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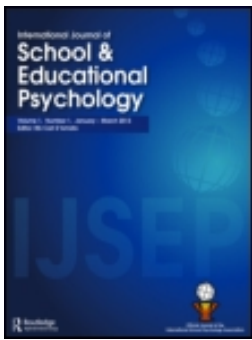


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# A Multicountry Study of Cross-Cultural Differences in Psychological Wellness of Adolescents

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Relative to positive psychology, a focus on increasing psychological well-being has been recently supported. Positive psychology is the study of influences and processes that contribute to the successful and optimal functioning of individuals. Nurturing and encouraging wellness competencies creates a buffer against mental illness and fosters intensification of adaptive coping skills. The purpose of this study was to highlight results from a descriptive study of a large-scale sample of Asian youth (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand) who responded to the Child and Adolescent Wellness Scale (CAWS) and compare them with a sample from the United States. The CAWS items reflect characteristics and cognitions of psychologically healthy and resilient children. As predicted, students generally perceived themselves as psychologically well, with all scores being above the theoretical midpoint score of 2.5. The average total CAWS score for the sample was 2.85 (on a 4-point Likert scale). Japanese students scored the lowest in most of the 10 dimensions. There were significant differences in each of the dimensions. The utilization of CAWS for practice with adolescents within a cross-cultural context and future studies is also discussed.

**Keywords:** Culture, psychological wellness, children, adolescents

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The purpose of this article is to describe and explore cross-cultural similarities and differences of a multinational sample of adolescents on 10 dimensions of wellness, as measured by the Children and Adolescent Wellness Scale (CAWS; Copeland & Nelson, 2004). In previous articles

(Copeland, Nelson, & Traugher, 2010; Shimada, Hess, & Nelson, 2013), wellness was defined as the “attitudes and activities which improve the quality of life and expand potential for higher levels of functioning” (Mullen, 1986, p. 34). Wellness is often indicated as *psychological well-being* or *psychological wellness*, and these terms are used interchangeably.

Relative to positive psychology, a focus on increasing psychological well-being has been recently supported. Positive psychology concentrates on influences that can increase an individual’s own strengths in order to function at an optimal level (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Although significant improvements in the diagnosis and treatment of children’s psychopathology and maladaptive behaviors have been made, shifting the focus towards their positive psychological well-being can also contribute to their educational and psychological needs (Keyes & Lopez, 2002). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) suggested that treatments and interventions could be improved with the integration of positive psychology, with greater concentration on traits such as interpersonal skills, wisdom, hope, optimism, and creativity. Positive psychology can create a preventive buffer against possible maladaptive outcomes or psychopathology in children.

Positive psychology focuses on finding ways of increasing the individual’s strengths and well-being. The CAWS (Copeland & Nelson, 2004) was conceptualized to address the scarcity of measurement tools currently available as a comprehensive assessment of children’s psychological wellness ages 8 to 19 years old. The CAWS items reflect characteristics and cognitions of psychologically healthy and resilient children. The CAWS consists of 10 separate dimensions: Adaptability, Connectedness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Self-Regulation, Empathy, Initiative, Mindfulness, Optimism, Self-Efficacy, and Social Competence. Each dimension is theorized or has been shown through research to be uniquely associated with healthy outcomes experienced by children. The following paragraphs briefly define and delineate the significance of each dimension to the general wellness construct.

Copeland and Nelson (2004) defined the 10 dimensions of wellness as: (a) *Adaptability*: the ability to negotiate difficult situations and preparedness for change; (b) *Connectedness*: the perception of belonging to school, family, and community; (c) *Conscientiousness*: a higher-order understanding or acceptance of personal choices as well as responsibility for actions; (d) *Emotional Self-Regulation*: a measure of learning how to use your emotions instead of letting your emotions use you; (e) *Empathy*: assessing the ability to see value, understand meaning in others, and find meaning in life; (f) *Initiative*: envisioning the future and engaging in activities that will lead to successful outcomes; (g) *Mindfulness*: the awareness of self and one’s personal strengths and weaknesses; (h) *Optimism*:

hope for the future; (i) *Self-Efficacy*: belief in one’s ability to accomplish a task; (j) *Social Competence*: intuition and knowledge leading to successful interpersonal relationships (Copeland, Nelson, & Traugher, 2010; Kodama, Nelson, Hess, & Asamsama, 2009; Nelson, Copeland, Traugher, Molina, & Huebner, 2005).

