

Display Rules of Emotion Across Four Cultures

Sari Andajani
*San Francisco University
& Fakultas Psikologi
Universitas Surabaya*

Sachiko Takeuchi, Edmond Seban,
Natalia Kouznetsova & David Matsumoto
San Francisco University

Introduction

Universality of emotional expression was confirmed by previous cross-cultural research (Ekman, 1994; Fridlund, Ekman, & Oster, 1987; Matsumoto, in press). However, this did not account for cultural variations in facial expressions. Then, the psychological concept "Cultural display rules" was introduced to explain why cultural differences in emotional expression exist though people share seven universal emotions across cultures. Cultural display rules are guides for appropriate emotional expressions based on social contexts in each culture (Ekman, 1972).

Despite the importance of this topic in the study of emotion, relatively few cross-cultural studies have been conducted on display rules (Ekman and Friesen, 1969; Matsumoto, 1990; Takeuchi Kudoh, Yakimovich, Lee, Seban, & Matsumoto, 1995). Ekman and Friesen's (1969) research on spontaneous facial expressions of American and Japanese reported clear indication of cultural display rules. Matsumoto (1990) further investigated display rules of Americans and Japanese in relation to power distance and in group-out group relationships and found these two variables were closely related to cultural variations in display rules. Our previous study (Takeuchi et al, 1995) systematically

examined display rules across (1) seven universal emotions, (2) four social relationships (family, friend, colleague, and stranger), (3) multiple rating domains (social norm and self-behavior), and (4) four countries (US, Korea, Russia, and Japan) using Display Rules Assessment Inventory (DRAI). In DRAI, subjects responded how they should and they actually express their emotions towards four different target persons by selecting a response out of seven alternatives provided on the basis of theoretical considerations. The validity of these response alternatives was also confirmed in the previous study.

The purpose of this study was first to determine whether the nominal response alternatives could be rescaled to scalar dimensional scores by identifying dimensions that existed in the response alternatives used in DRAI. Second, cross-cultural similarities and differences in display rules among Americans, Koreans, Russians, and Japanese were reexamined based on the identified dimensions. DRAI data was converted from nominal to interval based on this dimension and analyzed by ANOVA to see whether the analyses with the original data in the previous study (Takeuchi et al, 1995). This paper consists of two studies: (1) identification of an underlying dimension of display rules, and (2) reinvestigation of display rules across these four countries.