Fear Goliath or David? Inferring competence from demeanor across cultures

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Abstract

We examined cultural differences in people’s lay theories of demeanor – how demeanor may be perceived as a straightforward and reliable reflection of reality (convergence theory) or as a deviating reflection of reality (divergence theory). Across different domains of competition, Euro-Canadians perceived greater competence in an opponent with a competent demeanor, whereas Chinese paradoxically perceived greater competence in an opponent with no signs of competence (Studies 1 to 4b). The results, unexplained by attributional styles (Study 1), likeability (Study 3), or modesty (Study 3), suggest that Euro-Canadians endorse a stronger convergence theory whereas Chinese endorse a stronger divergence theory in their inferences of competence. Corroborated with qualitative data (Study 4a), such cultural differences were explained by the beliefs that demeanor can be a misleading reflection of reality, verified in college and community (Study 4b) samples. We discuss the implications for processes of social perception, intergroup dynamics, and self-presentation in competitions.

Keywords: Culture, inference of competence, demeanor, appearance and reality, convergence theory, divergence theory, competition

Fear Goliath or David? Inferring competence from demeanor across cultures

In late September 1950, the U.S. faced a tough dilemma following their victory in South Korea: should they end the campaign at the 38th parallel or push north for a complete unification of Korea? Their main concern in surging across the border was whether China would intervene. Unsure, they watched for signs from the Chinese forces, and days of observation eventually convinced them that no serious threat was in their way. From the absence of aircrafts and ammunitions to ill-equipped soldiers, the Chinese forces appeared far too weak to stand a chance against 450,000 troops of vastly superior firepower (Appleman, 1961, p.78). Concluding that China was not a threat, the Americans crossed the border in early October, only to be met by the Chinese forces who fought back with thorough preparation (Whiting, 1960). What happened next is history.

As in everyday life, the historical account above indicates that people often make inferences about reality on the basis of public demeanor. In this research, demeanor refers to the public displays of behaviors or expressions (DePaulo, 1992), such as gestures, voices, images, verbal and body languages, postures, manners, and so on. Inferring reality based on demeanor involves the use of lay theories about how demeanor and reality are related (Flavell, Flavell, & Green, 1983; Gopnik & Astington, 1988), which have not received much attention in social or cultural psychology. Recognizing this gap, the present research examines people's beliefs about demeanor and reality as culturally shaped lay theories. Specifically, the *convergence theory* of demeanor describes the view that demeanor is a direct and straightforward reflection of reality, with the construal of reality and demeanor converging in the same direction. In contrast, the *divergence theory* of demeanor describes the view that demeanor is a misleading reflection of reality, with

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3 reality being construed as paradoxically deviating from its demeanor. We conceptualize
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5 the convergence versus divergence theories as two extremes on a single continuum.
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7 Based on cultural differences in intellectual traditions and thinking styles, we propose
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9 that Euro-Canadians would hold the convergence theory more than Chinese, whereas
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11 Chinese would hold the divergence theory more than Euro-Canadians. In the next section,
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13 we discuss how these lay beliefs may differ across cultures. Then, we present evidence
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15 for how these beliefs may influence the inferences of competence that people make about
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17 others in competitive contexts.
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22 **Convergence theory in North American cultures**
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24 For centuries, thinkers in the West have taken great interest in the equivalence
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26 between the public demeanor of a person and the reality that is presumed to be
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28 underneath that demeanor. For example, Aristotle was among the first to describe the self
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30 as a singular entity in which external representations (e.g., speech, actions, personas) are
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32 thought to be direct reflections of the psyche that defines a person (Höffe, 2010). For
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34 Hume (1739/1896), the self is a bundle of external manifestations and internal qualities of
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36 a person woven into a unifying pattern we call identity. For other theorists (e.g., Jung,
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38 1954), a discrepancy between the true self and demeanor can be a threat to personal
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40 growth. Underlying these perspectives is a convergence view: demeanor and the reality
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42 beneath it are assumed to converge in the same direction. In other words, demeanor is
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44 expected to be, by and large, a direct reflection of reality without substantial discrepancy.
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46 Applying this assumption of demeanor to person perception and interpersonal processes,
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48 one may equally expect convergence between the way people present themselves and
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50 who they are within. This is indeed what past research has shown. From thinking to
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3 talking (e.g., Bruner, 1996), attitudes to behaviors (e.g., Kraus, 1995), and values to
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5 choices (e.g., Prentice, 1987), a fundamental assumption in Western intellectual traditions
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7 is that the defining aspects of the self should be unified and coherent, from the inside to
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9 the outside.
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12 Two bodies of literature provide empirical evidence for the prevalence of the
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14 convergence theory in North America. First, North American cultures emphasize self-
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16 expression, which reveals one's feelings, attitudes, or inner thoughts (Guignon, 2004;
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18 Heine, 2010). Such convergence between expression and the inner self is accomplished
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20 through experiences such as direct communication styles (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey &
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22 Chua, 1988), candid displays of emotions (Matsumoto, Takeuchi, Andayani,
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24 Kouznetsova, & Krupp, 1998), and choices motivated by intrinsic preferences (Deci &
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26 Ryan, 1985). Accordingly, motivational quotes in common parlance such as "*be who you*
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28 *are*" and "*speak your mind*" suggest not only the right to express oneself, but also a
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30 cultural spirit that demands a straightforward mapping of one's demeanor on one's core
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32 identity (i.e., who one really is). Given how fundamental self-expression is to North
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34 American values, it would make little sense to express oneself through demeanor in a
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36 way that is misleading, paradoxical, or counterintuitive to the world of observers, which
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38 would likely be interpreted as a signal of insincerity or even deception.
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45 Research has shown evidence for convergence among North Americans in various
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47 domains of social perception. For instance, competent-looking candidates are rated as
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49 more competent, and are more likely to win an actual election (Todorov, Mandisodza,
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51 Goren, & Hall, 2005). Such a pattern of results have been found across athletic
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53 (Greenlees, Bradley, Holder, & Thelwell, 2005), academic (Paulhus & Morgan, 1997),
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hiring (Zebrowitz, Tenenbaum, & Goldstein, 1991), and business (Judge & Cable, 2004; Lukaszewski, Simmons, Anderson, & Roney, 2015) settings. These observations suggest a pattern of convergence thinking that may be prevalent among North Americans: what you see on the outside is consistent with what you get on the inside.

Divergence theory in East Asian cultures

In contrast to the convergence theory, the divergence theory describes the view that reality is expected to deviate from demeanor and, in the extreme case, the two may even diverge into opposite directions. We propose that East Asians would endorse the convergence theory less and the divergence theory more, relative to Euro-Canadians, which is consistent with the intellectual traditions of dialecticism in East Asian cultures (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). In dialectical thinking, everything contains two opposing but complementary forces, *yin* and *yang*, which exist interdependently with each other and breed the diversity of the universe, such as soft and hard, weak and strong, or good and evil. Because all things in the world are manifestations of the coexistence of *yin* and *yang*, they may deviate from their original propensity over time (Ji, Nisbett, & Su, 2001), they may be in possession of conceptually incongruent qualities (Campbell et al., 1996; Choi & Choi, 2002; Spencer-Rodgers, Williams, & Peng, 2010), or, as we propose, they may appear one way on the outside and turn out to be misleadingly different or even paradoxically opposite on the inside.

A divergent view of life is a recurring theme in East Asian philosophical traditions (Hansen, 1992; see also Merrell-Wolff, 1983). For centuries, Buddhist and Taoist thoughts have pointed out that demeanor is nothing but a distorted window to the understanding of reality, a metaphysical stance that is present but far less prevalent in

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Western traditions (Collinson, Plant, & Wilkinson, 2000). Likewise, writings of Taoism highlight a juxtaposition of opposites in personal qualities (i.e., reality) and behaviors (i.e., demeanor) through maxims such as: “*he who speaks does not know; he who knows does not speak*” (*Tao Te Ching*, chap. 36), and “*the greatest skill seems clumsy; the greatest eloquence stutters*” (*Tao Te Ching*, chap. 45). More akin to the present research, the paradoxical view of demeanor is also apparent in the contexts of warfare and competitions in the East. The idea that displaying one’s strengths to an opponent has an ironic effect of revealing one’s weaknesses and vulnerabilities is observed not only in historical sources of Asian cultures (*The Art of War*, chap. 6), but also in cultural research. Compared to North Americans, East Asians tend to perceive hostile, competitive behaviors as less threatening, which, ironically, causes them to respond to a competitor with cooperative behaviors (Keller, Loewenstein, & Yan, 2010).

Beyond the scopes of philosophy, the idea that demeanor can be a misleading reflection of reality is evident in other domains of life. For example, stock options that revealed no signs of strengths were more desirable to Chinese participants than to North American participants (Ji, Zhang, & Guo, 2008). Likewise, behind what seems to be trivial can be an event of disproportionate magnitude (Spina et al., 2010). Doing things one way may suggest thinking the other way (Masuda & Kitayama, 2004); responding to a request with a “yes” may actually mean a “no” (Ma, 1996); putting a happy smile may not be an indication of happiness (Masuda et al., 2008). Whereas the demeanor points to one direction, the underlying reality may deviate from that direction or even diverge in the opposite direction. These cultural observations and empirical findings of Eastern cultures suggest a relatively greater prevalence of the divergence theory: things are not

always the way they look; what appears to be may be different from, or even the opposite of what it really is.

