

**Feeling Socially (Dis)Engaging Emotions with Favorite Music:
The Role of Self-Construal Across Cultures**

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Abstract

Cross-cultural research on music and emotion has expanded in recent years; yet, our understanding of how culture shapes music-evoked emotions remains limited, partly because of narrow conceptualizations and operationalizations of culture. This article presents two studies that address these gaps by incorporating self-construal (one's sense of self in relation to others, shaped by a cultural emphasis on interdependence or independence) and utilizing culturally informed emotion models (socially engaging vs. socially disengaging). Study One employed an online questionnaire, where participants from diverse cultural backgrounds reflected on the emotions elicited by their favorite music. Results revealed that independent self-construal was positively associated with the frequency of negative socially disengaging emotions and the intensity of positive general emotions. Study Two involved a listening experiment with participants from Singapore, China, and the U.K., who reported their emotional responses after listening to their favorite music. This study showed that interdependent self-construal directly influenced the frequency and intensity of socially engaging emotions and mediated cross-country differences in these emotions. Independent self-construal was positively linked to the frequency and intensity of positive socially disengaging emotions and aesthetic emotions, and the frequency of positive general emotions. These findings highlight the importance of specifying cultural variables and integrating culturally informed emotion models in cross-cultural research. Additionally, the studies suggest that different methodologies – listening to music versus reflecting on it – significantly affect results when examining music-evoked emotions between cultures. Overall, this research demonstrates the critical role of self-construal in shaping affective responses to music within and across cultures.

Keywords: culture, self, self-construal, preferred music, felt emotion

Feeling Socially (Dis)Engaging Emotions with Favorite Music:

The Role of Self-Construal Across Cultures

Music's ability to evoke emotions across cultures has been demonstrated empirically. Some researchers emphasized similarities in emotional responses, while others highlighted differences (e.g., Juslin et al., 2016). Although cross-cultural research in music and emotion has flourished in the last decade (Sauvé et al., 2023), our understanding of how culture influences music-evoked emotions remains limited. This is because previous research in music psychology utilized narrow conceptualizations of culture (Tang, 2025). For example, cross-cultural research has mostly examined how familiarity with certain musical genres influences emotion perception, leaving unanswered the exact mechanism by which culture impacts emotional experiences. Furthermore, previous studies adopted Western models of emotion, which assumes that emotions are intrapsychic experiences that belong to the individual (Becker, 2010; Tsai & Clobert, 2019). Since music reflects cultural meanings and individuals embody diverse cultural values (Andrews et al., 2022; Stalinski & Schellenberg, 2012), affective responses to music are culturally inflected. In other words, music and listeners share a symbiotic relationship, wherein they reciprocally and dynamically define and shape each other (Becker, 2010; Clarke, 2011; Frith, 1996; Tang, 2024). In this article, we aim to advance understanding of how culture influences felt emotions with music by directly investigating specific cultural factors and adopting culturally informed models of emotions.

Cross-Cultural Research on Music-Evoked Emotions

Music psychologists have differentiated perceived and felt emotions in music (Juslin, 2016). Perceived emotions refer to those recognized in music without necessarily being experienced by the listener, whereas felt emotions refer to the listener's affective responses to music. In this article, we focus on the latter, the emotions evoked in the individual through music.

Many cross-cultural studies compared individuals of different nationalities or ethnicities (Egermann et al., 2015; Ornoy, 2022), while others investigated affective responses to various musical genres (Beier et al., 2022; Cowen et al., 2020) and specific musical elements (Fang et al., 2017; Hoshino, 1996). Taken together, these studies shed light on similarities and differences in music-evoked emotions experienced by people in different cultural contexts and while listening to music

from different cultures, including their own. Apart from recruiting culturally diverse participants and using cultural products, these studies did not investigate the exact psychological mechanism by which culture influences felt emotions with music. Instead, they merely examined how familiarity with and exposure to certain genres of music influences felt emotions.

A few studies adopted approaches found in cross-cultural psychology, namely by comparing collectivistic and individualistic cultures (Juslin et al., 2016; Saarikallio et al., 2021). In collectivistic cultures, individuals tend to prioritize group goals and interdependence, whereas in individualistic cultures, autonomy and personal goals take precedence. Using online surveys, Juslin et al. (2016) and Saarikallio et al. (2021) found that emotions such as peaceful-transcendence, nostalgia-longing, and joy-happiness were more prevalent in collectivistic cultures (i.e., Brazil, Kenya, Portugal, and India), whereas sadness-melancholy and power-empowerment were more common in individualistic cultures (i.e., Australia, Sweden, the U.S., and Finland). Consequently, they attributed these cross-cultural differences to the norms and values that characterize collectivistic and individualistic societies.

Two key limitations should be considered. First, the researchers used nationality as a proxy for cultural values (Juslin et al., 2016; Saarikallio et al., 2021). However, scholars have argued that collectivism-individualism are orthogonal dimensions such that individuals may possess both values simultaneously (Gelfand et al., 1996; Lee et al., 2019). Additionally, the increasing prevalence of individualism worldwide casts doubt on the appropriateness of relying on country as a means of operationalizing these cultural values (Santos et al., 2017). Therefore, cross-national comparisons ignore the heterogeneity found within countries and the permeability of the boundaries by which cultural constructs like collectivism-individualism might operate.

Second, these studies mostly utilized self-report measures based on discrete (or basic) emotions (Ekman, 1992; Izard, 1992), dimensional emotion models (Russell, 1980), miscellaneous emotions (Eerola & Vuoskoski, 2013), and aesthetic emotions (Coutinho & Scherer, 2017; Zentner et al., 2008). Implicitly, these models are grounded in Western theorizing of emotions, which assumes that emotions are inner psychological phenomena pertaining to the individual, separate from the situation or relationships (Becker, 2010; Tsai & Clobert, 2019). Such emotions may not fully reflect the affective experiences of people from non-Western cultures (Benamou, 2003; Cowen et al., 2020).

To overcome this, researchers employed different emotion measures (Egermann et al., 2015; Fang et al., 2017; Hoshino, 1996) or examined purported universal music-evoked responses (Beier et al., 2022). Although these methods demonstrate that music may indeed elicit emotions in individuals across cultures, it opens the question of whether there is diversity in the spectrum of emotions experienced. To address these challenges, better conceptualizations and operationalizations of culture, as well as better tools to measure music-evoked emotions across cultures are needed.

Culture, Self-Construal, and Emotions

We define culture as an expansive set of material and symbolic concepts that guide individuals' thoughts, feelings, and actions (Markus & Hamedani, 2019). Based on this definition, culture may reside "outside the head" in cultural products and practices (e.g., music) as well as pervasive ideas (e.g., collectivistic and individualistic values; Morling, 2016). Culture may also reside "inside the head" in individuals through psychological constructs such as motivation, cognition, and emotion. Fundamental to this conceptualization is the notion that culture and individuals are continually and mutually constituting one another; as cultural content changes, the mediating self and psychological functioning changes as well (Markus & Kitayama, 2010; Tang, 2025). Reflecting on this theoretical framework, the abovementioned studies have mostly investigated how "outside the head" cultural elements influence emotional responses to music. What is missing is the role played by specific psychological processes elicited within individuals when music evokes emotions.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) posited that national differences in collectivism and individualism give rise to interdependent and independent self-construals, respectively. Self-construals refer to how people view themselves with respect to others. Research has shown that people of non-Western, primarily East Asian cultures, have a more dominant interdependent self-construal, viewing the self as embedded within social relationships (Cross et al., 2011; Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010). In contrast, people of Western cultures have a more dominant independent self-construal, viewing the self as autonomous and distinct from others. Though conceptually related, collectivism-individualism and interdependent-independent self-construals represent different levels of analysis: the former describes large-scale entities like nation-states, while the latter reflects individual-level components.