Although a number of cross-cultural and multinational studies have been conducted with children and adolescents relative to indices of pathology (Gu, Lai, & Ye, 2001), almost no work exists using positive psychological constructs when studying the influence of culture on psychological wellness. Therefore, current research in positive psychology has limited validity across cultural groups because most samples utilized have been with Caucasians and adults (Diener & Diener, 1995; Lopez & Snyder, 2003).

Finally, this study is unique in that the authors attempted to describe the differences in psychological well-being between collectivist countries and individualist countries. Collectivist countries believe in the idea of a shared identity (Schwartz, 1990). People who are greatly influenced by the cultural expectations of a collectivist country tend to “value tradition, sociability, and interdependence” (Caldwell-Harris & Ayçiçeği, 2006, p. 332). However, individual emotions and beliefs can differ based on what is considered socially correct or appropriate. In addition, this difference can negatively impact one’s psychological well-being (Diener & Diener, 1995). For individualist countries such as the United States, internal attributes of the self are emphasized over social obligations and expectations of others. Caldwell-Harris and Ayçiçeği (2006) stated that there are also internal self-perseverance consequences, such as social isolation. Life satisfaction and self-esteem correlated higher with individualist countries (Diener & Diener, 1995).

There is a pressing need to study how positive psychology impacts adolescents of varying cultures. The purpose of this study is to highlight results from a large-scale sample of Asian youth (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand) who responded to the CAWS, and compare those results with a sample of ethnically diverse students from North America. The population of each of the Asian countries is homogeneous compared to the ethnically heterogeneous U.S. sample. This is a descriptive study of psychological wellness of adolescents in five countries. Results from this multicountry study can provide greater understanding of psychological wellness in children and adolescents from a cross-cultural context.

## METHODS

### Participants

Four Asian adolescent samples were collected, one from each of the four countries: Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and

Thailand; a single U.S. adolescent sample was also used for comparison. Asian countries were chosen based on a sample of convenience. The majority of the participants were in the ninth grade. Participation was obtained by contacting schools that expressed interest. Internal review boards (IRB) differed from each country and the appropriate IRB procedures were followed. IRB procedures can range from individual parental consent to only principal's consent. Students were asked to read the information on the cover sheet attached to the questionnaires. The cover sheet contained the general purpose of the study, approximate time to complete the instruments, anonymity of the research, and the voluntary nature of participation. Students who assented to participate in the research completed the questionnaires. Students were also asked to provide general demographic information including age, gender, and race. As the individual authors were responsible for data collection in the specific countries, response rates varied. The response rate for the U.S. sample was 85%, while the response rates for the Asian countries were between 90 and 95%.

### Instrumentation

The CAWS is a pencil/paper measure consisting of 150 items. It was translated to the language of each of the countries and then back translated to English. The CAWS employs a Likert-type response scale. Respondents are required to circle one of the following responses: “*Not at all like me/strongly disagree*” (scored 1 point), “*Unlike me/disagree*” (2 points), “*Like me/agree*” (3 points), or “*Very much like me/strongly agree*” (4 points). The scoring for negative items (e.g., “I am often bored”) is reversed. The CAWS typically takes students approximately 25–30 min to complete.

Previous research has found strong internal consistency with  $\alpha > 0.70$  for all 10 dimensions (Copeland & Nelson 2004; Copeland et al., 2010). Exploratory factor analysis yielded a unitary scale with all 10 dimensions contributing to the overall factor of wellness. There was also a strong internal consistency for the overall 150-item test,  $\alpha 0.96$  with a test-retest reliability of  $r = 0.74$  in a one-month period for both U.S. and Asian samples (Kodama et al., 2009). The coefficient alpha for the entire study sample was 0.94. A recent confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the current data determined one unique factor. Factor loadings range from 0.46 to 0.73. Based on the results of the CFA and the conceptual model of wellness, the CAWS appears to be a viable measure of psychological wellness with the adolescent population.

