STRESS APPRAISAL AND COPING: The Anglo-American and the Japanese Populations in Southern California

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to investigate the cultural influence on the way an individual perceives and copes with stress in daily life. We tend to assume that there is a certain 'good' or 'right' coping style which should be employed by everyone. However, what a person thinks is an appropriate coping style may well be a sociocultural construct formed through his or her socialization process and may not be universal across different cultures.

A questionnaire survey and interview were conducted for an Anglo-American population and a Japanese population in the greater Los Angeles area. The subjects were full-time white collar employees of the U.S. subsidiaries of Japanese corporations. The Japanese subjects were born and brought up in Japan and came to the United States after they reach adulthood. The questionnaire presented hypothetical stressful situations in everyday life and asked the participant to what degree he/she would feel the situation stressful and with what frequencies he/she would choose various coping strategies to relieve the perceived distress.

The results of the statistical analysis indicated that there are some consistent cultural patterns in an individual's manner of perceiving and coping with stress. One of the notable differences was that the Anglo-American respondents said they would be more likely than the Japanese to choose direct action, confrontational styles which included focusing on the problem and taking action to eliminate the source of stress, while the Japanese respondents said they would be more likely to use nonconfrontational strategies. In particular, wishful thinking, distancing oneself, and resigning oneself to the stressful situation were found to be more likely choices for the Japanese respondents. These differences are derived from the differences of so-

ciocultural backgrounds, socialization patterns, and values between American and Japanese cultures.

INTRODUCTION

This study addresses issues of coping with stress and issues of culture and personality, and intends to link these two areas of social-psychological investigation. Although recent years have produced a large quantity of research on stress or stress-related behaviors, studies dealing with individual variations due to a different culture, particularly a non-western culture, are few. Major sociological variables in stress research have been age (Pearlin and Schooler 1978; Lazarus and Folkman 1984; McCrae 1982; Labouvie-Vief, Hakim-Larson, and Hobart 1987; Rook, Dooley, and Catalino 1991); gender (Pearlin and Schooler 1978; Folkman and Lazarus 1984; Billings and Moos 1981; Aneshensel and Pearlin 1987; Kandel 1980; Kessler and McLeod 1984; Belle 1987; Viney and Westbrook 1982; Stone and Neale 1984; Miller and Kirsch 1987; Thoits 1991); and socioeconomic status (Pearlin and Schooler 1978). Some personality variables such as "personality hardiness" (Kobasa, Maddi, and Courington 1981), sense of mastery (Seeman and Seeman 1983), or Type A personality (Manuck, Craft, and Gold 1979; Pittner and Houston 1980) have also been examined.

In contrast, few studies of stress-related behavior incorporate an ethnicity or culture variable, and its relationship to stress is often considered as secondary to socioeconomic variables. It has been speculated that minority group experiences expose individuals to racism, discrimination and lower socioeconomic status, and consequently, make them more vulnerable to stress (Myer 1982; Neff 1984; Kessler and Neighbors 1986; Kuo 1984). These studies tended to focus on the structural variables stemming from the subjects' positions in a society, rather than the cultural contents such as their values and beliefs.

Aldwin and Greenberger (1987) found that Korean college students in the U.S.

were more depressed than Caucasian students; particularly, Korean students whose parents were perceived to have traditional values were more severely depressed. Aldwin and Greenberger concluded that one's value orientation makes a significant contribution to prediction of depression and suggested incorporating value systems in the prevailing stress paradigm.

Furthermore, a number of anthropological studies on cultural norms, values, and socialization practices of a particular society and the self-concept resulting from these factors, have provided keys for hypothesizing social situations which would distress the individual as well as predictable responsive behaviors to reduce unpleasantness. For example, discussions on the nature of the Western self as strong individualism and autonomous responsibility (Johnson 1985), or of the non-Western self as a "collateral" self, "diffused" self, or "unindividuated" self, which is extended to include a wide variety of others (Nakamura 1964, Caudill 1964, DeVos 1976, Tatara 1974, Doi 1973, Tanaka, Matsumi, and Marsella 1976, Geerts 1973, Connors 1982, Constantino 1966: cited in Marsella 1985) are all relevant in a broad sense, and offer a basis for anticipating different culturally-based patterns of response to stress.

The tendency to include significant others crossing the self boundary is also likely to lead to the development of a strong sense of "group self" (Minami 1987) and "familial self" (Minami 1987, Roland 1988) through interdependent and more affective oriented relations. The extreme phenomenon which typifies the Japanese diffused, blurred self boundary is seen in parent-child joint suicide due to the parent's extremely intense identification with the child (Kawanishi 1990).

Francis Hsu (1985) proposed an "elements of man's existence model" and maintained that the Chinese person's self-esteem is more closely tied to the significant others such as parents and siblings, and remains so through his life. For the Japanese, Hsu said, these kinship-base ties would be less strong than for the Chinese, but this enables them to "have a more adequate foundation for forming larger groupings."

