

〈Brief Report〉

Structure of Sociotropy and Autonomy and Their Correlation with Psychological Adjustment in a Korean University Sample*

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Emerging research emphasizes cultural influences on personality and psychopathology. In the present study, it was hypothesized that Sociotropy and Autonomy, the most well-known personality styles which make people vulnerable to depression, reflect cultural values and may have different effects in different cultures. The factor structures of Sociotropy and Autonomy were investigated in relation to psychological adjustment in Korea. Three hundred and five university students completed the Personality Style Inventory (PSI), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS). As the results, both Sociotropy and Autonomy correlated positively with the measures of depression and social anxiety. Factor analysis of the PSI showed that Autonomy, consistent with previous western studies, consists of two subfactors of 'Being in Control of One's Plans' and 'Defensive Separation'. However, Sociotropy showed different subfactors from previous western studies, and the subfactor 'Trying Not to Offend Others' correlated more strongly with the BDI and SIAS than the subfactor 'Fear of Being Separated from Others'. Unlike previous western findings in which the second subfactor of Sociotropy was named 'Dependency' and was related with psychological maladjustment, it was newly interpreted that such maladaptive effect is attenuated in Korea which emphasizes maintaining relationships with others. On the contrary, it was suggested that the implicit social standard that one should behave in the way that meets others' expectations may function as a psychological pressure.

Key words : Sociotropy, Autonomy, collectivistic culture, Korean sample, depression, social anxiety

* This work was supported by the Inje Research and Scholarship Foundation in 2008.

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Over the past 30 years, researchers from the cognitive theoretical orientations have investigated the contribution of personality to vulnerability to depression. Among the various suggestions, Beck's (1983) two personality types of *Sociotropy* and *Autonomy* have been the focus of consistent interest. Sociotropy, defined as an investment in positive interchange with others, may make people vulnerable to interpersonal loss or rejection and has been correlated with depression and anxiety disorders. Autonomy, meaning an investment in preserving and increasing personal independence, mobility and personal rights, may lead people to become vulnerable to achievement failures and/or social isolation. Similar personality characteristics appear in the work of Blatt, D'Afflitti and Quinlan (1976) who proposed the concepts of *Dependency* and *Self-Criticism*. However, Beck's theorizing of personality styles differ in that there is an emphasis on the psychological investment of the individual and therefore is more cognitive and includes an aspect of value judgment.

Sociotropy and Autonomy measured by self-report questionnaires have demonstrated inconsistent results concerning their relationship with psychopathology. This inconsistency may have resulted from the differential effects of the subfactors of Sociotropy and Autonomy on the psychological adjustment.

Bieling, Beck and Brown (2000) conducted confirmatory factor analysis on the SAS and suggested that Sociotropy has two subfactors of

Preference for Affiliation and *Fear of Criticism and Rejection*, and Autonomy, *Sensitivity to Others' Control* and *Independent Goal Attainment*. A few other studies showed that the subfactors of Sociotropy and Autonomy have differential relationships with mental health (Bieling et al., 2000; Robins et al., 1994; Sato & McCann, 1997). Sociotropy, especially the subfactor of *Fear of Criticism and Rejection* appears to correlate strongly with depression (Khatri, Bagby, & Dobson, 2005).

As for the PSI, Bagby et al. (1998) confirmed that both Sociotropy and Autonomy had three subfactors each, but did not examine the differential relationship between each of the subfactors and depression. In the study by Lee (2000), all the subfactors showed a positive correlation with depression. Therefore, more studies are needed regarding the relationship between the subfactors of the PSI and psychological adjustment.

Another line of research emphasizes the cultural influences on personality and psychopathology. Both genetics and environmental factors determine personality, and culture is one of the most important environmental influences (Triandis & Suh, 2002). Beck also agreed that personality is in part inherent but also recognized the part which is prone to change when influenced by life events and environment. Considering these previous suggestions, it is plausible that personality styles which are vulnerable to depression differ in

different cultures. An individual's cognition and behavior are interpreted differently according to the culture and thus it entails important effects on the individual's psychological adjustment. An example which supports this idea is the personality-culture clash model according to which in a collectivistic culture, individualistic people are more vulnerable to psychological problems and that in an individualistic culture, collectivistic people are more prone to depression (Caldwell-Harris & Aycicegi-Dinn, 2006). Despite the fact that the interaction between an individual's personality and the cultural norms is important, there has been a lack of research investigating whether what is considered as a vulnerability factor in one culture plays a different role in another culture. In particular, the influence of Sociotropy and Autonomy are likely to differ between the collectivistic culture which emphasizes social relationships and the individualistic culture which promotes individual independence and achievement. Therefore, the present study was designed to investigate the relationship between the personality styles and the psychological adjustment among the university students of Korea, a country which is considered as a collectivistic culture from the strong influence of Confucianism (Cho, 2007).

