

# Traditional and Modern Characteristics Across the Generations: Similarities and Discrepancies

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**ABSTRACT.** The authors examined, through an analysis of self-construals and beliefs about social interaction, the traditional and modern orientations of younger and older generations of Taiwanese people. The authors surveyed 169 pairs of parent–child dyads with a battery of structured questionnaires. Within-subjects analyses revealed high generational correlations as well as discrepancies in both traditional and modern characteristics. Between-subjects analyses further indicated that individual traditional and modern characteristics were affected by age and gender and by their interactions. The authors discuss (a) the pattern of generational similarities and discrepancies in the framework of culture stability and change and (b) the coexistence of traditional and modern characteristics in a rapidly changing society.

**Key words:** collectivism, generational discrepancies, generational similarities, individualism, modern characteristics, traditional characteristics

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SINCE HOFSTEDE'S (1980) seminal work, the topic of individualism–collectivism (I–C) has been the focus of zealous research, which has provided overwhelming evidence of behavioral differences between people from collectivist societies and those from individualist ones (Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994).

The I–C dimension (Hofstede, 1980) is sociological, and Hofstede based his entire work on ecological–group level analyses. I–C is not about individuals but, rather, about the constraints within which people in different societies develop a

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psychology of relatedness. Indeed, the main difference between collectivism and individualism concerns the “basic unit of survival” (Hui & Triandis, 1986, p. 225). 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 collective, and the welfare of the group is the highest social and moral value.

The main implication of the difference between individualism and collectivism concerns the relationship between an individual and a group. Conceptualizing a psychological dimension of relatedness to parallel the sociological (I–C) dimension, Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) proposed the *independent* and *interdependent* views of self. An independent view of self derives from a belief in the wholeness and separateness of each individual’s configuration of internal attributes. That construal emphasizes self-actualization; self-realization; expression of one’s unique configuration of needs, rights, and capacities; and development of one’s distinct potential. This is the prototypical Western characterization of the self, which locates crucial self-representations within the individual. In contrast, an interdependent view of self derives from a belief in the individual’s connectedness to and interdependence with others. That construal emphasizes fitting in, belonging to, fulfilling and creating obligations, and becoming part of various social units. This is the prototypical Eastern characterization of the self, which locates crucial self-representations not within the unique individual attributes but within one’s social relationships.

Issues associated with the possible origins of the differences between an independent and interdependent construal of the self are still open to debate. It is likely that each culture activates, elaborates, organizes, strengthens, and maintains one self-system over the other through socialization practices such as child rearing (Stevenson, Asuma, & Harkuta, 1986). Those distinct self-construals may then govern and affect some aspects of perception, cognition, emotion, and motivation. Furthermore, conceptions of the self may influence the nature of intrapersonal as well as interpersonal phenomena.

Beliefs about interpersonal interaction may be a consequence of self-systems. Markus and Kitayama (1991) described five tasks for independent self-construal: being unique, expressing self, realizing internal attributes, promoting one’s own goals, and being direct in social interactions. To fulfill those tasks, the individual must actively exercise his or her agency; seek control over the external environment; and change or influence other people, things, and objects to further his or her goals. The preoccupation with such active control is quite evident in the sizable and undiminishing attention accorded to the topic of control in the West (see Furnham & Steele, 1993). Furthermore, sense of control has been repeatedly linked to a wide variety of indices of adaptation (see Steptoe & Appels, 1989).

There are also five tasks for interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991): belonging and fitting in, occupying one’s proper place, engaging in appropriate action, promoting others’ goals, and being indirect in social interactions. To fulfill those tasks, the individual must build and maintain harmo-

ny in interpersonal relationships. Many Eastern cultures advocate adapting to, rather than controlling, the environment. Instead of the assertion of one's own needs and the rigorous pursuit of one's own goals, many Eastern cultures value interpersonal harmony and encourage—"sacrificing the Small self to accomplish the Great self," according to a popular Chinese saying. In Chinese culture, a state of homeostasis between the self and others (e.g., groups, society, and nature) is viewed as the ultimate achievement in human adaptation (Chiang, 1996). Relationship harmony is a concept borrowed from Confucian philosophy, which is, arguably, the most significant force shaping the mentality of the Chinese people. Harmony refers to the balance achieved in relationships. The major focus of that concept is the relationship itself, rather than the satisfaction of its constituent individuals or the support derived by an individual from the relationship (Ho, 1993).

