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Should Job Applicants Be Excited or Calm? The Role of Culture and Ideal Affect in Employment Settings

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Do cultural differences in emotion play a role in employment settings? We predicted that cultural differences in ideal affect—the states that people value and ideally want to feel—are reflected in: (a) how individuals present themselves when applying for a job, and (b) what individuals look for when hiring someone for a job. In Studies 1–2 (N_{S1} = 236, N_{S2} = 174), European Americans wanted to convey high arousal positive states (HAP; excitement) more and low arousal positive states (LAP; calm) less than did Hong Kong Chinese when applying for a job. European Americans also used more HAP words in their applications and showed more "high intensity" smiles in their video introductions than did Hong Kong Chinese. In Study 3 (N = 185), European American working adults rated their ideal job applicant as being more HAP and less LAP than did Hong Kong Chinese, and in Study 4a (N = 125), European American Masters of Business Administration (MBAs) were more likely to hire an excited (vs. calm) applicant for a hypothetical internship than were Hong Kong Chinese MBAs. Finally, in Study 4b (N = 300), employees in a U.S. company were more likely to hire an excited (vs. calm) applicant for a hypothetical internship. In Studies 1–4a, observed differences were partly related to European Americans valuing HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese. These findings support our predictions that culture and ideal affect shape behavior in employment settings, and have important implications for promoting cultural diversity in the workplace.

Keywords: culture, emotion, emotional expression, organizational behavior, hiring

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Despite recent attempts by many companies to increase employee diversity (Kaiser et al., 2013; Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008), racial and ethnic disparities in who gets interviewed (Booth, Leigh, & Varganova, 2012; Bursell, 2007; Carlsson & Rooth, 2008; Kang, DeCelles, Tilcsik, & Jun, 2016; Neumark, 2012; Oreopoulos, 2011) and who gets hired (Altonji & Blank, 1999; Pager, 2007; Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009) persist in the U.S., Canada, and many other Western European countries. Overall, applicants of Western European descent are 50% more likely to be interviewed and are as much as twice more likely to be hired than similarly qualified foreign and minority candidates (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Bursell, 2007; Gaddis, 2015;

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Oreopoulos, 2011; Pager et al., 2009). In the U.S., these disparities exist even when European Americans are compared with Asian Americans (U.S. born and foreign born), whose average levels of educational attainment are as high or even higher than that of European Americans (Pew Research, 2012).

While these disparities may reflect overt discrimination, they may also reflect employers' unconscious biases. For instance, Asian-named applicants are 20–40% less likely to get an interview compared with European/Anglo-named applicants in the U.S. and Canada (Banerjee, Reitz, & Oreopoulos, 2017; Kang et al., 2016; Oreopoulos, 2011). However, Asian Americans who "Whitened" their first names (e.g., by using an American nickname rather than a legal Chinese name) and experiences (e.g., by omitting membership to Asian ethnic clubs) on resumes were twice as likely to be interviewed by potential employers than were those who did not (Kang et al., 2016). This suggests that employers may be drawn to applicants whose names and experiences match their own, perhaps because those applicants seem more familiar or a better cultural fit for the organization (Banerjee et al., 2017; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Cotton, O'Neil, & Griffin, 2008; Rivera, 2012, 2015). Indeed, a case study finds that 60% of evaluators at top-tier U.S. recruitment firms rated "cultural fit" (e.g., based on leisure pursuits, background, and self-presentation styles) as the most important criterion used to assess applicants during job interviews (Rivera, 2015).

In this article, we propose that emotional expression may be another cue that employers across cultures use—consciously or unconsciously—to decide whom to interview and hire. Empirical evidence suggests that across cultures, individuals are better at recognizing the emotions of their own cultural groups (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). Furthermore, cultures differ in the emotions that people value and ideally want to feel (their "ideal affect;" Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006), and across cultures, emotional expressions that match these affective ideals increase judgments of warmth and affiliation (Park, Blevins, Knutson, & Tsai, 2017; Tsai et al., in press). As a result, in the same way that employers are more inclined to interview and hire applicants who have culturally normative names, they may be more inclined to interview and hire applicants whose expressions match the emotions that they and their cultures value (i.e., when there is an "ideal affect match"). To test this hypothesis, we first examined whether cultural differences in ideal affect are reflected in the emotions that individuals want to convey and in the emotions they express when applying for a job. We then examined whether individuals are more likely to hire applicants whose emotional expressions match the emotions that are valued in their cultures. Prior to describing these studies, we first review previous research examining the role of emotion in employment and work settings and affect valuation theory, the theoretical framework guiding this research.

Emotions in Employment and Work Settings

Because people spend a large portion of their time at work—on average 1,700 hours per year in the U.S. (Weisenthal, 2013)—a significant body of research has focused on the role of emotion in people's work lives (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Dass, 2002; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011; Coté, 2005; Diefendorff & Greguras, 2009; Elfenbein, 2007; Hu & Kaplan, 2015; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The majority of these studies focus on how employees actually feel at work as well as how they regulate those feelings (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005; Brief, Butcher, & Roberson, 1995; Bunk & Magley, 2013; Hanisch & Hulin, 1991; Miner, Glomb, & Hulin, 2005; Samnani, Salamon, & Singh, 2013). For instance, the more employees experience and suppress negative emotions at work, the worse their mental and physical health, which ultimately increases job-related burnout and emotional exhaustion (Brief et al., 1995; Hochschild, 1983; Sears, & Humiston, 2015). Enhancing the experience and expression of positive emotions reduces these effects and improves employee satisfaction and performance (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008; Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000; Staw & Barsade, 1993; Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994; Winslow, Hu, Kaplan, & Li, 2017; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000).

Relatively little research, however, has examined the role of emotion in the context of *employment*; that is, when people are applying for jobs or when they are hiring other people for jobs, even though employment settings are the gateway to the workplace. There are, however, some recent exceptions. For example, Paulhus and colleagues found that European Americans and Asian Americans viewed applicants who showed "active ingratiation" (i.e., laughing, humor, engagement) as more hirable (Paulhus, Westlake, Calvez, & Harms, 2013). Similarly, Wolf and colleagues found that applicants who reappraised emotional distress as "passionate," were rated as more competent and hirable than those who did not (Wolf, Lee, Sah, & Brooks, 2016). And in an ethnographic study, Rivera (2015) found that evaluators' experiences of excitement and enthusiasm in response to job candidates led to more positive assessments, more vivid recollections, and higher rankings of those job candidates.

These studies, however, are limited in three ways. First, while these studies demonstrate the importance of passion, excitement, enthusiasm, laughing, humor, and engagement in interviewing and hiring, they do not explain *why* they matter. Second, these studies have primarily focused on U.S. samples, despite increasing evidence of cultural differences in the role of emotion in work settings more generally (Ambady, Koo, Lee, & Rosenthal, 1996; Lim, Chavan, & Taksa, 2015; Sanchez-Burks, 2002; Sanchez-Burks & Lee, in press) and cultural differences in the value of various emotions—such as excitement—more specifically (Tsai et al., 2006). Thus, we do not yet know whether high arousal positive emotional states, like excitement and enthusiasm, matter to the same degree for employment in cultural contexts outside the U.S., especially those that place less value on high arousal positive states in general. Third, most studies either examine the emotional expressions of the applicant *or* the emotional preferences of the employers; few have examined how the two interact. To address these limitations, we conducted five studies that were motivated by affect valuation theory.

Affect Valuation Theory: The Importance of Ideal Affect

Affect valuation theory (AVT) highlights the importance of people's ideal affect in everyday life (Tsai, 2007, 2017). By "affect," we refer to feeling states that vary along the dimensions of valence (from negative to positive) and arousal (from low to high; Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1999; Larsen & Diener, 1992; Russell, 1991; Thayer, 1989; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). High arousal positive states (HAP) include excitement, enthusiasm, and

elation, while low arousal positive states (LAP) include calm, peacefulness, and relaxation.

The first premise of AVT is that how people actually feel (their "actual affect") differs from how they ideally want to feel (their "ideal affect"). While actual affect refers to how people respond to an event or how they respond on average ("How do I feel now? How do I typically feel?"), ideal affect refers to a desired state that helps people interpret their own and others' affective experiences ("Does this feel right?"). Indeed, across several studies that include a variety of cultures, we have observed that people want to feel more positive (including HAP and LAP) and less negative (including high arousal negative states such as nervousness and low arousal negative states such as dullness) than they actually feel, and that in general, people want to feel positive states more than negative ones (Tsai et al., 2006). Moreover, structural equation modeling demonstrates that actual affect and ideal affect—while weakly to moderately correlated—are empirically distinct constructs (Koopmann-Holm & Tsai, 2014; Tsai et al., 2006).

The second premise of AVT is that while cultural factors shape both actual and ideal affect, they shape ideal affect more than actual affect. Indeed, across a number of studies, we find that European Americans want to feel HAP more than East Asians, while East Asians want to feel LAP more than European Americans (Tsai et al., 2006; Tsai, Miao, Seppala, Fung, & Yeung, 2007). Moreover, these cultural differences are reflected in the popular media of those cultures, with American media containing more open-mouth, toothy "excited" smiles and fewer closed-mouth "calm" smiles than Chinese media, including children's storybooks, women's magazines, Facebook photos, and most recently, the official photos of leaders in government, business, and academia (Huang & Park, 2013; Tsai, 2007; Tsai, Ang, et al., 2016; Tsai, Chim, & Sims, 2015; Tsai, Louie, Chen, & Uchida, 2007). Importantly, we typically observe cultural differences in ideal HAP and ideal LAP against a backdrop of few cultural differences in actual HAP or actual LAP. When differences in actual HAP and actual LAP do occur, we find that cultural differences in ideal affect hold after controlling for these differences. Together, these findings support the second premise of AVT that culture shapes how people want to feel more than how they actually feel.

The third premise of AVT is that people's ideal affect has a host of consequences for daily life, like guiding people's decision making (Tsai, 2007, 2017), above and beyond their actual affect. For instance, the more people value HAP, the more likely they are to prefer high intensity exercise, to choose exciting versus relaxing music, and to select stimulating versus soothing consumer products such as lotions and water (Tsai et al., 2007, 2015). People's ideal affect also shapes their enjoyment of activities: for instance, the more people value LAP, the more they enjoy calming (vs. exciting) amusement park rides and low (vs. high) intensity exercise (Chim, Hogan, Fung, & Tsai, 2017).

Cultural and individual differences in ideal affect even have consequences for people's behavior in health settings. For instance, people's ideal affect predicts how they respond to excitement (vs. calm)-focused physicians, including how much they trust them, whether they choose them for their care, and even whether they adhere to the physician's recommendations (Sims, Koopmann-Holm, Jiang, Fung, & Tsai, 2017; Sims & Tsai, 2015; Sims, Tsai, Koopmann-Holm, Thomas, & Goldstein, 2014).

Ideal Affect in Employment Settings

In this article, we examine whether ideal affect also plays a role in employment settings. We focused on employment settings for several reasons. First, employment settings are places where people are consciously trying to put their best face forward, and thus applicants engage in various impression management techniques to present themselves in the most favorable light (Barrick, Shaffer, & Degrassi, 2009; Derous, 2017; Sandal et al., 2014). Therefore, people's conceptions of the ideal applicant or employee, which include how they should feel and express emotion, are relevant for both employees and employers. Indeed, research on "feeling rules" and emotional labor in the workplace suggests that employees are expected to express certain emotions on the job (Hochschild, 1983). In the U.S., for example, between 70% and 90% of employees from various occupations believe that their jobs require or expect them to express positive emotion and suppress negative emotion (Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006; Kramer & Hess, 2002).

Second, as mentioned above, previous studies on employment have found that applicants who express HAP (i.e., laughter, humor, engagement) and appraise their emotions as "passionate" are more likely to be judged as competent and hirable (Paulhus et al., 2013; Wolf et al., 2016). This may be because U.S. cultural contexts place more of a premium on HAP than do other cultural contexts. Thus, we were interested in whether "excited" applicants would be as hirable in contexts that value HAP less (i.e., Chinese contexts). Furthermore, while several career counseling websites in the U.S. advise job seekers to "be excited" (WikiHow, 2017) and "project positive energy and enthusiasm" (Bowman, 2014), similar websites in China advise job seekers to remain calm (BaiDu, 2017). However, there is presently no empirical evidence examining whether cultural differences in ideal affect are reflected in what people want to convey when applying for a job.

Finally, we focused on employment settings because behaviors in these settings have clear consequences for one's work life and future occupational success. Therefore, understanding the role of ideal affect on these behaviors may have important implications for promoting cultural diversity in the workplace.

Thus, based on AVT, we predicted that European Americans would report wanting to convey and would actually show more HAP and less LAP than would Hong Kong Chinese when applying for a job. We also predicted that employers would be more likely to hire applicants whose emotional expressions matched how employers (and their cultures) ideally want to feel ("ideal affect match"). Specifically, European Americans would be more likely to view the ideal applicant as someone who is more HAP and less LAP compared with Hong Kong Chinese, and European Americans would be more likely to hire an excited versus calm applicant compared with Hong Kong Chinese. We have already observed some support for this hypothesis. European Americans rated excited (vs. calm) faces as more affiliative (extraverted, agreeable) than did Hong Kong Chinese, and these differences were related to European Americans being more likely to hire an excited (vs. calm) applicant than Hong Kong Chinese in a hypothetical scenario (Tsai et al., in press). However, that study was conducted

with a university sample, and therefore, it is unclear whether similar results would emerge among adults who have already been in the workplace, and/or have received specialized training in management (e.g., Masters of Business Administration [MBA] students).

The Present Research

Overview of Studies

We conducted five studies to test our hypotheses: two that examined the role of ideal affect on how people present themselves in their job applications, and three that examined the role of ideal affect on whom people hire. We compared European Americans and Asian Americans living in the U.S. and Hong Kong Chinese living in Hong Kong because our previous research on ideal affect focused on these groups, and therefore, we had specific hypotheses about how they would differ.

In the first two studies, we examined what people said they wanted to convey, what words they used in their applications to describe themselves and their experiences (Studies 1–2), and what smiles they showed when they were greeting potential interviewers in a video-recorded introduction (Study 2). In the first two studies we were also interested in whether the emotions that people wanted to convey varied as a function of the country of the job they were applying for. Therefore, participants applied for two jobs, one in the United States and one in mainland China (see online supplementary materials, Section A). On the one hand, people—especially Asian Americans—might "frame switch," or behave more like European Americans when applying for the U.S. job and more like Hong Kong Chinese when applying for Chinese job (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000). On the other hand, cultural differences in ideal affect may be so ingrained that they might hold regardless of the country of the job.

Human Subjects and Power Analyses

Study materials and procedures for all of the studies reported in this article were approved by the Stanford University Non-Medical Institutional Review Board, under protocol IRB #26318, "The effects of cultural context on emotional responses of biculturals."

Previous studies demonstrating that ideal affect drives cultural differences in physician choice (Sims et al., 2017) have found medium effect sizes (partial $\eta^2 = .08$). Using this estimate, for each study, we conducted a conservative power analysis (G * Power; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) to identify the sample size that corresponds to an 80% chance of detecting a medium-sized effect (partial $\eta^2 = .06$, $f = .25$) at $\alpha = .05$.