The desired self-image, which is a product of socialization through the person's

society and culture as well as his own personal experience, also differs greatly among Western and Asian - particularly East Asian - cultures. In the United States, a country in which the western "idea of individuality has probably reached its zenith" (Rosenberg 1979), the ideal principle is that "all people are worthy of respect, that their individual wants and interest must be considered, that the maximum autonomy consistent with social control be permitted, the self-realization is desirable and that even in religious matters, the individual's relationship to his God should be a personal one" (Rosenberg p.33). Of central importance to the socialization of the American self is the nourishment of individuality and self-reliance, which also leads to the universalistic organizing principal of the world.

On the other hand, the Japanese self has been described as lacking such a prioritizing of self-reliance and as stressing interdependence instead. Takeo Doi, a renowned Japanese psychiatrist and researcher, states that the concept of *'amae'* is crucial to understanding Japanese personality (1962).

The Japanese self having such a contrasting nature with the western self, the central goal of Japanese socialization is "the growth of human beings as social persons" (Plath 1980; cited by Smith 1983). The ideal image of the mature individual in Japan is one who always cares for others and who can cooperate well in a group or be well-integrated into his social network.

However, the intense awareness of others around the self often inhibits the development of a permanent and universal principle of conduct. The lack of a universalistic outlook in the Japanese has been described as "relativism" (Reischauer 1981) or "interactional relativism" (Lebra 1976), which also leads to a "situational ethic" (Lebra).

The determinant factor of the Japanese behavior is more the nature of a particular situation, rather than a certain principle which can be applied across situations. Therefore, the Japanese self is likely to be extremely sensitive and concerned about its social relationships. This "social preoccupation," as Lebra (1976) termed it, is a

strong guiding force for Japanese individuals in many contexts. Furthermore, this strong "self-reflectivity" (Rosenberg 1979) makes the Japanese continually worry about how others see them.

While "social preoccupation" makes the Japanese strive for at least the appearance of smooth relationships, another important aspect of Japanese values is closely related to Buddhism which sees the world in an endless chain of causes and effects from the unknown past through the present to the future. Its concepts of '*un*(luck),' '*en* (for social relationships),' or '*innen*,' are used as explanations for success or failure. If a person has to give up a certain goal such as marrying the girl of his choice, he is encouraged to resign ('*akirameru*') since there was no '*en*' that could have brought the two people together (Lebra 1976). Thus, suffering and hardship must be accepted with resignation because one has been loaded with such '*innen*' from his previous life. This fatalistic resignation, or cosmic self-identity, is also supported by a sense of the universal impermanence, evanescence, and ephemerality of life (Lebra 1976). Although Americans also have to resign themselves from time to time, in America, resignation does not seem to be a culturally established method of reducing the stress of being unable to reach a goal.

Minami (1956) elaborated on the Japanese readiness for resignation. According to Minami, most of the self-cultivation literature in Japan is centered on how to resolve instances of psychological distress by way of '*akirame* (= resignation),' or by simply enduring unhappy situation. This is based on the Buddhistic assumption that life is basically a world of suffering to be endured. However, Japanese resignation ('*akirame*') is not necessarily an attitude of giving up out of hopelessness or despair, Minami says. It is a way to feel at ease with one's fate, a kind of nature-dependent attitude. Furthermore, it is an attitude of always preparing for the worst so that when something untoward happens, one does not have to get upset. So it is not that one is resigned to a particular situation, but that one is ready with this state of mind. '*Akirame*' or a certain type of passive acceptance gives the Japanese a psychological immunity

against unhappiness.

Thus, the existing literature and research leads us to the reasonable assumption that one's cultural/ethnic background including values, socialization process, and the sense of self can make a significant difference in one's appraisal of and means of coping with psychological stress.

However, few studies have attempted to systematically investigate the effect of cultural background of the subjects on their stress-related behaviors. This study used a comparative approach to explore cultural influence on Anglo-American and Japanese white collar workers in the perception of stress and coping with stress, and particularly examined the following hypotheses: 1) Since the Japanese are typically socialized to maintain harmony with others, and Americans are typically socialized to nurture independence, the Japanese will be more likely to use an emotion-focused (or covert action) coping style which is less confrontational, and the Americans will be more likely to use a problem-focused (or overt action) coping style which is more confrontational; 2) The Japanese will be more likely than Americans to resign themselves to and accept stress; 3) Since the Japanese self tends to identify with significant others more than the western self, the Japanese will become more distressed by what happens to their significant others.