The Present Research

We proposed that people from different cultures may hold different lay theories of how demeanor and reality are related to each other, which may shape judgments in a host of situations, such as inferences in competitive settings. Guided by these assumptions, five studies examined cultural differences in the way people infer competence of their opponents based on demeanor. We predict that European North American participants (vs. Chinese) are more likely to infer competence from a strong demeanor that reveals signs of strengths, whereas Chinese participants (vs. North Americans) are more likely to infer competence from an ordinary demeanor that reveals no signs of strengths (Studies 1-4b). We also explored the underlying mechanism by examining people’s endorsement of proverbs that describe demeanor as a misleading representation of reality (Studies 4a-b). Because we conceptualized the tendency for convergence versus divergence theories as two ends of a continuum, our goal was not to show that North Americans would engage in convergence thinking only or Chinese would engage in divergence thinking only. Instead, we predicted that North Americans would be more likely than Chinese to engage in convergence thinking, and Chinese would be more likely than North Americans to engage in divergence thinking.

Across five studies, demeanor was operationalized as the public images or self-relevant information that the targets revealed in a competition; perceived reality was operationalized by how strong or competent the targets were perceived to be by our participants. To help distinguish between targets with different forms of demeanor, we

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borrowed two figures from the Bible. No story paints a sharper contrast of demeanor than the biblical account of *Goliath*, the powerful-looking warrior who revealed clear signs of strengths and might, and *David*, the ordinary-looking shepherd who revealed no signs of advantages on the surface. For brevity, we have labeled the targets with a strong demeanor as “*Goliath*” (e.g., company *Goliath*) and the targets with an ordinary demeanor as “*David*” (e.g., company *David*). These labels were not shown to our participants, and are used only in this paper for ease of understanding.

Study 1: Job Hiring

To examine cultural differences, we recruited participants from Canada and China and had them rate the competence of a job candidate on the basis of demeanor.

Method

Participants

We tested 102 Euro-Canadian students (86 women; $M_{age} = 19.6$ years, $SD_{age} = 1.85$) from a Canadian university and 110 Chinese students (52 women; $M_{age} = 21.4$ years, $SD_{age} = 2.19$) from a Chinese university in their native language.¹² Test materials of all studies were developed in English and, where appropriate, translated independently into Chinese by two bilingual researchers and checked by other bilingual researchers for cultural equivalence.

Procedure

¹ We arrived at an estimate of sample size for all studies with G*Power, assuming an alpha value of .05, a small to medium effect size ($f = .15$) for the interaction in a mixed ANOVA, and .80 power. Results based on these parameters suggested an estimate of at least 90 participants. We aimed to get at least 100 participants for each study and more if possible for more power. The actual number of participants across studies varied due to differences in the timing of the data collection (e.g., at the beginning vs. the end of the term) and resources available. Data analyses were only conducted after data collection was terminated.

² The measurements reported in this manuscript were the only measurements included. Most of the studies were conducted with other unrelated studies for efficiency of data collection.

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Participants first imagined that they were a hiring manager of a company who had a brief opportunity to evaluate the competence of a job candidate based on the candidate’s demeanor. They were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In the *Goliath* condition ($n = 112$), the candidate “*projects a competitive image, appears assertive and competent, and resembles people who would appear in the spotlight.*” In the *David* condition ($n = 100$), the candidate “*projects an indistinctive image, appears silent and reserved, and resembles the kind of people who do not stand out in a group.*” (See Supplementary Materials)” Descriptions were carefully designed such that they only depicted the candidates’ outward demeanor without any depiction of their actual competence. Then, participants rated the candidate’s competence on two different but related questions: “*How competent do you think this candidate is?*” and “*how much of a threat do you think this candidate is to the other candidates’ success of getting this job?*”, both along a 7-point scale (1 = *not competent at all/not a threat at all*, 7 = *completely competent/a very big threat*).

Past research has shown that compared to East Asians, North Americans are more likely to attribute behaviors to internal dispositions and less likely to attribute behaviors to situational influences (e.g., Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999; Morris & Peng, 1994). To examine the possible influence of dispositional versus situational thinking, we included a vignette (adapted from Kitayama, Ishii, Imada, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006) about a professional basketball player devoting his vacation time to free basketball camps in poor neighbourhoods. Participants rated (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) the extent to which the basketball player’s behavior was caused by dispositional

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and situational factors, respectively. Finally, participants provided demographic information.

Results and Discussion

Inferences of competence

Since the ratings of competence and threat are highly correlated (Euro-Canadians: $r = .73$; Chinese: $r = .74$), the two measures were averaged into a composite labelled as *inferred competence*.

We conducted a 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian vs. Chinese) $\times$ 2 (demeanor: *Goliath* vs. *David*) ANOVA on inferred competence, and found a significant main effect of demeanor, $F(1, 208) = 46.18, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .18$, qualified by an expected culture $\times$ demeanor interaction, $F(1, 208) = 13.11, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$.³ Consistent with our predictions, Euro-Canadians ($M = 5.26, SD = 1.04$) rated candidate *Goliath* as more competent than did Chinese ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.04$), $F(1, 110) = 7.20, p = .008, \eta_p^2 = .06$, whereas Chinese ($M = 4.33, SD = .83$) rated candidate *David* as more competent than did Euro-Canadians ($M = 3.94, SD = .71$), $F(1, 98) = 6.45, p = .013, \eta_p^2 = .06$ (Figure 1).⁴ Thus, Euro-Canadians and Chinese participants inferred competence from demeanor in different ways.⁵

³ To assess the robustness of our findings, we have analyzed data with non-parametric tests as reported in Supplementary Materials, which led to the same conclusions.

⁴ Within-culture analyses showed that candidate *Goliath* was perceived as more competent than candidate *David* among Euro-Canadian participants, $F(1, 100) = 55.82, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .36$, and among Chinese participants, $F(1, 108) = 4.94, p = .028, \eta_p^2 = .04$.

⁵ There was a culture $\times$ gender interaction effect in Study 1, $F(1, 196) = 6.76, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Euro-Canadian men ($M_{men} = 3.89$ vs. $M_{women} = 4.68, p = .05$) generally rated both candidates as less competent than did Euro-Canadian women, an effect not found among Chinese participants ($M_{men} = 4.66$ vs. $M_{women} = 4.43, p = .23$). In Study 3, there was also a culture $\times$ gender interaction effect, $F(1, 240) = 4.19, p = .042, \eta_p^2 = .02$. But this time, Chinese men ($M_{men} = 4.64$ vs. $M_{women} = 4.95, p = .07$) generally rated both candidates as less competent than did Chinese women, an effect not found among Euro-Canadian participants ($M_{men} = 4.87$ vs. $M_{women} = 4.73, p = .31$). Because these gender differences were not systematic across studies and in view of the discrepancy of gender ratios in our samples, these gender effects should be

Dispositional thinking

A 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian vs. Chinese) $\times$ 2 (thinking styles: dispositionism vs. situationism) mixed ANOVA revealed a significant 2-way interaction, $F(1, 209) = 15.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Consistent with prior cultural research (Choi et al., 1999; Kitayama et al., 2006), dispositional thinking was stronger among Euro-Canadians ($M = 5.88$, $SD = .90$) than among Chinese ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(209) = 3.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, whereas situational thinking was stronger among Chinese ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.20$) than among Euro-Canadians ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.49$), $t(209) = 2.01$, $p = .045$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Dispositional and situational thinking, however, did not mediate the observed effects of culture on inferences of competence, $t = .43$, $p > .25$. When these two measures were included as covariates, the main pattern of results remained the same for the culture $\times$ thinking styles interaction, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$.

Thus, Euro-Canadian participants (vs. Chinese participants) showed a stronger tendency to infer competence in a way that was congruent with demeanor, indicative of stronger convergence thinking (or weaker divergence thinking). Such cultural differences in inferences could not be explained by dispositional thinking or bias.

While Study 1 relied on a between-participant design in which participants' judgments about the targets were made separately without a clear comparison point, research (Hsee, 2000) has shown that attributes that are subjective and abstract in nature are best evaluated with an explicit reference or comparison point (i.e., a joint-evaluation). Inferences of competence are subjective and thus do not lend themselves well to separate

interpreted with caution. Gender did not have any other effects ($ps > .13$). Age had no meaningful impact on the results when entered as a covariate ($ps > .13$) and would not change our conclusions about the observed results across all studies.

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3 evaluations. We addressed this issue in subsequent studies by using a within-participant
4 design so that participants could evaluate targets of *Goliath* and *David* comparatively. A
5 joint-evaluation approach also provides higher ecological validity as judgments are rarely
6 made in isolation of comparisons in real-world settings (Brunswik, 1956; Campbell &
7 Stanley, 1966).
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Study 2: Business Rivals

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17 Study 2 examined inferences of competence across cultures in the business
18 domain where public images of companies, such as the way they advertise their goals,
19 ambitions, and financial backgrounds, are commonly taken as a manifestation of
20 underlying competence (Gray & Balmer, 1998). Operationalizing demeanor as public
21 images, we predicted that the rival company that advertises its strengths in its image
22 (company *Goliath*) would be perceived as more competent by Euro-Canadians than by
23 Chinese, whereas the rival company that reveals no signs of strengths in its image
24 (company *David*) would be perceived as more competent by Chinese than by Euro-
25 Canadians.
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Method*Participants*

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42 Participants were 54 Euro-Canadian (37 women; $M_{age} = 18.7$ years, $SD_{age} = .96$)
43 and 45 Chinese students at a Canadian university (27 women and 18 men; $M_{age} = 19.6$
44 years, $SD_{age} = 1.80$). Euro-Canadian participants were either born in Canada or raised in
45 the country for the most part of their lives. Chinese participants were immigrants who
46 had lived in Canada for an average of 8.3 years. The study was conducted in English.
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Procedure

Participants imagined being the CEO of a new company in anticipation of two rival companies. One rival company had maintained a highly ambitious image in the market and appeared to be financially resourceful (company *Goliath*); the other company had maintained an ordinary image and appeared to be very low-profile without advertising its financial background (company *David*). As a measure of competence, participants rated (1 = *very unlikely*, 7 = *very likely*) the extent to which they thought each rival company was a threat to their own company (See Supplementary Materials). Finally, they reported demographic information.

