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Universalities and Idiosyncrasies in Self-Concept: East-West and North-South[1]

Universalidades e Idiosincracia del Autoconcepto: Este-Oeste y Norte-Sur

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Abstract

Self-concept has been crucial to the description of human beings since ancient times. Different authors have offered definitions and approaches to the study of the self. Many instruments have been developed to measure this multi-faceted construct. However, there is great difficulty in using definitions and instruments developed in one ecosystem to describe the peoples from different cultures. In order to include the universals and idiosyncrasies of the self, a model that takes culture into account is needed. The purpose of this article is to compare the cognitive, emotional, and motivational aspects of the self-concept in different countries representing the east-west and north-south axis, such as Mexico, Peru, Japan, China, United States and Chile, from a psycho-socio-cultural point of view. The paradigm for this purpose included descriptions and comparisons based on Hofstede´s cultural syndromes, as well as an overview of some instruments that have been used to measure the construct. The discussion focuses on the importance of considering culture to understand the meanings of this construct, placing emphasis on the methodological tools derived from the theoretical orientation and the attentions that must be had when making cross-cultural comparisons, be it Between countries and even within the same country. This means that we must not forget the aspects shared by cultures in the relationship with oneself (etic), but we must forget about the particular aspects (emic) or idiosyncratic aspects, which are what are finally given by the particularities to self-concept.

Keywords: Self-Concept, Personality, Culture, Cultural Syndrome, Psycho-Socio-Cultural

Resumen

El auto-concepto es un constructo crucial en el estudio de los seres humanos desde la antigüedad. Diferentes autores han propuesto definiciones y acercamientos al estudio del *self,* así como muchos instrumentos para medir este constructo en sus diversas aproximaciones (social, académico, entre otros). Sin embargo, existe una

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gran problemática, la cual se asocia a el uso que tienen los instrumentos sin considerar la realidad cultural para la cual se utiliza, es decir, al describir a las personas de una cultura cuando las hemos evaluado con instrumentos desarrollado en una cultura diferente. Por lo tanto, es necesario desarrollar la discusión respecto de cuestiones universales como específicas de cada cultura en relación al autoconcepto. El propósito del presente artículo es realizar esta discusión en relación a comparar los aspectos cognitivos, emocionales y motivaciones del auto-concepto en diferentes países del este-oeste y norte sur desde una perspectiva psico-socio-cultural, los países considerados son: México, Perú, Japón, China, Estados Unidos y Chile. Para ello se incluyen descripciones y comparaciones basadas en los síndromes culturales planteados por Hofstade así como una revisión de los instrumentos que se han utilizado para medir este constructo. La discusión se centra en la importancia de considerar la cultura en el estudio del auto-concepto, haciendo énfasis en las herramientas metodológicas que se derivan de las orientaciones teóricas propuestas y de las atenciones que se deben tener a la hora de realizar comparaciones transculturales, ya sea entre países e incluso dentro de un mismo país. Esto quiere decir, que no se debe olvidar los aspectos compartidos por las culturales en relación al self (etic), pero sin caer en el olvido de los aspectos particulares (emic) o idiosincrático, que son los que finalmente le dan las particularidades al autoconcepto.

Palabras Clave: Auto-Concepto, Personalidad, Cultura, Síndromes Culturales, Psico-Socio-Cultural.

For millennia, philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Francis Bacon and Nietzsche have described and analyzed self-concept as a crucial construct in understanding individuals (Oñate, 1989) However, the discourse on the self had its greatest development in the field of psychology, where it has been under study from different theoretical orientations (Diaz-Loving, Reyes-Lagunes & Rivera-Aragon, 2002). As result of different perspectives and theoretical backgrounds of the proponents, many definitions have been proposed. However, all of them share the idea that the self-concept develops or emerges in and from the constant dialectic of relationships with others. It is therefore not a static structure, but a reflection about the interplay between the me and the I (Diaz-Loving, et al., 2002). Early on, James (1890) defines the self-concept by indicating that this construct involves not only the image one has of self, but also that others have of one, this fact gives an account of the multiple number of selves that a person may have, based on their social field. Following in James´s steps, Cooley (1902) indicates that the self-concept is nothing more that the result of the interactions a person has with their social environment and the reactions of this social milieu to one. Subsequently, Mead (1934) adds the use of symbols in its development, i.e., he states that the use of language and the interactions of the different roles that are played, allow people to think about themselves in a variety of ways.

