

Chinese isms dimensions in mainland China and Taiwan: Convergence and extension of American isms dimensions

Zhuo Job Chen¹  | Kung-Yu Hsu² | Xinyue Zhou³ | Gerard Saucier⁴

¹Department of Psychology, Clemson University

²Department of Psychology, National Chung Cheng University

³Department of Marketing, School of Management, Zhejiang University

⁴Department of Psychology, University of Oregon

Correspondence

Zhuo Job Chen, Department of Psychology, Clemson University, 418 Brackett Hall, Clemson, SC 29634.
Email: zhuoc@clemson.edu

Abstract

Objective: Previous studies of American English isms terms have uncovered as many as five broad factors: tradition-oriented religiousness (TR), subjective spirituality (SS), communal rationalism (CR), unmitigated self-interest (USI), and inequality aversion (IA). The present studies took a similar lexical approach to investigate the Chinese-language isms structures in both mainland China and Taiwan.

Method and Results: In Study 1, exploratory factor analyses with 915 mainland Chinese subjects uncovered four interpretable factors dimensionalizing 165 mainland Chinese dictionary isms terms. These factors represented contents of a combination of TR and SS, USI, CR, and a culturally unique Communist Party of China (CPC) ideology factor. In Study 2, exploratory factor analyses with 467 Taiwan Chinese subjects revealed four interpretable factors categorizing 291 Taiwan Chinese dictionary isms terms. These factors represented contents of a combination of TR and SS, USI, CR, and a culturally unique dimension expressing aspirations for happiness.

Conclusions: The results gave evidence for the existence of the isms factors TR and SS, USI, and CR in Chinese culture. Cultural uniqueness was reflected in the merging of TR and SS into the factor Syncretic Religiousness and the culture-specific factors of CPC ideology in China and Happiness/Peace Promotion in Taiwan.

KEYWORDS

culture, factor analysis, lexical, political psychology, values

1 | INTRODUCTION

“Isms,” as in *nationalism*, *capitalism*, and *Catholicism*, are words that summarize a distinctive doctrine, system, or theory at a highly abstract level. In a particular language and in the culture using that language, words ending in *-ism* often describe beliefs held by individuals. Thus, the *-ism* lexicon of a language is a repository of culturally relevant beliefs, particularly beliefs that are controversial or whose degree of acceptance in a population has changed dynamically over time.

If beliefs are sedimented in language, we can learn something from studying semantic representation in language. Lexical studies of isms in Western societies have shown promise in the development of a good structural model of belief-system components (Krauss, 2006; Saucier, 2000). Subsequent psychometric work has uncovered dimensions of

isms that are distinct from and complementary to domains of personality and values, with isms also predicting important social attitudes and changes in personality (Saucier, 2008, 2013). To the extent isms are reproducible within and even across cultures, dimensions of isms have a potential for deepening our understanding of the interplay of culture and beliefs (Geertz, 1964; Swidler, 1986). The current study explores this issue of generalizability by attempting to delineate the structure of isms in Chinese culture.

1.1 | Lexical approach for a good structural model

A lexical approach examines conceptualizations that are implicit in the semantics of natural language. Such an approach has been widely used in discovering basic

personality attributes (e.g., Goldberg, 1981). In a lexical study of isms, all belief-related terms ending in *-ism* were extracted from an American English dictionary (e.g., Saucier, 2000). The *-ism* words not related to beliefs (e.g., *metabolism*, *alcoholism*) were removed. Dictionary definitions of these isms were then methodically transformed into questionnaire statements, and participants indicated their agreement with each ism statement along a response scale (e.g., ranging from 1 to 5). Factor analysis then reduced the correlational structure to a small number of factors that were replicable across halves of a large sample.

Among the criteria that make a structural model good, a lexical approach tends particularly to lend strength in the areas of comprehensiveness and social importance (Saucier & Srivastava, 2015).

The social importance of an attribute corresponds substantially with the degree of its representation in a language (Saucier, 2009). When terms in a language serve as variables, an attribute represented by multiple terms appears as a factor. The importance of a factor is underscored when the factor includes terms used with high frequency. Together, high frequency and rich representation in language combine to imply social importance, an important practical criterion for a model in psychology.

Moreover, structural models derived from lexicons can be more comprehensive than models based on folk concepts derived from a limited demographic in a particular time period, because a lexicon reflects shared concepts among a wider demographic across a longer historical period. Thus, lexically derived models might be expected to generate features not emphasized in models arising from individual scientists and theorists, who are imperfect representatives of the wider cultural pool of ideas and have their own biases. This principle manifests in the well-known history of the Big Five model of personality, which introduced dimensions (e.g., Agreeableness, Conscientiousness) little evident in the most widely referenced prior structural models of personality. And indeed, lexical isms research has discovered dimensions of belief distinct from and in some ways beyond those delimited by extant models of social attitudes and values.

Constructing models from terms in the natural language also reduces biases associated with theoretical assumptions, which sometimes can be seen in the long run to be arbitrary or biased. The key value-adding element in a lexical study of isms is that the terms and structure come as a function of the population, not from theorists. In this way, lexical studies capture what have been called “menu-independent” aspects of beliefs and ideology (Malka & Soto, 2015), in contrast to the specific packaging of positions promulgated by elites and political parties. In short, psychological studies of beliefs have the potential to promote a more objective investigation of isms structures.

1.2 | Isms dimensions and their correlates

Within the lexical paradigm, the structure of isms in American English has received systematic evaluation. Factor analyses of 266 different *-ism* terms drawn from the *American Heritage Dictionary* identified a four-factor (later expanded to a five-factor) structure in American student and community samples (Saucier, 2000, 2013). Krauss (2006) subsequently replicated the main form of the initial four-factor structure in an analogous study with a Romanian dictionary and a Romanian sample.

Based on theoretical conceptualizations and empirical correlations of these factors with other variables, Saucier (2000, 2013) labeled these four factors as tradition-oriented religiousness (TR), subjective spirituality (SS), unmitigated self-interest (USI), and communal rationalism (CR). The Saucier (2013) study proposed an additional fifth factor, inequality aversion (IA). TR is associated with organized religion and fundamentalism, emphasizing the importance of scriptures, traditional religion, and a hierarchy of religious authority. SS is associated with belief in spirits and involves answers having to do with personal metaphysics, numinous experience, and a more nonhierarchical approach to spirituality. USI involves endorsement of various forms of hedonistic self-interest as a source of value and goodness in life. CR puts emphasis on common institutions and the exercise of reason as sources of value and goodness. This emphasis involves collaborative or communal rational processes, eventuating in institutions of civil government and fields of scholarship and science. IA centers on distrust of elite groups and political alienation deriving from unequal distribution of wealth and power in society and might be associated with the promotion of a simpler way of life, as well as milder punishment of criminals.

As an empirical application of isms research, the Survey of Dictionary-Based Isms (SDI) has been developed to capture these five factors. An early version of this scale captured the initial four dimensions with 28 items (SDI-28; Saucier, 2008), and a subsequent revision included measurement of the fifth dimension, Inequality Aversion (SDI-46; Saucier, 2013) and applied the scale to multicultural contexts (Saucier et al., 2015). Studies using the SDI suggest that isms act as an important complement to models in personality (e.g., Big Five). Correlations between isms and aspects of personality are of moderate magnitude ($r_s < .25$), suggesting that isms do not completely overlap with personality and may supply an additional insight into personality. Isms were also found to be moderately associated with change in personality characteristics across a span of 10 years (Saucier, 2013).

Isms not only predict important social attitudes, but also reveal dimensions that go beyond current sociopolitical models. TR was correlated strongly with conservatism and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1996), and USI

was associated with self-enhancement and social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). More interestingly, SS and CR isms were almost orthogonal to that two-dimension sociopolitical model (see Figure 2 of Saucier, 2013), thus capturing variance they do not explain.

