

When People are Moved, Their Experience Transcends Their Culture:

Examining Own-Life Experiences of Being Moved Among Japanese, Chinese, and Germans

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The emotional state of being moved has been gaining attention in psychology research recently. Previous studies have shown that it is experienced similarly in many cultures, and very recently cultural differences have also been found. However, details of cultural differences remain undiscussed. To examine this issue, we conducted a cross-cultural survey of 460 university students in two East Asian countries (Japan and China) and one European country (Germany) about moving events. Based on findings from previous studies that moving events surpass people's internal standards, as well as possibly change people's values, we hypothesized that the experience of being moved in each country differs from their mainstream cultural characteristics. Profiles of being moved, including eliciting events, affective aspects, and cognitive appraisals while and right after being moved were examined. Our predictions were approximately supported by the results. The findings suggest that own-life moving experiences may magnify people's cognitive and emotional range and even transcend their cultural characteristics.

Keywords: being moved, cross-cultural, self-construal

Introduction

When exposed to the vastness of nature or splendid art, we are sometimes moved. We are also moved by happenings in our own lives—for instance, receiving unexpected help from someone when our research, job, or even life itself seems hopeless. It can also occur when attending the funeral of a teacher who cared for us, or when it is announced that our paper or a proposal has been accepted after numerous rejections over a long time. Are people in different cultures deeply moved by the same kinds of episodes in their own lives, and do they feel and think in the same way? The experience of being moved has been observed in many cultures (for a review, see Fiske et al., 2017), and very recently, cultural differences have also been found (Seibt, Schubert, Zickfeld, & Fiske, 2017; Seibt et al., 2017; Zickfeld et al., 2018). However,

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details of the cultural differences have not yet been discussed. In this paper, we investigate cultural differences of being moved, with a focus on own-life moving experiences.¹

What Is “Being Moved”?

Menninghaus et al. (2015) consolidated the literature on being moved, examined the comprehensive profiles of being moved (i.e., eliciting events, affective aspects, and cognitive appraisals), and made the first sketch of being moved. Fiske et al. (2017) advanced the concept of *kama muta* (Sanskrit for “being moved by love”) and have been conducting studies in different nations. Beyond these, a variety of studies of the experience of being moved have been performed. Here we examine the profile of being moved based on findings from previous studies.

First, let us consider the affective aspects. Being moved is a distinct emotion with a primarily positive valence (Cova & Deonna, 2014; Hanich, Wagner, Shah, Jacobsen, & Menninghaus, 2014; Seibt et al., 2017). At the same time, it may also comprise a mixture of emotional ingredients (i.e., various positive and negative ingredients) (Deonna, 2011; Menninghaus et al., 2015).

Second, are the prototypical eliciting events. In daily life, the predominant eliciting events are significant relationship events (e.g., friendship and parent–child interaction), and next are critical life events (e.g., death and birth) (Kuehnast, Wagner, Wassiliwizky, Jacobsen, & Menninghaus, 2014; Menninghaus et al., 2015). These events often accompany prosocial bonding, such as feelings of attachment to family, friends, and communities (Menninghaus et al., 2015), as well as communal sharing relationships in which people feel they belong with each other (Fiske et al., 2017; Schubert, Zickfeld, Seibt, & Fiske, 2017). Meanwhile, the achievement is also demonstrated as an eliciting event (Cova & Deonna, 2014; Konečni, 2005, 2011; Landmann, Cova, & Hess, 2017).

Predictors of the above events have also been discussed. One predictor is the appraisal of fulfilling and surpassing individuals’ internal standards.² Cova and Deonna (2014) indicated that one’s values or internal standards predict being moved. Based on this statement and Scherer’s (2001) statement that emotions are particularly elicited by the appraisal of compatibility with internal standards (e.g., exceeding internal or external standards may produce feelings of pride), Landmann et al. (2017) conducted a series of video experiments and found that appraisals of surpassing a prosocial or achievement standard mediated the elicitation of being moved. Similarly, high compatibility with social norms (Menninghaus et al., 2015) and morality (Seibt, Schubert, Zickfeld, & Fiske, 2017; Wang, 2010), which play a substantial role in being moved, could also be considered to be consistent with and surpassing internal standards concerning social

¹ In art appreciation and other second- or third-person experiences, a personal context (e.g., memories, love, or victory) is necessary to elicit the emotional state of being moved (Konečni, 2005). Also, people with similar experiences can make up for the shortage of information from their own experiences, thus making it easy to evoke being moved (Tokaji, 2003). Therefore, we think exploring own-life experience may help to understand other moving experiences.