For Studies 1 and 2, to examine whether there are cultural differences in the emotions participants wanted to convey and actually conveyed when applying to jobs, we defined the power analysis as a repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA): within-between interaction with three cultural groups, and four measurements (2 [Culture of Job: U.S., China] × 2 [Affect: HAP, LAP]) for each dependent variable (ideal conveyed affect, word use, smiles). These analyses revealed that a total sample size of 30 participants (10 in each cultural group) would yield sufficient power to detect predicted cultural differences. For Studies 3 and 4a, we defined the power analysis as a repeated-measures ANOVA: within-between interaction with three cultural groups, and two measurements (Study 3: ideal applicant HAP, ideal applicant LAP; Study 4a: likelihood of hiring the excited applicant, likelihood of hiring the calm applicant); these analyses indicated that a sample size of 42 participants (14 in each cultural group) would yield sufficient power to detect predicted cultural differences. Across Studies 1–4a, because we also wanted to test whether cultural group and ideal affect predicted the dependent variables, we once again used G*Power to determine that 92 participants were required for multiple regression analyses with five predictors ($f^2 = .15$): cultural group and ideal HAP/LAP, controlling for actual HAP/LAP. Based on all of these analyses, we used 92 participants as a minimum recruitment guideline for Studies 1–4a.

For Study 4b, which included only one cultural group, power analyses for a two-tailed matched pairs t-test ($d = .3$) revealed that 90 participants would yield sufficient power to detect predicted differences in likelihood of hiring the excited versus calm applicant.

Study 1: The Affective States People Want to and Actually Convey in Their Job Applications (Online)

We predicted that European Americans would want to convey HAP more and LAP less than would Hong Kong Chinese on their job applications, and that Asian Americans would fall in between the two cultural groups (Hypothesis 1). We also predicted that these cultural differences would be reflected in the words that participants used in their job applications (Hypothesis 2). Finally, we predicted that cultural differences in the desire to convey HAP and LAP and the use of HAP and LAP words would be mediated by ideal HAP and LAP (Hypothesis 3). We were agnostic as to whether the country of the job would alter these effects.

Method

Participants. Participants were recruited online through psychology paid and course credit subject pool listservs, email advertisements, and flyers to participate in a two-part study on internship applications. First, interested participants completed a prescreening questionnaire in which they indicated their ethnicity, age, and student status. Based on their self-identified ethnicity on the prescreening survey, 102 European Americans, 97 Asian Americans, and 124 Hong Kong Chinese were eligible for the study. Next, given the tremendous variation within cultural groups–particularly among Asian Americans–in the United States (Zhang & Tsai, 2014), we selected participants who met specific cultural criteria to ensure that our samples represented the cultures of interest. As in our previous research, European Americans were required to: (a) have been born in the U.S. or Canada, (b) live in the U.S., and (c) have parents who were born in the U.S. or Canada. Asian Americans were required to: (a) have been born in the U.S. or an East Asian country, (b) live in the U.S., and (c) have parents who were both born in an East Asian country. Hong Kong Chinese were required to: (a) have been born in a Chinese country, (b) live in Hong Kong, and (c) have parents who were both born in a Chinese country. All participants were required to be between 18- and 26-years-old to limit their work experiences.

Using these criteria, 25 (11 European Americans, 10 Asian Americans, 4 Hong Kong Chinese) participants were excluded based on cultural background, and 8 (5 European Americans, 3 Asian Americans) were excluded based on age. Forty-nine participants were excluded because they did not return for the second session (12 European Americans, 14 Asian Americans, 23 Hong Kong Chinese),[1] and 5 (2 European Americans, 1 Asian American, 2 Hong Kong Chinese) were excluded for missing or insufficient data (e.g., written responses only contained one to two words). Thus, the final sample was comprised of 236 participants: 72 European Americans (75% female), 69 Asian Americans (72.5% female), and 95 Hong Kong Chinese (64.2% female). Based on the power analyses described above, our sample size of 236 participants provided more than sufficient power to test all of our hypotheses.

There were no significant cultural differences in gender distribution, $\chi^2(2, N = 236) = 2.57$, $p = .28$, or age, $F(2, 233) = 1.93$, $p = .15$. On average, the sample was 69.9% female and 20.5 years old ($SD = 2.28$). The pattern of results was consistent when we included participant gender in the analyses, and there were no significant main effects of participant gender or significant interactions between participant gender and cultural group on desire to convey emotions or emotion word use. Therefore, for parsimony, we excluded participant gender from the final analyses reported below.

Stimuli. Four internship ads were designed for this study based on real ads from companies in the business sector (e.g., banking, marketing, advertising, communications) found on popular job search websites (e.g., Monster.com). Each participant was asked to apply to a client services internship and a consumer resources internship. Two ads were developed for client services internships (one at a U.S. company and the other at a Chinese company), and two ads were developed for consumer resources internships (one at a U.S. company and another at a Chinese company). U.S. and Chinese ads differed in terms of the type of flag shown (U.S. vs. People's Republic of China), the name of the hiring manager (Ms. Miller vs. Ms. Wang), the name of the company (Johnson & Smith Communications vs. Li Global Media), the company headquarters (Washington, DC vs. Beijing), and the race of the people in the image (White/European American vs. East Asian). The internship ad contained a description of the company (e.g., "branches all over the world"), the internship (e.g., "manage accounts and client communication"), and the internship requirements (e.g., "high school diploma required"). The internship ads had minimal emotional content in the text and images (see online supplementary materials, Section A for sample ads). Because our sample was comprised of university students, we described the job as an internship; however, because internships are jobs, we use the two terms interchangeably throughout this article.

Measures.

Ideal conveyed job affect. Participants rated the degree to which they ideally wanted to convey 17 different affective states on their internship applications, using a scale of 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much.* The affective states sampled the octants of the affective circumplex (Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1998): enthusiastic, dull, excited, energetic, peaceful, bored, quiet, passive, astonished, calm, nervous, relaxed, content, happy, unhappy, satisfied, and serene. We also included 13 filler items (strong, passionate, balanced, easygoing, confident, humble, assertive, friendly, virtuous, flexible, intelligent, trustworthy, and authentic). Based on previous research (Tsai et al., 2006), we aggregated HAP items (excited, enthusiastic, energetic) and LAP items (relaxed, calm, peaceful, serene) for the U.S. and Chinese jobs. Across jobs, internal consistency estimates were high (Cronbach's alpha: ideal conveyed job HAP: .91 for European Americans, .92 for Asian Americans, .86 for Hong Kong Chinese; ideal conveyed job LAP: .84 for European Americans, .87 for Asian Americans, .76 for Hong Kong Chinese).

Word use. Responses to four open-ended application questions (see below) were combined to form each participant's U.S. and Chinese job application. Word use was quantified using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count, 2007 program (LIWC; Pennebaker, Francis, & Booth, 2001). We created mutually exclusive HAP and LAP word categories prior to analysis by identifying the words in the "positive emotion" word category from LIWC that were HAP (e.g., ecstatic, fascinate, passion, vigor; total of 69 words) and those that were LAP (e.g., calm, composed, harmony, peace; total of 23 words; Koopmann-Holm et al., 2014). All emotion words were highlighted from each participant's application, checked for miscoded words (e.g., "*excited* about the opportunity" would be correctly characterized as HAP, but Microsoft "*Excel"* would not), and then run through the program again to create means for HAP and LAP word use for each application. Means represent the percentage of total words that were HAP and LAP in response to the four open-ended questions for each application.

Hong Kong Chinese participants were allowed to respond in either Chinese or English. The responses of the Hong Kong Chinese participants who wrote in Chinese (33% in response to the Chinese job, 18% in response to the American job) were translated into English and back-translated into Chinese by two bilingual translators to ensure correct translation to English. Any discrepancies between the original Chinese and the back translation were reconciled by discussion, and the English translations were edited accordingly (Brislin, 1980). English translations were then run through LIWC as described above.

Global ideal and actual affect. To assess global actual and ideal affect, participants completed the Affect Valuation Index (AVI; Tsai et al., 2006), and rated how much they actually feel and how much they would ideally like to feel a list of 30 emotions over the course of a typical week on a Likert scale from 1 = *never* to 5 = *all the time*. Items were: enthusiastic, dull, excited, sleepy, sluggish, energetic, idle, aroused, rested, astonished, quiet, surprised, still, passive, inactive, fearful, calm, hostile, peaceful, nervous, relaxed, elated, lonely, content, sad, happy, unhappy, satisfied, serene, and euphoric. We aggregated HAP items (excited, enthusiastic, elated, energetic) and LAP items (relaxed, calm, peaceful, serene). Internal consistency estimates were high across cultural groups, as in previous work (Cronbach's alpha: ideal HAP: .81–.85; actual HAP: .83–.87; ideal LAP: .77–.82; actual LAP: .75–.81). As in previous work (e.g., Sims & Tsai, 2015; Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006; Tsai, Miao, et al., 2007; Tsai et al., in press), we ipsatized ideal affect scores at the individual level to control for differences in how East Asian and Western participants respond to Likert-type scales (Chen, Lee, & Steven-

[1] When we included the 49 individuals in our analyses, we found the same pattern of cultural differences in participants' desire to convey HAP/LAP and in their HAP/LAP word use. Ideal affect findings were identical to those reported in the article because participants who did not return for the second session did not complete the AVI.

son, 1995). More specifically, we calculated each individual's overall mean and standard deviation across all 30 ideal affect items. We then subtracted the overall mean and divided by the *SD* for each ideal affect item prior to creating the HAP and LAP aggregates. We did the same for actual affect items. Although results were similar using raw scores of actual and ideal affect (see online supplementary materials, Section B), we report ipsatized values here to be consistent with previous reports.

Cultural orientation. To determine the degree to which participants were oriented to Western or American culture, all participants completed the 25-item General Ethnicity Questionnaire (GEQ-A; Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000). European Americans and Asian Americans completed the American version, while Hong Kong Chinese completed the Western version. Internal consistency estimates were high (Cronbach's alpha: European American = .88, Asian American = .91, Hong Kong Chinese = .83). As predicted, the cultural groups differed in their orientation to Western/American cultures, $F(2, 233) = 85.53$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .42$, with European Americans ($M = 3.64$, $SE = .05$) being the most oriented to American culture, followed by Asian Americans ($M = 3.43$, $SE = .07$), and Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 2.73$, $SE = .05$). All pairwise comparisons were significant ($ps \leq .01$).

Hong Kong Chinese also completed the 25-item General Ethnicity Questionnaire-Chinese version (GEQ-C) to assess their orientation to Chinese culture. Asian Americans were first asked to identify the non-U.S. culture that they most identified with and then were given the General Ethnicity Questionnaire, with the reference culture being the cultural group they reported (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese). Internal consistency estimates were .85 for Hong Kong Chinese and .85 for Asian Americans. There were no group differences in orientation to East Asian/Chinese culture between Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.54$, $SE = .04$) and Asian Americans ($M = 3.50$, $SE = .06$), $t(162) = .64$, $p = .53$, 95% CI [−.09, .18]. Thus, we were successful in recruiting Hong Kong Chinese who were more oriented to Chinese than Western cultures, and Asian Americans who were equally oriented to East Asian and American cultures.

Demographics. Participants reported their age, gender, ethnicity, year in school, social class (parental education), place of birth, languages spoken, and parents' and grandparents' ethnicities and places of birth.

All instruments, internship ads, and instructions were developed in English, translated into Chinese, and back-translated into English. Any differences between the original English version and the back-translated version were discussed by the two translators and reconciled in the Chinese translation (Brislin, 1980). Hong Kong Chinese participants received all instruments and instructions in Chinese *and* English, which is common in Hong Kong university settings. European Americans and Asian Americans received all instruments and instructions in English, consistent with U.S. university norms.

Procedure. Participants signed up for a study on "internship applications," and completed the demographic prescreening questionnaire. Eligible participants received two online surveys. Each survey was completed within 24 hours of receiving the link; the second survey was sent 7 days after completion of the first survey. During the first survey, participants saw an advertisement for an internship application to a U.S. (or China)-based company. They then completed an application for the position, which included four open-ended questions in which participants were asked to describe themselves ("Please write a description of yourself so that Ms. Miller/Wang can assess whether you are a good fit for the internship"), their education ("Tell us about your educational background and your area of study"), their work experiences ("Please describe your relevant professional experiences"), and any additional information they wished to provide ("Please provide any additional information that might be helpful for evaluating your application"). Following the open-ended questions, participants were told that the internship application portion of the study was over. Participants then rated the degree to they wanted to convey different affective states in their applications.

One week later, participants followed the same procedure for a China (or U.S.)-based company. The presentation order of the U.S. and Chinese internship advertisements was counterbalanced to control for order effects.[2] Following the second internship application, all participants completed measures of global actual and ideal affect, cultural orientation, and additional demographic variables. Consistent with local norms around compensation, participants in the U.S. received a $15 Amazon gift card, and participants in Hong Kong received a $75HKD ($10USD) iTunes gift card for their participation in the study.

Data Analysis and Results

Do European Americans want to convey HAP more and LAP less than Hong Kong Chinese when applying for an internship (Hypothesis 1)? We conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Country of Job [U.S., China]) × 2 (Ideal Conveyed Job Affect [HAP, LAP]) repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA). Cultural Group was treated as a between-subjects factor, and Ideal Conveyed Job Affect and Country of Job were treated as within-subjects factors. Analyses revealed a significant main effect of Ideal Conveyed Job Affect, $F(1, 233) = 65.88$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .22$: across cultural groups, participants wanted to convey HAP ($M = 3.50$, $SE = .05$) more than LAP ($M = 2.96$, $SE = .05$) on their job applications.

However, as predicted, this main effect was qualified by a significant Cultural Group × Ideal Conveyed Job Affect interaction, $F(2, 233) = 27.12$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$. As predicted and shown in Figure 1 (top), European Americans ($M = 3.76$, $SE = .09$) wanted to convey HAP more than did Asian Americans ($M = 3.47$, $SE = .10$), $p = .03$, 95% CI [.04, .56] and Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.27$, $SE = .08$), $p < .001$, 95% CI [.26, .74]. In contrast, Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.36$, $SE = .07$) wanted to convey LAP more than did European Americans ($M = 2.76$, $SE = .08$), $p < .001$, 95% CI [.39, .83] and Asian Americans ($M = 2.77$, $SE = .09$), $p < .001$, 95% CI [.37, .81]. There were no significant main effects or interactions involving Country of Job, suggesting

[2] When we included order as a covariate in the models we found no significant main effect of order or significant interactions between order and cultural group, and therefore, we excluded this variable from the model. Moreover, when we examined each participant's first job application only, the results for ideal conveyed job affect and word use were similar to the those reported in the article.