1.3 | Isms in Chinese culture

Isms dimensions discovered in an English dictionary with American samples might or might not be culture-specific. An obvious question is whether the same structure can adequately capture isms in a different civilizational context.

Cross-cultural generalizations can occur in two degrees. The lenient test of generalization applies a structure developed in one culture to the population of other cultures and examines the degree to which the structure holds (e.g., as measurement invariance of psychological scales). The stringent test, however, identifies the most salient and important concepts within each linguistic/cultural context independently, derives an indigenous factor structure from those variables, and then examines the extent to which this new structure corresponds to previously proposed models (or indigenous structures from other contexts). A model that meets this stringent test in any language could be considered far more pervasive and universal than a structure that simply shows a high degree of translatability (Saucier, 2009).

The current study adopts the stringent test with a lexical approach to investigate isms structures in the Chinese language using both mainland and Taiwan Chinese samples. The fundamental research questions are as follows: What dimensions characterize the Chinese isms structure? To what degree do those dimensions replicate dimensions found in the United States? To what degree are those dimensions different from those found in the United States? What do these results indicate about the most fundamental components of belief systems globally?

We decided to examine the isms structure in the Chinese culture for several reasons. First, Chinese culture is quite distinct from that of the United States, where the original isms structure was derived. With a population composing one-fifth of the world, Chinese culture would be important in examining the issues of culture specificity and culture generality. Although geographically dispersed, Chinese culture is quite homogenous. Mainly concentrated in mainland China and Taiwan, Chinese people (ethnically Han, and oftentimes referred to as “Hua Ren”) in these regions use a homogenous writing system, *hanzi*, and a common spoken language, Mandarin, as the major, if not the only, official language. Even other forms of the Chinese language of Han people, like that of Hokkien (popular in Taiwan), use the same writing system.

We expected to replicate the unmitigated self-interest and tradition-oriented religiousness dimensions in mainland China and Taiwan, although endorsement levels and distributions might differ. Both dimensions speak to fundamental human needs that can cut across cultures. Concerns with self-interest and a predilection for enjoyment, as captured in USI, are driven ultimately by biological instinct. On the other hand, religion is a ubiquitous cultural phenomenon present in most human societies that have been studied. Given the historical influence of Buddhism and Taoism, institutionalized religion should not be a foreign concept to Chinese populations.

However, there would be reason to carefully examine the connection between the two isms dimensions tradition-oriented religiousness and subjective spirituality. Different from Abrahamic religions that have long taken a strong position against paganism and witchcraft, Asian religions have a syncretic nature in which one often observes a harmonious mixture of institutionalized religion, like Buddhism, with indigenous spiritual practices and beliefs such as Confucianism and Taoism. This unique syncretic religiousness may impact isms structures, where few would be religious people skeptical of mystics, or mystics skeptical of institutional religion, and therefore TR and SS may show up as one single factor.

On the other hand, the separation of religiousness from spirituality can be an artifact created by discursive and political pressures in modern-day Western societies. Spiritual movements like that of New Age appeal to secularized segments of the population who also reject traditional religion. The intimate association of evangelical Christianity with conservative Republicanism in the United States further motivates political liberals to disengage from the church while retaining spirituality (Malka, Lelkes, Srivastava, Cohen, & Miller, 2012). Not sharing this Western context, TR and SS may likely be one in the Chinese culture.

Also of particular interest would be the cultural specificity of communal rationalism. Considering the strong influence of communism on mainland China but not Taiwan, there might exist two versions of CR: one representing Western rationalities similar to those of the United States emphasizing science and a tolerant, multicultural democracy, and the other tailored to the specific ideological surrounds of communism. Use of the two Chinese populations enables examination of the commonality of Chinese culture and the differences in political systems. One might see how communism as a dominant political ideology shapes the landscape of belief systems in modern China, and how the absence thereof influences Taiwan.

We had some speculations about the inequality aversion dimension in Chinese culture given that one finds the trace

of egalitarianism in both traditional Confucian text (e.g., *datong*, or great unity) and in modern communist ideologies. However, we chose not to formulate a hypothesis for two reasons. First, and empirically, the inequality aversion factor was only recently reported in the United States (Saucier, 2013) and had not been replicated in other published studies. Second, and theoretically, the content of this factor was partially associated with values advocated in American Liberalism. This cultural specificity might put limitations on its generalizability.

2 | STUDY 1

2.1 | Method

The Institutional Review Board at the University of Oregon has approved the studies and experiments used in this article.

2.1.1 | Participants

Data came from two samples of mainland Chinese student participants. We removed individuals who had more than eight missing values on the 165 isms variables (5% missing). However, the results were not significantly different when we analyzed the complete data. Sample 1 initially included 444 students, of which 387 were retained (57 cases removed). Ages ranged from 18 to 26 ($Mdn = 20.0$, $SD = 1.3$), and 288 participants were female. Around half of the sample (63.3%) came from the student body in a university located in Guangzhou, whereas the rest were from a university located in Shanghai. Ethnicity of the sample was predominantly Han (97.1%). The great majority indicated their religious affiliation as “none” (94.5%). Sample 2 included 607 students from the same institution in Guangzhou as in Sample 1, and 528 were retained for analysis. Ages ranged from 18 to 53 ($Mdn = 20.0$, $SD = 2.4$), and 284 participants were female. Ethnicity of this sample was predominantly Han (99.2%), and the great majority indicated their religious affiliation as “none” (97.4%). The combined data of the two samples included 915 participants, among whom the median age was 20.0 ($SD = 2.0$), 63.4% were female, 98.1% were Han people, and 95.6% did not identify themselves with any religion.

The majority's not being identified with any religion, especially among younger individuals, was consistent with public survey results. For instance, in the Horizon survey 2007, only 14% of the total population reported any sort of a formal religious affiliation (as cited in Yang & Lang, 2011, pp. 172–174). However, beliefs in folk religions (e.g., ancestor-oriented ones) and in fortune and fate have a fair degree of prevalence among Chinese people.

2.1.2 | Extracting isms from the dictionary

The 10th edition of *Xinhua Zidian* (literally, “New China Dictionary”) was chosen to extract isms terms because of its authority, popularity, and content breadth. *Xinhua Zidian* was originally edited under the aegis of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1957, and it has ever since remained the most popular and bestselling dictionary in China. Up until 2004, it has gone through 10 revisions, including new words while maintaining a modest size that excludes terms no longer in common use.

There is no single suffix in the Chinese language that corresponds to *-ism* in English. However, the word endings *-jiao* (教, religion; e.g., “Fo Jiao”: Buddhism), *-zhuyi* (主義, theoretical system; e.g., “Makesi Zhuyi”: Marxism), *-lun* (論, theory; e.g., “Eryuan Lun”: dualism), and *-shuo* (說, theory; e.g., “Shangdiwusuobuzai Shuo”: immanentism) capture the core ideas of isms as social attitudes and beliefs, and they are often attached to an extant word as a Chinese equivalent to an English ism term. A complete selection of variables from the paperback version of *Xinhua Zidian* included definitions of all words that ended in *-jiao*, *-zhuyi*, *-lun*, and *-shuo*. Several words had multiple entries that conveyed distinct meanings; in those cases, we kept the entries as separate variables with a number labeling (e.g., Dengxiaoping Theory 1). The final list included entries of 165 isms.

2.1.3 | Measures

The 165 dictionary entries measured isms content in mainland China. The item conversion rules were, in fact, clearer and simpler in Chinese, as almost all Chinese words ending in the selected suffixes were interpretable as a belief or an attitude. To add clarity for respondents, the short phrase “I believe that” was added to the beginning of all definitions to help resolve ambiguities that the respondent might encounter. In Sample 1, these 165 items were entered as is and measured on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale. In Sample 2, we broke down 52 especially long entries into two or more items for greater ease of use by participants, which resulted in 238 isms items. Before analyzing data, as in Saucier (2000), we aggregated multiple items reflecting parts of the same isms entry into one variable by taking the mean of these variables. A 9-point Likert scale measured these variables. The two samples also included at the end the SDI-28 items, so as to enable empirical markers (Saucier, 2008) for the four isms factors (i.e., TR, USI, SS, CR) uncovered in American isms studies.

