

Research Article

Measuring Specific Traditional Chinese Values in Relation to Satisfaction of the Five Maslow Needs

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Abstract

To determine whether living according to specific traditional Chinese cultural values was associated with satisfaction of the five needs in Maslow's motivational hierarchy and overall life satisfaction, a mixed-method approach was employed, with an empirical questionnaire and supplemental interviews. The questionnaire assessed the hypothesized relationships that traditional Chinese values had with personal life outcomes, including health, employment, satisfaction of the five needs from Maslow's hierarchy, and life satisfaction. The interviews examined the relationships that several demographic variables had with living by traditional Chinese values. The results of the empirical data revealed that most Chinese people today are still living according to the traditional Chinese cultural values, and that living by those traditional values are strongly associated with satisfaction of all five of the human needs in the Maslow hierarchy, as well as with overall life satisfaction. Additionally, the results of the qualitative interviews readily supported the empirical findings, and also revealed that the time during which inter-generational transmission of the Chinese cultural values occurs is when parents teach those values to their children at a very early age, that is, between 3 and 8 years old, before the children start primary school.

Keywords: Chinese; traditional values; Maslow needs theory; family support; life satisfaction.

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Psychological Thought, 2022, Vol. 15(1), 132-164, <https://doi.org/10.37708/psyc.v15i1.636>

Received: 2021-07-04. Accepted: 2021-12-22. Published (VoR): 2022-04-30.

Handling Editor: Natasha Angelova, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

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Surprisingly, almost no empirical studies have been conducted that focused directly on comparing specific traditional Chinese cultural values with satisfaction of the five motivational human needs in Maslow's (1943, 1987) hierarchy of needs, despite numerous articles that have been published on either Chinese cultural values or Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Traditional Chinese values are considered to be those from a seminal study on Chinese culture (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987), which carefully specified the most central traditional Chinese cultural values that were independently identified by Chinese scholars; and from which those authors extracted a set of specific Chinese values on which those scholars' opinions converged. As examples, the values included prudence, thrift, respect for tradition, and moderation (the complete list is given in the Method section).

Despite the many attempts by various authors to try to assess Chinese culture, most have been limited because they measured general sociological concepts of culture rather than Chinese traditional values and/or did not use measures of the specific traditional values. As examples, studies often used a general sociological measure (e.g., Hofstede, 1980), which examined respondents' agreement with a set of factors that compare countries on cultural dimensions, such as individualism versus collectivism (e.g., Siu et al., 2005), rather than assessing whether the respondents lived their lives according to specific Chinese values. Additionally, there have been numerous studies on Chinese culture that were more focused on international comparisons that used business measures, such as work values (e.g., Jaw et al., 2007), but they could not be construed to represent the traditional values of the Chinese Culture Connection (1987). Hence, as previous studies did not focus on specific traditional values, most past research did not consider how various variables, such as family support, might relate to the extent that Chinese people live their lives according to traditional Chinese cultural values.

Another important consideration is whether the Chinese people of today are actually living



their lives according to traditional Chinese values. This concern appeared in the literature because some publications suggested that younger Chinese people are giving up their traditional culture (e.g., Tsui & Farh, 1997), while other publications found that Chinese people are still living according to traditional Chinese values (e.g., Taormina & Shamionov, 2016). Hence, to ascertain which of those views might be more accurate was another reason for conducting this investigation.

Therefore, based on data from a study by Taormina and Gao (2013) that included measures of both traditional Chinese values and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the objectives of this study were to conduct detailed assessments of (1) how personal life factors, such as family emotional support and various demographic variables, relate to living one's life according to specific traditional Chinese values, and (2) how living according to traditional Chinese values relates to several life outcomes, such as satisfaction of the five needs in Maslow's hierarchy, and overall life satisfaction.

Research Definitions

For clarity, it is necessary to define the central concepts, namely, "culture" (as in Chinese culture), and the phrases "traditional values" and "to transmit" (as in transmitting values across generations). Although the meaning of culture had been debated for many decades, Triandis (1996) suggested a concise definition that was operationalized by Taormina and Shamionov (2016, p. 198) as "the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are shared by a group of people (where beliefs are things thought to be true, attitudes are positive or negative evaluations of some object, and behaviors are actions that are performed)." "Values" are defined as "ideas, concepts, and qualities that are considered important in life" (Taormina & Gao, 2010, p. 1199). And for "traditional values," the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "tradition" as knowledge and established practices. Thus, "traditional values" refer to knowledge, past practices, and morals; and the phrase "to transmit traditional values" means conveying those values from one generation to subsequent generations.

Regarding Assumptions

Theoretically, some assumptions may be offered about underlying factors that could conceivably "cause" some variables in this study to influence whether a Chinese person accepts, and lives his or her life according to, traditional Chinese values. Likewise, it is possible that living according to traditional values could have certain effects on how one views the world and how one behaves in dealing with other people, which, in turn, might help

a person succeed in life.

Assumption 1. The first assumption is that social values are transmitted from older to younger generations. This idea is based on two studies. One is an explanation for the purpose of transmitting cultural information, i.e., [Malinowski \(1954, p. 177\)](#) revealed that one type of transmission, myth, has a vital function because “it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces, morality” and “is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale... but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom.”

The other study, by [Minc \(1986\)](#), provided a detailed review of theories about the importance of oral tradition that transmits survival information across generations; and scientifically confirmed that idea in an empirical analysis of two nonliterate societies. [Minc \(1986, p. 103\)](#) concluded that “As a body of reference knowledge, oral tradition clearly provided one enduring means for the preservation of hard-won survival experience.”

As Chinese culture has traditional values dating back to Confucius (551-479 BC), who first established the importance of living according to morals such as family piety, virtuous behavior, and social harmony, those values became the foundation of Chinese society and have remained so for the past 2,000 years. [Yang \(1995, p. 23\)](#) stressed that the family is the critical center around which Chinese life revolves, is the source from which children are socialized, and that “lifelong family experiences lead to the formation of embedded attitudes, thoughts, and behaviours.” Hence, it may be assumed that Chinese people teach traditional values to their offspring.

Hypotheses regarding Demographics and Living by Chinese Values

Assumption 2. Based on Assumption 1, it is expected that traditional values among the Chinese are learned while a person is growing up. For example, [Ho \(1981\)](#) explained that the Chinese, from very early in their childhood, are taught to live by traditional values in order to be properly socialized. Furthermore, whereas family dynamics involve a number of personal and interpersonal factors, it is possible that some demographic variables could be related to a person accepting and living his or her life according to the traditional values that are learned early in life. Thus, it may be assumed that some demographic variables might influence the extent to which one lives according to the traditional values of their culture. These variables might include biological ones, such as gender, age, and number of children;

as well as some personal and social variables, such as family emotional support, education completed, and marital status.