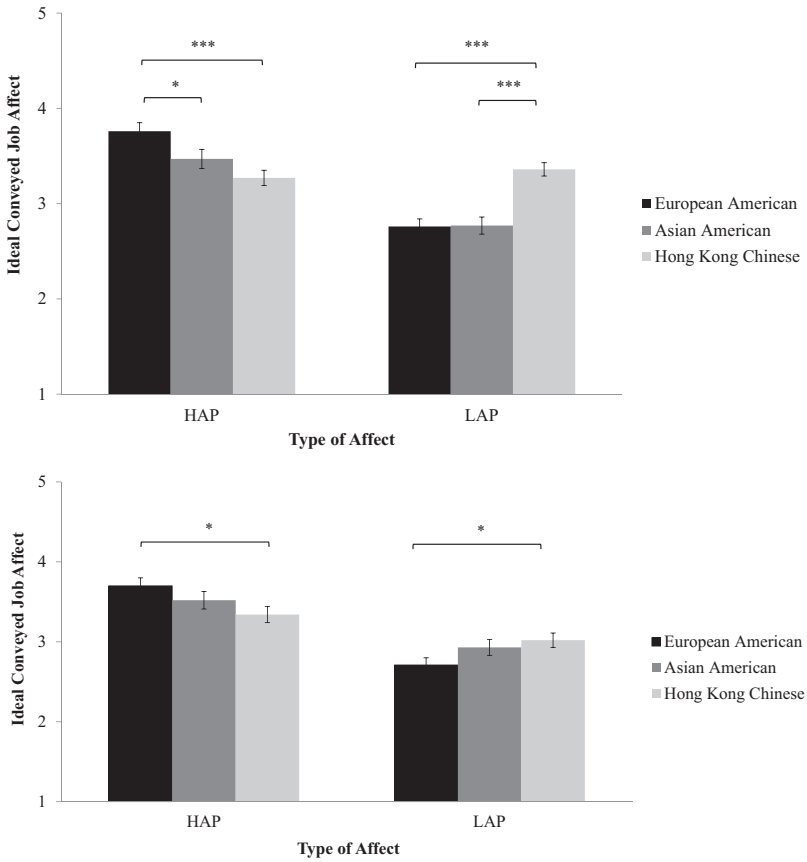

Figure 1. Cultural differences in desire to convey HAP and LAP on job applications (Study 1, top; Study 2, bottom). Error bars represent standard errors of the mean. HAP = high arousal positive; LAP = low arousal positive. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

that participants did not change what affective states they wanted to show as a function of the country of the job.

Do European Americans use more HAP and fewer LAP words on their job applications than Hong Kong Chinese (Hypothesis 2)? We conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Country of Job [U.S., Chinese] × 2 (Word Type [HAP, LAP]) repeated measures ANOVA, with Cultural Group as the between-subjects factor and Word Type and Country of Job defined as within-subjects factors. Analyses revealed a significant main effect of Cultural Group, $F(2, 233) = 5.83$, $p = .003$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$: European Americans ($M = .68$, $SE = .05$), $p = .001$, 95% CI [.09, .33] and Asian Americans ($M = .60$, $SE = .05$), $p = .048$, 95% CI [.001, .25] used more words overall than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .47$, $SE = .04$). There was also a significant main effect of Word Type, $F(1, 233) = 355.45$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .60$, with all groups using more HAP ($M = 1.09$, $SE = .05$) than LAP ($M = .08$, $SE = .01$) words.

These main effects, however, were again qualified by a significant Cultural Group × Word Type interaction, $F(2, 233) = 4.03$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. As predicted and shown in Figure 2 (top), European Americans ($M = 1.28$, $SE = .09$) used more HAP words than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .89$, $SE = .08$), $p = .002$, 95% CI [.15, .63]. Asian Americans ($M = 1.09$, $SE = .10$) fell in between the other cultural groups, and did not significantly differ from either group ($p = .11$ to .17).

Contrary to our prediction, however, European Americans ($M = .08$, $SE = .02$) did not differ from Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .05$, $SE = .02$) in their LAP word use, $p = .22$. Surprisingly, Asian Americans ($M = .10$, $SE = .02$) used more LAP words than did Hong Kong Chinese, $p = .04$, 95% CI [.002, .09], but did not differ from European Americans, $p = .44$.

Again, there were no significant main effects or interactions involving Country of Job.[3]

Are cultural differences in the desire to convey HAP and LAP and in HAP word use mediated by cultural differences in ideal affect (Hypothesis 3)? To answer this question, we first examined whether there were cultural differences in ideal affect using ipsatized ideal affect scores. We conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chi-

[3] When we ran our analyses on HAP and LAP categories that only included traditionally defined emotion items (HAP: enthu*, cheerf*, energ*, euphor*, excit*, exhilar*, exuber*, passion*, thrill*, vigor*; LAP: calm*, comfort*, compose*, ease*, peace*, relax*, seren*, tranquil*; all iterations of the word following the asterisk were coded as HAP or LAP), the same cultural differences emerged: European Americans ($M = .22$, $SE = .03$) used more HAP words than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .11$, $SE = .03$), $p = .01$, 95% CI [.03, .20]. Asian Americans ($M = .14$, $SE = .03$) fell in between the other cultural groups, but did not significantly differ from either group ($p = .07$ to .48). There were no cultural differences in the use of LAP words, $p = .08$ to .70.

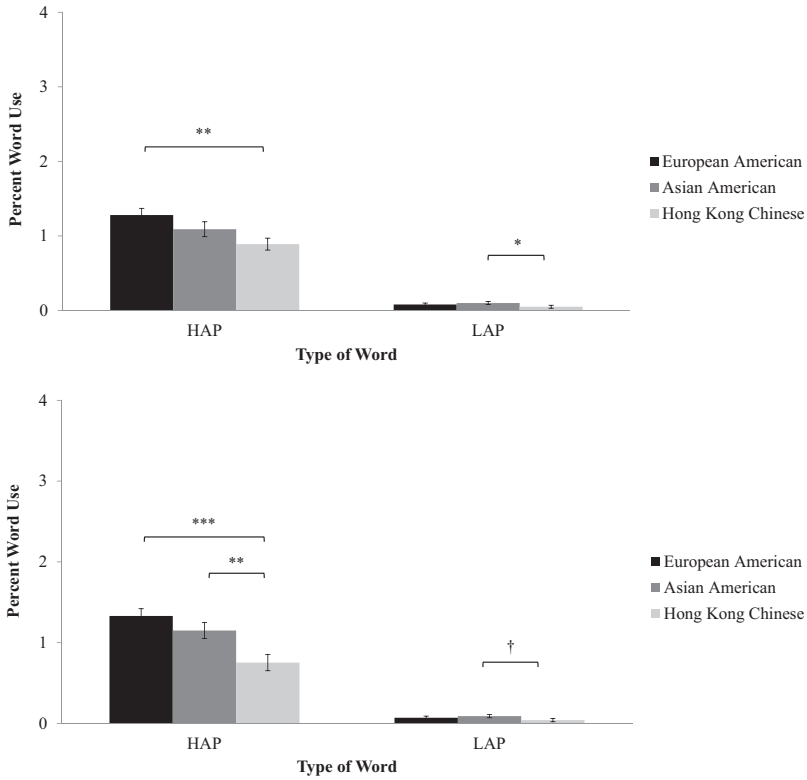

Figure 2. Cultural differences in emotion word use (Study 1, top; Study 2, bottom). Error bars represent standard errors of the mean. Means represent percent of total word use that is HAP (high arousal positive) or LAP (low arousal positive). † $p < .1$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

nese]) × 2 (Ideal Affect [HAP, LAP]) repeated measures analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) controlling for actual HAP and actual LAP; Cultural Group was treated as a between-subjects factor and Ideal Affect was treated as a within-subjects factor.

Analyses revealed a significant main effect of Ideal Affect, $F(1, 227) = 5.79$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, with participants across cultural groups valuing HAP more ($M = .85$, $SE = .03$) than LAP ($M = .79$, $SE = .02$). The main effect of Cultural Group was also significant, $F(2, 227) = 6.68$, $p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$, with European Americans ($M = .88$, $SE = .03$) and Asian Americans ($M = .85$, $SE = .03$) valuing HAP and LAP more than Hong Kong Chinese did ($M = .74$, $SE = .03$), $ps < .01$. Indeed, as predicted, planned pairwise comparisons revealed European Americans valued HAP significantly more ($M = .92$, $SE = .05$) than Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .79$, $SE = .04$), $p = .047$, 95% CI [.002, .26], with Asian Americans falling in between the groups ($M = .84$, $SE = .05$) and not significantly differing from either group ($p = .24$ to .43). However, contrary to our predictions, European Americans ($M = .83$, $SE = .04$), $p = .02$, 95% CI [.03, .25] and Asian Americans ($M = .85$, $SE = .04$), $p = .004$, 95% CI [.05, .27] also valued LAP more than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .69$, $SE = .04$). In sum, we found the predicted cultural differences in ideal HAP, but not in ideal LAP.

We also examined whether there were cultural group differences in actual affect using a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Actual Affect [HAP, LAP]) ANCOVA, controlling for ideal HAP and ideal LAP. There was a significant Cultural Group × Actual Affect interaction, $F(2, 227) = 9.29$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$, with Hong Kong Chinese experiencing LAP significantly more ($M = .62$, $SE = .05$) than European Americans ($M = .29$, $SE = .06$), $p < .001$, 95% CI [.17, .49] and Asian Americans ($M = .35$, $SE = .06$), $p = .001$, 95% CI [.11, .43]. Therefore, we controlled for actual LAP in subsequent analyses. There were no significant cultural group differences in actual HAP, $p = .17$ to .53, however. We also ran the cultural group comparisons using raw values of ideal and actual affect, and found a similar pattern of results (reported in the online supplementary materials, Section B).

Ideal conveyed job HAP. Next we tested the predicted mediation model (Model 4, Process; Hayes, 2012) that defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong Chinese, 0 = Asian American, 1 = European American) as the independent variable, ideal conveyed job HAP was the dependent variable, ideal HAP as a mediator, and actual LAP and ideal LAP as covariates (to control for cultural differences in actual and ideal LAP discussed above). As in previous work, we used raw rather than ipsatized ideal affect scores for these analyses because ipsatized scores restrict variance in correlational analyses (Fischer, 2004). Zero-order correlations among variables are provided in online supplementary materials, Section H. Mediation results are based on 5,000 bias corrected bootstrapped resamples.

As reported above, cultural group predicted ideal HAP, controlling for actual LAP and ideal LAP (Model Fit: $F(3, 232) = 19.35$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .20$), $b = .12$, $SE = .05$, $t = 2.29$, $p = .02$, 95%

CI [.02, .23], with European Americans and Asian Americans valuing HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese. Also as predicted, the more participants valued HAP, the more they wanted to convey HAP on their job applications over and above the effect of cultural group (Model Fit: $F(4, 231) = 10.51$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .15$), $b = .35$, $SE = .08$, $t = 4.55$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.20, .50]. Cultural group significantly predicted the degree to which participants wanted to convey HAP before including ideal HAP in the model (Model Fit: $F(3, 232) = 6.55$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .08$), $b = .27$, $SE = .07$, $t = 4.13$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.14, .40]. The direct effect of cultural group was reduced but remained significant after including ideal HAP in the model, $b = .23$, $SE = .06$, $t = 3.58$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.10, .35]. Furthermore, the indirect effect through ideal HAP was significant, effect = .04, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.01, .09], indicating that ideal HAP partially mediated cultural group differences in wanting to convey HAP.[4]

Ideal conveyed job LAP. Because we did not find the predicted cultural differences in ideal LAP, we did not conduct the same mediation analysis with ideal LAP. Instead, we tested whether ideal LAP influences ideal conveyed job LAP on job applications over and above the effects of cultural group using a stepwise multiple linear regression model. We defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong Chinese, 0 = Asian American, 1 = European American) as the independent variable in the first model, and then added raw values of ideal LAP, controlling for actual LAP and ideal HAP, as independent variables in the second model. The second model, adjusted $R^2 = .24$, $F(4, 231) = 19.06$, $p < .001$, fit the data better than the first, adjusted $R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 234) = 31.20$, $p < .001$, and demonstrated significantly improved model fit, $\Delta R^2 = .13$, $\Delta F(3, 231) = 13.37$, $p < .001$. Results of the second model indicate that ideal LAP, $b = .19$, $SE = .08$, $\beta = .17$, $t = 2.44$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [.04, .35], and actual LAP, $b = .31$, $SE = .08$, $\beta = .27$, $t = 4.07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.16, .45], predicted increased desire to convey LAP on job applications over and above the effect of cultural group, $b = -.24$, $SE = .06$, $\beta = -.26$, $t = -4.30$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [−.35, −.13]. As predicted, ideal HAP did not, $p = .81$, 95% CI [−.15, .12].

HAP word use. We tested a multiple serial mediation model (Model 6; Process; Hayes, 2012) using 5,000 bias corrected bootstrapped resamples that defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong, 0 = Asian American, 1 = European American) as the independent variable, HAP word use as the dependent variable, ideal HAP and ideal conveyed job HAP as serial mediators, and ideal LAP and actual LAP as covariates. Consistent with the above analyses, we found that cultural group significantly predicted ideal HAP (Model Fit: $F(3, 232) = 19.68$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .20$), $b = .12$, $SE = .05$, $t = 2.40$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [.02, .22], and ideal HAP predicted ideal conveyed job HAP (Model Fit: $F(4, 231) = 9.01$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .15$), $b = .35$, $SE = .08$, $t = 4.27$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.19, .51]. Contrary to our predictions, however, neither ideal HAP, $p = .41$, 95% CI [−.08, .20], nor ideal conveyed job HAP, $p = .46$, 95% CI [−.08, .17], predicted HAP word use. Moreover, cultural group predicted HAP word use to a similar degree before including ideal HAP and ideal conveyed job HAP in the model (Model Fit: $F(3, 232) = 4.06$, $p = .01$, $R^2 = .05$), $b = .20$, $SE = .06$, $t = 3.08$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [.07, .32], and after including these variables in the model (Model Fit: $F(5, 230) = 3.06$, $p = .01$, $R^2 = .05$), $b = .18$, $SE = .07$, $t = 2.63$, $p = .01$, 95% CI [.04, .31].

LAP word use. We also examined whether Asian American and Hong Kong Chinese differences in LAP word use were due to ideal LAP, using a mediation model (Model 4, Process) that defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong, 1 = Asian American) as the independent variable, LAP word use as the dependent variable, ideal LAP as the mediator, controlling for actual LAP. Results based on 5,000 bias corrected bootstrapped resamples indicate no significant indirect effect through ideal LAP on LAP word use, effect < .001, $SE = .002$, 95% CI [−.002, .007]. Ideal LAP did not predict LAP word use when entered in the model (Model Fit: $F(3, 160) = 1.57$, $p = .20$, $R^2 = .03$), $p = .67$, 95% CI [−.03, .04].

Discussion

As predicted, European Americans and Asian Americans wanted to convey HAP more than did Hong Kong Chinese in their job applications, in part because they valued HAP more. Also as predicted, European Americans used more HAP words than did Hong Kong Chinese in their internship applications, and Asian Americans fell in between the two other cultural groups. These latter differences, however, were not directly related to cultural differences in ideal HAP.

