Employee reports assault by co-workers

An employee at the North Campus Research Complex told police June 19 that he had been assaulted by co-workers on multiple occasions since April 2013. One of the assaults involved a suspect using a pocket knife or key to cut some of the victim’s hair. The victim did not seek medical treatment after any of the incidents.

Research

Buying behavior can be swayed by cultural mindset

By Jared Wadley

News Service

There are some combinations that just go well together: Milk and cookies, eggs and bacon, pancakes and syrup. But new research reveals that people with individualistic mindsets differ from their collectivist counterparts in ascribing value to those perfect combinations.

The collection of new studies, published in Psychological Science, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, demonstrates that people with collectivist mindsets tend to value the relationships between items more than the items themselves. People with individualistic mindsets, on the other hand, tend to see an item’s intrinsic value, and are, therefore, more likely to split up a complete set of items.

The individualistic mindset, as lead author Daphna Oyserman and colleagues at U-M explain, centers around personal goals.

“Institutions and relationships are just backdrops to individual striving,” Oyserman said. “This mindset is found most often in the United States and Western Europe, she said.

Conversely, the collective mindset is more common in Eastern cultures, and ascribes value to the overall community, stressing the relationships between individuals.

Though research has typically focused on relationships between individuals and their communities, Oyserman and her colleagues were interested in how these different mindsets affect consumer decision-making.

In the first of several experiments, the researchers asked Anglo- and Latin-American students to choose their favorite cell phone accessory set (red, blue, black, or white). Afterwards, the participants were told that one of the items in their preferred set was no longer available. At this point, the participants had two options: They could still choose their favorite set and simply replace the unavailable item with an item from another set, or they could choose a new set entirely — one that matched.

The Anglo-American students — who were likely to have more individualistic mindsets — usually picked another individual item from a different set rather than starting over with a completely new set.

But Latin-American students showed the opposite effect: When one of the accessories in their favorite set was unavailable, they were more likely to choose a new set altogether, even one that they didn’t like at all to begin with. They appeared to take a collectivist perspective, focusing on the inherent relationship between the matching accessories, which led them to view each set as one item.

Because all societies socialize both collectivistic and individualistic mindsets at least to some degree, Oyserman and colleagues hypothesized that it should be possible to cue either mindset under certain conditions. Experiments revealed that participants who were cued to have a collectivist accessible mindset were more hesitant to break up their preferred set, were more willing to pay extra to restore a set, and gave more compelling reasons explaining why items in a set should be grouped together.

This effect held across several different decision making scenarios. In one experiment, for example, participants were asked to choose their two favorite puppies to suggest to a friend, but were then told that only one puppy could be adopted. As predicted, collectivist thinkers were more likely to choose an entirely new puppy instead of choosing to split up their favorite two.

Similarly, collectivist thinkers were more likely to choose an entirely new snack when their favorite drink/snack combo became unavailable.

“These choices seem odd until one considers what the collectivistic mindset does,” Oyserman said. “It makes what would otherwise be two separate items feel like a single combined element.”

The researchers suggest that these effects might also generalize to other domains, such as public policy.

“Our studies imply that an accessible collectivist mindset would reduce willingness to accept some chosen policy options if others cannot be obtained, which would reduce compromise,” the authors conclude.

Co-authors on this research include James Mowry and Carolyn Yoon of U-M.

The Criminal Investigation

The criminal investigation has been closed because the victim does not want to pursue prosecution, but a personnel investigation has been conducted.

Nurse assaulted by patient

A nurse at the Cardiovascular Center told police that she was grabbed several times by an unruly patient on June 10. The 50-year-old patient also reportedly made inappropriate comments to the nurse. The case has been closed because the nurse does not want to pursue prosecution.

South Quad construction area vandalized

Hallways, a kitchen, and an elevator panel in South Quadrangle residence hall reportedly were vandalized with spray paint by a subject who broke into the building between 10:30 p.m. June 21 and 5:30 a.m. June 22. The fire extinguisher also was discharged. The building currently is being renovated and is closed. Police have no suspects in the incident.