

The Impact of Culture on Chinese Young People's Perceptions of Family Responsibility in Hong Kong, China

Tabitha Ng*

Abstract: This is a quantitative research study with a cross-sectional design and a survey approach to address the views of a large sample (n=1132) of young people in relation to family responsibility in a society where East meets West. The survey results suggest that the sample hold relatively positive attitudes towards Chinese cultural values and family responsibility. The traditional value of importance of family, filial piety and harmony with others were still strongly supported by many young people. The findings further revealed that the more the Chinese cultural values the young people associated with, the more the positive attitudes in family obligation they would have. However, global influences which emphasize the right of freedom and to have personal choice may have been at work too. There are implications for a matrix of policies to support young people in their transitions to adulthood.

Keywords: Chinese cultural value, global culture, family responsibility, filial piety, young people

Abstrak: Penyelidikan ini merupakan satu kajian kuantitatif dengan menggunakan reka bentuk keratan tinjauan untuk mengambil kira sampel yang besar, (n=1132) yang mana orang muda bertanggungjawab terhadap keluarga masing-masing dalam masyarakat kini. Dapatan tinjauan mencadangkan bahawa sampel kajian menunjukkan terdapat sikap positif terhadap nilai budaya Cina dan tanggungjawab keluarga. Nilai tradisi yang mementingkan keluarga, menghormati ibu bapa serta mempertahankan harmoni dengan orang

* Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Email: yimchunkwok@yahoo.com.hk

lain masih kuat dalam kalangan kebanyakan orang muda Cina. Hasil kajian seterusnya menunjukkan bahawa lebih banyak nilai budaya Cina yang dikaitkan dengan orang muda. Juga, lebih positif sikap mereka terhadap kewajipan keluarga. Namun begitu, pengaruh global yang mementingkan hak kebebasan dan pemilihan hak peribadi turut seiring. Terdapat pelbagai implikasi terhadap matriks dasar bagi menyokong orang muda dalam peralihan mereka kearah dewasa.

Kata kunci: Nilai budaya Cina, budaya global, tanggungjawab keluarga, menghormati ibu bapa, orang muda.

Introduction

Hong Kong lies in the far south of China. To grasp something of the local culture it is important to appreciate Chinese cultural values. Any discussion of Chinese social relationships soon encounters the term 'Confucianism' which is often used as a synonym for traditional Chinese culture. Sociologists and anthropologists have often seen Confucian writings as intellectual elaborations on basic cultural traits of the Chinese people whose everyday lives can be seen as governed by Confucian morality.

Traditionally, the central social relationships were defined by the doctrine of *wu lun* or the five cardinal relations as laid out by Mencius (Lau 1970, p. 102): those between father and son, ruler and subject, husband and wife, older and younger brother, and between friends. Each of these relationships were associated with a specific quality or character, respectively love or affection, righteousness or duty, distinction, precedence, and sincerity or trust. Most of these relationships were familial, based on hierarchies of generation, age, and gender. Only by acting correctly in social relationships could a person realize these virtues of humanity (Lau op cit).

China has often been seen as a peculiarly familial society and Confucian social theory placed special emphasis on family relationships as the core of a stable and harmonious society. There has been a modest amount of research into the role and values of the Hong Kong Chinese family. Moore (1974) noted that the Chinese place a strong emphasis on: filial piety, harmony between people and nature, people as social beings, and a preference for tolerance. Hsu (1971) acknowledged that the Chinese place an overriding importance on familial and social rather

than individual homeostasis. The family is seen as a basic resource of support and as the roots of an individual's orientation and life goals. Research has emphasized the importance for families of harmony and solidarity, lineage prolongation and expansion, family prosperity, and family sentiments. It is noted that the Chinese demand subordination of personal goals, interests, and welfare for the interests of the family. Its pattern of socialization has been regarded as a form of collectivism (Triandis 1987).

Family Responsibility and Filial Piety

As to family responsibility of all ancient virtues in China, filial piety is almost the religious respect that children owe to their parents, their grandparents, and, the elderly. As the classic homily of Filial Piety teaches, 'filial piety is the unchanging truth of Heaven, the unflinching equity of Earth, the universal practice of man which forms the root of all virtues', with it all enlightenment come into existence. Chinese people believe that human love toward one's parents is innate, as children all love the parents who carried them in their arms (Ng 2007, p. 129).

In traditional Chinese society, the values of Confucian filial piety provide the basis to culturally define the intergenerational relationships. These values surpass all other ethics (Ho 1996). Filial piety as a core ethic has been continuously practised, taught, and appreciated in behaviour, attitude, and belief throughout China (Tu 1997). The Confucian values have assumed that care for the elderly is the responsibility of adult children, and therefore, primarily the family's responsibility (Bengtson and Putney 2000; Chow 2001). Research has assumed filial piety to be a moral impulse in governing the intergenerational behaviour (Chow 2001; Kwan et al. 2003). Filial piety governs the families functionality, especially regarding the care of elderly parents, and hence has implications for public policy toward the elderly. It is relevant to note that in Asian societies, unlike the situation in most Western societies, both the elderly and young children have long relied exclusively on their families to meet their needs. Many Asian societies do not have a universal welfare system or other provident fund to cater for the financial needs of the elderly. As such, unlike the West, there is an expectation on family members to meet the dependency needs of the elderly (Chiu and Wong 2009).