² Internal standards are internalized norms or values, such as a personal self-ideal or an internalized moral code, while external standards are shared norms or values implicit in the communities (Scherer, 2001).

norms and morality. Another important predictor is one's high involvement. Tokaji (2003) stated that an individual's high personal involvement increased his or her event-related knowledge, which is needed to evoke being moved. Similarly, Wang stated that an essential predictor of being moved is one's involvement, as we "at least imagine ourselves being personally and bodily present" (Wang, 2010, p. 318). In general, when one is highly involved in an event, one's image of the self (self-construal) strongly influences one's appraisal of the event. Summing up, previous research has consistently shown that being moved is determined by people's internal standards and values, as well as their self-construal.

Cultural Differences in Being Moved

Internal standards, values, and self-construal are the basic issues of cultural psychology. From the perspective of the relationship between the individual and the community, the mainstream of Western culture (Western Europe and America) is individualistic while Eastern culture (East Asia) is collectivistic (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995). Similarly, Westerners tend to have an independent self-construal, while Easterners tend towards an interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010).

The above cultural differences in self-construal and values are associated with cultural differences in cognition. Self-construal covaries with thinking styles (Varnum, Grossmann, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2010). In Western cultures, the mainstream thinking style is analytical, while in Eastern cultures it is dialectical (Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). Similarly, morality in Western cultures is based on universal principles, such as social welfare and justice (Kohlberg, 1971), whereas Eastern morality is based on social relativism (Lebra, 1976). Self-construal also covary with control styles (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). Westerners tend to have an internal control style, which holds that one can control one's fate and the events in one's life, whereas Easterners tend to have an external control style, which holds that one's fate and events are determined by the environment, whereas (Trompenaars, 1996).

Cultural differences in self-construal, values, and cognition are also associated with cultural differences in emotions. First, let us consider the emotional ingredients. Differences in self-construal entail differences in the tendencies of engagement and disengagement; independent Westerners experience more socially disengaging emotions (e.g., self-regard and pride) while Easterners have more socially engaging emotions (e.g., friendly feelings, guilt, and shame) (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006). For instance, when something good happens, Americans feel more disengaging emotions such as pride, while Japanese feel more engaging emotions such as friendly feelings (Kitayama et al., 2000). Second is the issue of affective valence. The positive and negative emotional complexity of Easterners is reported to be greater than that of Westerners (Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2002) due to their dialectical thinking style (Spencer-Rodgers, Peng, & Wang, 2010). For instance, the Japanese find more negativity in positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and satisfaction than do Americans (Uchida & Kitayama, 2009). The third is emotional expressivity. Expression of one's inner emotions is considered to accord with self-consistency in Western cultures; when an expression is

suppressed, people feel dishonest (Rogers, 1951). However, in Eastern cultures, the expression of one's inner emotions is less significant (Kim & Sherman, 2007). In a survey of respondents in 23 countries conducted by Matsumoto and colleagues (Matsumoto et al., 2008), individualism was found to be negatively correlated with suppression, and Eastern people suppressed their emotions more than Western people.

Summing up, there are cultural differences in values and self-construal, which bring about cultural differences in emotions. Previous research defines being moved as an emotional state; thus, we can assume that being moved, which is strongly influenced by values and self-construal, could also have cultural differences.

The Change of Cognitive Appraisals and Affective Aspects After Being Moved: Release from Mainstream Cultural Characteristics

If there are cultural differences in being moved, what patterns will they show? We predict that when people are moved, the cognitive and affective aspects of being moved differ from their mainstream cultural characteristics.

The reason is as follows. In a questionnaire survey asking university students to describe own-life moving experiences and changes brought about by them, Tokaji (2004) indicated that moving experiences changed one's cognitive framework or, say, value system. Similarly, Cova and Deonna (2014) stated that the general function of being moved consists in reorganizing one's hierarchy of values and priorities. There is also an experimental study in line with these discussions. Djikic, Oatley, Zoeterman, and Peterson (2009) found that the experiment group (who had read a moving story) changed the cognition of their overall personality traits, compared to the control group (who read the same story in a documentary form), and people who had greater emotional changes reported greater personality changes. Since a moving experience in own life has similar affective and cognitive appraisals as a moving experience in fiction (Menninghaus et al., 2015), this result can also be considered as applying to the own-life moving experience.

Taken together, previous research has shown that moving experiences bring about changes in one's usual value system. Values are the core of culture (Hofstede, 2001), and self-construal is deeply involved with values (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010). When one's value system changes, one's usual self-construal may also change. In fact, Djikic et al. (2009) showed that their participants' self-image was altered, which can also be considered as showing a change in the usual self-construal. As mentioned above, self-construal and values covary with cognitive aspects such as thinking styles (Varnum et al., 2010) and control styles (Morling et al., 2002), as well as affective aspects (e.g., Kitayama et al., 2000; Kitayama, et al., 2006; Schimmack et al., 2002; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). Therefore, we may conclude that when one is moved, one's value system changes from usual, whereupon self-construal also changes, and as the result, one's cognitive and affective aspects may also change from usual. Since one's usual value system is mostly

determined by the mainstream cultural characteristics of one's society, we can assume that one's cognitive and affective aspects when moved differ from the mainstream characteristics of one's culture.