### Statistical Analysis

Due to a significant number of CAWS surveys containing at least one incomplete item, missing data points were imputed using the mean score value of the dimension to which the

item belonged. Participants missing more than 2 items on any one subscale were excluded from the analysis, as were those who missed greater than 10 items overall. In cases where participants circled two adjacent responses (e.g., *disagree* and *agree*, or *agree* and *strongly agree*), a mean value was assigned (e.g., 2.5). If responses not adjacent to each other (e.g., *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*) were circled, or if more than two responses were circled, the item was considered missing. Before data analysis, negative items (e.g., “I am often bored”) were reverse-scored.

Descriptive statistics were reported for all measures and data were reported as means and standard deviations. Independent sample *t*-tests and chi-square tests were used to analyze gender and age differences between countries. Hierarchical linear regression models were used to analyze the impact of country on wellness as defined by CAWS total and 10 dimensions. Gender and age were placed in model one. The five countries were recoded into dummy variables, with the United States as the reference group. Each Asian country was the reference group in post-hoc analyses of the CAWS total. The dummy variables were placed in model two, in order to control for age- and gender-related variances.

Finally, since this was a sample of convenience, the number of participants varied by country. A Bonferroni correction was used to address family-wise alpha inflation related to varying sample sizes and the number of comparison analyses. An adjustment of the cut-off *p*-value for statistical significance was determined at  $p < 0.001$  (55 planned comparisons). Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20.0.

## RESULTS

A total of 1,452 students were available for the study. The study's inclusion criterion for participation consisted of students between the age of 8 and 19 years old. Due to missing data (i.e., multiple missing/skipped items) and students who reported ages higher than the inclusion criterion, a total of 1,373 students were available for the study sample. The U.S. population was unique in comparison to the other countries because of the diversity in reported ethnicities within the sample. The U.S. sample consisted of students who identified with the following ethnic groups: African -Americans (1.9%), Asians (4.5%), Hispanics (14.0%), Native Americans (1.5%), White or Europeans (69.4%), and Other (8.7%).

A demographic summary of the sample can be found in Table 1. There were 175 Japanese (48.9% males), 492 Korean (50.8% males), 243 Taiwanese (58.0% males), 204 Thai (49.5% males), and 259 U.S. students (49.8% males). No significant gender differences were reported between countries,  $\chi^2_{(4)} = 5.35$ ,  $p = 0.25$ . The mean age was 15.61 ( $SD = 2.0$ ). There was a significant age difference between countries  $F_{(4)} = 192.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . On average, Taiwanese students were older with an average age of 17.50 years

TABLE 1  
Demographic Characteristics of Participants

| Dimension                | Mean Age (SD) | N (%)      |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|
| <i>Country of Origin</i> |               |            |
| Japan                    | 14.63 (1.6)   | 175 (12.7) |
| Korea                    | 16.21 (1.4)   | 492 (35.8) |
| Taiwan                   | 17.50 (0.7)   | 243 (17.7) |
| Thailand                 | 14.23 (2.3)   | 204 (14.9) |
| US                       | 14.43 (1.9)   | 259 (18.9) |
| <i>Gender</i>            |               |            |
| Male                     | 15.62 (2.0)   | 706 (51.4) |
| Female                   | 15.59 (2.0)   | 667 (48.6) |

( $SD = 0.7$ ); Thai students were the youngest with an average age of 14.23 years ( $SD = 2.3$ ).

For each country, the mean CAWS total was higher than the theoretical 2.5 midpoint (lowest value of 1 plus highest value of 4 divided by 2 = 2.5). The mean CAWS total and 10 dimensions were generally higher in the U.S. students compared to the other samples (Table 2). There were significant differences in the total CAWS score and each of the 10 dimensions with  $p < 0.0001$  between the countries.

The results for the U.S. specific regressions are shown in Table 3. There were significant differences between the U.S. versus all Asian countries, U.S. versus Koreans, and U.S. versus Japan for the CAWS total mean ( $p < 0.001$ ). On the 10 dimensions, the United States appeared to be most similar to Thailand and had the most differences with Japan. Post-hoc analyses of the comparisons between the Asian students are shown in Table 4.