Although the concepts of I-C (Hofstede, 1980) as a sociological dimension and of independent and interdependent self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994) as psychological dimensions are useful and popular in operationalizing the illusive culture, they are not without flaws. One serious criticism is their value-laden connotations and the assumed progression toward individualism with societal development. Collectivism and interdependent self-construal may carry some negative connotations (Lawler, 1980), and some researchers assume that individualism and independent self-construal replace them in the course of social evolution (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1984, 1988). That observation is not surprising, because most researchers view individualism and collectivism from a Western perspective, in which individualism and independent self-construal are highly valued and are considered compatible with social organization, economic development, cultural and social complexity, and even ideological superiority. In other words, individualism-independent self-construals and collectivism-interdependent self-construals are viewed as respective parallels to modernity-traditionality, and researchers have adopted a social evolutionary approach.

Indeed, after reviewing research conducted with the individual modernity paradigm, Yang (1988) concluded that about two thirds of individual modernity traits actually reflected individualism. Therefore, there is empirical evidence of similarity between core modern and traditional characteristics and I-C (Hofstede, 1980; Hui & Triandis, 1986).

However, the individual modernity paradigm has been severely criticized (Bendix, 1967) for pitting modernity against tradition and for assuming that the former replaces the latter. In fact, individual modernity may not be a coherent syndrome at all. On the one hand, those characteristics that are incompatible with the demands of urban living may give way to more compatible ones. On the other hand, characteristics that are compatible with the demands of urban living may endure, even though they are traditional from a Western perspective.

To develop a psychology of relatedness, Kagitcibasi (1990) proposed three models of the family: X, the collectivist model based on total interdependence; Z, the individualistic model based on total independence; and Y, a dialectical syn-

thesis of the two. Turkish researchers found the coexistence of independent and interdependent orientations in mothers' child-rearing values (Kagitcibasi, Sunar, & Bekman, 1988), in support of the Y model. In addition, other findings have pointed to the coexistence of individualist and collectivist value orientations among Chinese (Lin & Fu, 1990) and Indian people (Agarwal & Misra, 1986; Sinha & Tripathi, 1994).

Starting with the analysis of the inner structure of Confucianism, Hwang (1996) examined the perceived generational differences in both modern and traditional values among Taiwanese participants. He found that the importance of certain core traditional values did not change across the generations; some traditional values, however, were fading away. Moreover, Hwang argued that, in the course of social modernization, traditional and modern values may coexist and may even merge to create a new value system as a guiding force of human actions. However, one drawback of Hwang's research is that he examined the perceived, rather than the actual, generational differences, because the participants reported their own values and estimated those of their parents. An additional shortcoming of Hwang's study is its entire dependence on well-educated college-level informants, which seriously restricted the generalizability of the findings.

In the present study, we also focused on the most significant dyad—the parent–child relation (Goodwin & Tang, 1996)—to examine the generational differences. Because of our focus on close family relationships, alternative conceptions of independence–interdependence must be addressed. One of the most widely accepted theories of human relationships is *exchange theory*, which assumes that a person's behavior is motivated by a desire to maximize profits and minimize losses (Blau, 1964; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Although social exchange may provide a general framework for analyzing all kinds of relationships, a serious challenge to that perspective is that people conduct their actual daily relationships very differently, depending on with whom they are interacting. Later, Kelley & Thibaut (1978) introduced the concept of interdependence and extended exchange theory to recognize that people may be concerned with another person's outcomes or rewards as well as their own. Such empathetic and altruistic concerns are strong and familiar in love, marriage, and close family relationships and are important for friendships.

Similarly, Clark and her associates drew a clear distinction between exchange and *communal* relationships (Berg & Clark, 1986; Clark & Mills, 1979). Exchange relationships are governed by the desire for and expectation of immediate, equal, "tit-for-tat" repayment for benefits. Communal relationships, in contrast, are governed by the desire for and expectation of mutual responsiveness to each other's needs. Interactions between family members are usually regarded as communal, because family members, as a rule, do not keep track of rewards and costs to themselves but are more concerned with the needs of the other party. In other words, family members are responding to a state of interdependence.

