Michael B. Hinner (ed.)

The Interface of Business and Culture
Traditional Chinese Value Orientations: Contemporary Manifestation of Indigenous Constructs

Chen Ling

Cultural influence on communication and social interaction has been a major subject of interest in intercultural communication studies. Earlier research focused on uncovering of culture-general dimensions of variability and on variations associated with communication practices across cultures. This approach describes many studies from a social scientific perspective in searches of universality and, as an inevitable result, overlooks the variability within and changes overtime. It is not concerned about the issue of context, but works on the base of assumed culture stability, albeit in a relative sense. In efforts to derive new theories to study social phenomena in some specific cultural contexts, scholars from various disciplines have been working from a complementary approach and conducting what is referred to as indigenous research (e.g., Yang, 1997; Tsui, 2004).

The case of Chinese culture, now consisted of more than one society, presents a special context for indigenous research to uncover culture-specific constructs and theories, from which particular insights may be gained about change of the culture over time, viz. the way changes occur to a culture and the way the culture evolves. The core of contemporary Chinese culture of the dominant Han nationality is embodied in the three societies of Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan that constitute what is known as the Greater China. With separate social systems the three societies have been governed by very different philosophy and ideology, for about 1.5 century before 1997 in the case of Hong Kong and over five decades for Taiwan, while each has been variously influenced by Western and other non-Chinese cultures (e.g., Lau, 1997). Of interest to scholars in social sciences is the extent the divergent social developments have influenced Chinese mindset and value system as a whole. One way to gain some understanding of this problem is to proceed from the assumption of a common general heritage as a starting point. This assumed common heritage is the focus of the present study, part of a research endeavor to study the state of traditional
value orientations in contemporary Chinese societies as a base to understand changes in social behaviors as well as in communication.

**Past Studies**

*Chinese Value Survey*

Noting the Western bias in existing instruments, Bond and associates known as the Chinese Culture Connection (1987), developed the scale for Chinese Value Survey (CVS) to measure and evaluate cultural values within the setting of a Chinese social value system. The CVS comes out of search for a questionnaire that is non-Western by design and reflects a decidedly Chinese cultural characteristic previously not assessable in other, Western-based value surveys.

The scale contains 40 items derived from traditional Chinese ethos thought to represent fundamental values extolled for centuries and accepted as such. As such, the instrument was not based on preconceived theoretical constructs. In stead, constructs are generated from the data representing 22 societies in the world. Chinese Culture Connection (1987) reports CVS to have a four-factor structure, including Confucian work dynamism*, moral discipline, integration, and human-heartedness. When compared with Hofstede's 1980 IBM research, last three of the four CVS dimensions reportedly showed significant correlation with three of the four Hofstede's dimensions respectively: individualism/collectivism, power distance, and masculinity/femininity (Hofstede & Bond 1988). No significant correlation was established for Confucian dynamism. As Hofstede's dimensions and the Rokeach Value Survey dimensions were correlated (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), the Eastern based CVS appears to be a culture-general instrument largely comparable to Western instruments, while also including a value dimension not surfaced in the Western-developed measures.

The CVS scale was earlier validated in factor analysis with broad cross-cultural comparison (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) and intra-cultural comparison (Bond, 1988). Later studies, however, mostly employed the scale for different purpose, with irregular reporting of reliability, and none was concerned with validity assessments (e.g., Chiu, Wong, & Kosinski, 1998; McIntyre & Zhang, 2003; Ralston, Gustafson, Cheung, & Terpstra, 1992, 1993; Zhang et al. 2005). As most CVS items consistently score between 6 and 8 out of a possible 9 for Chinese samples in various studies, with a few falling below 6 and a couple just below 5, validity of the scale as a whole has been well supported empirically as representing Chinese cultural values in a general way. In contrast, there is little information about construct validity of the CVS factors along with other imperfections as discussed next.