METHODS

I. Subjects.

An Anglo-American and a Japanese group of adequately functioning adult men and women aged 20 and over, who had full-time white-collar employment in a corporate setting, were studied. Japanese companies in Southern California, most of which have become legal California corporations, hiring from the local area and with an almost completely Americanized management system, were chosen as the way to reach comparable Japanese and American samples. The Japanese subjects were born and brought up in Japan and came to the United States as adults. Only Anglo-Ameri-

cans were selected for comparison since they were more likely to present a contrast with the Japanese in terms of values and attitudes than most other large ethnic groups in the United States.

Of 170 companies initially contacted by telephone, 70 agreed to allow the distribution of questionnaires, and responses came form 61 identifiable companies. A total of 468 cases were considered valid and used for the final analysis (112 Anglo male, 81 Anglo female, 228 Japanese male, and 47 Japanese female). The subjects' mean age was 37.8 for Anglo male, 36.0 for Anglo female, 37.4 for Japanese male, and 36.5 Japanese female. A total of 134 people (35 Anglo men, 25 Anglo women, 66 Japanese men, and 8 Japanese women) agreed to be contacted by the researcher for follow-up interviews. Of these, 47 respondents (14 Anglo men, and 7 Anglo women, 18 Japanese men, 8 Japanese women,) were successfully contacted and interviewed.

Nearly all those sampled (at least 94 percent) experienced formative socialization until 20 years of age in their cultures. Majority of Japanese men were expatriates from the company headquarter in Japan, which implied that they were also socialized in the Japanese corporate system. They were expected to stay for a few to ten years in the U.S. and to return to Japan. Although they currently worked in the American work environment, they saw their present and future career within the Japanese corporate structure. On the other hand, most Japanese women did not have such a direct tie with the Japanese corporate system from Japan. Many of them were permanent residents of the U.S. because they were married to American citizens or other permanent residents.

The entire sample was relatively well-educated: more than 40 percent of all categories had at least a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Income level reflected a gender difference. More than 70 percent of both Anglo and Japanese men earned more than $40,000 a year. However, more than 60 percent of both Anglo and Japanese women fell into the $20,000 - $39,000 bracket. Occupational ranks also

showed gender differences: more than half of the males in both Anglo and Japanese groups held positions in the manager class or higher, while a majority of females in both groups held support positions, such as secretary.

II. Materials

The data were collected through self-administered, structured questionnaires. These were supplemented by an open-ended telephone interview for those who consented in the first survey to be interviewed.

The questionnaire was developed using Lazarus's model of cognitive appraisal (1966): the first part of the questionnaire concerns the perception of stress, or the first appraisal, and the second is concerned with coping style.

Subjects were presented with thirteen hypothetical situations concerning work or relationships with significant others (listed in Table 1). Subjects were asked to rate the extent to which they personally felt the situation would be stressful.

These hypothetical situations were developed on the basis of a study by Pearlin and Schooler (1978) whose factor analysis found main factors in stress perception in daily life. The questionnaire in this study incorporated some factors discovered by Pearlin and Schooler such as role overload (situation 1), nonacceptance (situation 5, 6, and 12), nonreciprocity (situation 7 and 13), depersonalization in the work environment (situation 3 and 4), parental problems (situation 10), and insufficiency of the reward (situation 2). Situations were also added to reflect the value differences of the two cultures with regard to one's identification with problems of significant others (situation 8, 9, and 11). The respondents who considered the situation to be either 'highly' or 'somewhat' stressful were asked to further assess how likely they would be to choose different coping styles in order to reduce or eliminate the feelings of stress.

The coping strategies in the questionnaire were derived from the 'Ways of Coping Checklist' by Folkman and Lazarus (1980) which also had been used in other

studies as a reliable method of coping assessment. The list was categorized into eight groups: 1. Problem-focused coping (overt action coping); 2. Wishful thinking (imagining better situations); 3. Distancing oneself (forget, or wait and see what will happen); 4. Emphasizing the positive; 5. Self-blame; 6. Tension-reduction (eating, exercising, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc.); 7. Self-isolation; 8. Seeking social support (talk to someone) (Lazarus and Folkman 1985, p.157).

The questionnaire of the present study excluded the 'self-blame' item, because this study defined coping as a conscious attempt to reduce or eliminate the stressful feeling. Two more coping strategies were created in order to reflect possible cultural differences more clearly: 1. Accept the situation and resign myself to the situation, and 2. Use of a mental health professional. (All coping choices are listed in Table 3.)

Respondents were asked to indicate on the scale from one to five how often they might use each coping strategy in responding to the given situation. Furthermore, the question was asked as to whether they were currently facing the situation or not, in order to determine if there was any significant difference due to their current state of stress.

The follow-up interviews aimed to confirm and clarify the answers in the questionnaire. Emphasis was placed on the issue of why the respondent perceived stress, or chose to cope, in a certain way.