Trevor (1998) focuses upon postmodern diversity and the accelerating change of familiar structures, relationships and meanings and notes that increasingly people are not willing to follow established customs related to marriage and conjugal role patterns. They do not want to confine themselves to conventional nuclear or extended family obligations.

In Hong Kong, filial piety in the past was defined as children's obligations to parents and absolute respect for parental authority. Although these elements remain relevant, the level of their importance has declined considerably. The cultural values have undergone substantial modification with industrialization. The economic independence and formation of nuclear families has affected how the new generation perceives and performs filial piety. In addition, the functions of the family are diminishing in modern society. The family no longer functions as the provider of education, health care, moral, and vocational training for its members. These functions have now largely been taken over by government and other institutions. Postmodern education under the global influence tends to produce a generation which values achievement, independent thinking, and its behaviour and the making of decisions on rational grounds. Consequently, the new generation has substantially modified or changed how they perceive and perform the values of Confucian filial piety. Research has indicated that traditional filial piety is declining or under transformation (Chow 2001; Ho 1996; Kwan et al. 2003). The above studies have clearly indicated that the provision of caregiving is not necessarily based on a moral sense of filial piety but may be contingent and stem from a socioeconomic structure and related attitudes and values (Lam 2006). Financial support of parents continues to be seen as desirable filial behaviour but its fulfillment is considered to be situational and is often symbolic in practice. Among the younger generation, greater emphasis is given to subjective aspects of filial piety, including love, care, and respect for parents. This generation also prefers to treat parents as equals and values open communication. Filial norms are gender specific. Filial piety requires that sons live with and provide for their aged parents, but such obligations are not imposed upon married daughters, although daughters often play an important role in caring for ailing parents. Recent surveys and case studies indicate that an increasing number of parents prefer to have daughters than sons (The Family Planning Association

of Hong Kong 1999; Miller 2004) as they have begun to recognize the contribution of daughters to their future well-being. Women often play the role of 'kin-keeper', maintaining frequent contact with parents as well as providing daily assistance and emotional support (Lye 1996).

Filial piety is often practiced in the context of reciprocal support. Although filial piety is considered to comprise the one-way obligations of children to their parents (Sung 2004), many parents provide financial support and childcare services for their adult children (Cooney and Uhlenberg 1992). Whyte's (1997) study conducted in urban China, for example, showed that adult children considered mutual help between generations as the greatest benefit of living with parents. Meanwhile, nuclear and small-size families are the contemporary norm. With smaller family sizes, children in the family can be more easily indulged. Coupled with smaller family size, the burden of family obligations and taking care of elderly parents becomes heavier as fewer family members can share this out. With the gradual overshadowing of the extended family by the nuclear family, important relations are increasingly being built with individuals outside the small primary group (Lau 1981; Wu and Tseng 1985). Furthermore, in a society where productivity and achievement are emphasized, respect for the elders appears to have weakened considerably (Goodwin and Tang 1996).

In the past decade or so in Hong Kong, there have been very few studies on family-youth related topics, such as youth perceptions on family obligations. Indeed, such studies as do exist seldom explore the role of Chinese cultural values on today's young people in specific regard to family responsibility. This paper concludes with a brief outline of key themes that may be of relevance to educators, social service providers, and policy makers more generally who together can jointly formulate appropriate youth and family interventions to assist the transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

Method

Research objectives and working hypotheses

The paper is based upon an exploratory survey of Chinese Hong Kong young people's perceptions of family responsibility under the impact of traditional values and global cultural change in late modernity. The paper also sought to identify possible needs, problems, threats, and

opportunities that young people might encounter in the transition of life with regard to family responsibility.

A cross-sectional survey was conducted to collect the views of a large non-probability sample of about 1200 young people aged between 17 and 25. This study examines a research question: What is the role of the Chinese cultural values on young people's perception of family responsibility in Hong Kong? The study aims to explore the impact of local traditional values on young people's attitudes towards family obligations. Underlying the research question is a working hypothesis that young people with higher attachment to Chinese cultural values will tend to have a more positive attitude towards family obligations.

Sampling

A self-administered questionnaire containing closed-ended questions was generated which sought to explore the relationship between Chinese cultural values and the selected dependent variable of young people's perceptions of family responsibility. The questionnaire was distributed to a target group of 1,250 young people in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories). The time costs and practical challenges in securing a randomized sample of young people with the desired different backgrounds and genders from the three regions made the adoption of a cross sectional purposive sample the pragmatic choice. The sample was initially structured from government By-Census distributions about the gender, age, and location of the region's youth population (Hong Kong Census and Statistics 2006a, b).