First, with a few exceptions, past studies mostly had smaller sample size for survey studies, ranging from less than 100 to over 300 respondents, raising questions about generalizability as well as validity. In relation, originally reported four-factor structure of the CVS varies from study to study in component composition. The factor number also varies for the few that conducted exploratory factor analysis partly due to varied factoring criteria. Two studies in the last group reported rotating the factors orthogonally then identifying value items with loadings greater than 0.40: From a sample of 309, Guan & Dodder's analysis (1998, 2001) yielded 18 of value statements with high enough loadings for inclusion in four factors, while Matthews (2000) also identifies four factors, with 39 items loaded on four factors from a sample of 151. More recently, McIntyre & Zhang (2003) obtain a two-factor structure of 36 items with a large sample of 687. Zhang et al. (2005) report a three-factor structure of 30 items, who had a cross sectional sample from Chinese Mainland, Taiwan, Japan and Korea.

Additionally with respect to the four original factors, only three appear to have face validity. "Confucian dynamism" reflects some teachings of Confucius that emphasize a hierarchy of social structure and search of personal virtues. It is characterized by a respect for tradition with a strong desire to save `face', and implies a need to order relationships by status and to respect that status order. "Human-heartedness" represents an individual's level of caring, social consciousness or social awareness. It is considered a measure of one's compassion toward others and is characterized by the need to be kind, forgiving and courteous. Human-heartedness was found to correlate with Hofstede's (1980) masculinity dimension, its component items appear to be conceptually compatible to that dimension. "Moral discipline" is concerned with keeping oneself under control in relation to others. It is characterized by the need to be moderate, prudent and adaptable and considered an indicator of whether the good of the group or the good of the individual is more important to an individual, identifying whether individuals see themselves as an integral part of a group or not. This dimension appeared to be conceptually comparable with Hofstede's individualism/collectivism, to which it was correlated. The fourth factor "integration," however, is somewhat problematic. Integration focuses upon social stability characterized by having tolerance for others, while also placing importance upon being trustworthy and enjoying a close friendship. Although this dimension is found to correlate with Hofstede's power distance dimension that identifies the degree of social acceptance of power inequality between individuals of different social status, conceptually the component items do not suggest a correspondence with the latter. Larger power distance represents greater ease in accepting social disparity, which can then promote greater integration empirically, yet the same can also be inferred from collectivism, whereas the essence of power is absent in
either. In fact, the component items for integration suggest the construct as having close association with collectivism and consistent with the latter's factor description.

Along the same vein, Chen, Nadamitsu & Lee (2001) found moral discipline significantly, negatively correlated with general tendency of argumentativeness and argumentation approach, and significantly, positively associated with argumentation avoidance. Integration correlated significantly and positively with argumentation avoidance, but significantly and negatively associated with argumentativeness. While not setting out to validate the construct, this first result points to construct validity, as concerns over social cohesion logically would discourage argument approach and encourage argument avoidance. However, integration has similar effects on argumentative tendencies, thus raising questions about exactly what this construct measures. This is an issue that has not been addressed, not by Bond, the Chinese Connection, or by other studies that followed. In summary, there is no question about CVS as a scale of indigenous Chinese values, but the dimensionality of this value set remains inconclusive.

**Traditional Chinese Value Orientations**

Two studies have started the work and explored the dimensionality of CVS, as a set of traditional values established and evolved over thousands of years. Chen (1999) conducted an exploratory factor analysis with a sample of 990 representing the greater China societies and identified five latent factors with some intercorrelations. Thirty-eight items produced a > .4 loading on at least one of the five factors and a secondary loading with a spread of .2 or larger. The factors were labeled respectively as “Work Ethics,” “Moral Virtue,” “Temperament,” “Human Relations,” and “Social Prestige,” representing traditional Chinese value orientations. A second study (Chen & Yeh, 2004) provides preliminary evidence of the construct validity for the five factors. The researchers performed multiple regressions with five indices of cultural orientations as the predicting variables and argumentative tendencies as the outcome variables. The results showed that factors of temperament (negative), social prestige and moral virtues contributed significantly to variance in argumentative approach, and factors of temperament, moral virtues (negative), human relations and social prestige made significant contribution to variance in the argumentative avoidance. Work Ethics did not show significant influence on either approach or avoidance tendency. Chen (2001) points out and discusses the conceptual similarity of the revised five-dimension scale with the theory of value orientations suggested by Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961). This idea is taken up here for further exploration as discussed below.

