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Cross-Cultural Analysis of Social Exclusion

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Abstract

Previous studies have investigated the emotions and behaviors in the ambiguous exclusion from social perceivers' points of view. Present study continues to find the clear-cut condition versus the preferential condition to understand how excluders are perceived by includers. In addition, the study looks into the differences of social exclusion in cross-cultural scenarios. Therefore, the study uses 2 (Perspective: Clearcut, Interest) x 2 (Culture: Independent, Interdependent) design to find the interactions between cultures and conditions. The excluder is being perceived as acting more 'exclusively' in the clear-cut condition than in the interest condition. Includers may have more exclusive behavioral intentions in interest situations, but not in clear-cut situations. However, there is no report about social preferences. These may reveal some interesting findings from the view of self-protection and ingroup vs. outgroup views to explain why includers' actions are different from what they think. This study can deeper our understanding of social exclusion from includers' perspectives. Further studies can find out other different factors and contexts affecting includers' perception on ostracism.

Keywords

Ostracism; Social exclusion; Cross-culture; Social preferences; Behavioral intentions.

1. Introduction

Social exclusion makes those people who are ostracized feel hurt because people have strong needs to belong to and build connections with groups (Critcher and Zayas, 2014) [1]. People are highly sensitive to ostracism, which can results in negative consequences in cognitions and behaviors. This is related with experience of the social pain that resembles to the physical pain (Morese et al., 2019) [2]. Current studies focus more on the rejected's or observers' perspectives to ostracism. Involuntary excluder effect (IEE) suggests that individuals perceive includers as excluders. Social perceivers think that includers are seen more liking the excluder than the rejected, and this tends to happen in the future (Critcher et al., 2014). Ostracism detection system allows humans to detect dangerous situations efficiently and quickly, but it may trigger indiscriminate behaviors without an actual social threat because it is more costly to fail to detect a dangerous situation than falsely detect it (Critcher et al., 2014).

Some reasons why observers perceived in this way may result from three motives. Observers can attribute ostracism as a punitive motive, a malicious motive, or a role-prescribed motive (Rudert and Greifeneder, 2019) [3]. Punitive motive means that observers believe the ostracism situation relating to something wrong with the target (Rudert et al., 2019). They may regard the target as a troublemaker who is supposed to responsible for being ostracized. Malicious motive suggests that observers attribute ostracism as ingroup favoritism, racism, or selfishness (Rudert et al., 2019). The third possible motive is role-prescribed ostracism, which interprets the exclusion target as being related to their social norm and social role, and observers do not even regard this situation as ostracism (Rudert et al., 2019). These interpretations and mechanisms of ostracism helps us understand how social perceivers interpret such situation.

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Many researchers interpret and analyze different behaviors of ostracism to understand the mechanisms of social exclusion in observers' perspective. Some studies suggest that people are likely to deny prospective members' access because this behavior does not go against common group norms, whereas removing members from the group does (Rudert et al., 2019). Some argue that people treat current group members as ingroup while perspective members as outgroup, so they tend to prefer ingroup members and have "ingroup positivity bias" (Rudert et al., 2019). Others also argue that people have a tendency not to change the status quo, so they are not likely to change their group's composition. Therefore, they are likely to deny prospective members' access for keeping the status quo (Rudert et al., 2019). However, more ostracism contexts and situations from different perspectives need to be investigated in order to better understand the mechanism of social exclusion.

Ostracism would be perceived differently within different cultural settings because social interactions are different cross-cultural settings. Several studies compare individual-level rejection sensitivity between East Asians and European Americans (Uskul and Over, 2017) [4]. They find that collectivistic East Asians have higher individual-level rejection sensitivity than individualistic European Americans. However, most studies find that collective culture is less negatively affected by ostracism (Uskul et al., 2017). They find that collectivistic cultural groups are less negatively affected by ostracism than individualistic cultural groups. This could suggest that individuals with background of interdependent cultures respond to ostracism differently from individuals with background of independent cultures in terms of social interaction. Recent studies also investigated individuals response to ostracism in a given culture (socially interdependently vs. socially independently) (Uskul et al., 2017). The study shows that individuals with more socially independent orientation are more likely to have higher antisocial reactions to exclusion than inclusion, but there is no such difference for their behavior intentions for individuals with more socially interdependent orientations (Uskul et al., 2017). These illustrate that the experience of ostracism differs among different cultural groups.

