Methodological and theoretical issues on psychological traditionality and modernity research in an Asian society: In response to Kwang-Kuo Hwang and beyond

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Three objectives are addressed in the present study. First, the methodological and conceptual aspects of my long-term research program on psychological (individual) traditionality and modernity in Taiwan are briefly reviewed to provide a background for systematically responding to Kwang-Kuo Hwang’s critique of the research program. Second, my reply to Hwang is made in terms of five major issues, viz. the methodological approach adopted, the theoretical or conceptual basis, the explanation of the discontinuity between individual traditionality and modernity, the semantic opposites and psychological opposites, and the conceptual evaluation of the traditionality and modernity items. Third, a plea is made for conducting more and better studies on individual traditionality and modernity in developing Asian countries. Methodological and theoretical issues are further discussed and clarified for the sake of conducting methodologically and theoretically sounder research in this area.

Key words: hypothesis of limited psychological convergence, individual modernity, individual traditionality, psychological modernization, traditionality-modernity discontinuity.

Prologue

Theoretical and empirical analyses of Chinese individual traditionality/modernity (T/M) have been one of my favorite research topics in my professional career as a Chinese personality and social psychologist. My long-term research on psychological T/M began in 1972 in the hayday of research on non-Western societal and individual modernization by Western social scientists. As a young Chinese psychologist deeply committed to help modernize Chinese societies and people, I was strongly inspired by the works of L. W. Doob, A. Inkeles, J. A. Kahl, C. Kerr, D. Lerner, M. J. Levy, W. E. Moore, A. G. Myer and A. Porter, to name a few. Virtually all of them are Western (mostly American) sociologists. These scholars conducted research on individual modernity using concepts based on classical modernization theory.

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They focused on non-Western societies rather than on their own for the obvious reason that Western people’s psychological modernization was rapidly approaching a plateau. Inspired by their research, I quickly made up my mind to study Chinese individual T/M as a life-long research area, with the hope that such research would provide useful knowledge to better understand the content, structure and change of Chinese people’s psychological make-up during the process of societal modernization.

Classical modernization theory was soon criticized for its equating modernization with Westernization and its overoptimistic view of modernization as the unmistakable cause of economic and political progress, first by Wallerstein’s (1974, 1980) world system theory and other perspectives in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As a result, with the exception of Inkeles (1997) and Inglehart (1997), Western social scientists’ interest in doing research in this area quickly faded away.

The reason that most Western investigators turned away from this research area is understandable. Western, especially American, social scientists tend to be highly sensitive to the change of theoretical or methodological paradigm in their own research domain. When either of these paradigms shifts, investigators do one of two things: go with the tide or leave the field. Changing paradigms may not be easy, and so a much more likely action is to leave the field, especially if the field does not mean much to the investigator. My guess is that studying individual T/M in non-Western societies may not be so important professionally and psychologically to a Western researcher as it is to non-Western researchers.

I, myself, however, decided to continue my research on Chinese T/M. There were three main reasons for this decision. First, unlike Western investigators, I was studying the individual T/M of people in my own society rather than in a foreign one. Findings from such research, if carried out in a longitudinal and systematic way, would enable us to better understand how Chinese people are transforming psychologically in a context of rapid societal modernization. Furthermore, it would also offer an opportunity to learn more about the psychological mechanisms underlying Chinese people’s changes from traditional to modern needs, attitudes, beliefs, values, temperaments and behaviors. As a Chinese psychologist who strongly felt obligated to promote Chinese psychological modernization and to preserve some of the traditional Chinese psychological characteristics deemed beneficial to modern life, I could not afford to give up this research.

Second, my research focused on the study of Chinese psychological modernization and its antecedent, concurrent and consequent variables in a systematic way. The psychological transformation of Chinese people during the process of societal modernization in contemporary Chinese societies affords a wide range of highly conspicuous psychological and behavioral phenomena, easily observed in everyday life. These transformations profoundly affect almost all aspects of daily functioning. Such pervasive phenomena of fundamental significance surely deserve serious research effort by Chinese psychologists.

Third, in the second stage of my research, conceptually and empirically, I deliberately tried to detach from the debates on sociological theories of societal modernity and adopted a psychological approach to the study of Chinese individual T/M as two sets of actually existing psychological and behavioral characteristics important to the daily functioning of Chinese people. I decided to start from my own and other researchers’ observations of and experiences with the relevant Chinese psychological and behavioral attributes as they manifested in Chinese everyday life, to formulate a comprehensive conceptual framework, which served as the basis for conducting individual T/M empiric research in Taiwan.

Since 1970, I have been conducting conceptual and empirical analyses of the various aspects and correlates of Chinese individual T/M. The conceptual analyses were mainly...
published in Yang (1978, 1981b, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1994, 1996, 1998a) and Yang et al. (1991), with empirical findings in Yang (1981a, 1981b, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1994, 1996) and Yang et al. (Hchu & Yang, 1972; Hwang & Yang, 1972; Yang & Hchu, 1974; Chu & Yang, 1976; Yang & Cheng, 1988; Yang et al., 1991). A recent comprehensive review of these conceptual and empirical accomplishments was presented in Yang (1996). The theoretical concepts developed and the measuring tools (Chinese and English versions) constructed from this research have been used in many studies for master theses, doctoral dissertations and other academic purposes in Taiwan, mainland China, Singapore and the USA. These studies have been published in both Chinese and English in domestic and international academic journals. Three very recent events, however, are most encouraging. First, a special issue on individual traditionality/modernity, jointly edited by Frederick T. L. Leong and Weining C. Chang from the USA and Singapore, respectively, was published in the first issue of the sixth volume (2003) of Asian Journal of Social Psychology (AJSP). Second, a systematic and critical review of the theoretical frameworks and empirical findings of my T/M research was made by Y. Y. Yang (2001), a social psychologist from mainland China, in the official journal of the Chinese Association of Social Psychology based in Beijing. Third, Kwang-Kuo Hwang’s paper entailing a critique of the methodology of my research on individual T/M has been accepted for publication in AJSP. The editors of the Journal invited me to make this reply.

In the following sections, I will first give a coherent synopsis of the various aspects of the methodology adopted in conducting Chinese individual T/M research in Taiwan, and then respond to Hwang’s criticisms. Finally, I will discuss some methodological and theoretical issues that I consider important for conducting better T/M research in non-Western developing societies.

