SHORT NOTES

'I or we': Family socialization values in a national probability sample in Taiwan

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The aim of the present secondary data analysis was to explore antecedents and consequences of family socialization values emphasizing independence or interdependence, using a Taiwanese national probability sample. Analysis of variance revealed that those who were male, older and less educated emphasized greater interdependence values. In contrast, those who were younger, with higher social status and urban residents emphasized greater independence values. Multiple regression analysis further revealed that valuing interdependence was related to preferring a greater number of offspring, a higher endorsement of filial piety, greater marital and life satisfaction. Finally, in this national sample, endorsement on independence and interdependence values was equivalent.

Key words: Chinese, family socialization values, independence, interdependence, national survey.

Introduction

Following Hofstede's (1980) seminal work, the topic of individualism and collectivism (I/C) has been the focus of a great deal of zealous research activities in psychology. These research efforts have provided overwhelming evidence of behavioral differences between people from collectivist societies and those from individualist ones (Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994). The main difference across cultures concerns the 'basic unit of survival' (Hui & Triandis, 1986). For individualists, the basic unit is the self, and the well-being of self is the main criterion of adaptation. For collectivists, the basic unit is a group or collectivity, and the welfare of the group is the highest social and moral value. Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002) concluded in their meta-analysis that the core component of individualist value is 'valuing personal independence' whereas those of collectivist value are 'sense of duty to group' and 'relatedness to others'.

However, it is now generally agreed that I/C could be viewed as two cultural syndromes that may coexist within the same geopolitical locale and the same person. For instance, Tu (1991) used 'multiple modernity' to denote the tradition-modern coexistence in Asia. Yang (1988) proposed limited convergence of modernity when he observed traditional elements coexisting with modern elements of the Chinese culture. More recently, Lu and Yang (2006) termed the emergent hybrid as 'tradition-modern biculturalism' in contemporary Chinese societies, and provided extensive evidence supporting their proposal. Such coexistence of tradition/modern or I/C values was also found among Indians (Sinha & Tripathi, 1994).

The same was also true for Turks. Kagitçibasi (1990) proposed three models of family change: X, the collectivist model based on total interdependence; Z, the individualistic model based on total independence; and Y, a dialectical synthesis of the two. Viewing family as an integral part of socialization for the transmission of cultural values, Kagitçibasi (1996) further analyzed the meaning-making system of family socialization practices in the context of her three models. Specifically, in Model X, the control/obedience orientation is the key and total interdependence is valued; in Model Z, the autonomy/self-reliance orientation is the key and total independence is valued. Somewhere between these two extremes, a Turkish study found the coexistence of independent and interdependent orientations in mothers' childrearing values (Kagitcibasi, Sunar, & Bekman, 1988), thus supporting the Y model. However, systematic research on family socialization values has been rare (Miller, 1988).

We thus conducted a secondary data analysis exercise to explore antecedents and consequences of family socialization values in terms of emphasizing independence or interdependence in the cultural context of a Chinese society (Taiwan) using a national probability sample. Valuing and socializing children in interdependence is in accordance with traditional Chinese collectivist culture, while emphasizing independence results from the modern Western individualistic influence. Following Lu and Yang's (2006) theory of 'tradition-modern biculturalism', we would expect that contemporary Taiwanese adopt both independence and interdependence family socialization values.

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Furthermore, decades of research on Chinese traditionality/modernity traits has identified some demographical correlates (Yang, 1988; Lu & Kao, 2002; Lu & Gilmour, 2004; Kao & Lu, 2006). Specifically, we would expect that gender, age, education, social economic status (SES) and rural residents may be antecedents of independence and interdependence.

Finally, there might be a linkage between cultural values and various family preferences. Scholars noted that children have an instrumental value as good workers in the collectivist cultures, and an expressive value in the individualist cultures (Kagitçibasi, 1990). In traditional collectivist Chinese societies, a larger family and more children are desirable, whereas filial piety is the most important family value to observe (Yang, 1981). More recent research further noted that cultural values people endorse might have an impact on their life adjustment and personal well-being. For instance, endorsing traditional Chinese values and interdependence were related to better adjustment among Taiwanese (Lu, Gilmour, & Kao, 2001; Lu & Gilmour, 2004). However, the adjustment value of endorsing modern traits such as independence is debatable and evidence inconclusive (Lu, 2006). We thus expected that desired number of offspring, endorsement of filial piety, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction may be consequences of independence and interdependence. As this study is not a planned hypothesis testing study, only descriptive analyses were used.

