends to promote self-generated and often destabilizing emotions such as anger (Triandis, 1995, p. 72).
In both the research and theoretical literature on differences between people from Eastern and Western cultures, differences in self-construals and worldviews are generally maintained beyond childhood and adolescence into adulthood through the continued priming and reinforcement provided by interdependent or independent cues (Triandis, 1995). Thus, dispositional characteristics of empathy, developed through both biological and social developmental pathways, are believed to continue through adulthood as well (Davis, 1996; Hoffman, 1982, 1987). Based upon past literature and research on culture and empathy development, it seems reasonable to expect that a person's culture (i.e., Eastern versus Western) and their degree of empathy could be related. However, the specific nature of this relationship has been neglected in empathy research.

In examination of past literature and research on empathy development and self-construals, it seems reasonable to expect that people from different cultures could have different experiences of empathy. That is, the many linguistic, perceptual, social, cognitive, and biological factors differentiating Eastern versus Western cultures, could have an impact on an individual’s ability to empathize with others (Duan et al., 2005). Because empathy on the part of the counselor is considered by theorists to be a necessary condition for change in a client (e.g., Carkhuff, 1969, 1980; Carkhuff & Truax, 1965; Egan, 1975; Kohut, 1959, 1971, 1984; Rogers, 1957, 1975, 1986) throughout the counseling process (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Cartwright & Lerner, 1963; Chung & Bemak, 2002; Dombrow, 1966; Gladstein, 1977; Katz, 1963; Rogers et al., 1967; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967), it is important that additional research on this essential therapeutic construct is conducted. Although Roger's (1957) writings about empathy were the
impetus for much subsequent empathy research, cross-cultural empathy is still not clearly understood due to its multifaceted and complex nature (Duan & Hill, 1996).

It has been suggested that future empathy research include investigations of both cognitive and affective components of empathy (Gladstein, 1983). To improve counselor education, training, and practice, it has been recommended that "empathic readiness" and cultural differences be explored in order to add to the body of knowledge regarding cross-cultural empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996). The relationship between cultural worldviews and self-construals and empathy in the graduate counseling student has been unexplored.

Given both the initial results and the crucial limitations of the study conducted by Duan et al., (2005), this research study focused on empathy among Eastern versus Western master’s-level counseling students at various points in their academic program. Master’s-level counseling students from the United States of America and Thailand were investigated for this purpose. It is generally accepted that most people from a collectivistic culture, such as Thailand, would adhere more strongly to interdependent self-construals and worldviews, whereas people from an individualistic culture, such as America, would have stronger independent self-construals and worldviews. However, self-construals had not been investigated with participants from Thailand nor with master’s-level counseling students; therefore, the potential for results, different from past research studies on self-construals, could not be dismissed. The relationship between both interdependent or independent self-construals and the degree of empathy was empirically investigated. Because the participants in this research study were from Eastern versus Western cultures, it was hypothesized that there could have been a significant group difference in degree of empathy. It was also hypothesized that there could have been a
significant relationship between self-construals (independent and interdependent) and degree of empathy among the master’s level counseling students.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine whether differences in empathy existed among Western versus Eastern master’s-level counseling students. The researcher also examined the degree to which independent versus interdependent self-construals (i.e., individualistic versus a collectivistic worldviews) related to differences in empathy.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant group difference in degree of empathy between Western and Eastern master’s-level counseling students?

2. Is there a significant relationship between master’s-level counseling students’ independent and interdependent self-construals and their degree of empathy?

Research and Null Hypotheses

*Research hypothesis 1:* There are statistically significant group differences in degree of empathy, as measured by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980), between Western and Eastern master’s-level counseling students.

*Null hypothesis 1:* There are no statistically significant group differences in degree of empathy, as measured by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980), between Western and Eastern master’s-level counseling students.

*Research hypothesis 2:* There are statistically significant correlations between master’s-level counseling students’ interdependent and independent self-construals, as
measured by the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994), and their degree of empathy, as measured by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980).

Null hypothesis 2: There are no statistically significant correlations between master’s-level counseling students’ interdependent and independent self-construals, as measured by the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994), and their degree of empathy, as measured by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980).

Description of Independent and Dependent Variables

In order to test hypothesis number one, the independent variable was master’s-level counseling students. The independent variable included a nominal scale with two distinct categories, Eastern and Western master’s-level counseling students. The Eastern master’s-level counseling students were enrolled in a counselor education program at a university in Thailand. The Western master’s-level counseling students were enrolled in a counselor education program at a university in a Midwestern state in the United States of America. For hypothesis number one, the dependent variables included three measures of empathy. The three dependent variables included empathy subscales on the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980): Perspective Taking (a cognitive type of empathy), Empathic Concern (an affective type of empathy), and Fantasy Scale (which includes a combination of cognitive and affective types of empathy).

In order to test hypothesis number two, bivariate correlational analyses were used to evaluate the degree of relationship between two types of self-construal (independent and interdependent) and three types of empathy (Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern, and Fantasy subscales of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index).
Participants and Delimitations

A total of 101 master’s-level counseling students enrolled in universities both in the United States of America and in Thailand participated in this research study. The mean age of the participants (n = 53) from the United States of America was 29.0 years (SD = 8.08), while the mean age of the Thai participants (n = 48) was 31.98 years (SD = 8.35). The age range of the participants from the United States of America was 22 to 59 years. The age range of the participants from Thailand was 22 to 50 years. Among the participants from the United States of America, 10 (18.87%) were males and 43 (81.13%) were females. The participants sampled from Thailand included 15 (31.25%) males and 33 (68.75%) females.

In terms of race, 46 (86.79%) of the participants from the United States of America self-identified their race as European American, 4 (7.55%) participants self-identified as African American, 1 (1.89%) participant self-identified as Indian, 1 (1.89%) participant self-identified as Bi-Racial, and 1 (1.89%) participant self-identified as African. Within the Thai group of participants, 38 (79.17%) participants self-identified their race as Asian, 6 (12.5%) participants self-identified as Indian, 2 (4.17%) participants self-identified as Asian/Indian, 1 (2.08%) self-identified as African, and 1 (2.08%) self-identified as “Other.”

In regard to current religious affiliation and the group of participants sampled from the United States of America, 38 (71.70%) participants identified themselves as Christian, 10 (18.87%) participants identified themselves as Spiritual, but not Religious, 2 (3.77%) participants identified themselves as Agnostic, 1 (1.89%) participant self-identified as Buddhist/Christian, 1 (1.89%) participant self-identified as Hindu, and 1
(1.89%) participant self-identified as Other/None. In terms of current religious affiliation and the group of participants sampled from Thailand, 22 (45.83%) participants self-identified as Christian, 19 (39.58%) participants self-identified as Buddhist, 3 (6.25%) participants self-identified as Spiritual, but not Religious, 2 (4.17%) self-identified as Hindu, 1 (2.08%) self-identified as Agnostic, and 1 (2.08%) participant self-identified as Other/None.

In terms of relationship status and the group of participants from the United States of America, 20 (37.74%) participants reported they were single, 20 (37.74%) participants reported they were married, and 13 (24.53%) participants reported they were involved in a committed relationship. Within the group of participants from Thailand, 33 (68.75%) reported being single, 12 (25%) reported being married, and 3 (6.25%) reported being involved in a committed relationship.

All of the participants (N = 101) were formally enrolled as master’s-level counseling students. In terms of time invested in the master’s-level counseling program, within the group of participants from the United States of America, 17 (32.08%) participants reported being enrolled in their first semester, 3 (5.66%) participants reported having completed their first semester, 4 (7.55%) participants reported having completed their second semester, 6 (11.32%) participants reported having completed their third semester, 2 (3.77%) participants reported having completed their fourth semester, 6 (11.32%) participants reported having completed their fifth semester, 9 (16.98%) participants reported having completed their sixth semester, 5 (9.43%) participants reported having completed their seventh semester, and 1 (1.89%) participant reported having completed their eighth semester. Among the Thai group of master’s-level
counseling students, 10 (20.83%) participants reported being enrolled in their first semester of the counseling program, 8 (16.67%) participants reported having completed their first semester, 13 (27.08%) participants reported having completed their second semester, 9 (18.75%) participants reported having completed their third semester, 7 (14.58%) reported having completed their fourth semester, and 1 (2.08%) reported having completed their fifth semester (See Table 1).

The counseling-related educational requirements, the instructional methods, and course materials (e.g., textbooks), were similar for programs at both universities. Thus, the type of educational training was taken into account before the sub-samples were chosen or data collection began. The sample population in this study was delimited to master’s-level students enrolled in counseling programs in Thailand and in a Midwestern state in the United States of America. The participants from Thailand represented individuals from an Eastern culture, and the participants from the United States of America represented individuals from a Western culture. The sample characteristics were assessed using a demographic questionnaire. Because the primary purpose of this study was to test differences in empathy among persons from Eastern versus Western cultures, no other demographic-related delimitations were introduced. That is, delimitations were not placed on such participant characteristics as age, sex, race, socioeconomic status, marital status, religious affiliation, or number of years in the master’s-level counseling program.
Table 1

Frequency Distributions for Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of participants</th>
<th>United States of America</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>((n = 53))</td>
<td>((n = 48))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>81.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Racial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>86.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current religion</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist/Christian</td>
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<td>1.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>71.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
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<td>1.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
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<td>18.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other / None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship status</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm. relationship</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in counseling program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1(^{st}) semester</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 1(^{st}) semester</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 2(^{nd}) semester</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 3(^{rd}) semester</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 4(^{th}) semester</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 5(^{th}) semester</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1

Frequency Distributions for Demographic Variables (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of participants</th>
<th>United States of America</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 53)</td>
<td>(n = 48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed 6th semester</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.98%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 7th semester</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.43%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 8th semester</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>98.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

First, the researcher obtained written permission from the participating university in Thailand to conduct research with master’s-level students in their counseling programs. After this was achieved, the researcher gained approval for the research design from the Institutional Review Board at the primary university setting. Upon obtaining approval to conduct the research project, the researcher contacted program coordinators and professors at the selected institutions and coordinated dates and times for the data collection. Data collection materials included (a) an informed consent document (see
Appendix A), (b) one demographic questionnaire, (c) the Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Singelis, 1994), and (d) the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980). Informed consent for participation in this study was inferred by completion of the demographic questionnaire, Self-Construal Scale, and Interpersonal Reactivity Index.

Data collection from the university located in Thailand was coordinated by one faculty contact person at that institution. Data collection packets were mailed to the contact person, who distributed them to selected program faculty. The program faculty distributed the packets to students either before or after their respective class time began or ended. The faculty members then collected all completed packets from participants, and returned them to the contact person for storage. Once all data had been collected, completed packets were mailed to the researcher for data entry. All data collection was anonymous. No identifying data were collected. Completed packets were stored in a locked file cabinet before and after data entry.

Data collection from the university located in the Midwestern state of the United States of America was coordinated by the researcher. After permission was gained from course instructors, the researcher distributed the packets to students either before or after their respective class time began or ended. The researcher then collected all completed packets from participants and stored them in a locked cabinet until data collection was completed. Once all data had been collected, the researcher entered participants’ information for statistical analyses purposes. All data collection was anonymous. No identifying data were collected.
Research Design

In order to test null hypothesis one, a causal-comparative research method was used. This design is often also called ex post facto research because causes are generally studied after they have influenced another variable (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Kerlinger (1973) explained that “ex post facto research is a systematic inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of the independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable” (p. 379). An ex post facto research design was used to examine the group differences in empathy between Eastern versus Western students enrolled in a master’s-level counselor education program. Because the independent variable (Eastern versus Western master’s-level counseling students) could not be manipulated, an ex post facto research design was indicated (Newman & Newman, 1994). Although causation cannot be inferred with an ex post facto research design, Newman and Newman (1994) explained that “one of the most effective ways of using ex post facto research is to help identify a small set of variables from a large set of variables related to the dependent variable for future experimental manipulation” (p. 124). Causal comparative or ex post facto research designs are also useful when a researcher is able to speculate about the causes of a phenomenon, based on prior research, theory and observation (Gall et al., 2003). This aspect of the research design applied to this study, as plausible alternative hypotheses had been formulated based on strong inference. This type of research design tends to have high external validity and therefore potentially increased the generalizability of this study from the testing situation to the general population (Newman & Newman, 1994).
In order to test null hypothesis two, a correlational analysis method was employed. This method was appropriate when the purpose of a research study was to explore relationships between variables (Gall et al., 2003). Correlational analysis is "the study of the relationships that exist among random variables, including the identification and summary of such relationships" (Kachigan, 1991, p. 118). In correlational relationships, the researcher has no control over the variables being studied (Kachigan, 1991). These variables are considered to be random "in that any given object has a probability of possessing a given value of those variables which is not under our control" (Kachigan, 1991, p. 118). Bivariate correlation analyses were utilized in this research to examine the relationship between the two quantitative measures of self-construal and three quantitative measures of empathy.

Data Analyses

The researcher utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for data entry and statistical analyses. First, descriptive statistics were obtained for all demographic, independent, and dependent variables. Descriptive statistics included calculations of frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, and ranges for all variables.

In order to test null hypothesis one, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was utilized. A power analysis was conducted to determine the sample size necessary for each of the two groups of participants (Western and Eastern) to attain the desired power of .80 for the alpha level set at .05, with a hypothesized medium effect size (Cohen, 1992). Based on Cohen's (1992) statistical power analyses configurations, a minimum of 64 participants in each group was necessary for .80 power to detect effects.
Prior to conducting the MANOVA for the null hypothesis one, the data were screened for data accuracy, missing data, extreme values or outliers, and adherence to the basic assumptions underlying the MANOVA. A Box Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices was conducted to investigate the sphericity of the covariance matrix. The results of the Box Test were not significant (Box M = 3.79, $F = .61$, and $p = .72$). The basic assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were not found to be violated; therefore, additional statistical procedures to transform data, as suggested by Mertler and Vannatta (2005), were not employed.