Self-construal theory acknowledges that individuals are not passive agents of culture – they also consciously or unconsciously reflect, reinforce, and change the cultures that they are part of (Hong & Mallorie, 2004; Markus & Kitayama, 2010; Oyserman, 2011). Much like the simultaneous endorsement of collectivistic and individualistic values (Gelfand et al., 1996; Lee et al., 2019), people may hold both interdependent and independent self-construals, and these selves can vary between and within cultural contexts. By this account, music not only reflects cultural meanings but may also provide a means of activating a particular self-construal. Thus, we need to consider the implications of these self-construals on our music listening experience, such as our affective response to music.

Research has demonstrated that interdependent-independent models of self influence emotional experiences outside of musical contexts (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Tsai & Clobert, 2019). In collectivistic cultures, emotions are understood as relational and socially embedded, whereas in individualistic cultures, they are understood as internal and personal. For instance, Uchida et al. (2009) found that Japanese participants used more emotion words in social contexts, while Americans did so when focusing on themselves. Levenson et al. (1992) further demonstrated this difference when comparing participants from West Sumatra and the U.S. during a Directed Facial Action task (i.e., posing facial expressions individually). Although both groups showed similar physiological responses, only the Americans reported feeling emotions. The West Sumatran participants did not subjectively experience any because emotions for them necessitated meaningful interpersonal context. This illustrates a culturally distinct understanding of emotions as inherently social.

An important corollary is that emotions are more interpersonally focused in collectivistic cultures, whereas emotions are more intrapersonally focused in individualistic cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Tsai & Clobert, 2019). In collectivistic cultures, the intersubjectivity resulting from interdependence with others takes priority in the affective process. Consequently, individuals with an interdependent self-construal might experience emotions that connect themselves with others (i.e., socially engaging emotions). In individualistic cultures, the personal subjective experience takes priority, meaning that individuals with an independent self-construal might experience emotions that distinguish themselves from others (i.e., socially disengaging emotions).

Empirical studies have supported this distinction (Jakubanees et al., 2019; Leu et al., 2010). Kitayama et al. (2000, 2006) found that Japanese participants experience socially engaging emotions (e.g., feeling connected, friendly, guilty, and ashamed) more frequently and intensely, whereas people from Western cultures (i.e., Germany, the U.K., and the U.S.) experience socially disengaging emotions (e.g., feeling superior to, proud, angry, and frustrated) more frequently and intensely. Similar patterns have been observed in children: Japanese children reported more shame, Korean children more guilt, and U.S. children more pride (Furukawa et al., 2012). Additionally, Japanese participants perceived shameful situations as more likely to occur than Americans who anticipated more anger-inducing situations (Boiger et al., 2013). Together, these findings suggest that certain culturally relevant music may evoke socially engaging emotions in individuals with interdependent self-construals and socially disengaging emotions in individuals with independent self-construals.

Preferred Music, Self, and Culture

Preferred music, defined as an individual's preference for one piece of music over another (Hargreaves et al., 2015), is an example of culturally relevant music. Music preferences have been linked to personality, cultural identity, and cultural values (Boer et al., 2013; Brittin, 2014; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006). Similarly, they can signal racial identity, with preferences for rap, hip-hop, and soul often associated with Black individuals, while rock, alternative, pop, country, and folk often associated with White individuals (Marshall & Naumann, 2018; Rentfrow et al., 2009). Furthermore, Andrews et al. (2022) demonstrated that cultural and personal values are stronger predictors of music preferences than personality traits alone. These findings suggest that an individual's self-construal may shape their music preferences, which in turn influences the emotions evoked by the music.

Consequently, this article examines the emotions individuals experience when listening to their favorite music. We hypothesized that interdependent and independent self-construals would be associated with more frequent and intense socially engaging and disengaging emotions, respectively. Previous research comparing collectivistic and individualistic cultures provides preliminary support. Juslin et al. (2016) found that nostalgia-longing and love-tenderness were more frequently reported in collectivistic cultures. Saarikallio et al. (2021) observed that power-empowerment was the highest-scoring emotion factor for the Finns, representing an individualistic culture. These findings align with

socially engaging and disengaging emotions. However, given the limitations of using nationality to operationalize culture and employing Western-based emotion measures, we cannot convincingly infer the influence of collectivism-individualism on the types of music-evoked emotions between cultures.

Overview of the Present Studies

The goal of this research was to advance knowledge of how culture shapes the emotions individuals experience when engaging with music. We situated our exploration on the meaning-making processes individuals undertake while listening to their favorite music because of its unique relevance to individuals, reflecting both individual and cultural influences. We conceptualize culture and individuals as continually and mutually constitutive (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Within the musical context, the affective response is culturally inflected such that emotional meaning emerges from the interactions between particular listeners and musical events (Becker, 2010; Tang, 2024). This resembles constructionist (Cespedes-Guevara & Eerola, 2018; Lennie & Eerola, 2022) and active sense-making approaches (Schiavio et al., 2017) to emotions in music. Although our studies did not control for specific musical features across participants' favorite music, factors that might affect emotional responses, our approach aligns with previous research examining emotions in the context of preferred music (e.g., Saarikallio et al., 2021; Schäfer et al., 2012). We argue that this approach offers valuable insights into the diverse emotional experiences associated with music across cultures.

This research aimed to investigate the role of self-construal in music-evoked emotions across cultures, incorporating culturally informed models of emotion. Specifically, our research question was: is self-construal, both between and within cultures, associated with the frequency and intensity of emotions elicited by music? To address this, we conducted two studies. Study One utilized an online questionnaire, where participants reflected on the emotions evoked by their favorite music. Building on these findings, Study Two adopted a listening experiment, where participants listened to their favorite piece of music and completed a questionnaire assessing their emotional responses. To better capture cross-cultural nuances, we incorporated emotion models from non-Western cultural traditions across studies. Both studies were approved by the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure through the Department of Music and the Department of Psychology.

Study One

In Study One, we adopted an exploratory approach. Previous research has demonstrated the feasibility of using retrospective, reflective online questionnaires to evaluate music-evoked emotions in cross-cultural contexts (Juslin et al., 2016; Saarikallio et al., 2021). By inviting participants to reflect on past emotional experiences with music, this method facilitates thoughtful contextualization and articulation of affective responses. Following this approach, participants completed an online questionnaire about the emotions they experienced while listening to their favorite piece of music.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited in two ways. Firstly, an online advertisement was distributed through the researchers and their contacts at universities in Singapore, China, Hong Kong, the U.K., and the U.S. Participants indicated if they wanted to be entered into a draw to win one of five £10 (~US\$13) Amazon gift cards. Secondly, participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) via CloudResearch and were compensated US\$1 upon completion. Participants who did not complete the questionnaire or had missing responses were removed. In total, 435 participants were included in the final analysis, representing 32 nationalities and 20 ethnicities, living in 11 different countries (see Supplementary Material A in the online supplemental materials).

Materials

Emotion Checklist. We first compiled emotion terms found in previous music and emotion research, such as the Geneva Emotional Music Scale (Zentner et al., 2008), the Geneva Music-Induced Affect Checklist (Coutinho & Scherer, 2017), and adjective scales (Juslin & Laukka, 2004); the circumplex model of emotions comprising valence and arousal (Kallinen & Ravaja, 2006); and prior cross-cultural work on music and emotions (Juslin et al., 2016). We also included terms found in cross-cultural psychology regarding socially engaging and disengaging emotions (Kitayama et al., 2000, 2006; P. Liu et al., 2022). The initial list consisted of 202 emotion words (or phrases). Duplicates and word derivatives (e.g., joy and joyful; relax and relaxation; sad and sadness) were removed, and synonyms were grouped together to form a list of 40 emotion terms. After discussing with other music and emotion scholars, these terms were further distilled into the final emotion checklist comprising 32-word (or phrase) pairs measuring socially engaging (7-items), socially

disengaging (6-items), aesthetic (5-items), positive general (7-items), and negative general (7-items) emotions (see Supplementary Material B in the online supplemental materials). Intensity was rated on a 7-point Likert Scale (from 1 = *not at all intense* to 7 = *very intense*).