Results and Discussion

A 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian vs. Chinese) × 2 (demeanor: *Goliath* vs. *David*) repeated ANOVA on participants’ inferences of competence revealed no main effect of culture, $F(1, 97) = 1.48, p = .227$, a significant main effect of demeanor, $F(1, 97) = 7.03, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = .07$, and a predicted culture × demeanor interaction, $F(1, 97) = 34.47, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .25$ (Figure 2). Replicating results of Study 1, Euro-Canadians ($M = 6.07, SD = 1.11$) perceived company *Goliath* as more competent than did Chinese ($M = 4.89, SD = 1.80$), $F(1, 97) = 16.07, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$, whereas Chinese ($M = 5.64, SD = 1.26$) perceived company *David* as more competent than did Euro-Canadians ($M = 4.00, SD = 1.85$), $F(1, 97) = 25.45, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .21$.

The within-subject nature of this study provided finer evidence for the use of convergence versus divergence theories across cultures. Consistent with prior research with North American samples (e.g., Paulhus & Morgan, 1997; Zebrowitz et., 1991), Euro-Canadians inferred greater competence in company *Goliath* than company *David*, $F(1, 97) = 38.35, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .28$, reflecting a convergent view in perception in which

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demeanor and reality are pointing to the same direction. In contrast, Chinese participants perceived company *David* to be more competent than company *Goliath*, $F(1, 97) = 4.25$, $p = .042$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, reflecting a divergent view in perception in which demeanor and reality deviate from each other. This study also showed that the effects of convergence and divergence theories on inferences go beyond the realms of interpersonal perception to domains of organization assessments, which are abstract and symbolic in nature (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

One limitation of Study 2 is the use of a single item as the dependent measure. Acknowledging the multi-facet nature of competence as a construct, we measured the inference of competence with multiple items in Study 3.

Study 3: Debate Tournament

One may argue that results of Studies 1-2 were driven by modesty concerns, which are emphasized in China more than in North America (Chen, Bond, Chan, Tang, & Buchtel, 2009). It is possible that, between *Goliath*, who may seem to be flaunting his competence, and *David*, who does not, Chinese participants may have found the former to be less modest and therefore less likeable, which may have affected their judgments of competence somehow. This alternative explanation, however, goes against the findings that judgments of warmth and competence are independent from each other in Western (e.g., Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Rosenberg, 1968; Zanna & Hamilton, 1972) and Eastern cultures (e.g., Chen & Jing, 2012). Still, we aimed to rule out this alternative explanation empirically in Study 3.

In addition, following the logic of dialectical reasoning (Nisbett, 2003; Peng & Nisbett, 1999), the quality that confers strengths or advantages can turn out to be a source

of weakness, whereas the quality that seems to be a source of obstacle or weakness may paradoxically be the foundation of strengths. Thus, cultural differences in dialectical reasoning predicts that Chinese participants (vs. Euro-Canadian participants) should perceive opponent *Goliath* to be more predictable (as both strengths and weaknesses were revealed) and opponent *David* to be more unpredictable (as neither strengths nor weaknesses were revealed). Perception of unpredictability, in turn, may drive cultural differences in the inferences of competence. Study 3 tested this hypothesis.

Method

Participants

Participants were 126 Euro-Canadian university students in Canada (103 women; $M_{age} = 21.1$ years, $SD_{age} = 4.76$) and 119 Chinese university students in China (98 women; $M_{age} = 20.3$ years, $SD_{age} = .78$). They completed the study in their native language.

Procedure

Participants imagined being on the university debate team in anticipation of two rival debaters. As a manipulation of demeanor, one debater (debater *Goliath*) was described as someone who adopted a competitive image and had no problem disclosing his debating techniques and skills to the public; the other debater (debater *David*) was described as one who adopted a low-profile image and did not reveal any sign of strengths to the public (See Supplementary Materials). Then, participants rated (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) each rival debater on four measures of competence (*how competent*, *how confident*, *how much of a threat*, *how much pressure they were to others*) in order to capture aspects of perceived competence more broadly. Next, participants rated (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) each rival debater on modesty (*how modest*), likeability (*how*

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likeable), and unpredictability (*how unpredictable*). Finally, they reported demographic information.

Results and Discussion

Inferences of competence

We averaged the four competence ratings (Cronbach α : debater *Goliath* = .77, debater *David* = .84) into a composite labelled as *inferences of competence*. A 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian vs. Chinese) $\times$ 2 (demeanor: *Goliath* vs. *David*) repeated ANOVA revealed a marginal main effect of culture, $F(1, 243) = 3.25, p = .073, \eta_p^2 = .01$, and no effect of demeanor, $F(1, 243) = 2.10, p = .149$. There was a significant culture by demeanor interaction (Figure 3), $F(1, 243) = 41.32, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .15$. Consistent with the results in Studies 1 and 2, Euro-Canadians ($M = 5.01, SD = 1.01$) rated debater *Goliath* as more competent than Chinese did ($M = 4.50, SD = 1.08$), $F(1, 243) = 14.50, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$, whereas Chinese ($M = 5.31, SD = .98$) rated debater *David* as more competent than did Euro-Canadians ($M = 4.50, SD = 1.06$), $F(1, 243) = 38.27, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$. Furthermore, Euro-Canadians rated debater *Goliath* as significantly more competent than debater *David*, $F(1, 243) = 12.76, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$, whereas Chinese showed the opposite pattern, $F(1, 243) = 30.16, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .11$.

Perceived modesty

A 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian vs. Chinese) $\times$ 2 (demeanor: *Goliath* vs. *David*) repeated ANOVA on perceived modesty revealed no main effect of culture, $F(1, 243) = 1.12, p = .291$, a main effect of demeanor, $F(1, 243) = 927.45, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .79$, and a significant culture $\times$ demeanor interaction effect, $F(1, 243) = 8.36, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .03$. While debater *Goliath* was perceived to be equally immodest by Euro-Canadians ($M =$

1.90, $SD = 1.12$) and Chinese ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 1.12$), $F(1, 243) = 2.21$, $p = .138$, debater *David* was perceived to be *less* modest by Chinese ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.31$) than by Euro-Canadians ($M = 5.59$, $SD = 1.15$), $F(1, 243) = 7.38$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. These results dovetail with what the divergence theory would suggest about an opponent who shows no signs of strengths: An absence of strengths in demeanor could be perceived as the presence of underlying competence instead of an expression of modesty.

Importantly, when modesty measures were included as covariates, cultural differences remained in the same pattern for the culture $\times$ demeanor interaction, $F(1, 241) = 42.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. Thus, modesty did not explain the observed cultural differences in judgments of competence.

Likeability

A 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian vs. Chinese) $\times$ 2 (demeanor: *Goliath* vs. *David*) repeated ANOVA on likeability revealed no effect of culture, $F(1, 243) = 1.76$, $p = .186$, a main effect of demeanor, $F(1, 243) = 173.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .42$, and a significant culture $\times$ demeanor interaction, $F(1, 243) = 11.69$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Debater *Goliath* was perceived as marginally less likeable by Euro-Canadians ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.22$) than by Chinese ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.40$), $F(1, 243) = 3.19$, $p = .075$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, whereas debater *David* was perceived as more likeable by Euro-Canadians ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.20$) than by Chinese ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.42$), $F(1, 243) = 12.08$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. When likeability measures were entered as covariates, the culture $\times$ demeanor interaction effect on inferred competence remained significant in the same pattern, $F(1, 241) = 41.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. These results suggest that while advertising one's strengths may make one less

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likeable, likeability seems to have little to do with perception of competence (Fiske et al., 2007) and could not explain the observed results.

Unpredictability

A 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian vs. Chinese) $\times$ 2 (demeanor: *Goliath* vs. *David*) repeated ANOVA on perceived unpredictability revealed a marginal effect of culture, $F(1, 243) = 3.23, p = .073, \eta_p^2 = .01$, a main effect of demeanor, $F(1, 243) = 284.24, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .54$, and a culture $\times$ demeanor interaction, $F(1, 243) = 20.17, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$. Consistent with predictions, Chinese ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.21$) were less likely than Euro-Canadians ($M = 3.71, SD = 1.81$) to perceive debater *Goliath* as unpredictable, $F(1, 243) = 19.93, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$, and more likely to perceive debater *David* as unpredictable ($M = 6.08, SD = .94$ for Chinese; $M = 5.60, SD = 1.71$ for Euro-Canadians), $F(1, 243) = 7.57, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = .03$.

Did perceived unpredictability contribute to cultural differences in inferences of competence? An indirect effect analysis suggested so. First, we created a composite score of *convergence judgments of competence* by subtracting competence ratings of debater *David* from competence ratings of debater *Goliath*. A high score would represent the tendency to associate a strong demeanor with competence. Then, we created a composite score of relative unpredictability by subtracting unpredictability scores of debater *David* from unpredictability scores of debater *Goliath*. A high score would represent the tendency to perceive greater unpredictability in a strong demeanor than in an ordinary demeanor. Culture was dummy-coded (0 = Chinese; 1 = Euro-Canadian).