Methods

Participants

Three hundred and five participants were recruited from the undergraduate participant pool of the Department of Psychology at a university in Seoul, Korea. There were 144 males (47.21%) and 160 females (52.46%) and information regarding gender was missing for one participant. The mean age of participants was 20.83 years ($SD=2.60$).

Measures

Personal Style Inventory (PSI; Robins et al., 1994; Korean version translated by Kim and Kim, 1998)

The PSI is a revised version of the Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale (SAS; Beck et al., 1983) and measures interpersonal and achievement vulnerabilities. The inventory contains 48 items and is composed of two 24-item subscales, Sociotropy and Autonomy. Participants rate items on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1='strongly disagree' to 6='strongly agree'. The internal consistency was $\alpha = .90$ for Sociotropy and $\alpha = .86$ for Autonomy (Robins et al, 1994). The test-retest reliability was .80 for Sociotropy and .70 for Autonomy over a 5- to 13-week period (Robins et al., 1994). In this study, the Korean version translated by Kim and Kim (1998) was used, and the internal consistency was .88 for Sociotropy and .84 for Autonomy.

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979; Korean version translated by Lee & Song, 1991)

The BDI is one of the most frequently used self-report measure of depressive symptoms. It consists of 21 items that are rated on a 4-point Likert scale. The BDI has been demonstrated to have high internal consistency and stability.

Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS; Mattick & Clarke, 1998, Korean version translated by Kim, 2000)

The 20-item SIAS assesses anxiety in social interaction situations using 5-point Likert scale. The SIAS has high internal consistency ($\alpha=.93$) and 1-month test-retest correlation ($r=.92$).

Procedure

In exchange for supplying demographic information and completing the questionnaires during a 30-minute period, they received a partial credit for the course in which they were enrolled. Participation was confidential and the participants were told that they could discontinue at any time if they feel uncomfortable physically or psychologically.

Statistical Analyses

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 12, was used for the statistical analyses of correlation and factor analysis.

Results

The mean and standard deviation of Sociotropy and Autonomy of the present study, described in Table 1, were similar to those of western studies.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation for Sociotropy and Autonomy

	M	SD
Sociotropy	95.30	15.03
Autonomy	83.75	13.49

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out and consistent with previous research, the PSI was confirmed to have two factors of Sociotropy and Autonomy. Four items under the eigenvalues of 0.3 (items 18, 20, 41, and 43) were excluded and one item was excluded as it belonged to the wrong factor (i.e. Item 24 was grouped into the factor of Sociotropy instead of Autonomy). After excluding those five items, exploratory factor analysis was conducted for each of Sociotropy and Autonomy, which showed different subfactors from the previous western studies.

The scree plot was examined for each of Sociotropy and Autonomy. It indicated that the eigenvalues after two components level off for both Sociotropy and Autonomy and therefore, exploratory factor analysis was carried out by retaining two components. As the results, two subfactors of Sociotropy were found and named