The emotion checklist was first translated into Chinese by Tang (first author). Two bilingual translators, who were masked to the study's hypotheses, back-translated the checklist – i.e., the native Mandarin-speaker translated the English version back into Chinese and the native English-speaker translated the Chinese version back into English. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved by changing either (or both) the Chinese and/or English terminology. This method of back-translation, involving individuals from East Asian and Western cultures, helps to ensure both linguistic semantic equivalence (i.e., similar meanings between cultures) and conceptual equivalence (i.e., the construct 'makes sense' in other cultures; Boehnke, 2022; Broesch et al., 2020).

Self-Construal. Self-construal was measured using Singelis' (1994) Self-Construal Scale (SCS). The SCS comprises 15-items each for interdependent and independent self-construals, rated on a 7-point Likert Scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). The Chinese version, obtained from T. Singelis (personal communication, November 17, 2022), has been used in previous studies (e.g., Li et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha for the present study (all participants combined) was .84 and .82 for the interdependent and independent scales, respectively.

Procedure

Participants accessed the study via a link on the online advertisement or through MTurk. After providing informed consent, they were instructed to report and think about their favorite piece of music. Thereafter, they were asked to reflect on the emotions that their favorite music was expressing and the emotions that they felt while listening to it. After choosing all relevant emotions for perceived and felt emotions separately using the emotion checklist, participants rated the intensity of their selected emotions. They then completed the SCS and demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, education level, and musical expertise). Regarding musical expertise, we included years of musical training and the musician rank item (i.e., "*Which title best describes you?*") of the Ollen Musical Sophistication Index (OMSI; Ollen, 2006), based on Zhang and Schubert's (2019) findings that they are the best single-item measures for estimating musicality. The online questionnaire was hosted by

Qualtrics^{XM} and took approximately 15-minutes to complete. Participation was voluntary and participants could skip any questions they did not want to answer.

Data Analysis

The frequency of emotions was calculated by summing the number of emotions selected in each type. Intensity of emotions was calculated by averaging the intensity of emotions selected in each type. Participants were grouped by nationality, following arguments that national differences in collectivism-individualism shape self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Given the wide range of nationalities (see Supplementary Material A in the online supplemental materials), we applied the cultural distance hypothesis (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003), which assumes that cultures are similar if they are close to one another, to cluster participants by geographic region. Subsequently, we conducted a multilevel regression analysis with participants nested within regions. For this article, we focused on the emotions that participants felt while listening to their favorite music. The analysis of perceived emotions will be presented in a separate forthcoming report. All analyzes were conducted using SPSS®28.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

Participants were divided into 9 regions: American ($n = 215$), Canadian ($n = 38$), Brazilian ($n = 2$), British ($n = 88$), European ($n = 15$), East Asian ($n = 26$), Southeast Asian ($n = 32$), South Asian ($n = 11$), and dual nationality ($n = 7$). See Table 1 for a description of participant characteristics.

<Table 1>

Participants selected a wide variety of musical genres, including folk, classical, rock, disco, country, pop, electronic dance music, rap, hip-hop, soul, Schlager, video game music, fusion, movie soundtracks, trance, show tunes, gospel, and contemporary Christian music. The distribution of genres was largely consistent across regions, showcasing substantial diversity within each. The U.S. sample exhibited the highest diversity of musical styles, whereas the Brazil sample reported the fewest. Some regional patterns emerged. For example, Mando-pop and Canto-pop were more prevalent in East and Southeast Asia, while Anglophone pop music appeared across all regions. A complete list of music titles and artists can be found in Supplementary Material C in the online supplemental materials.

Multilevel Regression Analysis

We conducted a multilevel regression analysis, nesting participants within regions and allowing the intercept by region to vary randomly. For between-region differences (Level 2), regional means of self-construal were calculated by averaging the respective self-construals of participants within each region. For each participant's within-region variance (Level 1), regional mean-centered self-construals were calculated by subtracting the regional means of interdependent and independent self-construals from each participant's self-construals respectively. Given the relatively small number of regions ($n = 9$) and that some had a small sample size ($n < 10$), self-construals were analyzed separately to minimize the risk of overfitting and type II error (false negative). Specifically, regional mean and regional mean-centered interdependent self-construals were entered as predictors of the frequency and intensity of the emotion types in Model 1, and regional mean and regional mean-centered independent self-construals were entered as predictors in Model 2.

Frequency of Emotion. In Model 1, no statistically significant associations were observed. This suggests that interdependent self-construal was not associated with the frequency of various emotion types felt with favorite music between participants across different regions.

In Model 2, the results showed that only the regional mean of independent self-construal was significantly associated with the frequency of negative socially disengaging emotions ($b = 0.17$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .019$). This suggests that between-region variation of independence, not within-region variation of independent self-construal, was positively associated with the frequency of negative socially disengaging emotions felt when listening to favorite music (see Table 2).

<Table 2>

Intensity of Emotion. In Model 1, no statistically significant associations were found. This suggests that interdependent self-construal was not associated with the intensity of various emotion types felt with favorite music between participants across different regions.

In Model 2, regional mean-centered independent self-construal was significantly associated with the intensity of positive general emotions ($b = 0.38$, $SE = 0.16$, $p = .016$). This suggests that within-region variation of independent self-construal, not between-region variation of independence, was associated with the intensity of positive general emotions felt with favorite music (see Table 3).

<Table 3>

Discussion of Study One

We found that independent self-construal was associated with the frequency of negative socially disengaging emotions felt with favorite music. This aligns with previous research indicating that individuals from Western countries tend to experience socially disengaging emotions more frequently in everyday social contexts (Boiger et al., 2013; Furukawa et al., 2012; Jakubanečs et al., 2019; Kitayama et al., 2000, 2006; Leu et al., 2010). Notably, Study One contributes to the literature by showing that regional differences in independence was positively associated with negative socially disengaging emotions in the music domain. One possible explanation may lie in cultural variation around emotion display rules: individualistic cultures generally perceive the expression of negative emotions as more acceptable than collectivistic cultures (Matsumoto, 1990). Our result is also consistent with findings that American Top-50 music often contains more lyrics expressing anger (Liew et al., 2023), potentially leading to more experiences of negative socially disengaging emotions (e.g., anger, disappointment, and resentment) when listeners engage with their favorite music.

This study also revealed that within-region variation in independent self-construal was positively linked to the intensity of positive general emotions. This supports earlier research showing that individuals with an independent self-construal tend to prefer high-arousal positive emotions, such as excitement and elation (Kim et al., 2014), and are drawn to people and activities that embody this ideal affect (Bencharit et al., 2019; Sims et al., 2014; Tsai et al., 2019; Tsai, Louie, et al., 2007; Tsai, Miao, et al., 2007). While such studies highlight differences between countries, our findings suggest that variations in independent self-construal within regions also play a critical role. Specifically, individuals across regions may share a preference for music that evokes positive emotions, but the intensity of these emotions felt can differ depending on their prevailing independent self-construal.

Unfortunately, we found no evidence supporting our hypothesis that interdependent self-construal was associated with socially engaging emotions. This finding contrasts with prior research showing that individuals from collectivistic cultures experience socially engaging emotions more frequently and intensely (Boiger et al., 2013; Furukawa et al., 2012; Jakubanečs et al., 2019; Kitayama et al., 2000, 2006; Leu et al., 2010). This was unexpected, given that a cursory review of

participants' reported favorite music titles (see Supplementary Material C in the online supplemental materials) revealed songs with themes of love and social connection, such as *Kiss Goodbye* (吻別) by Jacky Cheung (张学友), *Codinome Beija-Flor* by Cazuza, and *You'll Be in My Heart* by Phil Collins.

We propose two possibilities for this lack of evidence. First, the wide range of nationalities in this study may have diluted the findings because prior research indicates that cultural groups emphasize different ways of being interdependent and independent (Boiger et al., 2013; Vignoles et al., 2016). Individuals from different cultural backgrounds engage with music for distinct purposes, which could influence the emotions experienced with their favorite music (Boer et al., 2012; Boer & Fischer, 2012; Granot et al., 2021; Saarikallio et al., 2021; Schäfer et al., 2012). Thus, the diversity of the sample may have added complexity, potentially obscuring a clear association between interdependent self-construal and socially engaging emotions.