The psychological literature in the 70´s is witness to the growing recognition that the self-concept is multidimensional. Marsh (1986, 1990), makes it evident that the self-concept is the result of partial perceptions of the self, resulting in a multidimensional entity composed by different and dynamic components. This definition of self-concept, or of the I, has been resumed by different authors, postulating a variety of dimensions of the construct, for example, the academic, the social, the personal and the physical, which are further divided into dimensions of greater specificity (Axpe & Uralde, 2008).

In summary, self-concept can be described as a psychosocial mental structure built on the experience of interacting with others (Valdez-Medina, 1994), and the way in which individuals define themselves and give meaning to previous and new experiences (Baumeister, 1998; Markus, 1977). This also includes a set of self-perceptions that make up the schema that people have of themselves (Shavelson, Hübner, & Stanton, 1976). These authors point out that the self-concept has at least seven characteristics: it is organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, experimental, evaluative and differentiable. Thus, the perception of self is formed from interactions with

a particular ecosystem, influenced by reinforcements of the environment and the evaluations of significant others, comprising schemas and cognitive structures that determine how information is processed, in a manner similar to the attachment styles proposed by Bowlby (1969). In other words, we are continuously under construction by the experiences and social interactions experienced throughout the life cycle (Bandura, 1997; Spinath & Steinmayr, 2012). That is why a person can have an overall positive or negative self-concept depending on what dimensions and factors they set their attention upon (Neeman & Harter, 1986). It should be noted that once a mental schema is established, there are self-verification and self-reference processes that ensure the stability and permanence of the self-concept across situations and time (Swann 1987). Furthermore, as Bem (1972) points out in the Self-perception Theory, previous behaviors serve as the basis for the construction of self-descriptions of the future, especially when people need to publicly justify their actions.

Assessing culture's influence is important because self-concept is found to vary across cultures, in fact, cultural contexts provide different opportunities for engagement, and thus different opportunities to experience the self (Kitayama, Duffy, & Uchida, 2007; Markus & Hamedani, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Markus, Mullally, & Kitayama, 1997). Coşkan, Phalet, Güngör, & Mesquita (2016), conclude that overall patterns of self- construal at the cultural level may indicate context-specific differences in selves. Given the reliance of the construal of the self on dimensions that evolved from varied experiences in different cultures and ecosystems, various self-concept measures have been developed.

On the other hand, cross-cultural research is important because it is a tool for researchers to explore differences and cultural convergences, and thus identify overlapping constructs. These constructs are then used to predict many psychological variables, such as cognitive styles, welfare, self-regulation, self-esteem or social anxiety, among others (Vignoles et al., 2016).

A derivation of the attempt to conceptualize self-construals based on cultural experiences is that the operationalization of the psychological variable carries with it a cultural flavor. Thus, nomothetic measures used across cultures are adequate to make comparisons, as long as they are equivalent, but fail to identify idiosyncrasies evident in ideographic measures. Table 1 covers several of the most widely used scales in Latin-America.

Scales presented above account for instruments translated or developed for measuring self-concept used in Latin-America. Evident is the multiplicity of proposed dimensions, as well as the weight given to social-emotional aspects in the scales developed in Latin-America. This leads us to question if the categories proposed throughout different cultures are universal (etic), while those which only appear in certain cultures are idiosyncratic to this ecosystems (emic). An alternative is that factors that repeat across measures are related to human characteristics, and thus pose as universal, but concurrently have culturally specific manifestations or salience. Based on these assertions, it behooves us to obtain evidence that measures not only have psychometrically reliable and valid qualities, but that they are also culturally sensitive and relevant to diverse populations.

Taking on the challenge of developing equivalent measures that would allow comparisons of people from different places of the world, Hofstede (1984) developed the concept of cultural syndrome as a main construct of cross-cultural experience, and thus provide parameters of comparison among populations with distinct features that can be grouped by countries (their use and relationship with the concept of Self will be explained later).

Behavior patterns vary based on psychological phenomena that by their nature are affected by cultural variables. Therefore, models and constructs must be applied and interpreted with caution in different regions of the world. Hence, in many sectors of psychology we should not claim universal validity (Alarcon, 2010). Taking this a step further, we still want to make accurate descriptions at the time that we would attempt to make comparisons across groups. This requires instruments that allow cross-cultural comparisons, which is a major challenge. Measures will require recognizing the importance of incorporating

