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Thesis Examiner Report

Candidate	Chun (June) Yeung
Thesis Title	Emotional Fabric of Society: Emotional Environments, Congruence, and Discrepancies from a Macro Perspective
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This thesis represents a high-quality body of work that advances our understanding of the emotional fabric of society seen through a cross-cultural perspective. The candidate has undertaken a well-conceived research program, addressing a gap in the literature through a set of studies that are methodologically rigorous and conceptually rich.

Overall Comment

The overarching research question and the candidate's approach are clearly laid out in Chapter 1. The introduction establishes the literature gap and effectively sets up the individual studies reported within the thesis. Importantly, the candidate details their involvement in the development and implementation of the large cross-cultural datasets reported. This section is valuable, as it evidences the candidate's independent and substantial intellectual contribution to major international collaborative research projects.

The thesis is composed of four papers, three of which have already been published. Paper 1, with the candidate as second author, appeared in a leading journal in the field. The candidate is the first author for Paper 2 which has received a "minor revision" decision from another top journal. Paper 3 has already been published with the candidate as first author. Taken together, these outputs demonstrate the candidate's ability to produce research findings of an international standard.

In assessing these papers, it is particularly notable that the candidate employs a range of data-analytic approaches, each justified and meticulously reported, leading to robust analyses and compelling presentations of findings. The quality of writing throughout is very good. The thesis is also meticulously prepared, clearly written and presented.

Specific Comments

In Paper 1, the candidate demonstrates careful consideration in the selection of items measuring emotion expression and experience, with commendable attention to issues of measurement equivalence. The discussion of the "double-edged" effects of negative emotion is very interesting, well-discussed and supported by the data. One area for improvement is that the presentation of effect size information was not always straightforward to locate, which slightly reduced the ease of interpretation.

Paper 2 presents analyses of two large cross-cultural datasets examining issues of experience-expression discrepancy. This is a valuable contribution. However, I did wonder whether the hypotheses might be more effectively tested by examining over- and under-expression at the individual level rather than focusing on societal-level means. Why the analytic focus was on society means could be explicitly justified. The distinction introduced in the introduction between “expression” and “expressivity” seems to lose clarity as the paper progresses. More generally, the introduction of this paper could benefit from a more systematic review of existing evidence on under-expression of emotion. For example, the candidate’s findings that under-expression appears to be widespread across societies are intriguing, and this is something that could be unpacked further and related to prior findings in this area.

Papers 3 and 4 together extend the thesis in an interesting conceptual direction. Paper 3 makes an interesting link to classic theories in psychology such as self-discrepancy theory and proposes that different forms of mismatch between emotional experience and expression may have distinct implications for well-being. The use of polynomial regression with response surface analysis is well-discussed for its suitability, demonstrating the candidate’s data analytic versatility seen throughout the thesis. Paper 4, which is unpublished, is designed to extend this line of inquiry to a cross-cultural sample, to further test and probe for cross-cultural variation, focusing especially on the role of societal emotional environment. While both papers are well-presented with interesting findings, the discussions could be further developed. In particular, there is scope to more explicitly situate the findings within the broader literature and to elaborate on how the results add to and extend prior theorising on emotional fit—this is a comment similar to Paper 2. I encourage the candidate to further articulate the conceptual richness of these findings, as they have clear potential to advance the field.

Closing

In conclusion, this thesis constitutes a high-quality contribution to the field of cross-cultural psychology. It demonstrates the candidate’s ability to conduct independent, innovative, and methodologically rigorous research, resulting in outputs of clear international standing. While some aspects of the discussion sections could be strengthened to more fully articulate the conceptual implications of the findings, the overall quality of the work is commendable.

I therefore recommend that the thesis be accepted for the award of the degree.

The doctoral dissertation meets the conditions specified in art. 187 of the Act of 20 July 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 478, 619, 1630).

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