Second, the retrospective, reflective online questionnaire method relies on participants accurately recalling their favorite music and the emotions it evoked, which could introduce biases in memory and perception. Previous studies utilizing real-time listening experiments have shown that preference significantly affects the specificity and intensity of ratings across emotion categories (Fuentes-Sánchez et al., 2022; Kreutz et al., 2008). As shown by Levenson et al. (1992), meaningful, in-the-moment engagement with music may be necessary to elicit socially engaging emotions. In light of these considerations, we designed Study Two to address these limitations and build on our findings.

Study Two

For Study Two, we conducted a real-time listening experiment with participants residing in three countries. The selected countries represent distinct points along the collectivism-individualism spectrum, as defined by Hofstede et al.'s (2010) individualism index. Specifically, China (score = 20) was chosen to represent a collectivistic culture, and the U.K. (score = 89) to represent an individualist culture. Although Singapore shares the same score as China, its culture reflects a blend of Eastern and Western influences (Tamney, 1996). Traditional Asian values are prevalent in familial and social interactions, while Western ideals are evident in education, governance, and media (Ang & Stratton, 1995; Sheehy, 2004). Singapore's Bilingual Education Policy further reinforces this hybrid

sociocultural identity, enabling the coexistence of Eastern and Western cultural elements (Dixon, 2005; Ho, 2006). Singapore was therefore included to represent a unique sociocultural context that integrates both collectivistic and individualistic values.

In this study, we investigated whether self-construal mediates the relationship between country and the types of emotions felt in response to favorite music. Building on Study One, the real-time listening experiment provided a more immediate and ecologically valid assessment of emotional responses. We hypothesized that interdependent self-construal would mediate the relationship between country and socially engaging emotions, while independent self-construal would mediate the relationship between country and socially disengaging emotions felt when listening to favorite music.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from the University of Sheffield in the U.K., Henan University in China, and Singapore Management University in Singapore. In the U.K. and Singapore, recruitment was conducted using each university's psychology subject pool. Additionally, publicity materials were distributed at all three universities via internal email, social media, and on-campus bulletin boards. Participants received either course credit or a cash voucher (£5 in the U.K., CN¥30 in China, or SG\$5 in Singapore) as compensation. A total of 309 participants (102 participants residing in the U.K., 107 in China, and 100 in Singapore) were included in the final analysis. Reported nationalities and ethnicities can be found in the Supplementary Material D in the online supplemental materials.

Materials

The same measures from Study One were used. Cronbach's alpha (all participants combined) was .73 and .76 for the interdependent and independent SCSs, respectively.

Procedure

Prospective participants first registered their interest and indicated their favorite piece of music. Upon arrival at the lab, participants completed the informed consent form. Thereafter, participants listened to "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" to ensure that volume levels were appropriate and the headphones were positioned comfortably. Once ready, they were instructed to pay attention to the emotions that their favorite music was expressing and the emotions they felt while listening to it.

Participants then listened to their favorite music on the relevant music streaming service (e.g., Spotify or QQ Music). During this listening task, a prompt on the screen reminded them to pay attention to both perceived and felt emotions. Following the listening task, participants chose all relevant emotions for perceived and felt emotions separately using the emotion checklist and rated their intensity. Subsequently, they completed the SCS and demographic questions. The questionnaire was hosted by Qualtrics^{XM} and the entire experiment lasted approximately 30-minutes.

Data Analysis

We conducted a mediation analysis, focusing on the emotions participants felt while listening to their favorite music. The analysis of perceived emotions will be presented in a separate forthcoming report. All analyzes were conducted using SPSS®28.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

The one-way ANOVA showed that there was a statistically significant difference between countries regarding age, $F(2, 304) = 5.81, p = .003$; education level, $F(2, 306) = 7.06, p = .001$; musical identity, $F(2, 306) = 202.68, p < .001$; and musical training, $F(2, 306) = 34.91, p < .001$ (see Table 4). Post hoc analyzes with Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test (using an α of .05) showed that, on average, participants in China were older than participants in the U.K., and that they had higher education levels and musical expertise than both the U.K. and Singapore groups. This was expected because participants from China were mostly recruited from the music department.

The one-way ANOVA also showed that there was a statistically significant difference between countries in interdependent self-construal, $F(2, 306) = 5.76, p = .003$ (see Table 4). Post hoc analyzes showed that the Singapore group had higher interdependent self-construal than the U.K. group. There were no significant differences in independent self-construal, $F(2, 306) = 2.61, p = .075$.

<Table 4>

Participants selected a broad spectrum of musical styles, including alternative, folk, indie, pop, classical, rap, hip-hop, R&B, and rock. Each country exhibited diversity in the range of styles reported. As in Study One, some cross-country differences emerged: Chinese-pop, Mando-pop, and K-pop were mentioned exclusively in China and Singapore, whereas Anglophone pop music was cited

across all countries. The complete list can be found in Supplementary Material E in the online supplemental materials.

Role of Self-Construal Between Country and Felt Emotions

We conducted a mediation analysis using Hayes' (2017) PROCESS (v.4.2) Model 4. Country was entered as a multicategorical predictor using indicator coding (the U.K. was dummy coded as 0), interdependent and independent self-construals were entered as the mediators, and felt emotions were entered as the outcome variable. Musical identity and musical training were transformed into a composite musical expertise score (i.e., musician rank item x years of musical training). Age, education level, and musical expertise, which significantly differed between countries, along with gender were included as covariates. All standard errors and confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated on 5,000 bootstrapped iterations.

Frequency of Socially Engaging Emotions. The results showed that interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.25$, $t(298) = 2.78$, $p = .006$) was significantly associated with the frequency of positive socially engaging emotions. The subsequent mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of China-UK on positive socially engaging emotions ($b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.12]). The direct effect of China-UK remained significant ($b = -0.69$, $SE = 0.16$, $p < .001$). Thus, interdependent self-construal partially mediated the differences in the frequency of positive socially engaging emotions between these groups.

Similarly, the results indicated a significant indirect effect of Singapore-UK on the frequency of positive socially engaging emotions through interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.15]). The direct effect of Singapore-UK remained significant ($b = -0.29$, $SE = 0.14$, $p = .047$). Thus, interdependent self-construal partially mediated the differences in the frequency of positive socially engaging emotions between the Singapore and U.K. groups.

The results showed that both interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.07$, $t(298) = 1.83$, $p = .068$) and independent self-construal ($b = 0.01$, $t(298) = 0.28$, $p = .780$) were not significantly associated with the frequency of negative socially engaging emotions. Given that interdependent self-construal showed a marginal significant effect, we proceeded with the mediation analysis. The mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of China-UK on negative socially engaging emotions (b

= 0.01, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.03]). The direct effect of China-UK was not significant ($b = -0.05$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .481$). Thus, interdependent self-construal fully mediated the differences in the frequency of negative socially engaging emotions between the China and U.K. groups.

The mediation analysis also revealed a significant indirect effect of Singapore-UK on negative socially engaging emotions through interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.04]). The direct effect of Singapore-UK was not significant ($b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .662$). Thus, interdependent self-construal fully mediated the differences in the frequency of negative socially engaging emotions between the Singapore and U.K. groups.

Frequency of Socially Disengaging Emotions. The results showed that independent self-construal ($b = 0.11$, $t(298) = 2.49$, $p = .014$) was significantly associated with the frequency of positive socially disengaging emotions. The subsequent mediation analysis revealed a non-significant indirect effect of China-UK ($b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.04]) and Singapore-UK ($b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.03]) on positive socially disengaging emotions. Thus, independent self-construal did not mediate the differences in the frequency of positive socially disengaging emotions between these groups. The results also showed that both self-construals were not significantly associated with the frequency of negative socially disengaging emotions.