At this point, the two conceptions of independence and interdependence

must be further distinguished. Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) viewed independence and interdependence as two contrasting self-systems. The question is whether the self ends within the physical body or encompasses important others. Kelley and Thibaut (1978) as well as Clark and her colleagues (Berg & Clark, 1986; Clark & Mills, 1979) viewed independence-interdependence as embedded directly in the nature of the social relationship—that is, whether the relationship's focus is only one's own welfare or whether it includes the welfare of the other. Because we explored not only self-construals but also real-life relationships in the present study, both conceptions were relevant.

Therefore, we examined, through an analysis of self-construals and beliefs about social interaction, the traditional and modern orientations of Taiwanese parents and children. In a sample consisting of pairs of parents and children, we used within-subjects analyses to map generational similarities and discrepancies and between-subjects analyses to explore predictors of the traditional and modern orientations.

Our specific hypotheses were as follows:

*Hypothesis 1:* Parents have more traditional characteristics in terms of interdependent self-construal and harmony belief.

*Hypothesis 2:* Children have more modern characteristics in terms of independent self-construal and control belief.

Last, we examined predictors of the individual's independent self-construal, interdependent self-construal, control belief, and harmony belief.

## Method

### *Participants*

Parent-child pairs were our potential respondents. We approached adolescents at one senior high school and one vocational school in the same region in Taiwan. The students completed a battery of structured questionnaires during class. Then, each adolescent took home a copy of the questionnaire for his or her father or mother to complete. The questionnaire was the same for the students and their parents, except for minor alterations in wording to fit the different circumstances. We tried to survey both fathers and mothers and both sons and daughters. As a result, 169 parent-child pairs returned complete data for analysis. Among them, there were 38 father-son pairs, 39 father-daughter pairs, 36 mother-son pairs, and 56 mother-daughter pairs. The overall response rate was 96%.

### *Instruments*

*Self-construals.* We used the 24-item Independent and Interdependent Self-Construals Scale (Singelis, 1994). The respondents rated each statement on a 7-

point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Sample items are “My own personal identity independent of others is very important to me” (independent self-construal) and “Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument” (interdependent self-construal). We then computed two scores representing independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal, respectively. Higher scores indicated higher endorsement of a particular view of self.

*Control belief.* To reflect the current focus on social interactions, we used the Interpersonal Control subscale from the Sphere of Control Inventory (Paulhus & Christie, 1981). Respondents rated their agreement with 8 statements (e.g., “I often find it hard to get my point of view across to others,” reverse scored) on 7-point Likert-type scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). We then computed a total score. Higher scores indicated higher endorsement of beliefs in internal control in the interpersonal sphere.

*Harmony belief.* We selected Chinese idioms depicting interpersonal harmony from the Chinese Value Survey (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) and the Traditional Values Scale (Yang & Cheng, 1989). On 7-point Likert-type scales (1 = *not important*, 7 = *very important*), the respondents rated their agreement with the 20 idioms selected from both instruments and rewritten (e.g., “Sacrificing oneself for the greater good”). Higher scores indicated higher endorsement of beliefs in interpersonal harmony.

## Results

### *Descriptive Analysis*

In the present study, the children were middle adolescents (mean ages = 16.39 and 16.47 years, *SDs* = 0.63 and 0.62 for daughters and sons, respectively). Their parents were middle-aged adults (mean ages = 41.22 and 44.12 years, *SDs* = 4.19 and 5.27 for mothers and fathers, respectively). There were slightly more female (54.44%) than male participants in the sample. The education levels for parents and children (10 years) were comparable, although the mothers were generally less educated (9.38 years) than the fathers (11.09 years). The statutory education is 9 years in Taiwan (for breakdown of scores by generation and gender, see Table 1). According to the mean scores and standard deviations, within-group variations on all research variables were similar for the parents and the children.

### *Dyadic Similarities and Discrepancies*

We examined dyadic congruence on traditional and modern characteristics by correlating scores of a parent and child for a particular construct. Table 2 con-

