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Cultural Values and Real-life Displays of Wisdom in Taiwan: A Q-Methodological Perspective

Shih-ying Yang
Milan Tung-Wen Sun
Emma Y-F. Lin

National Chi Nan University, Taiwan

Abstract: Taiwan is an immigrant society. The early immigrants came from different regions of China, and the new immigrants are mainly people from Southeast Asia. Therefore, people in Taiwan have been influenced by many different cultures. Theoretically, real-life displays of wisdom often begin with a humane idea that draws its inspiration from important cultural values. This study utilizes Q methodology to explore important cultural values that foster real-life displays of wisdom in Taiwan. Q methodology is used to study people's thoughts and opinions and is known to reveal their hidden dimensions or underlying discourses. Factor analysis reveals three factors, or dimensions of cultural values, which foster real-life displays of wisdom in Taiwan: (a) empathy, inclusiveness, and harmony, (b) Confucian virtues and Western religious guidance, and (c) progressive Confucianism. The implications of these research findings are discussed in the last section.

Keywords: cultural values, displays of wisdom, Indigenous culture, polyculture, Taiwan

Introduction

The concept of "wisdom" is an important topic of enquiry in the field of psychology (Dong et al., 2023; Intezari et al., 2021; Sternberg & Glück, 2019). It indexes factors that facilitate people's effort to live meaningful and satisfying lives and to promote better lives for others. Multiple studies have shown that cultures influence people's displays of wisdom; people in different cultures often have different conceptions of wisdom and thus may tend to display different forms of wisdom (Assmann, 1994; for a more complete review see Yang & Intezari, 2019).

Despite this link between culture and wisdom, how cultural values foster real-life displays of wisdom is seldom examined. In a previous study (Yang et al., 2022), it was found that individuals who were nominated as wise persons in Taiwan often mentioned important cultural values that fostered their displays of wisdom. For example, a person nominated for his contribution to the educational reform movement in Taiwan revealed

Contact author: shihying@ncnu.edu.tw
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how his display of wisdom was influenced by values he absorbed from different cultures.

> I grew up in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period, so I used Japanese textbooks until the third grade. After the retrocession of Taiwan, I received a full Chinese education. After that, I went overseas to study and lived in the U.S. for fourteen years. … I think I retain some Taiwanese traits. I am sincere, hard-working, and friendly. I also highly value the Chinese traits of flexibility, persevering despite hardship, and tolerance of other cultures. From the Japanese, I learned to be honest and law-abiding. ... I also learned from Americans, who are positive, optimistic, innovative, creative, individualistic, and self-confident. Every culture has its merits and virtues and I try to learn from them. (cited in Yang et al., 2022, p. 6)

This person then took these important values into account when he made suggestions for educational reform in Taiwan. This example demonstrates how important cultural values played a role in fostering an individual's display of wisdom.

How an individual perceived the influence of cultural values on his/her display of wisdom is highly subjective. Since Q methodology is defined as the science of subjectivity (Brown, 1980; Sun, 2023), this study aims to explore cultural values that people perceived as having fostered their displays of wisdom in Taiwan by utilizing Q methodology. Using two open-ended questionnaires, we first explored important cultural values that people perceived as fostering their displays of wisdom and then used Q methodology to explore underlying dimensions of these cultural values.

Literature Review

Psychological Research on Wisdom

Since psychologist Erik Erikson (1968) first defined wisdom as the ego strength that an individual develops after successfully resolving psychosocial crises in the final stage of life, an increasing number of psychologists have studied human wisdom (Ardelt, 2003; Baltes et al., 1995; Erikson, 1968; Glück & Bluck, 2014; Glück & Weststrate, 2022; Grossmann et al., 2013; Mickler & Staudinger, 2008; Moraitou & Efklides, 2012; Sternberg, 1998, 2024; Sternberg & Karami, 2021; Thomas et al., 2017, 2019; Webster, 2003; Yang, 2008a), but consensus on a definition of wisdom has thus far eluded the field of psychology. However, scholars have broad agreement on the idea that wisdom is pertinent to the task of leading a meaningful and satisfying life, while promoting a better life for others (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Sternberg, 2024; Yang, 2013).

