

SOCIAL ORIENTATION IN CHINESE SOCIETIES: A COMPARISON OF EMPLOYEES FROM TAIWAN AND CHINESE MAINLAND

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While Taiwan and Chinese Mainland have their cultures originated from the same tradition, they have been separated for more than four decades and have evolved different social, political and economical systems. Due to a dearth of comparative studies, little is known about the similarities and differences in social cultural values between them. The present research was to address this issue.

The samples for this study consisted of 1188 employees of 11 companies in Taiwan and 1025 employees of 38 companies in Chinese Mainland. The two samples had similar distributions of age, gender and work position, although the Taiwanese had significantly higher level of education than their mainland counterpart. Based on Yang's conceptual framework, we developed a Chinese Social Orientation Scale (CSOS) to measure social cultural values. The scale has four dimensions: familism, authoritarianism, *renqing* and face, and instrumental *guanxi*. After deleting items with high cross loadings and items that showed markedly different factorial loadings between the two samples, we constructed a final scale that had equal factorial structure and factor loadings for the two samples.

We first examined the mean differences in social orientation between the two societies using ANCOVA, controlling for age, gender and

education. Results show that Taiwan employees scored significantly higher than their mainland counterpart in three of the four social orientation dimensions (i.e., familism, instrumental *guanxi* and authoritarianism). No significant difference was found on *renqing* and face between the two samples.

We also examined the impact of age, gender and education on social orientation using multiple regression analyses. Results revealed that: a) Age was negatively correlated with instrumental *guanxi* in both societies. Age was also negatively correlated with *renqing* and face but positively correlated with authoritarianism in Taiwan; b) Males scored significantly higher than females on all four dimensions of social orientation in Taiwan. Similar gender differences were found only on familism and instrumental *guanxi* in Chinese Mainland; c) Education was positively correlated with *renqing* and face as well as instrumental *guanxi* but negatively correlated with familism and authoritarianism in both societies. These results were discussed in terms of their implications for future research on social values in Chinese societies.

Keywords: Social orientation, Familism, Authoritarianism, Renqing and face, Instrumental *guanxi*