In efforts to understand humankind via cultural commonality and variations, anthropologists Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961) conceptualize the theory on basis of the three assumptions about human conditions in general. First, all human societies must deal with a limited number of universal problems. Second, solutions to problems are universally known and limited in number. Third, different cultures have different preferences for their solution to each problem, i.e., solutions are based and vary from culture to culture. These problems are thus the base of value orientations that differ from culture to culture. The authors suggested 5 universal problems as encompassing main living domains: the nature of human nature, humans’ relation with Nature, human’s relation with one another, basic human motives for action, as well as the concept of time. Each problem has 3 possible solutions, two being opposite extremes and one in the middle.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck did not provide measures for all the orientations they propose, although much later, a survey instrument, the Value Orientation Method, was developed by the Kluckhohn Center for the Study of Values (The Kluckhohn Center, 1995; Russo, 2000). Over the years, however, other scholars have proposed theories and related measurement instruments for similar purposes, such as Reckach’s (1979) Study of Values, Hofstede’s (1980, 2001) five basic value dimensions, and Schwartz’s (1999, 1994) seven cross culture values. These are independent efforts that do not directly derive from Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s works, although each overlaps to some extent with the latter. All these endeavors, including CVS, have the common objective to develop a universal measurement of values or social propensities applicable to all cultures.

As for CVS, four of the five factors newly identified by Chen present considerable content/concept relevance to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s four universal problems, specifically reflected in the component items. The factor of “Work Ethics” contains items such as persistence/perseverance, adaptability, knowledge/education and prudence/carefulness, patience. All items speak to traditional values related to work in a very broad sense, viz., human efforts in making a living. These values are about dealing with the environment, much of which is part of nature, and represent traditional Chinese orientation regarding humans’ relationship with Nature. It appears to be an orientation of harmonious co-existence with nature, accepting it as a given and doing what one can to make the best of it. “Moral Virtue” comprises of items such as filial piety, patriotism, sincerity, sense of righteousness, resistance to corruption, and kindness/compassion. It pertains to qualities of being a good person and has to do with the nature of human nature. This traditional value orientation leans toward human nature being good and encourages efforts to keep it that way.
Based on the above discussion of past findings, a study was undertaken to statistically confirm that traditional value orientations indeed are latent factors underlying the 40 traditional values common to all three Chinese societies. It was hypothesized that five common factors, “Work Ethics,” “Moral Virtue,” “Temperament,” “Human Relations,” and “Social Prestige,” could each be measured by a subset of values. A culture being a pre-existing entity with integral aspects operating on some logic of its own, it was further hypothesized that value orientations, as common factors, were oblique to one another.

“Temperament” is made of items of being disinterested and pure, having few desires, non-competitiveness, content with one’s position, respect for tradition, being conservative, and acceptance of social hierarchy. It exhibits a calm, almost passive, personality and does not push for action, responding to the problem of activity with restraint and temperance as basic human motives for action. Traditional Chinese value orientation in this respect advocates the mode of “being” or “being in becoming” with contentment and a quiet sense of purpose; the purpose that clearly is not to want or to do. “Human Relations” includes items of harmony, observation of rites/routines, humbleness, tolerance of others, and reciprocity of good will with others, and fit right into the orientation of humans’ relationship with one another. Collectivity is the value orientation to solve this problem, so people can get along, peacefully co-exist, and even be nice to one another. The last factor “Social Prestige” collects such components as wealth, face, sense of cultural superiority, and payment of the good/evil. It is one factor that does not resonate with any of the universal problems identified by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, yet represents the desired that is often jealously guarded.

