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Verity Yu Qing LUA
Singapore Management University, verity.lua.2018@socsc.smu.edu.sg

Nadyannam N. MAJEED
Singapore Management University, nadyannam.2017@smu.edu.sg

Andree HARTANTO
Singapore Management University, andreeh@smu.edu.sg

Angela K. Y. LEUNG
Singapore Management University, angelaleung@smu.edu.sg

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Citation

Help-Seeking Tendencies and Subjective Well-Being: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of the United States and Japan

Verity Y. Q. Lua*

Nadyanna M. Majeed

Andree Hartanto

Angela K.-y. Leung

Singapore Management University

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*Corresponding Author:

Verity Y. Q. Lua, Singapore Management University, School of Social Sciences, 90

Stamford Road, Singapore 178903, Singapore. Email: verity.lua.2018@socsc.smu.edu.sg

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Abstract

Help-seeking is commonly conceived as an instrumental behavior that improves people's subjective well-being. However, most findings supporting a positive association between help-seeking and subjective well-being are observed in independence-preferring countries. Drawing from research demonstrating that the pathways to subjective well-being are culturally divergent (Kitayama, Karasawa, et al. 2010), we posit that help-seeking tendencies may be detrimental to subjective well-being for members in interdependence-preferring countries where norms for preserving relational harmony and face concerns are prevalent. This study tested the moderating role of country in the relationship between help-seeking tendencies and subjective well-being using data from 5,068 American and Japanese participants. Results revealed that while help-seeking tendencies were associated with greater life satisfaction, higher positive affect, and lower negative affect among Americans, help-seeking tendencies were associated with poorer life satisfaction and lower positive affect among Japanese. We discussed the importance of adopting culturally sensitive perspectives when examining antecedents of subjective well-being.

Keywords

help-seeking tendencies, subjective well-being, interdependent culture, independent culture, cultural differences

Attaining high levels of life satisfaction or well-being is an important life goal for many people (Tay, Kuykendall, and Diener 2015). The experience of subjective well-being pertains to people's cognitive judgements and affective reactions about their life (Diener 1984:542). Thus, those with higher subjective well-being tend to show higher levels of life satisfaction, higher levels of pleasant emotions, and lower levels of unpleasant emotions (Haybron 2020; Proctor 2014). As subjective well-being has been associated with a host of social and health benefits (for a review, see Diener, Oishi, and Tay 2018), understanding the key to higher subjective well-being has become an important research agenda for many social and behavioral scientists. Several predictors of subjective well-being have been identified, such as the personality trait of extraversion was found to positively predict trait positive affect (Lucas and Diener 2009) and life satisfaction (Schimmack et al. 2004) and neuroticism to negatively predict life satisfaction (Schimmack et al. 2004). People's prosocial behavioral tendencies were also shown to improve one's life satisfaction and positive affect (Akin et al. 2013).

Notably, research suggests that not all predictors of subjective well-being are culturally universal, especially when these predictors are associated with different meanings when comparing between independence-preferring countries—which emphasize the pursuit of personal goals and an attendant sense of the self as efficacious and in-control—and interdependence-preferring countries—which emphasize the fulfilment of the needs and expectations of social others and the avoidance of relational strain and tension (Kitayama, Markus, and Kurokawa 2010; Kwan, Bond, and Singelis 1997). Such culturally differential impacts can be explained by Kitayama, Karasawa and colleagues' (2010) *culturally divergent modes of being* hypothesis, which proposes that culture has a normative influence on the relationship between predictors of well-being and individuals' subjective well-being. Specifically, engaging in behaviors that adhere to the social norms of a culture is more likely

to improve people's subjective well-being. For instance, whereas research showed that achieving a sense of personal control is one strong predictor of well-being in independence-preferring countries, promoting relational harmony is a strong predictor of well-being in interdependence-preferring countries (Kitayama, Karasawa, et al. 2010).

Whereas this finding demonstrates that different normative behaviors (achieving personal control vs. promoting relational harmony) positively predict subjective well-being in different cultures, it would be important to examine the possibility of a given tendency that positively predicts subjective well-being in one culture, but fails to predict or even negatively predicts subjective well-being in another culture, possibly because the associated behavior is linked to vastly different meaning representations, value imperatives, and expectations across the two cultures. We hypothesize that one such tendency is the tendency to seek help.

Help-seeking has been of interest to the psychology community (e.g., Gourash 1978) given its relationship with a host of positive outcomes in numerous domains, including educational, socioemotional, and health benefits (Vidourek et al. 2014; for a review, see Heerde and Hemphill 2018). In this light, a large body of the literature has examined the link between help-seeking (attitudes and behavior) with subjective well-being, which generally supports a positive association between help-seeking and subjective well-being (e.g., Best, Manktelow, and Taylor 2014; Hubbard et al. 2018). Additionally, although researchers have also identified different domains of help-seeking such as instrumental help-seeking (e.g., seeking tangible support such as financial aid) and socioemotional help-seeking (e.g., seeking comfort from friends; Skinner et al. 2003; Vélez et al. 2016), current works suggest that both types of help-seeking appear to have similar beneficial effects on one's sense of well-being (Bamberger 2009). Indeed, there is a general consensus in the literature that help-seeking is beneficial for individuals and should be encouraged (e.g., Goodwin et al. 2016; Yousaf, Grunfeld, and Hunter 2013). Such findings are unsurprising because help-seeking is widely

considered an instrumental behavior that facilitates goal attainment or adaptive problem-solving (Best et al. 2014; Nadler 1990). However, these findings supporting a positive relationship between help-seeking and subjective well-being were mainly informed by western samples coming from independence-preferring countries (e.g., the United States; Best et al. 2014; Goodwin et al. 2016; Hubbard et al. 2018).

The tendency to seek help may be disadvantageous in collectivistic-preferring countries as the costs of help-seeking are particularly salient in these countries. Help-seeking is more likely to be deemed incompatible with the culture's social norms of preserving interpersonal harmony and maintaining the relational status quo. Specifically, help-seeking can incur both interpersonal and intrapersonal costs to the help seeker (Lim, Teo, and Zhao 2013). Help-seeking incurs interpersonal costs as the help giver might experience discomfort arising from the help seeker's problems being imposed on them, in turn disrupting the relationship equilibrium and negatively impacting the relationship (Lim et al. 2013). In interdependent cultures, such costs are more prominent because of the stronger emphasis on maintaining harmonious social relationships and upholding a relational self. The relational impacts of seeking help were demonstrated in a study, which showed that individuals from interdependence-preferring cultures (Asians and Asian Americans) were less likely than those from independence-preferring cultures (European Americans) to report that they seek social support in the face of stressors, due to interpersonal concerns of disrupting relational harmony and intrapersonal concerns of losing face (Taylor et al. 2004). In a tightly knit relational network, it is likely that seeking help inevitably means owing people a favor and the favor is expected to be reciprocated in the future. Such hefty costs associated with help-seeking can account for why receiving social support actually made Asian participants feel more, rather than less, stressed (Liang and Bogat 1994; Taylor et al. 2007).