MANOVA was conducted to examine "the significance of group differences" (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005, p. 119) when testing the effect of one categorical independent variable on more than one quantitative dependent variable simultaneously. Mertler and Vannatta (2005) explained why including more than two dependent variables in statistical analyses when needed is advantageous to researchers: first, any worthwhile treatment will likely affect subjects in more than one way, thus the reason for additional dependent measures; second, the use of several dependent measures allows the researcher to obtain a more inclusive picture and a more detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation. By measuring several dependent variables instead of only one, the chances of discovering what contributes to group differences increases (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Specifically, in this research study, MANOVA was used to compare group differences between Eastern and Western master’s-level counseling students (i.e., categorical independent variable) on three types of empathy (i.e., multiple dependent variables, as measured by three IRI subscales).
After conducting the MANOVA, a test statistic was calculated to evaluate group differences (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Since the assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance was not violated, the Wilks’ Lambda test statistic was calculated, as suggested by Mertler and Vannatta (2005). Since MANOVA yielded statistically significant results, follow-up univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to determine which dependent variables were affected by the independent variables.

In order to test null hypothesis two, bivariate correlation analyses were performed. Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to examine the degree of relationship between the two quantitative variables of self-construal (i.e., independent and interdependent) and the three quantitative variables of empathy (i.e., Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern, and Fantasy). A correlation matrix was created and examined for significant relationships. For the purposes of exploration, post-hoc analyses were also conducted.

**Instruments**

The instruments administered to participants in this research study were comprised of an informed consent form, two measures of demographic characteristics (one developed for the Western group of participants and the other developed for the Eastern group of participants), a measure of independent and interdependent self-construals, and a measure of degree of empathy.

**Informed Consent Form**

An informed consent form was the first instrument provided to the participants (see Appendix A). The purpose of informed consent was to provide the participants with written communication regarding their informed and voluntary choice to participate in
this research study. This informed consent document, written in the English language for both subsamples, described the title of this research study, information about the researcher, the purpose of this research study, procedures that were used, risks, discomforts, and benefits of this study, information regarding the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from this study, efforts that were to be taken to maintain confidentiality of the participants and their data, contact information if participants had questions, and a statement regarding voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

**Measurement of Demographic Characteristics**

Demographic information about participants was gathered from the completion of two slightly different demographic questionnaires, both in the English language, developed by the researcher. There was a demographic questionnaire for master’s-level counseling students in Thailand (see Appendix B) and a demographic questionnaire for master’s-level counseling students in the United States of America (see Appendix C). The demographic questionnaire included information related to the following variables: sex, age, self-identified race, relationship status, religious affiliation, country of birth, years lived in country of birth, years lived in their location (i.e., Thailand or the United States of America), and number of semesters completed in the master’s-level counseling program.

**Measurement of Self-Construals**

The Self-Construal Scale (SCS) is an instrument developed in the English language for the purpose of measuring the strength of a person’s independent and interdependent self-construals (Singelis, 1994; see Appendix D). According to Singelis (1994), the independent self-construal reflects the individualistic characteristics of social
separateness and uniqueness most often associated with individuals from Western cultures. The interdependent self-construal was developed to embody the collectivistic characteristics of interrelatedness and connectedness most often associated with persons from Eastern cultures (Singelis, 1994). The SCS consists of 24 items, measuring the two types of self-construals. Half of the items reflect an independent self-construal and the other half represent an interdependent self-construal. The items were designed to measure “the constellation of thoughts, feelings, and actions composing independent and interdependent self-construals” (Singelis, 1994, p. 584).

The items developed for the SCS were drawn from several different scales (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Cross, 1995; Hui, 1988; Yamaguchi, 1994). The original SCS included 45 items which were analyzed statistically by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs; Singelis, 1994). The 45 items were subjected to a principal components factor analysis (Singelis, 1994). As hypothesized, the 45 items measure two factors, labeled as independence and interdependence (Singelis, 1994). Confirmatory factor analyses were then conducted on the 45-item SCS (Singelis, 1994). In the first CFA, divergent validity was established for two factors after comparing the overall fit between a one-factor and two-factor model (Singelis, 1994). After eliminating 21 of the items of the SCS, the developer (Singelis, 1994) conducted another CFA, in which divergent validity was again established for the two factors for the independent and interdependent items.

Both reliability and validity estimates for the two subscales of the SCS were satisfactory (Singelis, 1994). Cronbach alpha coefficients were .70 for the independent items and .74 for the interdependent items (Singelis, 1994). According to Singelis (1994),
there is quite a bit of evidence that supports the validity of the SCS, including such types of validity as face validity, content validity, construct validity, predictive validity, and divergent validity.

The face validity of the SCS is considered to be high due to its emphasis on the characteristics of the constructs as reflected in the 24 items (Singelis, 1994). Since the SCS is comprised of a variety of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that define self-construals, it is determined that the SCS also has content validity (Singelis, 1994). Construct validity was established through conducting research administering the SCS to participants who were both Asian Americans and Caucasian Americans (Singelis, 1994). Each participant was given a score for independence and for interdependence by averaging items on each subscale of the SCS (Singelis, 1994). As hypothesized, Asian Americans scored significantly higher on the interdependent items than did the Caucasian Americans (Singelis, 1994). These results have been replicated in a subsequent research study (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995); further adding to the construct validity of the SCS. The SCS was also found to have predictive validity (Singelis, 1994). According to Singelis (1994), the interdependent subscale of the SCS was found to be significant in predicting attributions made to the situation by individuals, which is characteristic of those who adhere to a collectivistic worldview (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Miller, 1984; Schweder & Bourne, 1984). Divergent validity of the SCS was found when analyzing the scores on the independence subscale (Singelis, 1994). There was not a significant correlation between independence scores and making attributions to the situation (Singelis, 1994). Also, independence scores were found to vary between ethnic groups; therefore,
providing evidence that the two subscales of independence and interdependence are two distinct dimensions of the same construct, which is self-construal (Singelis, 1994).

The limitations of the original version of the SCS included concerns regarding the sampling of participants and theoretical issues underlying the accepted assumption that independence and interdependence form a unitary bipolar dimension (Singelis, 1994). First, the research exploring the psychometrics of the SCS took place in Hawaii where the Asian culture could be more dynamic than in other states (Singelis, 1994). However, when comparing two international ethnic groups (e.g., people from America and people from Thailand), it is possible that the differences between these two groups could be significantly stronger than the differences between different ethnic groups in Hawaii (Singelis, 1994). Another issue regarding participant sampling is the absence of African Americans and Hispanic Americans in the Hawaiian population that was researched (Singelis, 1994). Because of this unique sample of participants, this research study may be lacking in generalizability (Singelis, 1994).

In past research, there has been the assumption that independent-interdependent self-construals are two opposite extremes of a unitary bipolar dimension (Singelis, 2000). However, there exist several research studies that indicate independent and interdependent self-construals are separate dimensions (Bontempo, 1993; Hui, 1988; Roland, 1988; Triandis Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). In other words, each individual is believed to possess both an independent and an interdependent self-construal in varying strengths. The strength of an individual’s independent and interdependent self-construals is considered to be dependent upon the impact of that individual’s culture, which is believed to emphasize the development of one of these self-
construals over the other (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). It was concluded by Singelis (2000) based on these research studies (Bontempo, 1993; Hui, 1988; Roland, 1988; Triandis et al., 1988), that the SCS is capable of measuring both independent and interdependent self-construals as two separate dimensions within the same individual (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). In this study independent and interdependent self-construals will each be measured separately for each participant. That is, each participant will receive one total SCS score for strength of independent self-construals and one total SCS score for strength of interdependent self-construals.

**Measurement of Empathy**

The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980), developed in the English language, is the most widely used instrument for the assessment of empathy (see Appendix E). The IRI (Davis, 1980) is a multidimensional measure of empathy, which acknowledges that empathy is composed of separate but related constructs. It is important to study empathy from a multidimensional perspective because past empathy research findings have indicated that empathy is a complex construct consisting of both cognitive and affective components (e.g., Brems, 1989; Gladstein, 1983; Hoffman, 1977; Shantz, 1975; Strayer, 1987). Past research studies that have chosen one component of empathy over the other have led to confusion about and oversimplification of the conceptualization of empathy (Gladstein, 1983).

In order to conduct empathy research from a multidimensional perspective, Davis (1980) developed the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI). The IRI measures both cognitive and emotional components of empathy (Davis, 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1996).
developmental progression within the individual, beginning with the earliest, most
primitive form of affective empathy categorized as “Personal Distress” and also more
mature forms of both cognitive and affective empathy categorized as “Perspective
Taking,” “Empathic Concern,” and Fantasy.”

The IRI, a self-report instrument, contains 28 total items presented in randomized
order, with four subscales each formatted using a Likert-type scale. This Likert-type scale
has a range from zero to 4 with zero indicating “does not describe me” and 4 indicating
“describes me very well” (Davis, 1996, p. 56). The four subscales of the IRI (Davis,
1980, 1996) are termed Perspective Taking (PT), Empathic Concern (EC), Fantasy (FS),
and Personal Distress (PD). The Perspective Taking subscale measures cognitive
empathy, based on traditional definitions. This subscale is designed to measure the
respondent's capacity to "adopt spontaneously the psychological point of view of others"
(Davis, 1983b, p. 224). This subscale is also related to positive "interpersonal
functioning, higher self-esteem, and very little emotionality" (Davis 1983a, p. 224). An
example of an item in the PT subscale is “Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine
how I would feel If I were in their place” (Davis, 1996, p. 56).

The Empathic Concern (EC) subscale measures "other-oriented feelings of
sympathy and concern for unfortunate others" (Davis, 1983a, p. 224). This subscale is
strongly related to altruistic behavior as well as "emotional reactivity and selfless concern
for others" (Davis, 1983a, p. 123). This subscale is not consistently associated with self-
esteeem or social competence (Davis, 1983a; Davis & Oathout, 1987). “I am often quite
touched by things that I see happen” is an example from the EC subscale of the IRI
(Davis, 1996, p. 56).
The Fantasy (FS) subscale measures the tendency to relate to fictional characters (Davis, 1983a). It is primarily a cognitive construct with affective features that measures the respondents' capacity to "transpose themselves imaginatively into the feelings and actions of others" (Davis, 1983a, p. 224). Davis (1996) described FS as "role taking" but noted that imagining oneself as a fictional character adds to the complex nature of this subscale. Significantly high scores on this subscale indicate a tendency toward emotionality, fearfulness, shyness, loneliness, social anxiety, withdrawal, and insecurity in social situations (Davis, 1983a). The FS contains such items as “When I’m reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me” (Davis, 1996, p. 56).

The Personal Distress (PD) subscale measures the personal emotional reactivity to others' negative experiences (Davis, 1983a). Specifically, this subscale is an emotional construct that measures "self-oriented' feelings of personal anxiety and unease in tense interpersonal settings' (Davis, 1983a, p. 224). Davis (1994) emphasizes that the PD is an “egocentric precursor of true empathy, more akin to sympathy” (p. 966) and that it decreases with age and emotional maturity. “I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation” is an example of an item from the PD subscale of the IRI (Davis, 1980). Because the Personal Distress subscale appears to decline with age and developmental maturity, Davis (1994) suggested that this subscale score not be added to the other three subscale scores. Davis (1994) recommended calculating a Mean Empathy Score (ESUM3), excluding PD. This researcher has made the decision to follow Davis’ suggestion based on the assumption that most master’s-level counseling students will be of adult age and will possess some level of empathic developmental maturity.
In terms of concurrent validity, the Perspective Taking (PT) subscale of the IRI was found to positively correlate with the Hogan Empathy Scale (1969) which is considered to tap solely into the cognitive component of empathy (Davis & Franzoi, 1991). The Perspective Taking subscale had the weakest correlation of the four subscales with Mehrabian and Epstein’s Emotional Empathy Scale (MEEES; Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972), which is considered to measure exclusively the affective component of empathy (Davis, 1983a, 1983b). Out of the four subscales of the IRI, the Empathic Concern subscale had the strongest correlation with the MEEES (Davis, 1983a, 1983b). Regarding construct validity, Davis (1983a, 1983b) found that the Personal Distress subscale, the most primitive form of empathy, was negatively correlated with the Perspective Taking and Empathic Concern subscales, considered to be the more mature forms of empathy.

In the original research validating the IRI, the sample population was college students (Davis, 1980). Internal reliability estimates for the IRI have ranged from alpha coefficients of .70 to .78. Test-retest reliability estimates have ranged from .61-.71 (Davis, 1980). Additionally, in other studies coefficient alphas were also calculated demonstrating the reliability of the four subscales of the IRI in corresponding to structural loadings on factors (Davis, 1980). Alphas of .82 for the Fantasy scale, .80 for the Empathic Concern scale, .75 for the Personal Distress scale and .79 for the Perspective Taking scale were found (Davis, 1980) and similar coefficient alphas for each of the four subscales were found in more current research on the hierarchical structure of the IRI (Pulos, Elison, & Lennon, 2004).