Also as predicted, Hong Kong Chinese wanted to convey LAP more than European Americans did. While we did not find the predicted cultural differences in ideal LAP, higher ideal LAP was associated with wanting to convey LAP more on job applications over and above the effects of cultural group. Despite differences in their desire to convey LAP, however, European Americans and Hong Kong Chinese did not differ in their use of LAP words, suggesting that word use may not be the best way to convey calm and other low arousal positive states. Moreover, all of the above findings held regardless of whether participants were applying to a U.S. or a Chinese company.

One limitation of this study is that because it was conducted online, it was difficult to control the setting in which participants completed the surveys. Therefore, we conducted a second study in a controlled laboratory setting to replicate these effects. Another limitation is that the online paradigm made it difficult to assess additional emotional behaviors that might be critical when applying for a job and that should also reflect people's ideal affect. For instance, because employers often make snap judgments during the first few seconds of meeting a potential employee (Barrick et al., 2009; Dougherty, Turban, & Callender, 1994), we predicted that there may be cultural differences in job applicants' smiles when they first greet potential employers. Therefore, in Study 2, participants completed job applications and indicated the affective states they wanted to convey in their applications, as in Study 1. In addition, they recorded a video introduction of themselves so that we could examine whether there were cultural differences in participants' expression of high and low intensity smiles when they greeted potential employers.

[4] These results held even when we did not control for cultural differences in actual and ideal LAP in the model, indirect effect = .05, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.01, .09].

Study 2: The Affective States People Want to and Actually Convey in Their Job Applications (Lab)

We first predicted that we would replicate the results from Study 1 when the study was conducted in person (vs. online): European Americans would report wanting to convey more HAP and less LAP and would use more HAP words in their applications than would Hong Kong Chinese, with Asian Americans falling in between the two cultural groups (Hypothesis 1). We also predicted that when greeting their employers, European Americans would show more high intensity smiles (similar to excited smiles) and fewer low intensity smiles (similar to calm smiles) compared to Hong Kong Chinese, and that Asian Americans would again fall in between the cultural groups (Hypothesis 2). Finally, we predicted that cultural differences in the desire to convey HAP on job applications would be mediated by ideal HAP, as in Study 1 (Hypothesis 3). We were agnostic as to whether ideal HAP and the desire to convey HAP would mediate differences in HAP word use or excited smiles given the lack of mediation in Study 1.

Method

Participants. Sixty-five European American, 65 Asian American, and 64 Hong Kong Chinese college students participated in a three-part study on internship applications over the course of 3 weeks. Participants were recruited from psychology listservs, club and activity listservs, and flyers posted around college campuses. European American and Asian American participants received $15 or two psychology course credits for their participation and Hong Kong participants received $100HKD ($12.90USD) for their participation.

We used the same cultural and age (18–26 years old) criteria as in Study 1. Participants who did not fit these eligibility criteria (4 European Americans, 8 Asian Americans, 3 Hong Kong Chinese) were excluded from the analyses. In addition, 1 European American, 1 Asian American, and 2 Hong Kong Chinese participants were excluded because of missing data; 1 Asian American was excluded for participating twice. This left a final sample of 60 European Americans (63.3% female), 55 Asian Americans (56.4% female), and 59 Hong Kong Chinese (76.3% female). Based on the power analyses described above, our sample size of 174 participants provided more than sufficient power.

The sample was 65.5% female, and there were no significant cultural group differences in gender distribution, $\chi^2(2, N = 174) = 5.19$, $p = .08$. As in Study 1, the pattern of results held when controlling for participant gender, and participant gender did not interact with cultural group for any of the variables of interest, so we removed this variable from the analyses reported below for parsimony. There was a significant cultural difference in age, $F(2, 153) = 3.41$, $p = .04$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$: European Americans ($M = 19.87$, $SE = .19$) were younger than Asian Americans ($M = 20.71$, $SE = .27$), $p = .048$, 95% CI [−1.68, −.01]. Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 20.63$, $SE = .27$) did not differ from the other groups, $p = .12$ to $.98$.[5] Given this difference, we ran all the analyses for Study 2 controlling for age; however, because the pattern of results was the same as when we did not control for age, we dropped this variable from the analyses reported below.

Stimuli. Stimuli were the same as those used in Study 1, with one slight modification. The people in the images were more ethnically diverse, although the Chinese internship ad still featured an Asian focal person, and the U.S. internship ad still featured a European American focal person (see online supplementary materials, Section A).

Measures.

Ideal conveyed job affect. We used the same measure that was used in Study 1. Aggregate scores were generated for HAP (excited, enthusiastic, energetic) and LAP (calm, peaceful, serene) for the American and Chinese jobs.[6] Across jobs, internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) were moderate to high (ideal conveyed job HAP: .92 for European Americans, .92 for Asian Americans, .89 for Hong Kong Chinese; ideal conveyed job LAP: .73 for European Americans, .84 for Asian Americans, .59 for Hong Kong Chinese).

Global ideal and actual affect. As in Study 1, participants completed the global AVI (Tsai et al., 2006). Participants completed the measure as part of an online battery of measures at least 24 hours before coming into the lab for the first session. Aggregate scores were generated for HAP (excited, enthusiastic, elated, energetic) and LAP (relaxed, calm, peaceful, serene). Similar to Study 1 and consistent with previous studies, internal consistency estimates were high for ideal affect and actual affect across all three groups (ideal HAP: .79–.84; actual HAP: .75–.89; ideal LAP: .72–.80; actual LAP: .75–.89). As in Study 1, cultural group comparisons of ideal affect and actual affect were conducted on ipsatized values to control for cultural differences in response styles.

Word use. We used the same program (LIWC) and procedure that was used in Study 1. As in Study 1, means represent the percentage of HAP and LAP words relative to the total words used across the four open-ended questions for each job application.

Facial expressions. Two Asian American coders familiar with both East Asian and American cultures were trained in the Facial Action Coding System (FACS; Ekman & Friesen, 1978) to code smiles (AU 12, lip corner puller). Coders examined the first 5 seconds (88 frames) of participants' video introductions, when participants first greeted the interviewer. We focused on this part of the video because interviewers' first impressions of applicants influence their overall ratings of the applicant (Barrick et al., 2009; Dougherty et al., 1994), and because it was difficult to code smiles when participants were speaking after this point. Based on FACS, coders identified: (a) when a distinct instance of AU 12 occurred, and (b) the intensity of each occurrence of AU 12. Specifically, coders identified the peak intensity of each AU 12, and then rated it on a 2-point scale, with 1 = *low intensity* (i.e., trace or slight) or 2 = *high intensity* (i.e., pronounced, extreme, or maximal).[7] Coders jointly coded a randomly selected 10% of cases to establish

[5] Eighteen Hong Kong Chinese participants could not report their age because of a survey error. However, based on their responses to the open-ended questions, we had no reason to exclude them from the sample based on the age criteria. When we did exclude them from the analyses, the results reported below were the same.

[6] We removed "relaxed" from the composite because it did not load onto the other LAP items for European Americans in this study.

[7] We did not code smiles as "excited" versus "calm" as in previous work (Tsai et al., 2016) because "excited smiles" are defined by the presence of AU 25 (lips part) and 26 (jaw drop), which was difficult to code for participants who had already begun talking.

interrater reliability, but they each coded the remaining cases independently.

We generated three data points for each video from each coder: (a) total number of smiles (AU 12); (b) number of high intensity smiles; and (c) number of low intensity smiles. In all cases, the total number of smiles was the sum of the number of high and low intensity smiles. We then aggregated the codes (i.e., total smiles, high-intensity smiles, low-intensity smiles) across coders for each video to reconcile disparities, reduce subjectivity, and reduce coder drift (Sayette, Cohn, Wertz, Perrott, & Parrott, 2001). Interrater reliability was based on interclass correlation coefficients (ICC), using a two-way mixed model of absolute agreement, and was moderate to high (total smiles: ICC = .85 to .86; intensity: ICC = .64 to .89). In our analyses, we focused on the mean number of high-intensity smiles and the mean number of low-intensity smiles (averaged across coders).

Cultural orientation. To assess cultural orientation, participants completed the 25-item General Ethnicity Questionnaire (Tsai et al., 2000), as in Study 1. Internal consistency estimates were high for all groups (American/Western orientation: European American = .85, Asian American = .89, Hong Kong Chinese = .86; Chinese/East Asian orientation: Asian American = .90, Hong Kong Chinese = .82). As predicted, there were cultural group differences in American/Western orientation, $F(2, 171) = 18.56$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$; European Americans ($M = 3.74$, $SE = .05$) were more oriented to American culture than were Asian Americans ($M = 3.39$, $SE = .07$) and Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.24$, $SE = .06$), $ps < .001$. As in Study 1, there were no cultural differences in Chinese/East Asian cultural orientation between Asian Americans ($M = 3.60$, $SE = .07$) and Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.54$, $SE = .05$), $p = .50$.

Demographics. We collected the same demographic data as in Study 1.

Procedure. The procedures were similar to those for Study 1. Participants first completed an online baseline survey at home, and then came to the lab for two sessions scheduled 1 week apart. The online baseline survey included measures of global actual and ideal affect and cultural orientation. In the first lab session, participants were shown a China or U.S.-based company internship ad (counterbalanced) and asked to imagine that they wanted to be considered for a highly desirable and competitive internship. They were then asked to answer the same four open-ended application questions as in Study 1. Participants were then instructed to record a 1-min video introduction of themselves for the position. Participants were given a one-page sheet which contained three questions ("Who are you?" "What are your qualifications?" "What can you contribute to the company?") to help them prepare for the video introduction. The experimenter then left the room so that participants could record their video introduction in private. After the video introduction, participants were told that the internship application was finished, and they then completed the measure assessing the emotions they wanted to convey on their job applications. This procedure was repeated during the second in-lab session. At the end of the second session, participants completed the demographic questionnaire.

Because the majority of Hong Kong Chinese participants in Study 1 responded in English, we decided to conduct Study 2 in English in the U.S. and Hong Kong. This also allowed us to assess whether Study 1 findings could have been due to group differences in the languages used.

Data Analysis and Results

Did we replicate the results from Study 1 (Hypothesis 1)?

Ideal conveyed job affect. As in Study 1, we conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Ideal Conveyed Job Affect [HAP, LAP]) × 2 (Country of Job [U.S., China]) repeated measures ANOVA with Cultural Group as a between-subjects factor and Country of Job and Ideal Conveyed Job Affect as within-subject factors. Results revealed a significant main effect of Ideal Conveyed Job Affect, $F(1, 171) = 78.52$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .32$, with participants across cultural groups wanting to convey HAP ($M = 3.52$, $SE = .06$) more than LAP ($M = 2.89$, $SE = .05$). This main effect, however, was qualified by a significant Cultural Group × Ideal Conveyed Job Affect interaction, $F(2, 171) = 7.57$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. As predicted, and consistent with Study 1, European Americans ($M = 3.70$, $SE = .10$), $p = .01$, 95% CI [.08, .65] wanted to convey HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese did ($M = 3.34$, $SE = .10$), with Asian Americans ($M = 3.52$, $SE = .11$) falling in between the two groups and not differing from either group, $p = .22$ to .23. In contrast, Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.02$, $SE = .09$) wanted to convey LAP more than did European Americans ($M = 2.71$, $SE = .09$), $p = .02$, 95% CI [.05, .57]. Asian Americans ($M = 2.93$, $SE = .10$) again fell in between the two groups and did not differ from either group, $p = .10$ to .49 (see Figure 1, bottom). As in Study 1, these effects held across U.S. and Chinese jobs.

HAP and LAP word use. As in Study 1, we ran a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Country of Job [U.S., China]) × 2 (Word Type [HAP, LAP]) repeated measures ANOVA, with Cultural Group as the between-subjects factor and Word Type and Country of Job defined as within-subjects factors. Results revealed a significant main effect of Word Type, $F(1, 171) = 326.51$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .66$, with participants using more HAP ($M = 1.08$, $SE = .06$) than LAP ($M = .07$, $SE = .01$) words. There was also a significant main effect of Cultural Group, $F(2, 171) = 10.73$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$: European Americans ($M = .70$, $SE = .05$), $p < .001$, 95% CI [.17, .44] and Asian Americans ($M = .62$, $SE = .05$), $p = .001$, 95% CI [.09, .37] used more positive words than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .39$, $SE = .05$).

This main effect, however, was qualified by a significant Cultural Group × Word Type interaction, $F(2, 171) = 8.19$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$. As predicted, and consistent with Study 1, European Americans ($M = 1.33$, $SE = .09$) used more HAP words than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .75$, $SE = .10$), $p < .001$, 95% CI [.32, .84]. The groups, once again, did not significantly differ in LAP word use (European American: $M = .07$, $SE = .02$; Hong Kong Chinese: $M = .04$, $SE = .02$), $p = .22$, 95% CI [−.02, .09]. Asian Americans, like their European American counterparts, used more HAP words ($M = 1.15$, $SE = .10$), $p = .004$, 95% CI [.13, .67], but also marginally more LAP words ($M = .09$, $SE = .02$), $p = .06$, 95% CI [−.002, .12] than did Hong Kong Chinese (see Figure 2, bottom). As in Study 1,

there were no significant main effects or interactions involving country of job.

In sum, we replicated the results of Study 1 in the lab and when the study was conducted only in English.

Do European Americans and Asian Americans show more excited smiles and fewer calm smiles in their job applications than Hong Kong Chinese (Hypothesis 2)? To identify whether there were cultural group differences in the type of smiles (i.e., high vs. low intensity) that applicants showed, we used a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Country of Job [U.S., China]) × 2 (Type of Smile [high intensity, low intensity]) repeated measures ANOVA. We found a significant main effect of Country of Job, $F(1, 171) = 4.92$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, with all groups showing more smiles when applying to the U.S. job ($M = .31$, $SE = .03$) than the Chinese job ($M = .26$, $SE = .02$). Analyses also revealed a marginally significant Cultural Group × Type of Smile interaction, $F(2, 171) = 2.75$, $p = .07$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. As predicted and shown in Figure 3, European Americans ($M = .35$, $SE = .05$), $p = .01$, 95% CI [.06, .35] and Asian Americans ($M = .31$, $SE = .05$), $p = .04$, 95% CI [.01, .31], showed more high intensity smiles than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .15$, $SE = .05$). Contrary to our predictions, but consistent with the LAP word use findings, there were no significant differences in expressions of low intensity smiles ($ps > .39$).

Within cultural groups, European Americans ($M_{high\ intensity} = .35$, $SE_{\text{high intensity}} = .05$; $M_{low\ intensity} = .33$, $SE_{\text{low intensity}} = .05$) and Asian Americans ($M_{high\ intensity} = .31$, $SE_{\text{high intensity}} = .05$; $M_{low\ intensity} = .27$, $SE_{\text{low intensity}} = .05$) did not differ in their expression of high versus low intensity smiles; however, Hong Kong Chinese expressed more low intensity smiles ($M = .33$, $SE = .05$) than they did high intensity smiles ($M = .15$, $SE = .05$), $p = .01$, 95% CI [.04, .33].