Method

Participants and Procedure
A total of 1,528 college students in Mainland China (N=857), Hong Kong (N=300), and Taiwan (N=371), 48.9% females and 49.5% males, participated in this survey at the juncture of the new millennium. Using the stratified sampling method, the sub-sample from Mainland Chinese was collected, from five different cities (Xi’an, Shanghai, Chengdu, Beijing, Guangzhou) representing major geographic regions of west, east, central, north and south respectively. Subsamples from Taiwan and Hong Kong were collected from several universities. The average age for the Mainland China sample was 19.58 (SD=5.56), the Hong Kong sample was 19.30 (SD=7.78) and the Taiwan sample was 20.47 (SD=4.36). Excluding missing values list-wise, there were 1,430 (93.4%) complete cases that were used for analysis.

Respondents were surveyed for self-reported perceived importance of traditional Chinese values in the CVS, the Chinese version. They filled out questionnaires in class and were asked to rate each item in terms of its importance to them personally. The rating was on a scale of 1 to 9, 1 being "not at all important" and 9 being "of supreme importance."

Analysis
Data comprised of responses to the CVS were analyzed with the PRELIS 2 and LISREL 8 software (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993, 1996a, 1996b). Data were first input into PRELIS 2 and subject to principal components analysis limited to five factors with maximum likelihood for initial estimation and model specification. The analysis served as a preliminary confirmation of the factor structure and created a covariance matrix that was input into LISREL 8 for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) done statistically to evaluate model estimates. Latent variables were allowed to correlate freely in CFA, with restrictions on measurement error covariance of individual items.

For model estimation and fit assessment, the goodness-of-fit statistics provide assessment of the extent the hypothesized factor structure fit the observed data. Multiple fit indices were employed as recommended by Browne and Cudeck (1993) and Hu and Bentler (1998), including χ², goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Bentler-Bonnet normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis non-normed fit index (NNFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

Result

Model Specification
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy yielded a coefficient of .92, which indicated an excellent fit (Kim, 1987). For Bartlet’s Test of Sphericity, Chi-Square = 18944.47, p < .001. Test of Homogeneity of Variances yielded Levene = 1.981, p > .05. Five factors resulted from principal component factor analysis combined to account for over 50% of total variance in the data. Careful examination of items loading on each of the factors revealed a factor structure similar to the hypothesized model. The latent variables contained mostly the same items as value orientations reported in Chen (1999), thus also were labeled “Work Ethics,” “Moral Virtue,” “Temperament,” “Human Relations,” and “Social Prestige.”
Model Evaluation
CFA produced the traditionally reported measures as follows: $\chi^2 = 855.6376$, $df = 551$, $p < 0.00$; goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.9710, and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = 0.9568. Other measures included the comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.9950, Bentler-Bonnet normed fit index (NFI) = 0.9860, Tucker-Lewis non-normed fit index (NNFI) = 0.9969, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.0196. The last four measures take sample size as well as degrees of freedom into account and are less sensitive to sampling characteristics.

Although the chi-square test was significant, the $\chi^2/df$ ratio was 1.6:1, which is a more appropriate measure for samples larger than 200 as was the case in this study, indicating an adequate fit. For the index measures, values were all above .90, indicating good model fit with over 90% variance accounted for. Variance unaccounted for was less than 2%, with the value of RMSEA smaller than .08, another indication of reasonable model fit suggested by Browne & Cudek, (1993). Additionally, parsimony normed fit index (PNFI) is 0.6956; parsimony goodness of fit index (PGFI) reached 0.6525. Taking the complexity of the model into account in assessment, these indices suggested that the hypothesized model was not overly complex, but exhibited adequate model parsimony. All in all, the model demonstrated an excellent fit with the data.