The IRI has demonstrated construct validity (Davis & Franzoi (1991), convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Davis, 1983a, 1983b, 1994). The factor structure of
the IRI has demonstrated stability over time and across various, diverse samples (Davis, 1983a, 1983b). As noted above, the Emotional Concern (EC) scale of the IRI has demonstrated a strong correlation with the Mehrabian and Epstein’s (1972) Emotional Empathy Scale, which is considered to provide a global measure of affective empathy (Davis 1983a, 1983b). Discriminant validity of the IRI was established by comparing the relationships between each of the IRI subscales and measure of social competence, self-esteem, emotionality, and sensitivity to others. The Perspective Taking subscale has been consistently related to positive social functioning and higher self-esteem (Davis, 1983a, 1983b). The Emotional Concern subscale was not related to social functioning but was associated with sensitivity to the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others (Davis, 1983a, 1983b).

Summary of Methodology

The purpose of this research study was to explore group differences in empathy and the relationship between self-construals (independent versus interdependent) and empathy in master’s-level counseling students. Participants included master’s-level students enrolled in counseling programs at either a university in the United States of America or at a university in Thailand. Participants completed an informed consent document, a demographic questionnaire, the Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Singelis, 1994), and the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980), which were administered in the English language for both subsamples. A one-way MANOVA was conducted to statistically examine whether Eastern versus Western master’s-level counseling students significantly differed in degree of empathy (by analyzing subscales scores on the IRI). Bivariate correlational analyses were used to examine whether or not independent and
interdependent self-construals (as measured by the SCS) significantly correlated with degree of empathy (as measured by the IRI). Post-hoc analyses were conducted for exploratory purposes.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The purpose of this research study was to examine whether differences in empathy existed among Western (from the United States of America) versus Eastern (from Thailand) master’s-level counseling students. Additionally, the researcher examined the degree to which independent versus interdependent self-construals (i.e., individualistic versus a collectivistic worldview) contributed to differences in empathy. Chapter IV presents the statistical results of these research findings, organized in two parts: demographic and descriptive statistics and the results of the inferential statistical analyses for the two research hypotheses.

Test of Normality Statistics

A Box Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices was conducted to investigate the sphericity of the covariance matrix. The results of the Box Test were not significant (Box $M = 3.785$, $F = .610$, and $p = .723$). The basic assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were not found to be violated; therefore, additional statistical procedures to transform data, as suggested by Mertler and Vannatta (2005), were not employed.

Descriptive Statistics

On the Empathic Concern (EC) subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1983a, 1983b), the participants from the United States of America had a
mean score of 22.74 ($SD = 3.31$) and the participants from Thailand had a mean score of 18.1 ($SD = 4.03$). In the original study of the IRI, Davis (1980), found a mean score of 20.36 for the EC subscale in a group of participants sampled in the United States of America. In comparison to the present study, the mean score for the EC subscale for the Western group of participants was slightly higher and the mean score for the EC subscale for the Eastern group of participants was somewhat lower than the mean score found in the original study by Davis (1980). In the study conducted by Duan et al. (2005) in which participants were sampled from a university in a Midwestern state, the mean score for the EC subscale of the IRI was 22.24 ($SD = 1.77$), which was similar to the mean score for the EC subscale of the IRI for the Western group of participants in the present study and somewhat higher than the mean score for the EC subscale of the IRI for the Eastern group of participants in the present study.

On the Fantasy Scale (FS) subscale of the IRI, the participants from the United States of America had a mean score of 18.28 ($SD = 5.58$), while the participants from Thailand had a mean score of 16.23 ($SD = 5.16$). The mean score for the FS subscale found by the developer of the IRI (Davis, 1980) was 17.42, which was slightly lower than the mean score for the FS subscale of the Western group of participants and slightly higher than the mean score for the FS subscale of the Eastern group of participants in the present study. Duan et al. (2005) did not use the FS subscale of the IRI in their research study on empathy and cultural orientations; therefore, comparisons could not be made with the present study regarding the FS subscale of the IRI.

Mean scores on the Perspective Taking (PT) subscale were 21.11 ($SD = 3.53$) for the participants from the United States of America and 17.94 ($SD = 3.48$) for the
participants from Thailand. Davis (1980) reported a mean score of 17.37 for the PT subscale of the IRI, which was somewhat lower than the mean score for the PT subscale of the IRI for the Western group of participants and only minimally lower than the mean score for the PT subscale of the IRI for the Eastern group of participants. A mean score of 22.23 ($SD = 2.65$) for the PT subscale of the IRI was reported by Duan et al. (2005), which was slightly higher than the mean score reported for the PT subscale of the IRI for the Western group of participants in the present study and somewhat higher than the mean score reported for the PT subscale of the IRI for the Eastern group of participants in the present study.

Mean scores for the total empathy composite score of EC, FS, and PT were 123.51 ($SD = 8.74$) for the participants from the United States of America and 122.58 ($SD = 10.31$) for the participants from Thailand. A mean score of the total of the three subscales of EC, FS, and PT of the IRI was not reported in the original study of the IRI by the developer, Davis (1980), nor in Duan et al.’s (2005) study.

The participants from the United States of America had a mean score of 75.09 ($SD = 7.73$) for the independent subscale of the Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Singelis, 1994), and a mean score of 72.85 ($SD = 7.54$) for the interdependent subscale of the SCS. The participants from Thailand had a mean score of 74.96 ($SD = 6.72$) on the independent subscale of the SCS and a mean score of 73.56 ($SD = 10.52$) on the interdependent subscale of the SCS. In the original study, Singelis (1994), the developer of the SCS, reported a mean score of 70.2 ($SD = 10.95$) in the first subsample ($n = 208$), sampled from the University of Hawaii, for the independent self-construal subscale of the SCS and a mean score of 71.85 ($SD = 11.4$) for the interdependent self-construal subscale.
of the SCS. Singelis (1994) also found mean scores of 72.45 ($SD = 11.25$) for the independent self-construal subscale and 72.6 ($SD = 12.0$) for the interdependent subscale for the second subsample ($n = 95$), also sampled at the University of Hawaii. The mean scores for both of the subsamples for the independent and interdependent self-construal subscales in the original study conducted by Singelis (1994) were lower than those found in the present study for both the Western and Eastern groups of participants.

Additionally, data for both of the instruments (SCS and IRI) were normally distributed with the exception of the SCS interdependent self-construal subscale, which had a very slight leptokurtic distribution with a Kurtosis = 1.212 (See Tables 2 and 3).

**Table 2**

Descriptive Statistics of the Sample Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th></th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22.74</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18.28</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16.23</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21.11</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17.94</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC + FS + PT)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>123.51</td>
<td>8.74</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>122.58</td>
<td>10.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS Independent</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>75.09</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>74.96</td>
<td>6.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS Interdependent</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>72.85</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>73.56</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine the reliability of the instruments used in this study, Cronbach’s (1951) alpha internal consistency estimates were calculated. The internal consistency reliability estimates for the IRI consisted of .65 for the Perspective Taking (PT) subscale, .81 for the Fantasy Scale (FS), .74 for the Empathic Concern (EC) subscale, and .82 for the combination of the PT, FS, and EC subscales of the IRI. These three alpha coefficients were acceptable (Cronbach, 1951) and comparable to those of Davis (1980;
1983), the author of the IRI, who reported acceptable alpha coefficients ranging from .70 to .78 for the IRI subscales.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for the Original Studies of the IRI and SCS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>20.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>17.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>17.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS (Indep)</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>70.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS (Inter)</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>71.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Standard Deviations were not reported for IRI in the Davis (1980) study.

The internal consistency reliability estimates for the SCS were .52 for the independent self-construal subscale and .68 for the interdependent self-construal subscale. The internal consistency reliability estimate of .52 for the independent self-construal subscale was considered to be unacceptable, and .68 for the interdependent self-construal subscale was considered to be acceptable, according to Cronbach’s (1951) standards. These alpha coefficients were somewhat lower in comparison to those of Singelis (1994), the author of the SCS, who reported alpha coefficients ranging from .69 to .70 for the independent self-construal subscale and .73 to .74 for the interdependent self-construal subscales (See Table 4).
Table 4
Cronbach’s Alpha Internal Consistency Reliability Estimates of Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument subscales</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Present study</th>
<th>Reported by developer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC+FS+PT)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS Interdependent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS Independent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for the Statistical Hypotheses

Research hypothesis number one stated that there would be statistically significant group differences in degree of empathy, as measured by the three subscales of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980) between Western (from the United States of America) and Eastern (from Thailand) master’s-level counseling students. In order to test this hypothesis, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted, which compared a linear combination of empathy scores on the three subscales of the IRI, including the Empathic Concern Scale (EC), the Fantasy Scale (FS) and the Perspective Taking Scale (PT). Results yielded a significant Wilk’s $\lambda < .001$, $F(3,97) = 16.843, p < .001$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .34$. Examination of the coefficients for the linear combinations distinguishing the Western master’s-level counseling students from the Eastern master’s-level counseling students on degree of empathy, as measured by the IRI, yielded results which indicated that the Western master’s-level counseling students
scored significantly higher than the Eastern master’s-level counseling students on empathy, as measured by the IRI ($p < .001$).

The effect sizes utilized when conducting the MANOVA were the partial $\eta^2$ which is slightly different than the traditional $\eta^2$ (Murphy & Myors, 2004). The traditional $\eta^2$ is equivalent to the $R^2$ in Multiple Linear Regression and is the unique variance accounted for by a predictor variable on the criterion (Murphy & Myors, 2004). The formula for the traditional eta squared is $\eta^2 = \frac{SS_{\text{effect}}}{SS_{\text{total}}}$ (Murphy & Myors, 2004). However, with a MANOVA, the formula to obtain partial eta squared values is $\eta_p^2 = \frac{SS_{\text{effect}}}{SS_{\text{error}}}$ (Murphy & Myors, 2004). The difference in utilizing the partial eta squared values as opposed to the eta squared valued is that the formula for partial eta squared measures the proportion of total variance accounted for by that particular independent variable on the dependent variable and does not adjust for variance accounted for by additional independent variables (Murphy & Myors, 2004). According to Cohen’s (1988) standard effect sizes, a large effect is equal to an $\eta_p^2 \geq 0.138$, a medium effect ranges from an $\eta_p^2 = 0.059$ to an $\eta_p^2 = 0.137$ and a small effect is an $\eta_p^2 < 0.059$. There was an effect size of .34, which is a large effect size, according to Cohen’s (1988) standard effect sizes, for group differences in empathy (See Table 5). This large effect size of .34, found by calculating partial eta squared, was equivalent to a large Cohen’s $d$ effect size of .80 or greater, a large $f^2$ effect size of .35 or greater, and was similar to a large $R^2$ effect size of .15 or greater (Murphy & Myors, 2004). The large effect size of .34 means that 34% of the variance accounted for in empathy was due to
participant group. With this large effect size, it is possible to detect differences 99+% of the time.

Table 5

MANOVA Results for Differences Between Eastern and Western Participant Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Hypothesis $df$</th>
<th>Error $df$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pillai's Trace</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1719.35</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1719.35</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling's Trace</td>
<td>53.18</td>
<td>1719.35</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy's Largest Root</td>
<td>53.18</td>
<td>1719.35</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Type</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Hypothesis $df$</th>
<th>Error $df$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pillai's Trace</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>16.843a</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>16.843a</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling's Trace</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>16.843a</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy's Largest Root</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>16.843a</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to data collection, a power analysis had been conducted to determine the sample size of each of the two groups of participants (Western and Eastern) to attain the desired power of .80 for the alpha level set at .05, with a hypothesized medium effect size (Cohen, 1992). It was determined from this power analysis that it would have been necessary to have 64 participants in both the Western and Eastern groups. However, both the Western and Eastern groups had less than 64 participants ($n = 53$ and $n = 48$, respectively). Despite this issue of lowered power, a large effect size was found for the differences in empathy between the Western and Eastern groups of participants.

Follow-up univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine whether the two groups of participants, Eastern versus Western, scored statistically significantly higher on each of the three IRI subscales (EC, FS, and PT). Results of the
ANOVAs revealed that the Western master’s-level counseling students scored significantly higher on two types of empathy, as measured by the IRI. The statistically significant differences were found on the IRI subscales of EC and PT, as evidenced by $F(1,99) = 40.14, p < .001$ for the EC subscale and $F(1,99) = 20.65, p < .001$ for the PT subscale. Although the Western master’s-level counseling students did not score statistically significantly higher than the Eastern master’s-level counseling students on the IRI subscale of FS, the difference in scores with the Western master’s-level counseling students having scored higher approached significance, $p = .058$.

The effect sizes for group differences on the IRI subscales ranged from small to large, according to Cohen’s (1988) standard effect sizes. The effect size of $\eta_p^2 = .04$ for the IRI subscale of FS, to large effect sizes of $\eta_p^2 = .17$ for the IRI subscale of PT, and $\eta_p^2 = .29$ for the IRI subscale of EC. According to these effect sizes, 4% of the variance accounted for in the fantasy type of empathy is due to participant group (Western versus Eastern), 17% of the variance accounted for in the perspective taking type of empathy is due to participant group, and 29% of the variance accounted for in the empathic concern type of empathy is due to participant group (See Table 6).
Table 6

ANOVA Results for Empathy Differences Between Participant Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td>42011.44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42011.44</td>
<td>3120.64</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td>30001.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30001.34</td>
<td>1035.17</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td>38410.82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38410.82</td>
<td>3121.72</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td>540.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>540.35</td>
<td>40.14</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td>106.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>106.25</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td>254.03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>254.03</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td>1332.78</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>13.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td>2869.23</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>28.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td>1218.13</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis number two stated that master’s-level counseling students’ independent and interdependent self-construals would be significantly correlated with degree of empathy. Bivariate correlational analyses were conducted between the two subscales of the SCS (independent and interdependent) and the IRI combined subscales of Empathic Concern (EC), Fantasy Scale (FS), and Perspective Taking (PT). Results indicated a positive correlation between independent self-construals and degree of empathy ($r = .22, p = .03$). However, there was no statistically significant relationship found between interdependent self-construal scores and empathy scores with $r = .01$ and $p = .92$ (See Table 7).
### Table 7

Correlations for Empathy and Independent / Interdependent Self-Construals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>Independent Self-Construal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Self-Construal</td>
<td>( r )</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( p )</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent Self-Construal</td>
<td>( r )</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( p )</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Correlation is significant at the p < .05 level (2-tailed).