Earlier approaches tended to define wisdom as qualities and competencies that an individual might possess, including ego strength (Erikson, 1968), personality attributes (Ardelt, 2003; Brown & Greene, 2006; Greene & Brown, 2009; Thomas et al., 2019; Webster, 2003), internal resources (Glück & Bluck, 2014; Moraitou & Efklides, 2012), practical life knowledge (Baltes et al., 1995) and a balanced way of reasoning (Brienza et al., 2018; Grossmann et al., 2013). More recent development has shifted the focus to actions that have been taken when individuals encountered real-life challenges as well as the effects those actions have generated (e.g., Glück & Weststrate, 2022; Sternberg & Karami, 2021; Yang, 2008a).

This study adopts Yang's (2008a) process definition of wisdom to explore cultural values that foster people's displays of wisdom, based on two considerations. First, this approach takes real-life displays of wisdom into account. Yang (2008a) proposed that wisdom is a real-life process involving three components: (a) cognitive integration, (b) embodying actions, and (c) positive effects for oneself and others. A real-life display of wisdom thus entails an individual arriving at an integrated and humane idea after cognitively incorporating disparate or even conflicting notions, taking actions to implement this unified idea, and generating positive effects both for the individual and for others.

Second, this approach has been tested empirically and has provided substantial empirical results over the years (e.g., Yang, 2008a, 2008b, 2011, 2017). The approach often uses interviews and open-ended questionnaires to collect "wisdom incidents"—the narratives of people's displays of wisdom—by asking people to describe their wisest decisions and actions. This method resembles Galton's technique for memory studies (Dritschel et al., 1992; Galton, 1879), in which a participant is asked in "free recall" to describe memories of an event or an experience triggered by a cue word (in this case, "wisest"). Displays of wisdom collected through open-ended questionnaires and interviews have been analyzed thematically and further evaluated by trained raters using theoretical criteria. Previous studies have found that most displays of wisdom were meaningful, important, and significant life events which pertained to the pursuit of a meaningful and satisfying life and which participants were able to describe in detail (Yang, 2008b, 2017).

Multicultural Perspective on Cultural Influences

If a display of wisdom begins with integrating ideas and ends with behaviors that result in positive outcomes, as Yang's definition of process describes, then cultural values can foster displays of wisdom by influencing people to make wise decisions or take wise action. Culture has been defined as "a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, coordinate socially to achieve a viable existence, transmit social behavior, pursue happiness and well-being, and derive meaning from life" (Matsumoto, 2007, p. 1,293). Recent research on polycultural psychology suggests that people often select their cultural influences and are capable of cherishing their own cultural heritage while learning optimally from other cultures (Berry, 2009; Morris et al., 2015; Yoon et al., 2013). As mentioned earlier, results of a previous study (Yang et al., 2022) showed Taiwanese who were nominated as wise persons were able to synthesize the lessons they learned from both their own culture and other cultures.

Cultural Context of Taiwan

Situated between Northeast and Southeast Asia, Taiwan is a transportation hub for the Asian continent and the Pacific Ocean, and a cross-cultural nexus. Historically, Taiwan has been exposed to many different cultures. Prior to the 17th century, Taiwan was inhabited mainly by Indigenous peoples. It became first a Dutch and then a Spanish colony between 1622 and 1662. It was a Chinese territory between 1662 and 1895 and then became a Japanese colony between 1895 and 1945. Since 1945, Taiwan has been a territory of the Republic of China (ROC), and distinct politically from the People's Republic of China (PRC) since 1949 (Hwang, 2015). Hence, although Taiwan represents one of the major Chinese communities in the world, it has absorbed the essence of several different cultures (Chang, 1999; Hsu, 2023; Yang et al., 2022; Yeh, 2014).