Table 2. Factor loadings for Sociotropy

Item no.	Items	Factor I	Factor II
1	내가 원하는 것보다 다른 사람들이 원하는 것을 종종 더 우선으로 생각한다.	.60	.02
3	내가 사랑하는 사람들과 떨어져 있기가 어렵다.	.01	.55
5	내가 다른 사람의 감정에 어떤 영향을 주는지 매우 신경이 쓰인다.	.57	.36
7	다른 사람이 내게 하는 비판에 매우 예민하다.	.51	.39
9	다른 사람들에게 상처를 줄까봐, 혹은 다른 사람들을 화나게 할까봐 걱정을 많이 한다.	.74	.30
11	사람들과의 관계가 날 불편하게 하더라도 이를 깨뜨리기가 힘들다.	.61	.22
13	나는 다른 사람들에게 쉽게 설득을 당한다.	.52	.15
15	다른 사람들을 기쁘게 해주려고 과도하게 노력한다.	.53	.33
17	하루 종일 혼자 있어야 하는 경우가 견디기 힘들다.	.09	.43
19	다른 사람들의 문제를 내가 해결해줘야 한다는 책임감을 종종 느낀다.	.27	.29
21	사람들과의 관계가 깨어졌을 때 느끼는 상실감을 극복하기가 어렵다.	.36	.66
23	다른 사람의 사랑을 받거나 칭찬을 받는 것은 나에게 중요하다.	.05	.75
25	다른 사람들에게 친절하게 잘 해줘야 한다고 생각한다.	.28	.34
27	종지 않은 일이 일어났을 때 연락할 수 있는 가까운 사람이 내게 있다는 확신을 갖고 싶다.	.01	.62
29	나는 다른 사람들에게 너무 미안해하는 태도를 취한다.	.69	-.01
31	사람들이 나에게 어떻게 반응할 지에 대해 걱정을 많이 한다.	.72	.26
33	누군가가 날 좋아하는지 아닌지가 불확실할 때 마음이 매우 불편하다.	.46	.43
35	다른 사람들의 부탁에 “싫다”라고 대답하기가 힘들다.	.65	.08
37	내게 무슨 일이 일어났는데 주위에 이야기할 사람이 아무도 없을 때 난 당황스럽다.	.19	.68
39	내 행동이 다른 사람들이 내게 기대하는 것과 일치될 때 마음이 매우 편안하다.	.20	.52
45	다른 사람들이 나에게 대해 어떻게 느끼는지에 따라 나 자신을 판단한다.	.55	.38
47	내가 다른 사람들에게 화가 났을 때 그 사실을 얘기하기가 어렵다.	.63	-.07

“*Trying Not to Offend Others*” (Items 1, 5, 7, 9, 21, 23, 25, 27, 37, 39), and two subfactors of 11, 13, 15, 29, 31, 33, 35, 45, 47) and “*Fear Autonomy, “Being in Control of One’s Plans” of Being Separated from Others*” (Items 3, 17, 19, (Items 8, 12, 14, 32, 36, 40, 44, 46, 48) and

“*Defensive Separation*” (Items 2, 4, 6, 10, 16, 22, 26, 28, 30, 34, 38, 42). Tables 2 and 3 show the factor loadings for Sociotropy and Autonomy. Both Sociotropy and Autonomy showed positive correlations with the measures of depression (.39 and .38 respectively, $p < .001$)

Table 3. Factor loadings for Autonomy

Item no.	Items	Factor I	Factor II
2	다른 사람과 거리를 두는 경향이 있다.	.05	.59
4	다른 사람들이 나에게 뭔가를 요구할 때 쉽게 짜증이 나고 귀찮아진다.	.22	.42
6	도움을 얻기 위해 다른 사람들에게 의존하고 싶지 않다.	.20	.30
8	내가 단지 평범하고 중간 수준의 사람이라는 것을 느낄 때 괴롭다.	.54	.04
10	기분이 우울할 때 사람들의 동정을 받고 싶지 않다.	.07	.44
12	사람들은 서로에게 요구하는 것이 너무 많을 때가 종종 있다.	.42	.20
14	내가 한 일의 결과가 완전한 성공이 아니면 완전히 실패한 것으로 보통 생각한다.	.40	.24
16	다른 사람들이 내 사생활에 끼어드는 것을 좋아하지 않는다.	.33	.43
22	누군가 나에게 의존하는 것이 부담스럽다.	.26	.55
26	사람들에게 칭찬을 하거나 애정을 표현하기가 어렵다.	-.04	.61
28	어떤 사람과의 관계에 오랫동안 전념하기가 어렵다.	.18	.61
30	내 감정과 그 외 다른 개인적인 일을 꺼내놓고 얘기하는 것이 어렵다.	.06	.69
32	나의 잠재적인 능력을 최대한 발휘하지 못했다는 느낌이 들 때는 나 자신을 용서하기가 힘들다.	.61	.07
34	중요한 결정을 내릴 때, 나는 다른 사람들의 충고가 방해가 된다는 느낌이 든다.	.23	.40
36	사람들이 내 행동이나 일을 지시하려고 할 때 화가 난다.	.73	.08
38	다른 사람이 사적인 질문을 하면 보통 나는 사생활을 침해당한다는 느낌이 든다.	.32	.54
40	다른 사람들이나 상황 여건이 내 계획을 방해할 때 매우 화가 난다.	.64	.11
42	나는 큰 일을 결정할 때 다른 사람의 충고를 거의 믿지 않는다.	.14	.41
44	독립적으로 자유롭게 행동하지 못할 때, 나는 다른 사람들보다 더 많이 화가 난다.	.63	.15
46	다른 사람들이 내 생각에 영향력을 미치려고 할 때 화가 난다.	.57	.29
48	내 계획에 대해 다른 사람들이 한마디씩 할 때 나는 통제 당한다는 느낌이 든다.	.59	.26