In addition to isms items, some participants in Sample 2 also completed a balanced 14-item Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (Altemeyer, 1996). An example item is “It is always better to trust the judgement of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-

rousers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people's minds." Eight items from the Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Pratto et al., 1994) measured lack of inequality aversion, along with the domination over lower-status groups. An example item is "Inferior groups should stay in their place." Three items measured attitude with respect to communism (e.g., "I identify with the communist party"). Eight items derived from typical quotes of Mao Zedong measured how strongly one believed in Maoism. These items supported the idea of revolting against authority (e.g., "Revolution is not sin; we have reason to overthrow the authority") and encouraged people to "create the history." All measures appeared in a single paper-and-pencil questionnaire package. Response options of each involved a 1 (*I definitely disagree with the statement*) to 9 (*I definitely agree with the statement*) Likert scale.

2.1.4 | Analysis

Since this study investigated a novel set of variables seeking a best-fitting structure for that set of variables (and the population from which the sample derives), exploratory factor analysis is an appropriate tool. We analyzed data from the two samples separately as well as the combined data. As the two samples used different scales, we transformed variables into *z*-scores within each sample before combining the data. (The variables were *z*-scored, not the cases; this was not ipsatization.) The procedure used was principal-axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. Factor scores were saved for correlational use. Selection of number of factors utilized parallel analysis, which computed average eigenvalues of 1,000 permutations of the original raw data set with 165 variables, combined with examination of factors with respect to interpretability. Interpretability means that many items have their highest loading on the factor, thus defining the factor, and that the items have a readily interpretable content pattern.

2.2 | Results

Parallel analysis suggested 16 factors for Sample 1 and 26 factors for Sample 2, with eigenvalues larger than those of randomly generated factors. However, a larger-than-chance eigenvalue does not necessarily imply that a factor is substantively meaningful. We noticed that factors were not sufficiently defined when more than five factors were extracted from the data. For instance, in the six-factor solution for Sample 1, the highest loading on factor 6 was only .27, and only five indicators defined this factor.

In the six-factor solution for Sample 2, the situation was only slightly better. The highest loading on factor 6 was merely .36, with 11 indicators to define this factor. Given that .36 was too low of a factor saturation level, we focused

our attention on factor solutions that were five factors or fewer.

Examining factor replicability across samples helps to distinguish meaningful factors from noise introduced by sampling. To serve this purpose, we calculated the congruence coefficient as an index of the similarity between factors that had been derived in factor analyses (Burt, 1948). The congruence coefficient ranges from -1 to 1 , and its interpretation is similar to that of a Pearson correlation. A value higher than .80 indicates a fair similarity. The congruence coefficient for the factors in the one-factor solution was $-.51$; in the two-factor solution, the coefficients were .92 and .94; in the three-factor solution, they were .82, .91, and .92; in the four-factor solution, they were .83, .84, .92, and .92; and in the five-factor solution, they were .69, .80, .86, .88, and .93. This pattern of coefficients suggested that the two- to four-factor solutions were most replicable across samples. When it came to five factors, the congruence coefficients between the two fifth factors were relatively low (.69), which indicated that the fifth factors might reflect sample idiosyncrasies more than general isms structures.

The above analyses demonstrated the reproducibility of two- to four-factor solutions across samples, suggesting that the structures were not due to sampling error or different ways of assessment. The four-factor model appeared to be an optimal solution, as it distinguished more sources of information (factors) than did three- or two-factor models, while remaining reliable with high congruence coefficients. The subsequent analysis will therefore focus on the four factors using the combined data.

2.2.1 | Factor structures in the combined data

Five exploratory factor analyses extracted, in sequence, one to five factors from the combined data. Figure 1 shows the correlation of newly emerged factors with the factors in the previous factor analysis. Factor labels refer to the contents of main items defining a factor, in terms of isms factor labels from the American studies where applicable. The TR+SS factor was named *syncretic religiousness* (SynRel for short) since it gave evidence for a kind of "tolerance of any possible contradiction" between fundamentalist and spiritistic/mystical religion, whereas in the West—including West Asia—these tend to be opposed and separated. Four of the five factors in the five-factor solution strongly correlated with their predecessors in the four-factor solution, whereas the fifth factor did not contain information distinct from other factors. This suggested that the factor solution tended to stabilize at the four-factor level. Note that the factor indicating the ideology of the Communist Party of China (CPC

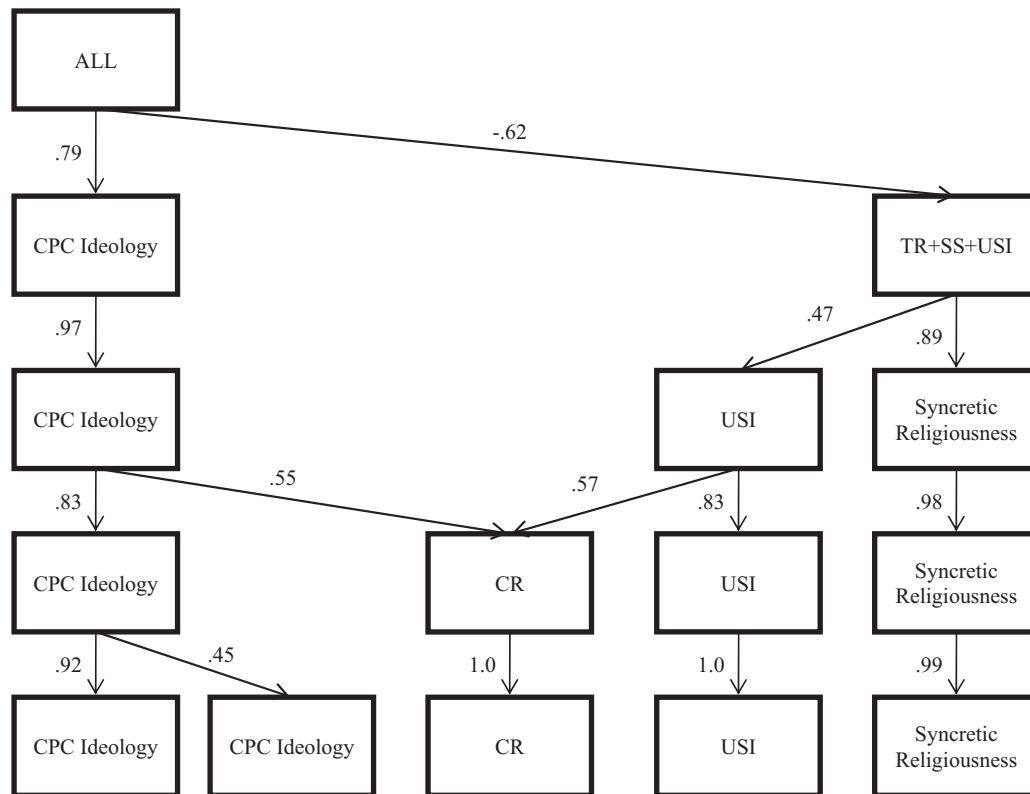


FIGURE 1 Emergence of factors in the mainland China data. Numbers on the arrows are correlation coefficients. Correlations smaller than .30 are not displayed. CPC = Communist Party of China; TR = tradition-oriented religiosity; SS = subjective spirituality; USI = unmitigated self-interest; CR = communal rationalism

ideology for short) clearly distinguished itself from the other factors.

We also observed a separation of self-centeredness from a collectivist concern starting at the two-factor solution. In this Chinese sample, the collectivist concern took the form of CPC ideology. The association of USI with the SynRel isms might be rather sample-specific and arise from similarly positive-skewed low levels of TR matching low levels of USI.