Table 1
Self-concept measuring instruments: source, target group and dimensions

Scale	Participants	Items	Dimensions
Tennessee self-concept scale (Fits, 1965)	12 years and older	100 items, 45 positive, 45 negative. 10 from L of the MMPI	Identity, self-satisfaction, behavior. Physical, moral, personal, family, and social
Semantic differential self-concept scale (Andrade and Pick, 1986)	9 to 15 years old	48 bipolar items	Physical, relationship with friends, as a son, as a student; moral and emotional
Juvenile self-concept-scale (Piers 1984)	8 to 18 years old	80 items	Perceptions of: social behavior, intellectual status, body image, anxiety feelings, popularity, well-being
Self-concept scale (La Rosa and Díaz- Loving,1991)	16 and older	64 bipolar semantic differential type items	Social, emotional, moral, and occupational
Self-Description Questionnaire (Marsh, 1992)		102 items	11 factors. 3 academic dimensions: mathematics, verbal and general. 7 non-academic dimensions: physical capabilities, physical appearance, relations with other sex, relations with same sex, relations with parents, sincerity and emotional stability. It includes a self-esteem scale
Self-concept questionnaire (Valdez-Medina, 1994)	High-school students	28 adjectives	Social-normative, social-expressive, affectionate, intellectual and rebellion to culture
Actual and ideal self-concept in children (Muñiz Campos & Andrade-Palos 2000)	Elementary school	32 items	Social normative, physical, social expressive, and intellectual
Self-concept Scale (Díaz-Loving, Reyes Lagunes and Rivera, 2002)	Mexicans ages 17 to 55.	90 attributes	9 factors: Social expressive, ethical normative, socio-emotional intelligence, passive negative external control, social affiliative, emotional negative self-affirming, constructive instrumental, emotionally vulnerable and depressive.

Source: by authors

indigenous and universal elements in studies aimed at the measurement of any psychological construct (Cheung, Van de Vijver, & Leong, 2011; Van de Vijver, 2013), especially when it can be so dependent on everyday experiences as is the case of the self-concept. In fact, several studies have shown evidence of this phenomenon. For example, Asian cultures have different conceptions of individuality (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), because they engage in practices calling for connection and adjustment (co-sleeping, self- criticism, and acceptance by others; Coşkan et al., 2016). Furthermore, even within the same country there may be differences in the perception of me based on the group to which people belong (Fetvadjiev, Meiring, Van de Vijver, Alewyn, & Hill, 2015). In the case of Mexico, given its diverse pre-Columbian diversity and a history of wars and conquests, the definition of self-concept has been constructed from different cultural roots (Diaz-Loving, 2006). Several intellectual figures have confronted the description of the Mexican self-concept from a philosophical perspective (Samuel Ramos, 1934), a literary position (Octavio Paz, 1950) and a cultural psychoanalytic analysis (Santiago Ramirez, 1959). It safe to say that in each account, a projective universal approach was taken that paid minor attention to cultural variables and was based primarily on disciplinary orientations. Relatively recently, from an integral psycho-socio-cultural perspective, Díaz-Guerrero (1972) provides a bio-psycho-socio-cultural paradigm that considers the individual in his or her environment, and focuses on the social and historical features that have had an effect on the development of the self-concepts of the Mexicans. In this proposal, culture can be measured through culturally significant statements that are supported by the majority of the people of a given culture. He coined the term, "historical socio-cultural premises", to refer to such statements that represent

the beliefs and the norms that are prevalent in a given group (PHSC).

A key concept to understand the relation between culture and self-concept from the perspective of Díaz-Guerrero is that personality, of which self-concept is a key component, develops through a lifelong dialectic interaction between the premises and the biopsychic needs of each individual (Díaz-Guerrero, 1994). With this position as the starting point, we may take a closer look at the Mexican culture. Diaz-Guerrero initially identified nine factors composing the PHSC that permeate the community and the family identity and interactions (Diaz-Loving, 2006), they are: affiliative obedience, virginity, self-sacrifice, machismo, fear of authority, family status quo, respect over love, family honor, and cultural rigidity. Although premises are fairly stable, changes due to age (generational), social mobility, political revolutions, modernization and migration have been documented (Diaz-Guerrero, 1994).

The PHSC provides a profile of individuals' self-images, interpersonal relationships, group and social communication (Diaz-Guerrero, 1994). In this sense, PHSC provides norms for the feelings, ideas and thoughts, as well as the interaction with family and others (Diaz-Guerrero, 1972), and determines the categories of perception people use to understand themselves. For example, the affiliative obedience premise indicates that Mexicans children should always obey their parents (90 percent of junior high school students agree with this statement from 1960 to 1990; Diaz-Guerrero, 2003), and believe that in return they will receive love and affection. To carry out this premise one should develop a sense of urgency for the comfort of others, that leads to a consistent self-modification behavior (behavior in which a person changes to fulfill the needs and like of others), since Mexicans in general prefer to meet others' needs before their own. This constant pattern, using self-verification and self-reference processes (Swann, 1987), concludes in the development of a self that is highly social and emotional (Diaz-Loving & Draguns, 1999).