RESULTS

I. According to the results of two way ANOVA, controlling for the effects of income, education, and age, ethnicity variables showed independent, significant difference for perception of the stressful situation, in six out of the thirteen situations (46%). Gender variables showed independent, significant difference in two situations (15%). [*See Table 1*]

The mean differences of perceived stress were compared in situations where their ethnicity or gender made an independent significant effect.

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[See Table 2]

The Japanese reported they would feel more stressed than Anglo-Americans if they had to work more overtime ("role overload" factor). Anglo-Americans reported they would feel more stressed than the Japanese in situations of unfair treatment, or "depersonalization in the work environment." However, in another situation of depersonalization, that is, nonrecognition from fellow workers, the Japanese expressed more stress than Anglo subjects. As for the situation of "nonacceptance by spouse," the Japanese subjects expressed less stress than the Anglo-Americans. For the two situations representing "nonreciprocity in give and take" (situation 7 and 13), Anglo-American subjects reported they would feel more stressed than the Japanese. Women indicated they would find it more stressful than men to be unfairly evaluated by their supervisors, and to be giving more to personal relationships than they receive.

The remaining situations did not show an independent, significant effect of either ethnicity or gender. The finding that no independent effect is found in situation 8 ("spouse distressed by his/her parental family") contradicted the initial expectation that the Japanese would be more likely to report distress than Americans by what happens to their significant others. Likewise, no significant ethnic or gender differences were indicated in situation 9 ("spouse distressed by his/her work").

II. Coping Strategies

Two way ANOVA controlling for the effect of income, education, and age showed that out of 117 coping choices across thirteen different situations, sixty-three choices (54%) had independent, significant ethnicity difference. Twenty-two choices (29%) were found to have independent, significant gender difference. Significant interaction of ethnicity and gender was found in 10 choices.

[See Table 3]

Certain cultural and gender patterns in coping strategies were revealed. Cases where ethnicity had an independent, significant effects were as follows.

a : Focus on the problem and manage or change the source of stress by taking action

(direct action, problem-focused coping). Situation 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 13. This is the most frequently chosen coping strategy in all situations. However, Anglo-American subjects were consistently more likely than the Japanese to use this strategy in all seven situations.

b: Imagine that the situation would somehow go away, or fantasize a better situation (wishful thinking). Situation 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 13. Japanese subjects were consistently more likely than Anglo subjects to use this strategy. The mean differences between Anglo and Japanese groups for this coping strategy were greater than those for all other coping strategies.

c: Distance myself: try to forget the problem, or wait to see what happens (distancing). Situation 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12. As in wishful thinking, Japanese subjects were consistently more likely than Anglo-Americans to choose this strategy.

d: Look at the positive side of the situation (positive thinking). In four out of five situations, (situations 2, 3, 7, 9, and 13), Japanese subjects were more likely than Anglo-Americans to choose this strategy. Only in situation 2 ("unfair pay") did Americans show greater likelihood of using this strategy. Gender difference was more significant than ethnicity difference in situation 5 ("not enough time with spouse"): women were found more likely than men to cope with stress by positive thinking.

e: Accept the situation and resign myself to what goes on since there is nothing I can do (accept and resign). Situations 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13. In all ten situations, Japanese subjects were consistently more likely than Anglo-Americans to cope with stress by acceptance and resignation.

f: Reduce the tension by eating, drinking, smoking, using medications or drugs, or exercising (tension-reduction). Situations 1, 2, 3, 10, and 11. In all five situations, Japanese subjects were more likely to use tension-reduction strategies to cope with stress. Gender also showed a significant difference in Situation 10 ("Child not living up to my expectation"): women were more likely than men to use this strategy.

g: Keep to myself; avoiding people in general, keeping others from knowing how bad things are (self-isolation). Situation 1, 3, 4, 7, and 12. In all five situations, Anglo-American subjects were consistently more likely than Japanese subjects to isolate themselves or hide their problems in times of stress. In three situations (Situations 4, 7, and 12), men were more likely to do so than women.

h: Seek social support; talk to someone. Situations 5, 6, and 7. In all these cases, Anglo-Americans were more likely than the Japanese to choose this strategy. However, gender differences were more apparent than ethnicity difference in this coping choice. In all eight situations (Situations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 13) where gender had an independent, significant effect, women were consistently more likely than men to cope with stress by seeking social support or talking to someone.

i: Go to see a therapist. (Use of a mental health professional) Situations 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 13. In all six situations, Anglo-Americans are consistently more likely than Japanese subjects to use mental health services. However, for the entire study, this was a very unlikely coping choice. The grand mean was never over 2 ('seldom'). In three situations where gender also showed an independent, significant difference (Situations 3, 7, and 13), women were more likely to seek mental health services.

No consistent pattern of difference was found between those who responded that they currently faced the proposed stressful situation and those who did not, in their way of perceiving and coping with stress.