From the 2006 By-census, we can observe some important characteristics of the young people. There are a total of 909,005 youngsters aged 15-24. The sex ratio is quite equally distributed. Of this population, 97% are non-married and 44% are working youth with a median monthly income of HK\$6,500. Some 55% are economically inactive in which 97% are students. The educational attainment of the youth is 41.7% in upper secondary; sixth form and above is around 40%. Some 90.4% of the youth are living with parents. Most of the youth (57.3%) are living in the New Territories such as Shatin, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun. 26.9% are living in the Kowloon Peninsula while only 15.8% are in Hong Kong Island. Based on this by-census population, the study constructed a survey frame by using a quota sampling method so that a

similar proportion of demographic variables could be chosen to reflect the participating youth population. This resulted in the distribution set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Hong Kong Survey Sample – Key Variables

Items		Male	Female	Total
Age	15 – 19	300	288	588
	20 – 24	300	312	612
	Total	600	600	1,200
Marital Status	Never Married	1,165		
	Married	34		
Labour Force	15 – 24	Total: 540		
Economic Inactive (including students (97%) and unemployed)		Total: 660		
Educational Attainment	No schooling	2.4		1,200
	Primary	12		
	Lower Secondary	192		
	Upper Secondary	501		
	Sixth Form	126		
	Diploma / Sub-degree course	168		
	Degree course	198		
Living Arrangement	Living Alone	12		1,200
	Living with parent(s) only	1085		
	Living with spouse and/or child(ren)	22		
	Others	81		
Geographical Distribution	HK Island	190		1,200
	Kowloon	323		
	New Territories	687		
	Marine	0		

Participants were solicited through much of 2011 to multiple gatekeepers in charge of children and youth centres, secondary schools, tertiary education colleges/universities, working youth centres, and churches sited across the three targeted areas of Hong Kong. The self-administered instrument was ultimately distributed to 1250 young people. The gatekeepers also collected the questionnaires and were repeatedly requested to urge their return. Their cooperation in this regard proved highly successful and some 1158 were collected which yielded a return rate of 93%. Excluding those invalid questionnaires, there were 1132 valid questionnaires.

Measures

Chinese Value Survey (CVS). The survey sought to measure the impact of traditional values in guiding young people about marriage and in doing so we drew upon Bond's (1986) validated method for uncovering cultural universals that takes as its starting point an emic theory of human behaviour with roots in an Eastern culture, China. The Chinese survey (Bond, 1986) was deliberately ethnocentric in its construction, selecting for its forty test items only those values that Bond deemed relevant and pertinent to Chinese culture. The CVS seeks to overcome the bias of other Western-based value measures while being comparable to Western models for measuring cultures (see also Hofstede and Bond 1988). The CVS comprises 40 traditional Chinese indigenous cultural values located across four sub-scales. The four sub-scales of the CVS were sequenced as follows: CVS I: Integrity and Tolerance, this contained 17 value items focusing on social stability, strong family bonding, and chastity in women, all of which indicate the traditional importance of family. CVS II: Confucian Ethos has 11 value items addressing themes such as 'protecting your face', conservatism and restraint, non-competitiveness, and traditional work ethic. CVS III: Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity has 9 items which embraced ideas suggesting gentleness and compassion as contrasted with a sterner, legalistic approach to life. CVS IV has three items that reflect moral restraint, adaptability, prudence, and self-control. The first part of the survey instrument addressed the importance of the above cultural values as guiding principles in young people's lives. The participants were asked to respond to the CVS using a Likert type scale of 1 to 9. One (1) represented a value which was 'of no importance to me' and nine (9) 'of supreme importance to me.'

Family Responsibility Scale. Family responsibility in this research refers to one who fulfills his/her role to care and provide support for parents. Filial piety is defined in accordance with the teaching of Confucius in that children should treat their parents with reverence and obedience. According to Chow (2001), the practice of filial piety is divided into three levels. The first level includes providing parents with the necessary materials for the satisfaction of their physical needs and comforts, including attending to them when they are ill. The second level includes paying attention to parents' wishes and obeying their preferences. The third level includes behaving in such a way as to make parents happy and to bring them honor and the respect of the community. For this survey, the concept of family responsibility was sought via a measure of young people's attitudes toward family obligation developed by Fuligni and Tseng (2008). The measure consists of three subscales that are intended to tap three distinct, yet overlapping aspects of young people's sense of obligation to support, assist, and respect the authority of the family. The first is termed 'current assistance' and measures young people's beliefs about how often they should help and spend time with the family on a daily basis. The goal of this subscale is to assess attitudes towards the types of activities in which young people would engage in order to help and be with family members on a daily basis. Respondents were asked to use a scale where 1 = "Almost Never," 2 = "Once in a While," 3 = "Sometimes," 4 = "Frequently," and 5 = "Almost Always" to indicate how often they believe they should engage in these behaviors. In addition to providing daily assistance, the idea that young people should respect the authority of the family and make sacrifices for them was one that emerged from the literature on familism and filial piety (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Therefore, it was important to develop this subscale in such a way as to capture a more general sense of obligation that goes beyond the discrete tasks of daily life. Hence, respect for family was included and seven items were introduced that sought to assess young people's views about respecting the authority of elders in their family, including parents, grandparents, and older siblings. It was also important to capture the extent to which young people believe they should consider the needs and wishes of the family when making important decisions about their own lives. The second subscale also contained items to identify young people's views about making sacrifices and doing well for the sake of the family. This subscale is the closest of the three subscales to

measure 'kin collectivism' in terms of its themes and generality (Rhee et al. 1996), but the items were designed primarily to be simple, direct, and meaningful to young people. Respondents used a five-point scale where 1 = "Not At All Important," 3 = "Somewhat Important," and 5 = "Very Important" to rate the importance of each of the behaviors to themselves.

The third subscale attempted to assess the extent to which young people believe that their obligation to support and assist their family was a lifelong obligation that extended into and throughout adulthood. One of the goals of creating the measure was to examine how a sense of obligation shaped motivation, behavior, and decision making during the young adult years. Making plans about schooling, work, and family formation are significant developmental tasks of the young people and the study sought to capture how young people anticipated future family obligations and their own life plan. The subscale of future support included six items that referred to the ways in which family assistance might be manifested during adulthood, including providing financial assistance, living with or near family members, and going to college near family. Respondents used the same scale as that used for the subscale of respect for family.