It should be noted that premises are not static, and that they express general guidelines that specify different behaviors as adequate for different groups within a cultural group. As a consequence, self-concept varies across individuals and accordance with culture, age and sex. In fact, Diaz-Guerrero (1977), proposes eight different personality types that describe more than 90% of the Mexican population. For example, in relation to norms dealing with women and men, the stricter the attachment to traditional norms and beliefs in Mexico, the more men tend to perceive themselves as dominant and instrumental and with the need to prove their masculinity, while women tend to perceive themselves as dependent and expressive with a freedom to express their feelings (Diaz-Loving, et al., 2002; Valdez & González, 1999; Díaz-Loving, Rivera Aragón, & Sánchez Aragón, 2001; Fernandez, Paez, & González, 2005).

Given the undeniable relationship found between culture and self-concept, more studies have focused on analyzing the association between the two (for reviews see Heine, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Triandis, 2001). For example, Markus and Kitayama (1991) indicate that in Western cultures self-concepts are about independence, making reference to personal skills, preferences, feelings, values and attributes, i.e., the self focuses on individual features to define itself, self-construals would strive for self-expression, uniqueness, and self-actualization, based on personal thoughts, feelings, and goals. While in Eastern cultures, there is an interdependent self, that focuses on social and interpersonal categories, for example national or gender groups are used to define the self (Kanagawa, Cross, & Markus, 2001; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto & Norasakkunkit, 1997). Self-construals would strive to fit in and maintain social harmony, basing their actions on situationally defined norms and expectations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Other studies have documented the relationship between interdependence, national identity, social status and sharing feelings. For example, with increased interdependence, there is a greater national identity, lower social status, and there is greater willingness to share positive feelings. On the contrary, greater independence is linked to higher social status and cultures with more females in power positions (Fernandez, et al., 2005).

A way of understanding how culture influences the construction of the self is by means of cultural scripts. An example of this is what occurs with the cultural script of sympathy (*simpatico*, in Spanish), very characteristic of Latino and Hispanic populations. In Latin America, a clear schema indicates that the purpose of the self is to allow harmony and positive feelings to emanate from interpersonal relationships, rendering the self as an amiable, courteous and modest individual, centered on making others feel comfortable (Triandis, Marin, Lisansky, & Betancourt, 1984).

However, a study conducted with Belgium and Turkish students, indicated that dependency is not necessarily typical of collectivist cultures (Coşkan et al., 2016). Kağıtçıbaşı (2005) proposed that another way of conceptualizing cultural differences in self-construal is in terms of the *relative* focus on autonomy and relatedness. A number of studies have shown that self-construals in different cultures vary with respect to the relative levels of autonomy and relatedness (Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kağıtçıbaşı, & Poortinga, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda, Way, Hughes, Yoshikawa, Kalman, & Niwa, 2008).

As we attest to the role of culture on the development of the self, it compels us to search for further cultural models to more fully understand such a crucial construct. One possible approach to the study of the self-concept is through cultural syndromes. Hofstede (1984) developed five cultural syndromes, individualism-collectivism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, aversion to uncertainty, long-short term orientation and a recent sixth syndrome, Indulgence-Restraint cited by Minkov (2013). Individualism-collectivism, proposed Hofstede and elaborated by Triandis (1996, 2001), indicates that people from individualistic societies, found more in Western countries, define themselves by using elements of their personality ("I'm outgoing, I like pop music"). In addition, individualistic cultures emphasize achieving a high social status and trading in social relations (Fernandez, et al., 2005). While people from collectivist cultures, found more in as Asia, Africa and South America, highlight structural variables such as social class, their national group, or the opinions of other people in regards to defining their own selves ("my friends think that am modest and humble" - Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988), and emphasize loyalty, social norms and group obligations (Fernandez, et al., 2005).