A literature review shows that Taiwanese benefited greatly from Chinese culture. Chinese philosophical traditions such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Mahayana Buddhism are the source of many people's philosophies and ethical principles (Chang, 1999). Thus, it is reasonable to speculate that many important cultural values of Confucianism, Daoism, and Mahayana Buddhism—such as Confucian ethical principles of humaneness (仁), filial piety (孝), loyalty (忠), rightness (義) (Bloom, 1999), the Daoist philosophy of non-action (無為), weak overcoming strong (柔弱勝剛強) (Bloom, et al., 1999), and Mahayana Buddhist ideals of living in the moment (活在當下)(Shen, 2008)—may form the foundation of displays of wisdom in Taiwan.

Taiwanese have also been strongly influenced by Japanese culture, both for historical and geographical reasons (Yeh, 2014), and hence many Japanese habits and customs were adopted by Taiwanese. Many important Japanese cultural values, such as respect for the law and a sense of commitment in work and craftsmanship, as discussed above, were absorbed and inspired people to take wise actions.

In addition, Taiwan has been strongly influenced by the West, most notably by the U.S. From 1950 to 1965, the U.S. provided Taiwan with over a billion dollars a year in aid, and since then, the people of the two countries have had close relations. U.S. pop culture has also been influential in Taiwan (Lin, 2004). Moreover, many important figures, particularly higher-ranking government officials and scholars in academic institutes in Taiwan, have studied in the West, most often in the U.S. Economically, Taiwan's stock market capitalization is priced in U.S. dollars. All these indicate that the U.S. influence is strong in Taiwan. Perhaps the emphasis that people in the U.S. put on democracy, freedom, equality, innovation, and individualism has also strongly influenced people in Taiwan and furthered fostered their real-life displays of wisdom.

Taiwan was also the home of Indigenous people long before Dutch, Spanish, and Han Chinese came to Taiwan. Thus, in addition to Chinese, Japanese, and American cultures, cultures of different branches of Indigenous people also constitute an important part of the cultural spectrum of Taiwan. Although most literature on Taiwan Indigenous cultures describes how Chinese culture has influenced them (Chang, 2007; Zhang, 2011), one may speculate that perhaps important cultural values of Taiwan Indigenous cultures, such as respect for leaders and elders, love for nature, maintaining simple interpersonal relationship without too much calculation, and eco-friendly practices, can also foster displays of wisdom.

Moreover, as new immigrants have come to Taiwan, most often through international marriages and naturalization, Korean, Vietnamese, Malaysian, and Indonesian cultures have also begun to influence people in Taiwan (Hsu, 2023; Yeh, 2014). Recent discussions of Chinese psychology in Taiwan suggest that researchers should break down the "Chinese-ness" umbrella and take a multicultural perspective to investigate how values, beliefs, ethical principles, and social customs of different cultures, including Han Chinese, Taiwan Indigenous cultures, the U.S., Japanese, Korean, southeast Asian, etc., have influenced behaviors of people in Taiwan (Hsu, 2023). Since we have not found any study detailing the important cultural values that foster displays of wisdom in Taiwan, we decided to fill this gap by exploring wisdom-fostering cultural values from a multicultural perspective.

Research Design and Method

The present study aims to explore the underlying dimensions of cultural values that have fostered displays of wisdom in Taiwan. Data were collected in two phases. The first phase aimed to explore important cultural values that have fostered real-life displays of wisdom by using two open-ended questionnaires: the first one asking for important cultural values that have strongly influenced participants, and the second one asking for instances in which wisdom was displayed and the extent to which cultural values identified in the first questionnaire fostered these displays of wisdom. [1]

There were 568 respondents who completed both questionnaires. A total of 155 indicated that they most strongly agreed (rated 7 on 7-point Likert scale) that the cultural values they listed in the first questionnaire had fostered their displays of wisdom (as described in the second questionnaire). From these respondents, we collected 261 descriptions of cultural values. Using thematical analysis (Guest et al., 2014), descriptions that were related to a philosophical concept or virtue were combined into one value. This exercise identified 52 values, with varying frequencies of occurrence. Similarly, the values that were identified by the participants as belonging to the same cultural tradition were grouped into that specific cultural category. Thus, the 52 values were distributed among 10 cultural categories: Taiwanese (*n*=10)[2], Chinese (*n*=12), Confucian (*n*=7), Daoist (*n*=5), Buddhist (*n*=4), Western (*n*=5), Christian (*n*=3), Japanese (*n*=3), Taiwan Indigenous (*n*=2), and Indian cultures (*n=1*).