Are cultural differences in ideal conveyed job affect, HAP word use, and excited smiles related to cultural differences in ideal HAP (Hypothesis 3)? We then examined whether we could replicate the mediation results from Study 1. As in Study 1, we first examined whether there were cultural differences in ipsatized values of ideal and actual affect. As predicted, European Americans ($M = .87$, $SE = .06$), $p = .02$, 95% CI [.03, .34], and Asian Americans ($M = .86$, $SE = .06$), $p = .03$, 95% CI [.02, .34], valued HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese did ($M = .68$, $SE = .06$). Similar to Study 1, European Americans ($M = .86$, $SE = .05$), $p = .003$, 95% CI [.08, .38], and Asian Americans ($M = .86$, $SE = .05$), $p = .004$, 95% CI [.07, .38], also valued LAP more than Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .63$, $SE = .05$). Thus, we again found predicted group differences in ideal HAP, but not in ideal LAP. Unlike Study 1, there were no significant cultural group differences in actual HAP, $p = .09$ to .94, or actual LAP, $p = .22$ to .77 (see the online supplementary materials, Section C for a complete report of these analyses, including the cultural group comparisons using raw values of ideal affect, which are consistent with the patterns reported here).[8]

Ideal conveyed job HAP. Using the same mediation model as in Study 1, we examined whether the direct effect of cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong Chinese, 0 = Asian Americans, 1 = European Americans) on the desire to convey HAP was mediated by ideal HAP based on 5,000 bias corrected bootstrapped resamples, controlling for cultural differences in ideal LAP. Zero-order correlations among variables are provided in the online supplementary materials, Section H. As predicted and consistent with the results of Study 1, cultural group significantly predicted ideal HAP (Model Fit: $F(2, 171) = 15.34$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .15$), $b = .12$, $SE = .06$, $t = 2.03$, $p = .04$, 95% CI [.003, .24]: European Americans and Asian Americans valued HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese. Also consistent with Study 1, ideal HAP, $b = .43$, $SE = .09$, $t = 5.01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.26, .60], predicted the desire to convey HAP during the job interview. The significant total effect of cultural group on desire to convey HAP (Model Fit: $F(2, 171) = 9.24$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .10$), $b = .27$, $SE = .07$, $t = 3.78$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.13, .42], was reduced after ideal HAP was included in the model (Model Fit: $F(3, 170) = 15.41$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .21$), $b = .22$, $SE = .07$, $t = 3.22$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [.09, .36], and the indirect effect through ideal HAP was significant, effect = .05, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [.003, .12]. Thus, we replicated the findings from Study 1: European Americans wanted to convey HAP more in their job applications than did Hong Kong Chinese, and this was related to the fact that they valued HAP more.

Ideal conveyed job LAP. Because we did not find the predicted cultural differences in ideal LAP, we tested whether ideal LAP influences the desire to convey LAP over and above cultural group using a stepwise multiple linear regression model in which we defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong Chinese, 0 = Asian American, 1 = European American) as the independent variable in the first model, and ideal LAP, controlling for actual LAP and ideal HAP, as independent variables in the second model. We included actual LAP in the model to be consistent with Study 1, but the results are similar when we exclude actual LAP from the model. Similar to Study 1, the second model, adjusted $R^2 = .12$, $F(4, 169) = 6.69$, $p < .001$, fit the data better than the first, adjusted $R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 172) = 4.57$, $p = .03$, and demonstrated significantly improved model fit, $\Delta R^2 = .11$, $\Delta F(3, 169) = 7.24$, $p < .001$. Both ideal LAP, $b = .17$, $SE = .08$, $\beta = .17$, $t = 2.15$, $p = .03$, 95% CI [.01, .33], and actual LAP, $b = .21$, $SE = .08$, $\beta = .21$, $t = 2.72$, $p = .01$, 95% CI [.06, .35], were significantly associated with increased desire to convey LAP on job applications over and above the effect of cultural group, $b = -.14$, $SE = .07$, $\beta = -.16$, $t = -2.17$, $p = .03$, 95% CI [−.27, −.01]. As predicted, ideal HAP was not, $p = .18$, 95% CI [−.05, .26].

HAP word use. We then tested whether cultural group differences in HAP word use were mediated by ideal HAP and ideal conveyed HAP using a serial mediation model (Model 6, Process; Hayes, 2012) that defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong, 0 = Asian American, 1 = European American) as the independent variable, HAP word use as the dependent variable, ideal HAP and

[8] Using ipsatized scores of actual affect, we do not find cultural differences in actual HAP or LAP. Thus, we do not control for actual HAP or LAP in the mediation analyses that follow. However, using raw scores of actual affect, we do find cultural differences in actual LAP. When we control for actual LAP in the mediation model that examines the indirect effect through ideal HAP on desire to convey HAP, results are consistent with what we report in the article. We find the same significant indirect effect through ideal HAP, effect = .06, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [.01, .13], and no significant effect of actual LAP on desire to convey HAP in the indirect effects model (Model Fit: $F(4, 169) = 12.54$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .23$), $p = .07$, 95% CI [−.01, .31].

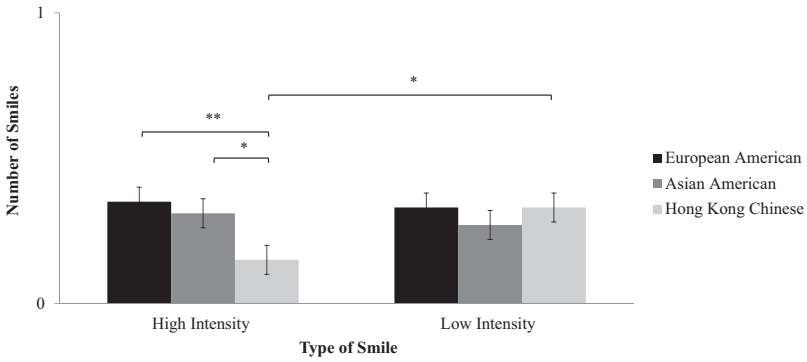

Figure 3. Cultural differences in high and low intensity smiles (Study 2). Error bars represent standard errors of the mean. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

ideal conveyed job HAP as serial mediators, and ideal LAP as a covariate. Consistent with Study 1, results based on 5,000 bias corrected bootstrapped resamples indicate no significant indirect effects through ideal HAP, effect = −.005, *SE* = .01, 95% CI [−.04, .02], or desire to convey HAP, effect = .01, *SE* = .02, 95% CI [−.03, .05], and no significant serial mediation effect through ideal HAP and desire to convey HAP, effect = .002, *SE* = .01, 95% CI [−.01, .02], because ideal HAP, $p = .71$, 95% CI [−.26, .18], and desire to convey HAP, $p = .68$, 95% CI [−.13, .20], did not predict HAP word use in the indirect effects model (Model Fit: $F(4, 169) = 4.90$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .10$).[9]

High intensity smiles. Finally, we examined whether cultural differences in high intensity smiles were mediated by ideal HAP and desire to convey HAP, controlling for ideal LAP (Process, Model 6; Hayes, 2012). Results based on 5,000 bias corrected bootstrapped resamples indicate no significant indirect effects through ideal HAP, effect = .005, *SE* = .01, 95% CI [−.01, .03], or ideal conveyed job HAP, effect = .01, *SE* = .01, 95% CI [−.003, .04], and no significant serial mediation effect through ideal HAP and ideal conveyed job HAP, effect = .003, *SE* = .003, 95% CI [−.0002, .01] because ideal HAP, $p = .47$, 95% CI [−.07, .15], and ideal conveyed job HAP, $p = .16$, 95% CI [−.02, .15], did not predict high intensity smiles in the indirect effects model (Model Fit: $F(4, 169) = 2.71$, $p = .03$, $R^2 = .06$).

In sum, as in Study 1, cultural differences in wanting to convey HAP were mediated by ideal HAP; however, cultural differences in HAP word use and high intensity smiles were not.

Discussion

This study replicates and expands on Study 1 by testing our hypotheses in the lab (vs. online). Our findings were strikingly consistent with those of Study 1, suggesting that conducting the study in the lab and in English had a minimal impact on our effects. Specifically, due to cultural differences in the valuation of HAP, European Americans wanted to convey HAP more than did Hong Kong Chinese on their job applications, with Asian Americans falling in between these cultural groups. These findings are the first to demonstrate links between how people ideally want to feel and what they want to convey in a particular situation. These differences were also reflected in HAP word use and the occurrence of high intensity smiles: European Americans used more HAP words on their applications and showed more high intensity smiles at the beginning of their video introductions than did Hong Kong Chinese, with Asian Americans falling in between these groups. However, these cultural differences in HAP word use and high intensity smiles were not mediated by ideal HAP, perhaps reflecting the generally low correlation between self-report and behavioral measures.

Also consistent with Study 1, although Hong Kong Chinese reported wanting to convey more LAP than did European Americans, they did not use more LAP words or show more low intensity smiles compared with European Americans in Study 2. Hong Kong Chinese, however, did show more low intensity than high intensity smiles. These findings further suggest that in employment settings, LAP may be expressed through channels other than word use and smiles.

Finally, in both studies, we observed that the country of the job had minimal effects on the cultural differences that we observed.

Summary of Studies 1 and 2

In summary, Studies 1 and 2 clearly show that European Americans want to convey more HAP and actually do so through their word use and facial expressions compared to Hong Kong Chinese. Although these studies illustrate how cultural differences in ideal affect are expressed in employment settings, they do not reveal the implications of these differences. Thus, in the next three studies we examined whether European Americans are actually more likely to hire excited (vs. calm) applicants than Hong Kong Chinese. Although previous work provides some evidence that this is the case, that work was focused on university samples (Tsai et al., in press). Therefore, in the next three studies, we extend prior work by focusing on working adults and MBA students, who may have more experience in the working world.

[9] When we removed ideal LAP from the mediation model, there were still no significant indirect effects in this model, or in the mediation model examining whether ideal HAP and ideal conveyed job HAP predict high intensity smiles.

Study 3: The Emotions of Ideal Applicants

In Study 3, we examined whether cultural differences in ideal affect would be reflected in people's conceptions of the ideal applicant. We hypothesized that European Americans would view the ideal applicant as more HAP and less LAP than would Hong Kong Chinese, and that Asian Americans would fall in between these cultural groups (Hypothesis 1). We also predicted that these cultural differences would be mediated by cultural differences in ideal HAP (Hypothesis 2).

Method

Participants. European American, Asian American, and Hong Kong Chinese working adults were recruited online through Amazon Mechanical Turk in the U.S. and alumni/research participant listservs in Hong Kong. Consistent with local norms around compensation, Amazon Mechanical Turk participants received $2 and Hong Kong participants received a $50HKD ($6.45USD) Starbucks gift card.

Before participating, everyone completed a five-item prescreening questionnaire in which they indicated their race/ethnicity, age, gender, and employment status. We expanded our cultural criteria and removed the parental birthplace restriction because it was difficult to recruit working adults using such strict cultural criteria. European Americans were required to: (a) self identify as only White/European American, and (b) be born in the U.S.; Asian Americans were required to: (a) self identify as only East Asian/East Asian American, and (b) be born in the U.S. or an East Asian country; Hong Kong Chinese were required to: (a) self identify as Chinese, and (b) be born in Hong Kong or China. For U.S. MTurk participants, IP addresses were restricted to those accessing the survey from U.S. locations only.

In addition, because participants would be asked to make hiring decisions, we wanted to ensure that participants were in the workforce, and therefore, we prescreened for age (31–55 y.o.) and employment status (employed for pay). Eligible participants continued to the study, while all others were told they were ineligible for the study. Based on IP address and time of completion, 22 Hong Kong Chinese, 27 Asian Americans, and 12 European Americans were excluded for data integrity and/or cultural criteria (i.e., completing the prescreen questions or the survey more than once, incomplete data, inconsistent reporting of age or ethnicity). This resulted in a final sample of 185 participants: 69 European Americans (52.2% female; median age = 36–40 y.o.), 49 Asian Americans (49% female; median age = 36–40 y.o.), and 67 Hong Kong Chinese (68.7% female; median age = 31–35 y.o.). Based on the power analyses described above, our sample size of 185 participants provided more than sufficient power to test our hypotheses.

There were cultural group differences in gender distribution, $\chi^2(2, N = 185) = 5.66$, $p = .06$, Cramer's V = .18, with the Hong Kong Chinese group being comprised of more females. There were no group differences in age distribution, $\chi^2(8, N = 185) = 11.58$, $p = .17$, Cramer's V = .18. Consistent with the previous studies, we controlled for age and gender in our analyses, but because including these variables did not change the results, we dropped both variables from the final model for parsimony.

Stimuli. We used the same stimuli as in Study 1. All participants were presented with the ad for the consumer resources position. European American and Asian American working adults were presented with the U.S. job ad in English, and Hong Kong Chinese working adults were presented with the Chinese job ad in Chinese. As in Study 1, we administered all instruments and instructions to European Americans and Asian Americans in English, and we administered all instruments and instructions to Hong Kong Chinese in Chinese and English.

Measures.

Ideal applicant. Using a scale of 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*, participants rated the degree to which the ideal applicant for the internship should be: enthusiastic, dull, excited, energetic, peaceful, bored, quiet, passive, astonished, calm, nervous, relaxed, content, happy, unhappy, satisfied, and serene. We also included 13 filler items (i.e., strong, passionate, balanced, easygoing, confident, humble, assertive, friendly, virtuous, flexible, intelligent, trustworthy, authentic). Similar to Studies 1 and 2, we created aggregate scores of HAP (excited, enthusiastic, energetic) and LAP (relaxed, calm, peaceful, serene) items. Internal consistency estimates were overall moderate to high (ideal applicant HAP: .81 for European Americans, .69 for Asian Americans, .45 for Hong Kong Chinese;[10] ideal applicant LAP: .67 for European Americans, .80 for Asian Americans, .63 for Hong Kong Chinese).

Global ideal and actual affect. As in Studies 1 and 2, we administered the AVI to assess global actual and ideal affect (Tsai et al., 2006). We calculated HAP (enthusiastic, excited, elated, energetic) and LAP (calm, peaceful, relaxed, serene) aggregates. Internal consistency estimates were high for all cultural groups, as in previous studies (ideal HAP: .79–.83; actual HAP: .80–.87; ideal LAP: .72–.82; actual LAP: .78–.83). Also, as in previous studies, we calculated actual and ideal HAP and LAP using ipsatized scores to control for cultural differences in response styles (Chen et al., 1995). The results are consistent with those based on raw scores (reported in the online supplementary materials, Section D).

Cultural orientation. Given time constraints, we asked participants to complete only one item from the GEQ ("Overall, I am ___ oriented to American/Chinese/East Asian culture.") on a scale from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*. As in Study 1, European Americans ($M = 4.42$, $SE = .10$) were more oriented to American culture than were Asian Americans ($M = 4.02$, $SE = .11$), $t(116) = 2.58$, $p = .01$, 95% CI [.09, .71], $d = .48$, whereas Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.13$, $SE = .11$) and Asian Americans ($M = 2.84$, $SE = .17$) did not differ in their orientation to Chinese/East Asian cultures, $p = .15$, 95% CI [−.11, .71].