To examine the mediating role of perceived unpredictability in the relationship between culture and convergence judgments, we entered culture as the predictor,

convergence judgments as the dependent variable, and unpredictability as the mediator into the Process macro (Hayes, 2013) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. Culture predicted convergence judgments ($b = 1.32, SE = .20, p < .001$) and perceived unpredictability ($b = 1.37, SE = .31, p < .001$), indicating that compared to Chinese, Euro-Canadians were more likely to associate a strong demeanor (vs. an ordinary demeanor) with competence and unpredictability. Both culture ($b = 1.02, SE = .20, p < .001$), and unpredictability ($b = .21, SE = .04, p < .001$) predicted convergence judgments when they were entered into the model together. The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero (LLCI = .15, ULCI = .51). These results indicated a partial mediation, suggesting that perceived unpredictability contributed in part to cultural differences in convergence judgments (Figure 4).

Study 4a: Belief about the Misleading Nature of Demeanor

Study 4 aimed to unpack the observed cultural differences in inferences by identifying the underlying mechanism. Diving into the core of divergence theory, we specifically examined the misleading nature of demeanor as a lay belief and its mediating role between culture and inferences of competence based on demeanor.

Pretest Study

We wanted to use proverbs to measure people’s lay belief that demeanor is a misleading reflection of reality, an approach employed in previous research investigating cultural ideas and beliefs (e.g., Peng & Nisbett, 1999). We selected two proverbs from the Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs, (4th ed., Duckett, 2004), “*beware of a silent dog and still water*” (a Latin proverb) and “*a wise falcon hides his talons*” (an Italian proverb).

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These proverbs share the notion that the nature of things can deviate from how they appear.

A separate group of Euro-Canadian ($n = 35$) and Chinese ($n = 21$) participants rated (1 = *not at all agree*, 7 = *completely agree*) the extent to which they agreed with each of the proverbs (along with fillers). The results showed that endorsements of the two target proverbs significantly correlated with each other (Euro-Canadians: $r = .54$, $p = .001$ vs. Chinese: $r = .76$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, endorsements with these proverbs (see the means in Supplementary Materials) were correlated with endorsement of the conceptually relevant statement “*appearances are often misleading*” (Euro-Canadians: $r = .79$, $p < .001$ and $r = .57$, $p < .001$ vs. Chinese: $r = .52$, $p = .016$ and $r = .68$, $p = .001$).

Main Study

Participants

Participants were 84 Euro-Canadians (46 women; $M_{age} = 18.9$ years, $SD_{age} = 1.10$) at a Canadian university and 71 Chinese (32 women; $M_{age} = 22.7$ years, $SD_{age} = 4.56$) at a Chinese university.

Procedure

Participants read the debating scenario involving two debaters with contrasting demeanor, as in Study 3. They rated (1 = *very unlikely*, 7 = *very likely*) the extent to which each debater would be a threat to their own victory, as a measure of perceived competence (See Supplementary Materials). Then, they explained their assessments in an open-ended question. Next, participants rated (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) the extent to which they agreed with each of the following proverbs, “*beware of a silent dog and still water*,” “*a wise falcon hides his talons*,” along with conceptually unrelated filler proverbs

such as “one bad apple can spoil the whole bunch.” Finally, they provided demographic information.

Results and Discussion

Inferences of competence

A 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian vs. Chinese) × 2 (demeanor: *Goliath* vs. *David*) mixed ANOVA on perceived competence revealed no significant effects of culture, $F(1, 153) < 1, p = .833$, or of demeanor, $F(1, 153) < 1, p = .964$. As expected, there was a significant culture by demeanor interaction, $F(1, 153) = 5.79, p = .017, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Euro-Canadians ($M = 4.92, SD = 1.39$) inferred debater *Goliath* as more threatening than did Chinese ($M = 4.39, SD = 1.52$), $F(1, 153) = 5.00, p = .027, \eta_p^2 = .03$, whereas Chinese ($M = 4.90, SD = 1.50$) inferred debater *David* as more threatening than did Euro-Canadians ($M = 4.43, SD = 1.49$), $F(1, 153) = 3.84, p = .052, \eta_p^2 = .02$ (Figure 5a). Within-culture analyses revealed that debater *Goliath* was marginally more competent than debater *David* to Euro-Canadians, $F(1, 153) = 3.04, p = .083, \eta_p^2 = .02$, whereas debater *David* was marginally more competent than debater *Goliath* to Chinese, $F(1, 153) = 2.77, p = .098, \eta_p^2 = .02$. In sum, Chinese and Euro-Canadians inferred competence from demeanor differently.

Can these cultural patterns be explained by convergence or divergence theory of demeanor as we proposed? We answered this question qualitatively by examining participants’ open-ended explanations. We then examined demeanor-reality beliefs, as measured by the proverbs, and how such beliefs may mediate cultural differences in inferences of competence.

Open-ended explanations

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Participants' open-ended accounts were translated into English, where appropriate, and independently coded by two coders blind to hypotheses (pre-consensus agreement: 85%). Coders coded whether the explanations highlighted convergence thinking between demeanor and reality (e.g., *debater Goliath "was competent because he looks strong"*) or divergence thinking between demeanor and reality (e.g., *debater David "was competent because he looks weak"*). Some examples of convergence explanations are: "*Debater A most likely is loud and open about his techniques because he is confident in his abilities and is therefore most likely very good* (by one Euro-Canadian participant)"; "*Debater A looks like a very competitive person who refuses to concede. With such confidence and the ability to articulate he should be very strong* (by one Chinese participant)". Examples of divergence explanations included: "*The talkative one is more likely to slip up. Talk less and you're less likely to make a fool of yourself. Could be hiding vast intelligence* (by one Euro-Canadian participant)"; "*one who has real talent does not reveal himself, so it is possible that Debater B is hiding one's light under a bush. People who "strut their stuff" can be seen through, making them more transparent* (by one Chinese participant)."

Supporting our predictions, convergence explanations were significantly more frequent among Euro-Canadians (42.9%) than among Chinese (25.7%), $\chi^2(1, N = 155) = 4.93, p = .026$, whereas divergence explanations were more frequent among Chinese (30.0%) than among Euro-Canadians (14.3%), $\chi^2(1, N = 155) = 5.60, p = .018$. Unrestricted by methodological issues such as biased questioning and scale format, these qualitative data provided further support to the proposed cultural difference, with Euro-

Canadians (vs. Chinese) holding a more convergent view in their theories about demeanor and reality.

Mediating process: Belief in the misleading nature of demeanor

Using the proverbs to measure people’s belief in the misleading nature of demeanor, we found that Chinese participants endorsed both proverbs to a greater degree than did Euro-Canadian participants ($M_{CH} = 5.00$, $SD_{CH} = 1.80$; $M_{CAN} = 3.10$, $SD_{CAN} = 1.84$ for the silent dog proverb; $M_{CH} = 5.21$, $SD_{CH} = 1.67$; $M_{CAN} = 4.61$, $SD_{CAN} = 1.86$ for the falcon proverb), $F_s > 4.32$, $p_s < .039$.

For the mediation or indirect effect analysis, we created an index of convergence judgments by subtracting the competence ratings of debater *David* from that of debater *Goliath*; a positive score would represent the perception that debater *Goliath* was more competent than debater *David*, reflecting stronger convergence thinking. Ratings of the two proverbs were averaged into a composite; a high score would represent strong beliefs in the misleading nature of demeanor.

In our mediation analysis, we entered culture (0 = Chinese, 1 = Euro-Canadian) as the independent variable, convergence judgments as the dependent variable, and the beliefs in the misleading nature of demeanor as the mediator into the Process macro (Hayes, 2013) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. Culture predicted convergence judgments ($b = .95$, $SE = .41$, $p = .023$) and beliefs about demeanor ($b = -1.23$, $SE = .24$, $p < .001$), indicating that compared to Chinese, Euro-Canadians were more likely to associate a strong demeanor (vs. an ordinary demeanor) with competence, and they were less likely to endorse the beliefs that demeanor is misleading. When both culture and the beliefs about demeanor were entered into the model, beliefs predicted convergence

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judgments ($b = -.40$, $SE = .14$, $p = .003$), while culture's effect was no longer significant ($b = .46$, $SE = .44$, $p = .295$). The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero (LLCI = .15, ULCI = .97). These results indicated that believing in the misleading nature of demeanor accounted for cultural differences in convergence judgments (Figure 6a).

Study 4b: A Test of Generalizability

To test the generalizability of these findings beyond university samples, Study 4b sought to replicate the observed cultural effects with community samples recruited in the United States and China. In addition, we measured perceived competence with multiple items.

Method*Participants*

We recruited 130 Americans in the United States via Amazon Mechanical Turk (an online data collection platform in North America) who identified as individuals of European descent (38.5% women; $M_{age} = 38.5$ years, $SD_{age} = 11.70$), and 130 Chinese (56.2% women; $M_{age} = 30.5$ years, $SD_{age} = 7.64$) in China via So Jump (an online data collection platform in China) who were born and raised in China. Participants in both cultures were diverse in their education level, ranging from high school to college to professional degrees. Participants completed the survey in their native language.

Procedure

To measure perceived competence, we had participants read the debating scenario used in Study 4a and rate (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) each debater on seven items (*competent, capable, knowledgeable, experienced, proficient, skillful, and intelligent*).

Next, as a measure of the beliefs about the misleading nature of demeanor, participants rated the extent to which they understood (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) and agreed (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) with each of four proverbs (See Supplementary Materials). Of these proverbs, two were target proverbs from Study 4b that described the misleading nature of demeanor (“*beware of a silent dog and still water*” and “*a wise falcon hides his talons*”), and two were fillers that had nothing to do with demeanor and reality (“*a bad apple can spoil the whole bunch*” and “*good seed makes a good crop*”). Finally, participants provided demographic information.