The assumption above is supported by an empirical study. Seibt et al. (2017) conducted an experiment whereby the feelings of being moved, sadness, anxiety, and happiness were induced through videos in the U.S. and Norway. Norwegian participants reported stronger emotional responses than the U.S. participants when watching moving videos. Americans are more individualistic than Norwegians (Hofstede, 2001), and individualism is negatively correlated with emotion suppression (Matsumoto et al., 2008). However, the result of Seibt et al. could be understood as indicating that Norwegians expressed more of their emotions than the more individualistic Americans.

Eliciting Events of Being Moved: Another Release from Mainstream Cultural Characteristics

Furthermore, extending our first prediction, we made a second prediction that the eliciting events of being moved are also different from one's cultural characteristics.

As mentioned above, Landmann et al. (2017) proposed that being moved is elicited by events surpassing internal standards (prosocial or achievement-related internal standards). Internal standards vary by culture. It is important for interdependent Easterners to maintain social harmony in their daily lives (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010), so their internal standards related to relationships are relatively high (e.g., Oishi & Diener, 2001). Meanwhile, internal standards related to self-regard issues such as self-achievement are relatively low (e.g., Diener & Diener, 1995), which means that they are easier to surpass. Thus, when self-achievement events occur, such as passing entrance exams for a difficult university, they may be deeply moved. Contrariwise, independent Westerners are always trying to find good aspects of themselves and to enhance themselves (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991); their internal standards of personal achievement are higher (e.g., Diener & Diener, 1995), and internal standards of relationships are lower (e.g., Kwan, Bond, & Singelis, 1997), which thus are easy to surpass. Thus, they may be deeply moved more easily by relationship events, such as friendship or parent-child interactions.

Details of the Above Release from Mainstream Cultural Characteristics

Details of the cognitive appraisals (while and right after being moved), affective aspects, and eliciting events of being moved are considered to be as follows.

We assume that, first, the change in an individual's value system when moved brings about a change of self-construal, which covaries with cognitive appraisals (Morling et al., 2002; Varnum et al., 2010). As a result, cognitive appraisals of being moved diverge from mainstream cultural characteristics. Cognitive appraisals include thinking styles and control styles, so we are led to the following prediction: When moved, independent Westerners may turn to a more dialectical thinking style, and they may begin to observe and evaluate the moving event as both positive and negative and as not always being compatible with morality

and social norms. On the other hand, interdependent Easterners may turn to a more analytical thinking style, begin to concentrate on the good aspects of the moving episode and view it as highly compatible with morality and social norms. Similarly, when moved, Westerners may turn to an external control style and begin to notice that they have little ability to control the moving event and that the event is happening entirely outside themselves, whereas Easterners may turn to an internal control style and begin to consider the moving event as happening inside themselves and that they have the ability to control it.

Second, similarly, when moved, the change in one's value system brings about a change in self-construal and in cognitive appraisals, which all covary with affective aspects (e.g., Kitayama et al., 2000; Kitayama et al., 2006; Schimmack et al., 2002; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). As a result, the affective aspects of being moved also diverge from mainstream cultural characteristics, so we are led to the following prediction: When moved, independent Westerners may have more engaging emotions and fewer disengaging emotions, higher emotional complexity, and suppress their emotions more, while interdependent Easterners react oppositely.

Third, because of cultural differences in internal standards, independent Westerners who have relatively lower internal standards of relationship may be more moved by events that let them feel significant relationships with others, while Easterners may be more moved by events that let them feel their own achievement.

The Present Research

Combining the above predictions, we thus predict that when people are moved by their own-life events, the eliciting events, affective aspects, and cognitive appraisals (while and right after being moved) deviate from their culturally established patterns.

In order to examine these predictions, we employed three cultural group comparisons. Germany was chosen as the Western group and Japan and China were chosen as the Eastern groups. Germany is a Western country with an individualistic culture (Hofstede, 2001) and is more independent than China (Oeberst & Wu, 2015). Menninghaus et al. (2015) examined the profiles of being moved in German participants using the Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ).³ In light of the above considerations, we used Menninghaus et al.'s (2015) data. Japan and China are often picked as samples of Eastern cultures (e.g., Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). With respect to interdependent self-construal, the two countries showed no significant differences, while, with respect to independent self-construal, the Chinese are more independent than the Japanese (Takata, 1997; Tomita, 2014). Therefore, adding Japanese and Chinese data to German data to perform a three-country comparison may yield meaningful results.

³ The GAQ Assessment of Emotion-Eliciting Events (2002, <http://www.affective-science.org/researchmaterial>) was developed by the Geneva Emotion Research Group on the basis of Klaus R. Scherer's Component Process Model of Emotion (Scherer, 2001). This model examines comprehensive profiles of emotions that were also used to study seven basic emotions in a 37-country survey (Scherer, 1997), in which predominant cultural differences were found.