Demographics. We collected the same demographic data as in Studies 1 and 2.

Procedure. Participants were recruited for an online study on "hiring decisions," and screened for ethnicity, employment, and age. Eligible participants were asked to imagine that they were the hiring manager for the consumer resources internship described in

[10] The reliability for ideal applicant HAP was slightly lower for Hong Kong Chinese participants than for the other groups, and removing any single item from the composite did not improve reliability for Hong Kong Chinese. Therefore, we examined whether there were cultural differences for each item using one-way ANOVA models. European Americans rated their ideal applicant as more excited and enthusiastic than did Hong Kong Chinese, $p < .001$, but there were no cultural differences in their ratings of the ideal applicant as energetic, $p = .95$.

the ad. Participants were then asked to think about their ideal applicant for the position. Afterward, they completed measures of their ideal applicant, global ideal and actual affect, cultural orientation, and demographics.

Data Analysis and Results

Do European Americans view ideal applicants as more HAP and less LAP than Hong Kong Chinese? (Hypothesis 1). We conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Ideal Applicant Affect [HAP, LAP]) repeated measures ANOVA; Cultural Group was treated as a between-subjects factor and Ideal Applicant Affect was treated as a within-subjects factor. There was no significant main effect of Ideal Applicant Affect, $F(1, 182) = .39$, $p = .53$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. There was a significant main effect of Cultural Group, $F(2, 182) = 3.14$, $p = .046$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, with European Americans ($M = 3.80$, $SE = .07$) rating the ideal applicant as more positive than Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.58$, $SE = .07$), $p = .02$, 95% CI [.04, .41], and Asian Americans falling in between the two groups ($M = 3.61$, $SE = .08$).

As predicted, this was qualified by a Cultural Group × Ideal Applicant Affect interaction, $F(2, 182) = 28.20$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .24$. As shown in Figure 4, European Americans viewed the ideal applicant as more HAP ($M = 4.02$, $SE = .08$) than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = 3.33$, $SE = .08$), $p < .001$, 95% CI [.47, .92]. Asian Americans ($M = 3.68$, $SE = .10$) viewed the ideal applicant as more HAP than did Hong Kong Chinese, $p < .01$, 95% CI [.10, .60], but as less HAP than European Americans, $p < .01$, 95% CI [−.59, −.10]. In contrast, Hong Kong Chinese viewed the ideal applicant as more LAP ($M = 3.82$, $SE = .08$) than did European Americans ($M = 3.57$, $SE = .08$), $p = .03$, 95% CI [.02, .47], and Asian Americans ($M = 3.54$, $SE = .10$), $p = .02$, 95% CI [.04, .53].

Within cultural groups, European Americans viewed the ideal applicant as more HAP than LAP, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.28, .63], whereas Hong Kong Chinese viewed the ideal applicant as more LAP than HAP, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.31, .67]. Asian Americans viewed the ideal applicant as equally HAP and LAP, $p = .18$, 95% CI [−.07, .35].

Are cultural differences in ideal applicant HAP and LAP mediated by ideal affect? (Hypothesis 2). We first examined whether there were cultural differences in ipsatized scores of ideal affect. We conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Ideal Affect [HAP, LAP]) repeated measures analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) controlling for actual HAP and actual LAP; Cultural Group was treated as a between-subjects factor and Ideal Affect was treated as a within-subjects factor. There was a significant main effect of Ideal Affect, $F(1, 180) = 9.54$, $p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$; participants valued LAP ($M = .91$, $SE = .03$) more than HAP ($M = .71$, $SE = .03$). Analyses also revealed a significant main effect of Cultural Group, $F(2, 180) = 4.57$, $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$, in which European Americans ($M = .85$, $SE = .03$), $p = .01$, 95% CI [.04, .23], and Asian Americans ($M = .85$, $SE = .04$), $p = .02$, 95% CI [.02, .23], valued HAP and LAP more than Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .72$, $SE = .03$).

These effects, however, were qualified by a significant Cultural Group × Ideal Affect interaction, $F(2, 180) = 4.18$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. As predicted, European Americans ($M = .81$, $SE = .05$), $p < .001$, 95% CI [.13, .42] and Asian Americans ($M = .76$, $SE = .06$), $p = .01$, 95% CI [.07, .38] valued HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese did ($M = .54$, $SE = .05$). However, there were no significant cultural group differences in ideal LAP (European Americans: $M = .89$, $SE = .05$; Asian Americans: $M = .93$, $SE = .06$; Hong Kong Chinese: $M = .90$, $SE = .05$), $p = .56$ to $.88$.

We also examined whether there were cultural group differences in actual affect using a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Actual Affect [HAP, LAP]) ANCOVA, controlling for ideal HAP and ideal LAP. There were no significant main effects or interactions involving Cultural Group or Actual Affect, $p = .06$ to $.83$. Results were similar when analyses were conducted on raw scores of actual and ideal affect (see the online supplementary materials, Section D).

Ideal applicant HAP. Therefore, we tested a mediation model (Model 4, Process; Hayes, 2012) that defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong, 0 = Asian American, 1 = European American) as the independent variable, ideal applicant HAP as the dependent variable, and ideal HAP as the mediator.[11] Zero-order correlations among variables are provided in the online supplementary materials, Section H. The below results are based on 5,000 bias corrected bootstrapped resamples. First, cultural group predicted ideal HAP (Model Fit: $F(1, 183) = 14.59$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .07$), $b = .28$, $SE = .07$, $t = 3.82$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.14, .43], with European Americans and Asian Americans valuing HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese. Ideal HAP predicted ratings of the ideal applicant as HAP, $b = .42$, $SE = .05$, $t = 8.64$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.32, .52]: the more participants valued HAP, the more HAP they rated the ideal applicant. The significant total effect of cultural group on ratings of the ideal applicant as HAP (Model Fit: $F(1, 183) = 36.85$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .17$), $b = .35$, $SE = .06$, $t = 6.07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.23, .46], was reduced but still significant after entering ideal HAP into the model (Model Fit: $F(2, 182) = 63.18$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .41$), $b = .23$, $SE = .05$, $t = 4.57$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.13, .33]. In addition, the indirect effect through ideal HAP was significant, effect = .12, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [.07, .18]. In sum, ideal HAP partially mediated cultural differences in ratings of the ideal applicant as HAP.

Ideal applicant LAP. Similar to Studies 1 and 2, we did not find predicted cultural differences in ideal LAP, yet we did find predicted cultural differences in the degree to which participants' ideal applicants were LAP. Thus, we tested whether ideal LAP influences ratings of the ideal applicant being LAP over and above cultural group. As in the previous studies, we used a stepwise multiple linear regression model in which we defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong Chinese, 0 = Asian American, 1 = European American) as the independent variable in the first model,

[11] Using ipsatized scores of ideal affect, we did not find cultural differences in ideal LAP. Thus, we did not control for ideal LAP in the mediation analyses that follow. However, using raw scores of ideal affect, we did find cultural differences in ideal LAP. When we controlled for ideal LAP in the mediation model that examines the indirect effect through ideal HAP on ideal applicant HAP, results were consistent; there was a significant indirect effect through ideal HAP, effect = .09, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [.03, .15], and no significant effect of ideal LAP on ideal applicant HAP in the indirect effects model (Model Fit: $F(3, 181) = 42.14$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .41$), $p = .51$, 95% CI [−.17, .08].

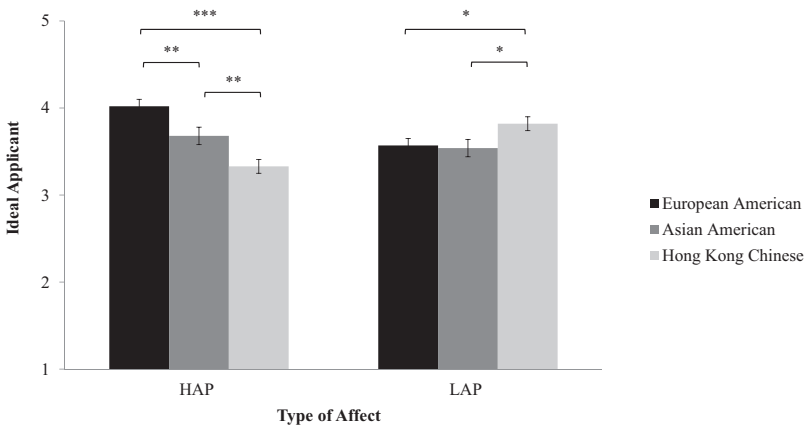

Figure 4. Cultural differences in ratings of ideal applicant as HAP or LAP (Study 3). Error bars represent standard errors of the mean. HAP = high arousal positive; LAP = low arousal positive. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

and then added ideal LAP, controlling for ideal HAP, as the independent variable in the second model. Similar to Studies 1 and 2, the second model, adjusted $R^2 = .25$, $F(3, 181) = 21.75$, $p < .001$, fit the data better than the first, adjusted $R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 183) = 4.65$, $p = .03$, and demonstrated significantly improved model fit, $\Delta R^2 = .24$, $\Delta F(2, 181) = 29.57$, $p < .001$. The more one ideally wanted to feel LAP, the more they rated the ideal applicant as LAP, $b = .34$, $SE = .07$, $\beta = .38$, $t = 5.23$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.21, .47], over and above the effect of cultural group, $b = -.22$, $SE = .05$, $\beta = -.27$, $t = -4.13$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [−.32, −.11]. Surprisingly, ideal HAP also predicted ratings of the ideal applicant as LAP, $b = .15$, $SE = .06$, $\beta = .19$, $t = 2.55$, $p = .01$, 95% CI [.03, .26].

Discussion

As predicted, European American working adults viewed ideal job applicants as being more HAP than did Hong Kong Chinese working adults, and Asian Americans fell in between these cultural groups. These differences were mediated by ideal HAP. Also as predicted, Hong Kong Chinese viewed ideal job applicants as being more LAP than did European Americans, with Asian Americans falling in between the two groups. In addition, ideal LAP predicted the degree to which participants viewed the ideal applicant as LAP over and above the effect of cultural group. Together, these findings suggest that when employers are thinking about the ideal applicant for a job, their ideal affect plays a role in whom they envision.

Study 4: Hiring Choices

One main limitation of Study 3 is that participants were not presented with actual applicants, and therefore, it is unclear whether European Americans are also more likely to hire an excited versus calm applicant compared with Hong Kong Chinese. Therefore, in Studies 4a and 4b, we presented participants with scenarios in which they were asked to hire an applicant for an internship. In Study 4a, we studied a sample of working adults with advanced training in business, (i.e., MBAs). On the one hand, MBAs might show the same biases as working adults. On the other hand, given greater exposure to different cultures and greater training in business, MBAs might be less susceptible to such biases. In Study 4b, we examined whether current employees of a midsized company in the U.S. were more likely to choose an excited (vs. calm) applicant.

Study 4a: Hiring Choices of MBAs

In Study 4a, we presented MBA students with three equally qualified applicants that varied in their emotional expressions (an excited applicant, a calm applicant, and a neutral applicant who served as a control), and asked participants how likely they were to hire each applicant. We hypothesized that European Americans would be more likely to hire the excited (vs. calm) applicant than Hong Kong Chinese, that Asian Americans would fall in between the two groups (Hypothesis 1), and that this difference would be mediated by ideal HAP (Hypothesis 2).

Method

Participants. European American, Asian American, and Hong Kong Chinese MBAs were recruited through e-mail advertisements distributed through university listservs. Consistent with local norms around compensation for MBAs, European American and Asian American participants received a $40 Amazon gift card and Hong Kong Chinese received a $300HKD ($38.37USD) Starbucks gift card or cash for their participation in the study.

Participants were prescreened on race/ethnicity, gender, age, and MBA student status. As in Study 3, European American participants were eligible if they self-identified as White/European American; Asian American participants were eligible if they self-identified as East Asian or East Asian American; and Hong Kong Chinese participants were eligible if they self-identified as Chinese. In addition, participants had to be enrolled in an MBA program to be eligible for the study. Seven participants (5 European American, 1 Asian American, and 1 mixed race participant) did not qualify based on ethnic criteria and were excluded from the analyses. Our final sample consisted of 125 participants: 58 Eu-

ropean Americans (37.9% female), 25 Asian Americans (52% female), and 42 Hong Kong Chinese (50% female). Based on the power analyses described above, our sample of 125 participants was enough to achieve sufficient power.

The cultural groups did not differ in gender distribution, $\chi^2(2, N = 125) = 2.09$, $p = .35$, Cramer's V = .13. Although the median age range for all three cultural groups was 26–35 years of age, Hong Kong Chinese were slightly older than the other two groups, $\chi^2(4, N = 125) = 17.05$, $p = .002$. There were no significant effects or interactions involving participant gender and therefore we excluded participant gender from our final model. Similarly, we ran all the analyses controlling for age, but because the pattern of results did not change, we dropped age from the final models.

Stimuli.

Internship ad. The internship ads were the same as in Study 3.

Applicant videos. Based on participants' responses from Studies 1 and 2, we created six videos of job applicants (3 European American [1 excited, 1 calm, 1 neutral]; 3 Hong Kong Chinese [1 excited, 1 calm, 1 neutral]), in which applicants described their qualifications for the job (http://stanford.edu/~ylzhang/study_3_stimuli/). Applicants were similar in terms of qualifications (i.e., academic training, work experience, extracurricular activities), and videos were similar in terms of length (excited: $M = 79$ s, $SD = 12.73$ s; calm: $M = 80$ s, $SD = 4.24$ s; neutral: $M = 79$ s, $SD = 21.21$ s) and word count (excited: $M = 285.50$ words, $SD = 116.67$ words; calm: $M = 287$ words, $SD = 114.55$ words; neutral: $M = 281$ words, $SD = 111.72$ words). Chinese videos ($M = 88.33$ s, $SD = 5.51$ s; $M = 365.33$ words, $SD = 4.61$ words) were slightly longer than English videos ($M = 70.33$ s, $SD = 6.51$ s; $M = 203.67$ words, $SD = 2.08$ words) because of language differences. However, applicants differed in their affective behavior, which was conveyed through specific word use ("excited" vs. "calm" vs. no emotion words), facial expressions (open smile vs. closed smiles vs. no smiles), vocal tone (speaking faster and more emphatically vs. speaking slower and more melodically vs. neutral tone), and overall body movement (several head movements vs. few head movements vs. even fewer head movements).

We recruited 9 European American and 5 Hong Kong Chinese male university students (age 18–25 y.o.) to read the descriptions in exciting, calming, and neutral ways while being recorded. Actors were paid $50 each. We used only male applicants to minimize the number of videos participants viewed. To match the native language of the participants viewing the stimuli, European American videos were recorded in English, and Hong Kong Chinese videos were recorded in Cantonese. Actors were similar in weight/build, wore the same white button-up shirt, had short hair, and had no visible tattoos or piercings. We chose the six videos (3 European American, 3 Hong Kong Chinese) that best reflected the targeted affect and that were the most closely matched across cultural groups.