In addition, the strong concerns of "face" and others' evaluations in interdependence-preferring countries (Oetzel and Ting-Toomey 2003; Zane and Yeh 2002) also incur intrapersonal costs. As seeking help signifies one's incompetence, dependence, and inferiority, and puts one at risk of negative evaluations by others (Lee 1997; Lim et al. 2013; Lin 2002), people in interdependence-preferring countries may feel hesitant to seek help so as to protect their "face". Indeed, previous work has supported this contention. Numerous studies (e.g., Ina and Morita 2015; Mojaverian, Hashimoto, and Kim 2013) have suggested that Japanese participants show less favorable attitudes towards help-seeking compared to American participants due to concerns about what others might think should they engage in help-seeking. Furthermore, in a recent study by Ishii et al. (2017), it was found that Japanese participants expected to experience strong feelings of guilt and shame after receiving help. Taken together, accounting for the role of culture in encouraging or deterring help-seeking will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the relationship between help-seeking and subjective well-being across cultures, thus revealing a new set of culturally distinct pathways for subjective well-being.

In line with the hypothesis that help-seeking tendencies might be disadvantageous in collectivistic-preferring countries, preliminary research has indeed suggested that help-seeking is associated with culturally differential health outcomes. In an experimental study by Taylor and colleagues (2007), they found that Asian participants asked to write a letter to explicitly seek advice and support from people they were close to experienced significantly more stress (as measured by cortisol levels) subsequently compared to those assigned to write about other things such as the characteristics of a close friend group, or landmarks around a university campus. This trend was however not observed among European Americans. While their findings suggest that help-seeking is disadvantageous for Asian individuals' momentary

stress, the research was not able to tell whether help-seeking is indeed disadvantageous for Asians over a longer-term basis in terms of lowering their well-being.

The current research seeks to examine whether the relationship between help-seeking tendencies—as measured by people's attitude of whether they feel comfortable with seeking help—and the three components of subjective well-being, namely life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Diener 1984; Proctor 2014) would differ across countries with differing cultures (i.e., interdependence-preferring countries versus interdependence-preferring countries). Despite the differences between help-seeking attitudes and behavior, research has suggested that attitudes and actual behavior are very often significantly moderately correlated (Kraus, 1995; Wallace et al. 2005; Kim and Hunter 1993; Bamberg and Moser 2007). Research specifically on help-seeking has also shown that help-seeking attitudes and comfort in help-seeking significantly predict help-seeking behavior on a day-to-day basis (Kaniasty and Norris 2000; Mojtabai et al. 2016). Thus, if help-seeking behaviors are more costly than beneficial for individuals in interdependence-preferring countries, we would expect to observe that attitudes favoring help-seeking is also disadvantageous in these countries (e.g., Japan) and can negatively predict people's subjective well-being. Together, the current research sets out to add new understanding to this area of studies by examining whether there are culturally distinct pathways between help-seeking tendencies and subjective well-being.

The parallel projects of Midlife in the United States II (MIDUS 2) and Midlife in Japan (MIDJA) offer a valuable opportunity for conducting a rigorous cross-country comparison between an independence-preferring country (the United States) and an interdependence-preferring country (Japan; Kitayama, Karasawa, et al. 2010; Levine et al. 2016; Taylor et al. 2004) with large representative samples and equivalent measures. Based on Kitayama, Karasawa, and colleagues (2010), we predicted that help-seeking tendencies

would be positively associated with subjective well-being among American participants. This is in light of the instrumentality of help-seeking in aiding individuals in achieving their personal goals and aspirations or solving problems they personally encounter, which are expectations in line with the ideals of independence-preferring cultures. In contrast, we predicted that help-seeking tendencies would be negatively associated with subjective well-being among Japanese participants given the intra- and interpersonal strain associated with help-seeking. We also hypothesized that the moderating role of country would remain significant after controlling for factors that have been previously found to significantly influence one's sense of subjective well-being. Specifically, we controlled for participants' demographics (Lucas and Gohm 2000), socioeconomic status (Sacks, Stevenson, and Wolfers 2010; Tan et al. 2020), and their Big Five personality traits (Anglim et al. 2020). In line with Yzerbyt, Muller, and Judd's (2004) recommendations, we also controlled for the interaction terms between country and these covariates.

METHODS

Participants

The current study analyzed the data of 5,068 respondents from the parallel MIDUS 2 (N = 4,041) and MIDJA (N = 1,027) projects (Ryff et al. 2007, 2011). The MIDUS 2 Project was conducted in 2004 to 2006 as a follow up to the first MIDUS study conducted in 1995. The MIDUS projects involved national probability samples recruited through random sampling across the United States. A total of 4,963 American adults completed MIDUS 2, but only a subset (N = 4,041) completed both the phone interview and self-administered questionnaire components, which included the data required for the purpose of the current study. The MIDJA project, conducted in 2008 in Japan, was a parallel project modelled after the MIDUS project. The current study analyzed data of the MIDJIA project involving a probability

sample of 1,027 Japanese adults from the Tokyo metropolitan area. The sample descriptive statistics are reported in Table 1.[1]

[Table 1 about here]

Measures

Life satisfaction. Life satisfaction was measured in MIDUS 2 and MIDJA using six items assessing domain-specific life satisfaction (Prenda and Lachman 2001). Participants rated their satisfaction with their overall life, work, health, relationship with their spouse/partner, relationship with their children, and financial situation on a 11-point Likert scale (0 = the worst possible to 10 = the best possible). We used the calculated scores provided in the MIDUS and MIDJA data sets, whereby the scores on the spouse and children items were averaged to form one score and aggregated with the other four items to produce a composite index representing participants' general life satisfaction. The life satisfaction score was calculated for all participants with a valid response on at least one item, such that for those with missing data on one or more items, each item weighted more in their overall life satisfaction score. For example, if participants responded to only the items concerning their overall satisfaction with life and work, their responses on these two items were averaged to compute their life satisfaction score (α_{MIDUS2} = .71, α_{MIDJA} = .76). This helped to minimize the effect of missing data in the current study.

Positive and negative affect. Positive and negative affect were assessed independently using six items each. Participants were asked to indicate how much they felt a certain emotion (e.g., "cheerful" for positive affect, "nervous" for negative affect) in the past 30 days on a 5-point scale (1 = none of the time to 5 = all of the time). Responses were coded such that higher scores indicated higher levels of positive or negative affect. Given that affect was measured based on a 30-day time period, this measurement reflects participants' relatively stable affective experiences (i.e., trait affect; Hudson, Lucas, and Donnellan 2017). Internal

consistency was high for both positive affect ($\alpha_{\text{MIDUS2}} = .91$, $\alpha_{\text{MIDJA}} = .93$) and negative affect ($\alpha_{\text{MIDUS2}} = .85$, $\alpha_{\text{MIDJA}} = .86$) across the two samples.