We employed questionnaire surveys in both Japan and China, using the GAQ as in Menninghaus et al. (2015), and compared the data for Japanese (the most interdependent), Germans (the most independent), and Chinese subjects (in between the others). The GAQ can be broadly divided into three parts: eliciting events, affective aspects, and cognitive appraisals. We make three hypotheses, one for each part:

Hypothesis 1: Eliciting events in each country show different patterns from their cultural characteristics.

We expect that the Japanese and Chinese have fewer relationship events and more achievement events than the Germans. Additionally, the Japanese should have fewer relationship events and more achievement events than the Chinese.

Hypothesis 2: Affective aspects in each country show different patterns from their cultural characteristics.

We expect that Japanese and Chinese have fewer engaging emotions and more disengaging emotions, lower emotional complexity, and express their emotions more than Germans. Additionally, compared to the Chinese, the Japanese should have fewer engaging emotions and more disengaging emotions and lower emotional complexity, and express their emotions more.

Hypothesis 3: Cognitive appraisals (while and right after being moved) in each country show different patterns than their cultural characteristics.

We compared three appraisals from the GAQ—goal importance, compatibility with standards, and coping potential—made while and right after the participant is moved. First is goal importance. Japanese and Chinese pay more attention than Germans to the positive outcome of the events and evaluate the event more positively, which shows analytic attentional patterns. The second is compatibility with the standard. Japanese and Chinese pay more attention to and evaluate the compatibility with morality and social norms at a much higher level than Germans, which shows an analytic thinking style and universal moral principles. The third is coping potential. Compared to Germans, the Japanese and Chinese think they can control and modify events, which shows an internal control style. Fourth, additionally, in the above three appraisals Japanese show more analytic thinking style, universal moral principles, and internal control style than the Chinese.

Method

Ethics Statement

The study of Japanese and Chinese participants received approval from the Research Ethics Committee at the Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba. Before instruction for the study began, participants were given written informed consent, and only people who agreed to the contents of this form answered the questionnaire. The ethics statement of the study of German participants can be found at: <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0128451>.

Participants

The questionnaire survey was conducted in October 2016. Students, including 183 Japanese (93 male, 90 female), with an average age of 19.57 years ($SD = 1.27$, $min = 18$, $max = 25$), from three universities in Tokyo and 210 Chinese (56 male, 154 female), with average age 20.46 years ($SD = 1.27$, $min = 18$, $max = 25$), from three universities in Nanjing volunteered for the paper-and-pencil study at the end of their class. It took them 15 minutes to complete the study. The Japanese term used for ‘being moved’ was 感動 *kandō* (you can write also “*kandō* as it is common for Hepburn romanization”), as in Tokaji (2003). The Chinese term was 感动 *gǎndòng*, as in Wang (2010) and Seibt et al. (2017). We also included German university students’ data from Menninghaus et al. (2015)⁴ in our analysis. Since the German dataset includes data that report events other than own-life events and the maximum age (54) is much higher than Japanese and Chinese participants’ maximum age (25), only the data of participants who reported own-life events and age under 25 were extracted from the German dataset. We thereby obtained the respective data for 67 German students (20 male, 47 female; average age 21.94 years, $SD = 1.62$, $min = 19$, $max = 25$). All participants were self-identified as native speakers in their respective national languages.

Questionnaire and Procedure

We used the GAQ Assessment of Emotion-Eliciting Events (2002, <http://www.affective-science.org/researchmaterial/>), which was used by Menninghaus et al. (2015). We translated the English version of the GAQ into Japanese and Chinese with the permission of the authors. The procedure used in this study followed a parallel back-translation procedure. First, the GAQ was translated from English to Japanese and Chinese, respectively, by two bilingual individuals (Japanese vs. English, and Chinese vs. English). The two translated versions were retranslated back into English by two other bilingual individuals who were unfamiliar with the original GAQ. Second, a committee made up of the individuals who participated in the translation process, one Japanese social psychologist, and two Chinese graduate students in psychology compared the two back-translated English versions with the original GAQ and then discussed and made the final Japanese and Chinese versions. The two versions yielded the same constructs as the original GAQ. Finally, we sent the two versions to the authors of the GAQ and obtained their approval.⁵

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. First, we asked participants to recall an emotionally moving event in their own lives and to describe it in a few sentences. Then they were asked about the circumstances of the experience including how long ago, where, and who was present and select one answer for each question.

⁴ The dataset analyzed for this study can be found in PLOS One (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0128451.s001>). We analyzed it with the permission of the authors. The original dataset consists of 228 German university students (77 male, 145 females, 6 without a statement), average age 24.7 years ($SD = 6.04$, $min = 19$, $max = 54$), of whom 112 participants reported own-life events, 58 reported media-represented real events, and 56 reported fictional events.

