

Group dynamics process in group music therapy
improvisation as an opportunity for Asians to liberate
themselves from harmony as a social constraint?

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A Questionnaire-based Study

- Culturally related differences among Europeans and Asians with regard to self-expression in improvisational music therapy
- Research question: Can an Asia-typical pattern of behaviour regarding self-expression be found in the group music therapy improvisation?
- 40 closed & 9 open questions, addressed to European and Asian colleagues (student and music therapist)
- 26 European colleagues (incl. 7 students) from Austria, Germany & Switzerland, 19 Asian colleagues (incl. 6 students) from China, Japan, Korea & Thailand (1)

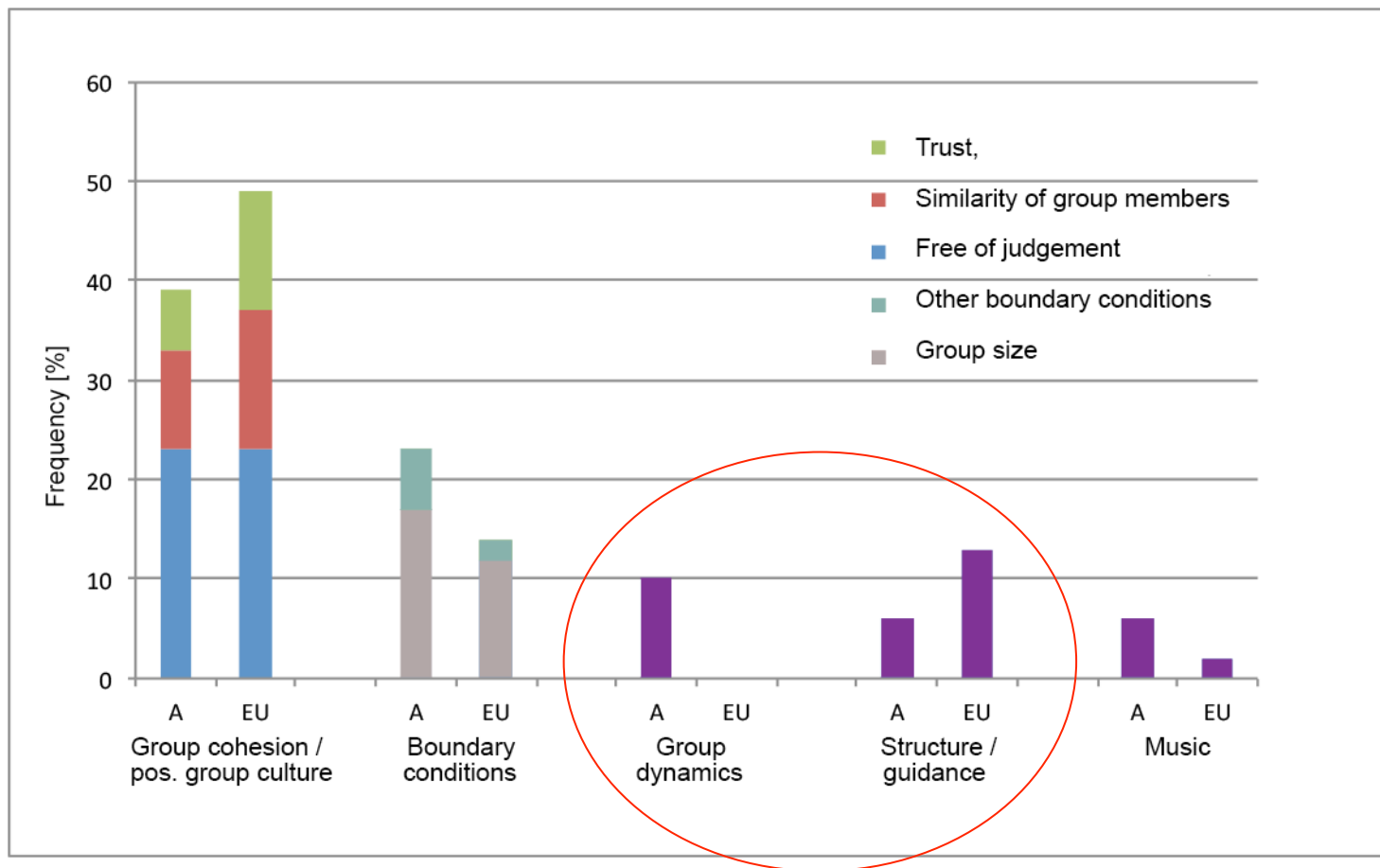
II.a Study design / Theoretical background