Help-seeking tendencies. Help-seeking tendencies were assessed using the self-sufficiency scale in MIDUS 2 and MIDJA. Participants were asked to indicate how well the statements "Asking others for help comes naturally for me" and "I don't like to ask others for help unless I have to" (reversed) described them on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = a lot to 4 = not at all). Due to the relatively low internal consistency of the two-item measure ($\alpha_{\text{MIDUS2}} = .62$, $\alpha_{\text{MIDJA}} = .44$), both items were also analyzed independently (i.e., as separate independent variables) as part of sensitivity analyses.[2] Notably, the results of the sensitivity analyses were similar to those reported in the manuscript (which used help-seeking tendencies as a composite measure) except for some differences when negative affect as an outcome variable was analyzed. We report the sensitivity analyses on negative affect in the results section below. In the current study, responses to the two help-seeking tendency items were coded such that a higher score indicated a greater comfort in seeking help.

Socioeconomic status. Objective socioeconomic status was computed using their highest educational qualification attained and household income. As per previous studies using MIDUS 2 and MIDJA data (e.g., Hartanto, Lau, and Yong 2020; Kitayama et al. 2015; Park et al. 2013), educational attainment was standardized across both countries using a 7-point scale (1 = 8th grade, junior high school, 7 = attended or graduated from graduate school) and occupational status using a 3-point scale (1 = blue-collar job, 2 = white-collar job, 3 = managerial or professional job). Educational attainment and occupational status were then standardized within each country, and participants' objective socioeconomic status was obtained by standardizing the average of the two scores within country.[3] Subjective socioeconomic status was measured using a ladder scale (Adler et al. 2000). Participants ranked their standing in the community on a ladder with 10 rungs, with the top rung

representing people with the highest standing in their community. The term "community"

was not defined; instead, participants were told to define community in whatever way that is

most meaningful to them.

      Personality traits. Big Five personality traits (agreeableness, conscientiousness,

extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience; McCrae and Costa 1985) were

measured with a set of 26 descriptive adjectives specifically developed for the MIDUS

project (Lachman and Weaver 1997). The scale has good construct validity and significantly

correlates with the NEO-Five Factor Inventory (Lachman 2005; Prenda and Lachman 2001;

Turiano et al. 2012). Each of the five traits were scored on a 4-point scale, with higher scores

indicating a higher standing in each trait. The Cronbach's alphas for each of the traits were:

agreeableness (five items; $\alpha_{MIDUS2} = .80$, $\alpha_{MIDJA} = .87$), conscientiousness (five items; α_{MIDUS2}

$= .68$, $\alpha_{MIDJA} = .66$), extraversion (five items; $\alpha_{MIDUS2} = .76$, $\alpha_{MIDJA} = .83$), neuroticism (four

items; $\alpha_{MIDUS2} = .74$, $\alpha_{MIDJA} = .50$), and openness to experience (seven items; $\alpha_{MIDUS2} = .77$,

$\alpha_{MIDJA} = .84$).

Analytic Plan

The current study sought to examine whether countries with different predominant cultures

(i.e., independence-preferring versus interdependence-preferring) would differ in the

relationship between help-seeking tendencies and subjective well-being measures.

Specifically, we took into account all domains of subjective well-being, including life

satisfaction, trait positive affect, and trait negative affect (Diener 1984). To test our

hypotheses, hierarchical linear regressions were conducted in R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team

2020) with life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect entered separately as outcome

variables, help-seeking tendencies as the predictor variable, and country as the moderating

variable. A disordinal relationship between help-seeking tendencies and subjective well-being

across the two countries would support our hypothesis that the relationship between help-

seeking tendencies and subjective well-being differ across the interdependence-preferring country and the independence-preferring country. Simple slopes were computed using the procedure recommended by Holmbeck (2002). Country was dummy coded with the U.S. (the independence-preferring culture) set as the reference category. Both categorical covariates (gender and marital status) were dummy coded with female and non-married being the reference categories. To prevent bias arising from missing data (0.60 percent across all variables; Nguyen et al. 2018), 10 imputed datasets were created using an Expectation-Maximization Algorithm through the R package Amelia version 1.7.6 (Honaker, King, and Blackwell 2011) as per established statistical guidelines (Sidi and Harel 2018).[4]

Four models were estimated for each of the three outcome variables (life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect). In the first model, we estimated an unadjusted model with help-seeking tendencies, country, and their interaction term as the predictors of subjective well-being without any covariates. In the second model, we controlled for demographic variables (age, gender, and marital status) that may affect subjective well-being (González Gutiérrez et al. 2005). We further controlled for objective and subjective SES in the third model in light of previous literature suggesting their associations with subjective well-being (Navarro-Carrillo et al. 2020; Tan et al. 2020). Lastly, in the fourth model, we additionally controlled for the Big Five personality traits to ensure that our results were not an artefact of the established relationship between personality traits and subjective well-being (Lucas and Diener 2009). In order to ensure the robustness of our moderation results, in all models, we entered the interaction terms between the dummy-coded country variable and each of the covariates that were included in the model (Yzerbyt et al. 2004). The full R script for the analysis can be accessed at https://researchbox.org/158.

RESULTS

Life Satisfaction

[Table 2 about here]

First, we conducted a moderation analysis to investigate the interaction between help-seeking tendencies and country on life satisfaction. Consistent with our prediction, in our unadjusted model, we found a significant two-way interaction between help-seeking tendencies and country on life satisfaction ($\beta = -.08$, $b = -0.34$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI = [-0.46, -0.22], $p < .001$). Notably, we found that this two-way interaction was consistent after taking into account demographic factors in Model 2, objective and subjective socioeconomic status in Model 3, and personality traits in Model 4 (ps $\leq .003$; Table 2). These results remained significant when the two help-seeking tendency items were entered in the models as separate independent variables rather than as a composite measure (ps $< .020$).[5]

[Figure 1 about here]

To further probe these interactions, we conducted simple slopes analyses on all four models.[6] We found that for American participants, help-seeking tendencies were positively associated with life satisfaction in Models 1 to 3 ($\beta = [.05, .16]$, $b = [0.09, 0.20]$, ps $< .001$), and Model 4, albeit not reaching statistical significance ($\beta = .03$, $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI = [-0.001, 0.093], $p = .056$; Figure 1).[7] On the other hand, for Japanese participants, help-seeking tendencies were negatively associated with life satisfaction in Models 1 to 4 ($\beta = [-.08, -.07]$, $b = [-0.14, -0.12]$, ps $\leq .018$). Comparing the effect sizes of simple slopes in the final model (Figure 1), it appeared that there was a larger (negative) association between help-seeking tendencies and life satisfaction among Japanese participants compared to the (positive) association between help-seeking tendencies and life satisfaction observed among American participants. These findings suggest that while help-seeking tendencies are

positively associated with life satisfaction among American individuals, it is instead

negatively associated with life satisfaction among Japanese individuals.