The Power Distance cultural syndrome refers to the degree a group accepts greater or lower inequality or a hierarchical power structure. Some cultures easily accept inequality, which in turn is associated with greater violence, while other cultures accept it to a lesser degree, and seek to have equal rights. A third syndrome, Masculinity-Femininity, represents the preference for achievement or cooperation among its members. Some societies are more instrumental and competitive and are characterized by heroism, assertiveness and material rewards, while other societies are characterized by the pursuit of harmony and collaboration between members and are considered more feminine. A fourth dimension, Uncertainty Avoidance, refers to the degree in which members of a society are more or less comfortable with ambiguity about the future. Some societies have rigid beliefs, behaviors and standards; while others have a more relaxed attitude in their practices and standards. Long-term Orientation, that refers to the degree in which societies prefer to keep their traditions and rules and struggle against social changes, while there are other cultures that stress long term benefits of making changes and new decisions, which are considered more pragmatic (Hofstede, 1991). In recent analysis, Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, (2010, p. 281) introduce the syndrome of Indulgence-Restraint. "Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun"; while restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms (Hofstede, et al., 2010, p. 281).

A combination of the cultural syndromes proposed by Hofstede, the dependence and interdependence features advanced by Markus and Kitayama (1991) and the historic-socio-cultural premises proposed by Diaz-Guerrero (1972), converge in that individual differences are modeled by social and cultural factors. That is to say, individual features such as feelings, thoughts and motivations are developed and modified

by the social environment through interactions with others. Using cultural syndromes and cross-cultural literature on the self as the basis to describe differences among societies, we will analyze descriptions of the self for individuals from: Peru, Chile, Japan, China, the United States of America and Mexico, and group them into three main areas, cognitive, emotional, and motivational dimensions. These countries were selected to represent typical features of East, West and of North and South America.

Cognitive Aspects

In relation to cognitive processes, societies can be grouped into two - those places where people think in individual terms and thus are governed by their own needs and values, and those ecosystems where people look to norms and the social interpersonal context in order to make their choices.

When looking at the spectrum of the effects of individualism and collectivism on the way people process information, with regard to countries where the focus is on the interpersonal context, we find among others, Mexico. In this society, the information is processed in terms of social categories, norms and beliefs derived from social entities like the family (Diaz-Guerrero, 2003). Hierarchy, traditions and status direct social evaluation and functioning, which places in a complex dialectic of power, respect and love. Besides the importance of a self that is able to transit through harmonious interpersonal relationships, there is a strong sense of social responsibility evident in selves who endorse characteristics such as efficiency, and industriousness (Diaz-Loving, 2006). In a similar fashion, in Mexico the reference group is the family, while in Japan the self is construed in terms of relations with society in general, with emphasis on hierarchy, loyalty and social categories (Cousins, 1989). In China, its citizens also put emphasis on social hierarchy and give special importance to the loyalty between individuals (Liu, 1986); they are guided by social norms and structures, which limits their creativity (Liu & Hsu, 1974).

Therefore, in terms of cultural syndromes, in these cultures collectivism and the power distance are the fundamental axes of action. In the case of Peru, individuals tend to perceive their worlds in terms of external social pressures; they tend to see their selves as pessimistic, conformist, submissive and corrupt, although they also retrieve some positive aspects having to do with the capacity of adapting to situations, and thus see themselves as creative (Genna, 2010). For the case of China, Bond (1979 a, b) indicates that conscientiousness is a central trait, that when Chinese are exposed to English questionnaires they adhere to Chinese attitudes more strongly that Western attitudes, but surprisingly, he identify that people who anticipated competition against others were rated more positively, contrary to what they expected. For the case of Chile, there is a mix of individualism since they see themselves as being intelligent, suspicious, honest, applied, apathetic and sincere, while on the collectivist side they consider themselves as committed, responsible, active, loyal, helpful, friendly and distrustful (Gutiérrez, 2012). From a predominantly individualistic perspective, in the United States they see themselves as unique, less similar to others, highlighting the peculiarities of each individual, by stressing aspects related to traits, behaviors, achievements and psychological attributes (Cousins, 1989; Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984).

In general, Mexicans have a tendency to be vertical collectivist with a diminution of this attribute with education; power distance is characterized by large status differences with stress on following family norms and traditions; females tend to be expressive and dependent while males are instrumental and dominant; there is a tendency to maintain norms and respond to immediate situational stimuli, and the majority of the population is culturally rigid with high aversion to uncertainty (Diaz-Guerrero, 2003).

For the case of Chile, a Latin-American country, we find greater individualism that is expressed by assertiveness and autonomy when something does not seem right to them, in terms of power distance, reminiscence of authoritarian regimes favors hierarchical structures and marked social classes, especially in older people, A for masculinity and femininity, young and educated people value gender equality and flexibility, and tend to resolve gender conflicts by collaboration; obedience to authority is traditional and

still prevalent, but broken by progressive and youth movements. The older generations continue to have a long term orientation that seeks absolute truth and normative thoughts and traditions. Finally, for Peru, the trend is of collectivism with a strong sense of belonging. Peruvians favor hierarchical and centralized structures, with high need for authority and obedience were family and close contact guide their values and norms systems to absolute truths (Hofstede, 1991).