DISCUSSION

Quantitative data from the questionnaire and follow-up interviews revealed certain patterns in stress perception and coping among Anglo-American and Japanese respondents. A limitation of this study is that respondents were asked what they thought they would do in various hypothetical situations, rather than what they were actually doing for stress at that moment. Thus, the data represent the subjects' perceptions of stress and coping options rather than reports of how they actually behave

in distress.

In many stressful situations concerning work, both Anglo-American and Japanese subjects responded they would choose problem-focused, action-taking coping strategies. However, what they meant by "action" differed from Anglos and Japanese. For Japanese subjects, it implied "working harder to finish the job," "improving the efficiency" or "reducing the tension" by substitutional activities such as drinking and playing golf, or "learn my work better to show I am a good worker." It is speculated that the deep-rooted source of these responses (particularly by Japanese men) is a sense of helplessness in terms of controlling the workload and promotion in the Japanese corporate structure, as well as a sense of resignation that individuals cannot do anything about the situation. Few indicated an intention to confront a superior in order to force a change in the perceived unfair conditions. Instead, the Japanese said they would try to rationalize the situation, telling themselves that unfairness was part of working for a Japanese corporation, or to change their perspective on the job, downplaying the importance of money or human relationships at work, and eventually trying to tell themselves that they must accept the situation and endure. Even if they indicated willingness to take more direct action, they reported they usually would not seek immediate correction of the situation. Furthermore, when the Japanese indicated they would choose to convey their frustration to a supervisor, they indicated a preference for indirect and nonverbal communication. Rather than focusing on the specific issue of too many assignments, or unfairness in general, they said they would work harder, hoping that their effort would be recognized.

On the other hand, for many American subjects, "action" meant confronting the superior and negotiating about their work situation to change the cause of stress in a very short time. They reported they perceived "unfair pay" or "unfair evaluation" as particularly stressful. They indicated that they would approach the issue analytically or use evidence to make their case in negotiations. If the negotiation failed, they said, they would be willing to leave the job or start looking for another job.

Many coping mechanisms favored by the Japanese men seem to reflect the rigid organizational structure of Japanese corporations, which emphasizes long-time employment and reliance upon the seniority system to determine job rankings and wages. This structure clearly contrasts with the American corporate structure, which is based on the demand for specialists, and the principles of equal pay for equal work and job mobility.

These differences were apparent not only in the corporate structures or economic systems of the two societies, but also in personal and family relationships. Responses concerning spousal relationships reflected the differences between Japanese and American family values and structures, particularly regarding the husband-wife relationship. Although Japanese marital relationships have become rapidly westernized in recent years, especially among young couples, the average Japanese family still practices extremely strong sex role differentiation: the husband is seen as a breadwinner and the wife as a caretaker of the household and children. Since the functional aspect of marriage is given more emphasis in Japan than in many Western societies, strong role expectations enable Japanese couples to see "less time with spouse" or lack of companionship as potentially less stressful than do Americans, whose responses repeatedly indicated that they would use active efforts to change the situation.

Other marital problems such as "no affection from spouse," and "lack of reciprocity in give and take" again revealed very contrasting coping patterns. A Japanese proneness for covert-action coping was particularly pronounced: enduring the situation, '*akirameru* (= accept and resign),' wishful thinking, self-blame, lowering one's expectations concerning marriage, or devaluing conjugal affection were often indicated as possible solutions. The Japanese also tended to shift attention away from the problem rather than focusing on it.

American respondents said they would focus on the problem and be willing to confront the partner about the situation. Their eagerness to do something about the

perceived lack of affection from the spouse is probably due to the great importance placed on romantic love and fairness as the main ingredient in American marriages. It was in response to this situation that the word "I will confront (the spouse or situation)" were expressed most often by Anglo-American respondents, particularly by Anglo women.

Differences between Japanese and American coping patterns also reflect differences in early socialization practices. For example, the Japanese school system strongly emphasizes harmony and teamwork through group activities, as well as the development of cognitive abilities. From an early age, children learn that they are a part of a whole and to be responsible for their role in keeping the group activity going smoothly. *Gaman*, or the ability to endure difficulties patiently and to defer gratification, is a virtue taught at home and school. *Gaman zuyoi ko* (a child who exhibits a high level of *gaman*) is praised and considered strong and reliable. *Gaman* also leads to an attitude of no complaint (at least overtly), and of perseverance in difficult situations. It is believed that *gaman* will someday be rewarded by others, or that situations will improve. Knowing what others want and suppressing one's own desires, by *gaman* and by showing consideration toward others, is important in Japan, while knowing one's own wants is more important in American society. Japanese socialization creates individuals who are sensitive to others' needs and who can work hard for group goals, but who cannot easily defend their own interests. In contrast, Americans are brought up in a society which strongly emphasizes individual personality rather than group identity and responsibility (Williams 1970). Standing up for one's own rights and verbally communicating them is generally encouraged from an early age. Furthermore, honesty, straightforwardness, and openness are desired values in human relationships, whether private or public. This study also showed that going directly to the problem, finding its cause, and taking action to eliminate it or to change the situation by direct confrontation and open communication was a typical Anglo-American choice of coping mechanism among the subjects. Behind this pat-

tern is also an American history which valued action, an attempt to actively shape and control the outside world (Williams 1970), moving away from traditional European religious and social structures, conquering new frontiers, creating material wealth and seemingly endless opportunities, and encouraging individual success and achievement.