Positive Affect

[Table 3 about here]

Similar to the findings on life satisfaction, country was a significant moderator of the

relationship between help-seeking tendencies and positive affect in the unadjusted Model 1 (β

$= -.11$, $b = -0.24$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI = $[-0.31, -0.17]$, $p < .001$). This finding held consistent

after taking into account age, gender, and marital status in Model 2, socioeconomic status in

Model 3, and personality traits in Model 4 (ps $< .001$; Table 3). These results remained

significant when help-seeking tendency items were entered in the models as separate

independent variables rather than as a composite measure (ps $< .001$).[8]

[Figure 2 about here]

An interaction between help-seeking tendencies and country was observed in all

models. Simple slopes analyses revealed that help-seeking tendencies was significantly

associated with higher positive affect for American participants in Model 1 to 4 ($\beta =$

$[.06, .17]$, $b = [0.05, 0.14]$, ps $< .001$), but lower positive affect for Japanese participants in

Model 1 to 4 ($\beta = [-.12, -.08]$, $b = [-0.10, -0.07]$, ps $\leq .006$). Comparing the effect sizes of

simple slopes in the final model (Figure 2), it appeared that there was a larger (negative)

association between help-seeking tendencies and positive affect among Japanese participants

compared to the (positive) association between help-seeking tendencies and positive affect

observed among American participants. Similar to the findings on life satisfaction, these

results suggest that help-seeking tendencies are positively associated with positive affect for

American individuals, but negatively associated with positive affect for Japanese individuals.

Negative Affect

[Table 4 about here]

Lastly, we found that the association between help-seeking tendencies and negative affect was significantly different between the two countries, as indicated by the significant interaction term between help-seeking tendencies and country in the unadjusted Model 1 ($\beta = .07$, $b = 0.12$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI = [0.06, 0.17], $p < .001$). This finding was consistent after controlling for the various covariates in Model 2, Model 3, and Model 4 ($ps \leq .008$; Table 4).

[Figure 3 about here]

Simple slopes analyses revealed that help-seeking tendencies were associated with less negative affect for American participants in Models 1 to 4 ($\beta = [-.14, -.03]$, $b = [-0.10, -0.02]$, $ps \leq .032$). However, help-seeking tendencies were not significantly associated with negative affect for Japanese participants in all four Models ($\beta = [.03, .06]$, $b = [0.02, 0.05]$, $ps \geq .056$). Hence, while help-seeking tendencies were significantly and negatively associated with negative affect for American individuals, we did not find any association between help-seeking tendencies and negative affect for Japanese individuals (Figure 3).

Sensitivity analyses were conducted by examining the two help-seeking items as independent predictor variables rather than as a composite measure.[9] When the item "I don't like to ask others for help unless I have to" (reversed) was used as the independent variable, we found a significant interaction between help-seeking tendencies and country in all four models ($ps < .001$). Among American participants, help-seeking tendencies were negatively associated with negative affect in Models 1 to 4 ($\beta = [-.14, -.05]$, $b = [-0.09, -0.03]$, $ps < .001$). In contrast, among Japanese participants, help-seeking tendencies were positively associated (albeit not reaching statistical significance) with negative affect in Model 1 ($\beta = .06$, $b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI = [-0.001, 0.071], $p = .059$), and after controlling for covariates in Models 2 to 4 ($\beta = [.06, .08]$, $b = [0.04, 0.05]$, $ps \leq .019$). Comparing the effect sizes of simple slopes in the final model, it appeared that there was a larger (positive) association ($\beta = .06$) between help-seeking tendencies (as measured by the reversed item "I

don't like to ask others for help unless I have to") and negative affect among Japanese participants compared to the (negative) association ($|\beta|$ = .05) between help-seeking tendencies and negative affect observed among American participants.

In contrast, when the item "Asking others for help comes naturally for me" was used as the independent variable, we found that there was no significant interaction between help-seeking tendencies and country (ps > .058). Among American participants, help-seeking tendencies were negatively associated with negative affect in Models 1 and 2 (β = [–.09, –.07], b = [–0.05, –0.04], ps < .001), but to a non-significant extent in Models 3 and 4 (β = [–.03, .00], b = [–0.02, 0.00], ps > .105). This suggested that the negative association between help-seeking tendencies and negative affect among Americans were driven largely by participants' willingness to seek help (i.e., participants' responses towards the reversed item "I don't like to ask others for help unless I have to"), rather than whether asking others for help came naturally to them. In contrast, among Japanese participants, help-seeking tendencies as measured by participant's responses to the item "asking others for help comes naturally for me" was not associated with negative affect in Models 1 to 4 (β = [–.03, .01], b = [–0.02, 0.01], ps > .363). We will further discuss this interesting difference between the two help-seeking items in the discussion section.

DISCUSSION

Based on two large representative samples recruited in the United States and Japan, the current study provides the first evidence supporting the role of culture as a moderator in the relation between help-seeking tendencies and subjective well-being. Among American respondents, help-seeking tendencies were generally associated with improved life satisfaction, increased positive trait affect, and decreased negative trait affect. In contrast, among Japanese respondents, help-seeking tendencies were generally associated with poorer life satisfaction and decreased positive trait affect. Even after controlling for demographic

variables, personality traits, and the interaction terms between the covariates and country, the two-way interaction between help-seeking tendencies and country on subjective well-being remained largely significant, providing strong support for our hypothesized moderation models. Taken together, adding to existing studies mainly informed by independence-preferring western cultures, the current research suggests that help-seeking may not always confer benefits for people's subjective well-being if they come from an interdependence-preferring culture. Indeed, the current findings are in line with existing empirical research suggesting that Asian individuals are less likely to seek help due to relational concerns (Taylor et al. 2004). Furthermore, it contributes to the growing body of literature supporting the proposition of culturally distinct pathways to subjective well-being (Kitayama, Karasawa, et al. 2010).

Although help-seeking has been shown to offer a host of positive outcomes in independence-preferring cultures, few studies have examined the advantages and disadvantages of help-seeking in interdependence-preferring cultures. On the one hand, help-seeking can be a largely advantageous strategy to help people achieve goals or solve problems; on the other hand, help-seeking can result in relational strain and thus incur pertinent intra- and interpersonal costs. The current results support our hypothesis that help-seeking tendencies confer more well-being benefits when the outcomes implicated in help-seeking are more aligned with the culture's mandates, in line with previous research suggesting that culture has a normative influence on well-being (Kitayama, Karasawa, et al. 2010; Wu et al. 2021). These findings are also in line with previous research suggesting that Asian-Americans experienced more relational concerns (Taylor et al., 2004) and psychological stress after seeking help (Taylor et al., 2007). Therefore, higher help-seeking tendencies tend to be associated with improved subjective well-being among Americans

(members of an independence-preferring culture), but lowered subjective well-being among Japanese participants (members of an interdependence-preferring culture).