Critcher and Zayas (2014) have found that included individuals do not report having inclusive behavioral intentions. However, recent work suggests that included individuals may have preferences for the excluder who rejects other. The present study takes included individuals' perspectives to perceive excluders' perspectives, which is different from many previous studies using the perspectives of observers or excluders. Moreover, this study focuses on social exclusion under two different exclusion conditions to see whether and when ostracism detection system could be triggered when it comes to an ambiguous exclusion or a clear one. We compared these two conditions between two cultures (China vs. the U.S.). The aims of the study are to examine how included persons perceived excluders and the rejected persons under clear-cut condition compared with that in the interest condition, and how these perceptions and judgments differ between independent and interdependent culture orientations. Current studies show that individuals with high level of social interdependence may have more chronic cognitive accessibility to positive social representations, which functions as a buffer to protecting them from negative consequences related with ostracism because of having nature of social bonds (Uskul et al., 2017). However, individuals from a more individualistic culture do not have much these social bonds, so they may feel more painful when encountering ostracism.

Many studies suggests some theories from the perspective of excluders and observers in terms of social exclusion, but little research reveals includers' perspectives of this similar social interaction under different conditions. What's more, collectivistic culture and high levels of social interdependence are related with less negative responses to ostracism (Uskul et al., 2017). This may show that social exclusion is varied across-cultures and different contexts. In this study, we expect that excluders from the independent culture in the clear-cut condition will be perceived as being more "exclusive" than they are in the interest condition. Second, excluders in the clear-cut exclusion could be perceived as having more exclusive social

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preferences than in the interest exclusion, and this difference will be higher in the independence culture than it is in the interdependent culture. Third, we also expect that participants (includers) in the interest condition will have more exclusive social preferences in the independent culture. Forth, participants (includers) in the interest exclusion will have more exclusive behavioral intentions than clear-cut exclusion from the independent culture. Ostracism may cause more pains to the individuals from the background of individualistic culture than individuals than those from the of collectivistic culture, so we anticipate that participants with a more independent culture would feel more discomfortable in the clear-cut condition than they do in the interest condition. Finally, we expect that excluder's actions in the clear-cut exclusion could be perceived as being more motivated by disliking of the rejected than liking of the included in the independent culture.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and Design

The study recruited Chinese participants from a Chinese social media, and American participants were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk. There were total 137 Chinese participants (M = 27.3, SD = 1, of which 69.0% female, 28.7% male, age range: 13-66, 97.7% Asian), and 372 American participants (M = 27.3, SD = 1, of which 41.4% female, 58.6% male, age range: 18-76, 72.8% White; 11.3% Black; 6.4% Asian). Participants were randomly assigned into two different social scenarios and completed self-report. The study combined Chi-squared test and two-way ANOVA 2 (Perspective: Clearcut, Interest) x 2 (Culture: Independent, Interdependent) design to measure different scores between the clear-cut condition and interest condition from two cultures. The procedure of this study was approved by the ethics committee of the Cornell University. The analyses were commenced after data collection was finished.

2.2. Procedure and Materials

Chinese participants clicked a link to complete the study via social media, and American participants completed the study via Amazon Mechanical Turk. They read and confirm the informed consent before starting the experiment. The experiment consisted of questionnaires about different social interactions and personal information report about participants. In reality they completed the task alone, but participants were in two different banquet scenes with two programmed participants. Participants were randomly assigned to clear-cut or interest conditions. In both conditions, they were attending a banquet dinner for a new organization. They sat down for dinner with Person A and Person B, who were two people of their same sex and were not known by them before. In the clear-cut condition, Person A (excluder) was talking to the participant (includer), and had shifted his/her body to exclude Person B (rejected person) from the conversation. In the interest condition. Person A (excluder) showed more interested in what the participant had said compared to what Person B (rejected person) had said. They were asked to evaluate their feelings about interactions with other two participants under two different conditions. In addition, participants were asked to invite Person A or Person B or both to watch a movie a few weeks later, and then reported their feelings about these two persons. They finally completed self-evaluation about their personality and cultural values, and provided their own personal information including their gender, identities, and ages.