Although the coping patterns chosen by the Japanese respondents often involved some action-taking, a more typical coping method was to try to bear the situation or to do *gaman* as long as possible, believing that it is best to wait until things solve themselves and if no solution comes, to resign oneself to the situation. This pattern evolved in a country with very limited natural resources and repeated natural disasters, where the only perceived way for the Japanese to survive was to adjust themselves to the nature of the environment (Miyagi 1992). At the same time, the Japanese developed a sense of closeness to and trust in nature which brought yearly harvest. To let a matter take its natural course has been considered a good attitude in Japan, and things which come out of a natural process have always been considered the best. "Rather than trying to solve the problem in haste," said one Japanese female respondent, "I try to think time will solve it in a natural way. I believe waiting is also a very important, useful coping method."

Thus, coping patterns strongly reflect not only the structural arrangements, such as the corporate system, but also the shared values and beliefs with which individuals are socialized. What people believe to be a good coping strategy is very much a product of the history of their culture and the sociocultural condition for its members. The implication of the study will be significant for mental health professionals, educators, and social workers who deal with social and psychological problems of clients from non-western background.

A final comment should be made regarding the generalizability of the results of this study. Although the groups of Anglo-American and Japanese employees working for the Japanese corporations in Southern California were considered compa-

rable for analysis, they may be in this occupational environment after a certain prescreened process. The Japanese corporations may choose their employees for overseas assignment based on several criteria such as obedience to the employer, personality toughness, or prior experience abroad. The American workers for Japanese companies may have been exposed to Japanese culture before or have been interested in Japan, which may have been one of the factors in applying for a job in the Japanese company. Some may also have been somewhat influenced by their Japanese colleagues. In any case, it is important to keep in mind that the subjects were not randomly sampled and may not represent the typical Japanese or Anglo-American.

TABLE 1. Analysis of Variance For Relationship of Ethnicity and Sex With The
Degree of Stress Appraisal (F-Value)

* significant at .05 level
** significant at .01 level
*** significant at .001 level

Stressful Situations	N	MAIN EFFECTS		Interact-ion
		Ethnicity	Sex	
1. The amount of work is so much that I have to work overtime more often than I expected.	422	*** 30.560	.013	2.356
2. My work is not fair relative to my ability.	422	.489	1.201	.418
3. My work is unfairly evaluated by my supervisor.	425	* 6.328	* 3.939	.314
4. I do not receive sufficient recognition from my fellow workers.	426	*** 23.393	1.720	1.392
5. I cannot spend enough time with my spouse (or partner).	421	*** 17.656	.062	.154
6. My spouse (or partner) is not affectionate toward me.	414	2.971	.001	.277
7. I feel that I am giving much more to the relationship than my spouse (or partner) is giving.	418	*** 31.307	*** 9.445	1.122
8. My spouse (or partner) is very distressed by problems concerning his/her family (parents, siblings,...etc.)	420	*** 8.243	.068	** 7.744
9. My spouse (or partner) is very distressed by problems concerning his/her work.	414	.131	1.382	1.394
10. My children do not live up to my expectation.	267	.744	.000	.430
11. My grown-up child is very distressed by problems concerning his/her financial situation.	257	3.079	.016	.157
12. My closest friend outside family does not understand my problem.	428	.616	.450	2.659
13. I feel I am giving much more to my friend than receiving from him/her in the relationship.	427	** 7.564	1.215	1.214

Table 2. Significant Mean Differences by Ethnicity or Gender.