Reliability and Replicability

In the survey research, the researcher adopted the measures of Chinese Value Survey (CVS) and Family Responsibility Scale (FRS). For the survey, it was found that the internal consistency estimates using Cronbach's alpha suggested high reliability for the two scales (CVS = .937; FRS = .907). In regard to the issue of replicability, the quantitative research was based on a cross-sectional research design specifying a clear and systematic survey procedure, including selecting relevant target groups; designing measures of concepts; administration of research instruments and data analysis. The questionnaire design was based on different scales previously tested and validated in different surveys. As a whole, the procedures in this aspect of the research could be replicated by others.

Analysis of survey data

In regard to data analysis, contrasts and comparisons were made between the survey findings and those in earlier studies utilizing the original

instruments. Their findings were used as a source of triangulation to challenge the survey outcomes from different standpoints. The data were analyzed using principal component bi-variate statistical analysis which was rotated orthogonally using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 14).

Results

Demographic Background of Respondents

As to the profile of the 1132 respondents, male and female samples were evenly distributed: 48.6% (N=550) was male and 51.4% (N=582) female in the study. The mean age of the respondents was 19.55 (SD=2.276) with 72.5% at the age range of 17-20 and 27.5% at the age range of 21-25. The majority of the participants were unmarried (98.7%, N=1108) and lived with parents (96.9%, N=1077). The education attainment of the participants was at senior high school level (55.6%, N=628) and sub-degree or above level (43.8%, N=495). 82.4% (N=930) were full-time students and 63.2% (N=703) had no income. The respondents were mostly the eldest child (38.8%, N=435) or the youngest child (34.3%, N=385) at home with one (50.6%, N=568) or two (25.7%, N=289) siblings. 58.3% (N=652) had no religion while 41.7% (N=467) claimed religion of various types and the majority being Christian (34.6%, N=387). Most of the respondents lived in the New Territories (57.1%, N=641) while a small proportion of them (16.6%, N=188) lived in Hong Kong Island. As the majority of the respondents were full-time students, only 1.3% (N=15) of the participants engaged in cross-border work. 61 respondents (5.6%) worked overtime and 89 of them (8.1%) had continuing education. The above distributions were mostly congruent with by-census findings. Locality may be important in collecting the views of the youth because it was hypothesized that locality may reflect aspects of economic and social status. However, it was found that there was no significant relationship between locality and the views of the youth as Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories encompass a relatively small area where transport and information exchange is highly impacted, and spatially could be considered as an urban city region. We now re-examine these key variables in relation to their perceptions about Chinese values and family responsibility.

Young People's Perceptions on Chinese Cultural Values

Table 2 shows that the participants in this study generally achieved high scores in CVS total and its 4 subscales, i.e. CVS I (M=125.08, SD=14.129); CVS II (M=67.82, SD=11.343); CVS III (M=61.37, SD=8.927); CVS IV (M=19.01, SD=3.717); and CVS Total (M=273.05, SD=33.357). Research by Lau (in Kwok and Chan, 2002, p. 132) indicated 92.9% of Hong Kong people agreed that traditional Chinese values such as loyalty, filial piety, benevolence and righteousness should still be respected. So too did this survey reveal similar findings in that young people were likely to be still influenced more or less by Chinese cultural values, and Confucian ideas still seemed to play a role in their cultural outlook.

Top Five Significant Values on Chinese Value Survey

Table 2 sets out the 40 items of the CVS. The top 5 values that the respondents rated as the most important mainly fell in the category of CVS I which stands for integrity and tolerance. This included filial piety (M=7.99, SD=1.196), trustworthiness (M=7.92, SD=1.214), self-cultivation (M=7.74, SD=1.231) and courtesy (M=7.70, SD=1.322). The fifth one was a close intimate friend (M=7.69, SD=1.424) which fell in the category of CVS II that represents the Confucian Ethos. In regard to the top 5 values that the participants rated as less important to them, most fell in the category of CVS II- Confucian Ethos which included protecting your face (M=4.83, SD=1.915), being conservative (M=4.90, SD=1.953), non-competitiveness (M=5.60, SD=1.960) and having few desires (M=5.65, SD=1.936). Another item within the 5 less important values fell in the category of CVS III- Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity, was patriotism (M=5.55, SD=2.014).

Table 2: Chinese Value Survey (CVS)

Chinese Value Scale	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
CVS I -Integrity & Tolerance					
Filial piety (Obedience to parents, respect for parents, honoring ancestors, financial support of parents)	1124	7.99	1.196	1	9
Trustworthiness	1131	7.92	1.214	1	9
Self-cultivation	1130	7.74	1.231	1	9