The 6 demographic variables (listed in the previous paragraph) in relation to the 12 specific Chinese values could produce a total of 72 correlations and hypotheses, which would be numerically unwieldy. Thus, based on the assumption that Chinese values are taught by parents to their children from an early age, three initial hypotheses were formulated using the “overall measure” of Living by Chinese Values (i.e., the average score for the 12 values).

H(1): *Family Emotional Support will be positively and significantly correlated with Living by Chinese Values.*

Similarly, assuming that married people transmit traditional values to their children, it may be expected that married persons (i.e., parents) would transmit the traditional values, and, thus, must know the traditional values in order to transmit them. Therefore, married persons would be more likely to live their lives according to traditional Chinese values than would single persons.

H(2): *Married persons will report Living by Chinese Values to a greater extent than will single persons.*

Also, on the assumption that traditional values are transmitted from parents to their children, it is expected that persons who have children will be more likely than persons who have no children to live their lives according to traditional Chinese values. One author, despite stating that [China's Cultural Revolution \(1966-1976\)](#) “disrupted” China’s value system (and that other Chinese societies, namely, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, also experienced value changes), [Yau \(1988, pp. 53-54\)](#) also said that “the Chinese have a strong admiration of their culture, which has a history of thousands of years” and “it is necessary to pass down the Chinese culture to the next generation. To do so, parents have to provide the best education they can for their children. The most important thing is that parents should have a deep knowledge of the Chinese culture.” Thus, the third hypothesis:

H(3): *People who have children will report Living by Chinese Values more than people who do not have children.*

Regarding the relationships between the demographics and the *specific* Chinese traditional values, in the present study, for the first time, all 72 (i.e., the 6 demographics x 12 values) correlations were computed in order to attain a greater understanding of the roles that

demographics play in accepting and living one's life according to the specific Chinese values. (All of the 72 correlations are shown in the Results Section.)

Assumption 3 (on Life Outcomes). Whereas traditional values have been maintained by various cultures for thousands of years, it is assumed that they are transmitted across generations because the older generations found those values to be helpful for survival and in living successful lives (Minc, 1986). That research coincides with Bowlby's (1982) attachment theory, namely, that emotional support from parents builds social competence in their offspring, including being more socially outgoing and being better able to cope with social problems. Additionally, in an empirical test of that theory, Paterson et al. (1995) found that adolescents who had received high levels of emotional support from their parents had significantly greater levels of self-esteem and coping abilities.

In other words, family emotional support could create in people who have received such support a greater ability to deal with difficulties in life, such as social conflicts at work, and thus become more successful at work and in life in general. Furthermore, regarding the Chinese people, as Yang (1995) pointed out, the emphasis on Chinese family orientation, which is characterized by family harmony and solidarity, is regarded as the means to family prolongation, family honor, and family prosperity. Thus, possible "outcome variables" of living one's life according to the traditional values of one's culture were deemed to include: Employment Status, Income, and Health, as well as Satisfaction with the five levels of Needs (from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs), and Life Satisfaction.

Consequently, this study endeavored to bridge a research gap, that is, to gain a clearer understanding of a set of specific traditional Chinese values. Hence, based on the foregoing theories and assumptions, and using published data on specific Chinese values, this study assessed the relationships that certain demographics of Chinese families had with the specific Chinese values, and the extent to which those Chinese values relate to some desired life outcomes that Chinese people hope to achieve by living according to their cultural values.

Hypotheses Regarding Living by Chinese Values and Life Outcomes

Based on the sociological theory that social values play a positive role in people's lives (Malinowski, 1954), and on empirical evidence that traditional values help societies survive (Minc, 1986), it was expected that living one's life according to the Chinese traditional

cultural values would correlate positively with satisfying certain human needs (Maslow 1943), and also with one's health, and/or with one's overall life satisfaction. Therefore, hypotheses were developed from the life outcomes as follows:

For Employment, most organizations generally want employees who are hardworking and persevering. This coincides with Chinese values, as explained by Lu et al. (2009, p. 170), i.e., "Confucianism molded the foundation of Chinese social values, which admire loyalty, obedience, hard work, modesty, and so on." In other words, to the extent that living by Chinese values is expected to be beneficial, people who live their lives according to traditional Chinese values, which include working hard, should have a positive effect on their employment status.

H(4): *Employment will have a positive and significant correlation with living one's life according to at least one of the traditional Chinese values.*

For Income, the same logic may apply as for Employment. That is, people who are hardworking and persevering would also be appreciated by their employers, who often reward such workers with promotions and salary increases.

H(5): *Income will have a positive and significant correlation with living one's life according to at least one of the traditional Chinese values.*

For Health, it is logical that societies adopt values that are designed to preserve the life and health of their members. Consequently, at least one of the Chinese values could be expected to help in maintaining one's health.

H(6): *Health will have a positive and significant correlation with living one's life according to at least one of the traditional Chinese values.*

Regarding satisfaction of the human motivational needs (Maslow, 1943), if traditional values evolved as a means of preserving society, then there should be positive correlations between satisfaction of the needs in Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs and at least one of the traditional Chinese cultural values.

H(7): *Satisfaction of (a) Physiological Needs, (b) Safety/Security Needs, (c) Belongingness Needs, (d1) Esteem from Self, (d2) Esteem from Others, (d3) overall Esteem, as well as (e) Self-Actualization will each have a positive and significant correlation with living one's life according to at least one of the traditional Chinese values.*

For overall Life Satisfaction, sociological theory would suggest that living by traditional social values should help people with many aspects of their lives, thereby leading to overall satisfaction with one's life.

H(8): *Life Satisfaction will have a positive and significant correlation with living one's life according to at least one of the traditional Chinese values.*

Method

Respondents

There were two sets of respondents. One was 386 ethnic Chinese adults (138 males, 248 females), aged 18 to 67 years, from the [Taormina and Gao \(2013\)](#) study (data used with permission). The demographics of those respondents are given verbatim below:

For education, 7 respondents had none, 46 finished primary school, 241 secondary school, 79 had a bachelor's degree, and 13 had a master's degree or higher. For marital status, 246 were single, 132 married, and 8 indicated "other" (divorced, separated, or widowed). The average number of children was 0.65 ($SD = 1.11$), with most respondents (69.43%) having none and the rest (30.57%) having one to six children. For employment, 73 respondents were unemployed, 127 had part-time jobs, and 186 had full-time jobs. For monthly income (in U.S. dollars), 181 earned less than \$625, 94 earned between \$625 and \$1,249, 58 between \$1,250 and \$1,874, 29 between \$1,875 and \$2,499, 10 between \$2,500 and \$3,124, and 14 earned \$3,125 or more. For overall health, the mean score was 2.63 ($SD = 0.74$). (Taormina & Gao, 2013, pp. 162-163)

For the interview (qualitative) data, a second set of respondents were 30 ethnic Chinese people who were not from the [Taormina and Gao \(2013\)](#) study, but came from the same regions of China. Interviews were conducted to add perspective to the quantitative data. For determining the number of interviewees, [Guest et al. \(2006\)](#) stated that purposive sampling could ascertain perceptions or beliefs of interviewees from a relatively homogeneous group (in this case, ethnic Chinese people) and that 12 interviewees would be a sufficient sample (based on data saturation). However, whereas other researchers suggested that "qualitative studies should generally include between 20 and 30 interviews" ([Marshall et al., 2013, p. 20](#)), the total number of interviewees was set at 30.