Culturally related differences

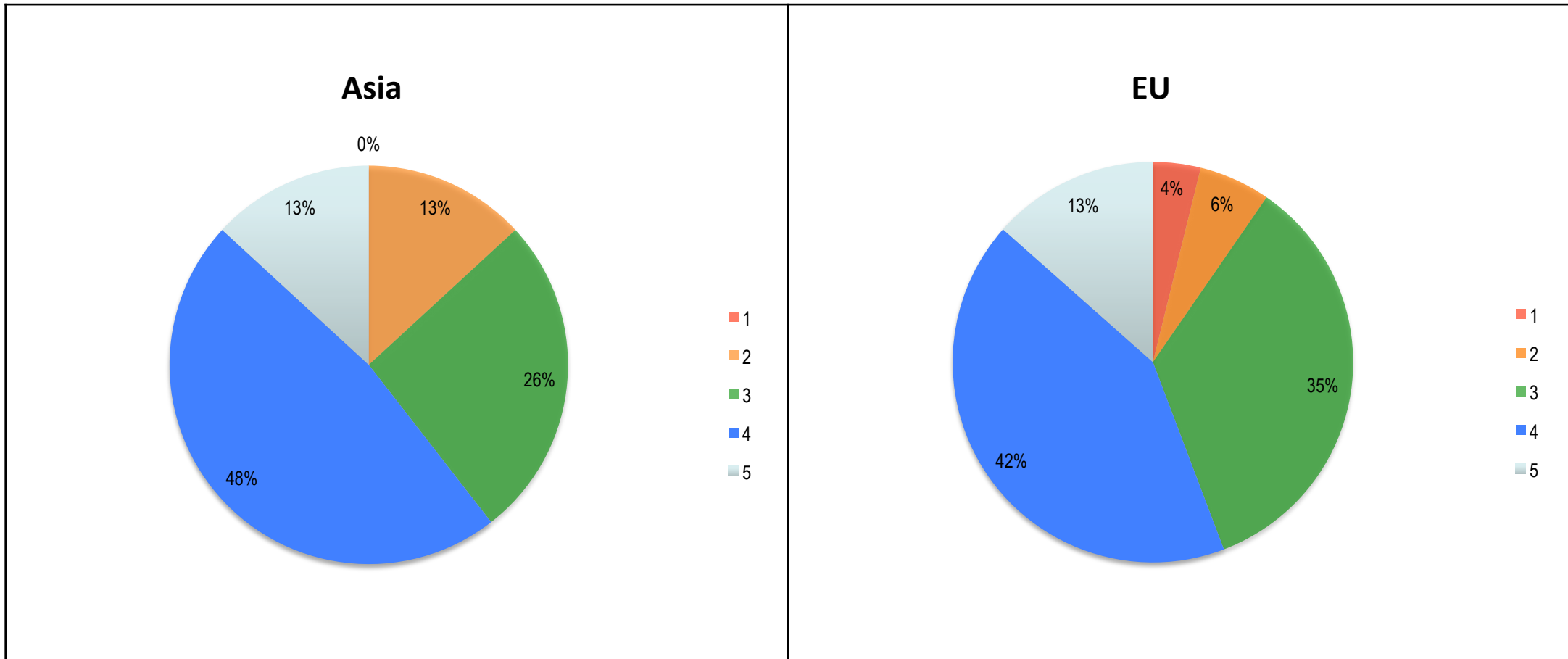
	<i>individualist cultures</i>	<i>collectivist cultures</i>
Individualism vs. Confucianism / Collectivism	person > group horizontal social structure	group > person vertical social structure
Concept of Self	Independent self	Interdependent self
Cultural anthropology	Guilt-Culture	Shame-Culture
Mental health	autonomy	accommodation

Assumptions arising out of these differences ...