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2.3. Dependent Variables

2.3.1. The Excluder Acted 'Exclusively'

The dependent variable is to the extent to which the excluder acted 'exclusively' perceived by participants (e.g., Did Person A act "exclusively"?, 1 = Not at all, 9 = completely). The larger the number is, the more exclusive the includer thinks the excluder's action is.

2.3.2. Excluder's Social Preference

The second dependent variable is the excluder's social preference being perceived by includers. For example, participants were asked how much they thought Person A liked Person B and how much Person A liked them. Responses were made on scales (1 = Not at all, 9 = Very much). The difference score between excluder liking includer and excluder liking the rejected would be how much excluders would be perceived as having exclusive social preferences. The larger the number is, the more excluders will be perceived as having exclusive social preferences.

2.3.3. The Includer's Social Preference

The third dependent variable is the includer's social preference. Participants were asked how much they liked Person A and how much they liked Person B. Responses were also made on scales (1 = Not at all, 9 = Very much). The difference score between the includer liking the excluder and the includer liking the rejected person would be how much the includer's social preference was. The larger the number is, the more includers have social preferences.

2.3.4. The Includer's Behavioral Intentions

The fourth dependent variable is the includer's behavioral intentions, which indicate the preferences for the excluder who rejected the other. Participants were asked to invite only Person A or Person B or Both. Responses were made on scales (1 = Not at all, 9 = Extremely). There is a difference score between the situation when only invite Person A was invited and the one when Both A and B were invited. If the number of person A being invited outweighs the number of person B being invited, it means a higher level of exclusive behavioral intentions of the participants.

2.3.5. The Includer's Discomfort

The dependent variable is includer's discomfort. Two items assessed to what extent the included would feel negatively (awkward, uncomfortable) on 1 (not at all) to 9 (completely) scales. The larger number is, the more includers will feel discomfortable.

2.3.6. The Excluder's Motivations

The last dependent variable is the excluder's motivations. Participants reported to what extent they perceived excluder's actions were motivated by disliking of the rejected, liking of includer, or by chance (1 = Not at all, 9 = completely). There is a difference score between being motivated by disliking of the rejected and by liking of the included. The larger number is, the more excluders will be perceived as being more motivated by disliking the rejected than liking of the included.

3. Results

3.1. The Extent to which the Excluder Acted 'Exclusively'

We hypothesized that excluders from the independent culture in the clear-cut condition would be perceived as being more "exclusive" than in the interest condition. We conducted a 2 (Perspective: Clearcut, Interest) x 2 (Culture: Independent, Interdependent) type III ANOVA. There was a statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures on judging the extent to which the excluder acted 'exclusively, $F(1, 504) = 19.224$, $p < .001$, $\eta p2 = 0.037$. There was a significant main effect of condition, $F(1,504) = 69.638$, $p< .001$, as well as a significant main effect of culture, $F(1,504) = 54.345$. Interestingly, it showed that the excluder

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in the interest exclusion could be perceived as being more 'exclusively' in the independent culture, whereas the excluder was perceived as being less 'exclusively in the interdependent culture. Importantly, there was a significant difference between the clea-rcut condition (M = 6.96, SD = 1.88) and the interest condition (M = 5.69, SD = 2.36) in judging the extent to which the excluder acted 'exclusively' by cultures, t(504) = 8.345, p <.001,d = 0.84. This suggests the excluder was being perceived by culture as acting more 'exclusively' in the clear-cut condition than it was in the interest condition.