For exploratory purposes, post-hoc statistical analyses were performed. First, an independent samples \( t \) test was conducted to determine if there were significant mean score differences between the Western and Eastern groups of participants on the independent and interdependent self-construal subscales of the SCS. Results of the Independent-Samples \( t \) test revealed that there were no statistically significant mean score differences for the Western and Eastern master’s-level counseling students on either independent or interdependent self-construals (See Tables 8 and 9).

Additional post-hoc bivariate correlational analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between each of the IRI subscales (EC, FS, and PT) and the SCS subscales (independent and interdependent). For the combined groups of master’s-level counseling students (Eastern and Western), a statistically significant positive relationship was found between the independent subscale scores of the SCS and the PT subscale scores of the IRI (\( r = .32, p = .001 \), 2-tailed) (See Table 10).
Table 8

Participant Group Statistics for Independent/Interdependent Self-Construals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Construal Scale</th>
<th>Participant group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>Std. error mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Self-Construal</td>
<td>USA (1)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>75.51</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thai (2)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>74.96</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent Self-Construal</td>
<td>USA (1)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>72.85</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thai (2)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>73.56</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

Independent Samples t-test Results for Self-Construals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Construal Scale</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>$M_1-M_2$</th>
<th>$f^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Self-Construal</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent Self-Construal</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>-0.71</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $M_1$ = mean score for Western group of participants.

$M_2$ = mean score for Eastern group of participants.
Table 10

Correlations Between SCS Subscales, IRI Subscales, and IRI Composite for All Participants (*N* = 101)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCS (Indep)</th>
<th>SCS (Inter)</th>
<th>IRI (EC)</th>
<th>IRI (FS)</th>
<th>IRI (PT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCS (Inter)</td>
<td><em>r</em> = .04</td>
<td><em>p</em> = .67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td><em>r</em> = .09</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td><em>p</em> = .35</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td><em>r</em> = .10</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td><em>p</em> = .31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC+FS+PT)</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.79**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Correlation is significant at *p* < .05, 2-tailed.
**Correlation is significant at *p* < .01, 2-tailed.

Bivariate correlational analyses were also conducted examining the relationships between the SCS subscales and the IRI subscales for each group of participants: master’s-level counseling students from the United States of America (Western) and from Thailand (Eastern). For the group of participants from the United States of America, results indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between the SCS independent self-construal subscale and the PT subscale of the IRI (*r* = .38, *p* = .005, 2-tailed) (See Table 11).
### Table 11

Correlations Between SCS Subscales, IRI Subscales, and IRI Composite for Western Participants (n = 53)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SCS (Indep)</th>
<th>SCS (Inter)</th>
<th>IRI (EC)</th>
<th>IRI (FS)</th>
<th>IRI (PT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCS (Inter)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC+FS+PT)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>0.84**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. **Correlation is significant at p < .01, 2-tailed.

Regarding participants from Thailand, results of the bivariate correlational analyses revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the SCS independent self-construal subscale and the EC subscale of the IRI (r = .372, p = .01, 2-tailed). Findings also indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between the SCS independent self-construal subscale and the FS subscale of the IRI (r = .29, p = .045) (See Table 12).
### Table 12

Correlations Between SCS Subscales, IRI Subscales, and IRI Composite for Eastern Participants (n = 48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SCS (Indep)</th>
<th>SCS (Inter)</th>
<th>IRI (EC)</th>
<th>IRI (FS)</th>
<th>IRI (PT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCS (Indep)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (FS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (PT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI (EC+FS+PT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.70**</td>
<td>.78**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Correlation is significant at p < .05, 2-tailed.
**Correlation is significant at p < .01, 2-tailed.

A post hoc bivariate correlational analysis was also conducted to examine the relationship between degree of empathy (the combined IRI subscale scores of EC, FS, and PT) and number of semesters in the master’s-level counseling programs. There was a significant positive correlation found between degree of empathy and number of semesters in the counseling program for the two groups of master’s-level counseling students combined (r = .20, p = .05, 2-tailed).

In the present study, there were moderate intercorrelations, according to Cronbach’s (1951) standards, found among the three IRI subscales of EC, FS, and PT for
both groups of participants (Eastern and Western) combined. Results indicated a
moderate intercorrelation between the IRI subscales of EC and FS \( (r = .36, p = .00, \)
2-tailed), between the IRI subscales of PT and EC \( (r = .38, p = .00, 2\text{-tailed}), \) and
between the IRI subscales of PT and FS \( (r = .27, p = .01, 2\text{-tailed}). \) Within the Western
group of participants, there was only one intercorrelation found between the IRI
subscales of FS and EC \( (r = .37, p = .01, 2\text{-tailed}), \) which was considered moderate by
Cronbach’s (1951) standards. As for the Eastern group of participants, there were no
significant intercorrelations found among the three subscales, EC, FS, and PT of the IRI.
For the Western and Eastern group of participants, both separated and combined,
moderate to high intercorrelations were found between the combined empathy composite
score of the IRI (EC + FS + PT) and each of the three subscales. The range of these
intercorrelations was \( r = .56 \) to \( r = .84, p = .00, 2\text{-tailed} \) (See Tables 10, 11, and 12).

In the original study of the IRI, conducted by Davis (1980), the data were
separated by gender. The IRI subscales of FS and PT were virtually unrelated for both
males and females (Davis, 1980). There were moderate intercorrelations found between
the IRI subscales of EC and FS for both males and females \( (r = .33 \text{ and } .30, \text{ respectively})\)
and for the IRI subscales of PT and EC \( (r = .33 \text{ for males, } r = .30 \text{ for females}) \) in Davis’
(1980) original study.

There were no significant intercorrelations found between the independent and
interdependent self-construal subscales of the SCS for Eastern and Western participants;
when analyzed as separate groups or combined. These results were similar to Singelis’
(1994) original study of the SCS, in which there were no significant intercorrelations
found between the independent and interdependent self-construal subscales in the two subsamples of participants sampled from the University of Hawaii.

Summary of Results

Chapter IV included demographic statistics for the two participants groups sample (Eastern versus Western) and descriptive statistics related to the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1983a, 1983b) and the Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Singelis, 1994). Scores from the IRI and SCS were statistically analyzed using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and since statistical significance was found, follow-up univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to evaluate and determine which subscales of the IRI and SCS led to statistical significance. Results of hypothesis number one indicated statistically significant differences on degree of empathy, as measured by the combined subscale scores on the IRI (EC, FS, and PT), between Eastern (from Thailand) and Western (from the United States of America) master’s-level counseling students, with the Western participant group having scored significantly higher on degree of empathy. When the ANOVAs were conducted to examine where the differences occurred, statistical significance was found in the IRI subscales of EC and PT. Although, the IRI subscale of FS was not found to be statistically significant, it approached significance.

Results for hypothesis number two indicated that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between degree of empathy, as measured by the combined subscales of the IRI (EC, FS, and PT), and level of independent self-construals, as measured by the SCS. A follow-up multiple regression analysis was conducted to further investigate the significant relationship between independent self-construals and
empathy and results indicated that as the level of independent self-construal increased, so did the degree of empathy. Additionally, there was no statistically significant relationship found between degree of empathy, as measured by the combined subscales of the IRI (EC, FS, and PT), and level of interdependence, as measured by the SCS.

Results for post-hoc analyses indicated that there were no statistically significant mean score differences for either the independent self-construal subscale or for the interdependent self-construal subscale of the SCS between the Western and Eastern groups of participants. Additional findings revealed several statistically significant positive correlations between the three IRI subscales (EC, FS, and PT) and the SCS Independent subscale when the two groups of participants (Western and Eastern) were combined and when the data from the two groups of participants were analyzed separately. There were no statistically significant relationships found between the Interdependent subscale of the SCS and any of the IRI subscales.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research study was to explore empathy and self-construals in Eastern and Western master’s-level counseling students. First, the researcher explored whether or not group differences existed between Western and Eastern master’s-level counseling students on degree of empathy. Second, the researcher examined whether or not a significant relationship existed between the master’s-level counseling students’ independent and interdependent self-construals and their degree of empathy. Included in this chapter are the discussion and interpretation of the findings of this research study, a comparison of the results of this study to previous literature and research, limitations and conclusions, implication of the findings, recommendations for future research, and a summary of the findings.

Discussion and Interpretation of Statistical Results

The participants in this research study ($N = 101$) were comprised of two groups of master’s-level counseling students: Eastern and Western. The Eastern group of participants ($n = 48$) was enrolled in a counseling program in a university in Thailand and the Western group of participants ($n = 53$) was enrolled in a counseling program in a university in a Midwestern state in the United States of America. The participants in this study completed the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1983a, 1983b) to assess
their degree of empathy, the Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Singelis, 1994) to examine their levels of independent and interdependent self-construals, and a demographic questionnaire developed by the researcher, one designed for the master’s-level counseling students sampled from the United States of America and another one specifically designed for the master’s-level counseling students sampled from Thailand.

Unique to the present study, there were no previous research studies found in which the IRI (Davis, 1980) or the SCS (Singelis, 1994) were used to examine and compare differences in groups of participants from two different countries; specifically, the United States of America and Thailand. The IRI was normed on male and female undergraduate college students enrolled in introductory psychology courses at the University of Texas in Austin (Davis, 1980, 1983a, 1983b). Siu and Shek (2005) had examined the validity of the IRI with Chinese participants from Hong Kong but did not compare these participants to a sub-sample of participants from a Western country, as was done in the present study. In Siu and Shek’s (2005) study, the IRI was translated into the Chinese language and then administered to junior high school students and university students in Hong Kong. The participants sampled in Duan et al.’s (2005) study were 121 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory psychology courses at a large university in a Midwestern state of the United States of America. In the present study, the Western sub-sample included master’s-level students enrolled in a counseling program at a university in a Midwestern state of the United States of America and the Eastern sub-sample was comprised of master’s-level counseling students enrolled in an international, English-speaking university in Thailand.
Regarding the SCS, Singelis (1994) originally normed this instrument on undergraduate students from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The self-reported ethnic-racial makeup of the sample included 8 (2.2%) African Americans; 49 (13.77%) Caucasians; 43 Chinese (12.0%); 32 (8.9%) Filipinos; 26 (7.3%) Hawaiians or part Hawaiians; 122 (34.1%) Japanese; 13 (3.6%) Koreans; 2 (0.6%) Samoans; 20 (5.6%) mixed; and 43 (12.0%) other. Subsequent research on self-construals and embarrassability were conducted by Singelis and Sharkey (1995) in which they also sampled undergraduate students at the University of Hawaii with a similar ethnic-racial background that was sampled in the Singelis (1994) study. In comparison, the sample in the present study was different from previous studies on self-construals (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). The Western sub-sample in the present study did not include any Asians and was comprised of 86.79% European Americans, 7.9% African Americans, 1.89% Indian, 1.89% Bi-Racial, and 1.89% African. The Eastern sub-sample included 79.17% Asians, 4.17% Indians, 2.08% African, and 2.08% “Other.”

After examining and comparing the composition of participants sampled in previous studies (Davis, 1980; Duan et al., 2005; Singelis, 1994, Singelis & Sharkey, 1995; Siu & Shek, 2005), greater variance in strength of cultural orientations (self-construals) was anticipated in the present study prior to data collection due to the assumed cultural differences between the two sub-samples of participants from two countries (the United States of America and Thailand). It was expected that the Western sub-sample would have significantly stronger independent self-construals than the Eastern sub-sample and conversely, the Eastern sub-sample would have significantly stronger interdependent self-construals than the Western sub-sample. However, contrary
to these expectations, the results revealed no significant differences in either independent or interdependent self-construals between the Eastern and Western groups of participants.

Research hypothesis number one stated that there would be statistically significant differences in degree of empathy between the Eastern and Western groups of participants. Findings from the MANOVA revealed that the Western group of master’s-level counseling students scored significantly higher than the Eastern group of master’s-level counseling students on degree of empathy, as measured by the IRI. Follow-up ANOVAs of the subscales of the IRI further indicated that the Western group of participants scored statistically significantly higher on the Empathic Concern (EC) subscale and on the Perspective Taking (PT) subscale. Although the results indicated that there was no statistically significant group difference in degree of empathy on the Fantasy Scale (FS), the difference approached significance. The results of this study indicated that the Western group of participants had a higher degree of empathy than did the Eastern group of participants. There was no prior research found that studied degree of empathy between Eastern and Western groups of participants to which these results could be compared.

Research hypothesis number two stated that there would be a significant relationship between self-construals (both independent and interdependent) and degree of empathy among all master’s-level counseling students. The results of bivariate correlational analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between independent self-construals, as measured by the SCS, and degree of empathy, as measured by the IRI combined subscales of EC, FS, and PT. There was no statistically significant relationship found between interdependent self-construals and degree of empathy. The findings of this
study partially supported past research in which a significant relationship was indicated between empathy and two cultural orientations among participants (Duan et al., 2005). However, in this research study, only independent self-construals were significantly related to empathy, whereas in Duan et al.’s (2005) research study, both cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism were significantly correlated with different types of empathy. Dispositional intellectual empathy and empathic emotion were positively correlated with collectivism, whereas individualism was found to predict intellectual empathy (Duan et al., 2005).