favourable conditions for Self-Expression

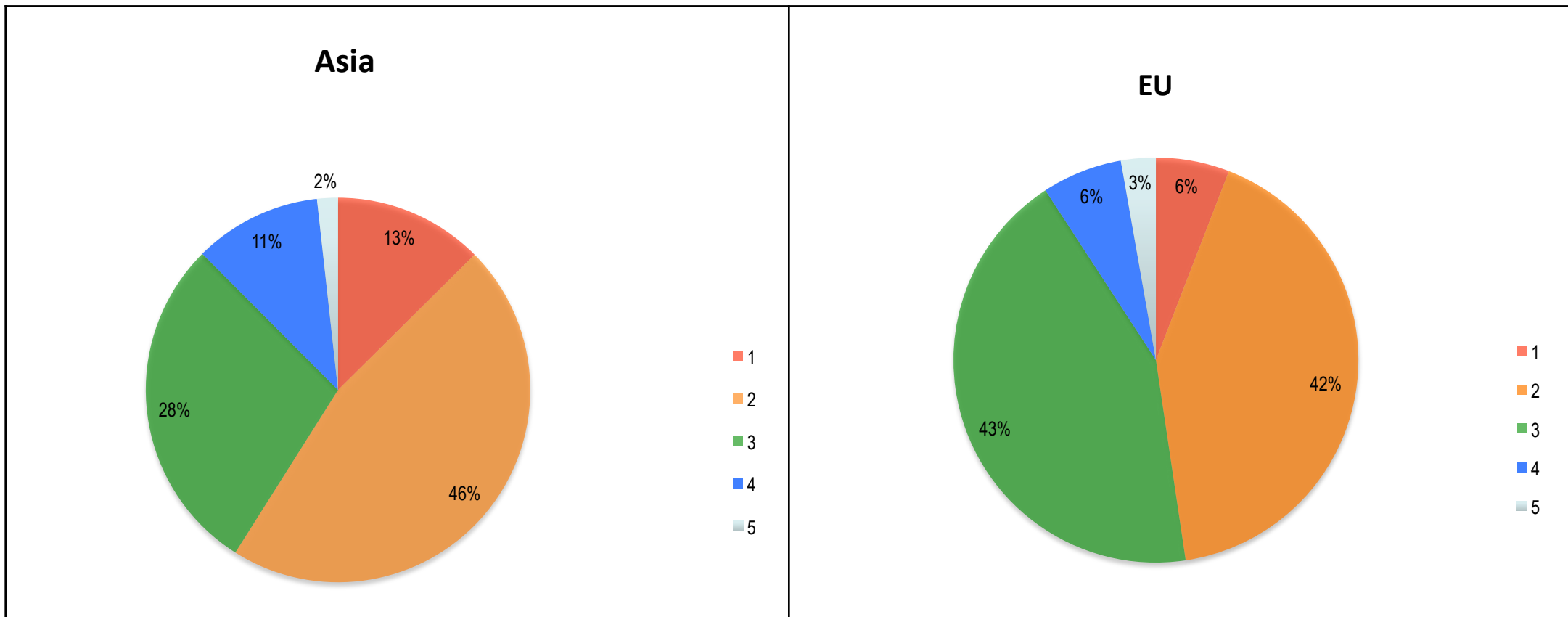


Orientation