Alluding to our findings, it is noteworthy that although the composite measure of help-seeking tendencies were associated with lower life satisfaction and positive trait affect in the Japanese sample, the composite help-seeking measure was not associated with negative trait affect. The theoretical significance of this finding is twofold. First, this bolsters evidence from prior research suggesting that different indicator measures of subjective well-being (life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect) are independent constructs (Tov and Diener 2009). Specifically, it is in line with the view that positive affect and negative affect are orthogonal from each other rather than representing two opposite ends of a spectrum (Diener and Emmons 1984). Second, the present finding suggests that help-seeking may undermine positive affect, but not necessarily increase negative affect. Although this finding may appear to be inconsistent with prior studies showing that receiving social support was associated with higher stress levels among Asian participants (Liang and Bogat 1994; Taylor et al. 2007), it should be noted that the items used to measure negative affect in the current study did not include stress. Additionally, whereas Taylor and colleagues' (2007) experiment examined state levels of stress after help-seeking, the current study examined a more trait-like (i.e., more stable) sense of negative affect. As such, it is also possible that help-seeking can lead to temporal increases in stress levels among Asians, but these effects do not emerge when considering their general sense of negative affect. Nonetheless, given that stress has been found to be consistently associated with negative affect (e.g., Cohen, Tyrrell, and Smith 1993; Hamama et al. 2013), it would be insightful to examine how to reconcile these seemingly mixed findings as help-seeking might not be associated with negative affect in general but positively associated with the experience of stress.

Interestingly, sensitivity analyses provide a clearer picture of why help-seeking tendencies were not associated with negative affect among Japanese participants. While the interaction between the reversed item "I don't like to ask others for help unless I have to" and the dummy-coded country variable on negative affect was significant, the interaction between the item "asking others for help comes naturally for me" and the country variable on negative affect was not. It is plausible that being comfortable with asking for help (i.e., feeling natural when seeking help) can buffer against some intra-personal costs of help-seeking among the Japanese. Thus, some Japanese participants do feel more natural about seeking help (but possibly deterred by the cultural norms), and thereby feeling less negative about help-seeking. Relatedly, the recent research by Niiya (2017) also found that Japanese individuals may engage in *amae*—the notion of dependence on others' love or indulgence—during help-seeking. As such, it is possible that Japanese individuals who feel more natural with help-seeking can engage in *amae*, which may buffer against the experience of negative affect when seeking help. This may explain why "asking others for help comes naturally for me" was not significantly associated with negative affect among Japanese participants, and why there was no significant interaction between "asking others for help comes naturally for me" and country on negative affect. All things considered, the results of the current study generally support that there exist culturally distinct pathways to subjective well-being and that the benefits of help-seeking may differ for Japanese and Americans.

The current findings provide practically significant implications. It can be very insightful for healthcare practitioners, policy makers, and counsellors to recognize the potential negative repercussions of encouraging help-seeking among certain individuals. As mental health professionals and policy makers tend to encourage help-seeking as it is widely considered to be instrumental and advantageous to do so (Best et al. 2014; Nadler 1990), our study reveals that one should be tactful when encouraging help-seeking behavior among

individuals from interdependence-preferring cultures. Of import, such recommendations of seeking help may backfire if not conveyed with care. In a similar vein, the current findings prompt people to be more mindful of their family and friend's cultural background and the potential negative impacts on well-being when encouraging them to seek professional help. Indeed, the intrapersonal and "face" costs associated with help-seeking may also explain why there is a stigma attached to seeking professional help in counselling or psychotherapy in East Asian cultures (Shea and Yeh 2008).

The large-sample, representative data collected in the MIDUS 2 and MIDJA studies allowed for an investigation of the robust relationship between help-seeking tendencies and subjective well-being across an independence-preferring country and an interdependence-preferring country. However, some limitations of the present study have to be acknowledged. First, given the limited number of items (two items) in the measure of help-seeking tendencies in the MIDUS 2 and MIDJA datasets, the measure showed relatively low reliability. To this end, we conducted sensitivity analyses to analyze the help-seeking items separately rather than as a composite (See Online Appendices F through K). Results of these analyses revealed relatively consistent findings with those reported in the current paper. Except for when the item "asking others for help comes naturally for me" was regressed against culture with negative affect as the outcome (as previously discussed), all interaction terms remained significant. We hope that these more in-depth analyses regarding the help-seeking tendencies measure can provide a better understanding of the phenomenon despite the measure's low reliability. Relatedly, the current study considers individuals' help-seeking tendencies, an attitudinal measure, rather than actual help-seeking behavior. Although there is research suggesting that help-seeking attitudes and comfort in help-seeking are significantly associated with actual help-seeking behavior (Kaniasty and Norris 2000; Mojtabai et al. 2016), it is plausible that the relationship between help-seeking behavior and well-being is

more nuanced. For example, as previously alluded to, help-seeking behavior may interact with individuals' tendencies to engage in *amae* (Niiya 2017), thereby buffering some of the costs of help-seeking behavior on well-being. Future studies can benefit from using a more comprehensive measure of help-seeking and measuring actual help-seeking behavior in a real-life context.

Second, the use of secondary datasets only afford a cross-sectional research methodology for the present study. As such, little can be drawn about the causality of the relationship between help-seeking tendencies and well-being across the two cultures in the present research. If we consider that well-being precedes help-seeking, our results would suggest that when Japanese participants have poorer well-being, they will show a greater tendency to seek help (i.e., a negative correlation). Indeed, some works suggest that this may be possible, given that distress levels have been found to be related to greater willingness to seek help among Asian individuals (e.g., Tracey, Leong, and Glidden 1986). Nonetheless, other works have also suggested that help-seeking may not be as beneficial for individuals from interdependence-preferring cultures compared to those from independence-preferring cultures (e.g., Taylor et al. 2004; Taylor et al. 2007; Wu et al. 2021). It would thus be highly beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study to examine the temporal relationship between help-seeking and subjective well-being across time for testing the possibility of a reverse causation, or even a bidirectional relationship between help-seeking and subjective well-being.

Also related to the cross-sectional nature of the study, we are unable to rule out the possibility that the findings observed are undermined by issues such as translation equivalence. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the parallel MIDUS and MIDJA projects were designed specially to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons. As such, the principal investigators of the projects have made significant efforts to ensure that the MIDUS and

MIDJA data are comparable. The Japanese version of the questionnaire used in the MIDJA study was translated from the MIDUS questionnaire, and back translated to English and adjusted by native speakers to ensure equivalent meaning. The items involved in measuring the key variables of the current study (i.e., help-seeking tendencies, life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect) were deemed to be worded the same way in both the MIDUS II and MIDJA questionnaires (Ryff et al. 2008). Thus, we believe that our findings are not undermined by translation issues.

We also acknowledge that we are unable to fully rule out the presence of confounding variables that drive both help-seeking tendencies and subjective well-being. For example, it is possible that a third variable unrelated to culture, and unaccounted for in the current analysis, caused us to observe these disordinal relationships. Hence, to ensure that our findings were not confounded by other factors that may differ between countries (but are not true differences explained by culture), we controlled for various covariate variables, as well as the interactions between these covariates and country. In these analyses, the findings that country moderated the relationship between help-seeking tendencies and subjective well-being remained significant. It would certainly be worthwhile for future longitudinal research to replicate the current findings.