The six videos were pretested with a university sample of 98 European Americans and 100 Hong Kong Chinese participants to ensure that they were perceived similarly in terms of their qualifications (i.e., how educated, skilled, and experienced they appeared; Tsai et al., in press). During the pretest, participants were also asked which emotion (i.e., anger, disgust, fear, sadness, calm, excitement, surprise, or neutral) the applicant displayed. As intended, the majority of European Americans and Hong Kong Chinese viewed the excited applicant as "excited;" the calm applicant as "calm," and the neutral applicant as "neutral." Applicants did not differ in how intelligent and competent they appeared (see Tsai et al., in press).

Measures.

Global ideal and actual affect. As in Studies 1–3, the AVI was used to assess global actual and ideal affect. Aggregate scores were calculated for HAP (enthusiastic, excited, elated) and LAP (calm, relaxed, peaceful serene).[12] Internal consistency estimates were moderate to high (ideal HAP: .76–.83; actual HAP: .68–.80; ideal LAP: .70–.80; actual LAP: .68–.87). As in previous studies, we report the results of ipsatized means below.

Cultural orientation. As in Study 3, participants were asked about their overall orientation to American/Chinese/East Asian cultures. European Americans ($M = 4.38$, $SE = .10$) were more oriented to American culture than were Asian Americans ($M = 3.76$, $SE = .20$), $t(81) = 3.16$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [.23, 1.01], Cohen's $d = .71$, but Hong Kong Chinese and Asian Americans did not differ in their orientation to Chinese/East Asian cultures (Hong Kong Chinese $M = 3.17$, $SE = .14$; Asian American $M = 3.09$, $SE = .18$), $p = .73$.

Likelihood to hire. After watching each applicant's video introduction, participants were asked "How likely are you to hire this applicant?" on a scale from 1 = *very unlikely* to 7 = *very likely*. Scores were ipsatized (i.e., the likelihood score for the excited applicant was adjusted by the mean for all three applicants, and divided by the standard deviation) because we were interested in participants' relative rating of each applicant. The same procedure was used for likelihood to hire the calm applicant.

Hiring choice. After answering the likelihood to hire question for each applicant, we asked participants to choose one of the applicants to hire. The participants saw a still image of each of the three applicants taken from the video stimuli. The three images were presented side by side in the same order in which the participant saw the videos.

Demographics. We collected the same demographic data as in Studies 1–3.

Procedure. Participants were recruited for an online study on "hiring decisions," and prescreened for ethnicity and MBA student status. Eligible participants were asked to imagine they were the hiring manager for the consumer resources internship, and viewed the internship ad. Next, participants watched each of the three videos in a random order. Following each video, participants were asked how likely they were to hire that applicant. After watching all three videos, participants were asked to select one applicant to hire. Participants were then asked a series of follow-up questions about the applicant they chose (these questions were not the focus of the current article, and therefore are not reported here). Finally, participants completed measures of global ideal and actual affect, cultural orientation, and demographics.

Because Hong Kong Chinese MBAs were ostensibly hiring for a Chinese company, and European American and Asian American MBAs were ostensibly hiring for an U.S. company, we administered all materials in Chinese for the Hong Kong MBAs and in English for the European American and Asian American MBAs.

[12] We removed energetic from the HAP aggregate because it did not load with the rest of the items for European Americans.

Data Analysis and Results

Are European Americans more likely to hire the excited applicant than Hong Kong Chinese? (Hypothesis 1). First, we conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Job Applicant [excited, calm]) repeated measures ANOVA on ipsatized likelihood to hire ratings to assess the degree to which participants were likely to hire the excited and calm applicants relative to the neutral applicant. Cultural Group was treated as a between-subjects factor and Job Applicant was treated as a within-subjects factor.

Although the Cultural Group × Job Applicant interaction was not significant, $F(2, 115) = 1.50$, $p = .23$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, planned pairwise comparisons revealed that as predicted, European American MBAs were more likely to hire the excited applicant ($M = .26$, $SE = .11$) than were Hong Kong Chinese MBAs ($M = -.13$, $SE = .13$), $p = .03$, 95% CI [.05, .73]. Asian Americans fell in between the two cultural groups ($M = .24$, $SE = .17$) but did not significantly differ from either group, $p = .09$ to .92. Contrary to our predictions, there were no cultural differences in likelihood of hiring the calm applicant (European American $M = .20$, $SE = .10$, Asian American $M = .02$, $SE = .16$; Hong Kong Chinese $M = .21$, $SE = .12$), $ps > .34$ (see Figure 5, top). Results from analyses of raw likelihood to hire scores are similar (see the online supplementary materials, Section E).

Are cultural differences in likelihood of hiring the excited applicant mediated by ideal HAP? (Hypothesis 2). To answer this question, we first examined whether there were predicted cultural group differences in ideal affect. Specifically, we conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Ideal Affect [HAP, LAP]) repeated

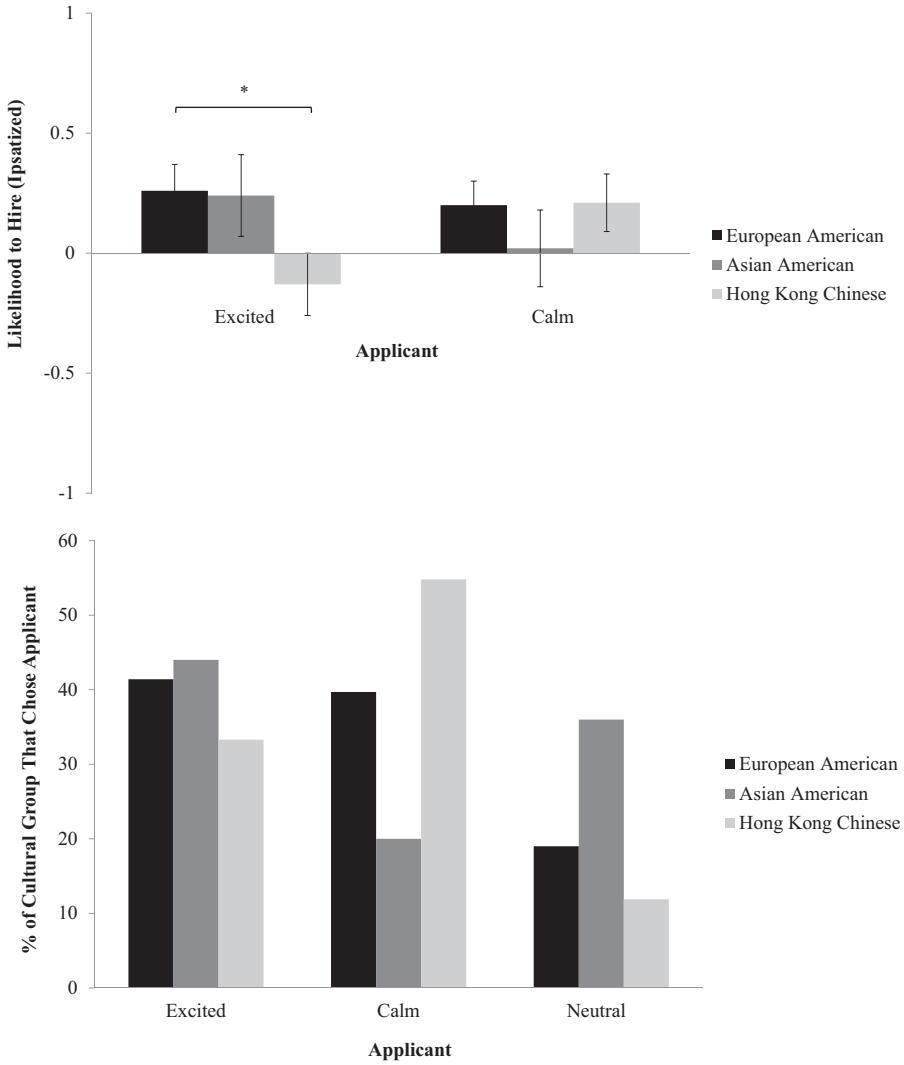

Figure 5. Study 4a: Cultural differences in likelihood of hiring the excited versus calm applicant (top) and applicant choice (bottom) among MBAs. Likelihood values are ipsatized to illustrate likelihood of hiring the excited and calm applicant relative to the neutral applicant. Error bars represent standard error of the mean. * $p < .05$.

measures ANCOVA using ipsatized ideal affect scores, controlling for actual HAP and actual LAP. Cultural Group was treated as a between-subjects factor and Ideal Affect was treated as a within-subjects factor. There was a significant main effect of Ideal Affect, $F(1, 120) = 5.02$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$, with participants across cultural groups wanting to feel more HAP ($M = .99$, $SE = .04$) than LAP ($M = .80$, $SE = .03$). Analyses also revealed a significant main effect of Cultural Group, $F(2, 120) = 4.09$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$, in which European Americans ($M = .92$, $SE = .03$), $p = .02$, 95% CI [.02, .19], and Asian Americans ($M = .96$, $SE = .04$), $p = .01$, 95% CI [.03, .25], valued HAP and LAP more than Hong Kong Chinese did ($M = .82$, $SE = .03$). Although the Cultural Group × Ideal Affect interaction, $F(2, 120) = 2.12$, $p = .12$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, was not significant, European Americans ($M = .99$, $SE = .05$), $p = .09$, 95% CI [−.02, .31] and Asian Americans ($M = 1.14$, $SE = .08$), $p = .01$, 95% CI [.09, .49] valued HAP more than did Hong Kong Chinese ($M = .85$, $SE = .06$), although the difference between European Americans and Hong Kong Chinese only approached significance. As in Study 3, there were no cultural group differences in ideal LAP (European Americans, $M = .85$, $SE = .04$; Asian Americans, $M = .77$, $SE = .06$, and Hong Kong Chinese, $M = .78$, $SE = .05$), $ps > .29$.

We also conducted a 3 (Cultural Group [European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese]) × 2 (Actual Affect [HAP, LAP]) ANCOVA, controlling for ideal HAP and ideal LAP, to examine whether there were cultural differences in actual affect. There were no significant main effects or interactions involving cultural group or actual affect, $ps > .14$. Results from analyses of raw ideal and actual affect scores were similar (see the online supplementary materials, Section F).

We then tested a mediation model (Model 4, Process) that defined cultural group (−1 = Hong Kong, 0 = Asian American, 1 = European American) as the independent variable, likelihood of hiring the excited applicant (ipsatized) as the dependent variable, and ideal HAP as the mediator. Zero-order correlations among variables are provided in the online supplementary materials, Section H. As in Studies 1–3, the below results use raw values of ideal HAP, and are based on 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrapped resamples. First, cultural group predicted ideal HAP (Model Fit: $F(1, 116) = 68.94$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .37$), $b = .52$, $SE = .06$, $t = 8.30$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.40, .64], indicating that European American and Asian American MBAs valued HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese MBAs. Next, ideal HAP predicted the likelihood of hiring the excited applicant: the more MBAs valued HAP, the more likely they were to hire the excited applicant, $b = .28$, $SE = .12$, $t = 2.23$, $p = .03$, 95% CI [.03, .53]. Finally, the significant total effect of cultural group on likelihood of hiring the excited applicant (Model Fit: $F(1, 116) = 4.86$, $p = .03$, $R^2 = .04$), $b = .19$, $SE = .09$, $t = 2.21$, $p = .03$, 95% CI [.02, .36], was no longer significant after entering ideal HAP into the model (Model Fit: $F(2, 115) = 5.01$, $p = .01$, $R^2 = .08$), $b = .04$, $SE = .11$, $t = .41$, $p = .68$, 95% CI [−.17, .25]. In addition, the indirect effect through ideal HAP was significant, effect = .14, $SE = .07$, 95% CI [.02, .28]. Thus, as predicted, European Americans were more likely to hire the excited (vs. calm) applicant than Hong Kong Chinese because they valued HAP more.[13]

Because we did not observe cultural differences in ideal LAP or likelihood of hiring the calm applicant, we did not test the relationship between these variables.

We also examined whether there were cultural group differences in hiring choice, using a chi-squared test of independence between Cultural Group (European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese) and Applicant Choice (excited, calm, neutral). As predicted, the cultural groups significantly differed in applicant choice, $\chi^2(4, N = 125) = 9.87$, $p = .04$, Cramer's V = .20. Whereas 41.4% of European American MBAs (adjusted standardized residual = .5) and 44% of Asian American MBAs (adjusted standardized residual = .5) chose the excited applicant, only 33.3% of Hong Kong Chinese MBAs did (adjusted standardized residual = −1.0; see Figure 5, bottom). In contrast, 54.8% of Hong Kong Chinese MBAs (adjusted standardized residual = 2.3) chose the calm applicant, while only 39.7% of European American MBAs (adjusted standardized residual = −.2) and 20% of Asian American MBAs (adjusted standardized residual = −2.4) did. Finally, 36% of Asian American MBAs (adjusted standardized residual = 2.2) chose the neutral applicant, while only 19% of European American MBAs (adjusted standardized residual = −.3) and 11.9% of Hong Kong Chinese MBAs (adjusted standardized residual = −1.6) did. Similar to the results of the mediation model for likelihood to hire, ideal HAP predicted choosing the excited applicant over and above the effect of cultural group, while ideal LAP had no effect on choosing the calm applicant (see the online supplementary materials, Section G).

Discussion

As predicted, European American MBAs were more likely to hire excited applicants than were Hong Kong Chinese, with Asian Americans falling in between the groups, because European Americans valued HAP more. Contrary to our prediction, there were no cultural differences in likelihood of hiring the calm applicant. Moreover, while Hong Kong Chinese MBAs chose calm more than excited applicants, European American MBAs chose excited and calm applicants equally. This may be because most of the European American MBAs were not currently working at a company, and therefore, did not have a strong preference for excited (vs. calm) applicants.

Study 4b: Hiring Choices of Employees in a U.S. Based Company

Therefore, in Study 4b, we examined the hiring choices of employees at a U.S. based organization. Although we could not test our cultural predictions because we were unable to find a comparable Chinese company, we could still test our hypothesis that U.S. employees would be more likely to hire the excited rather than the calm and neutral applicants. Although the employees varied in terms of ethnicity, we could not make formal comparisons by ethnicity because there were not sufficient sample sizes for specific ethnic groups other than the European Americans (see below). Moreover, we predicted that in the context of the company's annual retreat (when the data were collected), employees would be more likely to make their choices based on the emotional

[13] When we ran the model using raw values of likelihood of hiring the excited applicant, we similarly found a significant indirect effect of ideal HAP effect = .21, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [.05, .42] (see the online supplementary materials, Section E).

values of the company rather than their specific cultural backgrounds.

Method

Participants. Three-hundred employees at a midsized U.S. based company voluntarily participated in a 10-min study on "hiring decisions" as part of a lunchtime presentation during their annual staff retreat (Summer, 2016). Two-hundred and fifty-six employees indicated their ethnicity (181 European American, 8 African American, 11 East Asian/East Asian American, 2 Southeast Asian, 4 South Asian, 15 Latinx/Hispanic, 36 mixed/other), and 246 employees indicated their gender (69 male, 177 female). Based on the power analyses described above, our sample of 300 participants provided sufficient power to test our hypothesis.