**A glimpse at the methodology of my individual traditionality and modernity research in Taiwan**

Methodologically speaking, I adopted a psychometric approach from a dispositional perspective in my long-term individual T/M research project. With such a perspective, Chinese individual traditionality has been defined as the typical pattern of more or less related motivational, evaluative, attitudinal and temperamental traits that is most frequently observed in people in traditional Chinese society and can still be found in people in contemporary Chinese societies such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China. Chinese individual modernity has been defined as the typical pattern of more or less related motivational, evaluative, attitudinal and temperamental traits that is most frequently observed in people in contemporary highly industrialized societies, such as those in Europe and North America, and that has been gradually acquired to some extent by people in contemporary Chinese societies during the process of societal modernization. As attitudinal traits have a broader content coverage and are more susceptible to the influence of societal modernization than other kinds of psychological traits, more emphasis has been placed on Chinese social attitudes in constructing standardized scales for the assessment of individual T/M.

My research could be divided into two stages. The first stage was from 1972 to 1984, during which the Chinese Individual Traditionality-Modernity Scale (CITMS) was constructed and used as a measuring tool under the assumption that individual T and M constitute a unidimensional psychological continuum. The second stage began in 1985 and continues to the present. During this stage, two separate measuring instruments, the Multidimensional Scale of Chinese Individual Traditionality (MS-CIT) and the
Multidimensional Scale of Chinese Individual Modernity (MS-CIM), were constructed and used under the assumption that individual T and M are two separate, independent, multidimensional psychological syndromes. The overall strategy adopted in the second stage is radically different from that in the first, and a systematic contrast of the two strategies is shown in Table 1. The five specific assumptions of the new strategy provide the basic rationale for the development of the T/M assessment instruments in the second stage.

Construction of the MS-CIT and the MS-CIM was based upon two separate large item pools. The items in the two pools were written and collected chiefly in accordance with the two conceptual schemes of the major content of Chinese individual T/M (Yang et al., 1991) as shown in Table 2. The 14 conceptual categories of more or less overlapping traditional

### Table 1  Previous and new research strategies of individual traditionality and modernity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-M supposed to be a bipolar psychological continuum with two opposite parts.</td>
<td>T and M supposed to be two separate, rather independent psychological syndromes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-M supposed to be a bipolar continuum with unidimensional opposite parts.</td>
<td>T and M supposed to be two multidimensional psychological syndromes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same person’s level of T-M in his or her various life domains supposed to be roughly uniform (uniform psychological modernization).</td>
<td>The same person’s levels of both T and M supposed to vary substantially across his or her various life domains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The psychological content of T-M supposed to be cross-culturally invariant.</td>
<td>The components of both T and M supposed to vary substantially across different cultures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Adapted from Yang (1996, table 31.2).

### Table 2  The conceptual schemes of content coverage for individual traditionality/modernity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional psychological categories</th>
<th>Modern psychological categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collectivistic orientation</td>
<td>Individualistic orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familistic orientation</td>
<td>Institutionalistic orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particularistic orientation</td>
<td>Universalistic orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive-to-nature orientation</td>
<td>Dominating-the-nature orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-orientation</td>
<td>Self-orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past orientation</td>
<td>Future orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-suppressive orientation</td>
<td>Self-expressive orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian orientation</td>
<td>Egalitarian orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent orientation</td>
<td>Independent orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To-be-similar orientation</td>
<td>To-be-different orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty orientation</td>
<td>Competition orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External-control orientation</td>
<td>Internal-control orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-contentment orientation</td>
<td>Achievement orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship orientation</td>
<td>Tolerating-of-others orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Adapted from Yang et al. (1991) with the order of categories rearranged.
Chinese psychological characteristics that are listed in the first column were considered to represent the major content of Chinese individual T. These traditional psychological categories were selected on the basis of a large number of previous studies conducted by local psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists (Yang et al., 1991). The list was made as indigenous as possible. The 14 conceptual categories of more or less overlapping modern psychological characteristics listed in the second column were considered to represent the major content of Chinese individual T. These modern psychological categories were selected on the basis of a large number of previous studies conducted by Western as well as local scholars. The two sets of psychological orientations are arranged in the table so as to pair up the semantically contrasting items. With the exception of the last two pairs, the other 12 pairs seem to be semantically opposite. Use of semantically contrasting concepts was unavoidable for two reasons. One is that previous Western and local researchers in this area had already advanced several pairs of semantically opposite orientations in their conceptualization of the East–West psychological distinctions. The other is that the use of contrasted orientations is a useful way to highlight potential Eastern–Western psychological differences.

With the two conceptual schemes as guides for item writing, two separate pools of 460 and 430 items, for Chinese individual T and M, respectively, were compiled. Each item stated a cognition, feeling, evaluation or behavioral intention about a social object, activity or matter. Then, 299 and 256 items were selected for the preliminary versions of the MS-CIT and the MS-CIM. The preliminary MS-CIT was given to 819 university students and 599 adults, and the preliminary MS-CIM to 891 students and 614 adults in Taiwan. Factor analyses of the data consistently identified five oblique factors for T and M separately for both student and adult samples (Yang et al., 1991). The five T and five M factors are, respectively, labeled in Table 3 in descending order of the percentage of the total variance accounted for by each factor (Yang, 1996).3

The five T factors represent the major psychological components of Chinese individual T, and the five M factors, the major components of Chinese individual M. Both T and M are five-dimensional syndromes. Empirical analyses (Yang et al., 1991) revealed that the five T traits correlated with one another within the range from –0.04 to 0.71, indicating that some of them were substantially related to each other, whereas others were not related or only negligibly related. A similar correlational pattern was found for the five M traits, only this time the average correlation was lower than that for the five T traits. These findings indicated that neither the five T nor the five M traits formed a highly coherent psychological system. Instead, Chinese individual T/M seem to be two sets of more or less related concurrent psychological traits appearing and functioning together in the time and space when the research project was conducted. In other words, the relationships between the T components, and also those between the M components, were historically and socially situated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionality factors</th>
<th>Modernity factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submission to Authority</td>
<td>Egalitarianism and Open-mindedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial Piety and Ancestral Worship</td>
<td>Social Isolation and Self-reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism and Endurance</td>
<td>Optimism and Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatalism and Defensiveness</td>
<td>Affective Hedonism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Dominance</td>
<td>Sex Equality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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What is the relationship between individual T and M? Is my assumption that T and M are two separate, independent psychological syndromes correct? Yang’s (1994) study obtained some relevant empirical results, as presented in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 presents simple $r$s between the five T and the five M components for male and female students separately. With the exception of the negative correlations between Male Dominance and Sex Equality, all the other correlations were relatively low in absolute values. Furthermore, some of the T components were substantially correlated with one another and the same was true of some of the M components. Because of this possibility, Yang (1994) computed partial correlations between each T component and each M component with the other four T and four M components partialled out. Results are presented in Table 5. As can be seen from the table, all the partial correlations between T and M components decreased to a negligible absolute size. These results enabled the confident conclusion that Chinese individual T and M are two rather independent or orthogonal psychological syndromes.