Resulting item loadings of .2 or larger is presented in Table 1 (please turn to the next page). Nine items showed highest loadings on “Work Ethics”; ten on “Moral Virtue”; eight each on “Temperament” and “Human Relations,” and five on “Social Prestige” in the total forty. Fifteen items (#1, 3-5, 10, 11, 16, 22, 24, 26, 27, 30, 34, 36, 38) had higher than .2 loadings on one factor only. The rest, 35 items showed loadings on more than one factor, 5 of which (#12, 18, 19, 23, 35) have loadings on three factors.

Reliability tests of internal consistency of items in the 5 subscales yielded mostly satisfactory results: Cronbach’s alpha = .812 (Work Ethics), .811 (Moral Virtue), .758 (Temperament), .763 (Human Relations), and .601 (Social Prestige) respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Item in Chinese and English</th>
<th>I Work Ethics</th>
<th>II Moral Virtue</th>
<th>III Temperament</th>
<th>IV Human Relations</th>
<th>V Social Prestige</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 xiang sheng adaptability</td>
<td>.846</td>
<td>- .424</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td></td>
<td>- .484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 jiawun biaoshi</td>
<td>.686</td>
<td>.899</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td></td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 nianlong fairness</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>.487</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td></td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 xianzhi/xiangzhi knowledge</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td>.692</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td></td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 xiaohao/wuxie</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td></td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 xiujiu/huishang</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td></td>
<td>.283</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 zhi yin/liaoyi</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td></td>
<td>.243</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 xiaozheng niaoyi</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td></td>
<td>.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 xianzhi/xiangzhi being conservative</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td></td>
<td>.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 guansheng having few desires</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td></td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 xiangyin/diu xuzi huanxi huan xianzi</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td></td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 lao shen ji jing jing position</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td></td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 bi sheng congxiang non-competitiveness</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td></td>
<td>.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 xiangyin/diu xuzi huanxi huan xianzi</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.373</td>
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<td>.283</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 xianzhi/xiangzhi being conservative</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td></td>
<td>.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 zhi yin/liaoyi accepting social hierarchy</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td></td>
<td>.283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

A couple of caveats are to be noted before we interpret the findings. First, being self-reported perceptions of value importance, the data may very well represent utopian values rather than ideological values. The extent to which these values are actually translated into behavior in social interaction and activities is an issue for another occasion, for it is certainly important to be taken up by future studies. Although the data here were from a sample of student respondents, it is relatively representative of the regional culture of the Greater China. Students tend to grow more conservative as they mature and would approximate the rest of the population before long, whereas their current state would be less conservative and less traditional, the usual prognosis of being youthful and unworldly. It is with these understandings that we interpret findings, particularly in relation to construct validity, first discussing the details of the statistical results of dimensions, then conceptual coherence of items representing each construct as a value orientation. Lastly, implications of findings about the traditional Chinese value orientations will be discussed in relation to intercultural communication studies.

Dimensionality of Traditional Values

Dimensionality of traditional Chinese values emerges in the factor structure of values as variables, the essence of which however is better understood in the native context rich in local meanings considered here to aid interpretation of statistics. Although working with the CVS as a measurement instrument, CFA is employed here more for confirming latent variables than validating a measurement instrument. The CVS with values as component items is unlike a typical measurement instrument, as the items are not created or designed on the basis of a preconceived theory, but garnered from indigenous wisdom available and known to members of the culture. However, that this is a valid set of traditional Chinese values, the overall face validity, has been established from the onset by the Chinese Connection and supported by many studies. No claim is made of it being complete or exhaustive, which is a issue (e.g., Fan, 2000) for another study.

What is not yet clear and needs to be confirmed is that if these values are manifestation of few common factors. Also important is to learn about the extent to which traditional culture is still relevant today, for cultural members and for intercultural communication scholars. Inspired by Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck’s (1961) theory of value orientation and following the lead from earlier empirical findings, a model representing traditional Chinese value orientations was proposed consisting of five dimensions, or common factors. Results of confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the hypothesized five-factor model. The latent factors are confirmed as the value orientations of “Work Ethics,” “Moral Virtue,” “Temperance,” “Human Relations” and “Social Prestige.” As suggested by Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck’s theory, component items of each factor complement one another and together represent traditional Chinese answers to universal problems of “Relation with Nature,” “Human nature,” “Activity/personality,” and “Relation among people.” While the problems are universal, the answers presented in value orientations are unequivocally Chinese, manifest in concepts representing values indigenous to the culture. The analysis also confirmed an additional factor, “Social Prestige,” which does not address any of the universal problems suggested by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, but appears to be stable, emerging repeatedly in different studies along with the other factors.