However, most cultural values found in the Taiwanese category overlapped with those found in the Chinese category, except for "democracy and freedom" which we did not find in the Chinese category. We also found three cultural values in the Chinese category which were not listed in the Taiwanese category: "Try hard to protect one's own rights," "Bear hardship and work hard, take life as it comes," and "Be kind and forgiving, do things with a clear conscience." We therefore combined the two categories, producing a category of "Taiwanese/Chinese culture," which has 13 cultural values.

Similarly, four cultural values which participants indicated that they had learned from Buddhist culture, all overlapped with those found in Daoist culture. Only one value relating to non-action was identified as Daoist in origin and did not overlap with Buddhist cultural values. Again, these two categories were combined into the category of "Buddhist and Daoist culture" with five values. To a certain extent, Taiwanese culture and Chinese culture, and Buddhist culture and Daoist culture, are merged in Taiwan.

As a result, the concourse of 52 cultural values was combined into 39 cultural values, derived from eight cultural categories: Taiwanese/Chinese (*n*=13), Confucian (*n*=7), Buddhist/Daoist (*n*=5), Western (*n*=5), Christian (*n*=3), Japanese (*n*=3), Taiwan Indigenous (*n*=2), and Indian cultures (*n*=1). These 39 statements were randomly numbered (see Appendix) and served as the Q sample.

Although the structure of the Q sample was not balanced in a Fisherian sense (Fisher, 1942), these 39 statements proportionally represent the concourse on the basis of eight categories, which were revealed through thematic analysis of participants' subjective

[1] An advertisement for the two questionnaires, written in Chinese, was posted on "Chickpt," a commercial online service in Taiwan, which has over two million registered users. The advertisement was posted to recruit participants who were 18 years of age or over and willing to complete two questionnaires. Printed questionnaires were also sent to colleagues residing in southern, central, and northern Taiwan who helped distribute the questionnaires.

[2] The "*n*" in the parentheses refers to the number of statements in each category.

opinions. As Brown (1980) suggested, the structure of a Q sample is useful primarily "as a way to ensure comprehensiveness in the final collection of statements" (pp. 54-55). Furthermore, factor interpretation is made essentially through understanding the configuration of statements (factor array). The meaning of statements is to be comprehended *a posteriori*, i.e., "after the subject has sorted them" (Brown, 1980, p. 191), rather than what individual statements mean *a priori* (Brown, 1997, p. 11).

Twenty participants who were not previously involved in the study were then invited to present their subjective point of view regarding the most influential cultural values that they adhered to in their lives by Q sorting the 39 statements. The personal backgrounds of these respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Factor Loadings of the Three-factor Solution with Demographic Information

No.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Gender	Age	Religion
01	0.36	0.07	0.62*	Female	22	Buddhism
02	0.59*	0.14	0.05	Male	26	Folk Religion
03	0.36	0.50*	0.17	Female	20	None
04	0.47*	-0.03	0.11	Male	24	Folk religion
05	0.25	0.42*	0.13	Female	66	Folk religion
06	0.26	0.37	0.57*	Female	24	Folk religion
07	0.21	-0.32	0.46*	Female	20	Daoism
08	0.13	0.72*	0.02	Female	23	Folk religion
09	-0.26	0.88*	0.04	Male	60	Christianity
10	0.07	0.27	0.45*	Male	69	Christianity
11	0.62*	0.34	-0.14	Female	37	Christianity
12	0.72*	0.10	0.03	Male	54	Folk religion
13	0.68*	0.18	0.35	Female	46	None
14	0.13	0.28	0.56*	Female	47	Folk religion
15	0.60*	0.03	0.14	Female	31	Daoism
16	0.05	0.77*	0.03	Female	44	Folk religion
17	0.13	0.78*	-0.06	Female	59	Christianity
18	0.58*	-0.21	0.34	Female	18	Christianity
19	0.17	-0.24	0.63*	Female	22	Buddhism
20	-0.17	-0.03	0.68*	Male	45	Buddhism

Note. * indicates defining sorts.