In order to implement the specific assumption that T and M tend to vary substantially across various life domains, the final versions of the MS-CIT and the MS-CIM were constructed by choosing not only the items with the highest loadings on each component factor, but also items with content relevant to each life domain.4

Various forms of the T and M scales were constructed in order to suit different research needs or purposes. The full MS-CIT and the full MS-CIM were so constructed that both psychological-component scores and life-domain scores could be computed. These and other forms of the MS-CIT and the MS-CIM may be used in studies with a variety of research designs and addressing different kinds of issues on the correlates of the T and M components, the group differences in patterns or profiles of the T and M components, the change and stability of the T and M components during successive stages of societal change, the social psychological factors and mechanisms involved or responsible for the change and stability, and the various types of interactions between the T and M components as societal modernization goes on.

Thus far in this section, I have confined myself to the depiction of the methodological aspects of my T/M research. As to the empirical accomplishments of the two stages of the research program, the reader is referred to the review articles by Yang (1986, 1988; 1994, 1996) and Yang and Hchu (1974).

A reply to Hwang’s methodological criticisms

Having presented a coherent synopsis of my long-term T/M research, I am ready to respond to Hwang’s (2003) methodological comments. The major criticisms Hwang made in his critique can be reduced to the following five questions: (1) What is the appropriate approach for conducting individual T/M research? (2) Does Yang’s T/M research have a theoretical or conceptual basis? (3) How can the T/M discontinuity be explained? (4) Do semantic opposites indicate or reflect psychological opposites? (5) Are the items of the Chinese individual T/M scales conceptually adequate? In the following, I respond to each of these five questions in turn.

However, first I should make a distinction between individual and societal traditionality/modernity. As noted in the last section, individual T comprises a set of concurrent traditional psychological characteristics or traits at the individual level, whereas individual M comprises a set of concurrent modern psychological characteristics or traits at the individual level. Societal T denotes a set of concurrent traditional economic, political,
Table 4  Simple correlations between the five T factors and the five M factors for Taiwan university students (n = 447 for males, n = 377 for females)†

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionality factors</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Egalitarianism and Open-mindedness</th>
<th>Modernity factors</th>
<th>Optimism and Affectiveness</th>
<th>Affective Hedonism</th>
<th>Sex Equality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submission to Authority</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>-0.32**</td>
<td>-0.18**</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-0.29**</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-0.48**</td>
<td>-0.34**</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.43**</td>
<td>-0.34**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial Piety and Ancestral Worship</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>-0.15**</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
<td>-0.48**</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>-0.22**</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism and Endurance</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>-0.45**</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.14*</td>
<td>-0.32**</td>
<td>-0.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-0.57**</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.30**</td>
<td>-0.38**</td>
<td>-0.57**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatalism and Defensiveness</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>-0.34**</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>-0.22**</td>
<td>-0.29**</td>
<td>-0.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>-0.25**</td>
<td>-0.43**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Dominance</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>-0.27**</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.34**</td>
<td>-0.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-0.50**</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.29**</td>
<td>-0.38**</td>
<td>-0.62**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Adapted from table 3 in Yang (1994).
* p < 0.01, ** p < 0.001, two-tailed test.
Table 5  Partial correlations between the five T factors and the five M factors for Taiwan university students ($n=447$ for males, $n=377$ for females)†

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionality factors</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Egalitarianism and Open-mindedness</th>
<th>Modernity factors</th>
<th>Optimism and Assertiveness</th>
<th>Affective Hedonism</th>
<th>Sex Equality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Isolation and Self-reliance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission to Authority</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>–0.30***</td>
<td>–0.13</td>
<td>0.15*</td>
<td>–0.05</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>–0.19**</td>
<td>–0.03</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>–0.12</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial Piety and Ancestral Worship</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>–0.23**</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>–0.13</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>–0.14*</td>
<td>–0.32**</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism and Endurance</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>–0.16**</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>–0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>–0.22**</td>
<td>–0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>–0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatalism and Defensiveness</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>–0.11</td>
<td>–0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.28**</td>
<td>–0.16*</td>
<td>–0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Dominance</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>–0.25**</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>–0.03</td>
<td>–0.47**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>–0.15*</td>
<td>–0.03</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>–0.03</td>
<td>–0.34**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Adapted from table 4 in Yang (1994).
* $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed test.
+ Partial correlation coefficients between each T factor and M factor were computed with the other four T and four M factors statistically controlled (partialled out).
social and cultural characteristics at the society level, whereas societal M denotes a set of concurrent modern economic, political, social and cultural characteristics at the society level. The various modalities of societal M have been separately and conceptually analyzed and empirically investigated as economic, political, social, and cultural modernity by sociologists, economists, political scientists, and cultural analysts.

**Methodological approach adopted**

Recently, Ratner (1999) made a thorough literature review and identified three predominant approaches of cultural psychology, namely, the symbolic approach, activity theory, and the individualistic approach. The symbolic approach views culture as collective symbols and concepts, and explains how culture enters the psyche and organizes psychological phenomena. Activity theory proposes that psychological phenomena are formed as people engage in socially organized activities. The individualistic approach rejects the notion that culture has the power to organize psychological functions and, instead, regards culture as an external context that individuals use and reconstruct as they see fit. Hwang (2003) suggested that the symbolic approach and activity theory, but not the individualistic approach, should be adopted in studying individual T/M without making it clear why this may be so.

The problem is that when I started the first wave of my T/M research in Taiwan in 1972 and the second in 1985, cultural psychology was little known. In fact, the theoretical and methodological orientations of cultural psychology have become accessible only recently. To be honest, even if I re-did my research now, I would still not adopt a cultural psychological approach, simply because it is difficult for me to envision how such an approach can result in quantitative empirical data for simultaneously identifying a set of T or M dispositions in a broad and systematic way. What are the major psychological traits of Chinese individual T and M? What are the quantitative relationships between the T and M traits? What are the antecedent, concurrent and subsequent correlates of the T and M traits? How are certain processes and mechanisms involved in the formation and change of each of the T and M traits? These are the types of question I wanted to answer. There are neither conceptual nor empirical reasons for me to believe that cultural psychological approaches can do a better job of answering these questions. I still think the psychometric trait approach, which tends to focus on internal dispositions and to de-emphasize external, contextual factors, can do a better job.

Different psychologists are interested in answering different questions, and thus tend to develop or adopt different approaches to answer their chosen questions. There is no approach that is appropriate for all types of research questions, and no research question that could be equally appropriately answered by every approach. Every methodological approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Findings from studies adopting different approaches tend be complementary to one another, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological phenomena. This is the true spirit of multiple approaches or paradigms that Yang (1993, 1999) advocates. Under that principle, different indigenous psychologists in the same society should be encouraged to apply different or even conflicting strategies or paradigms, such as those distinguished by Guba and Lincoln (1994), to their own studies.

