How help-seeking intention is accounted for by sense of contribution, reciprocity norms, general trust, and self-construal

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Previous research regarding cultural differences of help-seeking intention indicated that East Asians are more reluctant to seek help than European Americans. These cultural differences are due to cultural psychological constructs, such as collectivism and/or interdependent self-construal, which is characteristic of East Asian cultures. However, alternative explanations for this socioecological construct, such as general trust and relational mobility, are also persuasive. Furthermore, help-seeking intention could be accounted for by the interaction effect of sense of contribution and reciprocity norms. In order to integrate these perspectives, this study examined the relationships between help-seeking intention, sense of contribution, reciprocity norms, general trust, and self-construal by conducting an internet survey on Japanese adults. The results were found to be consistent with previous research. Sense of contribution is positively associated with help-seeking intention, and this association is moderated by reciprocity free norms. General trust, self-expression, and harmony seeking are positively correlated with sense of contribution and help-seeking intention. Contrary to the hypothesis that help-seeking intention is inhibited because of relational apprehension based on interdependence, rejection avoidance is positively associated with help seeking intention. Additionally, a mediation effect of sense of contribution on relationships between harmony seeking and help-seeking intention was confirmed. For a more detailed understanding of help-seeking processes, the importance of considering sociodemographic and context variables is discussed.