Furthermore, assuming that people could have different views about life as they grow older, people from three age groups were assessed, i.e., young adults, middle-aged, and older

adults. The interviewees were also counterbalanced for gender, age, and location. That is, 15 were selected from Mainland China and 15 from Macau, i.e., the two locations studied by [Taormina and Gao \(2013\)](#).

For gender, 15 were males and 15 females; all were adults with 10 people in each of three age groups, i.e., younger (20 to 35 years), middle-aged (40 to 55 years), and older adults (65 to 80 years). The actual ages of all 30 respondents were from 20 to 76 years ($M = 50.33$, $SD = 18.85$). On education, 4 of the respondents completed middle school, 18 high school, and 8 had a bachelor degree. For marital status, 7 were single, 19 married, 2 divorced, and 2 widowed. Number of children ranged from 0 to 3. For work, 2 were unemployed, 2 worked part-time, 15 worked full-time, and 11 were retired or semi-retired.

Measures for the Quantitative Data

The empirical data were from [Taormina and Gao \(2013\)](#); used with permission. The variables were: Traditional Chinese Values, Family Emotional Support, Satisfaction of Needs from Maslow's Hierarchy (namely, Physiological, Safety-Security, Belongingness, Esteem, and Self-Actualization), and overall Life Satisfaction. Detailed descriptions of those variables are in Taormina and Gao, but to facilitate understanding, summaries are given here, with their original Cronbach Alpha reliabilities.

Chinese Traditional Values

[The Chinese Culture Connection \(1987\)](#) identified 29 specific traditional values, and, as explained by [Taormina and Gao \(2013, p. 164\)](#), "To reduce scale length, 12 of the most representative values were selected." The 12 values were: Hierarchical Social Relationships, Thrift, Perseverance, having a Sense of Shame, Personal Steadiness, Reciprocation, Protect Other People's Face, Respect for Tradition, Prudence, Moderation, Being Adaptable, and Contentedness with Life. For scoring, respondents were asked "To what extent do you personally live your life by these values?" Answers were on a response scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The alpha reliability was .83.

Regarding "Protect Other People's Face," according to [Yang \(1995\)](#), "face" is very important in Chinese culture; and is a social behavior by which one can gain or lose social respectability. [Bond and Hwang \(1986\)](#) identified six types of face, namely, behaviors that can (1) enhance one's own face, (2) enhance another person's face, (3) lose one's own face, (4) cause another person to lose face, (5) save one's own face, and (6) save or protect

another person's face. Taormina and Gao (2013) used only "protect other people's face" because they considered it to be distinctive of Chinese culture.

Satisfaction of the Needs in Maslow's Hierarchy

The measures for the five needs variables were also from Taormina and Gao (2013). For Physiological Need Satisfaction, Safety-Security Need Satisfaction, and Belongingness Need Satisfaction, each contained 15 items. For Esteem Need Satisfaction, Taormina and Gao used a 15-item measure that combined the two facets of esteem in Maslow's theory, i.e., esteem one receives from oneself and esteem one receives from other people. In the present study, Esteem was measured as Esteem from Self, having 7 items (e.g., "How positive I feel about myself as a person"), Esteem from Others, having 8 items (e.g., "How much other people respect me as a person"), and overall Esteem Need Satisfaction, which used all 15 of the esteem items. The question asked "How satisfied are you with... [each item]," and used a 5-point Likert-type response scale that ranged from 1 (completely unsatisfied) to 5 (completely satisfied).

For satisfaction of the Self-Actualization Need, Taormina and Gao used 12 items; for example, "I am now being the person I always wanted to be," and used a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability values for all the Maslow measures ranged from .81 to .91.

Family Emotional Support

Taormina and Gao (2013) used 10 of the 20 items from Procidano and Heller's (1983) Family Emotional Support measure. They used only the 10 items for *receiving* support from one's family (but no items on giving support). A sample item was "I rely on my family for emotional support," and responses were on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability was .83.

Life Satisfaction

For this measure, Taormina and Gao (2013) adopted a 10-item measure from Sirgy et al. (1998) that assessed life satisfaction as perceived by respondents in comparison to their own hopes for themselves, and in relation to other people. The question asked "How satisfied are you..." followed by 10 phrases (i.e., the items), for example, "Compared to the life goals you set for yourself," and "Compared to the accomplishments of your friends." Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (completely unsatisfied) to 5 (completely

satisfied). The reliability was .86.

Measures for the Interviews

For the qualitative data, a structured interview survey was used to gain insight into the possible relationships between Chinese people living their lives according to Chinese values and the experiences they had with Chinese values in their lives, as well as the extent to which living by Chinese values *might have influenced* their lives. (Note the non-biased wording.)

To assess the interviewees' life experiences with traditional Chinese values, they were asked how old they were when they first learned the values, who taught the values to them, how they felt about learning the values, whether they thought Chinese values should continue to be followed, and if they ever taught Chinese values to anyone.

They were also asked how much they actually lived their lives according to traditional Chinese values, which (to facilitate interpreting the answers) used a percentage response scale that ranged from 0% to 100%. Also, to assess the extent to which living according to Chinese values might have influenced their lives, interviewees were asked how they thought living according to Chinese values might have affected their employment, income, health, satisfaction of the five needs identified by Maslow, as well as their overall life satisfaction. (Again, the wording was unbiased to avoid inducing favorable or unfavorable responses.)

Procedure

The multimethod approach used empirical questionnaire data and qualitative data based on interviews. The questionnaire data were from Taormina and Gao (2013), who used a sidewalk intervention method in which adult participants were randomly selected from public places such as shopping malls and apartment buildings. After obtaining informed consent, the questionnaire was given to the participants and collected on site when finished. The reported response rate was 77.20%.

The qualitative data were newly obtained via purposive sampling to obtain a sample of 30 adult male and female interviewees. All participants were approached on a random basis in public areas, e.g., public squares and areas surrounding large residential districts in two Chinese regions (i.e., the same locations used in the Taormina and Gao study). The response rates for the interviews in the two locations were 26.79% and 46.87%.