Results and Discussion

Inferences of competence

Ratings of competence were averaged into a composite for debater *Goliath* ($\alpha = .90$) and debater *David* ($\alpha = .92$), respectively. A 2 (culture: Euro-American vs. Chinese) $\times$ 2 (demeanor: *Goliath* vs. *David*) repeated ANOVA on inferences of competence showed no main effects of culture, $F(1, 258) < 1, p = .759$, or of demeanor, $F(1, 258) < 1, p = .958$, but it did reveal a significant culture $\times$ demeanor interaction, $F(1, 258) = 13.57, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$. Replicating the observed results in Studies 1 through 4a, debater *Goliath* was perceived as more competent by Euro-American ($M = 5.30, SD = 1.12$) than by Chinese participants ($M = 4.99, SD = .90$), $F(1, 258) = 6.03, p = .015, \eta_p^2 = .02$, whereas debater *David* was perceived as marginally more competent by Chinese ($M = 5.27, SD = .95$) than by Euro-American participants ($M = 5.03, SD = 1.18$), $F(1, 258) = 3.36, p = .068, \eta_p^2 = .01$ (Figure 5b). Within-culture analyses further showed that debater *Goliath* was rated as more competent than debater *David* by Euro-American

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participants, $F(1, 258) = 6.59, p = .011, \eta_p^2 = .03$, whereas the opposite was observed for Chinese participants, $F(1, 258) = 96.98, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = .03$.

Proverbs

We averaged the agreement ratings (Euro-Americans: $r = .26, p = .002$; Chinese: $r = .45, p < .001$) of target proverbs into a composite score of beliefs about demeanor. Both groups of participants understood the proverbs well ($M_{AM} = 4.98, SD_{AM} = 1.33$, significantly above the scale midpoint, $t(129) = 8.40, p < .001$; $M_{CH} = 5.44, SD_{CH} = .98$, significantly above the scale midpoint, $t(129) = 16.75, p < .001$). Chinese participants endorsed the proverbs ($M = 5.54, SD = 1.04$) more than Euro-American participants ($M = 4.88, SD = 1.23$), $F(1, 258) = 22.16, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$.

To test the mediation, we computed convergence judgments and beliefs the same way as in Study 4a. We then entered culture (0 = Chinese; 1 = Euro-American) as the independent variable, convergence judgments as the dependent variable, and the beliefs in the misleading nature of demeanor as the mediator into Process macro (Hayes, 2013) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. Culture predicted convergence judgments ($b = .55, SE = .15, p < .001$) and the beliefs about demeanor ($b = -.67, SE = .14, p < .001$). When both culture and the beliefs about demeanor were entered into the model, beliefs predicted convergence judgments ($b = -.20, SE = .07, p = .003$), and culture's effect remained significant ($b = .42, SE = .15, p = .007$). The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero (LLCI = .04, ULCI = .28). These results, indicating a partial mediation, suggest that believing in the misleading nature of demeanor partly accounted for cultural differences in convergence judgments (Figure 6b).

Meta-Analysis

We performed a meta-analysis of the 5 cross-cultural studies reported above, involving 969 participants in total (496 Euro-North-Americans, and 473 Chinese). In each study, participants inferred competence of two targets with different forms of demeanor, on a 7-point scale. Within each cultural group, we created an index by subtracting the competence ratings of target *David* from that of target *Goliath*. A positive score would represent a higher competence rating for *Goliath* than for *David*. Then, we used the mean difference between North Americans and Chinese to index the effect-size in each study. A positive value would indicate that North Americans infer corresponding competence from demeanor to a greater extent than do Chinese.

The sample effect estimates (with difference between the means of two cultural groups), their respective confidence interval and the average effect size are presented in the forest plot (Figure 7). Homogeneity $Q = 24.39, p = .001$, indicating that the effect sizes were not homogenous overall. Assuming a random-effects model, the estimated cultural difference was 1.17, 95% CI [.70, 1.65], mean $d = .765, z = 13.88, p < .001$.⁶ Thus, the meta-analysis supported our predictions: The tendency to infer greater competence in target *Goliath* than in target *David* was stronger for Euro-North-Americans than for Chinese, a finding highlighting systematic differences in people’s use of convergence versus divergence theories across cultures.

General Discussion

Across five studies, we have shown consistent cultural differences in how people infer competence based on demeanor in various competitive settings. Specifically, Euro-North-Americans (vs. Chinese) inferred greater competence from an opponent who

⁶ Assuming a fix-effects model, the estimated cultural difference = .93, 95% CI [.77, 1.10], mean $d = .715, z = 11.02, p < .001$.

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3 appeared competent, whereas Chinese (vs. Euro-North-Americans) paradoxically inferred
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5 greater competence from an opponent who showed no signs of strengths. These cultural
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7 patterns, observed in students (Studies 1-4a) and community samples (Study 4b), were
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9 explained by the extent to which appearances are believed to be misleading reflections of
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11 reality, a finding supported by qualitative (Study 4a) and mediational evidence (Studies
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13 4a and 4b). Taken together, these results highlight the role of cultural beliefs in the
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15 construals of demeanor and inferences of competence in domains of competitions.
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19 As shown in Study 3, cultural differences in inferences of competence cannot be
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21 explained by perceived modesty or likeability of the targets. One may wonder why Euro-
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23 Canadians liked the modest-looking debater more than Chinese did, whereas Chinese
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25 liked the immodest-looking debater more than Euro-Canadians did. This finding seems to
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27 go against the common knowledge that modesty is more valued in Chinese than in
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29 Canadian culture (Chen et al., 2009). We believe that this has to do with the competitive
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31 context in which inferences were made. Competitions, after all, are not common
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33 situations but ones that motivate people to contemplate the goals and motives behind the
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35 displays of their fellow competitors (Fein, Hilton, & Miller, 1990; Gibson & Sachau,
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37 2000). Motivated to win in a competition, people may do whatever it takes to maximize
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39 their chance of success, which includes choosing their demeanor to present to the world.
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41 Thus, with this mindset, “modest” demeanor in a competitive context, very likeable to
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43 Chinese *if observed elsewhere*, might be perceived as a cue of strategic presentation
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45 instead of a reflection of true modesty. Accordingly, the stronger divergence theory
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47 (weaker convergence theory) among Chinese might lead them to infer demeanor of
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modesty as a sign of underlying competence, whereas Euro-Canadians might infer the same demeanor of modesty as a true signal of underlying modesty.

How is the present research on demeanor different from prior work on faces?

Some research on inferences of the face has shown cross-cultural consensus (e.g., Albright et al., 1997; Buss, 1989; Cunningham, Roberts, Barbee, Druen, & Wu, 1995; Ekman & Friesen, 1971; McArthur & Berry, 1987; Rule et al., 2010; Zebrowitz, Montepare, & Lee, 1993), while other research has revealed cultural differences in the perception of facial emotions (e.g., Ito, Masuda, & Hioki, 2012; Ito, Masuda, & Li, 2013; Masuda et al., 2008; Matsumoto, 1992). The present research differs from some of the face research in a few ways. First, our research presented demeanor in a specific context (e.g., job interview, company rivalry, debate tournament) along with situation-specific goals (e.g., getting a job or winning a debate), which might have influenced participants' judgments differently than when only a face is presented with little or no context. Incidentally, in studies that showed cultural differences in face perception, researchers also included contextual information in their stimuli. Masuda and colleagues, for instance, had college students (2008) and children (2017) interpret the emotional expressions of a target person surrounded by people who displayed the same emotions as the target person or different, and through this procedure they have identified systematic cultural differences. Second, the present research focused on competitive settings in which stakes are high, decisions are expected to be strategic, and reasoning about others are likely clouded with suspicion of ulterior motives (e.g., Fein et al., 1990). Thus, cultural differences might be more evident when people are put in the mindset of competition than when they are not. Third, demeanor is known to be distinct from faces: unlike faces

which have a strong biological component, demeanor of all forms (e.g., Kudoh & Matsumoto, 1985; Morris, 1994; Morris, Collett, Marsh, & O'Shaughnessy, 1980) is more influenced by cultural knowledge and norms, likely imbued with all kinds of cultural grammars. All these aspects might have contributed to the different results observed in this paper than those reported in prior work on faces. Future research can directly investigate how contexts may affect face perception.

Theoretical Implications

The present findings have important implications. First, understanding the relationship between demeanor and reality is ecologically important as it guides the core aspects of social life, from judgments and misunderstandings, to surprises, trust, and prejudice. Because demeanor is a key source of information, it is often taken as a justification for a host of stereotypes and associations (e.g., Jussim, Coleman, & Lerch, 1987) that people have for social groups. We hope that the present research can contribute to the theoretical links between the cultural literature and decades of work in intergroup processes.

Moreover, the observed cultural differences have implications for self-presentation. For example, physical height, which is typically associated with dominance (Zinsser, Bunker, & Williams, 1998) or social status (Judge & Cable, 2004; Lukaszewski et al., 2015) in Western cultures, may confer tall people with psychological advantages that indirectly increase their chances of success. These findings, obtained mainly from North American samples, may not be applicable to people with lay beliefs that demeanor and reality do not converge into the same direction or to the same degree. Furthermore, recent studies have examined the conditions and psychological processes that make

underdogs – those who show signs of disadvantage in competitions – more appealing to the audience than top dogs (Vandello, Goldschmied, & Richards, 2007). These studies showed that underdogs are associated with greater effort, which in turn predicts greater liking for them. Based on the present research, one may expect underdogs to be more appealing than top dogs to Chinese perceivers, not only because underdogs are associated with greater effort but also because of their inclination to the divergence theory: A competitor who shows no signs of competitive advantage may actually be strong and should be respected.