**TABLE 1**  
**Sample Characteristics and Scores on the Research Variables**

Score	<i>t(df)</i>								
	Daughters ( <i>N</i> = 91)	Sons ( <i>N</i> = 78)	Mothers ( <i>N</i> = 93)	Fathers ( <i>N</i> = 76)	Total parent-child ( <i>N</i> = 169)	Father- son ( <i>N</i> = 38)	Father- daughter ( <i>N</i> = 39)	Mother- son ( <i>N</i> = 36)	Mother- daughter ( <i>N</i> = 56)
Interdependent self-construal									
<i>M</i>	64.87	60.46	64.49	66.36	3.12(148)**	3.57(36)***	2.68(31)*	0.23(32)	-0.29(45)
<i>SD</i>	6.60	7.98	8.55	7.99					
Independent self-construal									
<i>M</i>	60.38	57.36	58.77	59.59	0.37(140)	0.5(31)	2.01(31)	0.18(29)	-1.26(45)
<i>SD</i>	7.83	6.90	8.10	8.98					
Harmony belief									
<i>M</i>	115.29	105.97	114.77	115.38	3.07(149)**	3.33(35)**	4.03(32)***	-0.4(31)	-0.09(47)
<i>SD</i>	12.58	14.53	15.77	11.94					
Control belief									
<i>M</i>	37.20	37.47	40.23	41.88	4.83(143)***	2.76(33)**	3.28(31)**	1.67(29)	2.43(46)*
<i>SD</i>	7.05	7.36	6.46	7.11					

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

tains results of this correlation analysis for (a) total parent–child pairs, (b) father–son pairs, (c) mother–son pairs, (d) father–daughter pairs, and (e) mother–daughter pairs. This analysis is analogous to the temporal autocorrelations or the pre–postcorrelations in a within-subjects design.

In terms of interdependent self-construal, on the one hand, only the mother–daughter dyads had a statistically significant correlation. In terms of independent self-construal, on the other hand, the overall generational correlation was significant; that finding could be attributed to the high correlation in father–daughter dyads. In terms of harmony belief, the overall generation correlation was again significant, and that pattern was present in father–daughter and mother–son dyads. However, only father–daughter dyads had a significant correlation in control belief. To sum, there was overall generational correlation in both traditional (harmony belief) and modern (independent self-construal) characteristics. The correlation was especially pronounced in father–daughter dyads, where three of four correlation coefficients reached statistical significance.

We examined dyadic discrepancies in traditional and modern characteristics by conducting paired *t* tests, in which we treated parents and children as two dependent samples. Again, we conducted analyses for all parent–child dyads and the four specific dyadic compositions (see Table 1). Half of the *t* tests revealed significant results. Overall, the parents had more traditional (interdependent self-construal and harmony belief) as well as modern (control belief) characteristics than did their children. Interestingly, those discrepancies were confined mostly to father–child dyads; with only one exception, on independent self-construal, such discrepancies did not occur in the mother–child dyads.

**TABLE 2**  
**Dyadic Correlations in Traditional and Modern Characteristics**

Variable	Total parent–child ( <i>N</i> = 169)	Father– son ( <i>N</i> = 38)	Father– daughter ( <i>N</i> = 39)	Mother– son ( <i>N</i> = 36)	Mother– daughter ( <i>N</i> = 56)
Interdependent self- construal	.13	.09	.08	.07	.35*
Independent self- construal	.20*	.27	.49**	–.01	.09
Harmony belief	.19*	.05	.40**	.38*	.15
Control belief	.19	–.16	.46**	.13	.01

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01.

TABLE 3  
Regression Analyses on Predictors of Traditional and Modern Characteristics

Predictor	Interdependent self-construal			Independent self-construal			Harmony belief			Control belief		
	$\beta$	$R^2$	$F(df)$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$F(df)$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$F(df)$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$F(df)$
Gender <sup>d</sup>	.17**			.03			.04			.23***		
Age	.15**			.02			.04			.05		
Years of education	-.11	.06	6.38(3, 308)***	-.07	.01	0.49(3, 299)	-.10*	.06		.04	.06	
Interdependent self-construal <sup>a</sup>							.56***					
Independent self-construal							.16***	.43	41.40(5, 272)***	.20**	.10	6.18(5, 271)***

Note. We coded female as 1 and male as 2.

<sup>a</sup>A new step in the hierarchical regression.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### *Predictors of Traditional and Modern Characteristics*

We examined generational similarities, discrepancies, and their causes by within-subjects analyses treating parent–child as a dyadic pair. Nonetheless, the design of the study also allowed between-subjects analyses treating parents and children as independent entities.

We conducted multiple regression analyses on each measure to examine the relative contribution of various potential predictors. In predicting self-construals, we entered age, gender, and years of education simultaneously as demographic variables. In predicting beliefs, there was a theoretical basis to determine a hierarchical order of variables, namely, demographic variables first, followed by the two self-construals (see Table 3).

