

## Cultural differences in social support provision toward friends

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Previous studies have suggested there were cultural differences in how and why people providing social support to their close others. The purpose of this research was to further investigate the cultural differences in social support provision and support motivations. We measured problem-focused support, emotion-focused support, and implicit forms of support (companionship and attentiveness), as well as the motivation for increasing closeness with the recipient, the motivation for enhancing the recipient's self-esteem and felt obligation. Participants from the United States and Japan recruited via crowdsourcing platform finished an online survey about their social support provision in Study 1. American participants reported having provided more social support overall than Japanese participants did. The four types of support were associated with different motivations across cultures. The motivation for enhancing other's self-esteem was an important predictor for social support among Americans, but not among Japanese. To explain the cultural differences from a socioecology perspective, we examined the mediating effect of perceived relational mobility. The results revealed that the cultural differences in the motivation for other's self-esteem were partially mediated by relational mobility. In Study 2, undergraduates from Japan, Mainland China, and the United States participated the same online survey as used in Study 1. The results showed that providing social support toward friends was motivated by different motivations across the three culture groups. The motivation for other's self-esteem positively associated with social support among Chinese and American participants, but not among Japanese. We failed to replicate the mediating effect observed in Study 1, and relational mobility had no significant mediating effect on any cultural differences in support provision and motivations. Besides, we hypothesized that the fear of negative evaluation could be a possible explanation to the lower frequency of support provision among Japanese. To test this prediction, we asked participants to complete the Brief version of Fear of Negative Evaluation scale. However, although we found that the fear of negative evaluation was negatively associated with some types of social support among Chinese and American participants, we failed to find significant cultural differences in the fear of negative evaluation. Together, these findings suggested that why people providing support toward their friends was culturally specific, and the relation between support motivations and the support provided varied across cultures.