⁵ The copyright of the Japanese and Chinese versions belongs to the Swiss Center for Affective Sciences. Further information about these questionnaires is available at: <http://www.affective-sciences.org/home/research/materials-and-online-research/research-material/>.

Second, we asked participants to give verbal descriptions⁶ of the emotions they experienced during the event—that is, to describe the experience in their own words—and then to indicate which emotions they had felt in this moving experience. They could either choose from a list of 16 emotional terms or write down other emotions they felt at that moment. Participants were asked about their evaluation (affective valence) of the event, such as how pleasant or unpleasant. This item was rated on a five-point scale anchored at not at all and extremely. Along with Menninghaus et al. (2015), aside from the evaluation in general, we also measured separate ratings of the personal evaluation on the same five-point scale—that is, how pleasant and unpleasant the event actually felt to the participant him or herself. Participants were then asked about the intensity,⁷ duration, and regulation of the moving experience and instructed to rate it on a five-point scale ranging from not at all to extreme.

Third, participants were asked about their cognitive appraisals while and right after the emotional state of being moved was evoked, including the goal importance of the event, compatibility with standards, and coping potential,⁸ as rated on a five-point scale ranging from not at all to extremely.

Results

Eliciting Events

The brief descriptions of the emotionally moving events given by the participants were analyzed as the eliciting events. Two of the authors developed a categorization scheme based on the categorization used in Menninghaus et al. (2015) (for significant relationship events and critical life events), as well as Konečni (2005, 2011), Cova and Deonna (2014), and Landmann et al.'s (2017) statements (for achievement events). One of the authors and two colleagues who were uninformed regarding this research categorized the descriptions. Four categories were extracted: significant relationship events (58.3%), achievement events (21.5%), critical life events (14.3%), and miscellaneous events (5.9%). The most frequent category in each country was a significant relationship (78.6% Chinese, 62.9% Germans, 35.0% Japanese), the second was an achievement (48.6% Japanese, 3.8% Chinese, 3.2% Germans), and the third was critical life (33.9% Germans, 13.3% Chinese, 9.3% Japanese). Since the miscellaneous events category was around 5% and far less common than the other three, we did not use this category for further analysis.

A chi-square test of the frequencies of events by country revealed statistically significant differences ($\chi^2(4, N = 433) = 167.89, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .44$). A post-hoc adjusted standardized residuals analysis

⁶ The verbal descriptions were used as references in categorizing eliciting events. We did no further analysis of them, similar to Menninghaus et al. (2015).

⁷ We also assessed intensity. Japanese and Chinese data used a five-point scale according to the GAQ, while a three-point scale was used for the German data, so intensity was excluded from the subsequent analysis. Intensity ratings were consistently very high. The means for the Japanese, Chinese, and German participants were 4.54 ($SD = 0.70$), 4.09 ($SD = 0.90$), and 2.64 ($SD = 0.60$), respectively.

⁸ In the current study, we focused on cognitive appraisals while and right after the emotional state of being moved is evoked, so we excluded analyses of appraisals in the GAQ that were apparently made before being moved was evoked, such as novelty (suddenness, familiarity, and predictability) and the main parts of goal/need significance (causation, outcome probability, discrepancy from expectation, and urgency).

indicated that the Japanese reported a significantly greater number of achievement events ($z = 12.2$), the Chinese reported more relationship events ($z = 9.0$), and the Germans reported more critical life events ($z = 4.7$). Turning to the situation of the moving experience, to the question of “How long ago did this emotional experience occur?” the most frequent answer was “years ago” (63.4% Japanese, 42.9% Chinese, 32.8% Germans), and the second was “months ago” (23.8% Chinese, 23.0% Japanese, 20.9% Germans). To the question of “Where did you experience this emotion?” the most frequent answer was “in a public place” (66.1% Japanese, 44.8% Chinese, 40.3% Germans), and the second was “in my home” (37.3% Germans, 31.0% Chinese, 21.9% Japanese).

To the question of “Who was present when you experienced this emotion?” the most frequent answer was “with people close to me (partners, friends, acquaintances or colleagues, etc.)” (79.2% Japanese, 73.3% Chinese, 70.1% Germans), the second was “with people unknown to me” (22.9% Chinese, 10.4% Japanese, 9.0% Germans), and the third was “I was alone” (19.4% Germans, 8.7% Japanese, 2.9% Chinese). A chi-square test of the frequencies by country revealed statistically significant differences ($\chi^2(2, N = 454) = 31.45, p < .001$, Cramer’s $V = .19$). A post-hoc adjusted standardized residuals analysis indicated that the Japanese gave significantly more responses of “with people close to me” ($z = 1.8$), the Chinese more “with people unknown to me” ($z = 3.7$), and the Germans more “I was alone” ($z = 3.9$).