In the four-factor model, indicators of cf41 (mainland China factor 1 from the four-factor solution) showed a combination of religious (e.g., Catholicism) and spiritistic (e.g., animism) content. Mean responses to these variables (means of original responses prior to standardizing the variables) were toward the lower end of the scale ($M_1 = 2.6$ on a 5-point scale, $M_2 = 4.5$ on a 9-point scale for the two samples, respectively), that is, below the scale median 3 for Sample 1 and below 5 for Sample 2. Indicators of cf42 predominantly represented CPC ideology advocated by the ruling communist party. Mean responses to these variables were toward the higher end of the scale ($M_1 = 3.5$, $M_2 = 6.5$). Indicators of cf43 showed a combination of humanistic concerns and a nationalist, pragmatic approach to serve the society (e.g., *Nalaizhuyi*: an open attitude to take in foreign culture). Responses leaned toward the higher end of the scale ($M_1 = 3.9$, $M_2 = 6.8$). Indicators of cf44 referred to concerns with personal gains and pleasure (e.g., egotism), with

responses tending toward the lower end of the scale ($M_1 = 2.5$, $M_2 = 4.2$). The complete list of indicators along with their loadings and descriptive statistics appear in supplemental materials that are available upon request or on pages. uoregon.edu/gsaucier/gsau5.htm.

Table 1 displays correlations of factor scores with the four isms marker scales derived from American studies. The magnitude of association was rather modest overall, suggesting that belief-system components have a large culture-specific basis. The four-factor solution had the clearest pattern by mapping the Chinese isms factors to the American isms markers. The factor cf41 correlated with both TR and SS, consistent with the contents of its indicators. The factor cf42 was associated with CR at a moderate effect size, consistent with the observation that CPC ideology has been a dominant rationality in mainland China since 1949. Being a factor composed of isms indicating humanistic concerns, cf43 had some resemblance to SS, and also to CR. The factor cf44 was selectively associated with USI, consistent with its content.

2.2.2 | Meta factors and correlations with criterion variables

The correspondence, albeit imperfect, between Chinese isms factors and American isms factors suggested possible existence of a “meta-factor” structure that influenced the shaping

TABLE 1 Correlations of factor scores extracted from one- to five-factor solutions with SDI markers in mainland China

	SDI-TR	SDI-CR	SDI-SS	SDI-USI
cf11	-.50*	.26	-.09	-.23
cf21	-.15	.33*	.14	-.15
cf22	.63*	.00	.32*	.18
cf31	-.21	.30*	.11	-.23
cf32	.62*	-.03	.34*	.03
cf33	.12	.17	.10	.27
cf41	.61*	-.04	.38*	-.01
cf42	-.13	.26	-.05	-.05
cf43	-.12	.23	.26	-.15
cf44	.22	.07	-.06	.43*
cf51	.62*	-.05	.38*	.02
cf52	-.13	.21	-.06	.00
cf53	-.11	.23	.25	-.15
cf54	.22	.07	-.07	.45*
cf55	-.03	.18	.04	-.16

Note. SDI = Survey of Dictionary-Based Isms; TR = tradition-oriented religiousness; CR = communal rationalism; SS = subjective spirituality; USI = unmitigated self-interest. For a sample of this size ($N < 900$), correlation coefficients bigger than .07 are significant at .05. Asterisks (*) label absolute coefficients bigger than .30, which is a medium effect size. The same rule applies in all tables. Factors were labeled in the form of cf_{ij} , which indicates the j -th factor in an i -factor solution. For instance, cf21 is the first factor extracted from a two-factor solution in the mainland China data.

of culture-specific structures. Both U.S.-derived and mainland China-derived isms structures may only partially represent this meta-factor structure, in the meantime expressing a considerable degree of cultural idiosyncrasies. To capture this meta-factor structure, we extracted four meta-factors from the matrix of four Chinese isms factor scores and four American isms markers.

The first four columns of Table 2 show correlations of Chinese isms factors (i.e., cf41 to cf44) and American isms factors (i.e., SDI-TR to SDI-USI) with meta-factors cmf1 to cmf4. We observed a near one-to-one association of meta-factors with culture-specific isms factors. The meta-factor cmf1 was associated with cf41 and TR, cmf2 with cf42 and CR, cmf3 with cf43 and SS, and cmf4 with cf44 and USI. Correlations of Chinese isms factors with meta-factors were stronger than those of American isms markers with meta-factors, as would be expected since the correlations were taken across exclusively Chinese participants. Several noticeable cross-loadings were observed with the American isms

markers. The meta-factor cmf1 correlated with SS, cmf3 correlated with CR and lower levels of USI, and cmf4 was associated with TR.

Table 2 also displays correlations of isms variables with four criterion variables. Nearly all the largest associations were between the CPC ideology factor and the indicators of pro-Maoist attitudes and identity with communism. These associations supported the interpretation that this isms factor did indeed represent the dominant ideology of the communist party. There were also moderately strong associations between the CPC ideology factor and right-wing authoritarianism; this may seem odd, but McFarland, Ageyev, and Djintcharadze (1996) found similar associations not only in Soviet Russia but also in Russia for some years afterward. Additionally, CR was correlated negatively with SDO and positively with RWA. This pattern may be due to the juxtaposition of CR and CPC ideology in mainland China. Despite their ideological discrepancy, both forms of rationalities reflect hierarchy-attenuating attitudes and support for authority. Other correlations were about .30 or less in magnitude and deserved less attention.

2.3 | Discussion

Four factors emerged from factor analyses of 167 Chinese isms terms extracted from a dictionary from contemporary mainland China. The four-factor solution proved to be optimal such that all four factors had distinct meanings, whereas a five-factor solution did not generate a distinct fifth factor. The factor contents and their correlations with SDI markers indicated a strong replication of TR and USI dimensions in China, supporting the general expectation of cross-cultural generalizability of factors. However, cultural idiosyncrasies existed in delineating the SS, CR, and unique CPC ideology dimensions.

Isms variables defining TR and SS were tightly bonded to create the syncretic religiousness dimension. This finding is not unexpected, being consistent with the religious landscape in the Chinese culture. Historically, Buddhism has been the dominant institutionalized religion, compatible with indigenous religions such as Confucianism and Taoism. A main feature of Chinese Buddhism is that its doctrines and practices incorporate local spiritual beliefs. For instance, the prevalent belief in ancestral spirits and communication with the dead finds support in the dogma of *samsara* and reincarnation that are central to Buddhism. Buddhism is not antithetical to local beliefs, and therefore one does not so easily find a split of individualized spirituality from institutionalized religion. This syncretic nature of Chinese Buddhism distinguishes itself from Abrahamic religions that have long taken a strong position against paganism and witchcraft.

TABLE 2 Correlations among factor scores from a four-factor solution, meta-factors, markers, and exterior variables for the mainland China data

	cmf1	cmf2	cmf3	cmf4	SDO	COM	MAO	RWA
cf41 (SynRel)	.95*	.03	.07	-.03	.09	-.09	-.03	.16
cf42 (CPC Ideo.)	-.04	.89*	-.02	-.06	-.29	.50*	.53*	.37*
cf43 (CR)	-.04	.20	.83*	-.05	-.34*	-.02	.05	.38*
cf44 (USI)	.09	.03	.11	.91*	.20	-.23	.20	.15
SDI-TR	.82*	-.20	-.10	.28	.25	-.10	-.01	-.03
SDI-CR	-.06	.64*	.39*	.07*	-.22	.12	-.07	.26
SDI-SS	.46*	-.09	.64*	-.21	-.07	-.01	.05	.16
SDI-USI	.01	-.05	-.28	.73*	.22	-.12	.21	-.03
SDO	.15	-.34*	-.28	.25	.75	-.14	.05	-.20
COM	-.09	.41*	-.06	-.22		.80	.26	.07
MAO	-.01	.38*	-.01	.20			.61	.32*
RWA	.11	.43*	.36*	.07				.66

Note. SDO = social dominance orientation; COM = communist identity; MAO = agreement with Maoism; RWA = right-wing authoritarianism; SynRel = syncretic religiousness; CPC Ideo. = Communist Party of China Ideology; CR = communal rationalism; USI = unmitigated self-interest; TR = tradition-oriented religiousness; SS = subjective spirituality. Terms cmf1 to cmf4 are Chinese meta-factors. $N = 115$ for correlations with MAO, $N = 517$ for correlations with SDO, COM, and RWA. $N = 905$ for factors and markers. Reliabilities for SDO to RWA are on the diagonal.