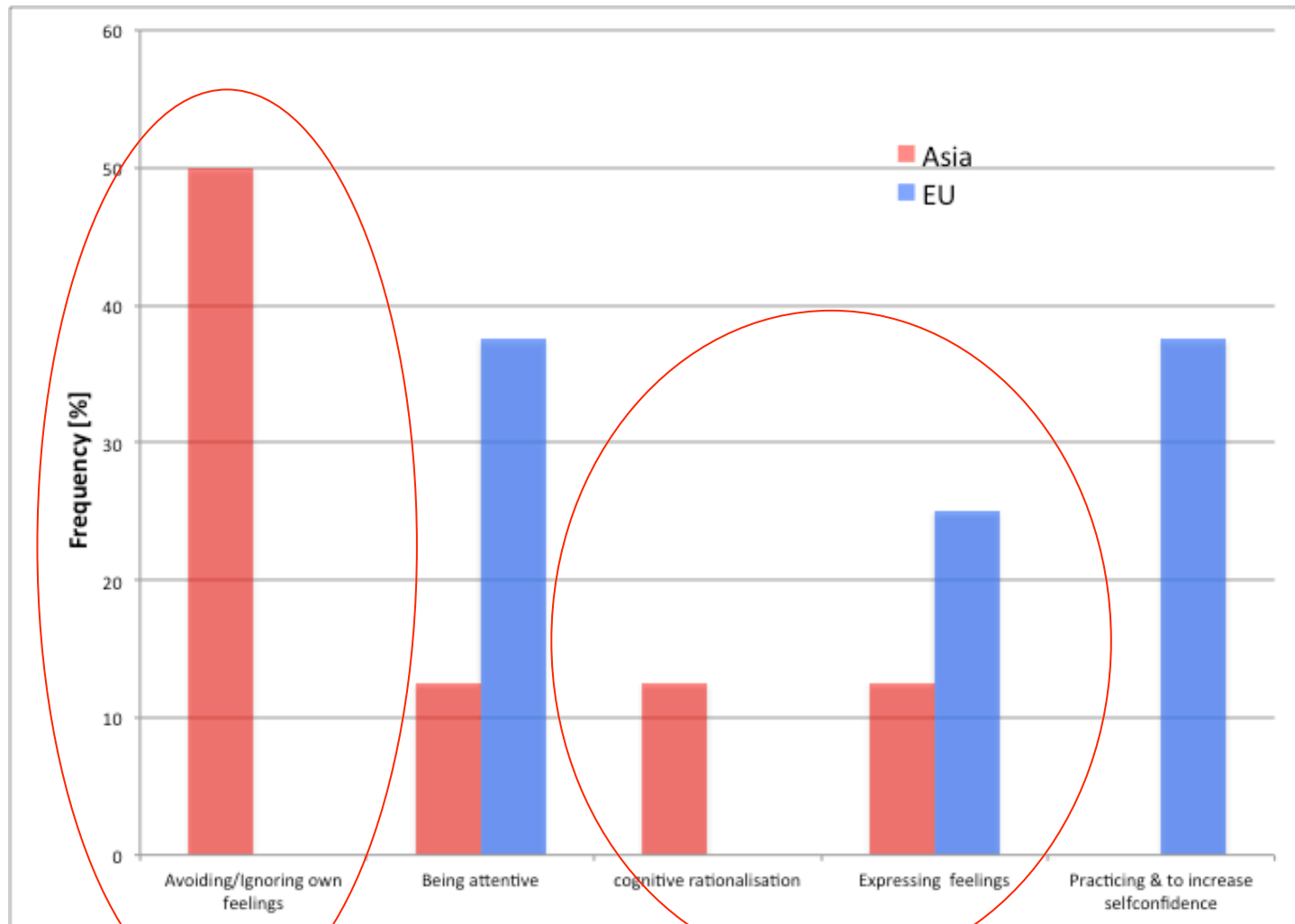
1. always; 2. often; 3. sometimes; 4. seldom; 5. never