Table 4. Correlations between the factors of the Personality Style (Sociotropy and Autonomy) and the level of one's adjustment (BDI and Social Anxiety scores)

	BDI	Social Anxiety	Socio-tropy	Auto-nomy	Socio 1	Socio 2	Auto 1	Auto 2
BDI	1							
Social Anxiety	.49**	1						
Sociotropy	.39**	.44**	1					
Autonomy	.38**	.46**	.17**	1				
Socio 1	.39**	.54**	.94**	.25**	1			
Socio 2	.26**	.12*	.80**	-.03	.55**	1		
Auto 1	.40**	.30**	.29**	.84**	.29**	.21**	1	
Auto 2	.26**	.49**	.02	.90**	.16**	-.22**	.52**	1

Note. Socio 1 = Sociotropy subfactor 1 "Trying Not to Offend Others"; Socio 2 = Sociotropy subfactor 2 "Fear of Being Separated from Others"; Auto 1 = Autonomy subfactor 1 "Being in Control of One's Plans"; Auto 2 = Autonomy subfactor 2 "Defensive Separation".

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

and social anxiety (.44 and .46 respectively, $p < .001$). As for depression, subfactor 1 (*Trying Not to Offend Others*) of Sociotropy and subfactor 1 (*Being in Control of One's Plans*) of Autonomy showed high positive correlations with depression (.39 and .40 respectively, $p < .001$). As for social anxiety, subfactor 1 (*Trying Not to Offend Others*) of Sociotropy and subfactor 2 (*Defensive Separation*) of Autonomy showed high positive correlations with social anxiety (.54 and .49 respectively, $p < .001$). Table 3 shows the relationship between the subfactors of the personality style and the level of one's adjustment.

Discussion

Consistent with previous studies, the PSI was found to have two factors of Autonomy and Sociotropy in the Korean sample. The mean of the two factors were also similar to those found in previous North American studies, which suggests that the level of Sociotropy and Autonomy *per se* might not be influenced by the cultural differences.

However, factor analysis of each of Sociotropy and Autonomy showed different results from previous studies carried out in western studies. In other words, Sociotropy showed subscales that are different from the previous researches while Autonomy had similar subscales. This may reflect

how Sociotropy is represented in the collectivistic social values of the Korean culture. Most of the items which consisted of the subfactors of *Pleasing Others* and *Concerns about what Others Think* in the original study by Robins et al. (1994) were grouped into the subfactor of *Trying Not to Offend Others* in the present study. The *Trying Not to Offend Others* subfactor showed a significantly stronger ($z=5.97$, $p<.001$) correlation with the measure of social anxiety ($r=.54$) than the other subfactor of Sociotropy, *Fear of Being Separated from Others* ($r=.12$). The *Trying Not to Offend Others* subfactor also showed a not statistically significant ($z=1.78$, $p=.07$), but still higher correlation with the measure of depression ($r=.39$) than the other subfactor *Fear of Being Separated from Others* did ($r=.26$).

For hundreds of years, East Asians have strongly been influenced by Confucianism which recognizes that an individual's self is meaningful only in the relationship with other people. Therefore, self-modification happens naturally among East Asians, which Suh (2007) conceptualized as "highly context sensitive self". This pattern of cognitions and behaviors is congruent with Sociotropy which characterizes efforts to maintain positive relationships with others. More definitively, Cha (1993) proposed that accepting relational obligations is an important aspect in the collectivistic Korean culture. In other words, trying to please others or being concerned about what others think are part of duties that people accept naturally in

the Korean culture, and not doing so may even be considered as rude and behaving against the cultural norm. *Trying Not to Offend Others* may actually be experienced as a form of social pressure in Korea and therefore, people who are sensitive to not violating these cultural expectations experience a high level of psychological stress. Those scoring high on the subscale of *Trying Not to Offend Others* may experience elevated levels of depressogenic or anxious mood. Likewise, those scoring high on *Being in Control of One's Plans*, a subfactor of Autonomy, may experience social obligations as obstructing carrying out their free will, which in turn increases the BDI score.