## DISCUSSION

The CAWS is a potential tool for psychologists and other human service providers who may be interested in assessing the psychological well-being of children across dimensions

of functioning. In addition, it is also a promising outcome measure in prevention and intervention research. The positive psychology movement supports the need for assessment instruments that can help school personnel in identifying and promoting positive assets in children and adolescents. However, only a handful of instruments have been developed for the purpose of measuring positive traits in children. The CAWS is intended to provide educators a tool to discover positive individual characteristics in children and adolescents, and foster them “not just to endure and survive, but also flourish” (Seligman, 2002, p. 8).

Overall, Japan scored consistently lower compared to the other countries both in overall CAWS total score and on most of the 10 dimensions. Japan’s low mean could be explained by Japan having a more modest view of individual well-being compared to other Asian countries. According to Marselia, Japan continues to adhere to the traditional way of life, which includes a more collectivist practice (1992). This strict adherence to the traditional way of life was also behind Japan’s group identity as a collectivist nation that prioritizes strong social bonds over individual needs (Marselia, 1992). This adherence to the group identity may explain Japan’s low Initiative score.

An interesting finding in 10 dimensions indicated that adolescents rated themselves the lowest on the dimension of Emotional Self-Regulation ( $M = 2.60$ ) and the highest in terms of Social Competence ( $M = 2.96$ ). This is to be expected and supports the validity of the CAWS, as adolescents may recognize some difficulty with restraint and self-regulation, but tend to report high social involvement and engagement.

## LIMITATIONS

There are notable caveats within this study. Although the study had a relatively large sample size, it might not be enough to warrant general applications for the countries studied. For example, the 175 Japanese students might not

TABLE 2  
Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation for CAWS Total and 10 Dimensions

|                           | All<br><i>M (SD)</i> | US<br><i>M (SD)</i> | Japan<br><i>M (SD)</i> | Korea<br><i>M (SD)</i> | Taiwan<br><i>M (SD)</i> | Thailand<br><i>M (SD)</i> |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| CAWS Total                | 2.87 (0.3)           | 2.96 (0.3)          | 2.73 (0.3)             | 2.83 (0.3)             | 2.88 (0.3)              | 2.93 (0.2)                |
| Adaptability              | 2.89 (0.3)           | 2.99 (0.3)          | 2.63 (0.4)             | 2.89 (0.3)             | 2.91 (0.3)              | 2.94 (0.3)                |
| Connectedness             | 2.88 (0.4)           | 3.01 (0.3)          | 2.79 (0.4)             | 2.85 (0.4)             | 2.79 (0.4)              | 3.00 (0.3)                |
| Conscientiousness         | 2.87 (0.3)           | 3.02 (0.3)          | 2.66 (0.4)             | 2.81 (0.3)             | 2.66 (0.4)              | 2.96 (0.3)                |
| Emotional Self-Regulation | 2.60 (0.3)           | 2.66 (0.4)          | 2.52 (0.4)             | 2.55 (0.3)             | 2.52 (0.4)              | 2.63 (0.3)                |
| Empathy                   | 2.94 (0.4)           | 3.03 (0.3)          | 2.81 (0.4)             | 2.88 (0.4)             | 2.81 (0.4)              | 2.98 (0.3)                |
| Initiative                | 2.78 (0.4)           | 2.94 (0.3)          | 2.64 (0.4)             | 2.71 (0.4)             | 2.64 (0.4)              | 2.85 (0.3)                |
| Mindfulness               | 2.85 (0.3)           | 2.98 (0.3)          | 2.71(0.4)              | 2.81 (0.3)             | 2.71 (0.4)              | 2.95 (0.3)                |
| Optimism                  | 2.81 (0.4)           | 2.79 (0.2)          | 2.74 (0.4)             | 2.77 (0.5)             | 2.74 (0.4)              | 2.92 (0.3)                |
| Self-Efficacy             | 2.94 (0.4)           | 3.00 (0.3)          | 2.80 (0.4)             | 2.96 (0.4)             | 2.89 (0.3)              | 3.00 (0.3)                |
| Social Competence         | 2.96 (0.3)           | 2.98 (0.3)          | 2.75 (0.4)             | 3.00 (0.3)             | 2.75 (0.4)              | 2.96 (0.3)                |

Standardized betas were controlled for gender and age.