Ethical Considerations

The empirical data were from [Taormina and Gao \(2013\)](#), who followed the ethical protocols of the American Psychological Association (APA). For the qualitative part of this study, APA guidelines were likewise followed. Specifically, all potential interviewees were informed both verbally and in writing of the purpose of the study, namely, to learn what Chinese people think about traditional Chinese values and if they think Chinese values influenced their lives in any way. They were told participation was entirely voluntary, that they were free to withdraw during any stage of the interview, guaranteed that they would always remain anonymous because their names were not being requested, and that their answers would be kept confidential. They were also asked if their interviews could be audio recorded. Only those who agreed were included in the study and given two consent forms, namely, one for the interview and one for the audio recording. For protection of all the data, no names were used and only the researchers could access the data, which were protected by computer passwords and kept in a secure, locked location.

Results

Whether Chinese People Live according to Traditional Chinese Values

One of the objectives of this study was to assess whether Chinese people continue to live according to traditional values. This was tested by comparing the mean scores on the extent to which they lived their lives according to the Chinese values with the measure's midpoint (as the theoretical mean of the population). That is, analyses were run for each of the 12 specific Chinese values, as well as for the overall measure of traditional Chinese values (i.e., the respondents' scores averaged for all 12 values). The scale was a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). For the overall traditional Chinese values measure, the obtained scores ranged from 1.33 to 5.00; and for the 12 specific Chinese values, all responses ranged from 1 to 5. Thus, as the respondents used the entire Chinese values scale, according to Saal et al. (1980) this implies that the 3.00 midpoint (on the 5-point scale) could be used as an estimate of the theoretical population mean.

Hence, to determine whether the respondents were living more or less according to traditional values, the obtained mean scores on the overall measure, as well as on the 12 specific values, were compared to the theoretical mean score of 3.00. For the overall measure, the mean score of 3.75 ($SD = 0.47$) was significantly higher than the theoretical

mean, $t(385) = 31.19$, $p = .000$. Likewise, for all 12 of the specific Chinese values, the average scores ranged from 3.37 (for Perseverance) to 3.96 (for Sense of Shame and for Reciprocation), and the t -values (all $dfs = 385$) were all positive, i.e., from 8.60 to 25.68 (all p -values = .000). These differences indicate that, overall, this sample of contemporary Chinese respondents were living their lives according to the traditional Chinese cultural values.

To assess whether younger people still live according to Chinese values, the responses of all three age groups on how much they live by traditional values were compared using a one-way ANOVA, which showed no significant differences among any of the three groups, $F(2,27) = 0.571$, $p = .572$. This indicated that the younger, middle-aged, and older Chinese people live according to Chinese values relatively equally.

Tests of the Initial Hypotheses

H(1) predicted a significant, positive correlation between the amount of Family Emotional Support received and the extent to which the respondents reported living by Chinese values (using the average of the respondent's scores on the 12 specific values). The highly significant result lent strong support to H(1), $r(384) = .325$, $p < .001$.

H(2) predicted that married persons would report living by Chinese values to a greater extent than single persons. This analysis used a t -test ($N = 378$, rather than 386 because eight respondents answered "other" to the marriage question). The results revealed that married persons ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.49$) were found to have a higher mean score than single persons ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.44$), which strongly supported (H2), $t(376) = 3.324$, $p < .001$.

H(3) predicted that people who have (one or more) children would report living by Chinese values to a greater extent than people with no children. The t -test result revealed that people with children ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.48$) scored significantly higher on living by Chinese values than people with no children ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.46$), which lent strong support to H(3), $t(384) = 2.991$, $p = .001$.

Correlation Tests between the Demographics and Chinese Values

Another objective of this study was to assess how demographic variables were related to living one's life according to each of the traditional Chinese values. Whereas there was a total of 6 demographic variables (namely, Family Emotional Support, Gender, Age,

Education Completed, Marital Status, and Number of Children), and 12 specific Chinese values, there were 72 possible correlations. To assess the extent to which the respondents reported living by each of the traditional Chinese values, all 72 correlations were computed, as shown in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, Family Emotional Support had significant, positive correlations with living one's life according to all 12 of the traditional Chinese Values.

For Gender, a lack of significance means that males and females live by Chinese values about equally. And there were four *significant* correlations. All four were negative correlations (coded as females = 0; males = 1), which means females (compared to males) lived their lives more according to the values of Sense of Shame, Reciprocation, Protect Other People's Face, and Contentedness.

For Age, seven correlations were significant. One showed that younger Chinese, more than the older Chinese, lived according to the value of respecting Hierarchical Relationships. For the other six correlations, the older Chinese lived more according to the values of Thrift, Perseverance, Respect for Tradition, Moderation, Contentedness, and Prudence.

For the amount of Education Completed, respondents with lower levels of this variable lived more according to the values of Prudence and Respect for Tradition.

For Marital Status, six of the 12 Chinese values were significant. That is, compared to single respondents, the married respondents lived more according to the values of Thrift, Perseverance, Respect for Tradition, Moderation, Contentedness, and Prudence.

For Number of Children, four Chinese values were significant. Specifically, respondents with more children lived more according to the values of Thrift, Perseverance, Respect for Tradition, and Prudence.

Table 1.
Chinese Values' Correlations with Demographics

Chinese Values	Mean	SD	Family Support	Gender	Age	Education	Marital Status	N of Children
Hierarchic Relationships	3.75	.729	.233	-.002	-.142	.066	-.032	-.071
<i>p</i>			.000	.963	.005	.197	.525	.166
Thrift	3.43	.887	.115	-.020	.205	-.042	.218	.215
<i>p</i>			.024	.689	.000	.409	.000	.000
Perseverance	3.37	.840	.165	.053	.246	-.002	.261	.169
<i>p</i>			.001	.299	.000	.963	.000	.001
Sense of Shame	3.96	.784	.160	-.122	-.055	.008	.005	-.037
<i>p</i>			.002	.017	.278	.875	.926	.473
Reciprocation	3.96	.739	.210	-.109	-.039	-.005	.017	-.009
<i>p</i>			.000	.032	.449	.922	.743	.855
Personal Steadiness	3.75	.804	.162	-.049	.075	-.008	.087	.035
<i>p</i>			.001	.334	.144	.882	.088	.490
Protect Other's Face	3.87	.789	.206	-.118	-.070	.031	-.030	-.046
<i>p</i>			.000	.021	.171	.541	.555	.367
Respect Tradition	3.67	.840	.245	-.064	.213	-.150	.214	.215
<i>p</i>			.000	.212	.000	.003	.000	.000
Moderation	3.61	.806	.187	-.058	.120	.021	.142	.093
<i>p</i>			.000	.255	.019	.679	.005	.069
Contentedness	3.88	.812	.222	-.152	.103	.012	.154	.099
<i>p</i>			.000	.003	.044	.821	.002	.052
Being Adaptable	3.92	.708	.247	-.005	-.015	-.044	.022	.019
<i>p</i>			.000	.925	.773	.390	.671	.704
Prudence	3.80	.789	.174	.004	.172	-.142	.172	.155
<i>p</i>			.001	.943	.001	.005	.001	.002

Note. *N* = 386 (except Age, where *N* = 384 as two respondents did not include age). Variable coding: Gender was Females = 0, Males = 1; Marital Status was Single = 1, Married = 2; Education was an increasing function (see Method section for details). Significant numbers are in **bold** to facilitate locating them.