Gender and age were significant predictors of interdependent self-construal. Being male and being older were associated with the higher level of that traditional characteristic. However, none of the three demographic variables predicted independent self-construal.

According to regression outcomes for beliefs, fewer years of education and the two self-construals, on the one hand, were significant predictors of the harmony belief. Together, they accounted for 43% of variance in scores; the contribution of the self-construals was 37%. Gender (male) and independent self-construal, on the other hand, were significant predictors of the control belief. Both accounted for 10% of the variance in scores.

## **Discussion**

We examined traditional and modern characteristics across generations. Adopting a dyadic design, we combined within-subjects with between-subjects analyses. We examined dyadic similarities and discrepancies with the former and the causes of those differences and predictive models with the latter. We focused the discussion on the generational similarities and discrepancies and on the relation between traditional and modern characteristics.

### *Culture Stability and Change*

One striking finding in the present study was the seemingly paradoxical coexistence of generational similarities and discrepancies. The overall generational correlation for both traditional and modern characteristics was high. By comparison, the overall generational discrepancies for both traditional and modern characteristics were also high. This generational pattern may indicate that culture both endures and changes.

Culture is a collective phenomenon, because people who share the same social environment learn culture from that environment. Early socialization of the young is an important way to transmit culture. One may regard the high cor-

relation within the present parent–child dyads as a result of such culture transmission through the generations. Through such transmission, a culture retains its core structure, as represented by its values, beliefs, rituals, practices, institutions, and so forth. The culture is, thus, stable.

Our finding corroborates an earlier claim by Hwang (1996) based on his study with highly educated members of the social elite. Our respondents, on average, had approximately 10 years of formal education, the average education attainment of the modern urban population in Taiwan since the enforcement of the 9-year statutory education policy in 1968. Thus, both ordinary people and members of the social elite living in a time of dramatic sociopolitical, economic, and technological changes retained the essence of the Chinese cultural heritage. For both the younger and older participants in the present study, traditional collectivist orientations still thrived. The interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) stresses the individual's connectedness to and interdependence with others. That self-view can thus be regarded as a psychological concept parallel to the sociological concept of collectivism. In the present study, the mean scores for the interdependent self-construal measure and those for the harmony belief (Table 1) indicate that all the groups fell between the 3rd and 4th quarters on the scales. If those quarters are taken as cutoffs, then the present findings indicate a fairly high level of traditional collectivist orientations in the sample as a whole, although there were differences in those orientations according to age and gender. Hofstede (1980) ranked Taiwan 44th of 53 worldwide regions on his measure of individualism and, thus, depicted it as a highly collectivist society. Nearly 20 years later, despite the astonishing economic miracle, the icebreaking political reform, and the fundamental westernization of life, Taiwan remains a collectivist society. Here, cultural resilience and stability have defeated the social Darwinists' claim that modernity eventually replaces indigenous traditions (Mazrui, 1968).

Nonetheless, the stability of culture does not preclude the possibility of change. We found overall discrepancies in both traditional and modern orientations across the generations. Triandis (1988) proposed that changes in individualist and collectivist orientations may take place with migration, religious changes, and changes in affluence and education. Generational differences were not implicated in his analyses. Later, in a study of Indian fathers and sons, Sinha and Tripathi (1994) found that younger, highly educated, and urban people tended to be less collectivistic; however, urban residence significantly influenced the orientation mainly of younger, rather than older, people. The authors dubbed that phenomenon "generation gap owing to urbanization" (p. 236).

The present study extended the earlier theoretical and empirical analyses in three ways. First, we examined generational differences within an urban population (the most affected by societal modernization) to "zoom in" on potential cohort effects. Second, we collected data from mothers and daughters as well as from fathers and sons; thus, we explored gender as a variable in determining the

generational differences. Third, because we adopted a dyadic design and complemented between-subjects analyses with within-subjects ones, a “purer” generational pattern could emerge while we controlled possible confoundings.

Generational differences in symbols, heroes, rituals, and values are evident to most people in many societies. Over the past two decades, there has been a general and irreversible trend of urbanization and nucleation of families and the weakening of traditional institutions of socialization in Taiwan (Shu & Lin, 1989; Yang, 1988). Under the restricting force of culture consistency, it is still likely that the younger urban population may exhibit fewer collectivist orientations and values than the older generations, as we found among the present Taiwanese parent–child dyads. The parents possessed more traditional collectivist characteristics, in terms of interdependence self-construal and harmony belief; however, the parents also had higher control beliefs than their children did. Those seemingly conflicting findings may be reconciled within the framework of Confucian ethics.