To say that cultural psychological approaches may not fit the dispositional study of individual T/M does not mean that these approaches can not be used fruitfully to investigate traditional and modern psychological and behavioral phenomena, albeit, in a non-dispositional way. One of the major common threads of most cultural psychological approaches is the emphasis on the mutual constitution of culture and behavior. Based upon

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this and other theoretical assumptions, cultural-psychologically oriented psychologists should be able to design and conduct a new type of research in which the mutually constitutive relationships between specific traditional (or modern) psychological or behavioral phenomena and their respective specific traditional (or modern) cultural contexts are systematically studied. The questions that could be asked in this type of research are strikingly different from those asked in my T/M research with a psychometric dispositional approach. Some of the most intriguing questions are: How are a specific traditional (or modern) cultural condition and its corresponding specific traditional (or modern) behavior ‘yoked’ to facilitate each other’s formation, stability and change? How does a decrease and increase in the strength of a specific traditional (or modern) cultural condition affect its ‘yoked’ specific traditional (or modern) behavior? How does a cultural condition newly formed during the course of societal modernization create a new specific modern behavior? How do two conflicting traditional and modern cultural conditions affect their respective corresponding traditional and modern behaviors? It seems that a cultural psychological approach is relatively more useful in answering the ‘how’ type of questions, while the psychometric dispositional approach mainly addresses the ‘what’ type of questions.

**Theoretical or conceptual basis**

In the abstract of his article, Hwang (2003) criticized that my research on individual T/M used an inductive, empirical approach without a theoretical grounding of conceptual analysis. In the discussion of the potential Chinese cultural background for Chinese individual T, he began with a short comment on traditional Chinese culture by pointing out that Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism and Buddhism are the major sources of Chinese cultural traditions. He doubted that such a heterogeneous cultural tradition could be measured by the five factors of Chinese individual T as identified in my research. I fully agree with his doubt. However, I believe that he failed to realize the distinction between societal and individual T. The heterogeneous Chinese cultural tradition is composed of ‘numerous significant but different components’ (Hwang, 2003) that may be regarded as components of Chinese societal, or more specifically, cultural, traditionality. What the five T factors represent are the components of Chinese individual (psychological) T rather than those of Chinese cultural T. The five T factors are the major traditional psychological traits at the individual level, which are formed under the influence of the various components of traditional Chinese culture. There may not be an isomorphic relationship between Chinese psychological and cultural components. There is no theoretical or empirical basis to claim that the former is as heterogeneous as the latter.

Hwang next introduced Li’s (1988, 1992) Chinese worldview model of equilibrium and his own structural model of Confucianism. Li’s model proposes that the fundamental operating principle in traditional Chinese cosmology is to seek balance and harmony between human beings and nature, human beings and society, and human beings and their egos. Hwang (2001) put forward a five-component model of Confucianism, the core component of which is the Confucian way of humanity. This core component includes two major kinds of ethics, ethics for ordinary people and ethics for scholars. The former ethics endorses two principles, viz. the principle of respecting the superior and the principle of favoring the intimate.

Taken as a whole, Hwang seemed to suggest that I should have made a thorough analysis of Chinese culture with Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism and Buddhism as its major sources at the societal level, and then constructed a comprehensive theory of Chinese cultural traditionality to include the most distinguishing features of Chinese cultural traditions, two of which could be those that are stressed in Li’s and Hwang’s models. From this set of
features, I should have then further developed a comprehensive conceptual framework of the
most distinguishing content features of Chinese individual T and, finally, I should have written
the T items of the MS-CIT in accordance with this comprehensive conceptual framework. As
I did not follow such a procedure, Hwang viewed my research on Chinese individual T as
adopting an inductive, empirical approach without a theoretical grounding of conceptual
analysis.

I must honestly admit that at the time I began my research, I was unable to do such a
thorough analysis of Chinese cultural traditions and to develop a comprehensive theory of
Chinese cultural T. I do not think I could do it even now. A thorough analysis of the whole
Chinese culture in its multifaceted entirety is an enormous accomplishment, which has
eluded Chinese philosophers, anthropologists and intellectual historians as well as Western
Sinologists. I certainly could not claim to have such expertise. I began by searching for a
comprehensive set of potential distinguishing features of Chinese individual T for formulating a
conceptual basis for writing T items (Table 2). They represented psychological characteristics
manifested by ordinary Chinese in their daily life. This conceptual framework captured
Chinese people’s psychological functioning in the ‘little traditions’ in Redfield’s (1956) sense.

With regard to the Western cultural background of individual M, Hwang did not mention
the major sources of Western cultural traditions as he did for Chinese cultural traditions.
Instead, he said that ‘it is clear that modernity is actually a consequence of the rationality
emerging from European civilization after the Renaissance in the 14th century that became
substantially manifest in various microworlds of scientific knowledge’ (Hwang, 2003). He
went on to mention several kinds of rationality, namely, classical, substantive, and
instrumental, in his paper without giving definitions. There are at least two problems with
Hwang’s statement. First, Hwang did not make it clear whether the term ‘modernity’ denotes
individual or societal M. Second, he claimed that modernity is actually a consequence of
rationality, literally meaning that rationality is not only a, but the sole, cause or determinant
of modernity.

Hwang seems to have used the term ‘modernity’ in a sociological rather than a
psychological sense. As a sociological term, modernity is ‘used to describe the condition of
society from Enlightenment of the 18th century to the middle of the 20th. It encompasses
a rational outlook on social issues and an attempt to shape social arrangements according
to scientific and logical principles’ (Lawson & Garrod, 2001; p. 154). According to this
theoretically neutral definition, modernity as used in sociology basically denotes a condition
of the society rather than a condition of the individual. In other words, it means societal rather
than individual M. When Hwang used the sociological concept of societal M to talk about
psychological M at the individual level, he inadvertently committed the fallacy of shifted
level of inquiry.

For the clarification of the relationship between rationality and (societal) modernity,
Lawson and Garrod’s (2001) rather eclectic sociological definition of rationality is useful.
They define rationality as: ‘a term used by sociologists to define a distinguishing characteristic
of modernity, which is that actions in modern societies are governed by logic and order. So,
in modern rational societies, actions are said to be governed by logical thought, in contrast
to the traditional societies of the past, where actions were controlled by what had always been
done. Rationality has been particularly associated with bureaucratic organizations, where the
actions of members of the organization are coordinated and controlled through rules, to
achieve organizational goals in a rational way’ (p. 202).