Emotional Ingredients (Verbal Description of Emotions During the Event)

Within the 16 verbal descriptions of emotions provided to participants, the average number of descriptions (emotions) selected by the Japanese, Chinese, and German participants were 2.05 ($SD = 1.47$), 1.46 ($SD = 1.09$), and 2.03 ($SD = 1.22$), respectively.

We counted the number of participants who selected each emotion and found that joy, surprise, pleasure, and sadness were the most frequently reported emotions (Table 1).

We then entered the word frequencies of each emotion (for each emotion, “0” was input for “not selected” and “1” for “selected”; frequencies were taken as the number of “1” scores) and three countries into a cross-tabulation. A chi-square test of emotion frequencies with country groups revealed significant differences in joy ($\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 33.56, p < .001$, Cramer’s $V = .27$), surprise ($\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 9.91, p < .001$, Cramer’s $V = .15$), pleasure ($\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 10.31, p < .01$, Cramer’s $V = .15$), sadness ($\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 38.44, p < .001$, Cramer’s $V = .29$), pride ($\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 31.56$, Cramer’s $V = .26$), relief ($\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 37.22, p < .001$, Cramer’s $V = .28$), guilt ($\chi^2(1, N = 460) = 19.71, p < .001$, Cramer’s $V = .21$), and shame ($\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 11.40, p < .01$, Cramer’s $V = .16$). A post-hoc adjusted standardized residuals analysis indicated that the Japanese reported more positive emotions, such as joy ($z = 5.8$), surprise ($z = 3.1$), pride ($z = 5.6$), and relief ($z = 5.5$), than the Chinese; the Chinese felt more guilt ($z = 4.4$) and shame ($z = 2.9$) than the Japanese; and the Germans had more sadness ($z = 5.9$) than the Japanese and less pleasure ($z = -3.2$) than the other two country groups.

Table 1. Emotional Ingredients

Emotions	Overall <i>n</i> (%)	Japanese <i>n</i> (%)	Chinese <i>n</i> (%)	Germans <i>n</i> (%)
Joy	243 (52.8)	127 (69.4)	87 (41.4)	29 (43.3)
Surprise	118 (25.7)	61 (33.3)	41 (19.5)	16 (23.9)
Pleasure	113 (24.6)	50 (27.3)	57 (27.1)	6 (9.0)
Sadness	65 (14.1)	12 (6.6)	28 (13.3)	25 (37.3)
Pride	57 (12.4)	42 (23.0)	10 (4.8)	5 (7.5)
Relief	56 (12.2)	41 (22.4)	5 (2.4)	10 (14.9)
Anxiety	32 (7.0)	9 (4.9)	15 (7.1)	8 (11.9)
Guilt	31 (6.7)	3 (1.7)	26 (12.4)	2 (3.0)
Fascination	31 (6.7)	20 (10.9)	5 (2.4)	6 (9.0)
Despair	17 (3.7)	4 (2.2)	3 (1.4)	10 (14.9)
Shame	16 (3.5)	0 (0.0)	13 (6.2)	3 (4.5)
Rage	13 (2.8)	3 (1.6)	1 (0.5)	9 (13.4)
Fear	12 (2.6)	2 (1.1)	7 (3.3)	3 (4.5)
Irritation	9 (2.0)	1 (0.5)	5 (2.4)	3 (4.5)
Contempt	5 (1.1)	1 (0.5)	3 (1.4)	1 (1.5)
Disgust	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Affective Valence

Affective valence was analyzed as the pleasantness and unpleasantness ratings of the event, both in general and in personal (actual feelings) (Table 2).

The means of positive valence both in general and in person were far higher than those of negative valence in the Japanese and Chinese participants. In contrast, positive and negative valence both in general and personal were nearly equal for the Germans. One-way ANOVA with Tukey's post-hoc tests showed statistically significant differences in affective valence both in general and in personal among three country groups. First, the Japanese group reported significantly the highest mean level of positive affect, followed by the Chinese and then the German groups. Second, the German group reported significantly the highest mean level of negative affect, followed by the Chinese and then the Japanese groups.

Duration and Emotion Regulation

Predominant cultural differences were shown in the three country groups by one-way ANOVA with Tukey's post-hoc tests (Table 2). Duration ratings showed that the emotional experience lasted a few hours to a few days within all countries, and the Japanese and Chinese durations were longer than for the Germans.

Emotion regulation ratings were low to moderate in the three country groups. In reducing the intensity or shortening its duration, the German group was significantly higher than the Japanese and

Chinese. Additionally, to control or mask the expression of feelings to keep them from others, the Germans and Chinese were significantly higher than the Japanese.