TABLE 3  
Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses for CAWS Total and 10 Dimensions

|                                  |                 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE(B)</i> | $\beta$ | <i>T</i> | <i>Sig. (p)</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| <i>CAWS Total</i>                |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.022   | 0.005        | -0.142  | -4.722   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | -0.009   | 0.015        | -0.019  | -0.644   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.057   | 0.012        | -0.138  | -4.578   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | -0.036   | 0.015        | -0.078  | -2.353   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.114   | 0.016        | -0.205  | -7.093   | <0.001          |
| <i>Adaptability</i>              |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.030   | 0.005        | -0.175  | -6.242   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | -0.037   | 0.016        | -0.064  | -2.356   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.045   | 0.013        | -0.096  | -3.376   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | -0.063   | 0.017        | -0.114  | -3.711   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.172   | 0.016        | -0.287  | -10.928  | <0.001          |
| <i>Connectedness</i>             |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.026   | 0.006        | -0.130  | -4.635   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | -0.012   | 0.018        | -0.018  | -0.649   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.054   | 0.015        | -0.102  | -3.601   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | -0.090   | 0.019        | -0.143  | -4.691   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.110   | 0.019        | -0.159  | -5.902   | <0.001          |
| <i>Conscientiousness</i>         |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.038   | 0.005        | -0.220  | -7.784   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | -0.035   | 0.016        | -0.061  | -2.191   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.105   | 0.013        | -0.225  | -7.921   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | -0.068   | 0.017        | -0.123  | -3.963   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.174   | 0.016        | -0.282  | -10.567  | <0.001          |
| <i>Emotional Self-Regulation</i> |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.019   | 0.005        | -0.114  | -4.034   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | -0.021   | 0.015        | -0.037  | -1.338   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.073   | 0.013        | -0.160  | -5.643   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | -0.010   | 0.017        | -0.018  | -0.583   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.074   | 0.016        | -0.127  | -4.653   | <0.001          |
| <i>Empathy</i>                   |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.025   | 0.005        | -0.137  | -4.873   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | -0.031   | 0.016        | -0.051  | -1.881   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.085   | 0.014        | -0.176  | -6.258   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | -0.007   | 0.018        | -0.012  | -0.382   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.108   | 0.017        | -0.172  | -6.382   | <0.001          |
| <i>Initiative</i>                |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.039   | 0.005        | -0.205  | -7.345   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | -0.058   | 0.017        | -0.091  | -3.332   | 0.001           |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.111   | 0.014        | -0.215  | -7.666   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | -0.058   | 0.019        | -0.094  | -3.059   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.154   | 0.018        | -0.231  | -8.671   | <0.001          |
| <i>Mindfulness</i>               |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.032   | 0.005        | -0.190  | -6.758   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | -0.028   | 0.015        | -0.049  | -1.807   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.069   | 0.013        | -0.151  | -5.318   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | -0.101   | 0.016        | -0.187  | -6.120   | <0.001          |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.132   | 0.016        | -0.223  | -8.346   | <0.001          |
| <i>Optimism</i>                  |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | 0.000    | 0.006        | 0.010   | 0.352    | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | 0.060    | 0.019        | 0.088   | 3.214    | 0.001           |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | -0.033   | 0.016        | -0.060  | -2.089   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Taiwan   | 0.031    | 0.020        | 0.048   | 1.547    | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Japan    | -0.022   | 0.020        | -0.030  | -1.100   | n.s.            |
| <i>Self-Efficacy</i>             |                 |          |              |         |          |                 |
|                                  | US vs. Asian    | -0.014   | 0.005        | -0.074  | -2.588   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Thailand | 0.000    | 0.017        | -0.007  | -0.256   | n.s.            |
|                                  | US vs. Korea    | 0.000    | 0.014        | 0.001   | 0.033    | n.s.            |

(continued)

TABLE 3 – (Continued)

|                          | <i>B</i> | <i>SE(B)</i> | $\beta$ | <i>T</i> | <i>Sig. (p)</i> |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| US vs. Taiwan            | -0.060   | 0.018        | -0.101  | -3.274   | 0.001           |
| US vs. Japan             | -0.093   | 0.018        | -0.145  | -5.324   | <0.001          |
| <i>Social Competence</i> |          |              |         |          |                 |
| US vs. Asian             | -0.011   | 0.005        | -0.067  | -2.369   | n.s.            |
| US vs. Thailand          | -0.013   | 0.015        | -0.023  | -0.842   | n.s.            |
| US vs. Korea             | 0.012    | 0.013        | 0.027   | 0.965    | n.s.            |
| US vs. Taiwan            | -0.032   | 0.016        | -0.059  | -1.944   | n.s.            |
| US vs. Japan             | -0.103   | 0.016        | -0.175  | -6.534   | <0.001          |

Standardized betas were controlled for gender and age.