Correlation Tests for the Chinese Values and Life Outcomes

Here, a note should be made regarding whether regression analyses could be run on the data. First, whereas the 12 traditional values all reflect aspects of a single culture that are highly integrated in Chinese society, the values themselves are highly intercorrelated. High intercorrelations, called "multicollinearity" among variables, create statistical anomalies in regression analyses, which could yield incongruous results. But for the sake of thoroughness, regressions were run. Those are shown in the Discussion Section on Chinese Values and Life Outcomes, with detailed explanations for how those results were obtained. In this section, however, the focus is on the significance of the correlations between the 12 traditional Chinese values and the life outcome measures, namely, the five needs in Maslow's Hierarchy (including self-actualization), as well as life satisfaction.

Table 2.
Chinese Values' Correlations with Satisfaction of Needs and Life Outcomes

Chinese Values	Employment	Income	Overall Health	Physio Needs	Safety Needs	Belonging Needs	Esteem (Self)	Esteem (Others)	Esteem (Total)	Self-Actualize	Life Sat
Hierarchic Relationships	-.077	.031	.039	.121	.162	.322	.208	.186	.231	.060	.209
<i>p</i>	.130	.550	.448	.017	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.241	.000
Thrift	.135	.067	-.069	.067	.089	.024	-.008	-.006	-.008	.129	.101
<i>p</i>	.008	.191	.175	.191	.079	.641	.870	.913	.873	.011	.048
Perseverance	.179	.184	-.077	.194	.155	.162	.146	.117	.154	.175	.205
<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.133	.000	.002	.001	.004	.022	.002	.001	.000
Sense of Shame	-.081	-.071	-.020	-.003	.076	.220	.124	.156	.165	-.079	.050
<i>p</i>	.114	.164	.690	.946	.138	.000	.015	.002	.001	.119	.325
Reciprocation	-.032	-.043	.051	.082	.081	.235	.148	.089	.138	.033	.118
<i>p</i>	.528	.401	.321	.107	.111	.000	.004	.081	.007	.520	.020
Personal Steadiness	.052	.052	.044	.189	.153	.280	.282	.228	.298	.115	.209
<i>p</i>	.305	.306	.390	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000	.024	.000
Protect Other's Face	-.049	-.021	.082	.114	.120	.344	.258	.298	.328	.046	.141
<i>p</i>	.338	.685	.108	.025	.018	.000	.000	.000	.000	.370	.006
Respect Tradition	.096	.077	-.032	.092	.092	.158	.110	.087	.115	.134	.197
<i>p</i>	.060	.129	.525	.072	.073	.002	.031	.089	.024	.008	.000
Moderation	.065	.032	-.080	.061	.081	.121	.084	.112	.116	.128	.192
<i>p</i>	.201	.525	.119	.231	.113	.017	.097	.027	.022	.012	.000
Contentedness	.046	-.001	-.072	.113	.090	.225	.148	.124	.159	.111	.146
<i>p</i>	.366	.985	.156	.027	.078	.000	.004	.015	.002	.029	.004
Being Adaptable	.022	.021	.125	.247	.170	.293	.353	.285	.373	.181	.263
<i>p</i>	.674	.679	.014	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Prudence	.088	.050	-.002	.228	.151	.118	.226	.173	.233	.138	.167
<i>p</i>	.083	.323	.964	.000	.003	.020	.000	.001	.000	.007	.001

Note. *N* = 386. Variable coding for Employment was None = 0, Part time = 1, Full time = 2; Significant numbers are in **bold** to facilitate locating them.



The principal objective of this research was to ascertain how living by traditional Chinese values would be related to a set of life outcomes, namely, Employment status, Income, Overall Health, satisfaction of Maslow's five Hierarchical Needs (i.e., Physiological, Safety, Belongingness, Esteem, and Self-Actualization), and Overall Life Satisfaction. Thus, correlations were computed for the 12 traditional Chinese values in relation to the set of life outcomes, which numbered 11 (because the Esteem Needs were examined in terms of the components of Esteem from Self and Esteem from Others, plus the overall Esteem Needs). Those results are shown in Table 2.

H(4) predicted that Employment would be significantly and positively related to at least one Chinese value, and the results revealed that respondents with higher employment status lived more according to the Chinese values of Thrift, $r(384) = .135$, $p = .008$, and Perseverance, $r(384) = .179$, $p = .000$, which supported H(4).

H(5) predicted that Income would be significantly and positively related to at least one Chinese value, and the results revealed that respondents with higher Income lived more according to the value of Perseverance, $r(384) = .184$, $p = .000$, which supported H(5).

H(6) predicted that Health would be significantly and positively related to at least one Chinese value, and the results revealed that respondents with better Health lived more according to the value of Being Adaptable, $r(384) = .125$, $p = .014$, which supported H(6).

H(7) predicted that satisfaction of each of the human needs identified by Maslow (1943) would be significantly and positively related to at least one Chinese value. The results demonstrated that satisfaction of basic Physiological Needs was positively and significantly correlated with living according to 7 of the 12 Chinese Values, namely, Hierarchical Relationships, Perseverance, Personal Steadiness, Protecting Other's Face, Contentedness, Being Adaptable, and Prudence, which supported H(7a).

Similarly, satisfaction of the Safety/Security Needs was found to be positively and significantly associated with living by 6 of the 12 Chinese values, namely, Hierarchical Relationships,

Perseverance, Personal Steadiness, Protecting Other's Face, Being Adaptable, and Prudence, which supported H(7b).

Additionally, satisfaction of the Belongingness Needs was positively and significantly associated with 11 of the 12 Chinese traditional values, namely, Hierarchic Relationships, Perseverance, Sense of Shame, Reciprocation, Personal Steadiness, Protect Other's People's Face, Respect Tradition, Moderation, Contentedness, Being Adaptable, and Prudence. These results lent support to H(7c).