Frequency of Aesthetic Emotions. The results showed that independent self-construal ($b = 0.31$, $t(298) = 3.79$, $p < .001$) was significantly associated with the frequency of aesthetic emotions. The subsequent mediation analysis revealed a non-significant indirect effect of China-UK ($b = 0.04$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.11]) and Singapore-UK ($b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.09]) on aesthetic emotions. Thus, independent self-construal did not mediate the differences in the frequency of aesthetic emotions between the China and U.K. as well as Singapore and U.K. groups.

Frequency of General Emotions. The results showed that independent self-construal ($b = 0.27$, $t(298) = 2.09$, $p = .037$) was significantly associated with the frequency of positive general emotions. The subsequent mediation analysis revealed a non-significant indirect effect of China-UK ($b = 0.04$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.12]) and Singapore-UK ($b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.10]) on positive general emotions. Thus, independent self-construal did not mediate the differences in the frequency of positive general emotions between the China and U.K. as well as Singapore and

U.K. groups. The results also showed that both self-construals were not significantly associated with the frequency of negative general emotions. See Table 5 for the mediation analysis results.

<Table 5>

Intensity of Socially Engaging Emotion. The results showed that interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.51$, $t(298) = 2.31$, $p = .022$) was significantly associated with the intensity of positive socially engaging emotions. The mediation analysis revealed a non-significant indirect effect of China-UK on these emotions through interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.10$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [-0.00, 0.26]). Thus, interdependent self-construal did not mediate the differences in the intensity of positive socially engaging emotions between the China and U.K. groups.

The mediation analysis indicated a significant indirect effect of Singapore-UK on the intensity of positive socially engaging emotions through interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.35]). The direct effect of Singapore-UK was not significant ($b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.35$, $p = .887$). Thus, interdependent self-construal fully mediated the differences in the intensity of positive socially engaging emotions between the Singapore and U.K. groups.

The results showed that both interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.35$, $t(298) = 1.92$, $p = .056$) and independent self-construal ($b = -0.12$, $t(298) = -0.75$, $p = .454$) were not significantly associated with the intensity of negative socially engaging emotions. Since interdependent self-construal showed a marginal significant effect, we proceeded with the mediation analysis. Results from the mediation analysis revealed a non-significant indirect effect of China-UK on these emotions ($b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [-0.00, 0.17]). Thus, interdependent self-construal did not mediate the differences in the intensity of negative socially engaging emotions between the China and U.K. groups.

The mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of Singapore-UK on the intensity of negative socially engaging emotions through interdependent self-construal ($b = 0.10$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.22]). The direct effect of Singapore-UK was not significant ($b = 0.38$, $SE = 0.29$, $p = .188$). Thus, interdependent self-construal fully mediated the differences in the intensity of negative socially engaging emotions between the Singapore and U.K. groups.

Intensity of Socially Disengaging Emotions. The results showed that independent self-construal ($b = 0.37$, $t(298) = 1.99$, $p = .048$) was significantly associated with the intensity of positive

socially disengaging emotions. The subsequent mediation analysis revealed a non-significant indirect effect of China-UK ($b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.16]) and Singapore-UK ($b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.13]) on positive socially disengaging emotions. Thus, independent self-construal did not mediate the differences in the intensity of positive socially disengaging emotions between these groups. The results also showed that both self-construals were not significantly associated with the intensity of negative socially disengaging emotions.

Intensity of Aesthetic Emotions. The results showed that independent self-construal ($b = 0.50$, $t(298) = 2.60$, $p = .009$) was significantly associated with the intensity of aesthetic emotions. The subsequent mediation analysis revealed a non-significant indirect effect of China-UK ($b = -0.00$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.02]) and Singapore-UK ($b = 0.00$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.02]) on aesthetic emotions. Thus, independent self-construal did not mediate the differences in the intensity of aesthetic emotions between these groups.

Intensity of General Emotions. The results showed that both self-construals were not significantly associated with the intensity of positive general emotions and negative general emotions. See Table 6 for the mediation analysis results for the intensity of felt emotions.

<Table 6>

Discussion of Study Two

We found that only interdependent self-construal emerged as a significant mediator, underscoring the idea that cultural contexts influence self-construal, which in turn shapes both music preferences and the emotional responses elicited by favorite music (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010; Tang, 2024). These results align with prior research indicating that individuals from collectivistic cultures experience socially engaging emotions more frequently and intensely in everyday interactions compared to individuals from individualistic cultures (Boiger et al., 2013; Furukawa et al., 2012; Jakubaneš et al., 2019; Kitayama et al., 2000, 2006; Leu et al., 2010). Unlike previous studies, which operationalize collectivism using countries, this study emphasizes the specific role of interdependent self-construal in evoking socially engaging emotions within the context of music.

We also found a significant positive relationship between interdependent self-construal and the frequency and intensity of socially engaging emotions, highlighting its influence both across and

within cultural contexts. While cultural environments may shape the range of music individuals are exposed to, self-construal plays a pivotal role in guiding the meaning-making processes that listeners engage in while listening to their favorite music. These cognitive and affective processes ultimately determine the emotions elicited. Specifically, interdependent self-construal, with its focus on intersubjective connections, likely enhances receptivity to socially engaging emotions, affective states that facilitate social cohesion and interpersonal bonding.

Contrary to our hypothesis, independent self-construal did not mediate the relationship between country and socially disengaging emotions evoked by favorite music. Our findings showed no significant differences in independent self-construal across cultural groups, which may explain the absence of a mediation effect. This lack of variation aligns with prior research indicating that individualism is increasing globally (Santos et al., 2017), suggesting that relying solely on country as a proxy for individualism may be insufficient for capturing meaningful cross-cultural distinctions.

Nonetheless, independent self-construal was positively associated with the frequency and intensity of positive socially disengaging emotions evoked by favorite music, which aligns with prior research on emotions in everyday social contexts (Kitayama et al., 2000, 2006). Importantly, this study advances previous cross-national research by emphasizing the specific role of independent self-construal in shaping these emotions within the music domain, even within a given cultural context. That is, although people from different countries may experience positive socially disengaging emotions, variations in independent self-construal may elucidate differences in the frequency and intensity of these emotions within cultural contexts.

Our results also revealed a significant positive relationship between independent self-construal and the frequency of positive general emotions evoked by favorite music. This is consistent with the broader observation that favorite music universally elicits positive emotions (Juslin et al., 2016; Saarikallio et al., 2021). This study extends previous research by highlighting the role of independent self-construal in shaping the frequency of these emotions experienced within cultural contexts. While individuals across countries may prefer music that evokes positive emotions, the degree to which these emotions are felt may be influenced by independent self-construal. This

suggests that within-culture variations in self-construal may provide a more nuanced understanding of individual differences in emotional responses to music beyond cross-national comparisons.

Additionally, we found that independent self-construal was positively linked to the frequency and intensity of aesthetic emotions. This suggests that aesthetic emotions may be rooted in Western philosophical traditions and, by extension, Western models of emotions. Aesthetic emotions involve an appreciation of the qualities of the object being evaluated (e.g., music), rather than from concerns related to survival or well-being (Menninghaus et al., 2019). This conceptualization contrasts sharply with Asian aesthetics. For example, Japanese aesthetics avoid focusing on the subject, emphasizing instead the immediacy or in-the-moment experience (Sasaki, 2011). Similarly, Chinese aesthetics prioritize the moral and educational functions of music, underscoring its role in promoting social harmony rather than valuing beauty as a standalone attribute (J. Liu, 2013). Given these philosophical differences, aesthetic emotions may resonate more strongly with independent self-construal.