The 20 participants were asked to Q sort the 39 statements according to the following instruction: "When you are dealing with people and situations in real-life, please sort the following statements from the ones you always try to follow (+4) to the ones you seldom try to follow (-4)." This instruction closely corresponds with the interactive definitions of wisdom (Glück & Weststrate, 2022; Sternberg & Karami, 2021; Yang, 2008a). These Q sorts were analyzed by using principal component factor analysis and varimax rotation via PQMethod (Schmolck). The analysis revealed three factors (see below and Table 1): *Empathy, Inclusiveness and Harmony*; *Western Religious Guidance and Confucian Virtues*; and *Progressive Confucianism*.

Research Findings

Factor 1: Empathy, Inclusiveness and Harmony

Factor 1 is defined by seven Q sorts. When dealing with people and situations, Factor 1 recognizes that "life is full of uncertainty" (2, +3)[3], but it is more important to be "active and open-minded" (8, +4) and to "embrace inclusiveness and diverse perspective, encourage exposure to different cultures" (7, +3). Factor 1 also values "family and interpersonal relationship" (3, +2), where one has to "have empathy" (5, +4), "value the existential meaning of an individual" (39, +2), "be kind and forgiving" (6, +2), and "treat others with compassion" (19, +2).

Empathy and inclusiveness in Factor 1 also derive from the notion of harmony and/or blending in. Nevertheless, Factor 1 does not emphasize purposefully becoming a role model (20, -4) or passively "taking life as it comes" (35, -2). The notion of blending in is not to "criticize and correct unreasonable ideas" (23, -3) raised by the others and has contributed to Factor 1's de-emphasizing statements related to the protection of self-interests. Hence, one tends not to "value the sense of security and choice that savings can bring" (22, -3), nor to "try hard to protect one's own rights (15, -3), or even to de-emphasize democracy and freedom through which individual rights and/or interests can be protected (30, -2).

Seemingly, Factor 1 embraces many principles from Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. It involves an integration of diverse cultural values without criticizing traditional values. But to some extent, this integration has not included religious values, especially Christian values; not to "pray for many things" nor to "seek God's correct guidance" (33, -4); nor does it "feel that the world is full of God's love" (10, -2).

Factor 2: Western Religious Guidance and Confucian Virtues

There are six Q sorts that define Factor 2. It stresses the importance of Western religious guidance and the cultivation of Confucian virtues. To "understand and feel that the world is full of God's love" (10, +4) and to "seek God's correct guidance" (33, +4), are both perceived in this factor as the most important values for dealing with human affairs. Taiwanese/Chinese are polytheistic, they believe in "Gods," but Factor 2 seeks "God's love and guidance." These cultural values thus can be reasonably attributed to the influence of Christianity. In addition, "keep working hard, be diligent rather than lazy" (9, +2) also corresponds with the Protestant work ethic, which emphasizes hard work (Weber et al., 2002).

The dominance of Western religious ideas in Factor 2 is further strengthened by its disregard of "reincarnation" (28, -4) and "folk religious traditions" (1, -4) which are usually emphasized in polytheism. Factor 2 also emphasizes that the subject is not willing to "accept the arrangement of fate" (17, -3) or to "become a vegetarian" (16, -3) as a Buddhist, or to "face all kinds of troubles with an attitude of non-action" (14, -2) as a Daoist.