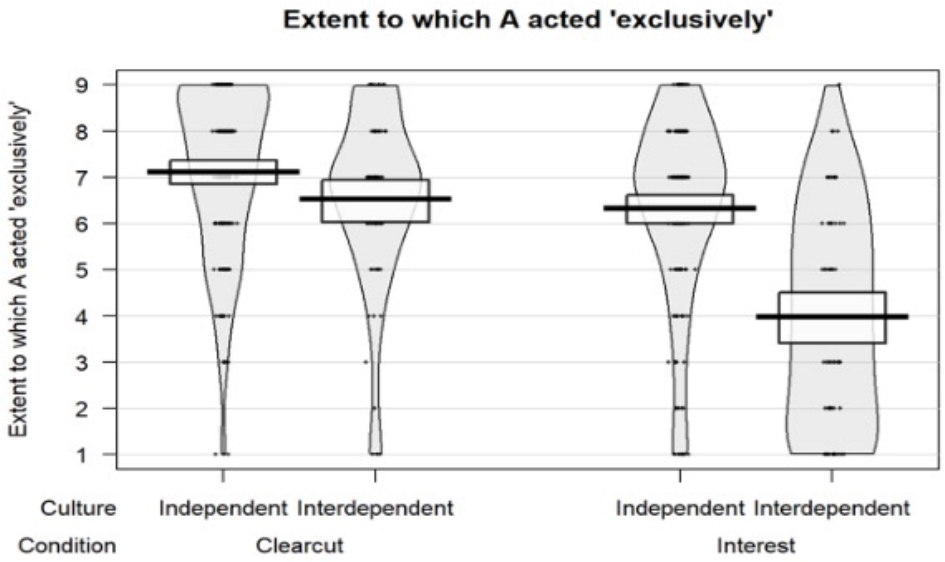

Figure 1. Extent to which A acted 'exclusively'

There was a statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures on judging the extent to which the excluder acted 'exclusively, $F(1, 504) = 19.224$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.037$. There was a significant main effect of condition, $F(1,504) = 69.638$, $p< .001$, as well as a significant main effect of culture, $F(1,504) = 54.345$.

3.2. The Excluder's Social Preference

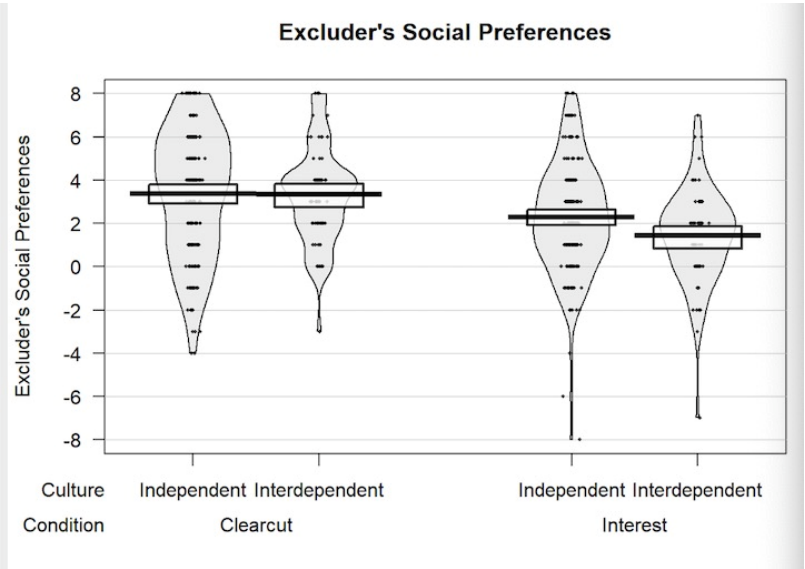

Figure 2. Excluder's Social Preferences

In the hypothesis 2, we expected that excluders in the clear-cut exclusion would be perceived as having more exclusive social preferences than in the interest exclusion. However, there was

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no statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures in the excluder's social preferences, F (1, 505) = 2.416, p = 0.120., ηp2 = 0.005. There was a main effect on how the includer perceive the excluder's social preference in condition F (1, 505) = 16.25, p < .001), whereas there was no main effect in culture (F = 0.01, p = 0.93). We have found that participants in the clear-cut condition (M=3.37, SD = 2.77) have more exclusive social preferences than those in the interest group (M= 2.05, SD = 2.51) by culture, t(505) = 5.738, p < .001, 95% CI [0.99, 2.03], d=0.57. The excluders in the clear-cut exclusion will be perceived as having more exclusive social preferences than in the interest exclusion, but there is no significant difference between two cultures.