Another explanation is that individuals with a stronger independent self-construal may place greater emphasis on their personal engagement with their favorite music, heightening their sensitivity to aesthetic experiences. They may also be more likely to critically evaluate the music or express personal judgements about its qualities. In contrast, individuals with a stronger interdependent self-construal might demonstrate greater humility, making them less inclined to pass personal judgments on another's work. Alternatively, their aesthetic judgments may be more influenced by the reactions and opinions of others rather than being based solely on their own perceptions. Since participants in this study listened to their favorite music in isolation, they lacked the social cues that might typically inform their aesthetic judgements. This may have contributed to the observed positive association between independent self-construal and aesthetic emotions. Future research could further investigate this hypothesis by including participants from additional Western or highly individualistic cultural contexts and conducting group listening experiments.

General Discussion

Our studies offered consistent evidence linking independent self-construal to socially disengaging emotions evoked by favorite music. In Study One, between-region differences in independent self-construal were positively associated with the frequency of negative socially

disengaging emotions. Study Two showed that independent self-construal directly influenced the frequency and intensity of positive socially disengaging emotions. Together, these findings advance cross-cultural emotion research in two ways: first, by extending insights from everyday emotional experiences to the music domain; and second, by moving beyond cross-country comparisons to highlight the role of independent self-construal in shaping socially disengaging emotions experienced with music. These results show that listeners feel emotions such as pride and superiority when they listen to their favorite music across and within cultures.

Our studies provided limited evidence of an association between interdependent self-construal and socially engaging emotions evoked by favorite music. No such associations were found in Study One. However, Study Two revealed that interdependent self-construal not only directly influenced the frequency and intensity of socially engaging emotions but also mediated between-country differences in these emotions. We propose that this discrepancy stems from differences in methodology. In Study One, participants were asked to recall the emotions experienced with their favorite music, a reflective process that centers individual experience. This introspection parallels self-construal manipulations commonly used in cross-cultural studies (cf. Cross et al., 2011). Prior research has shown that different self-construals can be activated in people from various cultures, resulting in behaviors congruent with interdependent or independent self-construals (e.g., Neumann, 2022). By inviting participants to focus on their individual subjective experience, Study One may have inadvertently primed independent self-construal, potentially accounting for the observed associations with independent self-construal and the absence of correlations with interdependent self-construal.

In contrast, the listening task shifted participants' focus from oneself to their engagement with music, a process that is culturally inflected. Music and listeners influence one another through dynamic exchanges of musical elements and listener perceptions (Becker, 2010; Clarke, 2011; Frith, 1996; Tang, 2024). This likely elicited more authentic emotional responses, thereby illuminating the relationship between interdependent self-construal and socially engaging emotions. Moreover, this methodological shift may explain the observed associations between independent self-construal and aesthetic emotions in Study Two. The listening experience may have encouraged participants to perceive music as a gestalt, facilitating the perception of aesthetic emotions.

Taken together, these findings have important implications for future cross-cultural music emotion research. They suggest that using retrospective, reflective questionnaires to evaluate music-evoked emotions may introduce methodological biases. Additionally, the laboratory-based design, removed from ecologically valid contexts where music engagement typically occurs, may have attenuated the observed associations and limits the generalizability of the findings. As demonstrated by Levenson et al. (1992) in their study of emotions in everyday contexts with the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra, examining music engagement in naturalistic settings may reveal nuanced cross-cultural emotional patterns. Given that music often involves people and multiple artistic mediums in other cultures (Nzewi, 1997), future research should prioritize ecologically valid environments to enhance the reliability and applicability of findings across cultures.

These findings also carry significant implications for music therapists and arts and health practitioners working with culturally diverse populations. Adopting a cultural approach to optimal functioning (Miyamoto et al., 2019) involves acknowledging that individuals from various cultural backgrounds may possess distinct self-construals, which influence the affective states they prioritize for well-being (Chow & Berenbaum, 2012; Rothman & Magee, 2016). For instance, individuals with an interdependent self-construal often define happiness in terms of interpersonal connectedness, whereas those with an independent self-construal are more likely to associate happiness with personal achievement (Uchida et al., 2004). Understanding that people with different self-construals may be more attuned to socially engaging or disengaging emotions through their favorite music enables practitioners to design culturally sensitive music interventions.

Another strength of our studies is its incorporation of culturally informed models of emotions. As discussed, cross-cultural research in music psychology has mostly relied on Western-derived frameworks that conceptualize emotions as intrapsychic experiences. This has constrained our ability to fully explore the diversity of affective responses to music across cultures. By integrating culturally informed models alongside specific cultural factors, we offer a nuanced understanding of how culture shapes music-evoked emotions by recognizing a broader range of emotions, while remaining sensitive to individual- and group-level cultural variations. For cross-cultural research in music psychology to

thrive, we advocate that as researchers, we should make explicit our epistemological and ontological assumptions, and embrace both etic and emic theoretical perspectives.

Limitations

While our studies offer valuable insights, we also acknowledge several limitations. First, the unequal distribution of participants across regions (Study One) and the differences in age, education levels, and musical expertise between groups (Study Two) present challenges. Prior research indicates that these factors can influence emotional responses to music to varying degrees (Di Mauro et al., 2018; Ladinig & Schellenberg, 2012; Pearce & Halpern, 2015). Although we statistically controlled for these variables in Study Two, future studies should aim for more comparable samples across cultures to enhance the generalizability of our results.

Second, we investigated music-evoked emotions using only a single favorite music selection. This choice was made because of practical constraints but may have limited our ability to detect differences. Also, the decision to use favorite music was based on prior research suggesting that they are linked to personality and cultural identity (Marshall & Naumann, 2018; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006), potentially reflecting an individual's prevailing self-construal and the emotions it induces. However, we recognize that specific music may inherently elicit particular emotions. Future research could standardize and employ multiple music stimuli to better explore cross-cultural differences and similarities in affective responses, while controlling for variables such as familiarity and liking.

Third, our use of a cross-sectional design limits our ability to draw causal inferences between self-construal and music-evoked emotions. One plausible theoretical explanation for our findings is that emotional experiences during music engagement may activate specific self-construals. While our design does not allow us to confirm this, it is reasonable to suggest that self-construal and music experience influence each other, consistent with the notion that the self and cultural factors mutually shape one another (Markus & Kitayama, 2010; Tang, 2024). This dynamic interaction likely plays a role in shaping the emotions experienced during music engagement.

Fourth, our categorization of emotions was determined a priori. Although this structured approach facilitated analysis, we acknowledge that emotions are inherently complex and may not neatly fit into predefined categories, especially across cultures. Nonetheless, our findings highlight the

importance of incorporating culturally sensitive models of emotions in cross-cultural research, enabling a richer understanding of how culture shapes emotional experiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our studies underscore the importance of integrating specific cultural factors and culturally informed emotion models in cross-cultural research on music-evoked emotions. Our findings also highlight how methodological variations, such as listening to music versus reflecting on it, can significantly influence emotional outcomes across cultures. For the first time, this research demonstrates the role of self-construal in shaping affective responses to music both within and across cultures. Interdependent self-construal was associated with socially engaging emotions, while independent self-construal was linked to socially disengaging, aesthetic, and positive general emotions. In other words, our sense of self, whether perceived as interconnected or independent, influences the frequency and intensity of various emotion types felt during music engagement. This research presents a novel approach to cross-cultural studies of affective experiences with music. By examining self-construal alongside culturally grounded emotion models, we contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of cultural diversity in music psychology. These insights pave the way for future research exploring the intricate interplay between culture, self-construal, and emotional experiences in the music domain.