As regards the potentially culture-specific domain of communal rationalism (CR), statements of CPC ideologies formed a strong dimension unique to the mainland Chinese sociopolitical situation. This dimension, encompassing classical Marxism, Maoist thought, and Dengxiaoping theory, represented the evolving ideologies that are more or less accepted within the Communist Party of China. These ideologies are put on school curricula as compulsory subjects from elementary school through college, and memorization of many of them is a prerequisite to succeed in exams. Our sample, college students, would not have much trouble recognizing these statements and schematizing them together so that they coalesce into a single unique factor.

The abundance of politically relevant ideologies in the dictionary can be partially attributed to the influence the ruling Communist Party exerted on the process of dictionary editing. The same political influence has also permeated social life, and as a result, these ideologies have become a significant component of the contemporary mainland Chinese belief system. In this sense, the use of a state-edited dictionary should not compromise the current findings; instead, it is most appropriate given the unique political situation in contemporary China.

However, we should not reduce this dimension into a mere cultural artifact that has no substantive meaning. Communist ideology is, of course, a coherent body of social theories, and the CPC ideology dimension was

strongly correlated with the CR isms marker. Even more interestingly, CPC ideology distinguished itself from a generic set of communal rationalities with its exclusive advocacy of a centralized people-serving government, equal wealth distribution, and radical social progress. Empirically, CPC ideology was correlated highly with communist identity and beliefs in Maoism, whereas CR had no association with either of them. Given its emphasis on egalitarianism, CPC ideology could be viewed as a specific version of inequality aversion. Unfortunately, in this data set, we did not have adequate American isms to represent IA.

Given the sociopolitical uniqueness of China, findings from the mainland Chinese sample are perhaps not conclusive of the isms structures for the Chinese culture in general. Following mainland China, Taiwan is the second largest Chinese community in the world. As a historic fact, Kuomintang—the founding political party of Taiwan—had been the ruling party in mainland China from 1928 until its retreat to Taiwan in 1949 after losing the Chinese Civil War to CPC. The culture in Taiwan is essentially Chinese but without any commitment to communist ideology. Not having undergone a socialist revolution, Taiwan has maintained a more traditional Chinese culture. Exploration of the isms structures in a Taiwan Chinese sample with a Taiwan-published dictionary would help isolate political context effects in the Study 1 data and move one step closer to a generalizable structure of Chinese isms.

3 | STUDY 2

With the above mission in mind, Study 2 investigated isms structures in Taiwan Chinese samples with two major puzzles to solve. First, will the TR and SS contents form a single factor in Taiwan as they did in Study 1? If so, this unique discovery of syncretic religiousness would more likely be a common belief-system component in the Chinese culture. Second, what would be the culturally unique CR factor in Taiwan, and to what degree would it correspond to the CPC ideology that stands out in mainland China?

3.1 | Method

3.1.1 | Participants

Data came from two samples of Taiwan Chinese participants. Sample 1 included 235 students from a national university in central Taiwan. These individuals responded to the questionnaire on a web-based survey portal. Sample ages ranged from 18 to 32 ($Mdn = 21.0$, $SD = 2.2$), and 175 participants were female. The sample included 6% Christians, 14% Buddhists, and 25% Taoists, along with 37% atheists, and the rest checked the option “others.” Sample 2 recruited 232 students from the same institution. Participants in Sample 2 responded to a paper-and-pencil questionnaire package. Ages ranged from 17 to 29 ($Mdn = 20.0$, $SD = 1.6$), and 130 participants were female. The sample included 7% Christians, 16% Buddhists, 21% Taoists, and 31% atheists, and the rest checked “others.” The combined data of the two samples included 467 participants, among whom the age median was 20.0 ($SD = 2.0$) and 65.3% were female. Six percent identified as Christians, 15% as Buddhists, 23% as Taoists, and 35% as atheists.

3.1.2 | Extracting isms from the dictionary

We extracted isms terms from a complete search through the electronic database of the *Revised Chinese Dictionary* (dict.revised.moe.edu.tw). The *Revised Chinese Dictionary* is a popular and authoritative dictionary edited by the Ministry of Education of Taiwan. Following the procedures in Study 1, selection of variables included definitions of all words that ended in *-jiao* (教), *-zhuyi* (主義), *-lun* (論), and *-shuo* (說). Several isms words had multiple entries that conveyed distinct meanings; in that case, we kept these entries as separate variables with a number labeling (e.g., Zhuzhi Theory 1). Eight isms words had long, double-barreled entries (*Benthamism*, *Capitalism*, *Humanitarianism*, *Malthusism*, *Materialism*, *Neorealism*, *Sanjie Jiao*, *Zoroastrianism*) and were split into two or more variables with a letter labeling. For instance, *Sanjie Jiao* (“three-stage religion”) is defined with

five doctrines that are quite independent of each other. We made each of the five doctrines a separate variable. The first doctrine, “Our practice should be ascetic and shame-oriented,” appeared as the variable “Sanjie Jiao a.” There were a total of 291 isms variables.

3.1.3 | Measures

In addition to the 291 isms variables, SDI-46 were included as American isms markers (Saucier, 2013). All variables used a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale for measurement.

3.1.4 | Analysis

The sample size in each sample is smaller than the number of variables. Therefore, we analyzed the combined data only. Total equivalence between online survey and paper-and-pencil questionnaire may be hard to achieve, but meta-analysis has shown no significant difference between these two administration formats, especially in personality assessment (Noyes & Garland, 2008). As in Study 1, we transformed variables into z -scores within each sample before combining the data. The z -transformation would further help reduce any effect of administration format. The procedure used was principal-axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. Factor scores were saved for correlational use. Selection of number of factors was based on the interpretability of factors.

3.2 | Results

Five exploratory factor analyses extracted, in sequence, one to five factors. Figure 2 shows the correlation of newly emerged factors with the factors in the previous factor analysis. Factor labels refer to the contents of main items defining a factor, in terms of isms factor labels from the American studies where applicable. In the five-factor solution, four factors were correlated strongly with their predecessors, leaving the fifth factor defined insufficiently by four indicators, which were only common in their negative way of phrasing. This suggested that the factor solution stabilized at the four-factor level.