Lastly, the current study does not differentiate between instrumental and emotional help-seeking (Skinner 2003; Vélez et al. 2016). Some may argue that emotional help-seeking which involves more self-disclosing compared to problem-focused or instrumental help-seeking (Skinner 2003; Vélez et al. 2016) can possibly promote rather than harm relational harmony, and thus deemed more beneficial for interdependence-preferring cultures like Japan. However, existing works suggest that this may not be the case (for a review, see Wu, Kim and Collins 2021). For example, in Kim, Sherman, and Taylor (2008) work examining cross-cultural differences in support seeking, the results showed that Asians are less likely to

benefit from support that involves disclosing their personal stressful events and feelings of distress. Such a view is in line with the high concern for "face" observed in interdependence-preferring cultures (Oetzel and Ting-Toomey 2003; Taylor et al. 2004). As both instrumental and emotional help-seeking is likely to somewhat reveal people's insufficient capability to solve problems and their feelings of distress, it is likely that the relationship between help-seeking and well-being would be similar for both forms of help-seeking in interdependence-preferring cultures. It would be valuable for future research to examine the two types of help-seeking to better understand the nuances in the relationship between help-seeking and well-being across cultures.

The existing literature tends to present an overwhelmingly positive perception of help-seeking behavior and the consequences it entails. Yet, our current findings provide preliminary evidence that challenges this rosy picture. Despite its benefits, help-seeking also incurs relational and intrapersonal costs that are likely to be more pertinent in interdependence-preferring cultures, thereby possibly diminishing and even reversing some of its subjective well-being benefits for individuals from such cultures. Taken together, the present study sheds novel light in reappraising the implications of help-seeking on subjective well-being. Although the idea that help-seeking tendencies could be detrimental to people's subjective well-being might appear counterintuitive, the costs of help-seeking in interdependence-preferring cultures should not be overlooked. Both theoretically and practically, it is insightful to adopt a more culturally sensitive perspective to uncover the nuances underlying the relationship between help-seeking and different indicators of subjective well-being. This research agenda would be particularly valuable for practitioners and policy makers who work with people from different cultures and intend to encourage their help-seeking behaviors.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Additional supporting information may be found at https://researchbox.org/158.

ENDNOTES

1. The tables of correlations for each sample are available in online Appendices A and B

2. See online Appendices F-K

3. Separate analyses with educational attainment and occupational status as individual indices yielded similar results to those presented in the current paper; see online Appendices C-E

4. Analyses conducted using listwise deletion instead of missing data imputation revealed that up to 239 of 5,068 observations would have been deleted due to missing data. The results of these analyses remained consistent with those reported in the paper

5. See online Appendices F-G

6. See online Appendices L-N

7. Sensitivity analyses with the two help-seeking items entered independently in two separate models revealed that the interaction term between help-seeking tendencies and country remained significant in all four models (see online Appendices F-G), suggesting that the relationship between help-seeking tendencies and life satisfaction differ between countries. Nonetheless, the non-significant relationship observed in the simple slope analyses between help-seeking tendencies and life satisfaction among American participants in Model 4 suggest that the positive relationship between help-seeking tendencies and life satisfaction may be better explained by personality variables rather than help-seeking tendencies

8. See online Appendices H-I

9. See online Appendices J-K

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SHORT AUTHOR BIOS

Verity Y. Q. Lua is an MPhil student in the psychology department at the School of Social

Sciences, Singapore Management University. Her main areas of interests are in social and

personality psychology, and well-being. She has presented her research at numerous

international conferences and is currently working on projects examining topics such as

paradox mindset, stress and well-being.

Nadyanna M. Majeed is an MPhil student in the psychology department at the School

of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University. Her research interests lie in the broad

area of stress processes and their consequences on well-being, and factors that can buffer

against such consequences. Specifically, her research has been published in *Journal of

Research in Personality*; *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind, and Brain*; and other peer-

reviewed journals.

Andree Hartanto is an Assistant Professor of Psychology in the Singapore

Management University. He received his PhD training in cognitive and developmental

psychology. His current research focuses on understanding how daily experiential factors

contribute to intraindividual changes and interindividual variability in affective and cognitive

well-being.

Angela Leung is an associate professor of psychology at the Singapore Management

University. As a cultural psychologist, her research is motivated by an overarching goal of

transforming complex, contradictory, and challenging issues (e.g., multicultural contact,

paradoxes, working motherhood, the pandemic) into opportunities so that people and society

can thrive. Her publications have appeared in journals including *American

Psychologist*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and *Psychological Science*.

Angela is the leading editor of two books, one on the psychological science of culture

published by the Cambridge University Press and another on culture and creativity published

by the Oxford University Press. She is currently the Co-Editor-in-Chief for the *Asian Journal of Social Psychology,* Associate Editor for the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, and the Editorial Board member for the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and *Management and Organization Review.*

TABLE 1

Demographics, Personality Profiles, and Other Characteristics of Participants from the MIDUS 2 and MIDJA Studies.

	Americans (MIDUS)					Japanese (MIDJA)				
	N	M	(SD)	Range		N	M	(SD)	Range	
Demographic Variables										
Age	4041	56.23	(12.39)	30 –	84	1027	54.36	(14.14)	30 –	79
Sex (% female)	4041	55.40%				1027	50.83%			
Marital Status (% Non-Married)	4035	29.00%				1025	30.73%			
Socioeconomic Status										
Objective SES	4041	0.00	(1.00)	−1.82 –	1.67	1027	0.00	(1.00)	−2.57 –	1.75
Subjective SES	3974	6.50	(1.84)	1 –	10	989	6.03	(2.11)	1 –	10
Personality Traits										
Agreeableness	4011	3.45	(0.50)	1.00 –	4.00	1024	2.63	(0.63)	1.00 –	4.00
Conscientiousness	4008	3.39	(0.46)	1.00 –	4.00	1024	2.60	(0.55)	1.00 –	4.00
Extraversion	4012	3.11	(0.57)	1.00 –	4.00	1024	2.42	(0.68)	1.00 –	4.00
Neuroticism	4009	2.07	(0.63)	1.00 –	4.00	1023	2.11	(0.56)	1.00 –	4.00
Openness to Experience	3975	2.90	(0.54)	1.00 –	4.00	1021	2.19	(0.61)	1.00 –	4.00
Help-Seeking Tendencies	4013	1.85	(0.76)	1.00 –	4.00	1023	2.85	(0.75)	1.00 –	4.00
Life Satisfaction	4040	7.50	(1.27)	1.00 –	10.00	1027	6.10	(1.58)	0.00 –	9.75
Negative Affect	4003	1.51	(0.58)	1.00 –	5.00	1024	1.69	(0.65)	1.00 –	5.00
Positive Affect	4023	3.43	(0.71)	1.00 –	5.00	1022	3.24	(0.76)	1.00 –	5.00

Note: Missing data were later imputed using an Expectation-Maximization Algorithm.

TABLE 2

Model Summaries of Life Satisfaction with Help-Seeking Tendencies and Country as Predictors.