Courtesy	1132	7.70	1.322	1	9
Sincerity	1131	7.60	1.400	1	9
Kindness (Forgiveness, compassion)	1126	7.49	1.327	1	9
Patience	1131	7.38	1.224	1	9
Prudence (Carefulness)	1130	7.38	1.318	1	9
Adaptability	1129	7.22	1.416	1	9
Tolerance of others	1126	7.20	1.330	1	9
Industry (Working hard)	1131	7.19	1.360	1	9
Harmony with others	1126	7.18	1.396	1	9
Persistence (Perseverance)	1128	7.18	1.323	1	9
Knowledge (Education)	1132	7.12	1.505	1	9
Humbleness	1125	7.11	1.415	1	9
Sense of righteousness	1129	6.89	1.528	1	9
Personal steadiness and stability	1131	6.77	1.486	1	9
CVS II – Confucian Ethos					
A close, intimate friend	1129	7.69	1.424	1	9
Chastity in women	1129	7.15	1.866	1	9
Contentedness with one's position in life	1128	6.84	1.680	1	9
Keeping oneself disinterested and pure	1130	6.68	1.638	1	9
Benevolent authority	1127	6.59	1.528	1	9
Respect for tradition	1130	5.97	1.764	1	9
Loyalty to superiors	1129	5.90	1.679	1	9
Having few desires	1128	5.65	1.936	1	9
Non-competitiveness	1131	5.60	1.960	1	9
Being conservative	1131	4.90	1.953	1	9
Protecting your "face"	1130	4.83	1.915	1	9
CVS III - Loyalty to ideals & Humanity					
Resistance to corruption	1129	7.44	1.472	1	9
Having a sense of shame	1131	7.35	1.428	1	9
Observation of rites and rituals	1129	7.23	1.443	1	9
Solidarity with others	1128	7.13	1.367	1	9

Ordering relationships by status and observing this order	1130	6.91	1.584	1	9
Thrift	1132	6.83	1.495	1	9
Moderation, following the middle way	1121	6.66	1.636	1	9
Reciprocation of greetings and favors, gifts	1128	6.31	1.609	1	9
Patriotism	1131	5.55	2.014	1	9
CVS IV – Moderation & Moral Discipline					
Repayment of both the good and the evil that another person has caused you	1127	6.71	1.661	1	9
Wealth	1132	6.60	1.830	1	9
A sense of cultural superiority	1131	5.71	1.846	1	9

Although the mean score of the CVS total was generally high, there were some differences between the subscales. On the whole, the respondents mostly had higher scores in CVS I which focused on social stability and family bonding. This indicated some traditional Chinese values such as filial piety (M=7.99), trustworthiness (M=7.92), self-cultivation (M=7.74) and courtesy (M=7.77) still played an important role in guiding today's youth. Importance of family and harmony with others were still important to this new generation. Another value that fell in CVS II also rated by the respondent as very important was a close, intimate friend (M=7.69). As we know, young people who were in their life transition from adolescence to young adulthood would likely treasure peer influence and support in searching for group and individual identity (Erikson 1975).

Conversely, we can find out from this survey that some of the Confucian values and ethos appeared to be declining. CVS II which stood for Confucian Work Dynamism had comparatively lower scores in the survey. In a materialistic world with keen competition and high consumption, Confucian values such as protecting your face (M=4.83), being conservative (M=4.90), non-competitiveness (M=5.60) and having few desires (M=5.65) were less pursued by today's young people. Another value rated by the participants as less important was patriotism (M=5.5). Hong Kong is under China's sovereignty since 1997 and

the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government actively promotes civic education in respect of China sovereignty. Yet, many youngsters still had a weak sense of national identity of being Chinese within the regime of Communist China. The younger generation did not appear to have a strong sense of patriotism and national identity, their scores on a sense of cultural superiority ($M=5.71$) was comparatively low as well. The survey conducted by Lau Siu-kai in 1994 (in Kwok and Chan 2002, p. 132), indicated that 56.5% of the Hong Kong Chinese consider themselves 'Hong Kongers' and 38.2% consider themselves to be Chinese. Hence the Hong Kong Chinese have a mixed identity as both Hong Kongers and Chinese and there is some evidence that young people do not necessarily adhere to some national consciousness and loyalty to a nation state (Lee and Leung 1999).

Relationship between Chinese Cultural Value and Gender

The results of liner regression show that the Chinese Value Survey only had positive significant relationship with the demographic variable of gender (at .01 sig. level). The effects of gender ($r = .263$) on CVS were moderate. Changes in gender account for 22.5% of the variation in CVS. This indicates that gender difference is a significant factor to affect young people's perception of Chinese cultural values. When comparing the mean score of CVS by gender it was found that females ($M=279.20$, $SD=28.53$) have a higher mean score than males ($M=266.52$, $SD=36.756$). It implies that female participants tend to be more influenced by the Chinese cultural values than their male counterparts. This may be explained to varying degrees by the socialization process which focuses on the obedience of the female; hence they may be more receptive to traditional Chinese cultural values such as women should get married in order to be 'complete' (Stockman 2000).

Young People's Perceptions on Family Responsibility

From Table 3, the participants generally got moderate mean scores in Family Responsibility Scale total ($M=77.65$, $SD=14.46$) and its subscales on Current Assistance ($M=31.21$, $SD=7.896$), Respect for Family ($M=23.13$, $SD=5.097$) and Future Support ($M=22.20$, $SD=4.440$).