We observed, once again, the combination of TR and SS factors into what we termed *syncretic religiousness*. The factor indicating USI has clearly distinguished itself from the other factors since the two-factor solution, resonating with the dichotomy of egocentric and collectivist concerns found in Study 1 (see Figure 2). Different from the stand-alone CPC ideology factor in mainland China, the Taiwan Chinese culture-specific factor emerged from splitting off from the syncretic religiousness composite. It expressed a general

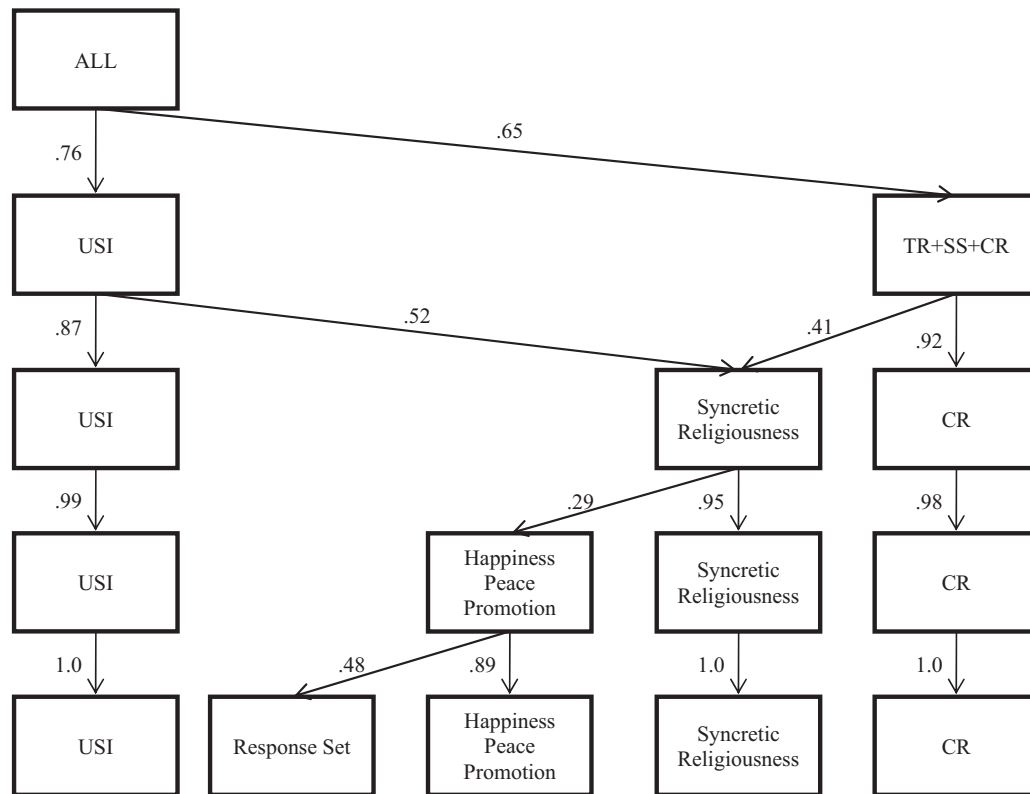


FIGURE 2 Emergence of factors in the Taiwan data. Numbers on the arrows are correlation coefficients. Correlations smaller than .30 are not displayed. USI = unmitigated self-interest; TR = tradition-oriented religiousness; SS = subjective spirituality; CR = communal rationalism

wish for happiness and peace in life with focus on caring family, ameliorating community, and striking peace. It was labeled *Happiness/Peace Promotion* in the diagram.

In the four-factor model, the strongest indicators of tf41 (the first factor of the four-factor structure in Taiwan) documented an exploitative approach toward enhancement of both individual-oriented (e.g., individual heroism) and group-oriented interests (e.g., totalitarianism). However, there was a diverse body of variables tagging on this factor, including some religion (e.g., Heavenly Father Religion) and social theories (e.g., state capitalism, utopian socialism). Mean responses to these variables were toward the lower end of the scale ($M = 1.8$), that is, below the scale median 3. The common low level of endorsement may account for the existence of incoherent isms in tf41; however, indicators of unmitigated self-interest (USI)—such as hedonism and materialism—were found among the high-loading items that had the highest means. This first factor appeared to represent a mix of USI content with other content that was even more sparsely endorsed. Note that the highest-loading item, “Shengxue doctrine,” was rather culture-specific: It advocates a form of education that is oriented exclusively toward preparing students for college examinations.

Indicators of tf42 included progressive ideas, social and scientific theories that would benefit the society as a whole (e.g., Keynesian economics). An interesting aspect of the

content on this factor: It combined imported Western concepts with specific Chinese concepts especially associated with Sun Yat-Sen, a highly influential Chinese political thinker and leader who synthesized Chinese and Western values, and the widely esteemed Founding Father of Taiwan. Responses were toward the higher end of the scale ($M = 3.5$).

Indicators of tf43 included a combination of religious schools (e.g., Yoga school), spiritual traditions (e.g., Lao-Chuang), and animistic beliefs (e.g., animism). The mixture of Daoist and Buddhist ways of thinking, along with the diverse content adjoined to these with somewhat lower loadings, gave a window into characteristic Chinese religious syncretism. The highest-loading item, “Quanzhen Jiao,” epitomized the syncretic nature of Chinese religiousness by advocating the unification of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Note that traditional Chinese religions characterized this factor with high-loading items. Lao-Chuang and Luo Jiao were forms of Daoism; Lamrim, Rnying Ma-Pa, and Final Teaching were schools of Buddhism; and Baisha School was a Confucian school of religious philosophy. This contrasted strikingly with its counterpart factor in mainland China (i.e., cf41), whose highest-loading items were mostly imported religions from the West. Responses were around the center of the scale ($M = 2.4$).

Indicators of tf44 featured a unique emphasis on family, peace, social harmony, and equality (e.g., egalitarianism),

TABLE 3 Correlation of factor scores extracted from one- to five-factor solutions with SDI markers in Taiwan

	SDI-USI	SDI-CR	SDI-TR	SDI-SS	SDI-IA
tf11	.31*	.27	.23	-.01	.23
tf21	.42*	-.19	.26	-.24	.23
tf22	-.01	.64*	.06	.27	.09
tf31	.44*	-.12	-.04	-.36*	.29
tf32	-.02	.69*	-.18	.18	.12
tf33	.10	.02	.55*	.19	.00
tf41	.46*	-.18	.03	-.37*	.26
tf42	.01	.67*	-.24	.13	.16
tf43	.01	.07	.47*	.24	.03
tf44	.16	.08	.30*	.02	-.13
tf51	.46*	-.18	.02	-.37*	.25
tf52	.02	.67*	-.23	.14	.14
tf53	.02	.07	.47*	.24	.03
tf54	.21	.02	.30*	.01	-.26
tf55	.00	.05	.08	-.04	.22

Note. SDI = Survey of Dictionary-Based Isms; USI = unmitigated self-interest; CR = communal rationalism; TR = tradition-oriented religiousness; SS = subjective spirituality; IA = inequality aversion. $N < 380$. Correlation coefficients greater than .10 are significant at .05.

with responses toward the higher end of the scale ($M = 3.3$). Compared to the other three factors, this last factor was characterized by a small number of items (< 20) with moderate to low loadings ($< .40$), making it a weakly generalizable isms factor. Many items cross-loaded on tf42, as these ideas were also in the ballpark of communal rationalism. The items that had lower cross-loadings, which thus made distinct definers of tf44, included Gandhiism (.02 on tf42), altruism (.10), Benthamism (.10), and nonresistance policy (.10). These items combined centered on what Benthamism would capture as “achieving greatest happiness for the most people,” by means of striking peace and caring for other people in the society.

Table 3 displays correlations of factor scores with the five SDI isms marker scales derived from American data. To be consistent, the first four of these marker scales were the same as those used in Study 1, whereas the additional IA factor was not included in Study 1. We observed some patterns in mapping Taiwan Chinese isms factors onto American isms markers. In the four-factor solution, tf41 had the strongest association with USI, but it was also correlated negatively with SS. This, again, might be due to the diversified body of

isms variables defining tf41. Clearer patterns were observed in the association of tf42 with CR, and tf43 with TR. The small factor tf44 was weakly correlated with TR, which may not be as interpretable. Except for tf42 and CR, the other correlations were at best moderate and only suggested some resemblance of these Taiwan Chinese isms factors to the American markers.