Table 2. One-Way ANOVA Results for Differences in Affective Valence, Duration, and Regulation Between Country Groups

	Japanese	Chinese	Germans	<i>F(df)</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial-eta squared
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>			
valence in personal (pleasant)	4.67 (0.78) ^a	4.05 (1.16) ^b	2.84 (1.68) ^c	63.38(2, 450)	**	.22
valence in personal (unpleasant)	1.16 (0.60) ^c	1.79 (1.19) ^b	2.84 (1.60) ^a	57.12(2, 407)	**	.22
valence in general (pleasant)	4.46 (0.89) ^a	3.96 (1.21) ^b	2.94 (1.69) ^c	40.09(2, 446)	**	.15
valence in general (unpleasant)	1.37 (0.83) ^c	1.83 (1.22) ^b	2.85 (1.64) ^a	36.41(2, 407)	**	.15
duration	3.94 (1.08) ^a	3.82 (1.02) ^a	3.31 (1.26) ^b	8.26(2, 447)	**	.04
reduce intensity & shorten duration	1.55 (1.11) ^b	1.52 (0.90) ^b	2.14 (1.19) ^a	9.46(2, 450)	**	.04
control/mask the expression	1.82 (1.16) ^b	2.17 (1.19) ^a	2.44 (1.34) ^a	7.77(2, 449)	**	.03

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Groups with the same letter are not significantly different from other groups.

a > b > c, and a,b is between a and b.

Cognitive Appraisals

Some similarities were found between the three countries. Overall, questions related to norm compatibility had the highest mean in all country groups.

Predominant cultural differences were shown in the three country groups by one-way ANOVA with Tukey's post-hoc tests (Table 3). First, for goal importance, regarding whether the event brought desirable outcomes, the Japanese had the highest means, followed by the Chinese and then the Germans. Regarding whether the event brought undesirable outcomes, the Japanese and Chinese had lower means than the Germans.

Second, for compatibility with standards, regarding the question of being consistent with laws or social norms, the Japanese and Chinese had significantly higher means than the Germans. Regarding the question of the unfairness of consequences, the Japanese and Chinese had significantly lower means than the Germans. For the question of being ethically acceptable, there were no significant differences among the three country groups.

Third, for coping potential, regarding the question of preventability of consequences, the Japanese had significantly higher means than the Germans. For the question of power to modify the consequences, the Japanese had significantly higher means than the Germans and Chinese.

Table 3. One-Way ANOVA Results for Differences in Cognitive Appraisals Between Country Groups

	Japanese	Chinese	Germans	<i>F(df)</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial-eta squared
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>			
Goal importance						
desirable outcomes	4.32 (1.07) ^a	3.73 (1.32) ^b	3.06 (1.64) ^c	25.60(2, 451)	**	.10
undesirable outcomes	1.28 (0.75) ^b	1.41 (0.96) ^b	2.30 (1.51) ^a	25.45(2, 441)	**	.10
goal importance	4.06 (1.44) ^a	3.51 (1.35) ^b	3.31 (1.33) ^b	12.30(2, 437)	**	.05
Compatibility with Standards						
ethically acceptable	4.25(1.08)	4.23(1.06)	3.93(1.13)	1.62(2, 418)	<i>n.s.</i>	.01
consistency with social norms	4.86 (0.53) ^a	4.91 (0.48) ^a	3.82 (1.23) ^b	54.41(2, 417)	**	.20
unfairness of consequences	1.27 (0.74) ^b	1.35 (0.87) ^b	2.61 (1.70) ^a	43.65(2, 435)	**	.17
Coping Potential						
preventability of consequences	2.93 (1.57) ^a	2.30 (1.37) ^b	2.86 (1.46) ^{a,b}	9.10(2, 435)	**	.04
power to modify the consequences	2.67 (1.49) ^a	2.03 (1.20) ^b	2.16 (1.41) ^b	10.93(2, 432)	**	.05
adjustment to consequences	2.99(1.34)	3.21(1.22)	3.45(1.20)	3.02(2, 434)	<i>n.s.</i>	.01

p* < .05, *p* < .01

Groups with the same letter are not significantly different from other groups.

a > b > c, and a,b is between a and b.

Discussion

The present research examined the cultural differences in own-life moving experiences by comparing Japanese, Chinese, and Germans. We hypothesized that when people are moved by their own-life events, the eliciting events (Hypothesis 1), affective aspects (Hypothesis 2), and cognitive appraisals (Hypothesis 3) of being moved show different patterns from their mainstream cultural characteristics. These hypotheses are supported or partially supported by our results.

Eliciting Events (Hypothesis 1)

The most interdependent Japanese had achievement events as the majority and had the largest number of achievement events within the three countries. As the majority of the events chosen by the most independent of them, the Germans, were a significant relationship, followed by critical life, this means that they are more moved by events in connection with others.⁹ Hypothesis 1 is supported by the results for these two countries.

Unexpectedly, however, the Chinese participants also cited significant relationships (e.g., friendship and parent–child interaction) as major events and even ranked them the largest within the three country groups. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is partly supported. The reason that the Chinese participants had so many relationship events may be related to the notable social and cultural change in China, especially the rising individuality (e.g., Sun & Wang, 2010).¹⁰

Affective Aspects (Hypothesis 2)

1. Affective valence (Table 2). Both in personally and in general, Japanese and Chinese had lower emotional complexity than Germans. Additionally, the Japanese had lower emotional complexity than the Chinese. Hypothesis 2 is supported.