The two images of the self, independent and interdependent self-construals, had been conceptualized to reflect various relational aspects of both individualism and collectivism; an independent self-construal embodying various characteristics of individualism and an interdependent self-construal embodying various characteristics of collectivism (Singelis, 1994). However, in this study interdependent self-construals were not significantly related to empathy.

Post-hoc analyses were conducted for the purpose of exploration. Results of an Independent-Samples $t$ test revealed that there were no statistically significant mean score differences for either the independent self-construal subscale or for the interdependent self-construal subscale of the SCS between the Western and Eastern groups of participants. These findings did not support previous research in which a Western group of participants scored significantly higher on independent self-construals than on interdependent self-construals, while a non-Western group of participants scored significantly higher on the interdependent self-construals than on independent self-construals (Singelis, 1994). The population sampled in the research study conducted by
Singelis (1994) included undergraduate students from the University of Hawaii in Manoa, consisting of 2.2% African American, 13.77% Caucasians, 12.0% Chinese, 8.9% Filipino, 7.3% Hawaiian or part Hawaiian, 34.1% Japanese, 3.6% Korean, 0.6% Samoan, 5.6% mixed, and 12.0% other, which was quite different from the populations sampled in this research study. Perhaps this divergent finding could be accounted for by the relatively poor internal consistency reliability of the instrument for the sample population used here. In this study, the alpha coefficients for the SCS were .52 for the independent self-construal subscale and .68 for the interdependent self-construal subscale. These alpha coefficients were somewhat lower in comparison to those of Singelis (1994), the author of the SCS. The internal consistency reliability estimate of .52 for the independent self-construal subscale was considered to be unacceptable, and .68 for the interdependent self-construal subscale was considered to be acceptable but low, according to Cronbach’s (1951) standards.

Furthermore, statistically significant positive intercorrelations were revealed between all three IRI subscales of EC, FS, and PT. Specifically, findings indicated statistically significant positive intercorrelations between the IRI subscales of EC and FS subscales, between the IRI subscales of PT and EC, and between the IRI subscales of FS and PT. Therefore, for the present sample, the three components of empathy measured including perspective taking, empathic concern, and fantasy, were significantly related to each other and may be measuring a very similar construct. Davis (1996), who developed the IRI and its subscales, conceptualized empathy and the IRI as designed to measure empathy as consisting of “a set of separate but related constructs” (p. 55). Davis (1980), in his original study of the IRI separated subscale intercorrelations by gender. In this
study (Davis, 1980), the IRI subscales of PT and FS were virtually unrelated for both males and females and moderate intercorrelations were found between the subscales of FS and EC for both males and females and between the subscales of PT and EC for both males and females. In the present study, moderate intercorrelations were found between the IRI subscales of FS and EC, between the subscales of PT and EC, and between the subscales of PT and FS. The moderate intercorrelation between the IRI subscales of PT and FS found in the present study was not found in the original study of the IRI (Davis, 1980), in which these two subscales (PT and FS) were virtually unrelated. There are several potential explanations for this difference.

The population sample in the present study may be considered unique in several ways, which may have accounted for the differences. Each of the participants in the present study was a master’s-level counseling student enrolled in a counseling program. Cross-culturally, master’s-level counseling students may be more homogenous than heterogeneous in their cultural orientations; which is what the results indicated in the present study. Neither the Western sub-sample nor the Eastern sub-sample had stronger independent or interdependent self-construals. When comparing these two groups of participants to the participants sampled in the Davis (1983a, 1983b) study, there are several additional potential factors which could have contributed to the differences found in the intercorrelations between subscales, such as age and education. In the present study, the mean ages of both groups of participants were higher than the mean age of participants in Davis’ (1983a, 1983b) study; therefore, age could have been a factor that accounted for variance between samples. Another important factor is that the participants in the present study were enrolled in counseling programs that teach and train students.
how to use empathy in therapeutic settings. Perhaps master’s-level counseling students have a better understanding of the various components of empathy due to their education and training; which would explain the higher intercorrelations of each of the three subscales of the IRI (PT, EC, and FS) with the population in the present study.

Post-hoc bivariate correlational analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between each of the three IRI subscales and the two SCS subscales. With all participants combined (both Eastern and Western students), a statistically significant positive relationship was found between the independent self-construal subscale scores of the SCS and the PT subscale scores of the IRI. As the level of the participants’ independent self-construals increased, so did the perspective taking component of empathy. Perspective taking, a cognitive empathic process, was developed to measure the self-reported “tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others in everyday life” (Davis, 1996, p. 57). The PT subscale items were created to assess social role taking, or the tendency to take on another’s perspective in different situations.

Individuals with strong interdependent self-construals tend to possess many collectivistic characteristics, such as valuing interpersonal relationships, interconnectedness, and harmony (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Individuals with strong interdependent self-construals have the tendency to strive to fit into the context rather than stand out and assert themselves to attain personal goals (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Since individuals with strong interdependent self-construals tend to value relationships and view the individual as intertwined with others and the environment or context (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), they may have difficulty separating themselves from the context in order to take on the perspective of another. The
independent self-construal characteristics that emphasize separateness, internal attributes, and uniqueness of individuals (Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995) may promote the tendency to separate oneself from the context in order to take on another’s psychological point of view. Also, individuals with strong interdependent self-construals typically strive to adapt to the situation rather than attempt to change it in an attempt to maintain harmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Perhaps it would be undesirable for a counselor with a strong interdependent self-construal to take on another’s perspective; because in doing so, the client may be encouraged to take action that could promote disharmony in a relationship or within their environment.

Additional post-hoc bivariate correlational analyses separating each of the two sub-samples (Eastern and Western students) revealed similar findings. The results showed that for both sub-groups there were no statistically significant relationships between the interdependent subscale of the SCS and any of the IRI subscales for either the Western or Eastern group of participants. However, for the Western group of participants, results indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between the SCS independent self-construal subscale and the Perspective Taking (PT) subscale of the IRI (similar to the finding reported above). As the level of independent self-construal increased, so did the degree of perspective taking empathy. Similarly, regarding the Eastern participants, results of the bivariate correlational analyses revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the SCS independent self-construal subscale and empathy. In contrast to the Western sub-sample, however, independent self-construal was significantly positively correlated with empathic concern and fantasy types of empathy.
That is, as the level of independent self-construal increased, so did the degree of empathic concern and fantasy in the Eastern sub-sample.

Because there were no significant differences in self-construals (neither independent nor interdependent) between the Eastern and Western groups of participants, the explanation for the differences found in empathy between these two groups is unclear. Possibly, there were extraneous cultural factors other than self-construal that contributed to the differences in empathy between these two groups. Another possibility is that the IRI does not tap into the interdependent aspects of empathy. That could explain the reason the EC and FS subscales were positively correlated with independent self-construals within the Eastern sub-sample but virtually unrelated to interdependent self-construals. Perhaps the construct of empathy would be perceived very differently in Eastern countries by individuals who have strong interdependent self-construals. It is possible that the construct of empathy, with its historical roots in ancient Western culture, does not translate well into Eastern culture and that is the reason higher scores on the subscales of EC and FS were related to independent self-construals and virtually unrelated to interdependent self-construals. The participants in the Eastern sub-sample, due to their education and training as master’s-level counseling students, may have come to understand the construct of empathy from a Western perspective, which may be reflected in their scores on the IRI.

The empathy development that occurs within the context of culture may have been different for those that are drawn to the counseling profession than for the general population. This may have been particularly true of the Western group of master’s-level counseling students. The Western group of participants may have had an increased self-
awareness of their empathic qualities and their internal process related to empathizing with others. This may be due, at least in part, to the tendency of individuals from Western societies to hold an “ego-focused” perspective, in which internal attributes and personal goals are emphasized over and above the goals of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Because these Western individuals may not have been raised to place the needs of others above their own, they may strive harder to understand the internal world of others and are more conscious of their weaknesses in this area. Or perhaps, some of these individuals were raised with an “other-focused” perspective within their family structures and were aware of the contrast between their “other-focused” values and the “ego-focused” general tendencies of the Western society. Due to their heightened self-awareness of their interpersonal values related to empathy, the Western group of master’s-level counseling students may have been better equipped to assess their empathic qualities by a self-report measure.

Additionally, the educational coursework and training of the Western group of master’s-level counseling students may have further enhanced their self-awareness of empathic qualities. Within the Western counseling program, there is an emphasis on increasing self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses in knowledge and skills of counseling and improving areas of weakness. It is unknown whether these same emphases were present in the Eastern counseling program. This emphasis on increased self-awareness and improvement in areas of weakness could have led the Western group of master’s-level counseling students to be more cognizant of their empathic abilities than the Eastern group of master’s-level counseling students.
Comparison of Results of This Study to Previous Literature and Research

Duan et al.’s research study (2005) was the only study found prior to this research study in which the role of cultural values and empathy were investigated. The researchers conceptualized empathy as being “developed and experienced in specific cultural contexts” (Duan et al., 2005, p. 3). They postulated that empathy, in whatever form, would have a significant impact on individuals’ cultural orientations (Duan et al., 2005). The researchers (Duan et al., 2005) hypothesized that collectivism, described as having an “other-focused” emphasis (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) would be more likely to be significantly correlated with empathy dispositions than individualism, described as having an “ego-focused” emphasis (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Participants in this study were 121 students from introductory psychology classes at a large Midwestern state university. The participants in this study were first administered the Value Survey (Schwartz, 1992), which was used to measure the cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism. Four weeks later, the participants returned for a laboratory session in which they were presented with a therapy session transcript regarding a client who described family issues that contributed to her feelings of worthlessness. The participants were then administered the Perspective Taking (PT) subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980), which was used to assess dispositional intellectual empathy and the Empathic Concern (EC) subscale of the IRI, which was used to assess empathic emotion.

The findings of their research study (Duan et al., 2005) indicated differences in empathy between the two cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism. The results indicated that collectivism was positively correlated with both dispositional
intellectual empathy and dispositional empathic emotion and that collectivism was found to predict experienced empathic emotion (Duan et al., 2005). Individualism was found to predict experienced intellectual empathy (Duan et al., 2005).

The cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism are similar to the concepts of independent self-construals and interdependent self-construals, respectively (Singelis, 1994). Placing the focus on the relationship of the individual to the collective is characteristic of both individualism and collectivism and independent and interdependent self-construals (Singelis, 1994). Markus and Kitayama (1991) postulated that individuals from Western societies hold an independent self-image that emphasizes separateness, uniqueness, and internal attributes or dispositions, whereas individuals from non-Western societies hold an interdependent view of self in which connectedness, social context, and relationships are stressed (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Similar to independent self-construals, Triandis (1988) described the central component of individualism as the tendency to prioritize one’s personal goals as being more important than the goals of the in-group. The central component of collectivism, similar to the concept of interdependent self-construals, is the tendency to place the goals of the in-group above one’s personal goals. More recent research (Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995) had indicated that individuals possess both individualistic and collectivistic characteristics and, similarly, both independent and interdependent self-construals to varying degrees. Despite the similarities between the cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism and independent and interdependent self-construals, disparity of results was found between the present research study and Duan et al.’s (2005) study.
Although there was only one other research study (Duan et al, 2005) found, previous to the present study, in which empathy and cultural orientations were investigated, there was a wealth of social psychology literature and research found on cognitive and affective differences between Eastern and Western groups of individuals (Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Cohen & Gunz, 2002; Fernald & Morikawa, 1993; Han et al., 1998; Ji, Schwartz et al., 2000; Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002). Since empathy is comprised of cognitive and affective components, it is important to discuss these cross-cultural differences in relation to cultural orientations and empathy, comparing the findings to the results of the present study.

Differences were found in child-rearing practices between mothers of Eastern and Western cultures (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993). These researchers (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993) examined child-rearing practices in the homes of Japanese and American mothers of infants that were either 6, 12, or 19 months old. The researchers (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993) placed specific toys in front of the infants and requested that the mothers interact with the infants and the toys. The American mothers were more likely to label each of the toys, assigning each of them nouns (i.e., “piggy,” “doggie”), while the Japanese mother were twice as likely to use verbs, social norms, greetings, and feelings when interacting with the toys and their infants (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993). It was concluded, based on their findings, that American infants were being taught that the world consisted mainly of objects and Japanese infants were being taught that the world was mainly about relationships and interactions with others (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), the view that the world consists of objects could be a cue that primes for independent self-construal development, while the perspective that the
world was mainly about relationships and interactions could be a cue for interdependent self-construal development. Based upon Hoffman’s (1982) model of empathy development, it seemed that the Japanese mothers were enhancing the development of empathy in their infants by the way in which they were interacting with their infants with toys; stressing relationships, interactions, and feelings.

There were differences found between children of Eastern and Western societies. Han et al. (1998) investigated differences between Chinese and American children, aged four to six years of age, in their autobiographical memory and story recall of daily life events. These researchers (Han et al., 1998) found that in describing an event, American children were three times more likely than Chinese children to make references to themselves versus references to others. Based upon self-construal theory (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), the tendency to refer to oneself, as the American children had done, is a characteristic of a person raised within an individualistic society and could be a priming factor for the development of an independent self-construal. In contrast, the tendency to refer more often to others is indicative of a child being raised within a collectivistic society and a priming factor for the development of an interdependent self-construal. According to Hoffman’s (1982) model of empathy development, it seemed that learning to refer to others in describing an event could promote empathy development among children.