Table 3: Summary Statistics for Family Obligation Sub-Scales Used in the Analysis

Sub-Scale (N = 1132)	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Current Assistance	31.21	7.896	12	55
Respect for Family	23.13	5.097	7	35
Future Support	22.20	4.440	6	30
Family Obligation Total	77.65	14.46	33	117

Comparatively, the respondents got a slightly higher score in the subscale of Future Support amongst the 3 subscales. The results suggest that this sample of young people in their early adulthood may concentrate more on their own self-development or career development. They may not prioritize time spent on assisting the family's daily affairs or doing household chores. Also, assuming the global influence of individualism, pluralism and liberalism, young people may not, like previous generations, give full regard to parents' advice and instructions in relation to for example, choice of their circle of friends or choice of subjects at university. However, the sample did appear to be influenced by Chinese cultural values of filial piety and have a deep sense of a debt to be repaid to parents for their support. Thus, they did assert a wish to support and care for their parents in the future when they were getting older. Table 4 summarizes the distribution of mean score of the 24 statements on the notion of family obligation.

Table 4: Family Obligation

Family Obligation Items (N=1132)	Mean	SD
Current Assistance (Min = 1; Max = 5)		
Eat meals with your family	4.16	1.027
Spend time at home with your family	3.71	0.966
Run errands that the family needs done	3.50	1.008
Spend time with your family on weekends	3.34	1.154
Spend holidays with your family	3.22	1.114
Help take care of your brothers and sisters	3.08	1.231
Do things together with your brothers and sisters	3.01	1.184
Spend time with your grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles	2.90	1.090
Help out around the house	2.58	1.179

Help your brothers or sisters with their homework	2.53	1.175
Help take care of your grandparents	2.53	1.218
Respect for Family (Min = 1; Max = 5)		
Treat your grandparents with great respect	3.92	1.075
Treat your parents with great respect	3.85	1.008
Do well for the sake of your family	3.71	1.067
Respect your older brothers and sisters	3.44	1.151
Make sacrifices for your family	3.16	1.140
Follow your parents' advice about choosing a job or major in college	2.75	1.292
Follow your parents' advice about choosing friends	2.51	1.238
Future Support (Min = 1; Max = 5)		
Live at home with your parents until you are married	4.19	1.042
Help your parents financially in the future	4.17	.949
Spend time with your parents even after you no longer live with them	3.96	.959
Help take care of your brothers and sisters in the future	3.65	1.115
Have your parents live with you when they get older	3.59	1.097
Live or go to college near your parents	2.87	1.336

Top Five Significant Statements on Family Responsibility Attitude

We can see that amongst the 24 statements in the family obligation scale (Table 4), the top 5 statements that the respondents strongly agreed with mostly fell in the subscale on Future Support. They included 'live at home with your parents until you are married' (M=4.19, SD=1.042); 'help your parents financially in the future' (M=4.17, SD=.949); 'spend time with your parents even after you no longer live with them' (M=3.96, SD=.959). Another two of the highest scores were on the subscale of Current Assistance 'eats meals with your family' (M=4.16, SD=1.027) and on the subscale of Respect for Family 'treat your grandparents with great respect' (M=3.92, SD=1.075). Such responses to these statements suggest that notions and practices of filial piety are still being socialized

within Chinese families. In the eyes of many Chinese parents, children would not be viewed as an adult until they got married and became financially self-reliant. Before marriage, young people typically live with parents, give financial support to them, eat meals after work or study with family members as part of family solidarity and harmony, and spend time in their company. These acts are to show gratitude to one's parents and display commitment to a kind of familial collectivism. The statement to 'Treat your grandparents with great respect' also reflects the view shared by many Chinese that elders should be held in high regard as traditionally older people have power and influence in the extended family. Children are trained to respect their grandparents from a very young age. While the spread in Hong Kong of the nuclear family may presage a weakening of this traditional veneration of elders it is still the case that grandparents serve important daily family functions such as child care and assist in household chores and help supervise domestic workers if their offspring are dual-earner parents.

In regard to the top 5 statements that the participants strongly disagreed with, these fell mostly on the subscale of Current Assistance with statements 'help your brothers or sisters with their homework' (M=2.53, SD=1.175); 'help take care of your grandparents' (M=2.53, SD=1.218); 'help out around the house' (M=2.58, SD=1.179). Another two statements fell in the subscale on Respect for Family that included 'follow your parents' advice about choosing friends' (M=2.51, SD=1.238) and 'follow your parents' advice about choosing a job or major in college' (M=2.75, SD=1.292). As some of the sample were single children (12.2%, N=137) or were the youngest child (34.3%, N=385) in their families, some family obligations such as 'help your brothers or sisters with their homework', 'help take care of your grandparents' and 'help out around the house' may not be an expected responsibility for them. With the increasing influence of global values which emphasize freedom and personal choice (liberalism, individualism and pluralism) it is possible that parents' advice about such areas as choice of friends, college courses and career paths may be declining in force.

Relationship between Family Responsibility and Gender & Living with Parents

The results indicate that Family Obligation Scale had a positive significant relationship with gender and living with parents (at .05 sig.

level). The effects of gender ($r = .280$) and living with parents ($r = .245$) on Family Obligation Scale were moderate. Changes in gender and living with parents account for 18.5% of the variation in Family Obligation. This shows that gender difference and living with parents are significant factors that affect youngsters' perception of family obligation.

When compared with the mean score of family responsibility by gender, it is found that female respondents ($M=79.04$, $SD=14.269$) had higher mean scores than male respondents ($M=76.072$, $SD=14.539$). This may imply that female respondents tend to be more willing to take up family responsibilities than males. In the thematic household survey on sharing of housework by Census and Statistics Department (2003), which analyzed by sex, females spent more time on household commitments than their male counterpart in all age groups, economic activity, status groups, marital status groups and educational attainment groups. On average, females spent 3.1 hours per day on household commitments as against 1.0 hour for males.