Large sample size in associated studies offers additional assurance on stability of the constructs. Reliability coefficients of most factors indicate internal consistency of sub-scales to be respectable or very good (DeVellis, 1991). The alpha of Social Prestige is barely acceptable even undesirable, but may be due to the small number of items it contains (Nunnally, 1967). Although it extensively needs further exploration and development, this factor is retained for its conceptual merit, as it seems to tap into an aspect that appears distinctive to Chinese culture and might represent something particular to be discussed in the next section.

A closer look at the items reveals fifteen of them carrying substantial loadings on only one factor, all except one reaching .4 above, which suggests considerable influence from the respective common factor and points toward validity of the content of the respective factor. The one exception among single factor items is item 516 (en wi hang shi or benevolent authority) that produced a highest loading of .777 on “Social Prestige.” These fifteen items appear to be the backbone of the five-factor structure and are rather evenly distributing among the five factors: “Work Ethics” containing 4 items, “Moral Virtue” claiming 2 items, and the remaining three containing 3 items each, loading exclusively on the respective factor. This demonstrates the strength of these factors such that
each might well have been measurable on just the above respective items alone, provided there had been enough item number.

Twenty-five items showed loadings on more than one factor, 5 of which (#12, 18, 19, 23, 35) have loadings on three factors. This probably results from the inter-correlations among factors and does not detract from the overall factor structure. Besides, items being naturally formed concepts so to speak, it is inevitable that they are rich in connotations with overlapping meanings with related concepts.

Regarding significant correlations between all factor pairs, the coefficients range from a low magnitude of \(-1.179, p = .04\), between “Work Ethics” and “Temperament,” to a high of \(0.820, p = .019\), between “Work Ethics” and “Moral Virtue.” This is hardly surprising for Chinese societies as observed cases of Chinese culture, since the inter-relatedness is characteristic of culture by its very nature. Three highest correlations are found among factors of “Work Ethics,” “Moral Virtue,” and “Human Relations,” which suggests a close interconnection between these orientations. All factors except one were positively related, thus appear to be mutually reinforcing. The one negative relationship between “Work Ethics” and “Temperament” mentioned above, is moderate in magnitude and is worth a second look, as it sheds light on the content of the factor taken up in the next section.

A few of items had low loadings that would have been dropped in a study for instrument building, which is kept nevertheless and noted here. As Table 1 shows, first four factors each contain 2 items with highest loadings below .4. There is one, item #18 (wenzhong, steadiness and stability), that loaded on three factors and had none higher than .3. These items are apparently less influenced by the common factors and highlight the possibility of other, unaccounted-for exogenous influence. These items would warrant special attention in future studies to determine necessity for their inclusion in the scale.