Limitations and Future Directions

Theoretically, there are good reasons to expect similar cultural patterns on inferences of positive (e.g., competence and strengths) and negative (e.g., clumsiness and ineffectiveness) qualities, although the present research only put the former to test. Future research can examine the latter empirically to address the issues on generalizability, especially in populations beyond North American and Chinese cultures. Another interesting question is whether our results can be found in social domains beyond competitions. To the extent that the convergence versus divergence theories of demeanor are cultural lay theories that guide basic social judgments, their impacts on inferences should appear not only in competitions but also in non-competitive domains, although one may reasonably expect the effects to be somewhat weaker in non-competitive contexts due to the absence of competition-specific mindsets and behaviors (e.g., Fein et al., 1990; Gibson & Sachau, 2000). We encourage future research to address this possibility. Furthermore, future studies may examine other core dimensions of social perception such as warmth (Fiske et al., 2007). Is the new colleague who greeted you

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with a warm demeanor really a friendly person? Does the sweet-looking couple at the dinner party indeed share a happy relationship? These situations are familiar, important, and relevant to everyday life within and across cultures, and future research may benefit from taking a deeper look at people's perception in these situations through the lens of convergence and divergence theories of demeanor. In terms of generalizability, we expect the present results to have some level of applicability to different populations since our investigations have yielded consistent findings from college and community samples from three countries. Whether, or to what extent, the present results can be observed in non-industrialized countries is a promising direction of pursuits. Future work, with evidence for generalizability or not, will enhance our understanding of culture and inferences of demeanor by informing us about the boundary conditions of this research, which highlights the relative preferences in the use of divergence versus convergence theories by people from different parts of the world.

Conclusion

The present research underscores the links between demeanor and reality in different cultural minds and their effects on the inferences of competence. While a strong demeanor is usually taken as a sign of actual competence and threat among Euro-Canadians and Euro-Americans, such tendency is weaker or even reversed among Chinese due to their lay theories about the misleading nature of demeanor. This research also suggests a bold explanation for the opening story: Maybe the Chinese army was signaling its competence by not revealing any sign of strengths, which, ironically, was mistakenly deciphered by the United States as a sign of weakness. Perhaps history—as

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well as the clashes between the West and East today—would have been a little different if it were not for a cross-cultural misunderstanding?

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Figure 1. Competence of rival candidates inferred by Euro-Canadian and Chinese participants (Study 1). Error bars represent standard errors.

Figure 2. Competence of rival companies inferred by Euro-Canadian and Chinese participants (Study 2). Error bars represent standard errors.

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Figure 3. Competence of rival debaters inferred by Euro-Canadian and Chinese participants (Study 3). Error bars represent standard errors.

Figure 4. Indirect effect of culture on convergence judgments, partially mediated by perceived unpredictability (Study 3). In parenthesis is the unstandardized regression coefficient after controlling for the mediator.

* $p < .001$.

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Figure 5a. Competence of rival debaters inferred by Euro-Canadian and Chinese participants (Study 4a). Error bars represent standard errors.

Figure 5b. Competence of rival debaters inferred by Euro-American and Chinese participants (Study 4b). Error bars represent standard errors.

Figure 6a. Unstandardized regression coefficients for links between culture and convergence judgments, fully mediated by beliefs about demeanor (Study 4a). In parenthesis is the regression coefficient after controlling for the mediating variable.

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

Figure 6b. Unstandardized regression coefficients for links between culture and convergence judgments, partially mediated by beliefs about demeanor (Study 4b). In parenthesis is the regression coefficient after controlling for the mediating variable.

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

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Figure 7. Forest plot for a meta-analysis based on 5 studies. Studies were weighted based on their sample sizes as well as the variance of their respective effect sizes.

Supplementary Materials

This document provides additional results and methodological details, such as distribution statistics and correlations of measures, non-parametric analyses on single-item measures, and original instructions.

Distribution Statistics and Correlations of Measures

The tables below provide the descriptive statistics and correlations of measures in each study. Correlations of the main measures in each study are reported, with statistical significance denoted as follows: *** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$ † $p \leq .10$.

Table S1: Distribution Statistics (Study 1)

	Euro-Canadians				Chinese			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}
Competence _{Goliath}	5.28	.16	-.59	.32	4.71	.16	-1.13	.31
Threat _{Goliath}	5.25	.17	-.36	.32	4.76	.16	-1.16	.31
Average competence _{Goliath}	5.26	.14	-.71	.32	4.74	.14	-1.18	.31
Competence _{David}	4.37	.12	1.05	.34	4.45	.12	.06	.33
Threat _{David}	3.51	.13	.05	.34	4.22	.13	-.29	.33
Average competence _{David}	3.94	.10	.50	.34	4.33	.12	.02	.33
Dispositional thinking	5.88	.09	-.84	.24	5.35	.11	-.91	.23
Situational thinking	4.33	.15	-.26	.24	4.70	.11	-.21	.23
Dispositional thinking _{composite}	1.56	.18	.51	.24	.65	.15	-.45	.23

Table S2: Correlations among Competence, Perceived Threat, and Average Competence (Study 1)

			Threat	Average
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				competence
Euro-Canadians	Goliath	Competence	.57***	.88***
		Threat		.89***
		Average competence		
	David	Competence	.25 [†]	.77***
		Threat		.81***
		Average competence		
Chinese	Goliath	Competence	.52***	.87***
		Threat		.87***
		Average competence		
	David	Competence	.72***	.92***
		Threat		.93***
		Average competence		

Table S3: Distribution Statistics (Study 2)

	Euro-Canadians				Chinese			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}
Threat _{Goliath}	6.07	.15	-2.11	.33	4.89	.27	-.41	.35
Threat _{David}	4.00	.25	.01	.33	5.64	.19	-.90	.35

Table S4: Correlations between Perceived Threat (Study 2)

		Threat _{David}
EC	Threat _{Goliath}	.35**
CH	Threat _{Goliath}	-.25 [†]

Note: EC = Euro-Canadians, CH = Chinese

Table S5: Distribution Statistics (Study 3)

	Euro-Canadians				Chinese			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}
Competence _{Goliath}	4.61	.13	-.01	.22	4.13	.11	.01	.22
Confidence _{Goliath}	5.58	.14	-1.11	.22	5.03	.14	-.86	.22
Threat _{Goliath}	4.79	.12	-.28	.22	4.38	.12	-.20	.22
Pressure _{Goliath}	5.06	.11	-.56	.22	4.46	.12	-.10	.22
Average competence _{Goliath}	5.01	.09	-.49	.22	4.50	.10	-.03	.22
Modesty _{Goliath}	1.90	.10	2.56	.22	2.11	.10	.96	.22
Likeability _{Goliath}	2.52	.11	1.13	.22	2.82	.13	.62	.22
Unpredictability _{Goliath}	3.71	.16	.37	.22	2.82	.11	.90	.22
Competence _{David}	4.96	.11	-.43	.22	5.41	.10	-.39	.22
Confidence _{David}	4.37	.12	-.01	.22	5.03	.11	-.08	.22
Threat _{David}	4.66	.12	-.30	.22	5.45	.11	-.73	.22
Pressure _{David}	4.01	.13	.16	.22	5.34	.11	-.71	.22
Average competence _{David}	4.50	.09	-.18	.22	5.31	.09	-.57	.22
Modesty _{David}	5.59	.10	-.82	.22	5.16	.12	-.60	.22
Likeability _{David}	4.66	.11	-.27	.22	4.08	.13	-.32	.22
Unpredictability _{David}	5.60	.15	-1.25	.22	6.08	.09	-1.40	.22

Table S6: Correlations among Perceived Threat, Pressure, Competence, Confidence, and Average Competence (Study 3)

			Pressure	Competence	Confidence	Average competence
Euro-Canadians	Goliath	Threat	.68***	.48***	.28***	.81***
		Pressure		.33***	.07	.67***
		Competence			.45***	.78***
		Confidence				.66***
	David	Threat	.66***	.59***	.38***	.85***
		Pressure		.48***	.29***	.80***

Chinese		Competence			.44***	.79***
		Confidence				.68***
	Goliath	Threat	.84***	.73***	.29**	.88***
		Pressure		.69***	.26**	.86***
		Competence			.35***	.84***
		Confidence				.63***
	David	Threat	.79***	.66***	.39***	.84***
		Pressure		.79***	.50***	.91***
		Competence			.59***	.89***
		Confidence				.74***

Table S7: Correlations of Average Competence (Study 3)

		Average competence _{David}
EC	Average competence _{Goliath}	.32***
CH	Average competence _{Goliath}	-.09

Note: EC = Euro-Canadians, CH = Chinese

Table S8: Correlations among Average Competence, Unpredictability, Modesty, and Likeability (Study 3)

			Unpredictability	Modesty	Likeability
Euro-Canadians	Goliath	Average competence	.33***	.16†	.17†
		Unpredictability		.21*	.04
		Modesty			.61***
	David	Average competence	.23**	.03	.11
		Unpredictability		-.03	-.08
		Modesty			.18*
C	G	Average competence	.25**	.18*	-.02

hi ne	o	Unpredictability		.41***	.14
		Modesty			.49***
	David	Average competence	.64***	.13	.05
		Unpredictability		.26**	.10
		Modesty			.24**

Table S9: Distribution Statistics (Study 4a Pretest)