Stimuli. The applicant videos were the same as in Study 4a.

Measures.

Likelihood to hire. After watching each applicant's video introduction, participants were asked "How likely are you to hire this applicant?" on a scale from 1 = *very unlikely* to 7 = *very likely*. Scores were ipsatized using the same procedure as Study 4a.

Hiring choice. Similar to Study 4a, we asked participants to choose one of the applicants to hire.

Demographics. Participants had the option to report their gender and racial/ethnic identities at the end of the survey.

Procedure. Two researchers guided all employees through the following procedure in person, and answered individual questions as they arose during the procedure. Employees were asked to load a link onto their computer or mobile device if they wanted to participate in a voluntary study on "hiring decisions." First, employees were told to imagine they were hiring for an internship position at their company and that they would see three applicants who all had the education and work experience required for the internship position. Then, employees watched three separate videos of applicants with distinct emotional profiles. Applicant A displayed a neutral emotional profile (i.e., facial expressions, tone, word use); Applicant B displayed an excited emotional profile, and Applicant C displayed a calm emotional profile. Videos and audio were displayed on a large public projector screen; all participants watched the video in the same room at the same time. Following each video, participants were asked to rate how likely they were to hire each applicant using their computer or personal electronic device. After watching all three videos, participants were asked to make a hiring decision (i.e., to choose one of the three applicants). Finally, participants completed the demographic questions.

Data Analysis and Results

Are employees in the U.S. more likely to hire the excited (vs. calm) applicant? First, we conducted a two-tailed paired samples t test on ipsatized likelihood to hire ratings to assess the degree to which participants were likely to hire the excited and calm applicants relative to the neutral applicant. As predicted and consistent with Study 4a, we found a significant difference, $t(265) = 3.68$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.14, .47], Cohen's $d = .39$, with employees reporting a greater likelihood of hiring the excited applicant ($M = .22$, $SE = .05$) than the calm applicant ($M = -.09$, $SE = .05$; see Figure 6, top).

In addition, we conducted a chi-squared goodness of fit test to examine whether applicant choice is equally distributed among excited, calm, and neutral applicants. Results indicate that, as predicted, there was an unequal distribution such that 47% of employees chose the excited applicant; 23.7% chose the calm applicant, and 29.3% chose the neutral applicant, $\chi^2(2, N = 300) = 26.66$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 6, bottom).

We also ran these analyses on only the European American employees ($N = 181$) and observed similar results. The two-tailed paired samples t test on ipsatized likelihood to hire ratings revealed a significant difference, $t(155) = 2.07$, $p = .04$, 95% CI [.01, .45], Cohen's $d = .28$, with European American employees reporting a greater likelihood of hiring the excited applicant ($M = .20$, $SE = .07$) than the calm applicant ($M = -.03$, $SE = .06$). In addition, the chi-squared goodness of fit test was significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 181) = 16.45$, $p < .001$, and indicated that, as predicted, there was an unequal distribution such that 47.5% of European American employees chose the excited applicant; 25.4% chose the calm applicant, and 27.1% chose the neutral applicant.

Discussion

In sum, as predicted, employees in a U.S. based company were more likely to hire the excited (vs. calm) applicant. These findings were even stronger than those found in Study 4a. Because of the nature of the data collection, we could not collect participants' ideal affect data. Therefore, future studies should not only collect data from comparable Chinese companies, but also examine whether these findings are related to employees' ideal HAP and LAP.

General Discussion

In five studies, we examined whether cultural differences in ideal affect play a role in how applicants present themselves when applying for a job, and whom people hire for jobs. In Studies 1 and 2, European Americans wanted to convey HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese when applying for an internship, in part because they valued HAP more. These differences were also reflected in participants' behaviors, with European Americans using more HAP words on their applications than Hong Kong Chinese across the two studies, and European Americans showing more high intensity smiles than Hong Kong Chinese at the beginning of their video introductions in Study 2. Cultural differences in ideal HAP, however, did not mediate cultural differences in word use or smiles, perhaps because these behaviors are more automatic and less deliberative than our self-report measure of ideal affect.

In Study 3, European American working adults viewed the ideal applicant as being more HAP than did Hong Kong Chinese working adults, in part because European Americans valued HAP more. In Study 4a, European American and Asian American MBAs were more likely to hire the excited (vs. calm) applicant for the job compared to Hong Kong Chinese MBAs, and again, these differences were related to European Americans and Asian Americans valuing HAP more than Hong Kong Chinese. Finally in Study 4b, employees in a U.S. based company were more likely to choose the excited (vs. calm) applicant for an internship.

Also consistent with our hypotheses, Hong Kong Chinese wanted to convey more LAP than did European Americans on their job applications and they viewed the ideal applicant as more LAP than did European Americans. However, we did not find

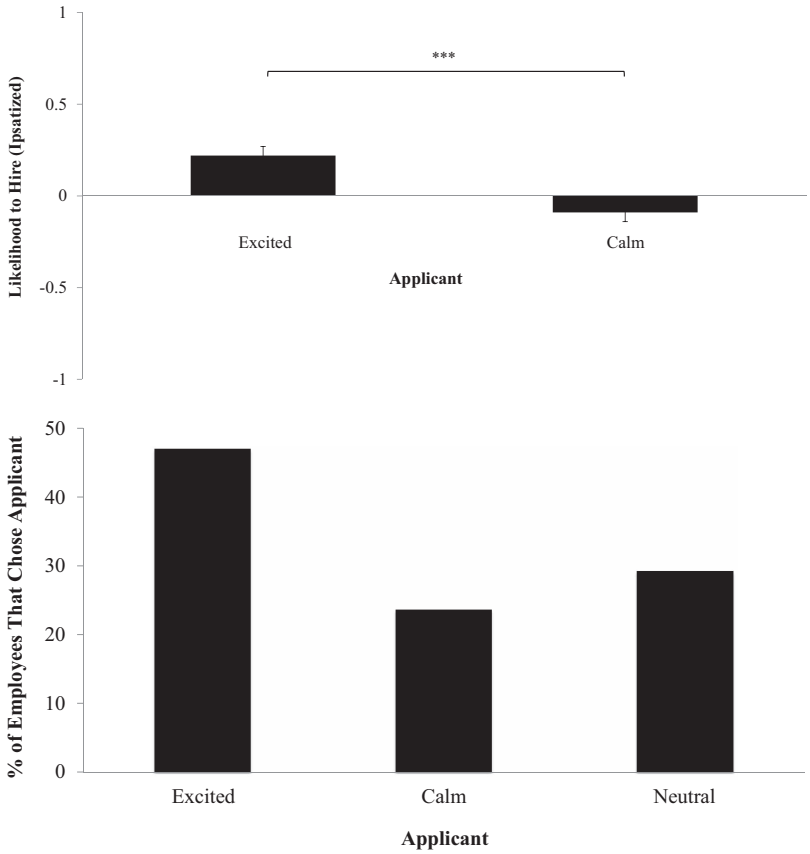

Figure 6. Study 4b: Likelihood of hiring the excited versus calm applicant (top) and applicant choice (bottom) among employees in a U.S. company. Likelihood values are ipsatized to illustrate likelihood of hiring the excited and calm applicant relative to the neutral applicant. Error bars represent standard error of the mean. *** $p < .001$.

predicted cultural differences in ideal LAP despite these cultural differences. In fact, across studies, European Americans either valued LAP more than Hong Kong Chinese or did not differ from Hong Kong Chinese in their valuation of LAP. One possibility may be that political and sociocultural shifts are driving European Americans to value LAP more than in previous reports (Tsai, 2017). These relatively temporary changes in ideal LAP may not, however, be linked to deeper cultural values and goals, and therefore, may be less predictive of the desire to convey LAP in job applications, or views of the ideal applicant as LAP. Future studies are needed to further explore these possibilities.

We also did not find cultural differences in the use of LAP words or expression of low intensity smiles, despite the cultural differences in the desire to convey LAP and views of the ideal applicant as LAP. Although Hong Kong Chinese did show more low intensity than high intensity smiles, there may be other cues that are used to signal calm in employment settings, including one's speaking volume, vocal prosody (e.g., pitch, range, rhythm), and speed of speaking. Although we were not able to quantify these cues in the present research, future studies should examine how LAP may be expressed through different channels.

In the first three studies, Asian Americans consistently fell in between European American and Hong Kong Chinese groups especially in terms of HAP (i.e., ideal conveyed job HAP on applications, HAP word use, high intensity smiles, ratings of the ideal applicant as HAP), which matched their lower orientation to American culture compared to European Americans. In terms of LAP, Asian Americans sometimes fell in between European Americans and Hong Kong Chinese, but other times scored even higher than Hong Kong Chinese. For instance, Asian Americans used more LAP words in Studies 1 and 2 in their applications than did Hong Kong Chinese, suggesting that there may be times when Asian Americans act even more "Asian" than their Hong Kong Chinese peers. Similarly, there was one case where Asian American MBAs acted even more "American" than did European American MBAs: Whereas European American MBAs were equally likely to hire excited and calm applicants, Asian American MBAs had a clear preference for the excited over the calm applicant. It is likely that Asian American MBAs are a highly Americanized sample, and probably endorse American ideals even more than some of their non-MBA Asian American peers. Together, these findings illustrate how bicultural Asian Americans integrate two sets of cultural norms, and at the same time, may get pushed more toward one set of cultural values than another.

That said, it was surprising that we found little evidence that these cultural differences varied as a function of the country of the

job, especially for Asian Americans. Although one possibility is that our cultural primes (i.e., the company of the job, images on the ads) were not strong enough to elicit frame-switching behavior, we did find in Study 2 that across cultural groups, when participants applied to the U.S. job, they smiled more than when they applied to the Chinese job, suggesting that participants were aware of the distinction between U.S. and Chinese jobs at some level. Thus, it is possible that participants—including Asian Americans—do not think that the emotions they should convey should vary across specific settings. Instead, Asian Americans appear to blend their cultures more generally rather than in response to specific settings. Future studies are needed to explore these possibilities further.

Implications for Affect Valuation Theory

The present work extends AVT in several ways. First, the research provides evidence that people's ideal affect plays a role in employment settings. Second, the research is the first to show how ideal affect is associated with desires to convey and express specific states. Although other studies have found evidence of cultural differences in facial expression that reflect ideal affect, the present research is the first to show a link between how people ideally want to feel and what they ideally want to convey in a specific situation (otherwise known as "display rules;" Ekman, 1972). Finally, previous research has demonstrated that "ideal affect match" (i.e., when people come in contact with others whose affective characteristics match how people ideally want to feel) promotes giving to strangers (Park et al., 2017); the present studies show that ideal affect match also promotes hiring.

Broader Scientific Implications

In addition to expanding AVT, these studies have several broader scientific implications. First, these studies are among the first to demonstrate cultural differences in the role of emotion in employment settings. While previous findings suggest that expressions of HAP are central to perceptions of hirability, our findings suggest that this depends on the degree to which HAP is valued in that culture. As a result, the studies integrate two bodies of literature—research on culture and emotion and research on emotion in work settings—in novel and illuminating ways. Second, this research adds to a growing literature suggesting that emotional expression may be one cue that people use—consciously or unconsciously—to signal ingroup membership or shared values. Third, this work is part of an increasing body of work demonstrating that how people ideally want to feel matters as much as how people actually feel.

Practical Implications

Our studies suggest that people may use emotional cues to decide whom to hire, which may lead to unintentional disparities in hiring practices. While many studies have shown the prevalence of race-based biases in employment settings (Altonji & Blank, 1999; Kang et al., 2016; Pager, 2007), to our knowledge, no study has looked at how employers may be biased toward specific emotions that are valued by their culture. Indeed, emotional expression, like one's name or place of birth, may be one index of cultural fit on which employers are increasingly basing their hiring decisions (Gleeson, 2017; Park et al., 2017; Rouen, 2011). Because employers may be unaware of their ideal affect and how it might influence their decisions, they may judge applicants as unqualified rather than as valuing different affective states than themselves. This may be particularly problematic in societies like the U.S. that aim to diversify their workforce. For instance, our data suggest that Asian Americans, while expressing more HAP than Hong Kong Chinese, still do not express as much HAP as their European American counterparts, in part because they do not value those states as much. This likely disadvantages Asian and Asian Americans applicants when they apply to jobs in the U.S., and may be one reason Asian Americans are less likely to be hired and to attain leadership positions compared with their European American peers.

Importantly, our study samples were relatively acculturated, and yet, we still observed these differences. We would predict that Asian Americans who are even less oriented to U.S. culture (e.g., first-generation college students, recent immigrants) may experience even more difficulty entering U.S. workplaces because of ideal affect mismatches. Thus, greater awareness of cultural differences in ideal affect and their effect on employment behaviors might reduce racial and ethnic disparities in who gets interviewed and hired for a job. Specifically, we suggest that attention to emotional values and expressions between and within cultures can help diversify work settings. Our findings also provide empirical support for advice that applicants should show enthusiasm when interviewing for U.S. jobs and calm when interviewing for Chinese jobs.

Limitations and Future Directions

These studies, of course, have several limitations that raise interesting questions for future research. First, while our studies mimicked employment settings in the real world, it would be important to see if we can replicate these findings when people are applying for and employers are hiring for real jobs. Although we began to look at this in Study 4b, the hiring decisions were still hypothetical. Thus, future studies should include companies from different cultures and track actual hiring decisions. Second, in all of the studies, we focused on client facing jobs. In future work, it would be interesting to examine whether similar processes hold for other jobs and occupations, such as data analysis, which might involve less emotional expression. Third, in the last two studies, applicants were matched in terms of qualifications, and those qualifications were high. In future research, it would be important to examine how employers weigh ideal affect match versus job applicants' qualifications. Does ideal affect match only matter when applicants are equally and highly qualified? Or could it matter even more when applicants are not qualified? Fourth, in the last study, in order to increase the ecological validity of the task and to minimize participant fatigue, participants only viewed European American or Chinese male applicants. In multicultural societies like the U.S., however, employers increasingly need to decide whether or not to hire people who vary not only in emotional expression but also race and sex. Although our previous research suggests that ideal affect match matters more than matches in race and sex (Park et al., 2017; Park, Tsai, Chim, Blevins, & Knutson, 2016), future research is needed to see if this is also the case in employment settings. Fifth, in our earlier work,

we demonstrated that ideal HAP was associated with valuing influence, whereas ideal LAP was associated with valuing adjustment (Tsai et al., 2007). Future studies should directly examine if this is why European Americans view ideal applicants as more HAP and less LAP than Hong Kong Chinese. Sixth, none of our studies experimentally manipulated ideal affect, but these manipulations are necessary to establish causality. Seventh, it would be important to examine how ideal affect match relates to actual job performance. Are employees who show ideal affect match more likely to be promoted, while those who show mismatches more likely to be fired? Finally, it would be important to examine whether similar processes occur for other ethnic minority groups and in other cultural contexts.

Despite these limitations, findings from five studies suggest that culture and ideal affect shape how people express themselves when applying for a job, and what people look for when hiring. In other words, whether job applicants should be excited or calm depends on the specific affective states employers, employees, and their cultures value.

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