On the other hand, Factor 2 is heavily influenced by Confucian ideas. It stresses the importance of "family and interpersonal relationships" (3, +3), and values the effects of education (26, +2) and continual learning (4, +2) on the cultivation of virtue. It emphasizes the need to "have empathy" (5, +3), "to love others as oneself" (12, +3), and

[3] Numbers in the parentheses are statement number and factor array respectively, the same applies below. In addition, if the words are cited verbatim from the statements, we use quotation marks.

"to be polite, show modesty, and be socially responsible" (25, +2). The model for Factor 2 is to become a modest, self-disciplined virtuous person (君子, Junzi), as emphasized by the Confucianism, someone who will not "try hard to protect his own rights" (15, -3), and focuses on examining oneself and cultivating one's character. Thus, such a person will not tend to seek to "associate with like-minded people" in leisure pursuits (24, -2), nor aspire to be "a model and become a benchmark" (20, -2).

By rigorously holding to virtues and religious guidance, an individual can distinguish "what is appropriate and what is inappropriate and insist on doing the right thing" (36, +2). Therefore, life should not be uncertain (2, -2). Factor 2 is thus guided by Western religion and Confucian ideals.

Factor 3: Progressive Confucianism

Factor 3, with seven defining Q sorts, highly values some concepts of traditional Confucian/Chinese philosophy, such as "family and interpersonal relationships" (3, +4), listening, empathizing, and keeping others company (39, +4), having empathy, doing good and helping others (5, +3), focusing on self-reflection (27, +3), and treating others with compassion (19, +2). However, it also emphasizes "having the courage to speak up, without fearing to challenge authority to push the boundaries of a rigid system" (34, +2). In addition, it sees "that life is full of uncertainty, (so that one must) act in accordance with conditions" when facing hardship (2, +2). Factor 3 recognizes that preserving traditional Confucian heritage and acting as a role model (20, -4), "take life as it comes" (35, -4), working hard (9, -3), and "returning to simple living" (11, -3) are not enough. It tries to be more progressive and pragmatic: "value democracy and freedom" (30, +2), "try hard to protect one's own rights" (5, +3) and to "criticize and correct unreasonable ideas" (23, +2).

However, this more progressive and pragmatic approach to traditional Confucian/Chinese doctrines does not involve the "integration of Chinese and Western cultures" (7, -2); it is not influenced by religious beliefs, especially Western beliefs (33, -3; 10, -2; 12, -2), and it is not based on financial considerations (22, -2).

Consensus Statements

There are two consensus statements that are in strongly positive positions in all three factors: "Have empathy, do good and help others" (5, +4, +3, +3) and "Value family and interpersonal relationships" (3, +2, +3, +4). Hence, although there are three distinctive dimensions of cultural value in Taiwan as shown in the three factors, "family" and "do good to help others" are core principles for people in Taiwan in handling human affairs.

Discussion and Conclusion

Given its historical backgrounds, the notion of integrative multiculturalism is emerging in Taiwan. Although many diverse cultures have influenced people in Taiwan, the results of the Q methodology study suggest three underlying dimensions for cultural values that foster real-life displays of wisdom in Taiwan. The first dimension is an integration of diverse cultures with the foci of empathy, inclusiveness, and harmony. The second dimension is a combination of Christian guidance and Confucian virtues. The third dimension is a type of pragmatism which attempts to assign new meaning to traditional Confucian doctrines. These are different forms of integrative multiculturalism. These results correspond well to the recent discovery in the field of

Chinese psychology in Taiwan, that "Chinese-ness" consists of cultural values from diverse origins (Hsu, 2023). The results also confirm the argument of polycultural psychology (Berry, 2009; Morris et al., 2015; Yoon et al., 2013) that people in Taiwan selected their cultural influences and learned from both their own and other cultures. Displays of wisdom by Taiwanese people are not only inspired by their own cultural heritage, such as Taiwanese, Chinese, Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist cultures, but also by Christian ideals and virtues as well as lessons learned from Japanese and Western cultures.