For Satisfaction of the Need for Esteem, Maslow explained that this factor was composed of Self-Esteem and Esteem from Others. Hence, correlations were computed for each of the two types of esteem, as well as for the combined (overall) measure of Esteem. The results revealed that Esteem from Self was positively and significantly associated with 10 of the 12 Chinese values, i.e., Hierarchic Relationships, Perseverance, Sense of Shame, Reciprocation, Personal Steadiness, Protect Others' Face, Respect Tradition, Contentedness, Being Adaptable, and Prudence, which supported H(7d1).

For Esteem from Others, this variable was positively and significantly associated with 9 of the 12 Chinese values, i.e., Hierarchic Relationships, Perseverance, Sense of Shame, Personal Steadiness, Protect Others' Face, Moderation, Contentedness, Being Adaptable, and Prudence, which supported H(7d2).

And satisfaction with overall Esteem (i.e., all items from both types of esteem) was positively and significantly associated with 11 of the 12 Chinese values, namely, Hierarchic Relationships, Perseverance, Sense of Shame, Reciprocation, Personal Steadiness, Protect Other's Face, Respect Tradition, Moderation, Contentedness, Being Adaptable, and Prudence, which satisfied H(7d3).

For satisfaction with Self-Actualization, the highest level of Maslow's motivational hierarchy, this was found to be positively and significantly associated with 8 of the 12 Chinese values, namely, Thrift, Perseverance, Personal Steadiness, Respect for Tradition, Moderation, Contentedness, Being Adaptable, and Prudence, which supported H(7e).

Finally, H(8) predicted that overall Life Satisfaction would have a positive and significant correlation with living one's life according to at least one of the traditional Chinese values. And it was found that Life Satisfaction was positively and significantly associated with 11 of the 12 Chinese values (i.e., all except Sense of Shame), which supported H(8).

Whereas there were 77 significant correlations that the Chinese values had with satisfaction of the needs' variables and Life Satisfaction, for the sake of parsimony those results are detailed in Table 2.

Results of the Interviews

On the question of how much (on a percentage basis) the respondents lived their lives according to traditional Chinese values, one interviewee said 30 percent, while the other 29 responses ranged from 50 to 100 percent ($M = 75.33\%$, $SD = 17.17$). And on whether they thought Chinese values should or should not continue to be followed, 100 percent said they should be followed. The reasons that the interviewees articulated in explaining their answers included "living by traditional Chinese values helps one to be a better person," "improves and develops interpersonal relationships," "helps to make a more pleasant social environment," and "helps to make a better society."

For the life outcomes, the respondents were asked if living by the Chinese values had "any effect" (the wording was neutral to avoid being a leading question) on their employment, income, health, the Maslow needs, and overall life satisfaction. To facilitate interpreting verbal replies, respondents were asked to summarize their answers using a 5-point Likert-type response scale, namely: 1 = very bad effect, 2 = some bad effect, 3 = no effect, 4 = some good effect, and 5 = very good effect.

On Employment and Income, 9 respondents said no effect, while 21 said some good to very good effect. On Health, 22 said no effect, while 8 said good to very good.

On whether living according to Chinese values satisfied the Maslow needs, for the Physiological Needs, 13 respondents said no effect, while 17 said some good effect. For Safety, 17 said no effect, while 13 said some good to very good effect. For Belongingness, 2 said no effect, while 28 said some good to very good effect. For Esteem from Self, 9 said no effect, while 21 said



some good to very good effect. For Esteem from Others, all 30 said some good to very good effect. For Self-Actualization, 9 said no effect, while 21 said some good to very good effect. And for Life Satisfaction, 4 said no effect, while 26 said some good to very good effect. Notably, the interviewees gave no negative responses. Thus, overall, while some interviewees said no effect, most responses indicated that living according to Chinese values had favorable effects on the interviewees' lives.

Discussion

There were many significant positive correlations. Of the correlations between the demographics and living by Chinese values, 35 of the 72 correlations (49%) were significant; and of the correlations that living by Chinese values had with the life outcomes, 77 of the 132 correlations (58%) were significant (both far exceeding the 5% that could be expected by chance). Therefore, in both tables there were 112 significant correlations; however, whereas discussing them all would exceed the length limits of this article, this discussion focuses on those that are the most culturally revealing.

Chinese Values and the Demographics

To better understand the meaning of the results in Table 1, it should be understood that a *nonsignificant* correlation for any given demographic category indicates that the respondents lived according to that Chinese value to a *relatively equal* extent. Similarly, a *significant* positive or negative correlation reflects a difference in living according to a Chinese value depending on the demographic coding. For example, for Gender (where the codes were females = 0, and males = 1), a negative correlation means females reported living by that Chinese value to a greater extent than did males. (The other demographics were numerically increasing functions.)

In Table 1, the most prominent result was that Family Emotional Support had significant positive correlations with all 12 traditional Chinese values. While correlations do not usually infer causality, in this case there can be no doubt that family emotional support occurs first chronologically because it begins at birth and continues through a person's entire lifetime, particularly in Chinese society. For example, a person's Thrift of their salary from work cannot "cause" receiving Family Social Support in his or her childhood; but receiving Family Social

Support in Childhood could, conceivably, lead a person to be thrifty when one reaches adulthood and starts to earn a salary (see, e.g., [Strotz, 1956](#)).

Also, the family has been regarded as the central unit in Chinese culture and society ([Yang, 1995](#)). Thus, the Chinese family may be regarded as the critical unit in teaching Chinese values, with parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and even older siblings as the main teachers of human values to a growing child. The interviews confirmed this idea. That is, all 30 interviewees stated that their parents taught them the Chinese values, and that they learned those values between the ages of 3 and 8 years.

The ages at which the children learn Chinese values, as revealed in the interviews, was a noteworthy finding because most publications use the term “children” in discussing when cultural values are learned, but there did not seem to be empirical literature that specified the particular ages. Thus, the specific age range is especially revealing because most children in China start primary school when they are about eight years old. Also, the age range mentioned by the interviewees matches sociological and psychological principles. That is, teaching children their culture’s traditional values prior to entering school enables them to better understand how they should behave with their teachers and other authorities, and how to get along better with other children ([Weissbourd & Anderson, 2016](#)). The interviews also indicated that teachers reinforced the values that the children were taught at home.

Therefore, the results from both the questionnaire and interviews strongly supported the idea that traditional Chinese values are transmitted by family members to their offspring; and that the more emotional support that exists within one’s family, the more its members live their lives according to the traditional Chinese values. This could explain why some researchers thought that younger Chinese, particularly college students (see [Tsui & Farh, 1997](#)), and especially those overseas ([Garrott, 1995](#); [Jiao & Hardie, 2009](#)), *seem* to reject cultural values. That is, the reason may be a lack of intimate familial contact, which reduces the students’ chances of receiving family emotional support. Future research could be conducted to confirm this finding.