The traditional Chinese society is a well-organized power hierarchy. According to a concept from Confucian philosophy, five cardinal relations are significant in one’s social world (Goodwin & Tang, 1996). The key dyadic relations are those between (a) emperor and minister, (b) father and son, (c) husband and wife, (d) brother and brother, and (e) friend and friend. As a culture emphasizing the father–son axis, the Confucian *Lun Li* (social order) ascribes different powers, duties, and obligations to the parties in the foregoing dyadic relations (Yang, 1981). The superior party (emperor, father, husband, elder brother, and elder friend) has greater power than the inferior party (minister, son, wife, younger brother, and younger friend). In general, the superior party also has more control over the living conditions. In modern Taiwan, the preceding cardinal social relations have remained largely intact, with the relation between emperor and minister replaced by that between authority and subordinate. It is not surprising, then, that the present parents felt more in control than their children did.

To summarize, culture both stays constant and evolves. Against the background of substantial social changes and economic development, younger and older Taiwanese urban residents, on the one hand, retained their core traditional collectivist orientations and exhibited a pattern of high correlations within the parent-child dyads. On the other hand, the children seemed to be a bit more than their parents and exhibited fewer traditional characteristics.

### *The Coexistence of Tradition and Modernity*

Another striking finding of the present study is the coexistence of traditional and modern orientations among the Taiwanese sample. Although the mean scores on independent self-construal and control belief were generally lower than those on interdependent self-construal and harmony belief, respectively, the mean scores on the former two variables indicate that all groups were placed

between the 2nd and 3rd quarters. In other words, a moderate degree of modern characteristics coexisted with a high degree of traditional characteristics among the present Taiwanese parents and children.

Our results corroborated earlier findings among Turkish, Chinese, and Indian samples (Agarwal & Misra, 1986; Hwang, 1996; Kagitcibasi et al., 1988; Lin & Fu, 1990; Sinha & Tripathi, 1994). Increasing empirical evidence has helped to break the once-popular myth of social Darwinism and the linear model of modernity (Mazrui, 1968). The Eastern cultures, even though they may be traditional from a Western perspective, may not simply vanish or be replaced by the incoming Western ones in the course of societal modernization. Instead, they may have amazing transformative power to preserve the core indigenous cultural tradition and, meanwhile, to absorb and assimilate useful elements from the alien cultures. Continuing collectivist culture and familial values in highly developed countries such as Japan (Iwawaki, 1986) provide evidence against the assumptions of modernization theory. The coexistence of seemingly conflicting self-views and interactive beliefs in the fast-developing Taiwanese society adds further support to Kagitcibasi's (1990) dialectical synthesis model.

More interesting, in a recent large-scale study with a Taiwanese sample (Lu, 1999), modern characteristics such as interdependent self-construal and harmony belief reliably predicted an individual's subjective well-being. Although independent self-construal and control belief are not the dominant self- and belief systems in a collectivist culture, they may, nonetheless, hold adjustment values for individuals in modern times.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) pointed out that the two self-systems may theoretically coexist within an individual. Empirically, independent and interdependent self-construals had a weak but significant relationship,  $r(489) = .28$ ,  $p < .001$ , as did control and harmony beliefs,  $r(497) = .23$ ,  $p < .001$ , among Taiwanese participants (Lu, 1999). In the face of the vast cultural invasion from the West and the rapid transition from an agricultural and autocratic society to an industrial and democratic society, Taiwanese people have not relinquished traditional Chinese ideology, philosophies, values, and practices. Instead, they have made pragmatic use of the Western culture by learning, adopting, and assimilating useful ideology, philosophies, values, and practices to enhance their adjustment to the modern world. In so doing, they may have nurtured, developed, elaborated—and even emphasized—the neglected (or sometimes suppressed) independent self-construal and control belief in certain domains of life. The notion of an autonomous, initiating, striving, and achieving personhood fits well with the efficient, achievement-oriented, and competitive urban existence. An attitude favoring the coexistence of independent and interdependent self-construals, as well as of control and harmony beliefs, for dealing with the apparent conflicts between strong traditionality and requisite modernity seems the most favorable outcome for people in Taiwan, as demonstrated in the present study.

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