2. Emotion regulation (Table 2). Japanese and Chinese had experiences with longer duration and expressed their emotions more than Germans. Additionally, although not significantly, the Japanese had experiences with longer duration and tended to express their emotions more than the Chinese. Hypothesis 2 is supported.

3. Emotional ingredients (Table 1). Japanese participants felt more disengaged emotions such as pride, and Chinese ones felt more engaging emotions such as guilt and shame. For the above emotions, German participants scored between Japanese and Chinese ones. Hypothesis 2 is partly supported.

Cognitive Appraisals (Hypothesis 3)

1. Goal importance (Table 3). Japanese and Chinese participants evaluated the events as having highly desirable outcomes, following an analytic pattern, while Germans evaluated them as having less desirable outcomes, showing a more dialectic pattern. Additionally, the Japanese evaluated the outcome as more desirable than the Chinese. Hypothesis 3 is supported.

2. Compatibility with standards (Table 3). Japanese and Chinese participants evaluated the events as highly compatible with social norms and fairer, which showed an analytic thinking pattern as well as

⁹ With help from the author, we analyzed the U.S. data (87 participants for own-life moving experiences) about eliciting events from the study by Cova and Deonna (2014). Proportions of these events are similar to the German data.

¹⁰ The World Values Survey (Inglehart et al., 2014a, b) also found that, comparing wave 7 (2010–2014) to wave 6 (2005–2009), Chinese values related to individualism such as hedonism and power rose.

universal moral principles.¹¹ Germans evaluated these issues lower, in a more dialectic pattern, and showing relative morality. This result supports Hypothesis 3. However, unexpectedly, there were no significant differences between the Japanese and Chinese participants, so Hypothesis 3 is partly supported.

3. Coping potential (Table 3). The Japanese thought they could control the events and even modify the consequences, which showed an internal control style. Germans had lower scores for controlling and modifying, which showed an external control style. These results supported Hypothesis 3. Unexpectedly, the Chinese did not show confidence in the control of the events either, so Hypothesis 3 is only partly supported. The reason for the Chinese not showing a more internal control pattern may be related to the rising individualism in China, as mentioned earlier.

The present research is the first to reveal cultural differences being moved through a comparison of one Western culture and two Eastern cultures. We analyzed eliciting events and affective and cognitive aspects of being moved, seeking to make a comprehensive picture of being moved in both Western and Eastern cultures. Our results are consistent with previous research, as being moved changes people's cognition (Cova & Deonna, 2014; Djikic et al., 2009) and magnify and deepen people's feelings (Panksepp, 1995), and we suggest that being moved may magnify people's range of cognition and emotions and even transcend their cultures. Future studies of the influence of being moved on cross-cultural understanding, elimination of discrimination, and self-transcendence can be conducted to broaden our understanding of the emotional state of being moved.

Limitations

There are three limitations.

First, although all the effect sizes of the results were acceptable, the German data were fewer than for the other two groups, which made the sample size somewhat imbalanced. Our future research is to be conducted in other Western and Eastern countries with a more balanced dataset.

Second, we used a questionnaire survey. Questionnaires have benefits in cross-cultural research, such as allowing involved behavioral and observational measurements (Scherer, Matsumoto, Wallbott, & Kudoh, 1988), and cultural differences are more apparent in retrospective reports than in real-time (e.g., Oishi, 2002). However, they still have limitations, such as the answers being subjective and dependent on memory. Future studies of own-life moving experiences can be conducted using longitudinal experiments in which participants respond to each examination in real-time.

Third, alternative interpretations of our results could also be considered. For instance, we interpret the result that the Chinese experienced more guilt and shame than the Japanese as constituting a release from mainstream cultural characteristics. However, Bedford (2004) and Bedford and Hwang (2003) stated that the Chinese have an extremely strong sense of responsibility to their family and friends, which makes

¹¹ The item for *ethically acceptable* showed the same pattern of being higher for the Japanese and Chinese participants than for the Germans, but this was not significant.

them easily feel guilty, and they also easily feel ashamed for their actions or lack of actions toward important others. In a future study, variables such as a sense of responsibility to close relationships need to be included and controlled to confirm or disconfirm our results.

Conclusion

The present study is the first to explore the details of the cultural differences in the emotional state of being moved. Own-life moving experiences among Japanese, Chinese, and Germans were examined. Our results showed that cultural differences exist in eliciting events, affective aspects, and cognitive appraisals (while and right after being moved), whereas the above features of each country differ from their mainstream cultural characteristics. These results suggest that being moved may magnify people's cognitive and emotional range and even transcend their cultural characteristics.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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