Two things are clear from this definition. One is that rationality is a part of modernity
rather than a cause of it, and definitely not the sole cause of it. The other is that rationality,
as a sociological term, denotes a distinguishing characteristic of societal M, rather than individual M. It is manifested in the rational rules according to which modern organizations, institutions or collectivities are governed.

By now it should be clear that rationality is not a cause of Western societal modernity, but a part of it. In addition to rationality, there must be other distinguishing characteristics of Western societal M. Together, these characteristics constitute the distinguishing features of contemporary Western culture and result in the complex pattern of Western individual M. This Western individual M is so heterogeneous as to include at least 20 modern psychological characteristics as reported in Yang’s (1988) review. The 20 psychological characteristics of individual M are listed in Table 6. It is rather difficult to tell for certain which of these characteristics are related to rationality and which are not. But one thing is obvious: most of the 20 characteristics cannot be clearly labeled as rationality-oriented.

So far, a comprehensive scheme of the major distinguishing features of modern Western culture has not emerged in the literature. Without such a scheme, it is just not plausible to develop a theoretical framework of the distinguishing features of Western individual M. Without such a framework, the only sensible thing to do is to select a set of apparently significant features of Western individual M as the starting point for the formulation of a conceptual framework of Chinese individual M. This is exactly what I did (Table 2). More than half of the 14 M features (psychological categories) can be found among the first (most important) 12 of the 20 modern psychological characteristics listed in Table 6.

Thus, two sets of distinguishing psychological features were provided, one for Chinese individual T and the other for M. Chinese individual T and M represent two highly diversified psychological domains identified by different investigators who had conducted empirical research in this area. These two conceptual frameworks were used as the guides to write a large number of items for both of the T and M item pools. The inherent heterogeneity of each conceptual framework ensured the broad content coverage of the item pool used for constructing each scale. The maximized conceptual divergence between the two frameworks also provided a ready distinction to differentiate between traditional and modern psychological characteristics.

All in all, while it is relatively easier to formulate a limited theory for a specific feature of Chinese or Western cultural traditions, it is insurmountably difficult to simultaneously put forward two comprehensive theories to cover the entire range of various distinguishing features of traditional Chinese culture and modern Western culture as the bases for formulating the conceptual systems of the major features of Chinese T and Western M. Instead, I began with two comprehensive frameworks that are conceptual, if not theoretical.

### Table 6 Twenty psychological characteristics of individual M

| 2. Low integration with relatives | 12. Future orientation |
| 3. Egalitarian attitudes | 13. Psychological differentiation |
| 4. Openness to innovation and change | 14. Empathetic capacity |
| 5. Belief in sex equality | 15. Need for information |
| 6. Achievement motivation | 16. Propensity to take risks in life |
| 7. Individualistic orientation | 17. Extralocal orientation (non-localism) |
| 8. Independence or self-reliance | 18. Secularization in religious belief |
| 10. Tolerance of and respect for others | 20. Educational and occupational aspirations |
in the strict sense, in nature for my long-term research on Chinese individual T/M. I decided not to adopt a purely inductive, empirical approach from the very beginning.

**Explanation of the discontinuity between individual T and M**

In the second stage of my T/M research, I hypothesized that Chinese individual T and M were two separate, independent psychological syndromes rather than opposite ends of the same continuum. This hypothesis was confirmed by the empirical data collected by Yang (1994), as shown in Tables 4 and 5. Based upon these findings, Yang (1994, 1996) inferred that Chinese individual T and M could coexist at the same time in the same Chinese society.

Hwang (2003) explained individual T/M discontinuity in terms of the difference in origin between traditional and modern knowledge. He claimed that in a developing non-Western society, people usually possess two different kinds of knowledge. One is the local, traditional non-scientific knowledge learned through socialization, the other is the modern scientific knowledge imported and transplanted from Western countries. Hwang also described how these two kinds of knowledge become mixed in non-Western people’s cognitive systems and help them to deal with different types of problems in different life domains. According to Hwang, local, non-scientific knowledge constitutes the traditional part of a person’s cognitive system, corresponding to individual T. The transplanted Western scientific knowledge constitutes the modern part of a person’s cognitive system, corresponding to individual M. Thus, the traditional and modern parts of a person’s cognitive system are qualitatively different in the sense that the former is prelogical and prescientific and the latter, logical and scientific. If this difference in ways of thinking between the local, traditional non-scientific and the transplanted Western scientific knowledge is likened to the difference in the ways of thinking between knowledge in the prescientific stage and that of the scientific stage in the Western history, there would be an individual T/M discontinuity.

While Hwang’s interpretation may contain a kernel of truth, his conceptualization of individual T/M in terms of knowledge has an obvious limitation. It is especially problematic to narrow down the imported Western knowledge to scientific knowledge derived from Western scientific theories. What gets imported is not only the Western scientific knowledge, but also Western originated psychological needs, values, attitudes, concepts, ideas, thoughts and common sense. Most of these Western psychological characteristics properly belong to the motivational, evaluative, attitudinal and temperamental modalities rather than the cognitive ones to which scientific knowledge belongs.

Hwang’s explanation of the T/M discontinuity is based on the differences between the assumed prelogicalness and prescientificness of the local traditional knowledge and the logicalness and scientificness of the transplanted Western knowledge. What about the qualitative differences between the non-cognitive psychological characteristics of people in contemporary Chinese societies and those of people in contemporary Western societies? It is not possible to say that the former are prelogical and prescientific and the latter, logical and scientific. We can only say that the two are qualitatively different in content, rather than in nature. The same may be true of the difference between local knowledge and transplanted knowledge. To be consistent, I prefer to consider the striking differences in content between the local cognitive and non-cognitive psychological attributes and the imported cognitive and non-cognitive ones as the major factor(s) responsible for individual T/M discontinuity.

It is important to note that the 14 categories of psychological orientations for individual T and the 14 for individual M in the comprehensive conceptual framework for item writing in Table 2 mainly represent the non-cognitive (i.e. motivational, evaluative, attitudinal and...
temperamental) aspects of the T/M content. The same is true of the five T components and the five M components extracted by factor analyses. Therefore, what the MS-CIT and the MS-CIM measure are essentially non-cognitive traditional and modern psychological characteristics. This means that the discontinuity between individual T and M as measured by the MS-CIT and MS-CIM cannot be adequately explained in terms of the discontinuity between the local, traditional prelogical and prescientific knowledge and the transplanted modern Western logical and scientific knowledge as suggested by Hwang.