Emotional Aspects

With regards to the emotional aspects of the self, there is a similar pattern to the one found for cognition, with some societies stressing individual feelings while others center on socio-centric and interpersonal stimuli in understanding their emotions.

In the case of Peru, a clear allocentric (other-focused) perspective is evident when Peruvians describe their emotive selves as friendly, cheerful, hospitable, supportive and optimistic (Genna, 2010). The same occurs for Chileans, who describe themselves in relation to others, as showing solidarity, generosity, and highlight aspects of relationships as being sentimental and romantic (Gutiérrez, 2012). On the egocentric end of the spectrum, individuals in United States, see emotions as reflecting their inner feelings and [allow themselves full public exercise of their inner states (Matsumoto, Kudoh, Scherer & Wallbott, 1988).

Societies that overstress socio-centric traditions emphasize interpersonal aspects even more when describing their selves in emotional terms. For example, in Japan people suppress and give less importance to their emotional experience, experience emotions less intensely, and can´t recognize them easily (Matsumoto, 1989). Japanese show what Hofstede classified as an orientation towards instrumentality, more than toward expressive characteristics. In turn, they give greater importance to harmony and cooperation with others (Li, Cheung, & Kau, 1979). The Chinese experience is similar in that they center their emotional states on the experience of others. For example, they focus on interpersonal aspects to show their emotions, that is to say, they use situations of others as cues for their feelings, and express anger when something happens to someone else, for example if someone does not yield their seat to an old lady (Stipek, Weiner, & Lee, 1989) this is typical in collectivistic cultures, where the focus is on the both dyadic and group relationships, (Bond, 2010). Finally, in Mexico people highlight the values of obedience and family harmony, stressing social roles and family structure as the guide to their feelings (Diaz-Loving, et al., 2002). This makes being happy or sad fundamental for peoples' evaluation of life´s success, as well as positive instrumental features and internal control in order to present the self as amiable, courteous, friendly, romantic, tranquil and patient (Diaz-Loving, 2006).

Generalizing from the Latin-American cultures, emotions in Mexico are built on family harmony and values, with strong emphasis on obedience, a notion of love being more important than power and with high fear of authority. Gender issues are driven by male machismo (superiority in power) and females "marianismo" (power adjudicated from love, for being virgins and mothers). Males can express anger and joy; females are encouraged to express joy and sorrow. Emotions are openly displayed in traditional social events and guided by categories, with a paramount importance given to happiness, to the extent that being happy implies success in life (Díaz-Guerrero, 2003). For the case of Chile, emotions are driven and controlled by traditions, authority figures who protect others and thus give meaning to correct emotions to certain interpersonal settings. Gender differences are less visible (Gutiérrez, 2012). Finally, in the case of Peru, traditions are of great importance, status makes authority figures distant, and the expression of emotions is only acceptable within social categories, with great respect for gender differences (Genna, 2010).

Motivational Aspects

The major differences between the countries in regards to motivation are twofold - on one hand, individualism vs. collectivism, and on the other, within collectivism, to what groups do selves respond. For example, Mexico and Peru are similar in that the self is driven by relationships in which individuals fulfill the needs of others. However, in Peru, individuals see themselves as driven to fulfill social roles of providing for the wellbeing of the community through

perseverance and hard work (Genna, 2010); in Mexico, individuals characterize themselves as self-modifying to make others, specially family and friends, feel comfortable. In Mexico this is characterized by the self-denial of the mother, the superiority of the father who provides for the family, and an affiliative obedience of the children who respect their parents in exchange for their love and protection, highlighting the group hierarchy (Diaz-Loving, et al., 2002). In Japan, the concern centers on a societal interpersonal harmony that is the most important motivator (Li, et al., 1979). In China, people show profound levels of social achievement orientation, directed at maintaining order and group care and resisting change. This orientation in Japan and China translates into high achievement orientation, driven by the idea of being the pride of a family (Blumenthal, 1977; Maehr & Nicholls, 1980), in terms of Markus & Kitayama (1991) implying an orientation towards interdependence. China and Japan are societies that have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism, people have the perception that their actions are restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong (Bond, 2010).