Method

Data and participants

Data for the present paper came from the 2006 'Taiwan Social Change Survey' (TSCS), which is the largest nationwide social survey in Taiwan. The TSCS series is operated by the Academia Sinica Taiwan, which has conducted 37 surveys as of 2006. With more than 80 000 interviews over the past 22 years, the TSCS has become the largest survey series among all of the general social surveys in the world (Smith, Kim, Koch, & Park, 2005, p. 74). Highly reputed for its methodological rigor (e.g. nationwide three-stage stratified probability proportionate to size (PPS) sampling using household registration data, well-trained interviewers making home visits, strict supervision, post-interview verification and data checking), its high-quality database is widely used for academic research and cross-cultural comparisons. The response rate for the 2006 survey was 45.7%. The current national sample comprised 2102 respondents. The entire sample was 50.2% male and 49.8% female, with a mean age of 45.96 ($SD = 17.00$, range = 20–93). Mean years of formal education was 11.79 ($SD = 4.02$). The majority (60.9%) was married, having on average 4.34

($SD = 1.90$) persons in the household. Approximately half of our participants (50.8%) lived in cities of various sizes.

Measures

Questionnaires were given in face-to-face home interviews by trained interviewers. The author was a member of the TSCS research group, but the present paper is essentially based on a secondary data analysis. The data analysed in the present paper mainly came from the following parts of the survey.

Family socialization values

To correspond to our dual conceptualization of family socialization values, four items were developed to tap participants' beliefs about child rearing. As Oyserman *et al.* (2002, p. 9) concluded in their comprehensive review on I/C-related values, the two most important individualist values are 'independence' (freedom, self-sufficiency and control over one's life) and 'goals' (striving for one's own goals, desires and achievements), whereas those of collectivist value are 'related' (considering close others an integral part of the self) and 'duty' (the duties and sacrifices that being a group member entails). We initially rephrased eight items to reflect child-rearing beliefs from established scales measuring I/C or independence/interdependence values (e.g. Hui, 1988; Singelis, 1994; Lu & Gilmour, 2007). After pre-test ($N = 150$) and interviews, four items were retained as they conveyed unambiguous meanings reported by our respondents. These are: 'we should teach children that family is more important; one should not put oneself before the family' (interdependence-duty), 'It is more important to teach children to get along with other people harmoniously than to strive for one's own performance' (interdependence-related), 'Even if we don't agree with children's ideals, we should still encourage them to pursue them' (independence-goals) and 'We should teach children to solve their own problems, not to rely on other people' (independence-self-sufficiency). Seven-point rating scales were used (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), with high scores representing high endorsement of interdependence or independence. Cronbach's α for the two-item independence scale was 0.55, and that for the two-item interdependence scale was 0.50 in the current sample.

Family preferences and well-being

In the survey, participants were asked to report their: (i) desired number of offspring; (ii) marital satisfaction (rated on: 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your marriage?' 1 = completely dissatisfied, 5 = completely satisfied); (iii) life satisfaction (rated on: 'Overall, how satisfied are you

with your life?' 1 = completely dissatisfied, 5 = completely satisfied).

Filial piety was measured by six items based on a dual model tapping authoritarian and reciprocal aspects (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). Seven-point rating scales were used (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), with high scores representing high endorsement of filial piety. The internal consistency of this scale was 0.69 in the current sample.

In addition, information on sex (coded male = 1, female = 2), age, marital status (coded married = 1, never married = 2), education attainment, income, SES (1 = lowest, 10 = highest), family size (number of people living in the household) and rural/urban residence (coded rural = 1, urban = 2) was recorded. Finally, as main research variables were measured by self-report, the social desirability bias needed to be controlled. Social desirability was measured by three items taken from the Crowne and Marlowe (1964) scale (1 = often, 4 = never), with high scores representing high susceptibility to social desirability. The internal consistency of this scale was 0.76 in the current sample.

Results

We first examined the conceptual validity of our 'Family Socialization Values Scale' using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). With oblimin rotation, the EFA of four items supported a two-factor structure. The initial eigenvalues and amount of variance accounted for by the two factors were 1.83 (45.64%) and 0.81 (20.32%), respectively, together accounting for 65.96% of the variance. All items loaded on its designated subscale (factor) with loadings between 0.56–0.90. Thus, we confirmed the two-factor conceptual structure of independence/interdependence in this large national sample.

