

Perceiving an Object and Its Context in Different Cultures

A Cultural Look at New Look

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Abstract

In two studies, a newly devised test (framed-line test) was used to examine the hypothesis that individuals engaging in Asian cultures are more capable of incorporating contextual information and those engaging in North American cultures are more capable of ignoring contextual information. On each trial, participants were presented with a square frame, within which was printed a vertical line. Participants were then shown another square frame of the same or different size and asked to draw a line that was identical to the first line in either absolute length (absolute task) or proportion to the height of the surrounding frame (relative task). The results supported the hypothesis: Whereas Japanese were more accurate in the relative task, Americans were more accurate in the absolute task. Moreover, when engaging in another culture, individuals tended to show the cognitive characteristic common in the host culture. doi: [10.1111/1467-9280.02432](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.02432) Psychological Science **May 2003** vol. 14no. 3 201-206