Based on the study on child-rearing practice differences (Fernald & Morikawa, 1993) and on the differences in autobiographical memory and story recall of daily life events in children (Han et al., 1998), it seems that infants and children from Eastern societies were being primed for enhanced empathy development. However, there is a gap
in cross-cultural empathy research between young children and college or university students. It is unclear as to what cultural differences may occur in empathy development from early childhood through early adulthood between individuals from Eastern and Western societies.

The majority of research on cultural differences in cognitive and affective processes between groups of participants from Eastern and Western cultures included samples comprised of college or university students. Ji, Schwartz et al. (2000) conducted research which investigated differences between Easterners (from Beijing University) and Westerners (from the University of Michigan) in their ability to attend to and report on their own and their peers’ attitudes and behaviors. It was found that the Eastern participants gave more detailed information; not only about their own attitudes and behaviors, but also about their peers’ behaviors (Ji, Schwartz et al., 2000). It was concluded by the researchers (Ji, Schwartz et al., 2000) that individuals from Eastern cultures were expected to attend more closely to others’ attitudes and behaviors in an effort to coordinate their own attitudes and behaviors to adjust to situations, which is typical of individuals from collectivistic societies, who have a strong interdependent self-construal. This ability to attend to other’s attitudes and behaviors is part of the cognitive, perspective taking aspect of empathy (Davis, 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1996). However, in the present study, the Western sub-sample was found to have higher perspective taking empathy than did the Eastern sub-sample.

Cohen and Gunz (2002) investigated differences in perceptions of events between North American students and Asian students. The North American students were mainly from Canada and the Asian students were from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Korea, and
various South and Southeast Asian countries (Cohen & Gunz, 2002). The North American students were found to recall an event from their personal perspective looking outward; in contrast to the Asian students, who had the tendency to recall an event from a third-person perspective or as an observer might perceive the event (Cohen & Gunz, 2002). A person from a Western culture, considered to be an individualistic society with a stronger independent self-construal is more likely to be self-focused or “ego-focused,” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and thus, recalling an event from a personal perspective would have been expected. An observer that recalls an event from a third-person perspective may be better able to relate to not only the individuals involved, but the relationship between the context or environment and the individuals; which is typical of individuals from an Eastern culture, considered to be collectivistic, with a stronger interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). An ability to recall an event could include both cognitive and affective aspects of empathy (Davis, 1983a, 1983b). Recalling an event with an “other-focused” perspective could be related to the perspective taking and empathic concern aspects of empathy. In the present study, the Western participants were found to have higher perspective taking and empathic concern aspects of empathy, which are considered to be cognitive and affective types of empathy, respectively.

Choi and Nisbett (1998) conducted research on fundamental attribution errors (FAE), or correspondence biases in attitude attributions in American and East Asian participants. The American participants were from the University of Michigan and the East Asian students were from So-Gang University in Seoul, Korea (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). The participants were presented with three different scenarios in which they were
requested to respond to each scenario with their true attitudes regarding the target person’s behaviors. Regardless of the scenario, the American participants had a greater tendency to attribute the target person’s behavior to dispositional factors rather than situational factors, which increased their likelihood of making an FAE. In contrast, Korean participants were more likely to attribute the target person’s behavior to situational factors, which decreased the probability of their making an FAE (Choi & Nisbett, 1998). Based on the perspective taking aspect of empathy that involves taking on the psychological perspective of another (Davis, 1980), it seems intuitive that an individual who could attribute a target person’s behavior to malleable, situational factors rather than more stable, dispositional factors could better empathize with the target person. However, believing situations are malleable may be a Western perspective. Individuals within an Eastern society typically hold the belief system that individuals must adapt to the situation or context and find the Middle Way to maintain harmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In a therapeutic setting, if the counselor feels the client would have difficulty making behavioral changes due to stable, dispositional factors, empathy for this client may be limited. If a counselor believes that the client’s behaviors are due to situational factors that could be changed, the counselor may be able to better empathize with the client. Typically, individuals from Western societies have a greater tendency to believe they can change situations (Nisbett, 2003). However, a counselor with an Eastern, collectivistic perspective, who believes that the client must adapt to the situation, may also have limited empathy for their client. So, whether or not the tendency to make an FAE would enhance or limit empathy in a counseling setting remains unclear. Perhaps the Western participants in the present study had higher empathy than the
Eastern participants because the IRI (Davis, 1980), which measured empathy, was a self-report measure. Perhaps the Western participants had a tendency to make an FAE about their own interpersonal attributes as being dispositional factors when responding to the IRI. In contrast, perhaps the Eastern participants had a greater tendency to respond to IRI items viewing each item as situational, depending upon the context.

Sanchez-Burks and his colleagues (2002) examined and compared the reactions of both Korean and American employees to evaluations received from their employers. Specifically, the reliance on indirect versus direct communication cues was investigated in the employees’ interactions with their employer (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002). Findings indicated that the Korean participants had a greater tendency to rely on indirect communication cues to focus on the employers to infer from the evaluation ratings how the employer felt about them (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002). In contrast, the American participants had a greater tendency to rely on direct communication cues from their employer, accepting the evaluation ratings at face value, and not attempting to understand the feelings of the employer (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2002). Individuals from collectivistic societies, who typically have a stronger interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995) have a stronger tendency than people from individualistic societies with stronger independent self-construals to attend to the experience of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Attempting to understand the emotions of another is part of the empathic concern aspect of empathy (Davis, 1983a, 1983b). Therefore, it seemed reasonable to expect that individuals from Eastern societies would have a higher degree of this type of empathy than individuals from Western societies. In the present study, the Western group of participants had a higher degree of
the empathic concern type of empathy than did the Eastern group of participants. There were also no differences in independent and interdependent self-construals between these two groups of participants.

*Hypothesized Explanations for the Anomalous Results*

In the present study, the Western group of master’s-level students scored significantly higher than the Eastern group of master’s-level counseling students on the perspective taking and empathic concern aspect of empathy. One explanation could be that master’s-level counseling students are not typical of the general populations from which they are sampled. An individual from a Western society that aspires to become a counselor may possess interdependent self-construal characteristics before they enroll in their master’s-level counseling program. That is, these Western participants may have a better understanding of relationships and the connections between individuals and their context or environments than do the general population of individuals from Western societies. This may be the reason that there were no mean score differences found in interdependent and independent self-construals between Western and Eastern participants. Additionally, the empathy training the Western master’s-level counseling students received in their counseling program may have further enhanced their perspective taking and empathic concern aspects of empathy. Furthermore, the Western group of participants in the present study had higher mean score differences in the number of semesters in their respective counseling programs than did the Eastern participants. The larger number of semesters in the counseling program could have further promoted empathy development, thus potentially contributing to the higher degree of empathy found in the Western group of master’s-level counseling students.
In the present research study, perspective taking, or dispositional intellectual empathy, was positively correlated with an independent self-construal in the Western group of participants. Empathic concern or empathic emotion was also positively correlated with an independent self-construal in the Eastern group of participants, which is contrary to what Duan et al. (2005) found. Perhaps the situation-specific aspect of Duan et al.’s (2005) study elicited dispositional intellectual empathy and empathic emotion from those participants who self-identified as having a stronger collectivistic cultural orientation. According to the literature, individuals from Eastern societies are more responsive to situational or contextual information than individuals from Western societies (e.g., Norenzayan et al., 2002). In Norenzayan et al.’s (2002) study, Koreans viewed dispositional or personality traits as malleable and the Americans viewed personality traits as fixed. If those participants, identified as collectivistic in Duan et al.’s (2005) study, responded to the self-report measure items with this perspective (i.e., that the response to each item depended upon situational or contextual factors) then perhaps they were more likely to report dispositional intellectual empathy and empathic emotion than if they were administered a self-report measure in which there were no situation-specific events presented (as was the case in this research study).

Duan et al.’s (2005) recommendation for future research was that the population sampled have greater cultural variance. The population sampled in Duan et al.’s (2005) study was comprised of introductory to psychology students at a university in a Midwestern state of the United States of America. These researchers found significant differences in the cultural orientations of individualism-collectivism within this population of undergraduate students. However, in the present research study no
significant differences were found between the cultural orientations of independent and interdependent self-construals and two groups of participants from two countries (the United States of America and Thailand); groups which are generally thought of as culturally different.

Several potential explanations for why no significant group differences were found in cultural orientations between two groups of participants from two different countries warrants further discussion. First, the nature of international schools established in Thailand at the beginning of the 1990s will be explored. According to literature, international schools in Thailand were originally established for the children of expatriates considered to be economically privileged and several of them were established in large cities such as the capital city of Bangkok (Monthienvichienchai, Bhibulbhanuwat, Kawemsuk, & Speece, 2002). The majority of the teaching staff recruited for these international schools have been typically British or those individuals who have been educated in the United Kingdom (Monthienvichienchai et al., 2002). The Eastern group of participants in this study was enrolled in one of the first international universities to be established in Thailand. The faculty members in the counseling department of this international university consisted of a faculty member from Belgium, another from New York, a third who had studied at the Delhi University in India and received his doctorate in the Philippines, a fourth faculty member who had received her master’s and doctoral degrees in California, and a fifth faculty member, who self-identified as a British citizen and who had been educated in the Philippines. First, it is unclear as to how the varied cultural experiences within each of the faculty members impacted their cultural orientations and teaching philosophies. Also, it is unclear how the
cultural orientations of the faculty members could have impacted the master’s-level counseling students’ learning at this international university.

The master’s-level counseling students from both countries (the United States of America and Thailand) had similar counseling program curricula. Perhaps the curricula, in addition to having professors who are from Western countries or who have been educated in Western countries led students from Eastern countries to adopt a Westernized view of empathy; however, their experience of empathy may be different within a counseling context. This in part could explain the disparity of results found between this research study and that of Duan et al. (2005), in which they found that those participants with a collectivistic cultural orientation had higher empathic emotion when presented with a case scenario.

Also, in contrast to Duan et al.’s (2005) study, significant differences in cultural orientations were not found in the present study. Although Duan et al. (2005) collected data in a Midwestern state of the United States of America, significant differences in cultural orientations were found between collectivism and individualism. However, in the present study, the Eastern and Western groups of participants did not differ significantly in their cultural orientations of independent and interdependent self-construals. Although the two groups of participants were sampled in two different countries, generally accepted as culturally distinct, the two groups were not as different in their cultural orientations as was assumed prior to data collection.

A potential explanation for the lack of differences found in the cultural orientations of independent and interdependent self-construals between the Eastern and Western groups of participants is that the students that were drawn to this particular
international university, in which curricula was presented in the English language, could be individuals who are not culturally oriented in the same way as other master’s-level students enrolled in Thai universities that are not international and in which courses are offered in the traditional Thai language and teaching style. In comparing the Eastern participant group in this research study to the general Thai population (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2000) it was discovered that the group of master’s-level counseling students from this international university was very different in composition than in the general Thai population. In terms of ethnicities, the National Statistical Office of Thailand (2000) reported the following population statistics: 80% Thai (53% Siamese, 27% Lao); 12% Chinese, 4% Malay, and 3% Khmer. Among the master’s-level counseling students from the international university in Thailand the statistics for ethnicities reported by the participants were as follows: 37.5% Thai, 25% Chinese, 12.5% Indian, 8.33% Myanma, 2.08% Drukpas (from Bhutan), 2.08% Filipino, 2.08% Indonesian, 2.08% Thai/Indian, 2.08% Nigerian, 2.08% Malaysian, 2.08% Thai/Filipino, and 2.08% Dutch (from the Netherlands). Thus, the population sampled from the university in Thailand (i.e., only 37.5% Thai) is not representative of the general population in Thailand (i.e., 80% Thai), in terms of population statistic percentages of ethnicities.

In terms of religious affiliation the National Statistical Office of Thailand (2000) reported the following population statistics: 95% Buddhist, 4% Muslim, and 0.6% Christian. Among the subsample of master’s-level counseling students from Thailand the following statistics were gathered regarding religious affiliation: 45.83% Christian, 39.58% Buddhist, 6.25% Spiritual, but not Religious, and 4.17% Hindu. It should also be
noted that the international university in Thailand has a Catholic religious affiliation, with a relatively large percentage of Christians. Thus, in regard to religious affiliation, the master’s-level counseling students that were sampled in this research study were not representative of the general religious affiliation population statistics for Thailand (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2000). It can therefore be inferred that these students’ worldviews may be more associated with a Western (or at least a non-traditionally Eastern) orientation than that of the average Thai citizen. Perhaps master’s-level counseling students, both in the United States of America and in Thailand, may be more similar than dissimilar and may not represent the general population on various characteristics. Outcomes of both demographic and descriptive statistical results support this contention. However, the culture of higher education institutions, particularly of master’s-level counseling programs, may be distinct from that of the general population; regardless of the country in which these master’s-level counseling programs exist.

As mentioned previously, the relatively poor internal consistency reliability estimate for the independent self-construal subscale of the SCS may indicate that this instrument was not a reliable measure of cultural orientations for the two groups of participants. Results on the SCS may have also been confounded in this research study by participants’ religious affiliation. Christians made up the largest percentage of participants in both the Western (71.70%) and Eastern (45.83%) groups. Some of the items on the SCS designed to reflect independent self-construals may have been inconsistent with Christian values, thus contributing to a lack of significant differences found within and between the two groups on independent and interdependent self-construals. One of the items on the SCS, for example, states “I am comfortable with
being singled out for praise or rewards.” This item was designed to reflect independent self-construals. A higher level of agreement with this statement was related to a higher score for independent self-construals. Idealistically, this item conflicts with various Biblical scriptures which encourage Christians to strive for humility. The way in which individuals from Western and Eastern societies view Christianity may differ as well.