When I planned to start the second stage of my research program almost 20 years ago, I had three relevant thoughts in mind. The first is that classical modernization theory was criticized for its conceptualization of discontinuity between traditional and modern societies. I should not make the same mistake in conceptualizing Chinese psychological T and M. Second, Chinese traditional psychological characteristics were formed in an agrarian society and are therefore most useful in adjusting to life in agricultural communities. Modern psychological characteristics were formed in modern industrial societies and are therefore most useful in adjusting to life in such a society. These two sets of characteristics should have markedly different content, which would make them uncorrelated. The third thought was that although the two semantically opposite terms ‘individual traditionality’ and ‘individual modernity’ are used to denote the two psychological constructs, the two latent constructs themselves may not form the two extremes in a continuum (to be discussed in the next subsection). These are the three thoughts that originally made me assume that individual T and M would be two separate, independent psychological constructs.

**Semantic opposites and psychological opposites**

Hwang (2003) noticed that most of the 14 features (psychological categories) for individual T can be paired up with most of the 14 features for M, as shown in Table 2. He commented that the oppositely labeled T and M orientations in each pair can be considered the two extremities of a continuum, and this is, of course, in contradiction to my assumption that individual T and M are two separate, independent psychological syndromes (Yang, 1994). He seemed to forget the distinction between the semantic domain and the psychological domain. Several psychologists have already demonstrated that semantic opposites may not mean psychological opposites.

A classical example is provided by Herzberg (1966), who found that as two obviously semantically opposite concepts, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction did not represent two negatively correlated psychological states required to form a bipolar continuum. Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction turned out to be two separate, independent kinds of experience, each having its own causes and effects. Another example can be found in Yu and Yang’s (1987, 1994) study in which social- and individual-oriented achievement motivations (semantically oppositely labeled) were found orthogonal to each other. They were differently influenced by socialization practices and differently affected task performances. The third example is concerned with the relationship between collectivism and individualism that were originally conceptualized and measured as two poles of the same continuum (Hui 1988; Triandis, 1988). Later, these two semantically oppositely labeled constructs were repeatedly found to be orthogonal dimensions by Bontempo (1993) and Kemmelmeier et al. (2003).

All these examples have unequivocally demonstrated that semantic opposites cannot be relied upon as a basis for validly inferring psychological opposites. This type of erroneous inference may be termed the fallacy of semantic-psychological consistency. The empirical findings cited above confirm the principle of semantic-psychological disparity that strongly
suggests that semantic meanings and psychological phenomena or constructs may belong to two completely different domains. Psychological opposites simply cannot be inferred from semantic opposites. Semantic opposites do not imply psychological opposites.

It is true that the semantic opposites for the T and M orientations in a pair in Table 2 can form the two extremes of a semantic continuum in the semantic-meaning space, but it is not necessarily true that the two oppositely labeled orientations constitute one continuum in the psychological space. Although many pairs of T and M orientations in Table 2 were semantically oppositely labeled, I was still able to end up with a set of empirical results that confirmed my original assumption that individual T and M are two separate, rather independent psychological syndromes.

**Conceptual evaluation of the T and M items**

Hwang (2003) discussed at length the inadequacy of the titles of some of the subscales of the MS-CIT and the MS-CIM as well as certain specific items in the various subscales. As it is impossible for me to make multiple piecemeal responses to so many relevant and irrelevant comments he made in this regard, I will just highlight three major aspects of his criticisms and make general comments on them.

*Semantic meanings of factor names and items.* As pointed out in the discussion of the fallacy of semantic-psychological consistency, a factor name is often an initial label to designate a hypothetical psychological construct for the sake of temporary convenience. It may not convey much about the psychological essence of the construct. The latter could only be gradually identified by a series of systematic investigations to explore the construct validity of the hypothesized construct.

Judging from the semantic meanings of some factor names and a few selected items, Hwang commented that the two M factors of Egalitarianism and Open-mindedness and Sex Equality could both be used to measure a respondent’s attitudes towards equal rights and opportunities in an open society. He also commented that ‘most’ items of the two M factors of Social Isolation and Self-reliance and Affective Hedonism measured individualistic self-assertion. All of these comments were made in accordance with the semantic meanings of the factor labels and some of the items. They are therefore superficial in the sense that they may have nothing to do with the latent psychological constructs the factor labels really denote and the actual psychological entities the items really assess. This is especially true in the case of a ‘non-obvious item’ whose face meaning has no obvious semantic relevance to the overall meaning of the factor for which it is actually a useful measuring item. While Hwang’s comments may be used in formulating research hypotheses to be tested in studies adopting a construct-validity strategy, they cannot replace systematic empirical research in discovering the essential psychological nature of each construct measured by a T or M subscale. As soon as new empirical evidence about the latent nature of a T or M construct is available, its label or title will be revised accordingly.

*Using a part to comment on the whole.* In the MS-CIT, there are 15 items in each of the subscales. Hwang chose only two, three or four items from a particular T subscale for discussion. In the MS-CIM, there are 12 items in each of the subscales. He chose only four or five items from a particular M subscale for criticism. The items included in each T and M subscale were selected on the basis of the empirical results of factor analysis. They all adequately satisfied basic psychometric requirements. The items in each subscale as a
whole provide a coherent measure of the particular T or M component as a hypothetical psychological construct. The inherent nature of such a construct can only be adequately fathomed through a long-term construct-validity research program. The items in each subscale simultaneously assess the multiple aspects of the psychological construct, which form a coherent psychological pattern. It does not make much sense to choose only a few items of a subscale to comment on the label and the nature of the factor.

Making post hoc and ad hoc interpretations or evaluations. In criticizing some items in a T or M subscale, Hwang (2003) made use of several specific limited theories or models. For example, from the view of his own structural model of Confucianism (Hwang, 2001), he commented that six items in three of the five T subscales, namely, Submission to Authority, Filial Piety and Ancestral Worship, and Male Dominance, did capture the values supported by the Confucian principle of respecting the superior, but that the coverage of relevant content is partial and incomplete. Another example is that Hwang followed the conceptual lead of Simmel (1900) to apply the concept of instrumental rationality to the criticism of two of the items in the M subscale of Optimism and Assertiveness. Instrumental rationality is a concept mainly applied to economic actions. It emphasizes the quantitative calculation of the effects of certain actions in terms of logical principles for the purpose of maximizing production at a minimum cost.