Also, when compared with the mean score of family responsibility by living with parents, the result reveals that those living with parents ($M=77.806$, $SD=14.414$) had a higher mean score than those not living with parents ($M=71.235$, $SD=17.851$). In traditional Chinese culture as mentioned earlier, living with parents and providing support for their future are part of filial piety practices that demonstrate children's family responsibilities. This is perhaps partly why the age of leaving home of young people in Asian societies appears higher than those of western societies that endorse global values of autonomy and early independence.

Relationship between Family Responsibility and Chinese Cultural Value

When exploring the relationship between Family Responsibility total and CVS 4 subscales, we find that Family Obligation only had a positive significant relationship with CVS II (at .05 sig. level) and CVS III (at .05 sig. level) respectively. The effects of CVS II ($r = .123$) and CVS III ($r = .184$) on Family Responsibility Scale were moderate. The findings reflect that Confucian Ethos and Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity were predictive factors which affected family obligation of young people. The higher the young people scored in CVS II and III, the more they would score on the take up of family obligations.

When we split Family Responsibility into 3 subscales, we find that subscale on current assistance had a positive significant relationship with CVS III (at .05 sig. level) (). The effect of CVS III ($r = .195$) on current assistance was moderate. That means the higher the young people scored in Chinese values related to loyalty to ideals and humanity, the greater the share in family responsibility they would have. This is similar to the result of Family Responsibility subscale on respect for family. The results indicate that respect for family had a positive significant relationship with CVS III (at .01 sig. level) as well. The effect of CVS III ($r = .236$) on respect for family was moderate. That means the higher the young people scored in Chinese values related to loyalty to ideals and humanity, the greater the respect for the family they would be.

Discussion

The survey results suggest that the sample generally got higher to moderate scores in the CVS and Family Responsibility Scale. This suggests that they hold relatively positive attitudes towards Chinese cultural values and family responsibility. The regression result to test the relationship between family responsibility and CVS further indicates that the family responsibility attitude had positive significant relationship with CVS in particular Confucian Ethos and Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity. The Chinese cultural values of these two aspects the young people associated with, the more the positive attitudes in taking family responsibility they would be. The survey findings support the research hypothesis that those with higher attachment to Chinese cultural value will tend to have a more positive attitude towards family obligation.

Regarding CVS, the traditional value of importance of family and filial piety, this was still strongly supported by many young people. However, traditional aspects of the Confucian Ethos such as protecting face, socially conservative attitude, non-competitiveness, having few desires and patriotism, these seemed much less adopted by the young people. They tended to be influenced more by a keen competitive global culture in which one should actualize oneself by achieving personal interest and goals. Global values of individualism and feminism would seem to have some discernible impact on the attitudes held by the sample.

Concerning young people's perceptions of family obligation, their views tended to be influenced by traditional cultural values such as to provide future support for family-of-origin through living with parents until one gets married; help parents financially; spend time with parents even after getting married; to provide company and solidarity through eating meals with the family; and to respect grandparents. By contrast, global influences which emphasize the right of freedom and to have personal choice may have been at work too. The findings revealed that respondents did not necessarily take consideration of parent's advice in deciding choice of friends, studying and career path decisions. Today's youth are assumed to have more autonomy in these areas in spite of family influence.

Hong Kong is facing the challenges of family change. Marriage and family are weakening as social institutions. Many young people are subject to the influences of both the global and local culture and values. The findings in this study shed light on a growing trend in the perceptions of young people on family responsibility. Some unknown factors such as continuing education, cross-border work, longer working hours and low-paid income, and lack of job opportunities in the labour market which may delay dependency of young people to their parents, should further be explored. The Hong Kong government and its policy networks have yet to fully map the challenges encountered by young people.

Within the Confucian tradition, adult children have the moral responsibility to take care of their elderly parents. But with socio-demographic developments, such as dual-earner families, high cost accommodation and fewer children per couple, it is increasingly difficult for young people to undertake family responsibilities. The Government cannot assume the family can sustain a high level of support for elders and has to consider adequate social services for the elderly, more specialized service targeting the frail elderly, social clubs and specialized housing for older people. The government should consider the feasibility of building a community-based older people care system that supports families through a range of options such as home help, home-visiting nurses, re-enablement, and day-care services (Chiu and Wong 2009).

Alongside the findings of this study, some limitations should be mentioned. As to the validity of cross-sectional survey research, the internal validity is typically weak. Thus, we do not claim to establish some definitive relationship between global values and young people's perceptions of family responsibility. In this regard the cross-sectional research design produced associations rather than causal inferences between variables. Similarly, external validity of the survey design was weak as our non-random method of sampling does not allow generalization. Given these known limitations for our survey method, it is still the case that the survey offers notable insights into the values of this sizeable sample. Thus, for these participants there seems to be some moderation of what are still powerful influences around traditional ideas of family responsibility and filial piety and greater endorsement of individual autonomy and the right of freedom. It may be that Hong Kong young people are honoring aspects of tradition while enjoying selectively the opportunities of a more individualistic ethos. The extent to which traditional Chinese values and Western global values can co-exist, conflict or come to dominate in time to come is the topic for future study.