Unification vs. Separation

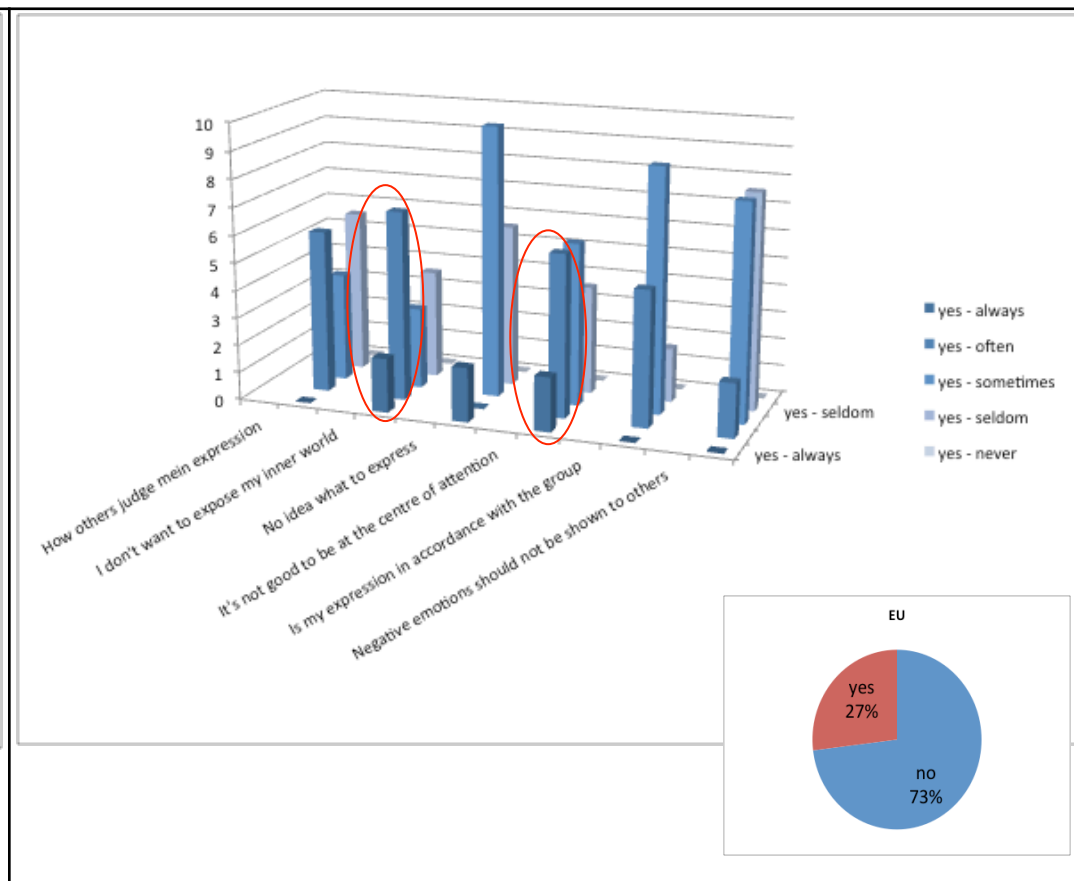
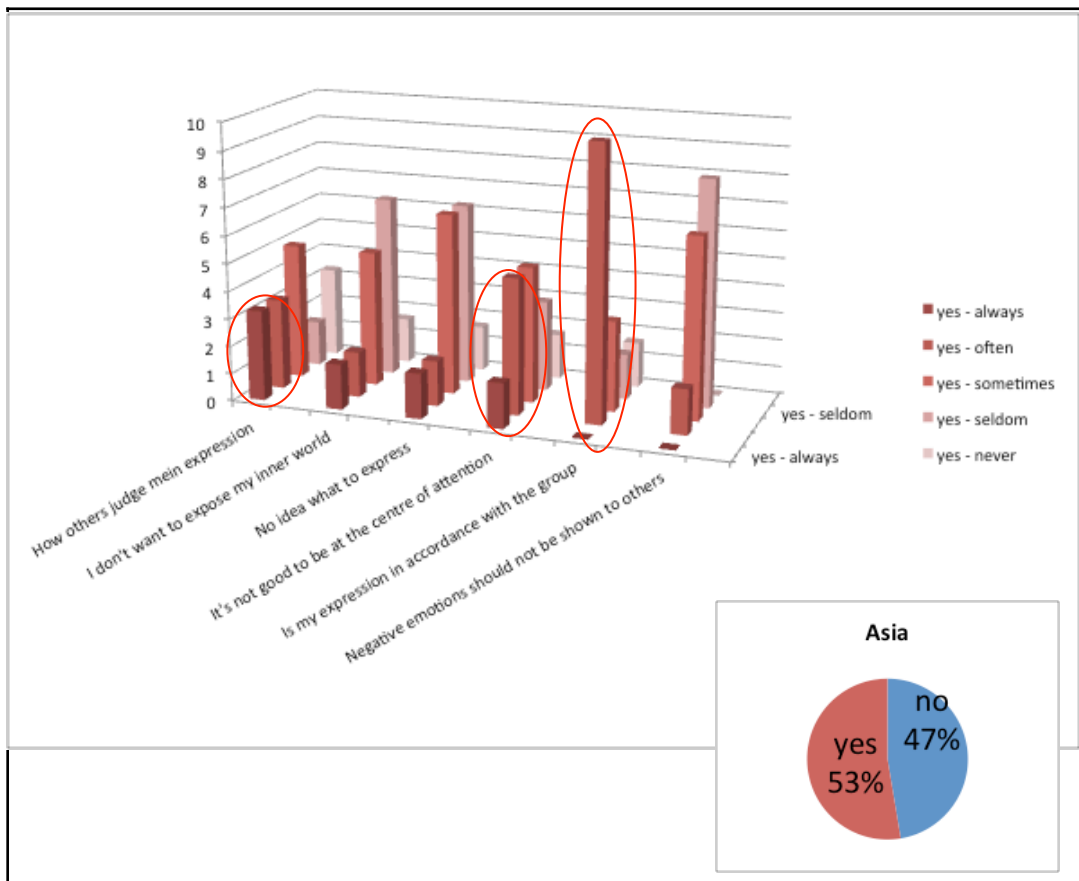