3.2.1 | Meta factors and correlations with criterion variables

We followed the same procedures taken in Study 1 to extract four meta-factors from the matrix of four factor scores derived from Taiwan and scale scores of the five isms markers. Table 4 shows correlations of Taiwan Chinese isms (i.e., tf41 to tf44) and American isms (i.e., TR to IA) with meta-factors tmf1 to tmf4. One of each of the four meta-factors showed strong, selective associations with exactly one isms variable from Taiwan. Tmf2 found one-to-one correspondence with factors representing CR in both Taiwan and the United States. Tmf1 represented ideas of USI, but it also correlated negatively with the American isms marker SS. Tmf3 represented syncretic religiousness and correlated with both TR and SS in the United States. Tmf4 was primarily determined by the happiness/peace promotion (HPP) factor tf44 in Taiwan, but it found moderate correlations with TR and was negatively correlated with IA in the United States. The negative correlation with IA was largely due to the scale items assessing IA, many of which expressed a pessimism about the future of human society and a distrust of the government. This contrasted with the optimistic content defining tf44.

TABLE 4 Correlations among factor scores from a four-factor solution, meta-factors, and markers for the Taiwan data

	tmf1	tmf2	tmf3	tmf4
tf41 (USI)	.99*	-.04	.01	-.18
tf42 (CR)	.08	.96*	-.05	-.10
tf43 (SynRel)	.00	.07	.76*	-.09
tf44 (HPP)	.12	.07	.11	.90*
SDI-USI	.52*	-.03	-.03	.20
SDI-CR	-.15	.84*	.05	.05
SDI-TR	.06	-.23	.89*	.44*
SDI-SS	-.40*	.21	.37*	.01
SDI-IA	.25	.17	.02	-.34*

Note. USI = unmitigated self-interest; CR = communal rationalism; SynRel = syncretic religiousness; HPP = happiness/peace promotion; TR = tradition-oriented religiousness; SS = subjective spirituality; IA = inequality aversion.

TABLE 5 Overlapping isms between the two cultures

	China	USI	SynRel	CR	CPC	M	Taiwan	USI	SynRel	CR	HPP	M
Animism	泛灵论/物活论		.51			3.0	精靈論		.47			2.9
Atheism	无神论		-.59			3.0	無神論	.36	-.33			<u>2.0</u>
Brahmanism	婆罗门教/印度教		.64			<u>2.1</u>	婆羅門教		.45			<u>1.7</u>
Buddhism	佛教/梵教		.55			2.6	佛教 1		.47			<u>2.3</u>
Catholicism	天主教		.63			<u>2.0</u>	天主教	.32	.40			<u>1.7</u>
Communism	共产主义 3				.47	3.2	共產主義	.39				<u>1.5</u>
Confucian religion	孔教 2			.39	.46	4.2	孔教		.48			<u>2.2</u>
Confucianism	孔教 1			.39	.40	4.2	儒家		.48			3.0
Cynicism	犬儒主义 1		.33			2.9	犬儒學派		.50			3.0
Democracy	民主主义			.40	.32	3.8	民主主義			.44		4.1
Egalitarianism	平等主义				.30	3.0	平等主義			.36	.36	4.2
Egotism	利己主义	.48				<u>1.6</u>	利己主義	.40				2.6
Empiricism	经验主义				.33	3.3	經驗主義			.47		3.7
Epicureanism	伊壁鸠鲁主义	.39				3.1	快樂主義	.45				<u>2.0</u>
Fatalism	宿命论 2	.31	.34			2.8	宿命論	.38	.31			<u>2.1</u>
Fetishism	物神论		.66			<u>2.5</u>	拜物教		.35			2.9
Hedonism	享乐主义	.37				3.2	享樂主義	.55				<u>2.2</u>
Humanistic theory	人本主义			.58		3.0	人本論 1	-.34		.47		3.1
Humanism	世俗人文主义		-.38		.31	3.9	人文主義			.48		4.3
Humanitarianism	人道主义			.51		4.4	人道主義 a			.48	.35	4.2
Immaterialism	客观唯心主义		.43			2.8	唯心論		.48			<u>2.5</u>
Individualism	个人主义	.40				<u>2.0</u>	個人主義	.45				<u>2.3</u>
Islamism	伊斯兰教/清真教		.49			<u>2.0</u>	回教		.34			<u>1.5</u>
Liberalism	自由主义 2			.50		3.4	自由主義			.30		2.7
Malthusism	新马尔萨斯主义	.35				2.6	馬爾薩斯人口論 a			.48		3.6
Mammonism	拜金主义	.43				<u>1.9</u>	拜金主義	.56				<u>1.5</u>
Manichaeism	明教3魔教		.36			2.9	明教		.53			<u>1.8</u>
Materialism	唯物主义				.53	3.5	唯物論 a	.48				<u>2.3</u>
Mysticism	神秘主义 1		.58			2.6	非理性主義 2		.37	.33		2.8
Optimism	乐观主义				.45	3.3	樂觀主義				.37	3.1
Pantheism	泛神论		.47			2.7	泛神論		.53			<u>2.4</u>
Polytheism	多神论		.59			<u>2.3</u>	多神教		.43			2.7
Romanticism	浪漫主义			.39		3.7	浪漫主義			.57		3.5
Socialism	社会主义 3				.42	2.9	社會主義				.31	2.6

(Continues)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

	China	USI	SynRel	CR	CPC	<i>M</i>	Taiwan	USI	SynRel	CR	HPP	<i>M</i>
Taoism	唯道论		.46			2.9	道家		.35			2.6
Theism	有神论		.68			<u>2.5</u>	有神論		.38			<u>2.5</u>

Note. USI = unmitigated self-interest; SynRel = syncretic religiousness; CR = communal rationalism; CPC = Communist Party of China; HPP = happiness/peace promotion. Boldfaced loadings indicate match between the two cultures. The *M* columns record the mean of an item. Means greater than 3.5 are boldfaced, whereas means lower than 2.5 are underscoring. Four entries bear the same name, but their contents differ so much for the two cultures that they were not included in the overlapping list. They are modernism (China: I advocate logic and reason, empirical investigations, and atheism; Taiwan: I emphasize isolation of individuals, brokenness of experience), positivism (China: I think that science is no more than description of subjective experience; the nature of reality is unknowable; Taiwan: I advocate using science to establish empirical knowledge, which must be obtained from observation or experience), Quanzhen Jiao (China: I advocate devoutness, and center-mindedness, helping the poor, and being altruistic; Taiwan: I advocate the unification of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism), and Sikhism (China: I believe in karma, practice, and oppose priesthood, idolatry, and ascetics; Taiwan: God is One, the truth, the creator, ever-living, and without image).

We culled isms variables present in both mainland China and in Taiwan to represent the similarities and differences between the isms structures in these two cultures. Table 5 shows these isms variables shared by both cultures. Boldfaced items indicate those matching. There appeared to be a common core of the four factors across Taiwan and mainland China. In either case, one saw a factor (labeled *USI*) emphasizing hedonism, mammonism, egotism, and individualism. One saw another factor (labeled *SynRel*) emphasizing religious concepts like Brahmanism, theism, Catholicism, polytheism, and pantheism. One saw a third factor (labeled *CR*) emphasizing humanistic theory, humanitarianism, romanticism, and democracy. And, albeit more weakly converging, one saw a fourth factor emphasizing optimism, socialism, and egalitarianism. Isms that loaded on the *SynRel* and *CR* factors generally matched between the two cultures. The *HPP* factor in Taiwan corresponded moderately to the *CPC* ideology factor in China, with matching isms of egalitarianism, optimism, and socialism.

There were, however, a few discrepancies. Communism and materialism loaded on the *CPC* ideology factor in China but on *USI* in Taiwan. In addition, the Confucianism and Confucian religion isms loaded on the *CPC* ideology factor in China but on syncretic religiousness in Taiwan. A reason for such discrepancy is the schematic presence of *CPC* ideology in China. Communism and materialism are

components of Marxist philosophy, and *CPC* ideology has incorporated traditional Confucianism in the process of indigenizing Marxist political philosophy. There is often a perception that Maoism suppressed and eliminated Confucianism, but these empirical data suggest that in the population, the process was more one of incorporation of Confucian ideas within *CPC* ideology. Therefore, a common ideological connotation gathered these isms under the same umbrella of *CPC* ideology in China, whereas in Taiwan, they were grouped with a different factor based on their contents. The relationship between communism and *USI* in the Taiwanese sample is also similar to that found in Romania by Krauss (2006).