TABLE 4  
Multiple Regression Analyses for CAWS Total Between Asian Countries

|               | <i>B</i> | <i>SE(B)</i> | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> | <i>Sig. (p)</i> |
|---------------|----------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| <i>Thai</i>   |          |              |         |          |                 |
| All Others    | -0.016   | 0.005        | -0.112  | -3.548   | < 0.001         |
| Korea         | -0.048   | 0.012        | -0.122  | -3.937   | < 0.001         |
| Taiwan        | -0.026   | 0.016        | -0.057  | -1.663   | n.s.            |
| Japan         | -0.096   | 0.016        | -0.180  | -6.120   | < 0.001         |
| <i>Korea</i>  |          |              |         |          |                 |
| All Others    | 0.010    | 0.003        | 0.087   | 2.916    | 0.004           |
| Taiwan        | 0.027    | 0.011        | 0.071   | 2.382    | 0.017           |
| Japan         | -0.011   | 0.013        | -0.025  | -0.817   | n.s.            |
| <i>Taiwan</i> |          |              |         |          |                 |
| All Others    | -0.005   | 0.005        | -0.034  | -1.025   | n.s.            |
| Japan         | -0.073   | 0.016        | -0.145  | -4.501   | < 0.001         |
| <i>Japan</i>  |          |              |         |          |                 |
| All Others    | 0.033    | 0.005        | 0.183   | 6.239    | < 0.001         |

Standardized betas were controlled for gender and age.

exemplify the varied cultural expressions of Japan. It would also be beneficial for the sample sizes to be more equal, preferably the same size as the Korean sample of 492 subjects. It might be helpful to have another measure of individual or parental cultural influence or cultural identity.

The mean score differences across multinational samples used for comparisons in this study may have been influenced by Response Style Differences (RSD) (e.g., acquiescence, extreme scores); respondents may have presented a rosier picture than truly exists (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995). These differences have often reflected the individualistic/collectivistic framework. Other methodological concerns that may have influenced mean score differences were the potential inaccurate translation of items in the different countries, and smaller samples of convenience. However, back translations of the CAWS items were implemented prior to the data collection in order to reduce language bias. Although this study had limitations, there were substantial effect sizes found that could greatly contribute to the overall understanding of adolescent psychological well-being.

### FUTURE RESEARCH

There would appear to be differences in the ages that need to be further studied. As data is collected, developmental trends might be noted. Finally, longitudinal data can provide a greater understanding of how collectivism or individualism affects adult well-being.

Future research could identify differences in psychological well-being between individuals living in their native country versus living in an environment with a different cultural expectation. For example, future research may examine the psychological well-being of Japanese youths living in Japan compared to those who are living in the United States. Future research could also be conducted for each of the CAWS dimensions; specifically, any gender differences could be isolated. In addition, differences between U.S.-born and immigrant Asians in psychological well-being would be a promising future research endeavor.

Currently, there are ongoing studies by the authors investigating the relationship of psychological well-being as defined by the CAWS with life satisfaction in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. This study is based on the idea that life satisfaction related strongly to the construct of wellness in a U.S. sample (Copeland et al., 2010). Other studies under way include the relationship with wellness and student engagement in the United States; wellness and achievement in the United States; and school engagement and school attachment with wellness in Japan. These future studies seek to explore predictive relationships between the CAWS and outcome measures of physical health and pathology. A large-scale study would further contribute to the overall validity of the CAWS.

The promotion of positive psychological health is especially poignant relative to recent violence against children and adolescents in schools in the United States. Psychological wellness provides a potentially useful framework and associated methods to promote the optimal development and resilience of children and adolescents in the school setting, where virtually all children spend a major portion of their lives. By clearly defining healthy outcomes and having standardized



measures of wellness, we help to promote the importance of positive psychological health.

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