**Traditional Value Orientations and Human Problems**

Conceptually, Chinese value orientations are interpreted as culture-specific answers to respective universal human problems. The first factor, “Work Ethics” contains the items of “adaptability, thrift, trustworthiness, knowledge/education, a close/intimate friend, persistence/perseverance, self-cultivation, patience, and steadiness/stability.” The factor presents the traditional value orientation with respect to humans’ relation with Nature, where each component item identifies a quality or an attribute needed to tackle a task or engage in an endeavor in human struggle for survival in the environments. Together the items point to a spirit of resilience, persistence and resourcefulness for human triumph and clearly are not about submission or subject to the power of external forces. These properties and attributes predicate human control in the face of elements and other external forces. Undoubtedly, human must have certain control by the traditional thinking, but the focus is on human effort to act in certain ways and not on the intended outcome of efforts. The items are about efforts to do what is possible under the circumstance and not efforts to challenge or alter Nature. It speaks of human definitely not as a slave, but as one willing to work hard. The question then is to what purpose human efforts should be directed, to master Nature or working with it for a balanced relation. The second interpretation has the support of traditional folk reverence of the divine order that is not to be disrupted yet it may work to certain human benefit with the right maneuver. An even stronger support is the philosophy of major traditional schools of thought with agreement on unity of man and Nature, or unity of man and Heaven, as an inherent relationship (Cheng & Bunnin, 2002; Chinese philosophy, 2008). Seen in this light, Work Ethics as the traditional value orientation toward Nature would be working with Nature the best one can and do not give up in hope of an acceptable outcome.

“Moral Virtue” is the second factor and is measured with “patriotism, resistance to corruption, sense of righteousness, sincerity, sense of shame, filial piety, solidarity with others, kindness/compassion, hardworking, and chastity in women.” These specify the qualities of a virtuous person, one that is good and does the good, and are thus highly relevant to the problem of human nature. Whether one deals with the self, the family, some specific others in the society or the society in general. It is interpreted as taking the stand of human nature being good, because the items do not give any hint about redemption or repentance, which would have been necessary in the case of an evil nature, or in case of a mix of the good and evil. The interpretation here also takes as supporting evidence from other authoritative sources. One source is the Trinitarian Classic (san zi jing, Three Character Classic), a first educational text for children in use for generations since the 13th century. The text starts with the statement, “Men at their birth are naturally good,” which must be maintained with education, because “If foolishly there is no teaching, the nature will deteriorate” (translation by Giles, quoted in Wang, 1910). This reflects the view of the Confucian school (Chan, 1996), which is the dominant school of thought throughout the history, often imperially espoused with profound influence on the populace.

The third factor is “Temperament” that underlies items of “being conservative, having few desires, being disinterested and pure, contend with one’s position, non-competitiveness, respect for tradition, royalty to superiors, and acceptance of social hierarchy.” The values unmistakably commend approaches to a state of activity/personality that are temperate, steady, cautious, and stable, which is not
consistent with the “doing” mode. Based on the items alone, it is again uncertain if “being” or “becoming” is the position for this value orientation. A clue may be the one negative inter-factor correlation, that between “Temperament” and “Work Ethics.” Whereas Temperament directs toward moderation, or not doing too much, Work Ethics advocates making efforts as much as possible. It is thus natural for the two factors to be negatively correlated. Since both are integral to Chinese culture, it makes sense to interpret Temperament as a value orientation toward “becoming” rather than toward “being.” This approach encourages taking goal directed actions with measured pace, so as to introduce gradual change and to grow steadily, thus is “becoming.” It is in contrast to “being,” i.e., accepting whatever is given, making the most of it and being content with it. This same idea is also reflected, albeit partially, in the value of self-cultivation that loaded on Work ethic and Human Relations.

The factor of “Human Relations” is demonstrated in value items of “humble- ness, moderation/middle-of-road, harmony with others, tolerance of others, observation of rites/rituals, courtesy, reciprocity of good will, and prudence/carefulness.” The items are rather self-explanatory in its relevance to the problem of relations with others in the society. The items together stipulate a preferred individual approach to fellow members of the society, which is accepting and getting along with others, and accepting and complying with social rules. The point of reference, the focus of attention, for this value orientation is clearly the collective, the society and not the individual. No recognition of individual or self as such is implied or presupposed in the items except when it is related to as part of a collective that include others, a tendency much supported in the literature (e.g., Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Hsu, 1981).