Another potential explanation has to with the cultural validity of the items on the measures (the IRI and the SCS). The items on the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI, Davis, 1980) used to measure empathy perhaps reflected a Westernized or traditional view of empathy, which could be an explanation as to why some of the subscales of the IRI for both the Western and Eastern groups of participants were related to independent self-construals and not to interdependent self-construals. Among the Eastern group of participants, stronger independent self-construals were related to a higher degree of empathy for the components of empathic concern and fantasy. In contrast, among those participants in the Western group, stronger independent self-construals were associated with a higher degree of empathy on the component of perspective taking. Unfortunately, very little is known about how empathy is conceptualized by individuals from Eastern countries (e.g., Thailand).

Implications of the Findings

Despite the limitations, the findings of this study added valuable information to the body of knowledge on cross-cultural empathy research. The results of this study revealed that Western master’s-level counseling students had higher empathy than Eastern master’s-level students. Furthermore, the findings indicated significant relationships between independent self-construals and empathy in both Western and
Eastern master’s-level students, although there were no significant differences found in either independent or interdependent self-construals between the Western and Eastern groups of participants. These results have several implications for counseling practice, counseling education, supervision and training, and counseling research.

The first implication for practitioners, counselor educators, counseling supervisors, and researchers is that the results of this research study reinforce the view that although there has been much empathy research in the past, empathy continues to be a complex, multidimensional construct that is conceptualized in diverse ways and is far from being clearly understood (Duan & Hill, 1996). The findings of this study did not support the results in Duan et al.’s (2005) research study in which cultural orientations and empathy were investigated and were contrary to what would be expected from cross-cultural theory and social psychology research. This area of research on cultural orientations and empathy is in the initial stages of exploration and, therefore, more research is needed to gain a better understanding how (and what types of) empathy differ between substantially dissimilar individuals.

It might be effective for counselor educators and counseling supervisors to have dialogues or group discussions with their students and supervisees, inquiring about their perceptions of the construct of empathy; comparing the similarities or dissimilarities between their perceptions of empathy and the traditional views of empathy (with origins in Western society). This would be for the purpose of assisting all involved to gain a more global perspective on empathy, and perhaps could positively impact multicultural competence, even though the focus in many master’s-level counseling programs may be on the traditional view of empathy.
The second implication of the findings is that research results involving individuals from different cultures must be examined with caution to prevent racial or cultural stereotyping and incorrect assumptions made about individuals from Eastern or Western societies. The Eastern and Western groups of participants in this study were not found to have significant differences between their independent and interdependent self-construals. The assumption is generally made that individuals from Eastern societies are more collectivistic than individuals from Western societies (who are considered to be more individualistic), regardless of their religious affiliation or country of origin (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1988). Singelis (1994) stated that independent self-construals reflect characteristics of individualism, and interdependent self-construals have shared characteristics with collectivism. It is important for practitioners, counselor educators, and counselor supervisors to consider that although it is essential to be aware of potential cultural differences among groups of people from Eastern and Western societies, it is also crucial to recognize that individuals across cultures may have similar values or worldviews. In the present study, similarities were found between independent and interdependent self-construals between the Eastern and Western groups of master’s-level counseling students.

A third implication is that when cultural differences are found, it is important to conduct further statistical analyses to examine where the differences lie. In this study, the results indicated that the Western group of participants had a higher degree of empathy than did the Eastern group of participants. With further statistical analyses conducted, the results revealed that those individuals with higher levels of independent self-construals, from both the Eastern and Western groups of participants, scored higher on certain
subscales of the empathy instrument. It is important for practitioners, counselor educators, counselor supervisors, and researchers to be aware that there could be alternative explanations for these findings and to be cautious about using these results to generalize to other populations.

Because the construct of empathy is considered a concept that was developed by individuals from Western societies, it is possible that master’s-level counseling students from Eastern societies, such as Thailand, may view empathy very differently than their Western counterparts. Because the Eastern master’s-level counseling students in this study were enrolled in an international, Catholic-affiliated university, in which courses were offered in English, it is possible that the Eastern master’s-level counseling students learned empathy from a Western perspective and thus, the students who had higher levels of independent self-construals were better able to relate to the construct of empathy. Also, it is unclear whether or not the items on the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980) accurately reflected the view of empathy from an individual’s perspective that holds a stronger interdependent self-construal or Eastern cultural values.

A fourth implication for counselor educators, counselor supervisors, counseling students, clinical counselors, and counseling supervisees is that it is important to consider cultural orientation as a factor which potentially accounts for differences in empathy within and between groups of individuals from different countries and cultures. Understanding that an individual’s self-construal can impact their degree of empathy can help counselor educators, clinical counselors, and counselor supervisors improve their level of multicultural competence. Counselor educators and counselor supervisors could use innovative active learning strategies in order to train their students and supervisees on
the relationship between cultural orientations and empathy. For example, counselor educators and counselor supervisors could develop role plays or triadic supervision levels, in which a counseling student or counseling supervisee with a stronger independent self-construal could be paired with another counseling student or counseling supervisee who has a stronger interdependent self-construal in order for them to experience and gain knowledge about potential differences in empathy. Counselor educators and counselor supervisors could also use this knowledge about cultural orientations and differences in empathy in order to maximize their students’ and supervisees’ strengths, minimize their limitations, and improve their ability to empathize with others.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

There were several limitations of this study. First, the two groups of participants from the United States of America (Western) and Thailand (Eastern) were samples of convenience. Future research should include replications of this study in other geographical areas, and in higher education institutions more reflective of the general population of the area in terms of race, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Future researchers should also include control groups of master’s-level students who are not enrolled in a counseling program in order to assess whether or not master’s-level counseling students have similar cultural orientations across various cultures. Also, it is cautioned that care be taken on the part of future cross-cultural researchers to prevent misinterpretation of findings when comparing two groups of individuals from two different countries to avoid issues of racial and/or ethnic stereotyping. In the present study, the results should not be inferred to mean that Western master’s-level counseling
students are more empathic than Eastern master’s-level counseling students or that an independent self-construal leads to increased empathy. Due to the use of self-report measures in the present study, what can be inferred is that the Western master’s-level counseling students assessed their empathic qualities at a higher level than did the Eastern master’s-level counseling students and that a higher level of empathy was related to independent self-construals.

Another limitation is the generalizability of this study, which should be extended to other populations with caution. The Western group of master’s-level counseling students was enrolled in a university in a Midwestern state in the United States of America, which may not be representative of other master’s-level counseling students from other states in the United States of America, or from other countries identified as Western (i.e., Canada, Australia, etc.). Also, the Eastern group of master’s-level counseling students was enrolled in an international university in a large city in Thailand in which courses were offered in the English language; therefore, this group of participants may not be representative of master’s-level counseling students from other areas in Thailand or in other countries identified as Eastern (i.e., China, Japan, Korea, etc.).

Cross-cultural empathy researchers who want to pursue research with Eastern and Western populations should consider sampling populations from various, different regions or countries. The assumption should not be made, based on the present study, that the Thai sub-sample was representative of all master’s-level counseling students from Eastern cultures or that master’s-level counseling students from a Midwestern state of the United States of America were representative of all master’s-level counseling students.
from Western cultures. It is recommended that future cross-cultural empathy researchers who want to investigate Eastern and Western population differences, seek population samples from other Eastern countries (i.e., Japan, China, and Korea, etc.) and from other Western regions or countries (i.e., Southwestern or Eastern regions of the United States of America, Canada, etc.).

A third limitation is the possibility that for participants in the Eastern (Thai) sub-sample, English was not their first language. Both measures (the SCS and IRI) were administered to both sub-samples in the English language. It is possible that the items on both of these instruments may have been better understood by the Western group of master’s-level counseling students. Perhaps, the Eastern participants would have responded differently to the items on both measures (the SCS and the IRI) if they had been translated accurately into their first language (if their first language was not English). For example, in the IRI (Davis, 1980) the item, “I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person” could have been perceived by the Eastern participants very differently in English than if it had been translated in their first language (p. 7). The literal meaning of “soft-hearted” to Eastern participants could mean weak, for example, but if it were translated into a word or phrase that meant compassionate or caring in their first language, then it would have been comprehended differently and could have led to different item responses on the IRI. Another example, in the SCS (Singelis, 1994), is the item, “Having a lively imagination is important to me” which could have been construed differently by the Eastern participants if the SCS had been translated into their first language. The word “lively,” if it has been translated into the Eastern participants’ first language, could have yielded a different item response on the SCS. The translation
process itself, could have resolved some of the potential cultural biases that may have arisen due to language misinterpretation.

A fourth limitation is that self-report measures were used to collect data in this study. First, it should be cautioned that generalizing self-reported empathy results to the practice of counseling should be avoided. Assessing self-reported empathy and its relationship to counseling practice was not explored and this relationship continues to be unclear. Another potential issue with self-report measures is social desirability. In the present study, this may have been an issue with the empathy instrument (the IRI) given that all participants were counseling students and therefore, may have felt pressure to share responses that showed heightened empathy. Although the researcher attempted to minimize the potential effects of social desirability by not disclosing to the participants that the research was examining empathy, it is possible that participants in this study responded to the self-report measure items in a socially desirable manner, attempting to respond in some anticipated way of placing themselves in the best possible light, rather than responding authentically. Future researchers should incorporate a social desirability scale into the research design; as a covariate when analyzing group differences, or as a control variable when examining relationships among variables.

A fifth limitation is that although there were similarities between the educational curricula in the counseling programs in the Western and Eastern sub-samples, the potential differences between the educational curricula and training methods may have impacted the results. The results revealed a relationship between the number of semesters in the counseling programs and the degree of empathy, such that, as the number of semesters in the counseling program increased, so did the degree of empathy among the
master’s-level counseling students. Additionally, the sequence of the coursework was different between the two groups of participants. The course schedule for the Western students suggested that the majority of these students take the Techniques of Counseling course, in which empathy is emphasized, by their third semester in the counseling program. The majority of the Eastern students, however, were scheduled to take the Microcounseling course, which seemed to be equivalent to the Techniques of Counseling course offered in the Western counseling program, by their fourth semester. Since the educational curricula course schedule and the number of semesters in the counseling program have the potential to impact degree of empathy among master’s-level counseling students, it is therefore recommended that future researchers control for these variables.

This study contributed important information about cross-cultural empathy in Eastern and Western societies and the relationships between independent and interdependent self-construals and empathy. While the findings of this exploratory study provided a preliminary understanding of cross-cultural empathy differences and the relationship between self-construals and empathy in master’s-level counseling students, many questions remain unanswered regarding the relationship between culture and empathy. For example:

- How did the master’s-level counseling students from Thailand and the United States of America conceptualize the construct of empathy before and during their enrollment in the counseling program in their university?
- How do the faculty members of the counseling program at the universities in Thailand and in the United States of America conceptualize empathy and how was it taught to their students?
• How is the counseling profession viewed in Thailand and in the United States of America?

• In both Thailand and in the United States of America, is the profession of counseling perceived as a medical profession, social work, or does it have an identity of its own?

It is recommended that qualitative research methodology be conducted to seek answers to these questions, not only with groups of participants in the United States of America and in Thailand, but perhaps with other groups of participants in other Western and Eastern societies.

The reliability of the SCS was in question in this study. The internal consistency reliability estimate for independent self-construals was .522, which is low by Cronbach’s (1951) standards and in comparison to the internal consistency reliability estimates found in Singelis’ (1994) original study. Was the SCS a reliable and stable measure of cultural orientations or self-construals within the Eastern and Western participant populations? The answer to this question is unknown without future research. It is recommended that future research be conducted comparing different measures of cultural orientations, including the SCS (Singelis, 1994) and measures of individualism and collectivism with participants from other countries.

Furthermore, it is recommended that future research on empathy and cultural values or orientations be conducted using different statistical analyses such as multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and/or univariate analyses of covariances (ANCOVAs) to control for variables such as gender, age, and number of semesters in the counseling program. Past research (Davis, 1980, 1983a, 1983b) has
demonstrated empathy differences between males and females; therefore, it is important to control for the variable of gender. Since empathy is a developmental process (Hoffman, 1982) that increases with age, it could also be important to control for this variable in future empathy research. In the present research, the Western sub-sample was found to have a significantly larger number of semesters in their counseling program than did the Eastern sub-sample. Because the number of semesters in a counseling program could impact the degree of empathy, this variable should also be controlled in future research. In summary, the variables of gender, age, and number of semesters in the counseling program have the potential to be confounding factors in future research on cultural orientations and empathy; therefore, it is recommended that these variables be controlled in order to obtain a clearer understanding of the relationship between cultural orientations and empathy.

The findings of this study also generated additional questions about the cultural validity of the IRI, used to measure empathy in this study. Because the subscales of the IRI were not related to interdependent self-construals, but certain subscales of the IRI were related to independent self-construals for both Eastern and Western master’s-level counseling students, the question remains as to whether or not the IRI was a culturally biased measure of empathy. Perhaps, the IRI measures the traditional, Western perspective of empathy. It is therefore recommended for future research that different measures of empathy be used with participants from countries other than the United States of America. If it is not possible to adapt Western measures of empathy to Eastern cultures, then new measures of empathy should be designed from the ground up to
measure components of empathy that are valued by the culture in which the measure would be used.

Self-report assessments of empathy, such as the IRI, are limiting to the extent that the participants tend to respond in socially desirable ways (Constantine & Ladany, 2000). Therefore, the ultimate objective would be to design multi-method research approaches to the assessment of empathy, including qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. It is recommended that future qualitative research on empathy and cultural orientations include pilot studies, thought experiments, and structured interviews based on both existing and grounded theories. These qualitative research methods should be employed not only to gain a better understanding of how those individuals from various cultures perceive the construct of empathy and cultural orientations, but also to conduct cultural analyses of items on quantitative measures proposed to be administered to participants. Based upon the qualitative research results, it is recommended that researchers use quantitative measures determined to be culturally valid. The multi-method research approaches should include a combination of self-report measures and evaluations from clients, colleagues, supervisors, and counselor educators.