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Table 1

Study One Participant Characteristics

	American	Canadian	Brazilian	British	European	East Asian	Southeast Asian	South Asian	Dual Nationality
	(<i>n</i> = 215)	(<i>n</i> = 38)	(<i>n</i> = 2)	(<i>n</i> = 88)	(<i>n</i> = 15)	(<i>n</i> = 26)	(<i>n</i> = 32)	(<i>n</i> = 11)	(<i>n</i> = 7)
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Age (Years)	38.66 (13.07)	40.74 (12.38)	26.50 (0.71)	31.65 (12.07)	32.08 (10.87)	28.00 (7.59)	29.15 (7.60)	38.70 (11.57)	28.67 (13.02)
Gender, <i>n</i> (%)									
Transgender	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Non-binary	4 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Female	105 (48.8)	18 (47.4)	1 (50.0)	32 (36.4)	7 (46.7)	22 (84.6)	17 (53.1)	7 (63.6)	2 (28.6)
Male	104 (48.4)	20 (52.6)	1 (50.0)	52 (59.1)	8 (53.3)	2 (7.7)	15 (46.9)	4 (36.4)	5 (71.4)
Prefer not to say	2 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Disability, <i>n</i> (%)									
Yes	35 (16.3)	11 (28.9)	0 (0.0)	4 (4.5)	1 (6.7)	2 (7.7)	1 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	6 (85.7)
No	173 (80.5)	26 (68.4)	2 (100)	78 (88.6)	14 (93.3)	24 (92.3)	30 (93.8)	11 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
Prefer not to say	3 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Prefer to self-describe	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (14.3)
Education Level	4.99 (0.71)	5.00 (0.82)	5.50 (0.71)	4.87 (0.65)	5.15 (0.90)	5.26 (0.56)	4.85 (0.82)	5.50 (0.53)	5.00 (0.89)
Musical Identity	2.55 (1.34)	2.21 (1.07)	2.50 (0.71)	2.64 (1.34)	2.23 (1.17)	3.42 (1.84)	2.44 (1.19)	1.90 (0.57)	4.17 (1.17)
Musical Training (Years)	4.01 (5.31)	3.76 (6.09)	1.00 (1.41)	4.29 (6.28)	2.85 (5.97)	7.11 (8.96)	3.11 (4.84)	0.70 (0.95)	11.5 (6.16)
Self-Construal									
Interdependent	4.99 (0.91)	4.64 (0.75)	4.84 (0.33)	4.53 (0.72)	4.37 (0.69)	4.77 (0.59)	4.96 (0.71)	5.28 (0.55)	4.58 (0.59)
Independent	5.25 (0.85)	5.06 (0.78)	5.87 (0.66)	5.01 (0.69)	5.02 (0.86)	4.72 (0.57)	4.96 (0.73)	5.15 (0.95)	4.83 (0.55)

Note. ^a Musical identity was obtained using the Ollen Musical Sophistication Index (OMSI; Ollen, 2006) musician rank item. Musical identity was used because it was reported to be the best single-item measure that represents musical sophistication and musicality (Zhang & Schubert, 2019).

Table 2

Study One Multilevel Regression Analysis Results for Frequency of Felt Emotion

Model 1: Interdependent Self-Construal				Model 2: Independent Self-Construal					
		Outcome Variable					Outcome Variable		
		<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>			<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Predictors		Positive Socially Engaging Emotions			Predictors		Socially Engaging Emotions		
Interdependent	RegionalMean	-0.13	0.21	.531	Independent	RegionalMean	0.02	0.29	.950
Interdependent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.06	0.06	.274	Independent	RegionalMeanCentered	-0.07	0.06	.263
		Negative Socially Engaging Emotions					Negative Socially Engaging Emotions		
Interdependent	RegionalMean	0.03	0.07	.711	Independent	RegionalMean	-0.01	0.10	.934
Interdependent	RegionalMeanCentered	-0.01	0.02	.723	Independent	RegionalMeanCentered	-0.01	0.02	.518
		Positive Socially Disengaging Emotions					Positive Socially Disengaging Emotions		
Interdependent	RegionalMean	0.00	0.12	.979	Independent	RegionalMean	0.05	0.15	.731
Interdependent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.02	0.03	.464	Independent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.04	0.03	.205
		Negative Socially Disengaging Emotions					Negative Socially Disengaging Emotions		
Interdependent	RegionalMean	0.09	0.05	.099	Independent	RegionalMean	0.17	0.07	.019*
Interdependent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.02	0.02	.238	Independent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.00	0.02	.949
		Aesthetic Emotions					Aesthetic Emotions		
Interdependent	RegionalMean	0.32	0.31	.379	Independent	RegionalMean	0.07	0.34	.843
Interdependent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.01	0.07	.909	Independent	RegionalMeanCentered	-0.06	0.07	.403
		Positive General Emotions					Positive General Emotions		
Interdependent	RegionalMean	0.55	0.60	.390	Independent	RegionalMean	0.56	0.70	.443
Interdependent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.07	0.09	.417	Independent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.01	0.09	.926
		Negative General Emotions					Negative General Emotions		
Interdependent	RegionalMean	-0.29	0.21	.208	Independent	RegionalMean	-0.04	0.30	.903
Interdependent	RegionalMeanCentered	0.04	0.04	.891	Independent	RegionalMeanCentered	-0.01	0.04	.819

Note. $N = 435$. Regional-means of interdependent and independent self-construals were calculated by averaging the respective self-construals of participants within each region. We did this to reflect between-region differences in self-construal (Level 2). Regional-mean-centered self-construals were calculated by subtracting the regional-means of interdependent and independent self-construals from each participant's interdependent and independent self-construals respectively. We did this to reflect each participant's within-region variance in self-construal (Level 1). Bold values indicate statistical significance.

* $p < .05$.

Table 3

Study One Multilevel Regression Analysis Results for Intensity of Felt Emotions

Model 1: Interdependent Self-Construal				Model 2: Independent Self-Construal					
		Outcome Variable				Outcome Variable			
		<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>			<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Predictors		Positive Socially Engaging Emotions			Predictors		Positive Socially Engaging Emotions		
Interdependent _{RegionalMean}		-0.20	0.64	.758	Independent _{RegionalMean}		0.58	1.04	.623
Interdependent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.09	0.18	.627	Independent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		-0.04	0.18	.811
		Negative Socially Engaging Emotions					Negative Socially Engaging Emotions		
Interdependent _{RegionalMean}		0.19	0.39	.624	Independent _{RegionalMean}		0.07	0.53	.895
Interdependent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		-0.03	0.11	.812	Independent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		-0.05	0.11	.668
		Positive Socially Disengaging Emotions					Positive Socially Disengaging Emotions		
Interdependent _{RegionalMean}		-0.23	0.55	.729	Independent _{RegionalMean}		0.06	0.75	.947
Interdependent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.14	0.15	.328	Independent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.20	0.15	.190
		Negative Socially Disengaging Emotions					Negative Socially Disengaging Emotions		
Interdependent _{RegionalMean}		0.35	0.24	.138	Independent _{RegionalMean}		0.73	0.34	.269
Interdependent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.07	0.07	.280	Independent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.01	0.07	.869
		Aesthetic Emotions					Aesthetic Emotions		
Interdependent _{RegionalMean}		1.42	1.05	.217	Independent _{RegionalMean}		-1.05	0.99	.454
Interdependent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.04	0.17	.809	Independent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.17	0.18	.344
		Positive General Emotions					Positive General Emotions		
Interdependent _{RegionalMean}		-0.42	0.80	.630	Independent _{RegionalMean}		-0.06	1.13	.959
Interdependent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.07	0.15	.674	Independent_{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.38	0.16	.016*
		Negative General Emotions					Negative General Emotions		
Interdependent _{RegionalMean}		-0.32	0.59	.616	Independent _{RegionalMean}		0.04	0.77	.959
Interdependent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		0.02	0.13	.856	Independent _{RegionalMeanCentered}		-0.05	0.13	.720

Note. $N = 435$. Regional-means of interdependent and independent self-construals were calculated by averaging the respective self-construals of participants within each region. We did this to reflect between-region differences in self-construal (Level 2). Regional-mean-centered self-construals were calculated by subtracting the regional-means of interdependent and independent self-construals from each participant's interdependent and independent self-construals respectively. We did this to reflect each participant's within-region variance in self-construal (Level 1). Bold values indicate statistical significance.

* $p < .05$.