In these and other examples, Hwang evaluated the adequacy or inadequacy of a few specific items in one or more T or M subscales from the perspective of a Chinese or Western scholar’s limited model. These interpretations or evaluations are not only post hoc but also ad hoc. It is not difficult at all to choose one or more limited theories concerning part of the Chinese or Western cultural traditions to comment on two or three items selected from among the 75 items of the MS-CIT or the 60 items of the MS-CIM. The MS-CIT and the MS-CIM are not two huge, omnibus T and M tests that include items assessing all the possible traditional and modern psychological characteristics. Instead, the MS-CIT and MS-CIM are intended to measure a limited number of general, basic T and M traits. What Hwang expected seems to be kinds of theme-specific standardized scales with highly limited content coverage, particularly designed to assess the psychological characteristics implied by a limited theory of a particular aspect of the Chinese culture. Actually, there already exist such theoretically oriented theme-specific scales in the literature of Chinese indigenous psychology. One example is the Chinese Filial Piety Scale constructed by Yang et al. (1988) on the basis of an analysis of the Confucian conceptualization of filial piety as one of the major features of the Chinese cultural traditions. Another example is the Chinese Familism Scale developed by Yeh and Yang (1998) on the basis of a conceptual analysis of the essential components of Chinese familism as a major feature of Chinese cultural traditions broader than Chinese filial piety. A third example is the Zhong-Yong Scale constructed by Chiu (2000) based on an analysis of the Confucian conception of dialectic thinking.

A plea for more and better individual T/M research in Asian societies

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to suggest that Asian psychologists conduct more studies on individual T and M and related topics in the future. The psychological and behavioral phenomena assessed by individual T and M scales, no matter how they are conceptualized, are important to the daily functioning of people in developing Asian societies. They actively exist and clearly affect life in numerous ways (e.g. in terms of intra-individual
and inter-individual conflicts and inconsistencies). Western psychologists concern themselves
with the investigation of psychological and behavioral phenomena and related problems and
issues in their own societies. Conducting T/M research in a non-Western society may not
mean much to them. As Asian social scientists, we have to rely on ourselves to conduct long-
term, systematic research on our own people’s psychology of T and M. I consider it the non-
Western psychologists’ privilege as well as responsibility to study the coexisting traditional
and modern psychological and behavioral phenomena and related issues in their own
societies, simply because Western psychologists do not have such phenomena and issues for
investigation.

I admit that my T/M research program in Taiwan has not been perfect. My long-term
research definitely has its methodological, theoretical and empirical partiality and
incompleteness, as Hwang so earnestly tried to point out. More and better T/M research
should be conducted in Taiwan and other Asian societies by retaining what I did right and
avoiding what I did wrong. Thus, both the positive and negative aspects of my research may
be used as starting points for conducting future T/M studies. Understanding past research,
however, is not enough for designing a well-conceived T/M study. Certain methodological
and theoretical issues must be taken into serious consideration.

Methodological issues

I have devoted myself to the development of a Chinese indigenous psychology for more than
25 years. As an indigenous psychologist, I would like to strongly recommend that all the
individual T/M research and its related studies be done with an indigenous approach. In order
for a psychological study to be truly indigenous, it has to have a sufficient level of indigenous
in which the researcher’s theory, concepts, methods, tools and results sufficiently or
adequately represent, reflect or reveal the natural elements, pattern, structure, mechanism and
process of the studied psychological or behavioral phenomenon embedded in its ecological,
economic, social or cultural context. Yang distinguished two major kinds of IC, namely,
context-dependent (contextualized) and context-independent (decontextualized). The former
emphasizes the congruity of the researcher’s theory, concepts, methods, tools and results with
the studied psychological or behavioral phenomenon-in-context as a whole, whereas the latter
stresses the congruity of the researcher’s theory, concepts, methods, tools and results with
the studied phenomenon itself, without taking its context into direct consideration.

In conducting indigenous research on individual T/M in an Asian country, the investigator
has to formulate a comprehensive conceptual framework of distinguishing local indigenous
features of individual T in such a way that all the selected T features are really compatible
with a sufficient number of distinguishing features of that country’s cultural traditions. The
investigator also has to formulate a comprehensive framework of distinguishing Western
indigenous features of individual M in such a way that all the selected M features are really
compatible with a sufficient number of distinguishing features of contemporary Western
culture. This double-indigenous requirement for the psychological content of individual
T/M fulfills the essential prerequisite of the cross-cultural indigenous approach (Yang,
2000). Studying individual T/M in an Asian country in the above way may be considered
a ‘truncated’ or ‘condensed’ form of the cross-cultural indigenous approach. After the
investigator has respectively constructed two indigenous comprehensive frameworks for
individual T/M, the research can be conducted by adopting either the context-dependent or
the context-independent IC strategy in subsequent steps.
Under the requirement of double-indigenousness, any broad approach (e.g. dispositional, cultural psychological, social learning or even social representationistic and constructionistic) and any method (quantitative or qualitative) may be used in research on individual T/M or related topics. As mentioned in the previous section, different approaches and methods are suitable for answering different kinds of research questions, and are thus able to provide different sorts of research findings that combine to offer a better understanding of psychological T/M and related phenomena.

**Theoretical issues**

In addition to the principle of multiple approaches, there is the principle of multiple theories, which encourages investigators to adopt different theoretical orientations (e.g. trait, cultural psychological, social learning or even social representationistic and constructionistic) in conducting research on individual T/M or related topics. Different theories tend to view the T/M phenomena from strikingly different angles, and thus to come up with radically different questions and explanations. Studying psychological and behavioral phenomena in the same area from a variety of theoretical perspectives will definitely enrich the area’s research concepts and further its research activities.

Beyond these broad theoretical perspectives, Asian social scientists need to construct indigenous, content-focused theories that will make their research more specifically theoretically based. There have been several more or less indigenous, content-specific theoretical hypotheses in the relevant literature. Some of them attempted to explain the probable changes of traditional and modern psychological and behavioral characteristics of people in a developing non-Western society during the course of societal modernization. For example, Yang (1988, 1993, 1996) put forward a cultural–ecologically interactionistic theory of psychological transformation due to societal modernization. According to this theory, people in different contemporary societies are said to eventually become psychologically similar in the core types of modern characteristics and dissimilar in other types of modern ones, as well as in certain types of traditional characteristics (for a delineation of the various types of modern and traditional psychological characteristics, see Yang, 1988, 1993, 1996). In other words, as a result of the continued societal modernization, the modern psychological characteristics of people in all contemporary societies will only partially converge and the traditional psychological characteristics will only partially diverge. Both kinds of psychological attributes will continue to coexist. Chang et al. (2003) called this conception of partial psychological convergence the ‘limited psychological convergence hypothesis’. Along the same line of reasoning, Tu (2000) advanced the notion of multiple modernities, meaning that modernization in different locales in the world might well result in different patterns of modernities in which modern elements are mixed with the different traditional elements of various indigenous cultures. Although Tu’s notion of multiple modernities mainly denotes multiple cultural modernities at the societal level, the concept may also be meaningfully applied to designate multiple psychological modernities at the individual level. The essential idea of my hypothesis of limited psychological convergence is that different (multiple) psychological modernities will eventually be formed in Western and non-Western modern societies. These psychological modernities will have a set of basic modern psychological characteristics as a common core, in addition to a number of culture-specific traditional psychological characteristics. It is clear that the limited psychological convergence hypothesis and multiple psychological modernities refer to the two sides of the same coin.