There was no statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures in excluder's social preferences, F (1, 505) = 2.416, p = 0.120., ηp2 = 0.005. There was a main effect on how the includer perceived the excluder's social preference in condition F (1, 505) = 16.25, p < .001), whereas there was no main effect in culture (F = 0.01, p = 0.93).

3.3. The Includer's Social Preference

Hypothesis 3 predicted that participants (includers) in the interest condition would be more exclusive in social preferences within the independent culture. There was no statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures in the includer's social preferences, F(1, 505) = 1.894, p = 0.169. There was a main effect on includer's social preference in condition (F (1, 505) = 67.50, p < .001), whereas there was no this main effect in culture F (1, 505) = 1.47, p = 0.23. We found participants in clear-cut condition (M = -1.77, SD = 0.56) had lower social preference (M = - 0.04, SD = 1.83) by cultures, t(505) = -7.149, p < .001, 95% CI [-2.03, -1.16], d = -0.71. Participants (includers) in the interest condition showed no exclusive social preference.

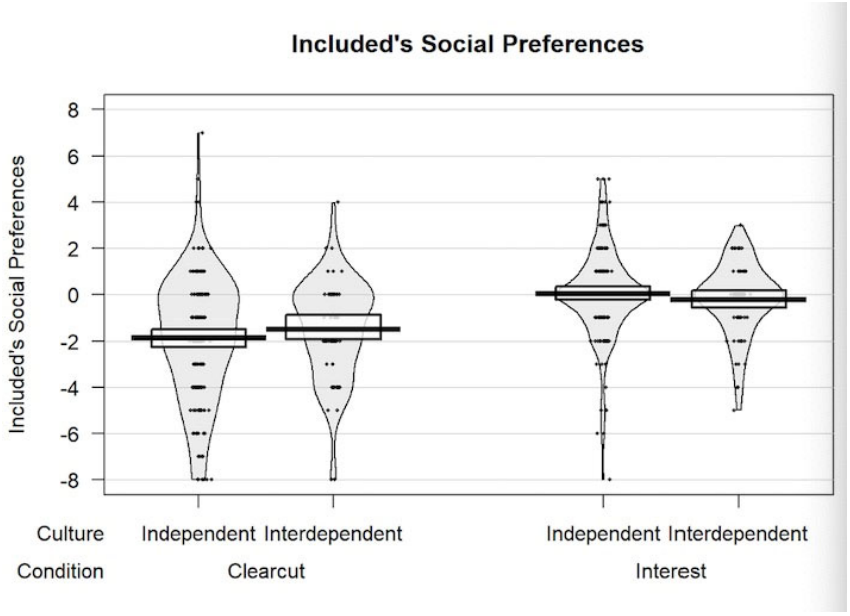

Figure 3. Included Social Preferences

There was no statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures in includer's social preferences, F(1, 505) = 1.894, p = 0.169. There was a main effect on the includer's social preference in condition (F (1, 505) = 67.50, p < .001), whereas there was no this main effect in culture F (1, 505) = 1.47, p = 0.23.

3.4. The Includer's Behavioral Intentions

Hypothesis 4 anticipated that participants (includers) in the interest exclusion would have more exclusive behavioral intentions than clear-cut exclusion from the independent culture. A

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chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between the includer's behavioral intentions and conditions within independent culture. We found that participants in the interest condition had more exclusive behavior attention in the ticketing condition than in the clear-cut condition in the independent culture. X^2 (1, N = 371) =25.56, p < .001.

Table 1. The includer's Behavioral Intentions.