Table 4

Study Two Participant Characteristics

	The U.K. (<i>n</i> = 102) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	China (<i>n</i> = 107) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Singapore (<i>n</i> = 100) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>p</i> -Value
Age (Years)	19.70 (4.50)	21.01 (1.41)	20.63 (1.45)	.003**
Gender, <i>n</i> (%)				
Transgender	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	
Non-binary	5 (4.90)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	
Female	85 (83.33)	71 (66.36)	83 (83.00)	
Male	11 (10.78)	29 (27.10)	16 (16.00)	
Prefer not to say	1 (0.98)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.00)	
Prefer to self-describe	0 (0.00)	7 (6.54)	0 (0.00)	
Disability, <i>n</i> (%)				
Yes	5 (4.90)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.00)	
No	91 (89.22)	101 (94.39)	98 (98.00)	
Prefer not to say	2 (1.96)	2 (1.87)	0 (0.00)	
Prefer to self-describe	4 (3.92)	4 (3.74)	1 (1.00)	
Education Level	4.25 (0.60)	4.55 (0.78)	4.25 (0.63)	.001***
Musical Identity ^a	2.35 (0.93)	4.65 (1.08)	2.31 (0.86)	< .001***
Music Training (Years)	3.64 (4.00)	7.22 (4.05)	3.05 (3.65)	< .001***
Self-construal				
Interdependent	4.73 (0.60)	4.83 (0.60)	5.02 (0.69)	.003**
Independent	4.57 (0.71)	4.79 (0.64)	4.67 (0.76)	.075

Note. ^a Musical identity was obtained using the Ollen Musical Sophistication Index (OMSI; Ollen, 2006) musician rank item. Musical identity was used because it was reported to be the best single-item measure that represents musical sophistication and musicality (Zhang & Schubert, 2019).

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5

Study Two Mediation Analysis for Frequency of Felt Emotions

Predictor Variables	Outcome Variables						95% CI	
	<i>b</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Positive Socially Engaging Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-0.69	-0.68	0.16	-4.25	< .001***		-1.02	-0.37
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	-0.29	-0.28	0.14	-1.99	.047*		-0.57	-0.00
Interdependent Self-Construal	0.25	0.16	0.09	2.78	.006**		0.07	0.43
Independent Self-Construal	0.11	0.08	0.08	1.41	.159		-0.05	0.27
Negative Socially Engaging Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-0.05	-0.11	0.07	-0.71	.481		-0.18	0.08
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	0.03	0.06	0.06	0.44	.662		-0.09	0.14
Interdependent Self-Construal	0.07	0.11	0.04	1.83	.068		-0.01	0.14
Independent Self-Construal	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.28	.780		-0.06	0.07
Age	0.03	0.24	0.01	4.09	< .001***		0.02	0.05
Positive Socially Disengaging Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-0.32	-0.58	0.09	-3.56	< .001***		-0.50	-0.14
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	-0.19	-0.34	0.08	-2.38	.018*		-0.34	-0.03
Interdependent Self-Construal	-0.05	-0.06	0.05	-1.07	.287		-0.15	0.05
Independent Self-Construal	0.11	0.14	0.04	2.49	.014*		0.02	0.20
Negative Socially Disengaging Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	0.01	0.06	0.04	0.34	.738		-0.06	0.09
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	0.06	0.27	0.03	1.88	.062		-0.00	0.13
Interdependent Self-Construal	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.52	.606		-0.03	0.05
Independent Self-Construal	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.58	.561		-0.03	0.05
Aesthetic Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-0.92	-0.86	0.16	-5.59	< .001***		-1.24	-0.59
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	-0.45	-0.43	0.14	-3.15	.002**		-0.74	-0.17
Interdependent Self-Construal	-0.06	-0.03	0.09	-0.61	.5454		-0.23	0.12
Independent Self-Construal	0.31	0.20	0.08	3.79	< .001***		0.15	0.47
Musical Expertise	0.01	0.28	0.00	4.32	< .001***		0.01	0.02
Positive General Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-1.04	-0.64	0.26	-3.93	< .001***		-1.56	-0.52
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	-0.49	-0.30	0.23	-2.11	.036*		-0.95	-0.03
Interdependent Self-Construal	-0.08	-0.03	0.15	-0.57	.566		-0.37	0.20
Independent Self-Construal	0.27	0.12	0.13	2.09	.037*		0.02	0.53
Musical Expertise	0.01	0.16	0.01	2.37	.019*		0.00	0.02
Negative General Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	0.04	0.05	0.13	0.33	.740		-0.21	0.29
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	0.15	0.20	0.11	1.38	.169		-0.07	0.37
Interdependent Self-Construal	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.23	.821		-0.12	0.15
Independent Self-Construal	-0.09	-0.08	0.06	-1.41	.161		-0.21	0.03
Gender	0.15	0.12	0.08	2.02	.044*		0.00	0.30

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. While covariates (age, gender, education, and musical expertise) are included in all models, only the statistically significant covariates are reported here. Full results can be found in Online Supplementary Materials F and G. Bold values indicate statistical significance.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 6

Study Two Mediation Analysis for Intensity of Felt Emotions

Predictor Variables	Outcome Variables						95% CI	
	<i>b</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Positive Socially Engaging Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-2.56	-0.96	0.40	-6.46	< .001***		-3.34	-1.78
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	0.05	0.02	0.35	0.14	.887		-0.64	0.74
Interdependent Self-Construal	0.51	0.12	0.22	2.31	.022*		0.07	0.94
Independent Self-Construal	0.30	0.08	0.20	1.53	.128		-0.09	0.69
Negative Socially Engaging Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-0.13	-0.07	0.33	-0.41	.683		-0.77	0.51
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	0.38	0.19	0.29	1.32	.188		-0.19	0.94
Interdependent Self-Construal	0.35	0.11	0.18	1.92	.056		-0.01	0.70
Independent Self-Construal	-0.12	-0.04	0.16	-0.75	.454		-0.44	0.20
Positive Socially Disengaging Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-1.54	-0.67	0.37	-4.14	< .001***		-2.27	-0.81
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	-0.67	-0.29	0.33	-2.05	.042*		-1.31	-0.03
Interdependent Self-Construal	-0.20	-0.06	0.21	-0.99	.321		-0.61	0.20
Independent Self-Construal	0.37	0.11	0.18	1.99	.048*		0.00	0.73
Negative Socially Disengaging Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	0.07	0.07	0.17	0.42	.675		-0.26	0.41
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	0.22	0.22	0.15	1.48	.139		-0.07	0.52
Interdependent Self-Construal	0.08	0.05	0.09	0.88	.382		-0.10	0.27
Independent Self-Construal	-0.03	-0.02	0.08	-0.40	.688		-0.20	0.13
Aesthetic Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-2.66	-1.02	0.39	-6.79	< .001***		-3.44	-1.89
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	-1.17	-0.45	0.35	-3.39	< .001***		-1.85	-0.49
Interdependent Self-Construal	-0.19	-0.05	0.22	-0.88	.381		-0.62	0.24
Independent Self-Construal	0.50	0.14	0.19	2.60	.009**		0.12	0.89
Positive General Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-2.76	-1.13	0.36	-7.59	< .001***		-3.47	-2.04
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	-0.10	-0.04	0.32	-0.31	.756		-0.73	0.53
Interdependent Self-Construal	-0.03	-0.01	0.20	-0.14	.887		-0.43	0.37
Independent Self-Construal	0.06	0.02	0.18	0.34	.734		-0.29	0.42
Musical Expertise	0.02	0.13	0.01	2.09	.038*		0.00	0.03
Negative General Emotions								
Country 1 (China-UK)	-0.45	-0.20	0.37	-1.23	.218		-1.17	.027
Country 2 (Singapore-UK)	0.76	0.33	0.32	2.37	.019*		0.13	1.39
Interdependent Self-Construal	0.36	0.10	0.20	1.78	.076		-0.04	0.76
Independent Self-Construal	-0.27	-0.08	0.18	-1.49	.136		-0.63	0.09
Age	0.12	0.16	0.05	2.68	.008**		0.03	0.22

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. While covariates (age, gender, education, and musical expertise) are included in all models, only the statistically significant covariates are reported here. Full results can be found in Online Supplementary Materials F and G. Bold values indicate statistical significance.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .00$