On the individualistic spectrum of the analyzed societies, individuals in the United States see themselves as driven from within. Thus, an important aspect in their motivation is maintaining congruence between their emotions and their behavior (Doi, 1986). Given that their energy come from fulfilling their personal needs and likes, they see themselves as having features of leadership, such as skill and competence (Fielder, 1978; Hollander, 1985). In the United States, as a norm, people indulge in their needs and desires, this produces seemingly contradictory attitudes and behaviors, such as "work hard and play hard". The case of Chile is a hybrid situation. Most of its population is European given the small original autochthonous population, showing individualistic tendencies within a larger collectivistic Latin-American ecosystem. Their selves thus include individualistic attributes, such as being loose, rebellious and aggressive (Gutiérrez, 2012), while also expressing some group attributes to guide their behavior, such as being loyal and group oriented (Fernandez, et al., 2005).

Motivation and behavior in Mexico is based on self-modification in favor of the group, strict group hierarchy and family status guidelines, self-denial of the mother and superiority of the father, and given the uncertainty, few long term investments with high stakes on following norms and roles. True to their hybrid traditions, in Chile individuals are empowered, but present themselves as cautious and moderate in their behaviors and attitudes; they search for adequate rules to adjust and guide their lives, and they look for quick results with emphasis on the short term. Likewise, México and Chile have a indulgent orientation, people exhibit a willingness to realize their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun, people are optimism and give great importance to leisure time, act as they please when the family accepts and spend money as they when they have it. On the other hand, in Peru, emphasis is placed on security over autonomy, hierarchical guides for behavior, keeping a low profile and humbleness, not showing emotions that may disturb other people, unless it is related to grief; motivation is related to short term goals.

Discussion

If the self is a social entity derived from the dialectic of bio-psychic needs and socio-cultural and eco-systemic stimuli, then the self-concept cannot be studied in an individual vacuum, and it is essential to consider the culture inhabited by that self (Esteban, Bastiani, & Vila, 2009). It is also necessary to consider that cultural variations do not necessarily correspond to variations in self-concept of the individuals within them. It is important to have a separate conceptualization and measurement of norms and values at the macro level, and beliefs and attributes at the individual level. Cross-cultural studies show general trends derived from the insertion of individuals in their respective cultural syndromes, but there are also intra-cultural differences according to sex, age, education and/or economic status of individuals.

In relation to the patterns of self that exist in each culture, it is important to consider all syndromes to analyze their differences and similarities. Societies offer and produce differing amounts of individualism

or collectivism, have different power distance relationships and are masculine, feminine or androgynous, for example. Taking all cultural syndromes into account can help understand that, while Mexico and Japan are collectivist countries, there are differences in cognitive and affective aspects arising from the group used as the referent (family versus social), and the combination of power distance and masculinity-femininity. Mexico as a country has very clear vertical hierarchical relations that are controlled mainly by affect, and attach great importance to the family and loyalty to it; the self in Mexico is to strictly follow cultural rules, show high uncertainty avoidance and have males as controlling power (machismo) and females being responsible for affect (marianismo). In terms of motivation and behavior, Mexicans tend to follow traditions and focus on short term rewards (Hofstede, 2001). In Japan, the emphasis is on honor and power. Despite the fact that they impose vertical relations, i.e., acknowledge the importance of hierarchies, the reference group in the case of Japan is the organization or society as a whole. However, even in this orientation, they differ in the sense that Japanese culture is not as hierarchical as other Asian cultures (Hofstede, 2001).

In this respect, although Peru and Chile and are considered collectivistic societies, they demonstrate a higher degree of masculine agentic orientation than does Mexican society. Although this instrumental perspective is more prevalent in Chile than Peru, and Peru has similar levels of expressive affiliative attributes to those found in Mexico. Unlike Japan, these cultures are more tolerant of unequal distribution of resources and power, and have high uncertainty avoidance. As a general rule, in all these different types of collectivism, there is a tendency to follow the rules and traditions over time.

China shares characteristics with the four collectivistic cultures, but differs in the long-term-oriented dimension, Chinese people emphasize the current situation and norms as determinant in the emotions, cognitions and motivations that guide the self in a given ecosystem. However, the context can easily change their traditions, when this happens, they can adapt and are likely to invest to achieve long-term results. Both China and Japan show a distinct difference from the Latin American Countries for the Indulgence-restraint syndrome. The two Asian countries have strong restrain norms, while in Mexico and Chile, indulgence in group happiness is widely encouraged. Peruvians stand in the middle of the two orientations.