For Gender, the results showed that most of the Chinese values were followed equally by both males and females. The only differences were for four Chinese values that females lived by more than males. One was the Sense of Shame, which is not surprising because it is a social

ethic in Chinese society for females to be more careful in their behaviors in order to avoid shame. Females were also higher on Contentedness; and also found to be more concerned with Reciprocation and Protecting Other People's Face, which suggests that Chinese females could be more socially sensitive than Chinese males.

For Age, the correlations revealed that younger people lived more according to respecting their elders. This could reflect a biological fact, that is, as seniors increase in age, people who are older than them will have passed away, such that there are fewer people older than them to whom they could show respect. Also, older respondents lived more according to Thrift, Perseverance, Contentedness, Prudence, and Moderation, suggesting that older people think these values might ensure a longer life; likely confirming the value of Respect for Tradition, which was also higher for older people.

Regarding Education and Chinese values, the results yielded some sociological insights, which may be revealed by examining Education in relation to the specific cultural values. First, 10 of the 12 values showed no significant differences with regard to education, suggesting that, overall, the Chinese people are still living according to traditional Chinese values. An assessment of the two values that yielded significant differences in relation to education could reveal why other researchers thought Chinese people are losing their values. The two values were Prudence and Respect for Tradition, which were lower for Chinese respondents with higher levels of education.

Previous studies used Chinese college students in Hong Kong and/or in other countries. But Chinese college students often live in dormitories or in other countries, which separates them from their parents, thus reducing contact with family members who could counsel them to deal with living in the unfamiliar universities that tend to be quite *liberal*. Thus, being exposed to the universities' more indulgent ideas and lifestyles could seduce the students into being less *prudent* in their behaviors. Likewise, the more permissive university lifestyle and way of thinking could entice the students into thinking that the freedom they have in the universities is more desirable than the rules and restrictions of their traditional mores, thereby reducing their *respect for tradition*.



For Marital Status, compared to singles, married persons lived more by the values of Thrift, Perseverance, Contentedness, Prudence, and Moderation, which (as with older people) could lead them to see that these values help them live a better life despite added stresses of increased financial burdens (e.g., buying a home) and social pressures (e.g., from in-laws whom they must please) to live a less-stressful life. Additionally, following those values would confirm their Respect for Tradition, which was also higher for married people.

For Number of Children, the four significant correlations matched four of the six for Marital Status, i.e., Thrift, Perseverance, Prudence, and Respect Tradition. The two that were not significant were Moderation and Contentedness, which might reflect the fact that the Chinese are very devoted to their children, e.g., parents sometimes yield their moderation to the excessive demands of their children. And for similar reasons, the parents' contentedness might be lower because of their devotion to their children, i.e., they want their children to prosper, which could make parents less content while striving to increase their financial status so their children would be more respected by relatives and neighbors.

Chinese Values and Life Outcomes

To the extent that the theory about cultural values helping family members succeed in life is correct (see: [Bowlby, 1982](#); [Minc, 1986](#); [Yang, 1995](#)), the correlations in Table 2 lent strong support to that theory. Perhaps even more remarkable is that, for the first time, the results indicate *which* life outcomes each of the 12 specific Chinese values seem to impact.

Employment had significant positive correlations with the Chinese cultural values of Thrift and Perseverance. These results support the theoretical view that traditional values can help a person succeed in life. Specifically, being persistent at one's tasks helps one gain expertise, which makes one more suitable and therefore more desirable for employment. Also, in one's personal life, according to Confucius, "it would be better to be frugal than to be extravagant" ([Eno, 2015](#), Analects Book III, 3.4) because extravagance could result in poverty in one's personal life, and bankruptcy in business. Also, Income had a significant positive correlation with Perseverance, which reflects the results for employment. That is, workers who persevere to complete their tasks are likely appreciated by their employers, who see them as reliable and, thus, reward them with promotions and higher salaries.

Health had a significant positive correlation with Being Adaptable. For Confucius, the idea of being adaptable probably came from seeing how peasants were able to survive by adapting their behaviors when faced with droughts, harsh winters, landlords, and warlords who could be very cruel. Regarding health, in particular, [Bonanno \(2004\)](#) explained how personal resilience can help one to survive difficulties, and defined resilience as the ability to adapt to changing conditions, such as difficulties in one's personal life, environmental adversities, and unexpected problems in general. Thus, the traditional value of Being Adaptable also supports the theory of survival.

Regarding satisfaction of the human needs ([Maslow, 1943](#)), from 6 to 11 of the 12 Chinese values were positively and significantly correlated with satisfying each need.

Regressions for Chinese Values and Life Outcomes.

As noted previously, using highly intercorrelated variables as possible “predictors” of a criterion (dependent) variable in regressions often yields anomalous results, i.e., those that are partly meaningful, but with some inconsistencies. This problem in regressions, called “multicollinearity,” is a statistical phenomenon (due to the way regressions are computed) that can convert *positive* correlations into *negative* predictors. For the Chinese data, the traditional values would be the predictors for regressions. And of their correlations with the five Maslow variables and overall life satisfaction, many had highly significant intercorrelations (of the 54 significant correlations, all were positive, with 23 at $p = .000$, 17 at $p = .001$ to $.008$, and 14 at $p = .011$ to $.048$).

The reason for this is that traditional values are highly related behavioral prescriptions in China's social milieu. Thus, in regressions, the intercorrelations among the Chinese values could result in *negative predictors for variables that have very strong positive correlations* with the criterion variables. That is, the regressions could produce some *incorrect* predictor values. Therefore, for each regression analysis, only the positive predictors are reported for the regressions; while the incongruous negative predictors were omitted because they had highly significant positive correlations with the outcome variables (see Table 2).

The regression results were as follow: For Physiological Needs satisfaction, of the 7 significant correlations, the traditional values of Being Adaptable and Perseverance were the significant

positive predictors. Maslow viewed Physiological Needs as “basic” needs on which one’s survival depends. Therefore, Being Adaptable and Perseverance would be behaviors that could help satisfying physiological needs. For example, when a usual food source is unavailable, one could adapt by eating alternate, less-preferred foods, and persevere in that behavior for as long as necessary to survive (e.g., [Minnis, 1985](#)).

For Safety/Security Needs satisfaction, of the 6 significant correlations, Being Adaptable and Perseverance were, again, the significant positive predictors. Maslow also included this as a basic need, that is, in addition to physiological requirements, one must be safe and secure from external threats to one’s existence in order to survive. The same two traditional values were the principal predictors for satisfaction of this need. Hence, the findings for the two most basic needs in Maslow’s hierarchy support the theory about following traditional values as a means of survival.