A paired *t*-test was conducted examining within-subject differences between independence (mean = 11.75, *SD* = 1.70) and interdependence (mean = 11.73, *SD* = 1.80) scores. The finding was not significant (*t*(2094) = 0.49, *ns*), indicating that participants endorsed equally strongly on independence and interdependence values.

A series of ANCOVA were conducted, controlling for social desirability (as covariate). Findings are summarized in Table 1. We found that male, older and less educated people valued more interdependence, whereas younger people with higher SES and urban residents valued more independence.

Pearson correlations were computed among main research variables, while again controlling for social desirability. Table 2 reports the full matrix of partial correlations. As independence and interdependence were significantly correlated (*r* = 0.44, *p* < 0.001), every correlation involving independence was computed controlling for interdependence (in addition to social desirability) and vice versa. This would allow us to obtain a clearer and cleaner pattern of associations. As such, higher interdependence significantly correlated with desiring a larger number of

Table 1 Antecedents of independence and interdependence: ANCOVA results with social desirability as covariate

Antecedents	Independence		Interdependence	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Male	11.76	1.72	11.82	1.75
Female	11.75	1.68	11.65	1.85
F for Sex (*df*)	0.02 (1,2095)		4.96* (1,2094)	
Younger (<45 years)	11.82	1.64	11.53	1.82
Older (≥45 years)	11.67	1.76	11.96	1.75
F for Age (*df*)	8.86** (1,2095)		4.46* (1,2094)	
(1) Junior high school and below	11.80	1.76	11.97	1.76
(2) High school	11.79	1.73	11.86	1.75
(3) College	11.81	1.70	11.63	1.90
F for Education (*df*)	1.48 (2,2085)		7.10*** (2,2086)	Post-hoc: 1 > 2 > 3
Lower SES (<5)	11.67	1.87	11.69	1.75
Higher SES (≥5)	11.81	1.72	11.70	1.64
F for SES (*df*)	4.09* (1,2094)		3.47 (1,2095)	
Urban	11.82	1.62	11.59	1.74
Rural	11.78	1.68	11.61	1.77
F for Residence (*df*)	3.95* (1,2090)		0.83 (1,2090)	

(1) *F* for Social desirability was significant in each ANCOVA. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.
SES, socio-economic status.

Table 2 Pearson correlations among main research variables: Controlling for social desirability, and for independence or interdependence as appropriate

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Sex	1												
2. Age	-0.16	1											
3. Education	-0.07**	-0.43***	1										
4. Family size	-0.02	-0.10***	-0.11***	1									
5. Income	0.03	-0.22***	0.30***	-0.02	1								
6. SES	0.09**	-0.15***	0.29***	-0.06	0.35***	1							
7. Urban/rural	-0.03	-0.11***	0.24***	-0.09***	0.16***	0.10**	1						
8. Independence	0.04	0.08***	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.09***	0.08**	1					
9. Interdependence	-0.06**	0.10***	0.11***	0.05	0.01	(0.44***)	0.05	0.44***	1				
10. Desired no. offspring	0.02	-0.18***	0.14***	-0.06	0.06***	-0.01	0.06*	-0.02	0.07*	1			
11. Filial piety	-0.11***	0.20***	0.24***	0.07	-0.13	-0.04	-0.11**	0.18***	0.29***	0.14***	1		
12. Marital satisfaction	-0.11***	-0.06***	0.08***	-0.00	0.11***	0.11***	0.01	0.06*	0.07*	-0.01	0.10***	1	
13. Life satisfaction	-0.13***	-0.06***	0.10***	-0.04	0.27***	0.22***	0.00	0.07*	0.06*	-0.01	0.06***	0.44***	1

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.
Sex: 1, Male; 2, Female; Urban/rural: 1, Rural; 2, Urban. All correlations involving independence and interdependence are partial correlations controlled for interdependence, and vice versa. Correlation between independence and interdependence (controlled for social desirability) is given in the parentheses.
SES, socio-economic status.

offspring, a higher endorsement of filial piety, and higher avowed marital and life satisfaction. It was interesting to note that independence produced a similar pattern of associations (with the exception of desired number of offspring), although the effect size was much smaller regarding filial piety.