Stressful Situations	GRAND MEAN (N)	ETHNICITY		SEX	
		Anglo (N)	Jpn. (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)
1. The amount of work is so much that I have to work overtime more often than I expected.	2.14 (422)	2.37 (176)	1.98 (246)		
3. My work is unfairly evaluated by my supervisor.	1.65 (425)	1.51 (177)	1.74 (248)	1.71 (311)	1.46 (114)
4. I do not receive sufficient recognition from my fellow workers.	2.48 (426)	2.67 (178)	2.34 (248)		
5. I cannot spend enough time with my spouse (or partner).	2.21 (421)	2.02 (176)	2.35 (245)		
7. I feel that I am giving much more to the relationship than my spouse (or partner) is giving.	2.50 (418)	2.23 (175)	2.70 (243)	2.60 (307)	2.23 (111)
13. I feel I am giving much more to my friend than receiving from him/her in the relationship.	2.83 (427)	2.71 (178)	2.91 (249)		

Table 3. Analysis Of Variance For Relationship Of Ethnicity And Sex With The Likelihood Of Using Different Coping Strategies. (F-value)

* significant at .05 level   ** significant at .01 level   *** significant at .001 level

(1)

Situation	a. Focus on the problem and manage or change the source of stress by taking action. (FOCUS)			b. Imagine that the situation would somehow go away or fantasize a better situation. (IMAGINE)			c. Distance myself: try to forget the problem, or wait to see what happens. (DISTANCE)		
	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex
1. More overtime than expected.	310	** 7.700	1.020	304	*** 81.887	.349	303	*** 17.190	.569
2. Pay not relative to ability.	319	*** 37.274	1.644	313	*** 59.535	1.661	312	** 8.507	.025
3. Unfair evaluation by supervisor.	367	*** 15.834	.006	361	*** 68.029	1.643	360	*** 29.768	1.797
4. No sufficient recognition from fellow workers.	212	.361	.485	209	*** 39.281	2.653	211	7.412	1.000
5. Not enough time with spouse.	274	*** 28.906	.201	268	*** 51.511	.780	269	*** 43.587	2.598
6. Spouse not affectionate.	328	* 5.207	* 4.626	322	*** 40.401	.053	321	*** 19.563	1.734
7. Give much more to relationship than receive.	191	** 16.401	* 5.687	188	*** 42.799	2.973	187	*** 23.781	1.960

Table 3.
(1 -a)

Situation	d. Look on the positive side of the situation. (POSITIVE)			e. Accept the situation and resign myself to what goes on since there is nothing I can do. (ACCEPT)			f. Reduce the tension by eating drinking, smoking, using medications or drugs or exercising. (REDUCE)		
	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex
1. More overtime than expected.	304	1.222	.790	305	***11.737	.676	304	***15.355	.314
2. Pay not relative to ability.	313	*5.593	.309	315	***35.577	1.297 Interaction **7.830	314	*4.563	1.835
3. Unfair evaluation by supervisor.	363	*5.219	.007	362	***23.333	1.223	361	*5.514	1.851
4. No sufficient recognition from fellow workers.	210	.218	.006	211	**8.236	1.105	210	**8.185	2.651 Interaction *5.853
5. Not enough time with spouse.	269	3.000	**9.940	268	***37.622	1.928	268	*2.988	4.026 Interaction *5.216
6. Spouse not affectionate.	319	3.638	.351	320	***45.188	.185	321	3.794	2.259
7. Give much more to relationship than receive.	189	*5.883	1.138	187	***44.462	*5.260	187	.244	.188 Interaction *4.427

Table 3.
(1-b)

Situation	g. Keep to myself; avoiding people in general, keeping others from knowing how bad things are. (HIDE)			h. Seek social support: talk to someone. (TALK)			i. Go to see a therapist. (THERAPIST)		
	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex
1. More overtime than expected.	304	*** 20.837	2.205	305	1.129	*** 16.272	304	.479	.392
2. Pay not relative to ability.	312	3.507	.400	314	** 3.370	8.006	314	2.747	3.559
3. Unfair evaluation by supervisor.	360	** 7.994	3.702	362	1.803	** 9.841	359	2.298	** 8.309
4. No sufficient recognition from fellow workers.	210	** 9.200	** 7.294	212	.860	2.832	210	2.836	2.418
5. Not enough time with spouse.	267	1.751	.161	268	*** 15.818	* 5.509	266	7.217	.022
6. Spouse not affectionate.	321	.002	3.832	321	** 7.307	** 7.370	317	*** 19.401	3.661
7. Give much more to relationship than receive.	187	* 5.690	** 7.383	187	** 7.087	*** 13.116	185	*** 12.724	6.431

Table 3.