	Euro-Canadians				Chinese			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}
Silent dog proverb	3.74	.25	-.09	.40	5.14	.25	-.09	.50
Falcon proverb	4.03	.28	-.38	.40	4.71	.35	-.81	.50
Misleading appearances statement	3.83	.34	-.01	.40	5.58	.30	-1.08	.50

Table S10: Distribution Statistics (Study 4a)

	Euro-Canadians				Chinese			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}
Competence _{Goliath}	4.92	.15	-.34	.26	4.39	.18	-.22	.29
Competence _{David}	4.43	.16	-.19	.26	4.90	.18	-.45	.29
Convergence judgments	.49	.28	.08	.26	-.51	.31	.24	.29
Falcon proverb	4.61	0.20	-.49	.26	5.21	.20	-.70	.29
Silent dog proverb	3.10	.20	.40	.27	5.00	.21	-.60	.29
Average _{silent dog & falcon}	3.88	.17	-.12	.26	5.11	.17	-.35	.29

Table S11: Correlations among Competence, Convergence Judgments, and Endorsement of Proverbs (Study 4a)

		Competence _{David}	Convergence judgments	Silent dog proverb	Falcon proverb	Average of silent dog and falcon proverbs
Euro-Canadians	Competence _{Goliath}	-.54***	.87***	-.19 [†]	-.16	-.19 [†]
	Competence _{David}		-.89***	.27*	.33**	.34**
	Convergence judgments			-.26*	-.28*	-.31**
	Silent dog proverb				.36***	.82***
	Falcon proverb					.83***
Chinese	Competence _{Goliath}	-.50***	.87***	.07	-.07	.004
	Competence _{David}		-.86***	.30*	.13	.27*
	Convergence judgments			-.13	-.11	-.15
	Silent dog proverb				.34**	.83***
	Falcon proverb					.80***

Table S12: Distribution Statistics (Study 4b)

	Euro-Americans				Chinese			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	skewness	<i>SE</i> _{skewness}
Competent _{Goliath}	5.32	.11	-.85	.22	5.14	.10	-.94	.21
Capable _{Goliath}	5.40	.12	-.89	.22	4.92	.11	-.45	.21
Knowledgeable _{Goliath}	5.30	.12	-.72	.22	5.18	.10	-.54	.21
Experienced _{Goliath}	5.49	.11	-.94	.22	4.68	.12	-.47	.21
Proficient _{Goliath}	5.31	.12	-.52	.22	5.23	.10	-.82	.21
Skillful _{Goliath}	5.28	.11	-.55	.22	4.99	.13	-.55	.21
Intelligent _{Goliath}	5.05	.12	-.56	.22	4.79	.12	-.20	.21
Average competence _{Goliath}	5.30	.10	-.80	.21	4.99	.08	-.64	.21
Competent _{David}	5.09	.12	-.25	.21	5.17	.11	-.46	.21

Capable _{David}	4.98	.12	-.20	.21	5.30	.10	-.45	.21
Knowledgeable _{David}	5.03	.12	-.31	.21	5.28	.11	-.70	.21
Experienced _{David}	4.96	.12	-.27	.21	5.49	.10	-.48	.21
Proficient _{David}	4.93	.12	-.33	.21	5.05	.11	-.49	.21
Skillful _{David}	4.99	.12	-.20	.21	5.15	.12	-.70	.21
Intelligent _{David}	5.20	.12	-.46	.21	5.45	.11	-.68	.21
Average competence _{David}	5.03	.10	-.13	.21	5.27	.08	-.79	.21
Convergence judgments	.27	.12	.10	.21	-.28	.09	.32	.21
Silent dog proverb _{understand}	4.17	.19	-.24	.21	5.74	.10	-.94	.21
Silent dog proverb _{agree}	4.25	.15	-.12	.21	5.81	.10	-.85	.21
Falcon proverb _{understand}	5.79	.12	-1.37	.21	5.15	.12	-.87	.21
Falcon proverb _{agree}	5.50	.12	-.70	.21	5.28	.12	-.65	.21
Silent dog and falcon _{understand}	4.98	.12	-.18	.21	5.44	.09	-.46	.21
Silent dog and falcon _{agree}	4.88	.11	-.25	.21	5.54	.09	-.62	.21

Table S13: Correlation among Average Competence, Convergence Judgments, and Endorsement of Proverbs (Study 4b)

		Average competence _{David}	Convergence judgments	Silent dog proverb _{agree}	Falcon proverb _{agree}	Silent dog and falcon proverbs _{agree}
Euro- American	Average competence _{Goliath}	.32***	.56***	.09	.02	.07
	Average competence _{David}		-.62***	.15 [†]	.31***	.28***
	Convergence judgments			-.06	-.26**	-.18*
	Silent dog proverb _{agree}				.26**	.85***
	Falcon proverb _{agree}					.73***
Chinese	Average competence _{Goliath}	.35***	.54***	.20*	.22*	.25**
	Average competence _{David}		-.61***	.42***	.36***	.45***
	Convergence judgments			-.21*	-.14	-.20*
	Silent dog proverb _{agree}				.45***	.83***
	Falcon proverb _{agree}					.88***

Supplementary Analyses

Given that some of the dependent variables were based on a single-item measure, we conducted non-parametric tests on them to test the robustness of results. Overall, the results were consistent with those reported in the main text. Details are reported below.

Study 1

Inferences of competence

Kruskal-Wallis H tests showed that candidate *Goliath* was significantly more competent to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 65.03) than to Chinese (mean rank = 48.84) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 7.11, p = .008$, and that candidate *David* was significantly more competent to Chinese (mean rank = 57.46) than to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 43.26) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 6.24, p = .013$.

Dispositional thinking

A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that dispositional thinking was significantly stronger among Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 121.54) than among Chinese (mean rank = 91.73) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 13.05, p < .001$.

Study 2

Inferences of competence

Kruskal-Wallis H tests showed that company *Goliath* was significantly more competent to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 58.50) than to Chinese (mean rank = 39.80) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 11.20, p = .001$, and that company *David* was significantly more competent to Chinese (mean rank = 63.71) than to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 38.57) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 19.41, p < .001$.

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Study 3

Perceived Modesty

Kruskal-Wallis H tests showed that debater *Goliath* was marginally more modest to Chinese (mean rank = 130.50) than to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 115.91) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 2.94, p = .086$, and that debater *David* was significantly more modest to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 133.72) than to Chinese (mean rank = 111.65) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 6.37, p = .012$.

Perceived Likeability

Kruskal-Wallis H tests showed that debater *Goliath* was marginally more likeable to Chinese (mean rank = 130.63) than to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 115.79) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 2.86, p = .091$, and that debater *David* was significantly more likeable to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 136.60) than to Chinese (mean rank = 108.61) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 10.24, p = .001$.

Perceived Unpredictability

Kruskal-Wallis H tests revealed that Chinese participants (mean rank = 106.18) rated debater *Goliath* as significantly less unpredictable (or more predictable) than did Euro-Canadians (mean rank = 138.88), $\chi^2(1) = 13.80, p < .001$; Chinese (mean rank = 128.01) showed a nonsignificant tendency to rate debater *David* as more unpredictable than did Euro-Canadians (mean rank = 118.27), $\chi^2(1) = 1.28, p = .257$.

Study 4a

Inferences of competence

Kruskal-Wallis H tests showed that debater *Goliath* was significantly more competent to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 84.92) than to Chinese (mean rank = 69.81) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 4.57, p = .033$, and that debater *David* was more competent to Chinese (mean rank = 85.46) than to Euro-Canadian (mean rank = 71.69) participants, $\chi^2(1) = 3.78, p = .052$.

Original Instructions (English)

Study 1

Inferences of competence measures

[Candidate *Goliath* condition]

Imagine that, as a company's hiring manager, you are interviewing a few candidates for a highly desirable job. All the candidates are waiting in the waiting room. One of the candidates projects a competitive image, appears assertive and competent, and resembles people who would appear in the spotlight.

Now assume that this is all the information you have about this candidate.

[Candidate *David* condition]

Imagine that, as a company's hiring manager, you are interviewing a few candidates for a highly desirable job. All the candidates are waiting in the waiting room. One of the candidates projects an indistinctive image, appears silent and reserved, and resembles the kind of people who do not stand out in a group.

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Now assume that this is all the information you have about this candidate.

[Then, participants in both conditions responded to the following questions, on two separate scales from 1 (*not competent at all/not a threat at all*) to 7 (*completely competent/a very big threat*)]

- 1) How competent do you think this candidate is?
- 2) How much of a threat do you think this candidate is to the other candidate’s success of getting this job?

Dispositional thinking measures

Professional basketball player, like T. W., are very busy almost every day during the regular season. The players work hard practicing and playing in games. In the off-season, therefore, many professional players take vacations. However, T. W. holds several free basketball camps for kids living in poor neighbourhoods instead of taking a vacation.

[Then, participants indicated their agreement on each statement below on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*)]

- 1) The features of T.W. (e.g. his characters, attitude, temperament) made him behave this way.
- 2) The features of the environment around T.W. (e.g. social norms, social atmosphere or other contextual factors) made him behave this way.

Demographics (Studies 1-4a)

What is your age (in years)? _____
Gender: _____Male _____Female _____Other (Please specify) _____

What is your cultural background? _____Euro-Canadian _____Chinese _____Other (please specify) _____

Study 2

Inferences of competence measures

Imagine that you have decided to start a company in an industry currently shared by two major firms, Company A and Company B. It is widely known that Company A maintains a highly ambitious image and appears to be significantly more resourceful than yours. On the other hand, Company B keeps a low profile; there is very little information about its financial competence, although there is no doubt that it is also a competitive firm. Given this information, how likely is it that each of these two companies would be a threat to the future success of your firm?