We further conducted hierarchical multiple regression analysis. By regressing family preferences and well-being on independence and interdependence, personal background variables (i.e. sex, age, education, income, SES, urban/rural residence) were entered into the equation first to control for their possible contributions. These demographic variables significantly correlated with family preferences and/or well-being variables (Table 2). For parsimony, every analysis was repeated taking out insignificant variables until all variables remaining in the final equation were significant predictors. Desired number of offspring, filial piety, marital satisfaction and life satisfaction were dependent variables in the four regressions reported in Table 3.

As can been seen in Table 3, interdependence was associated with desiring a larger number of offspring, a higher endorsement of filial piety, higher avowed marital and life satisfaction, mirroring the pattern we found with correlation analyses. As for independence, it had a weak association with a higher endorsement of filial piety, again replicating the earlier correlation results.

Discussion and conclusion

Using a national probability sample, the primary aim of the present research was to explore antecedents and consequences of family socialization values in terms of emphasizing independence or interdependence in the cultural context of a Chinese society. Due cautions should be exercised regarding validity of the new 'Family Socialization Values Scale' in this study. With tight restrictions on questionnaire length and interview time, no other existing scales of I/C or independence/interdependence were used in the survey, against which the conceptual validity of the new scale may be checked. However, our EFA results did confirm the underlying two-factor structure of independence/interdependence. Further evidence may be collected in the future.

Although theorists have long been asserting that values and self-systems rooted in diverse cultural traditions can coexist within an individual (e.g. Kagitçibasi, 1990; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Lu & Yang, 2006), the present study may be the first time that we obtained evidence showing that traditional and modern elements are now taking equal weight in the Chinese value system. This was observed in a nationwide representative sample, clearly demonstrating that Chinese people are now emphasizing both collectivist and individualistic values in socializing

Table 3 Predicting family preferences and well-being

Dependent variables	Predictors	β	ΔR^2	R^2	F
Desired no. offspring	Age†	0.25***	0.07***	0.07	
	Interdependence†	0.07***	0.01***	0.08	55.63***
Filial piety	Sex†	−0.10***			
	Age	0.18***			
	Education	−0.16***			
	Income	−0.06**	0.15***	0.15	
	Independence†	0.07***			
	Interdependence	0.29***	0.10***	0.25	97.14***
Marital satisfaction	Sex†	−0.11***			
	SES	0.09**			
	Income	0.08**	0.03***	0.03	
	Interdependence†	0.10***	0.01***	0.04	13.07***
Life satisfaction	Sex†	−0.09***			
	SES	0.14***			
	Income	0.21***	0.10***	0.10	
	Interdependence†	0.11***	0.01***	0.11	60.87***

**p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.
†Indicates a new step in hierarchical regression.
β and F are taken from the final equation.
SES, social economic status.

their children, thus consolidating the foundation for a long-lasting coexistence of traditional and modern rudiments in the society.

This trend is especially pronounced among the young, well-educated, high SES, urban residents, as such is the demographic profile we identified for the prevalence of independence values. This profile also corroborates previous findings for the Chinese (Lu & Kao, 2002; Lu & Gilmour, 2004). It makes sense that for the young educated Chinese living in metropolitan cities, emphasizing independence, autonomy, active striving and personal achievement will promote adjustment to the industrial urban environment, hence such characteristics are more likely to be adopted as family socialization values to pass down the generations.

Family socialization values were also found to be linked to family preferences and personal well-being. Interdependence representing core values of the Chinese cultural tradition was associated with desiring a bigger family and more willingness to adhere to filial piety, both are central features of the Chinese traditional family institution (Yang, 1981). More interestingly, interdependence also seems to hold the key for better adjustment in life. In the present study, interdependence was associated with higher marital and life satisfaction, partialling out contributions of other demographic factors such as SES and income. Although the effect size was not large (1% added explanatory power in both regressions), the finding corroborates a previously noted association between traditional Chinese values and better adjustment among Taiwanese (Lu *et al.*, 2001; Lu & Gilmour, 2004). The value of tradition in a modern world is not to be overlooked.

To conclude, in the present nationwide representative Taiwanese sample, we observed the equal strength of independence and interdependence as family socialization values. We further identified demographic profiles of favouring independence versus interdependence, and noted that independence/interdependence was linked to some indices of family preferences and personal well-being. Noting limits in the independence/interdependence measurement, the tentative conclusion is that bicultural identity in terms of family socialization values do exist among the Taiwanese. Documenting the existence of such bicultural identity and identifying its personal and institutional correlates are contributions of this study.

Acknowledgement

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