For Belongingness Needs, of the 11 significant correlations, three traditional values, namely, Respecting the Social Hierarchy, Protect Other People’s Face, and Being Adaptable, were significant positive predictors. These results could explain how one’s need for social belonging can be satisfied because the most central idea in Confucian philosophy is social harmony, including harmony among one’s family and friends ([Yang, 1995](#)). That is, filial piety, or showing respect to one’s elders, results in harmony within the family. Also, being adaptable socially, such as combining one’s wishes with the wishes of other members of one’s group, builds camaraderie. And in other social situations, protecting the face of other people, such as one’s friends when they are verbally attacked, strengthens emotional ties with them. Thus, from these few examples, it can be seen how Chinese traditional values can help to satisfy the human need for belongingness.

For Esteem Needs satisfaction, to avoid a lengthy discussion only the overall measure is discussed. Of the 11 significant correlations, the significant positive traditional values’ predictors were Being Adaptable, Protect Other People’s Face, and Personal Steadiness. Being Adaptable earns respect from other people because it shows that one has the strength of character to harmoniously reach agreements with one’s friends and associates. Protect Other People’s Face is a social behavior that garners respect and appreciation from friends for defending them when criticized or confronted. And Personal Steadiness is the ability to remain calm and consistent,



and/or to maintain the integrity of one's character. Together, these virtuous values help one gain esteem both from others as well as from oneself.

For Self-Actualization, of the 8 significant correlations, the two strongest positive predictors were Being Adaptable and Perseverance. Maslow described Self-Actualization as realizing one's greatest talents, achieving one's full potential, and feeling fulfilled in life. Maslow viewed Self-Actualization as achieved by very few people, which makes the present results noteworthy for insight into the helpfulness of traditional Chinese values for reaching this highest, most prized level of human existence. Interestingly, the two values that best predicted Self-Actualization also predicted satisfaction of other needs. That is, to facilitate self-actualization, Being Adaptable and Perseverance might combine as practical values, such that knowing how to adapt to difficult situations while also persevering in what one must do to achieve one's life goals could, conceivably, help a person to attain Self-Actualization.

Life Satisfaction had significant positive correlations with 11 Chinese values. The two strongest positive predictors were Being Adaptable and Perseverance. The fact that 11 of the 12 traditional values were positively and significantly correlated with overall life satisfaction, and that these two values predicted Self-Actualization, seem to indicate that the traditional Chinese values have practical relevance for helping people to satisfy all the categories of needs from Maslow's motivational hierarchy, as well as a person's overall life satisfaction.

Research Constraints and Solution

There was a constraint in the nature of cultural values themselves. That is, culture reflects the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are shared by people in a group or society. And as values are highly interrelated (by evolving over millennia to create a society), they are inherently intercorrelated. That manifests as multicollinearity in the responses when a society's members are asked about them, which constrains their use in regression analyses. Most experts suggest removing variables to reduce multicollinearity. However, removing the values that measure Chinese culture would defeat the objectives of this study, which was to assess how each cultural facet was accepted and practiced by Chinese people, and how those facets related to satisfaction of the needs in Maslow's hierarchy. To solve this dilemma, the regressions were run using all the values, and then any values that had polarities "reversed" from their original

correlations were removed. This yielded meaningful inferences about how the people's acceptance of their cultural values related to satisfaction of their needs.

Conclusions and Implications

While people everywhere vary in their beliefs and behaviors, the results of this study strongly support the idea that Chinese people are still living according to their traditional values. For the entire sample, their overall mean score on the Chinese traditional values measure was significantly higher than the theoretical mean of the measure; and the same held true for every one of the 12 specific values that composed the measure. Also, the one-way ANOVA on the data from the three age groups on how much they lived by Chinese values was *nonsignificant*, indicating that younger, middle-aged, and older Chinese adults were relatively equal in living their lives according to the Chinese traditional cultural values.

Another interesting finding from the interviews was the ages at which, and from whom, Chinese people first learn the traditional Chinese values. All the interviewees clearly stated that they first learned the values from their parents, and learned them between the ages of 3 and 8 years old. Those results coincide with some very practical sociological and social psychological factors. Specifically, by learning early in life what society expects of them and how to properly interact with adults and their peers, Chinese children gain the social skills needed to work successfully in groups, make friends more easily, make a smooth transition into adulthood, and thus live more happily in society.

The findings also supported the theory that traditional values evolved as a means to help societies survive (Malinowski, 1954; Minc, 1986). Along these lines, an interesting insight was derived from the findings, as seen in the regressions. Notably, the two Chinese values that appeared most frequently as significant predictors of the desired life outcomes were Being Adaptable and Perseverance. Those values might seem to be contradictory, yet they reveal a cultural discovery. That is, these two values, taken together, could explain why they are so important in promoting the survival of a society and its members.

For example, perseverance in one's tasks, e.g., the work one does to "make a living," is an *internal* characteristic that one *can* control; and yet, at the same time, one must also be adaptable when faced with *external* difficulties, which one *cannot* control. Thus, when used

together, those two particular values (and, by extension, all 12 traditional Chinese values) were empirically demonstrated to support the theory that traditional values play an important role in the survival of a culture, and thus in benefitting its members and their society.

Moreover, for the individuals who live according to the Chinese traditional values, this study revealed that those cultural values seem to help satisfy all five of the human needs in Maslow's (1943) theory. Furthermore, the results also indicated that living according to the traditional Chinese values could increase one's overall life satisfaction.

Implications

There are both practical social-psychological and empirical research implications from the results. In practical terms, the findings suggest that it would be wise to continue the transmission of cultural values to future generations. This idea comes from the fact that many of the cultural values (which reflect social psychological factors) were positive and significant predictors of satisfaction of the five human needs. That is, the cultural value of Being Adaptable was a significant positive predictor of satisfaction of all five needs, namely, the Physiological, Safety, Belongingness, Esteem, and Self-Actualization needs; and the value of Perseverance was a significant positive predictor of three of the needs, namely, the Physiological, Safety, and Self-Actualization needs.

Implications for empirical research derive from the fact that the two cultural values of Being Adaptable and Perseverance are notably similar to two of the four factors of adult personal resilience, namely, Adaptability and Determination (respectively), which help a person to be more resilient (Taormina, 2015). This suggests a new avenue for future research, namely, the investigation of the relationship between the extent to which people accept their society's cultural values and how resilient those people are. Research on these variables could be conducted within any culture, as well as across different cultures, thus greatly increasing opportunities for new research and new findings.

Funding/Financial Support

The authors have no funding to report

Other Support/Acknowledgement

The authors have no support to report.

Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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