[Then, participants indicated their inference of each company on two separate scales from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*)]

Study 3

Inferences of competence measures

Imagine that you are on the school debating team. This year, you have been chosen to represent your university in a competition against two visiting debaters (Debater A and Debater B) from other schools. Because your performance matters to both the school's reputation and your future career, it is important that you take these two contests seriously. It is known that Debater A adopts a competitive image and has no problem posturing by talking about their debating techniques and skills to the public. On the other hand, Debater B adopts a relatively low-

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profile image and does not say much to the public. Given the information available, please rate Debater A and Debater B on the following qualities:

[Then, participants indicated their response to each item on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*)]

- How competent do you think the debater is?
- How confident do you think the debater is?
- How much of a threat does the debater pose to your victory?
- How much do you feel pressured by the debater?
- How modest do you think the debater is?
- How much do you like the debater?
- How unpredictable is the debater to you?

Study 4a Pretest

We are interested in how people think about different sayings across cultures. For each of the sayings below, please circle the number that best represents your agreement with the saying.

[Then, participants indicated their response to each saying on a scale from 1 (*not at all agree*) to 7 (*completely agree*)]

“Beware of a silent dog and still water.”

“A wise falcon hides its claws.”

“Silence is golden, speech is silver.”

“Good seed makes good crop.”

“Appearances are often misleading.”

Study 4a

Inferences of competence measures

Imagine that you are on the school debating team. This year, you have been chosen to represent your university in a competition against two visiting debaters (Debater A and Debater B) from other schools. Because your performance matters to both the school’s reputation and your future career, it is important that you take these two contests seriously. It is known that Debater A adopts a competitive image and has no problem posturing by talking about their debating techniques and skills to the public. On the other hand, Debater B adopts a relatively low-profile image and does not say much to the public. Given the information available, how much of a threat do Debater A and Debater B pose to your victory?

[Then, participants indicated their inference of each debater on two separate scales from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*)]

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In the space below, please explain the reasons behind your judgment. **[Participants were given about half a page for their answers]**

Agreement with proverbs

We have collected a list of sayings. Please use the following scale to answer the following questions. For each question, choose a number that best represents your opinion and write it into the corresponding box.

[Then, participants indicated their response to each saying on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*)]

	How much do you agree with this saying?
One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch.	
A wise falcon hides his talons.	
The knife cuts both ways.	
Beware of a silent dog and still water.	
Silence is golden, speech is silver.	

Study 4b

Inferences of competence measures

Imagine that you are on the school debating team. This year, you have been chosen to represent your university in a competition against two visiting debaters (Debater A and Debater B) from other schools. Because your performance matters to both the school’s reputation and your future career, it is important that you take these two contests seriously. It is known that Debater A adopts a competitive image and has no problem posturing by talking about their debating techniques and skills to the public. On the other hand, Debater B adopts a relatively low-

profile image and does not say much to the public. Based on the information above, please rate Debater A and Debater B on the following qualities:

[Then, participants indicated their inference of each quality on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*)]

	Debater A	Debater B
Competent		
Capable		
Knowledgeable		
Experienced		
Proficient		
Skillful		
Intelligent		

Measures of Proverbs

In the next part of survey, you will be presented with several proverbs. Please read each proverb carefully and answer the questions that follow.

[Then, participants indicated their response to each proverb a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*)]

	To what extent do you understand the meaning of this proverb?	To what extent do you agree with this proverb?
Beware of a silent dog and still water.		
A wise falcon hides its claws.		
A bad apple can spoil a whole bunch.		
Good seed makes a good crop.		

Demographics

What is your age? _____

Gender: _____Male _____Female _____Other (Please specify) _____

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

_____Less than high school _____High school _____Some college _____2-year college degree

_____4-year college degree _____Master degree _____Doctoral degree _____Professional degree (e.g., M.D.)

Please indicate your ethnic background:

_____of African descent _____of Asian descent _____of European descent _____of Jewish descent

_____of Latino descent _____Other (please specify) _____

Original Instructions (Chinese)

Study 1

Inferences of competence measures

[Candidate *Goliath* condition]

设想你作为一家公司的人事主管，要就一份非常抢手的工作面试几位候选人。在等候室，所有竞争这份工作的候选人一起就坐等待面试。其中一位候选人外表看起来很具竞争力，看上去似乎很自信很有实力。

假设这是所有你知道关于这个候选人的信息。

[Candidate *David* condition]

设想你作为一家公司的人事主管，要就一份非常抢手的工作面试几位候选人。在等候室，所有竞争这份工作的候选人一起就坐等待面试。其中一位候选人外表看起来很不出众，看上去似乎很安静很内敛。

假设这是所有你知道关于这个候选人的信息。

[Then, participants in both conditions responded to the following questions, on two separate scales from 1 (一点实力都没有) to 7 (非常有实力/非常大的威胁)]

- 1) 你认为这个候选人多有实力？
- 2) 你认为这个候选人对其他候选人成功得到这份工作有多大的威胁？

Dispositional thinking measures

常规赛期间，像 T.W. 这样的职业球员几乎每天都非常忙。他们辛勤努力，练球和打比赛。因此，休赛时，很多职业球员会休假。

然而，T.W. 没有休假，而是为生活在贫困社区的孩子开办了几个免费的篮球课。

[Then, participants indicated their agreement on each statement below on a scale from 1 (强烈反对) to 7 (强烈赞同)]

- 1) T.W. 的个性（比如他的性格，态度，气质）导致他的这种行为表现。
- 2) T.W. 周围的环境特点（比如社会规范，社会气氛或其它情境因素）导致他的这种行为表现。

Demographics (Studies 1-4a)

你的年龄是(岁)? _____

性别: _____男性 _____女性 _____其他(请具体说明) _____

你的文化背景是? _____欧洲裔加拿大人 _____中国人 _____其他 (请具体说明) _____

Study 3

Inferences of competence measures

设想你是校辩论队的一员。今年你将代表学校参加辩论大赛，对手是外校的辩论手 A 及辩论手 B。因为你在比赛中的表现直接关系到学校的名声以及你的前途，这两场比赛都意义重大。在两位对手当中，辩手 A 的竞技意识很强，并且毫不避讳地向大众透露自己的辩论才能以及技巧。相反，辩手 B 则非常低调，对外也十分保留。根据以上信息, 请给辩手 A 和辩手 B 对下列的特征打分:

[Then, participants indicated their response to each item on a scale from 1 (完全没有) to 7 (完全有)]

你认为该辩手有多实力?
你认为该辩手有多自信?
该辩手对你的胜利有多大威胁?
该辩手令你感到的压力有多大?
你认为该辩手有多谦虚?
你有多喜欢该辩手?

你认为该辩手有多无法估计?

Study 4a

Inferences of competence measures

设想你是校辩论队的一员。今年你将代表学校参加辩论大赛，对手是外校的辩论手 A 及辩论手 B。因为你在比赛中的表现直接关系到学校的名声以及你的前途，这两场比赛都意义重大。在两位对手当中，辩手 A 的竞技意识很强，并且毫不避讳地向大众透露自己的辩论才能以及技巧。相反，辩手 B 则非常低调，对外也十分保留。根据以上信息，你认为辩手 A 和辩手 B 对你的胜利存在有多大威胁？

[Then, participants indicated their inference of each debater on two separate scales from 1 (非常不可能) to 7 (非常有可能)]

在下面的空白处，请解释您以上判断背后的原因。 [Participants were given about half a page for their answers]

Agreement with proverbs

我们收集了下列谚语。请根据下面的量表，在对应的空格内填写一个代表你对每一句谚语看法的数字。

[Then, participants indicated their response to each saying on a scale from 1 (完全不) to 7 (非常)]

	你同意这句谚语么？
一粒老鼠屎坏了一锅汤	
雄鹰藏其爪	

水能载舟，亦能覆舟	
提防不吠的犬，小心平静的水	
雄辩是银，沉默是金	

Study 4b

Inferences of competence measures

设想你是校辩论队的一员。今年你将代表学校参加辩论大赛，对手是外校的辩论手 A 及辩论手 B。因为你在比赛中的表现直接关系到学校的名声以及你的前途，这两场比赛都意义重大。在两位对手当中，辩手 A 的竞技意识很强，并且毫不避讳地向大众透露自己的辩论才能以及技巧。相反，辩手 B 则非常低调，对外也十分保留。请根据上述资料给辩手 A 和辩手 B 的特征打分。

[Then, participants indicated their inference of each quality on a scale from 1 (完全没有) to 7 (非常)]

	辩手 A	辩手 B
有本领		
有能耐		
有学识		
资深		
熟练		
有技巧		
有才智		

Measures of Proverbs

在问卷的这一部分，你将看到一些谚语。请仔细阅读每句谚语，并回答下列问题。

[Then, participants indicated their response to each proverb a scale from 1 (完全不) to 7 (非常)]

	你在多大程度上理解这个谚语的意思？	你在多大程度上同意这句谚语？
提防不吠的犬，小心平静的水		
雄鹰藏其爪		
一粒老鼠屎坏了一锅汤		
良种育嘉禾		

Demographics

年龄？ _____

性别: _____男性 _____女性 _____其他(请具体说明) _____

你完成的最高学历是？

_____中学学历以下 _____中学学历 _____部分大学教育 _____两年学士学位

_____四年学士学位 _____硕士学位 _____博士学位 _____专业学位 (例如: 医学学位)

请表明你的种族背景:

_____非洲裔 _____亚洲裔 _____欧洲裔 _____犹太裔

_____拉丁美洲裔 _____其他 (请具体说明) _____