There are at least two conditions contributing to the emerging integrative multiculturalism in Taiwan. First, Taiwan has been exposed to different cultural influences. It has experienced different periods of colonialism, from Holland, Spain, and Japan. Immigrants came first from the southern provinces of China; the relocation of the Republic of China government to Taiwan in 1949 brought more people from every part of China. In addition, there are also Taiwan's Indigenous people. The close alliance with the US since the 1950s has introduced Western culture. Thus, the conflicts and compromises between new and old, Eastern and Western cultures have served as the impetus for the integration of different cultures.

Second, the continuing controversy surrounding the political status of Taiwan has influenced the conception and development of a Taiwanese cultural identity (Wong & Sun, 1996). Given the tensions between the prior dominant frame of a Taiwanese and Chinese dualism, the concept of integrative multiculturalism can be perceived as a relatively apolitical alternative view. This new view allows the inclusion of mainlanders and other minority groups into the re-definition of Taiwanese culture as a collectively held system of meaning and customary patterns of thought and behavior shared by the people of Taiwan.

On the other hand, these emerging patterns of cultural value have two common elements. They all recognize the importance of family and empathy in handling human affairs. Traditionally, the process of "self-cultivation, family regulation, state governance, bringing peace to all under heaven" (修齊治平, *xiū-qí-zhì-píng*) is a fundamental theme in Confucian moral philosophy. It indicates a gradually expanding process beginning with the individual, emanating outward into serving and benefiting an ever-larger whole. It can be argued that the three dimensions identified in the study represent different directions of cultural development in Taiwan, but all start with the notions of family and empathy. One dimension is to return to the traditional cultural values, while still attempting to integrate Taiwanese/Chinese cultures and thought, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism into one new pattern of culture (Factor 1). A second dimension emphasizes self-cultivation of individual virtue by embracing Western, primarily Christian, religious guidance into Taiwanese/Chinese culture (Factor 2). The third dimension tries to modernize Confucianism by incorporating the notion of freedom and individual rights into traditional doctrines (Factor 3).

This argument is supported by Hsieh (1999), who asserts that Chinese "family" is the fundamental social unit for an individual to cultivate virtue; it is also the channel through which social harmony can be achieved. From the individual extending to "the others," empathy is where the cornerstone of "chaxu geju" (差序格局, "the order of stratified closeness"; Fei, 1992) is set. Holding to compassion and altruism when dealing with others resonates well with Confucian, Daoist, Christian, and folk religious beliefs. Moreover, family and interpersonal relationships also are strongly emphasized by Taiwanese, Chinese, Confucian, Christian, and Japanese cultures. Thus, the emphasis on compassion, altruism, family, and interpersonal relationships forms the core of wisdom-fostering cultural values in Taiwan.

Q methodology is an effective tool in exploring human subjectivity. This preliminary study shows that when combined with other methods, it can sharpen our understanding of how real-life displays of wisdom are fostered and shaped by important cultural values. Results of the present study not only uncover three underlying dimensions of cultural values that foster real-life displays of wisdom in Taiwan but also shows that many diverse cultural elements shine through the big cultural category called "Chinese-ness," and that there is more to what we know as the culture of Taiwan. It shows that Taiwanese in general, and those who have displayed real-life wisdom in particular, not only treasure their traditional cultural values, such as Confucian teachings, Daoist philosophy, and Taiwan Indigenous heritage, they also are able to absorb lessons learned from other cultures, including the West, Japan, and India.

Multiculturalism can be a common phenomenon of globalization. Every culture in the world is more or less influenced by other cultures. In addition to verifying the existence of multiculturalism in Taiwan, the three factors found in this Q study reveal the potential for Taiwanese people to further integrate different cultural values into their own culture. This potential serves as a hypothesis, and Q methodology can be utilized, for future research in the area of cultural studies, Indigenous and cultural psychology, and wisdom.