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff	
Intercept	7.54	(0.02)		***	7.64	(0.03)		***	7.52	(0.03)		***	7.43	(0.03)		***
Main effects																
Help-seeking	0.20	(0.03)	0.08	***	0.17	(0.03)	0.06	***	0.09	(0.03)	0.03	***	0.05	(0.02)	0.01	
Country	–1.33	(0.06)	–0.37	***	–1.37	(0.08)	–0.35	***	–1.30	(0.08)	–0.32	***	–0.82	(0.09)	–0.20	***
Two-way interaction																
Help-seeking × Country	–0.34	(0.06)	–0.08	***	–0.30	(0.06)	–0.07	***	–0.21	(0.06)	–0.05	***	–0.16	(0.05)	–0.04	**
Covariates																
Age					0.02	(0.00)	0.15	***	0.02	(0.00)	0.13	***	0.01	(0.00)	0.10	***
Sex					0.12	(0.04)	0.07	**	0.22	(0.04)	0.10	***	0.16	(0.04)	0.08	***
Marital status					–0.60	(0.05)	–0.21	***	–0.52	(0.04)	–0.19	***	–0.49	(0.04)	–0.17	***
Objective SES									0.13	(0.02)	0.09	***	0.12	(0.02)	0.09	***
Subjective SES									0.22	(0.01)	0.29	***	0.14	(0.01)	0.18	***
Agreeableness													–0.05	(0.04)	–0.02	
Conscientiousness													0.46	(0.04)	0.17	***
Extraversion													0.40	(0.04)	0.18	***
Neuroticism													–0.40	(0.03)	–0.19	***
Openness to experience													–0.10	(0.04)	–0.04	*
Two-way interactions (covariates)																
Country × Age					–0.01	(0.00)	–0.04	***	–0.01	(0.00)	–0.04	***	–0.02	(0.00)	–0.05	***
Country × Sex					0.42	(0.09)	0.06	***	0.43	(0.08)	0.06	***	0.34	(0.08)	0.05	***
Country × Marital status					–0.45	(0.10)	–0.06	***	–0.34	(0.09)	–0.04	***	–0.30	(0.09)	–0.04	***
Country × Objective SES									0.04	(0.04)	0.01		0.03	(0.04)	0.01	
Country × Subjective SES									0.01	(0.02)	0.00		–0.01	(0.02)	0.00	
Country × Agreeableness													0.01	(0.10)	0.00	
Country × Conscientiousness													–0.19	(0.09)	–0.03	*
Country × Extraversion													0.04	(0.09)	0.01	
Country × Neuroticism													–0.26	(0.07)	–0.04	***
Country × Openness to experience													0.10	(0.09)	0.02	

Note: Country was dummy coded with the United States (MIDUS) as a reference group. Gender was coded with female as a reference group.

Marital status was coded with non-married as a reference group. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed)

TABLE 3

Model Summaries of Positive Affect with Help-Seeking Tendencies and Country as Predictors.

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff	
Intercept	3.45	(0.01)		***	3.48	(0.02)		***	3.43	(0.02)		***	3.37	(0.02)		***
Main effects																
Help-seeking	0.14	(0.01)	0.11	***	0.13	(0.01)	0.11	***	0.11	(0.01)	0.08	***	0.05	(0.01)	0.03	***
Country	–0.14	(0.03)	–0.08	***	–0.20	(0.05)	–0.07	***	–0.17	(0.04)	–0.05	***	0.13	(0.05)	0.11	**
Two-way interaction																
Help-seeking × Country	–0.24	(0.03)	–0.11	***	–0.22	(0.03)	–0.11	***	–0.19	(0.03)	–0.09	***	–0.12	(0.03)	–0.06	***
Covariates																
Age					0.01	(0.00)	0.13	***	0.01	(0.00)	0.08	***	0.00	(0.00)	0.03	**
Sex					0.01	(0.02)	0.05		0.05	(0.02)	0.07	*	0.03	(0.02)	0.05	
Marital status					–0.12	(0.02)	–0.11	***	–0.08	(0.02)	–0.08	***	–0.07	(0.02)	–0.07	**
Objective SES									–0.02	(0.01)	–0.01		–0.02	(0.01)	–0.01	
Subjective SES									0.11	(0.01)	0.28	***	0.05	(0.01)	0.10	***
Agreeableness													0.00	(0.02)	0.00	
Conscientiousness													0.14	(0.02)	0.10	***
Extraversion													0.34	(0.02)	0.31	***
Neuroticism													–0.42	(0.02)	–0.34	***
Openness to experience													–0.03	(0.02)	–0.03	
Two-way interactions (covariates)																
Country × Age					–0.01	(0.00)	–0.04	**	0.00	(0.00)	–0.02		0.00	(0.00)	–0.02	
Country × Sex					0.31	(0.05)	0.08	***	0.30	(0.05)	0.08	***	0.23	(0.04)	0.06	***
Country × Marital status					–0.28	(0.05)	–0.07	***	–0.26	(0.05)	–0.07	***	–0.23	(0.05)	–0.06	***
Country × Objective SES									0.06	(0.02)	0.03	*	0.05	(0.02)	0.03	*
Country × Subjective SES									–0.05	(0.01)	–0.05	***	–0.04	(0.01)	–0.05	***
Country × Agreeableness													0.03	(0.05)	0.01	
Country × Conscientiousness													–0.06	(0.05)	–0.02	
Country × Extraversion													0.01	(0.05)	0.00	
Country × Neuroticism													0.10	(0.04)	0.03	*
Country × Openness to experience													0.00	(0.05)	0.00	

Note: Country was dummy coded with the United States (MIDUS) as a reference group. Gender was coded with female as a reference group.

Marital status was coded with non-married as a reference group. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 (two-tailed)

TABLE 4

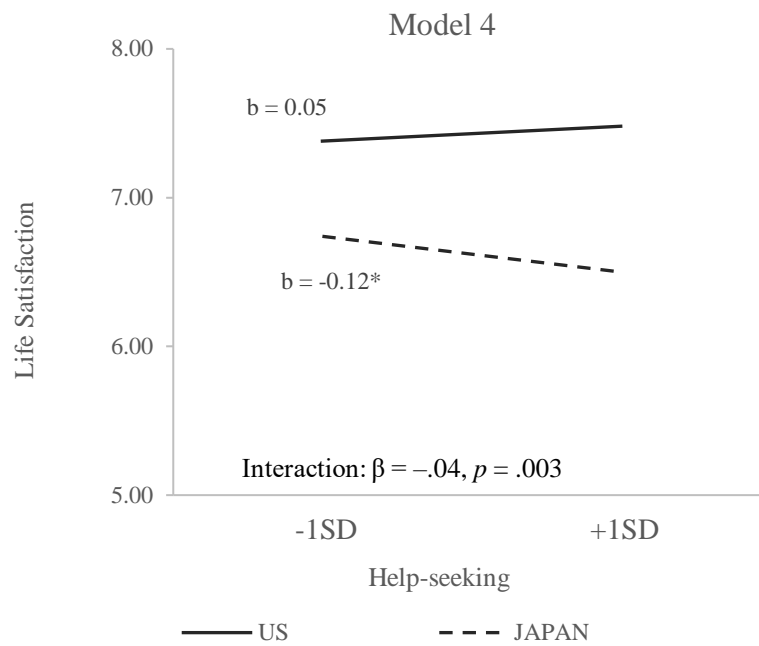*Model Summaries of Negative Affect with Help-Seeking Tendencies and Country as Predictors.*