References

- Bengtson, V.L. and Putney, N.M. (2000) 'Who will care for tomorrow's elderly? Consequences of population aging East and West', in Kim, K.D., Bengtson, V.L., Meyers, G.D., & Eun, K.S. (eds), *Aging in East and West: families, states, and the elderly*, New York: Springer Pub. Co., pp.263-385.
- Bond, M.H. (ed.) (1986) *The psychology of the Chinese people*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) (2003) *Thematic household survey: sharing of housework*, Hong Kong: C&SD Publication.
- Census and Statistics Department (2006a) *Population By-census 2006*, Available at: <http://www.bycensus2006.gov.hk/en/index.htm> (Accessed: 2 September 2011).
- Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) (2006b) *Population by-census 2006 – thematic report: youths*, Hong Kong: C&SD Publication.
- Chiu, S. and Wong, R. (2009) *A literature review of family policy in four East Asian societies*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Chow, N. (2001) 'The practice of filial piety among the Chinese in Hong Kong', in Chi, I., Chappell, N.L. and Lubben, J. (eds) *Elderly Chinese in Pacific rim countries: social support and integration*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 125-136.

- Cooney, T.M. and Uhlenberg, P. (1992) 'Support from parents over the life course: the adult child's perspective', *Social Forces*, 71, pp. 63-84.
- Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (1999) *Family planning knowledge, attitude and practice in Hong Kong survey 1997*, Hong Kong: The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong.
- Fulgini, A. J. and Tseng, V. (2008) 'A measure of adolescents' attitudes toward family obligation' in *On-line Working Paper Series*, California Centre for Population Research, UC Los Angeles, pp.1-23.
- Goodwin, R. and Tang, C.S.K. (1996) 'Chinese personal relationships', in Bond, M.H. (ed.) *The handbook of Chinese psychology*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp. 294-308.
- Ho, Y.F. (1996) 'Filial piety and its psychological consequences', in Bond, M.H. (ed.) *The handbook of Chinese psychology*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, pp. 155-165.
- Hofstede, G. and Bond, M.H. (1988) 'The Confucian connection: from cultural roots to economic growth', *Organizational Dynamics*, 16, pp. 5-21.
- Hsu, F.L.K. (1971) 'Psychosocial homeostasis and jen: conceptual tools for advancing psychological anthropology', *American Anthropologist*, 73, pp. 23-44.
- Kwan, A.Y.H., Cheung, J.C.K. & Ng, S.H. (2003) *Revisit of the filial piety concept among the young, the adult, and the old in Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Nanjing, Shanghai, Xiamen, and Xian: research report*, Hong Kong: Department of Applied Social Studies, City University of Hong Kong.
- Lam, C. (2006) 'Contradictions between traditional Chinese values and the actual performance: a study of the caregiving roles of the modern sandwich generation in Hong Kong', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 37(2), pp.299-311.
- Lau, D.C. (tran.) (1970) *Mencius*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Lau, S. (1981) 'Chinese familism in an urban-industrial setting: the case of Hong Kong', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 43, pp. 977-992.
- Lee, W.O. and Leung, S.W. (1999) *Institutional constraints on promoting civic education in Hong Kong secondary schools: Insight from the IEA data*, Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- Lye, D.J. (1996) 'Adult child-parent relationships', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22, pp.79-102.
- Miller, E. T. (2004) 'Filial daughters, filial sons: comparisons from rural North China', in Ikels, C. *Filial piety: practice and discourse in contemporary East Asia*, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 34-52.

- Moore, C.A. (1974) 'Introduction: the humanistic Chinese mind', in Moore, C.A. (ed.) *The Chinese mind: essentials of Chinese philosophy and culture*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, pp. 1-10.
- Ng, T.P. (2007) *Chinese culture, Western culture: why must we learn from each other?*, US: iUniverse Inc.
- Rhee, E., Uleman, J.S., and Lee, H.K. (1996) 'Variations in collectivism and individualism by ingroup and culture: conformity factor analysis', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(5), pp. 1037-1054.
- Suárez-Orozco, C. and Suárez-Orozco, M.M. (1995) *Transformations: immigration, family life and achievement motivation among Latino adolescents*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Sung, J.C. (2004) 'Development of a new concept of filial piety in modern Korean society', *Geriatrics and Gerontology International*, 4: S72 - S73.
- Trevor, N. (1998) 'Postmodernity and family theory', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology (Brill)*, 39(3), pp. 257-277.
- Triandis, H.C. (1987) 'Collectivism vs individualism: a reconceptualization of a basic concept in cross-cultural psychology', in Bagley, C. and Verma, G.K. (eds) *Personality, cognition, and values: cross-cultural perspectives on childhood and adolescence*, London: Macmillan, pp. 2-42.
- Tu, W.M. (1997) 'Humanity as embodied love: exploring filial piety in a global etical perspective', in Rouner L.S. (ed.) *Is there a human nature?*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, pp. 172-181.
- Whyte, M.K. (1997) 'The fate of filial obligations in urban China', *The China Journal*, 38, pp. 1-31.
- Wu, D.Y.H. and Tseng, W.S. (1985) 'Introduction: the characteristics of Chinese culture', in Tseng, W.S. and Wu, D.Y.H. (eds) *Chinese culture and mental health*, Orlando, FL: Academic Press. pp. 3-13.
- Zhou, M. and Bankston, C.L. (1998) *Growing up American: how Vietnamese children adapt to life in the United States*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.