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Appendix

Q Sample and Factor Array

Q Sample	Factor		
	1	2	3
1. Value and follow folk religious traditions, frequently ask gods for protection, and find comfort in spiritual practices	-1	-4	0
2. Know that life is full of uncertainty, calmly live in the moment and stay detached from worldly matters, be thankful in all things, be peaceful and act in accordance with conditions	3	-2	2
3. Value family and interpersonal relationships	2	3	4
4. Value education, stress the importance of continual learning	-1	2	0
5. Have empathy, do good and help others	4	3	3
6. Be kind and forgiving, do things with a clear conscience	2	0	-1
7. Embrace inclusiveness and diverse perspective, encourage exposure to different cultures, promote integration of Chinese and Western cultures	3	0	-2
8. Value being active and open-minded, stay curious, have the courage to take risks and do what one wants to do	4	-1	0
9. Keep working hard, be diligent rather than lazy	-1	2	-3
10. Understand and feel that the world is full of God's love, be thankful for all things	-2	4	-2
11. Care for and value things, be polite and respectful to people, return to simple living, and protect the earth's valuable resources	1	-2	-3
12. Try to love others as oneself, forgive the mistakes made by others	0	3	-2
13. Have a collective mentality, stress the importance of contributing to society	0	-1	-1
14. Do not pursue material things to excess, deal with things as they happen, and face all kinds of troubles with an attitude of non-action	0	-2	-1
15. Try hard to protect one's own rights	-3	-3	3
16. Try hard to be merciful to all living things, including adjusting one's diet for the sake of animals	-2	-3	-2
17. Hold Nature and the universe in awe, accept the arrangement of fate	-1	-3	0
18. Regarding one's own performance and actions, stay true to original intentions, and strive to observe strict and meticulous standards	1	-1	-1
19. Treat others with compassion, accept people of different races, and maintain appropriate interpersonal distance	2	1	2
20. Take the responsibility of the eldest son, be a model and become a benchmark	-4	-2	-4
21. Value self-cultivation, do not do to others what I myself do not desire	1	0	1
22. Stress the importance of saving money and being thrifty, value	-3	-1	-2

Q Sample	Factor		
	1	2	3
the sense of security and choice that savings can bring			
23. Criticize and correct unreasonable ideas such as “only academic performance matters”, “men are superior to women”, and “try hard to control oneself and concede”	-3	-1	2
24. Associate with like-minded people in leisure activities, explore issues in life, and enjoy learning new things through approaches such as animation	1	-2	0
25. Try hard to be polite, to show modesty, and to be socially responsible	0	2	1
26. Value education and self-cultivation	0	2	-1
27. Focus on self-reflection, stay strong during hardship, admit mistakes and offer apologies	1	0	3
28. Strongly believe in reincarnation and try hard to do good	-1	-4	0
29. Respect educators, encourage others to pass on knowledge and moral principles to the next generation	-2	0	1
30. Value democracy and freedom	-2	1	2
31. Treat everyday life as a spiritual practice, try hard to cultivate oneself	-1	-1	-1
32. Focus on family ethics, honor parents, show love and respect to one’s siblings	0	1	1
33. Pray for many things, seek God’s correct guidance, and not be influenced by worldly trends	-4	4	-3
34. Seek equality, respect freedom to express one’s opinions, have the courage to speak up, do not fear challenging authority to push the boundaries of a rigid system	1	0	2
35. Bear hardship and work hard, take life as it comes.	-2	1	-4
36. Believe that one should do what is appropriate and avoid doing what is inappropriate, insist on doing the right thing, and commit no bad deeds, no matter how small	3	2	1
37. Value independence, depend on oneself to solve all kinds of problems, take responsibility for the outcome of one’s decisions	0	1	1
38. Reach out to others through a pure and simple heart, maintain unsophisticated relationships with others without calculating gains and losses	2	1	0
39. Value the existential meaning of an individual, seize the moment and often listen, empathize, and keep others company	2	0	4

Note. Factor 1: Empathy, Inclusiveness and Harmony, Factor 2: Confucian Virtues and Western Religious Guidance, Factor 3: Progressive Confucianism. Statements were cultural values that were combined based on descriptions originated from the same philosophical concepts or virtues through thematic analysis. Each statement represents one specific theme but may contain more than one meaning.