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff		Unstd Coeff	(SE)	Std. Coeff	
Intercept	1.50	(0.01)		***	1.43	(0.01)		***	1.47	(0.01)		***	1.52	(0.01)		***
Main effects																
Help-seeking	–0.10	(0.01)	–0.10	***	–0.09	(0.01)	–0.08	***	–0.06	(0.01)	–0.05	***	–0.02	(0.01)	–0.01	*
Country	0.18	(0.03)	0.12	***	0.12	(0.04)	0.09	**	0.08	(0.04)	0.07	*	0.01	(0.04)	0.07	
Two-way interaction																
Help-seeking × Country	0.12	(0.03)	0.07	***	0.13	(0.03)	0.08	***	0.10	(0.03)	0.06	***	0.06	(0.02)	0.04	**
Covariates																
Age					–0.01	(0.00)	–0.11	***	0.00	(0.00)	–0.10	***	0.00	(0.00)	–0.03	*
Sex					0.07	(0.02)	0.05	***	0.03	(0.02)	0.03		0.01	(0.02)	0.03	
Marital status					0.12	(0.02)	0.11	***	0.10	(0.02)	0.09	***	0.07	(0.02)	0.07	***
Objective SES									–0.06	(0.01)	–0.08	***	–0.04	(0.01)	–0.06	***
Subjective SES									–0.07	(0.01)	–0.23	***	–0.03	(0.00)	–0.09	***
Agreeableness													0.10	(0.02)	0.10	***
Conscientiousness													–0.17	(0.02)	–0.13	***
Extraversion													–0.16	(0.02)	–0.19	***
Neuroticism													0.44	(0.01)	0.46	***
Openness to experience													0.08	(0.02)	0.10	***
Two-way interactions (covariates)																
Country × Age					0.00	(0.00)	–0.01		0.00	(0.00)	–0.01		0.00	(0.00)	0.00	
Country × Sex					–0.03	(0.04)	–0.01		–0.02	(0.04)	–0.01		0.12	(0.04)	0.04	**
Country × Marital status					0.13	(0.04)	0.04	**	0.11	(0.04)	0.03	*	0.09	(0.04)	0.03	*
Country × Objective SES									0.05	(0.02)	0.03	*	0.03	(0.02)	0.02	
Country × Subjective SES									0.01	(0.01)	0.01		0.00	(0.01)	0.00	
Country × Agreeableness													–0.04	(0.04)	–0.02	
Country × Conscientiousness													0.16	(0.04)	0.06	***
Country × Extraversion													–0.07	(0.04)	–0.03	
Country × Neuroticism													0.06	(0.03)	0.03	
Country × Openness to experience													0.08	(0.04)	0.03	*

Note. Country was dummy coded with the United States (MIDUS) as a reference group. Gender was coded with female as a reference group.

Marital status was coded with non-married as a reference group. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed)
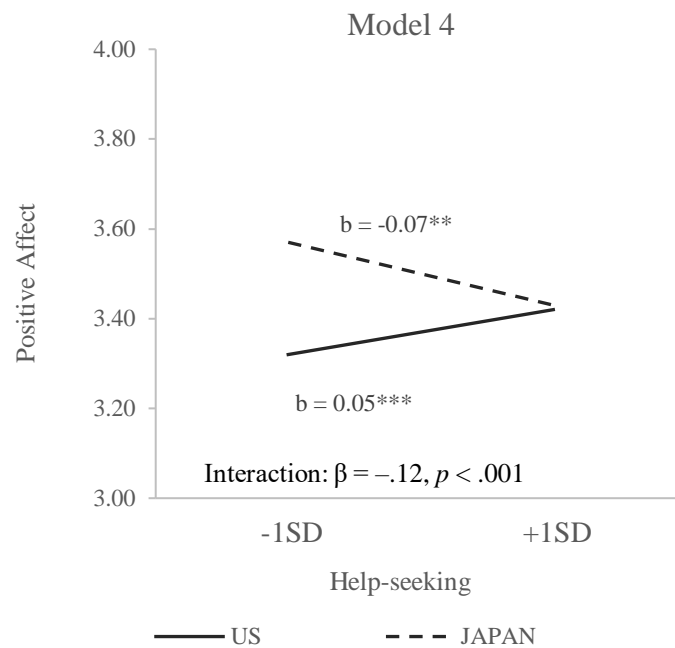
FIGURE 1

Simple Slopes of Life Satisfaction Regressed Against Help-Seeking Tendencies and Country

in Model 4.

Model 4

Life Satisfaction

8.00

b = 0.05

7.00

b = -0.12*

6.00

Interaction: $\beta = -.04$, $p = .003$

5.00

-1SD   +1SD

Help-seeking

———— US   – – – JAPAN

Note. The graph presents the simple slope of life satisfaction regressed against help-seeking

tendencies and country in Model 4. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 (two-tailed)
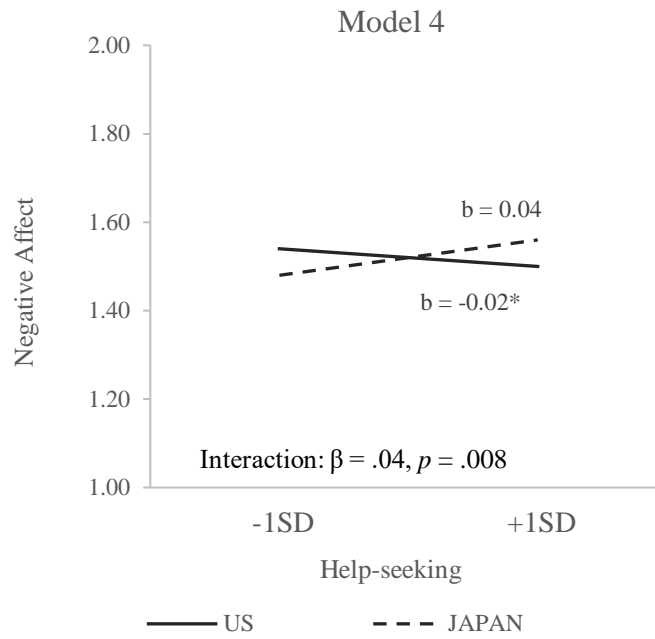
FIGURE 2

Simple Slopes of Positive Affect Regressed Against Help-Seeking Tendencies and Country in

Model 4.

Note. The graph presents the simple slope of positive affect regressed against help-seeking

tendencies and country in Model 4. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed)

FIGURE 3

Simple Slopes of Negative Affect Regressed Against Help-Seeking Tendencies and Country in

Model 4.

Note. The graph presents the simple slope of negative affect regressed against help-seeking

tendencies and country in Model 4. *p* < .05, **p* < .01, ***p* < .001 (two-tailed)