(2) (Continued)

Situation	a. Focus on the problem and manage or change the source of stress by taking action. (FOCUS)			b. Imagine that the situation would somehow go away or fantasize a better situation. (IMAGINE)			c. Distance myself: try to forget the problem, or wait to see what happens. (DISTANCE)		
	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex	(N)	Ethnic.	Sex
8. Spouse distressed by parental family.	286	.816	1.850	280	*** 99.951	.028 Interaction 6.056*	280	*** 14.568	.766
9. Spouse distressed by work.	263	1.945	2.492	257	*** 70.056	.307	256	*** 20.804	.001
10. Children not living up to my expectation.	182	.319 Interaction 4.744*	.179	176	*** 28.328	.006 Interaction 4.425*	176	** 7.534	.120
11. Grown-up child distressed by financial problem.	183	1.094	2.020	177	*** 33.415	1.404	177	2.694	1.625 Interaction 6.221*
12. Closest friend does not understand my problem.	143	2.932	** 6.893	140	*** 59.713	.263	140	*** 12.572	* 6.035
13. Give much more to my friend than receive.	117	** 8.423	.171	114	*** 23.492	.486	114	** 7.445	1.990 Interaction 4.146*

Table 3.
(2-a)

Situation	d. Look on the positive side of the situation. (POSITIVE)			e. Accept the situation and resign myself to what goes on since there is nothing I can do. (ACCEPT)			f. Reduce the tension by eating drinking, smoking, using medications or drugs or exercising. (REDUCE)		
	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex
8. Spouse distressed by parental family.	281	.104	.606	*** 283	22.865	.210	280	.516	.296
9. Spouse distressed by work.	* 256	5.669	.927	*** 256	14.763	.018	256	2.757	.984
10. Children not living up to my expectation.	* 177	1.211	5.448 Interaction 4.318*	176	1.439	.196	176	* 6.627	*** 12.475
11. Grown-up child distressed by financial problem.	179	2.128	.113 Interaction 3.963*	177	2.521	2.669	** 177	8.466	1.959
12. Closest friend does not understand my problem.	140	.174	.386	*** 141	21.418	1.954	140	.417	.249 Interaction 4.069*
13. Give much more to my friend than receive.	116	* 5.556	.350	*** 114	11.899	1.556	114	3.285	.039

Table 3.

(2-b)

Situation	g. Keep to myself; avoiding people in general, keeping others from knowing how bad things are. (HIDE)			h. Seek social support: talk to someone. (TALK)			i. Go to see a therapist. (THERAPIST)		
	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex	(N)	Ethnicity	Sex
8. Spouse distressed by parental family.	279	.771	.759	279	1.922	5.324 *	277	12.046 ***	3.106
9. Spouse distressed by work.	257	.347	2.798	257	3.851	2.373	257	2.940	2.277
10. Children not living up to my expectation.	176	2.511	.092	176	1.193	1.189	176	1.089	3.128
11. Grown-up child distressed by financial problem.	178	1.269	.041	178	1.839	3.362	177	.000	.620
12. Closest friend does not understand my problem.	140	6.563 *	9.777 **	139	.792	3.261 **	137	10.628 ***	1.778
13. Give much more to my friend than receive.	114	2.670	3.810	114	1.189	9.425 **	114	5.874 *	4.085 *

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ストレス認知とコーピング：
南カリフォルニア在住の白人アメリカ人と日本人の場合

川西　結子

　日常のストレスの認知とコーピングに個人の文化的背景が及ぼす影響を調べるため南カリフォルニアロスアンジェルス近郊に住む白人アメリカ人と日本人の比較を行った。現地日本企業に働く日本人と白人アメリカ人男女を対象にアンケート調査と一部の回答者に対して電話インタビューを行い分析した結果,回答者の文化的背景とそのストレス認知およびコーピングの方法にはいくつかの明らかなパターンが見い出された。

　例えば「仕事が多すぎる」という状況において強いストレスを感じると答えたのはアメリカ人回答者よりも日本人のほうが多かったのに対して,「仕事が公平に評価されない」「配偶者との時間が十分にもてない」「緊密な人間関係において自分のほうが相手に尽くしていると感じる時」などの状況ではアメリカ人回答者のほうがストレスを強く訴えた。ストレスのコーピングに関しては両グループとも「ストレスの原因に対して何らかの行動 (action)を起こす」という回答が最も多かった。しかし違いとして顕著なパターンの一つは白人アメリカ人回答者が直接的,対立的行動をとり,問題点に焦点をあててストレスの原因であると思われるものを取り除こうと努力するのに対して,日本人には非直接的,または対立を避ける方法をとる回答者がより多かった。ストレスの原因を取り除くために外に向かって働きかけるよりも,まず自分の行動や考え方を変えることによって状況を受け止めようをする努力が多くみられた。それらは強い自己コントロールに基づいたものから,「仕方ないと思う」あきらめの態度,そして「立ち向かうよりもできるだけ問題から目をそらして時間が解決してくれるのを待つ」といった成り行き任せの傾向が見られた。

　これらの違いの多くは両国の文化,社会構造,教育理念の違いに根差して

いる。さらには自然観の違いも関係していると考えられる。ストレス状況に直面した時「正しい」対処法，「間違った」対処法と判断評価を社会が個人に対してくだす傾向があるが，「正しい」コーピングの概念とは個々人に特有の社会文化的プロセスによって生みだされるものであり，普遍的なものではないことにあらためて注意する必要がある。