	Excluder	Rejected	Both	Row Totals
Interest independent	92 (73.58) [4.61]	64 (88.30) [6.69]	26 (20.110)[1.72]	182
Clear-cut independent	58 (76.42) [4.44]	116(91.70) [6.44]	15 (20.89) [1.66]	189
Column Totals	150	180	41	371(Grand Totals)

Participants in the interest condition had more exclusive behavior attention in the ticketing condition than in the clear-cut condition in the independent culture. X^2(1, N =371) = 25.56, p< .001.

3.5. The Includer's Discomfort

There was no statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures on includer's discomfort, F(1,504) = 3.453, p = 0.064, ηp2 = 0.007. There was a main effect on includer's discomfort in condition F (1,504) = 51.69, p < .001), whereas there was no this main effect in culture F (1, 504) = 0.14, p = 0.71. There was no statistically significant difference between independent culture (M = 6.17, SD = 2.21) and interdependent culture (M = 5.89, SD = 2.38) in includer's discomfort, t(504) = 1.329, p = 0.185, 95% CI [-0.13, 0.68], d = 0.13. Participants would feel more discomfortable in the clear-cut condition than in the interest condition, but there was no difference between two cultures.

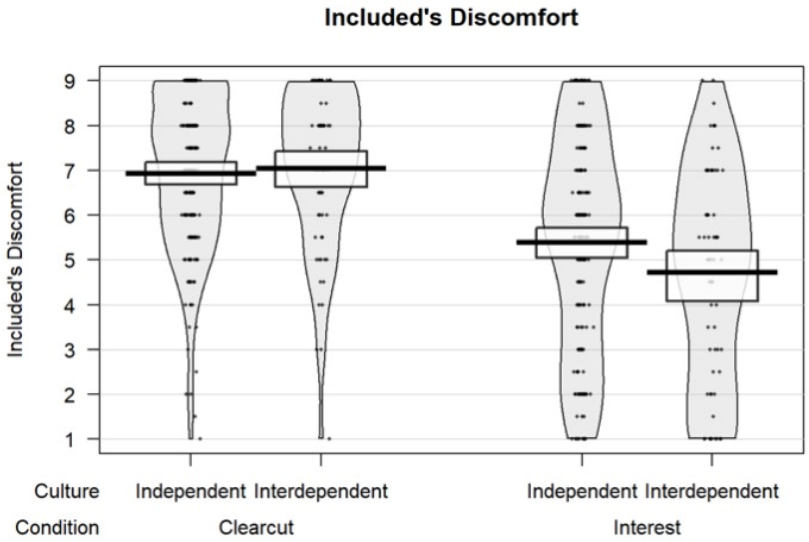

Figure 4. Included's Discomfort

There was no statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures in includer's discomfort, F(1,504) = 3.453, p = 0.064, ηp^2 = 0.007. There was a main effect on includer's discomfort in condition F (1,504) = 51.69, p < .001), whereas there was no this main effect in culture F (1, 504) = 0.14, p = 0.71.

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3.6. The Excluder's Motivations

In the hypothesis 6, we predicted that compared with interest exclusion from independent culture, the excluder's actions in the clear-cut exclusion would be perceived as being more motivated by disliking the rejected than liking of the included. There was no statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures in excluder's motivations, $F(1, 502) = 0.186$, $p = 0.666$. However, there was a main effect on condition $F(1, 502) = 51.69$, $p < .001$ as well as culture $F(1, 502) = 12.66$, $p < .001$) in excluder's motivations. We found that participants in the clear-cut condition ($M = 0.65$, $SD = 2.95$) judged that the excluder was more motivated by disliking of the rejected than liking the included compared to the interest condition ($M = -1.51$, $SD = 2.74$) by culture, $t(502) = 7.880$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.48, 3.24], $d = 0.79$.