1. always; 2. often; 3. sometimes; 4. seldom; 5. never

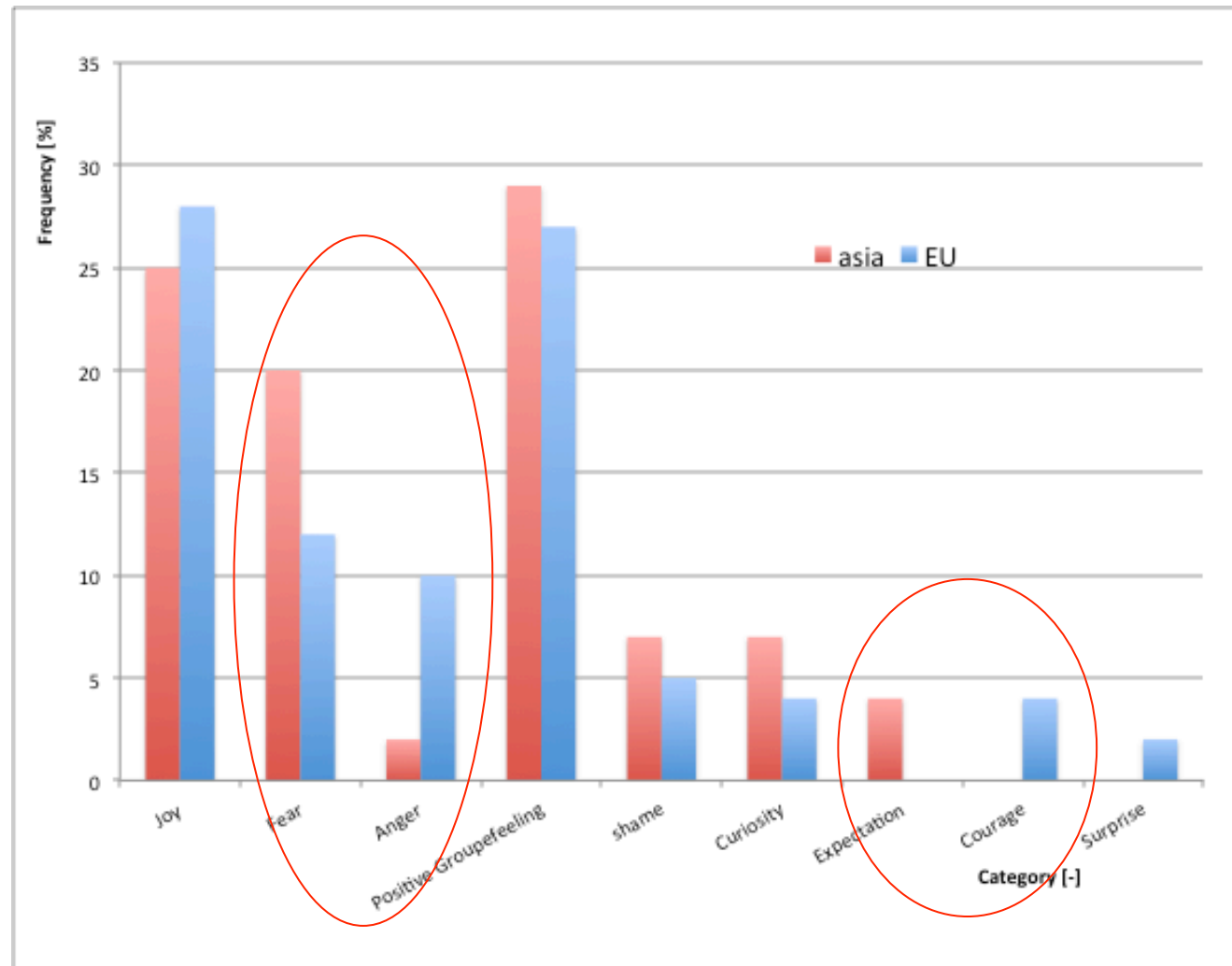
Behavioural strategies



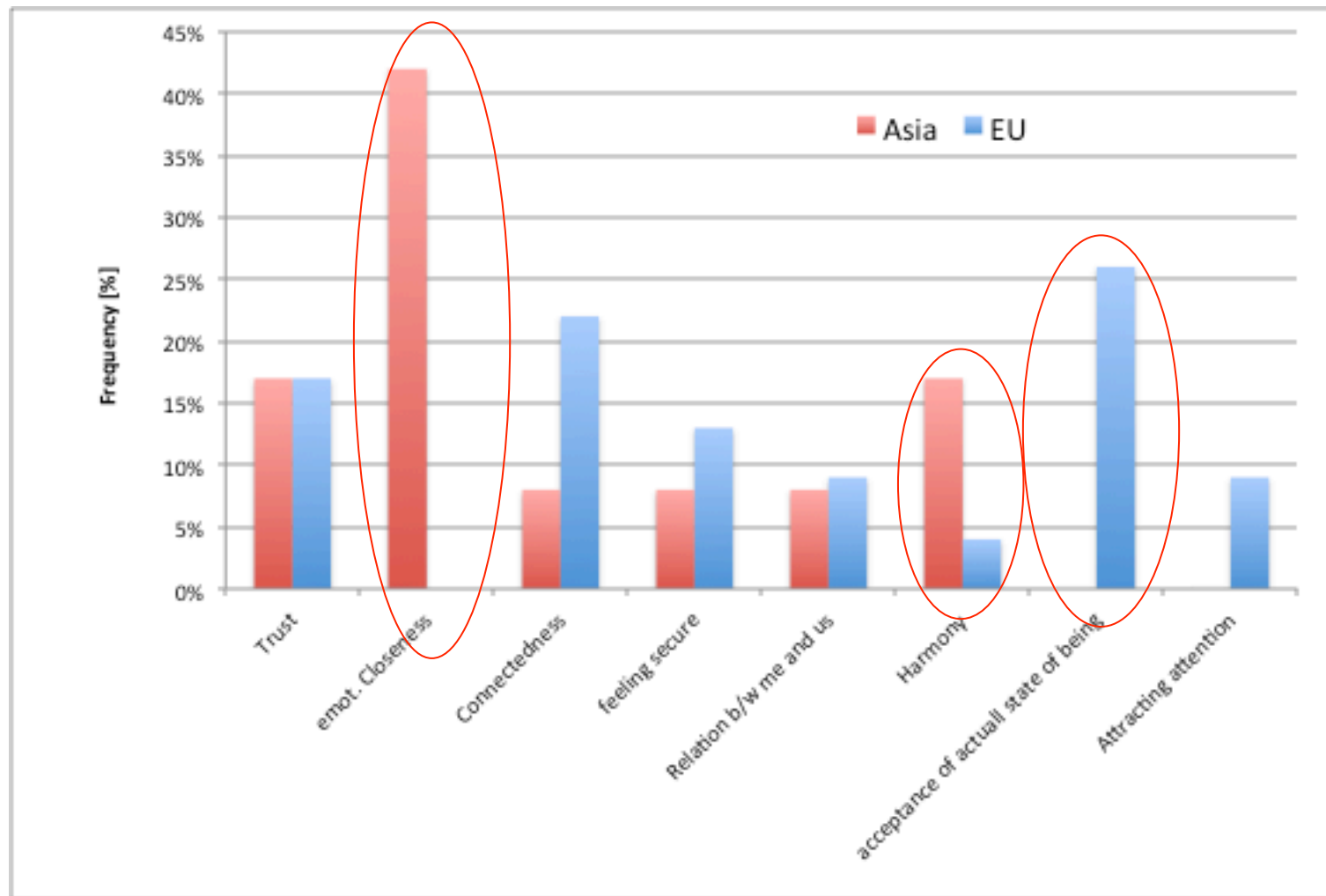
Reason for difficulties doing so



Self-Expressions and Emotions



Positive Group feelings

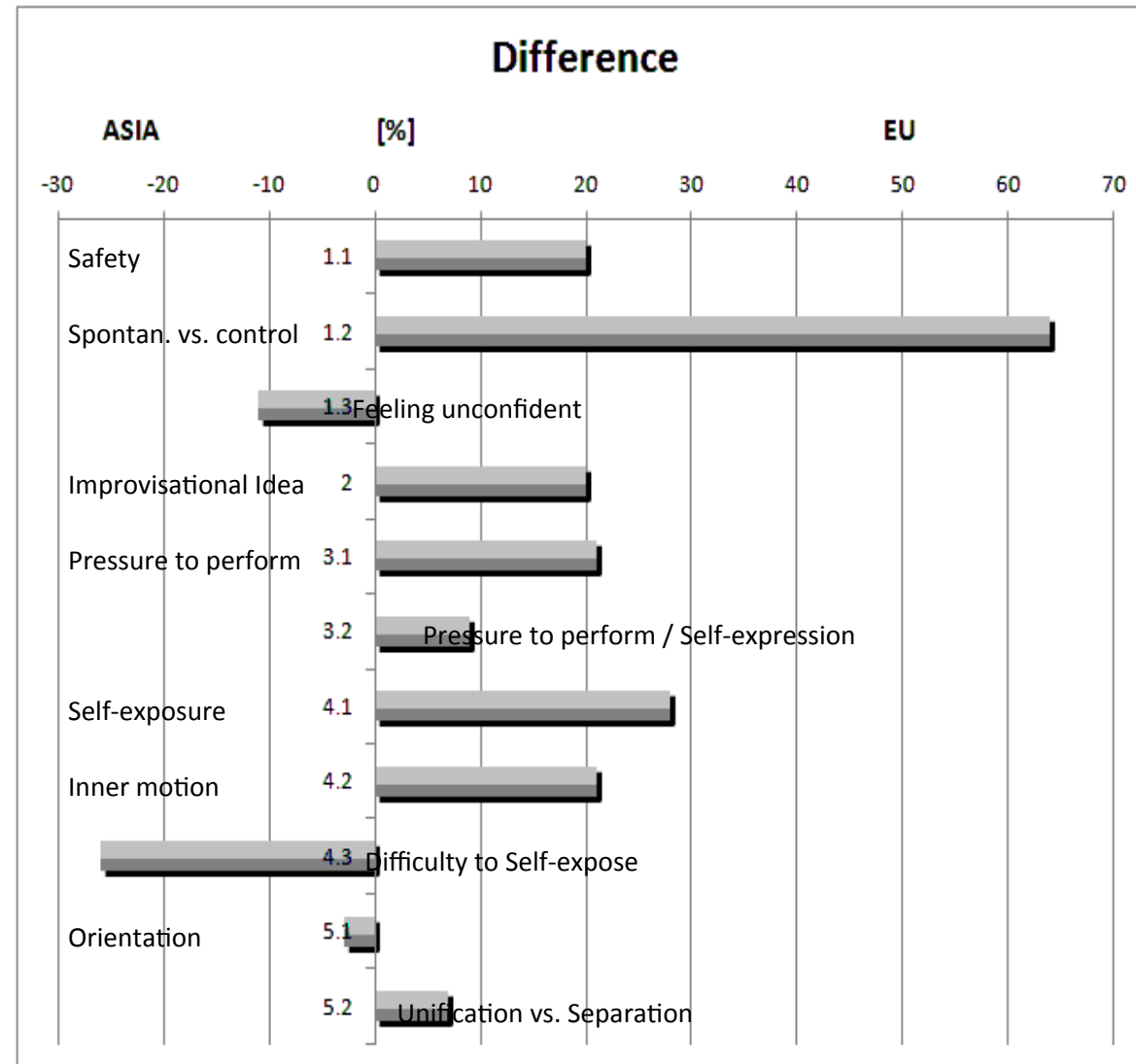


II.c Conclusion

Summary

Hypothesis

Asians ...	<p>Confucianism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. need more structure and leadership (Cat. 5.1 favourable conditions) 2. feel less safe in situations without guidelines like group improvisation (Cat. 1)
	<p>Collectivism / the inter/dependent self</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. tend to be in accordance with the group rather than standing out of it as an individual (Cat. 5.2) 4. are not used to perceive and show their own impulses (Cat. 2)
	<p>Shame</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. are more controlled instead of being spontaneous (Cat. 1.2) 6. avoid exposing themselves - especially their inner motion (Cat. 4) 7. gave greater pressure to perform (Cat. 3)



Conclusion

- A positive group culture is an essential prerequisite for authentic self-expression among both Asians and Europeans.
- Culturally related: Asians tend to suppress their unpleasant feelings in a group. Their greatest concern is a negative reaction / judgement of the group. It is especially important for them to make an experience in that their being will be accepted by others (therapeutic attitude).
- Individuality is important for Asians. The GMTI, with its focus on the group dynamics process and its low-structured setting, offers them a new social environment, where a predefined space is offered for the perception of their own impulses so they can try out new behaviours.
- Harmony - Confrontation - Shame: Aggression (just as disharmony) is a taboo among Asian. Integration of aggression on the intra-psychic and inter-personal level is a highly relevant topic – a general feature of psychotherapy, which frees Asians from their dominant sense of shame (qualitative research!!).
- Is GMTI an appropriate approach for Asians? YES ! although there exist cultural-specific challenges, the confrontation with the new social modes of interactions evolve their potential for self-development. Most asian MTs have great development during their MT-training so that differences with EU-colleagues are not that significant as expected.

Thank you for your attention!