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Conceptually speaking, two types of modern-traditional psychological mixtures may be distinguished. One mixture entails certain traditional psychological characteristics coexisting independently with modern ones to form a cluster of unintegrated concurrent attributes. The other is that certain modern and traditional psychological characteristics, as constituent elements, are blended into one integrated composite psychological whole. Preliminary empirical findings have been supportive of the existence of the first type of modern-traditional mix (Yang, 1994; Chang et al., 2003) as well as the second type (Lu, 2003). A better way to collect relevant data would be to administer the mixed set of all items of the MS-CIT and MS-CIM to the same sample of participants. By factor-analyzing responses on the combined set of T/M items, certain kinds of factors with mixed T/M items may emerge as direct evidence for the generation and existence of integrated T/M composite traits. However, the contention that people in developed and developing countries will end up with different culture-bound patterns or configurations of modern and traditional psychological characteristics as a result of diversified societal modernization is a big issue requiring more systematic study to test its validity.

Another theoretical scheme Yang (1996) put forward depicted the hypothetical dynamic process of attitude and value change under the impact of societal modernization from the perspective of inconsistency theory. Part of the scheme proposed that different modes of reducing or eliminating inconsistency or conflict between traditional and modern attitudes or values (i.e. forward resolution, cognitive compartmentalization, abortive resolution and backward resolution) would result in different intra-individual types of attitudinal or value composition, such as the simple (pure) traditional type, the compartmentalized mixed type (traditional attitudes or values in some life domains and modern in others, without perceiving the interdomain inconsistencies), the suspended mixed type (temporarily coexisting conflicting traditional and modern attitudes or values) and the simple (pure) modern type. Each of these types involves the coexistence of both traditional and modern psychological characteristics, albeit, in different proportions.

Finally, a comment on the great similarity between individual modernity and psychological individualism is in order. Yang (1988) checked the 20 core modern psychological characteristics identified from a thorough review of relevant literature and found that about two-thirds reflected individualism as defined by Hofstede (1980), Hui and Triandis (1986), Triandis (1988), and Waterman (1984). Kagitçibasi (1994) endorsed Yang’s argument and pointed out that the 1960s paradigm of research on individual modernity was revived in a new guise in the 1980s and even 1990s and that collectivism may be replaced by individualism through the course of societal modernization. While her first point has some truth, her second one seems dubious, judging from the empirical findings on the coexistence of traditional and modern psychological characteristics (Yang, 1994; Chang et al., 2003; Lu, 2003). Since ‘collectivism’ and ‘individualism’ denote roughly the same two syndromes as do ‘traditionality’ and ‘modernity’, what has been said about the latter pair thus far should be equally applicable to the former pair. Thus, like traditionality and modernity, both collectivism and individualism can be meaningfully distinguished at two levels, societal and individual (psychological). Psychological collectivism and individualism have been empirically demonstrated to be two orthogonal dimensions (Bontempo, 1993; Kemmelmeier et al., 2003) as have individual traditionality and modernity (Yang, 1994). The hypothesis of limited psychological convergence should be equally applicable to psychological individualism as it is to individual modernity. In the latter case the result is multiple psychological modernities, whereas in the former, it is multiple psychological individualisms. It is expected that just like the case of individual traditionality and modernity, many
psychological characteristics of collectivism may be replaced by those of individualism, and certain collectivistic characteristics may coexist with the individualistic ones to form different mixed types of psychological composition.

**A final word**

To conclude the paper, I would like to express four final thoughts. First, Hwang’s comments on my long-term T/M research in Taiwan have stimulated me to think more deeply about many issues involved in the research, and provided me a rare opportunity to understand the methodological and conceptual aspects of my T/M research better than before. Some of these fresh understandings have been expressed in the discussion in this paper. Second, after writing the article, I strongly feel that I would be able to do a better job methodologically, theoretically and empirically if I had a chance to redo my T/M research. I would do it in a more culturally minded, more theoretically oriented and more indigenous way, and place special emphasis on the different types of interactions between traditional and modern psychological characteristics and the processes and mechanisms involved in them. Third, psychologists of younger generations are needed to continue the psychological T/M research in Taiwan and to begin such research in other Asian societies. To inspire more psychologists to conduct studies in this area is an obvious goal for the future. Fourth, as advised by Inglehart (1997), modernization is not the end of history, and we are now entering the post-modern era. The search for individual postmodernity, resulting from societal postmodernization, in some of the Asian societies, would present the Asian psychologists new challenges. I propose the same societal and individual distinction be applied in our research on indigenized individual postmodernity.

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**End notes**

1 Societal modernization is modernization at the society level, which consists of such characteristics as industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, social mobility, occupational specialization, diminishing sex role specialization, reliance on legal-rational authority and emphasis on formal education, material well-being, and achieved rather than ascribed social status (Inglehart, 1997). These societal attributes characterize contemporary highly industrialized societies. Historically speaking, modernization is a recent phenomenon even in the West. As non-Western developing societies become industrialized, they manifest approximately the same attributes. Modernization in this sense has become a global process, and it can no longer be equated to Westernization as in classical modernization theory.

2 Hwang (2003) presented the two conceptual schemes in his article, but I prefer to use my own translation of the labels for the two sets of psychological orientations.

3 Hwang (2003) presented his English labels for the five T and the five M factors, but I prefer to use my own original English labels as published in Yang (1996).

4 Hwang (2003) presented his translation of the titles of the 10 life domains, but I prefer to use my own: (1) Marriage and the Husband–wife Relationship; (2) Child Rearing and Parent–child
Relationship; (3) Other Familial Matters; (4) Social and Interpersonal Relationship; (5) Sex and the Man–woman Relationship; (6) Education and Learning; (7) Occupation and Job; (8) Economy and Consumption; (9) Politics and Law; and (10) Religion and Religious Belief. As family and family life are extremely important to the Chinese people, the first three of the 10 life domains are all devoted to familial matters. The third domain covers familial matters beyond those covered in the first two and, for this reason, I have changed the title to ‘Other Familial Matters’ instead of using my original title ‘Family and Family Life’.

5 While there may be a cognitive component in a need, value, or attitude, taken as a whole none of these is a purely cognitive entity.

6 The fallacy of semantic-psychological consistency may also include the case of inferring similar psychological phenomena or constructs from labels with similar semantic meanings, but more empirical evidence is needed to demonstrate it.

References


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