“Social Prestige” is the last factor underlying to five value items of “wealth, face, sense of cultural superiority, payment of the good/evil, and benevolent authority.” The component items are properties of a person with a sense of decency, self-worth and importance. It appears that the dimension of “Social Prestige” includes values that are not essential but nevertheless desirable and important in life, specifically the social aspects of life. As such, it may represent a higher-level construct in terms of fundamental human needs, or human problems in this case, to borrow from Maslow’s (1943) conceptualization of human needs hierarchy. Along this line of thinking, the other four value orientations may be ones dealing with problems at more basic levels of human condition.

Lastly, regarding the component items, these should be taken to represent traditional culture in totality and not just one aspect or one school of thought. The original label of “Confucian dynamism” (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) is not accurate in nomenclature, although Confucianism is a major school of thought with much influence in Chinese culture. Moreover, it is necessary to understand that this school of thought itself is part of the Chinese tradition, rooted in and was a product of the cultural heritage, to which it is no equal. There are other, competing schools of thought as well as folk beliefs, such as Taoism and Buddhism, to name a couple major alternatives that have been equally influential although not dominant. These competing schools are also present in the scale. At least seven items (#13 self-cultivation, #17 non-competitiveness, #22 being disinterested and pure, #26 payment of the good/evil, #28 adaptability, #33 contend with one’s position, #38 having few desires) capture in whole or in part Taoist and Buddhist concepts and ideas, which may somewhat overlap with but are not part of the Confucian teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Correlations between Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>FACTOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>I. Work Ethics</td>
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<td>II. Moral Virtue</td>
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<td>III. Temperament</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Human Relations</td>
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<td>V. Social Prestige</td>
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*p < .05 for all coefficients.

Implications and Future Efforts

This preliminary study has empirically confirmed the dimensionality of traditional Chinese values as consistent with Kluckhohn and Stroebel’s conceptualization about culture. The sub-scales have proofed acceptable in validity as well as reliability. This is a first attempt, and more future studies are definitely needed to further validate these value orientations as indeed reflective of traditional Chinese culture orientations. The findings here have implications to inter-cultural studies in general as well as to studies related to cultural Chinese in particular. The scale, when fully validated, promises encouraging possibility to integrate the vast resource of humanistic tradition in Chinese culture to quantitative research when feasible. Apparently not all cultural concepts can be translated into quantifiable measurements. The challenge for researchers is to identify cultural aspects and elements amendable to social scientific investigation. The present study help pave the way for more humanistic-social scientific collaborative work in cross culture studies.
For Chinese societies, the CVS can be a useful tool in diachronic and longitudinal studies for understanding the cultural change, by identifying the particular value orientation that may have shifted and evolved over a period of time and tracing possible causes for such change, internal and external to the society. It may be of some value to studies of other East Asian cultures such as Korea and Japan, with which the Chinese have historically experienced continual cultural cross-fertilization (Yum, 1988) and in which traditional Chinese value orientations would only be a much smaller portion of the culture, for each has evolved independently as a nation culture.

With help of this scale, research may also move to study ways traditional value orientations influence and moderate social behaviors and communication activities. Specifically, value orientations may be relevant to an array of communication behaviors. For example, dimensions of Human Relations and Temperament may be most relevant to communication in interpersonal relationships, while Temperament, Work Ethics, and Moral Virtue may be associated more with task and performance related communication in organizations. Social Prestige would be relevant to social interaction in most contexts and would be particularly useful for study of facework.

Endnotes

1 Some would raise questions about the assumption, which is a separate issue for a different discussion somewhere else.

2 Besides the criticism of the label as misleading, many researchers also express concerns over validity of the cultural general dimension of Confucian Dynamism (e.g., see Fang, 2003 for a more recent review).

3 On this base, Condon & Yousef (1975) develop a complete model that covers three basic life spheres of the self, society, and nature, with 3 intersecting spheres of the family, humanity, the supernatural, each posing a few problems that culture must deal with. The original five is located in spheres of the self (activity), family (relations with others), humanity (human nature) and nature (relationship with Nature and time).

4 Human nature is actually one of the great controversies in Chinese philosophy much debated among ancient scholars even within the Confucianism school (e.g., Plutschow, 2002).

References