Concluding Remarks

The major contribution of this study is that it expanded the current literature and research on empathy, cultural orientations, and cross-cultural differences in master’s-level counseling students. This research study was unique in that it examined empathy and cultural orientations in two distinct countries. Although there is a wealth of literature and research on empathy, the research area of cultural orientations and empathy has been virtually neglected. This exploratory research study investigated the relationship between
empathy and the cultural orientations of independent and interdependent self-construals in two groups of master’s-level counseling students: Eastern (sampled from Thailand) and Western (sampled from the United Stated of America). The results of this study indicated that while there were no significant differences in self-construals (independent and interdependent) for the two groups of Western and Eastern participants, the Western group of participants scored significantly higher on degree of empathy than did the Eastern participants. The results further revealed that those participants (both Eastern and Western) that scored higher on independent self-construals, scored higher on certain aspects of empathy and that interdependent self-construals were not related to empathy. Often empathy training is a part of counselor education, supervision, and training in master’s-level counseling programs. It is therefore crucial for counselor educators and supervisors to gain a more global, culturally unbiased perspective on empathy if their intentions are to educate and train students and practitioners to be multiculturally competent and therapeutically empathic. Perhaps future research studies on empathy and cultural orientations in counselor education will provide a clearer, more global understanding of the complex relationship between cultural orientations and empathy.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Kara A. Kaelber, a doctoral student, in the Department of Counselor Education and Supervision, at The University of Akron, in Akron, Ohio, in the United States of America. This study will examine cross-cultural differences among graduate counseling students from two different countries. The purpose of this study is to explore group differences in the way in which individuals think, feel, and relate to others. Only graduate-level students in a counseling program will be invited to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to give general information that describes you and to complete two additional questionnaires. Questions target the way you think about, feel towards, and relate to others. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete your responses. As a participant, you will not receive direct benefits from this study, but your participation may add to the body of knowledge and understanding regarding cross-cultural differences in graduate counseling students.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without negative consequences. No known risks or discomforts to research participants are expected. All information will remain anonymous. No identifying data will be collected, and your anonymity is further protected by not asking you to sign and return the informed consent document.
Confidentiality will be maintained using a number code system that will be assigned to the questionnaire packets. The data will be entered into a password protected computer and completed questionnaire packets will be locked in a filing cabinet.

Your completion and return of this packet will serve as your acceptance of the information provided in this informed consent document and your consent to participate in this study. You will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for future reference.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kara A. Kaelber by emailing her at kak52@uakron.edu or calling her at 330-730-3721. You can also contact Dr. Robert C. Schwartz, Ph.D., Dissertation Chair and Associate Professor, at The University of Akron, in Akron, Ohio, in the United States of America, at rcs@uakron.edu, or by calling him at 330-972-8155.
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE - THAILAND

Please read each statement or question carefully. Please fill in the blank or circle the choice that provides the best answer. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. What is your age? ________________

2. I am a (please circle):
   a. Female
   b. Male

3. In what country where you born? __________________________________________

4. How many years did you live in the country in which you were born? _____________

   Please give specific years you lived in your country of birth:
   From __________ to ___________
   (year)      (year)

5. How many years have you lived in Thailand? ________________________________

   Please give specific years you have lived in Thailand:
   From __________ to ____________
   (year)        (year)

6. Country of Parents' Birth:

   Mother _____________________________________

   Father ______________________________________
7. Race (please circle one):
   a. American Indian or Native Alaskan
   b. Asian
   c. Black / African
   d. Black / West Indian
   e. Hispanic / Latin American
   f. Indian / Pakistani
   g. Middle Eastern
   h. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   i. White / European American
   j. Bi-Racial (Please explain): ________________________________
   k. Multi-Racial (please explain): ______________________________
   l. Other (please explain): ________________________________

8. Were you raised within a specific religion? Please circle one: Yes No
   If yes, which religion? ________________________________

9. Current religious affiliation (please circle one):
   a. Agnostic
   b. Atheist
   c. Buddhist
   d. Christian
   e. Hindu
   f. Muslim
g. Spiritual, but not religious

h. Other (please explain): ________________________________________________

10. The length of time you have been in the graduate counseling program (please circle one):

a. In the first semester

b. Completed the first semester

c. Completed the second semester

d. Completed the third semester

e. Completed the fourth semester

f. Completed the fifth semester

g. Completed the sixth semester

h. Completed the seventh semester

i. Completed the eighth semester

j. Other (please explain): ________________________________________________

11. Current relationship status (circle one):

a. Married

b. Separated

c. Divorced

d. Single

e. Widowed

f. Involved in a committed relationship
APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESIONNAIRE - AMERICA

Please read each statement or question carefully. Please fill in the blank or circle the choice that provides the best answer. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. What is your age? ________________

2. I am a (please circle):
   a. Female
   b. Male

3. In what country were you born? _______________________________________

4. If you were born in a country other than the United States of America, how many years did you live in the country in which you were born? ___________________

   Please give specific years you lived in your country of birth:

   From _________ to ___________  
   (year) (year)

5. If you were born in a country other than the United States of America, how many years have you lived in America? ___________________

   Please give specific years you have lived in America:

   From _________ to ___________  
   (year) (year)

6. Country of Parents' Birth:

   Mother _______________________

   Father _______________________

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7. Race (please circle one):
   a. American Indian or Native Alaskan
   b. Asian
   c. Black / African
   d. Black / African American
   e. Hispanic / Latin American
   f. Indian / Pakistani
   g. Middle Eastern
   h. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   i. White / European American
   j. Bi-Racial (Please explain): 
   k. Multi-Racial (please explain): 
   l. Other (please explain): 

8. Were you raised within a specific religion? Please circle one: Yes No
   If yes, which religion? 

9. Current religious affiliation (please circle one):
   a. Agnostic
   b. Atheist
   c. Buddhist
   d. Christian
   e. Hindu
   f. Muslim

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g. Spiritual, but not religious

h. Other (please explain): ____________________________________________

10. The length of time you have been in the graduate counseling program (please circle one):

   a. In the first semester
   b. Completed the first semester
   c. Completed the second semester
   d. Completed the third semester
   e. Completed the fourth semester
   f. Completed the fifth semester
   g. Completed the sixth semester
   h. Completed the seventh semester
   i. Completed the eighth semester
   j. Other (please explain): ____________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________

11. Current relationship status (please circle one):

   a. Married
   b. Separated
   c. Divorced
   d. Single
   e. Widowed
   f. Involved in a committed relationship
This is a questionnaire that measures a variety of feelings and behaviors in various situations. Listed below are a number of statements. Read each one as if it referred to you. Please circle the number that best matches your agreement or disagreement on the scale underneath each statement. (Please circle only one of the following integral numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 for each statement. Please do not circle decimal numbers, such as 1.5, 2.5, etc.). Please respond to every statement. Thank you.

1=STRONGLY DISAGREE
2=DISAGREE
3=SOMewhat DISAGREE
4=DON’T AGREE OR DISAGREE
5=AGREE SOMewhat
6=AGREE
7=STRONGLY AGREE

1. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

2. I can talk openly with a person who I meet for the first time, even when this person is much older than I am.

3. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.
4. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.

1------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Don't Disagree Agree or Agree Strongly Disagree Agree
Disagree Disagree Agree or Somewhat Agree Disagree

5. I do my own thing, regardless of what others think.

1------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Don't Disagree Agree or Agree Strongly Disagree Agree
Disagree Disagree Agree or Somewhat Agree Disagree

6. I respect people who are modest about themselves.

1------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Don't Disagree Agree or Agree Strongly Disagree Agree
Disagree Disagree Agree or Somewhat Agree Disagree

7. I feel it is important for me to act as an independent person.

1------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Don't Disagree Agree or Agree Strongly Disagree Agree
Disagree Disagree Agree or Somewhat Agree Disagree

8. I will sacrifice my self interest for the benefit of the group I am in.

1------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Don't Disagree Agree or Agree Strongly Disagree Agree
Disagree Disagree Agree or Somewhat Agree Disagree

9. I'd rather say "no" directly, than risk being misunderstood.

1------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Don't Disagree Agree or Agree Strongly Disagree Agree
Disagree Disagree Agree or Somewhat Agree Disagree

10. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

1------------2-------------3-------------4-------------5-------------6-------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Don't Disagree Agree or Agree Strongly Disagree Agree
Disagree Disagree Agree or Somewhat Agree Disagree
11. I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education/career plans.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree Disagree
Disagree Agree

12. I feel my fate is intertwined with the fate of those around me.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree Disagree
Disagree Agree

13. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree Disagree
Disagree Agree

14. I feel good when I cooperate with others.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree Disagree
Disagree Agree

15. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree Disagree
Disagree Agree

16. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree Disagree
Disagree Agree

17. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree Disagree
Disagree Agree
18. Speaking up during a class (or a meeting) is not a problem for me.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree or Disagree
Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree

19. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor (or my boss).

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree or Disagree
Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree

20. I act the same way no matter who I am with.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree or Disagree
Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree

21. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree or Disagree
Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree

22. I value being in good health above everything.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree or Disagree
Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree

23. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree or Disagree
Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree

24. I try to do what is best for me, regardless of how that might affect others.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Don't Agree or Agree or Disagree
Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree
25. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.

1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Don't Agree or Disagree  Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree
Disagree

26. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Don't Agree or Disagree  Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree
Disagree

27. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Don't Agree or Disagree  Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree
Disagree

28. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.

1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Don't Agree or Disagree  Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree
Disagree

29. I act the same way at home that I do at school (or work).

1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Don't Agree or Disagree  Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree
Disagree

30. I usually go along with what others want to do, even when I would rather do something different.

1------------2------------3------------4------------5------------6------------7
Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Don't Agree or Disagree  Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree
Disagree
APPENDIX E

THE INTERPERSONAL REACTIVITY INDEX (Davis, 1980)

The following statements inquire about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each item, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate number on the scale underneath each statement: 0,1,2,3,4. When you have decided on your answer, circle the appropriate number for each statement. (Please circle integral numbers only, such as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4. Please do not circle decimal numbers such as 1.5 or 2.5, etc.). READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY BEFORE RESPONDING. Answer as honestly as you can. Thank you.

1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.

   0-------------1------------2--------------3-------------4
   Does not describe me well                               Describes me very well

2. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

   0-------------1------------2--------------3-------------4
   Does not describe me well                               Describes me very well

3. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" perspective.

   0-------------1------------2--------------3-------------4
   Does not describe me well                               Describes me very well

4. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.

   0-------------1------------2--------------3-------------4
   Does not describe me well                               Describes me very well

5. I really get involved with the feeling of characters in a novel.

   0-------------1------------2--------------3-------------4
   Does not describe me well                               Describes me very well

6. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill at ease.

   0-------------1------------2--------------3-------------4
   Does not describe me well                               Describes me very well
7. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or a play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it.

   0------------1------------2------------3------------4
   Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well

8. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.

   0------------1------------2------------3------------4
   Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well

9. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.

   0------------1------------2------------3------------4
   Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well

10. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.

    0------------1------------2------------3------------4
    Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well

11. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

    0------------1------------2------------3------------4
    Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well

12. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me.

    0------------1------------2------------3------------4
    Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well

13. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm.

    0------------1------------2------------3------------4
    Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well

14. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.

    0------------1------------2------------3------------4
    Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well

15. If I am sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.

    0------------1------------2------------3------------4
    Does not describe me well                   Describes me very well
16. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as thought I were one of the characters.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well

17. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well

18. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well

19. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well

20. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well

21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well

22. I would describe myself as a pretty softhearted person.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well

23. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well

24. I tend to lose control during emergencies.

0---------1---------2---------3---------4
Does not describe me well               Describes me very well
25. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.

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26. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.

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27. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.

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28. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

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APPENDIX F

LETTERS OF PERMISSION

November 19, 2007

Kara A. Kaelber
121 ML Pleasant Road
Clinton, Ohio 44216

Ms. Kaelber:

Your protocol entitled "The Relationship between Self-Conceptual and Empathy among Eastern and Western Graduate Counseling Students" was determined to be exempt from IRB review on November 19, 2007. The IRB application number assigned to this project is 2007/1119. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

☐ Exemption 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.

☒ Exemption 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.

☐ Exemption 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

☐ Exemption 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.

☐ Exemption 5 - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.

☐ Exemption 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact the IRB to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

Sharon McWhorter
Associate Director

☒ Approved consent form attached

Cc: Robert C. Schwartz, Advisor
Rouelle Hall, IRB Chair

Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-3102
330-972-7666 • 330-972-6281 Fax
The University of Akron is an Equal Education and Employment Institution
15th November 2007

To

Ms. Kara Kaelber,
121, Mt. Pleasant Road,
Clinton, Ohio 44216
USA

Dear Ms. Kara Kaelber,

Greetings from Graduate School of Psychology, Assumption University, Thailand.

This is in response to your email to Dr. Jean Francois Botermans regarding your doctoral thesis on ‘The Relationship Between Self- Construal and Empathy Among Eastern and Western Graduate Counseling Students’.

The academic committee is happy to inform you that your proposal was accepted. You are welcome to pursue your research in the Graduate School of Psychology using the instruments listed in your email.

1. Interpersonal Reactivity Index
2. Self-Construal Scale
3. Emotional intelligence Scale

Please contact the department for further assistance in data collection.

Good luck and best wishes for your doctoral research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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