Most of the items which consisted of the subfactor *Dependency* in the original study by Robins et al. (1994) were named *Fear of Being Separated from Others* in the present study and correlated weakly with the measures of depression and social anxiety. Need for social connectedness is a strongly held value in Korea and therefore, scoring high on the *Fear of Being Separated from Others* subfactor does not necessarily increase the level of depression or social anxiety. In the western studies, Fear of Rejection (Bieling et al., 2000) and Neediness (Rude & Burnham, 1995) showed positive relationship with depression. In other words, the strong emphasis on social connectedness in the Korean culture may buffer individuals against some of the negative effects of Sociotropy on the psychological adjustment.

As for Autonomy, the fact that the subfactor *Defensive Separation* showed a significant correlation with the measure of social anxiety (.49, $p < .001$) suggests the need for future studies in relation to the nature of Autonomy. It is possible that those who are socially anxious separate themselves from others in order to protect themselves from the social pressure and maintain normative levels of psychological adjustment.

One limitation of the current study is that it was not a prospective one and therefore the causal direction of the relationship between personality styles and psychological adjustment is unknown. However, to the authors' knowledge, this is the first study which attempted to relate Sociotropy and Autonomy with the collectivistic and individualistic cultural values and their effects on mental health. This has obvious implications for the cognitive treatment of individuals with psychological problems in that both the individual's personality vulnerability and the cultural factors should be taken into account.

Another limitation is that there are studies which suggest that Koreans are recently changing in their cultural values due to the rapid modernization and industrialization processes. In one study, Koreans showed collectivistic attitudes in some aspects and individualistic attitudes in others (Cha, 1993). Having said that, the results of the present study implies that there may be other factors

which differentiate Korea from Western countries in relation to personality styles. Further exploration of the various components of both Sociotropy and Autonomy and their differential role in different cultures may provide further insight into understanding an individual's psychological adjustment from a more comprehensive perspective.

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- 원고접수일 : 2010. 4. 6.
1차 수정 원고접수일 : 2010. 9. 14.
2차 수정 원고접수일 : 2010. 11. 4.
게재결정일 : 2010. 12. 14.

〈Brief Report〉

한국 대학생의 사회지향성과 자율지향성의 구조 및 심리적 적응과의 관계

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최근 연구들은 문화적 가치가 성격과 정신병리에 미치는 영향을 강조하고 있다. 본 연구에서는 우울증의 취약성으로 잘 알려져 있는 사회지향성(Sociotropy)과 자율지향성(Autonomy) 성격 특성이 문화적 가치를 반영하며 문화에 따라 미치는 영향이 다를 수 있다고 가정하였고, 한국에서의 사회지향성과 자율지향성의 요인 구조를 심리 적응과 관련하여 살펴보았다. 305명의 대학생들이 성격 유형 척도(PSI), 벡 우울증 척도(BDI), 사회적 상호작용 불안 척도(SIAS)를 작성하였다. 사회지향성과 자율지향성 모두 우울증과 사회불안 척도들과 정적인 상관관계를 보인 가운데, 요인 분석 결과 자율지향성은 기존의 서구 연구 결과와 유사하게 ‘통제 욕구(Being in control of one’s plans)’와 ‘방어적 분리(Defensive separation)’의 두 하위유형으로 구성되었다. 그러나 사회지향성은 기존의 서구 연구 결과와는 다른 두 하위유형으로 확인되어, 그 중 ‘다른 사람의 기분을 상하지 않게 하려는 노력(Trying not to offend others)’ 하위유형이 ‘사람들과 멀어지는 것에 대한 두려움(Fear of being separated from others)’ 하위유형보다 우울증 및 사회불안과 더 강한 상관을 보였다. 기존 서양 연구에서 사회지향성의 두 번째 하위유형이 ‘의존(Dependency)’으로 명명되어 심리적 부적응과 상관을 보이는 것으로 밝혀진 것과는 달리, 다른 사람들과의 관계 유지를 중요시하는 문화인 한국에서는 이러한 부적응적 영향이 완화되는 것으로 새롭게 해석되었다. 오히려 타인의 기대에 부합하는 방식으로 행동해야 한다는 암묵적인 사회적 기준이 심리적 압박으로 작용할 수 있다는 가능성이 제시되었다.

주요어 : 사회지향성, 자율지향성, 집합주의 문화, 우울, 사회불안