Of the cultures considered in the paper, the United States and Belgium would be considered horizontal individualist societies. The main premise for these groups is the importance of personal needs and likes, making the right to freedom and justice for all the masterpiece of their ideology. The selves in these cultures have high levels of instrumentality and have a high degree of acceptance of uncertainty; this flexibility implies the acceptance of new ideas, compelling them to respond to new stimuli without dwelling very much on past events. Their society is more pragmatic and pursues shortterm benefits (Hofstede, 2001).

The availability of large number of self-concept measures with a single culture perspective and the need for instruments that are not only valid and reliable, but also culturally sensitive and relevant, imposes the need for the creation of scales that are cross-culturally valid. A step back to conduct exploratory research in each ecosystem is especially important because it can safe guard the literature form ethnocentric positions and help researchers overcome their own cultural biases when seeking to identify the constructs about which to theorize (Bond, 2009). If all the idiosyncrasies representative of all levels of each cultural syndrome were taken into account in the development of a self-concept inventory, it would be possible to make comparisons across cultures with respect to the self. Not taking into account these considerations for cross-cultural studies, would lead to erroneous assumption of the universality of the resulting patterns (van de Vijver & Leung, 2000).

The use of the self-concept construct generally has been associated to various fields of development, but mainly to the academic (Gonzalez, Leal, Segovia and Arancibia, 2012;) Gorostegui, and Dorr, 2005; Villarroel, 2011), showing the particularities that are present in the West. Thus, the mainstream definition itself considers primarily achievements in this area,

showing how culture affects the development of research and the conceptual definition of the phenomena it studies. The above begs the question about the role that culture plays in the development of the self and the particularities that will be considered in research. We must remember observers construct reality based on their own beliefs and conceptions and that these will be tainted by their own culture. Therefore, measures considered in this review respond to the characteristics and use that are given to the self-concept in different countries, this conceptualization varies depending on stereotypes that tend to be generalizations based on group identification. In these regard, it should be pointed out that the idiosyncratic descriptions made by country are based on means, and that important variations exist within groups. That is to say that to characterize all Chileans, Peruvians, Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, American, would be a generalization mistake, that does not consider that within individual countries large variations exist. We thus invite readers to consider culture as a cornerstone of psychological research with impacts both on the conceptualization of terms and phenomena and on the operalization and measures used to describe and understand groups and individuals.

Without a doubt, a thorough and objective description of the selves of individuals who inhabit different socio-cultural ecosystems requires measures that incorporate universal categories of the self (social, emotional, physical, ethical, instrumental, etc.), and the idiosyncratic manifestations of each category in a variety of cultural settings. In addition to the consideration of variations in cultural syndromes at the group level, considerations of structural variables such as age, education, sex, etc. should be incorporated to account for the diversity of personal characteristics at the individual level of analysis. The case of Mexico is an example of this type of work, with the development of the socio-cultural historical premises that allow further understanding of the beliefs and norms that underlie behavior and personality of individuals (Diaz-Loving, 2006).

There is no doubt that the complexity lies in the methodological aspects, either because of the availability of instruments, or in the way of analyzing the results. In sum, to facilitate future theorizing and research into the relationship between culture and self, Vignoles et al. (2016) identified an urgent need for systematic exploratory research into the dimensionality of independent and interdependent self-construals, involving (a) improved sampling of item content, (b) improved sampling of cultural groups, and (c) appropriate statistical procedures for analyzing data from multiple cultural groups. Only then do the questions that these authors propose become relevant, changing the focus from asking where to asking why different models of selfhood may be prevalent in different parts of the world. As Bond (2010) states, it is important to consider the scientific method to understand and analyzed how culture manifests its self in the lives of its members.

Finally, it is clear that individuals may be different in many ways, thus, to classify cultures solely based on the proposed dimensions may not be useful to show the complexity of cultural models. Rather we need to identify what are the different ways in which individuals can express themselves and vary in each context. In fact, the original proposal of Markus and Kitayama does not suggest that cognition, emotion and behavior are the only categories that exist, so it is important to explore the possibility of more models that represent individual and cultural differences (Vignoles et al., 2016). Likewise, the division between Western and Eastern cultures, does not even account for the nuances that may exist within each of these cultures, let alone what occurs when you introduce North South of the equator into the equation, in fact, Chile is South, and closer to the Pole, making it a more agentic culture than Peru. So, it is important to consider both indigenous and universal qualities when conducting research, paying special attention to situations in which results of studies appear inconsistent (Kitayama, Park, Sevincer, Karasawa, & Uskul, 2009; Levine et al., 2003). Including the consideration of structural variables such as religion, education, socio-economic levels that will allow a broader and clearer vision of self construals around the globe (Vignoles et al., 2016).

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