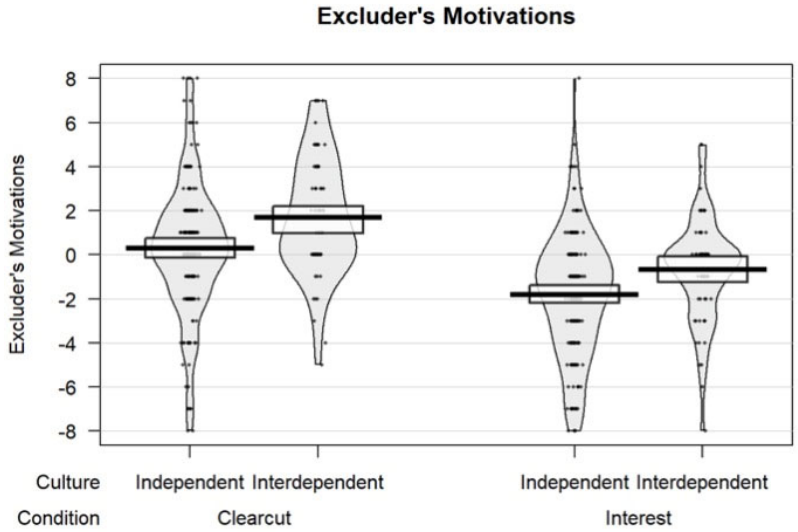

Figure 5. Excluder's Motivations

There was no statistically significant interaction between the effect of conditions and cultures in the excluder's motivations, $F(1, 502) = 0.186$, $p = 0.666$. However, there was a main effect on condition $F(1, 502) = 51.69$, $p < .001$ as well as culture $F(1, 502) = 12.66$, $p < .001$) in the excluder's motivations.

4. Discussion

Overall, we find that condition factor has greater impacts on how includers perceive and act to ostracism than culture factor does. In this study, includers have more exclusive behavioral intentions in the preferential (interest) exclusion. This indicates that they like excluders more than includers. However, there is no report on social preferences of excluders in the interest exclusion. There is an inconsistency between how includers perceive excluders and how they act to excluders. One assumption is that includers tend to regard excluders as ingroup people because they talked more to includers than to the rejected, whereas includers may perceive the rejected as outgroup members. They are likely to stand by ingroup people who talked more to them at the expense of rejecting others, so they show their kindness back to the excluder through invitations in ticketing conditions, which indicates a positive view to ingroup members (Rudert et al., 2019). Another assumption is that includers have self-protection to keep certain distance from the rejected in order to protect themselves from being next targeted and then being ostracized (Rudert et al., 2019). Therefore, they may flatter excluders in order to show their kindness to them through invitations.

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Another important finding is that excluders are perceived as acting 'exclusively' in but in different ways in different cultures. Specifically, it shows that excluders in the interest exclusion could be perceived as acting much more 'exclusively' in the independent culture than in the interdependent culture. This may be because socially interdependent participants show good resilience after being excluded compared will socially less independent participants (Uskul et al., 2017). Therefore, they could recover from ostracism better in the interdependent culture than those in the independent culture. Another interpretations could be that collective culture is less negatively affected by ostracism (Uskul et al., 2017). Another study shows that negative emotional states can even be related with positive relationship outcomes for people with interdependent views of the self (Kafetsios et al., 2018) [5]. They therefore show no sensitive views or even show positive views in an ambiguous exclusion.

5. Conclusion

The strength of the study is to test behaviors and perceptions about social exclusion from includers' perspective. The study used 2 (Perspective: Clearcut, Interest) x 2 (Culture: Independent, Interdependent) type III ANOVA to find the interaction between cultures and conditions, and compared within two factors. The limitation of the study includes an asymmetric population comparison between two cultures because there are fewer Chinese samples compared to American samples. Since there are only two cultures involved in this study, these results cannot generalize a result for larger population. The study lacks enough comparisons within gender and age to find out different perspectives in these variables. Despites some limitations, this study can deeper our understanding of social exclusion from includers' perspective. It contributes to further study about therapy and regulations to protect humans from suffering social pains in ostracism in order to improve humans' well-being. Goals of future studies may include investigating more different behaviors and perceptions of includers and finding out the mechanisms of these differences. Moreover, researchers could replicate the study and have more comparisons in cross-culture. They should also investigate other factors that can analyze social exclusion from includers' perspectives, including factors of gender, ages, races and ingroup vs. outgroup. Therefore, more ostracism contexts and situations from different perspectives need to be investigated in order to better understand the mechanism of social exclusion.

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