These matched and mismatched items were used to empirically assess the degree to which the isms factors derived from China matched with those derived from Taiwan. We ran the following analyses. First, there were 20 common items that appeared in both the *SDI-28* used in China and the *SDI-46* used in Taiwan. We combined the data from Study 1 and Study 2 into one data set, in which every individual had values on these 20 common *SDI* items. Second, in four regression analyses, these 20 common *SDI* items served as predictors and the four China isms factors (i.e., cf41 to cf44) as criteria, one at a time. Third, we saved the four corresponding predicted scores as variables. In Table 6, each of these four variables appear in

TABLE 6 Correlations of the predicted scores based on China and Taiwan factors, respectively

	Predicted tf43 (SynRel)	Predicted tf42 (CR)	Predicted tf41(USI)	Predicted tf44(HPP)
Predicted cf41 (SynRel)	.85	-.24	-.22	.47*
Predicted cf42 (CPC Ideology)	-.11	.79*	.02	.12
Predicted cf43 (CR)	.17	.72*	-.58*	-.11
Predicted cf44 (USI)	.31*	.25	.67*	.48*

Note. USI = unmitigated self-interest; SynRel = syncretic religiousness; CR = communal rationalism; CPC = Communist Party of China; HPP = happiness/peace promotion. "Predicted cf41" is the variable saved as the predicted score in a regression equation where overlapping *SDI* items served as predictors, and the China isms factor cf41 is the criterion. Similarly, "predicted tf42" is the predicted score based on the Taiwan factor tf42 used as the criterion.

the rows and was named after the source it came from. For instance, the first variable was “predicted cf41.” Although only mainland Chinese subjects had scores on the Chinese isms factors, all individuals (including those from Taiwan) received a predicted score on the four predicted variables. In other words, this process generated data for Taiwan Chinese subjects based on the information from the Chinese isms structure. Fourth, we did the same four regression analyses and saved predicted scores using the four Taiwan isms factors as criteria. These variables appear in the columns of Table 6.

Table 6 suggests some strong correspondence of isms factors derived from the two cultures. The correspondence was obvious in SynRel ($r = .85$), in CR ($r = .72$), and in USI ($r = .67$). The CPC ideology did not find a unique counterpart in Taiwan; instead, it correlated strongly with the CR factor from Taiwan ($r = .79$). This further corroborated that the CPC ideology factor was a special form of communal rationalism schematized in the particular Chinese political context. The Taiwan HPP factor had moderate correlations with both SynRel ($r = .47$) and USI from mainland China ($r = .48$). This was expected given these factors shared a common theme in promoting happiness.

Finally, we examined the endorsement of specific isms concepts and found largely consistent patterns across the two cultures. Here is the comparison of endorsement on isms between the two cultures.

In China, isms that had the highest mean ratings—humanitarianism, Nalaizhuyi, internationalism, meliorism, and cultural relativism, to name a few—were loaded on the CR factor. In addition, Confucian religion and Confucianism received high endorsement and cross-loaded on both CR and CPC ideology factors. Isms of low endorsement were split between syncretic religiousness (e.g., postmillennialism, Catholicism, totemism, Brahmanism, Raëlism) and USI (e.g., egotism, antinomianism, appeasement policy, mammonism, individualism). This pattern was expected given that the majority of the mainland Chinese sample identified as nonreligious. Note that the CPC ideology isms received average levels of endorsement.

In Taiwan, the pattern was similar. High-endorsement isms were exclusively CR (e.g., women's suffrage, education futurism, humanitarianism, minquan-ism, egalitarianism, feminism). Low-endorsement isms were split between USI (e.g., Jingoism, colonialism, racism, international terrorism, totalitarianism, militarism), which is also the biggest first factor, and syncretic religiousness (e.g., Mormonism, Tao religion).

Among the shared isms (in Table 5), most of their endorsement matched between the two cultures. The unmatched ones with high contrast included Confucian religion and materialism, both receiving lower scores in Taiwan

but higher scores in China. This difference can be explained by the loadings of these isms. These two isms loaded on the CPC ideology factor in China, making them officially approved ideology. In Taiwan, however, Confucian religion was categorized as syncretic religiousness, and materialism as an item of USI, both weakly endorsed according to consensually held views.

3.3 | Discussion

Similar to findings in mainland China, four factors proved to make an optimal structure for the 291 isms terms extracted from a dictionary edited in Taiwan. The factor contents and their correlations with SDI isms markers indicated a moderate to strong convergence of CR and USI dimensions in Taiwan to their American counterparts. The Taiwan CR factor had contents very similar to those defining CR in the American isms with a focus on reason and rationality. The Taiwan USI was also clear with a slightly heavier emphasis on group-oriented interest than on personal enjoyment.

The dimensions of TR and SS were again combined in the Taiwan Chinese sample as they were in Study 1. A greater emphasis on the spirituality isms was observed in the Taiwan-edited dictionary than in mainland China. This might reflect the fact that Taiwan has retained the richness of traditional, indigenous spiritual beliefs, many of which had been destroyed or forced underground during the Cultural Revolution in China. Despite this minor difference, Study 2 replicated Study 1's syncretic religiousness factor in Taiwan, offering further evidence for the combination of TR and SS in the Chinese cultural context.

There was apparently not a CPC ideology factor in Taiwan. Instead, we found a smaller factor (in terms of number of salient items and size of loadings) loosely aggregated around themes of the importance of promoting peace and happiness. These themes were distinct enough from the themes represented in the three larger factors—communal rationalism, religion/spirituality, pursuit of self-interest (in a way emphasizing power and potentially coercion)—to make for a meaningful residual, undoubtedly drawing on some related set of schemas in the Taiwan population. The absence of a CPC ideology factor in Taiwan might be attributed simply to Taiwan Chinese not being very schematic for CPC ideology; that is, this ideology has not historically been among the most influential ways of organizing conceptualizations there among everyday people.

4 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

In two studies with Chinese cultural samples from both mainland China and Taiwan, we discovered a four-factor

structure that could best characterize the Chinese isms. The most interesting results occurred with the combination of TR and SS into a single dimension of syncretic religiousness in both mainland China and Taiwan, and the culture-specific CR dimension of CPC ideology in mainland China.

The mainland China situation seems to be two competing concepts of communal rationalism, which might be seen as the one associated most with Deng Xiao Ping (party-oriented) and the one associated with ideologies that had stronger Western roots (more democratic, humanist). The former is not really present in Taiwan, and one sees in its place a small but potentially important residual factor with peace-and-happiness-oriented content.

There has not been a clear IA replication in these studies, although one limitation is that we did not have markers for it in Study 1 data. However, the CPC ideology factor should in theory represent some kind of inequality aversion, and egalitarianism content was associated with the fourth factor in Taiwan data. Most likely, the problem is that IA has been formulated in a way that reflects too much of the cultural specificity of the American context (i.e., whether one supports or opposes a particular Western brand of economic conservatism).

The dimensions of CR and USI have received good replication in both Chinese cultures, and they corresponded relatively well with the American isms markers. This is not surprising, as CR reflects ideals and values that can promote order in complex, secularized societies. Whatever their differences, China and Taiwan are societies of this sort, and they have received a strong influence from ideologies that promote science, the rule of law, and some conception of “the rule of the people.” USI, moreover, derives from basic human needs. One has to note that the USI in mainland China was more focused on individual enjoyment, whereas there was a heavier emphasis on group-level identification for the Taiwan Chinese USI. Both self-interest and group interest were part of the USI as originally found in American studies (Saucier, 2000, 2013).

The syncretic religiousness dimension received solid support from the Chinese culture. As pointed out earlier, the combination of established religious institutions and spiritual beliefs has been commonplace in Chinese cultures. Another reason for the combination of TR and SS was more empirical. Items that measured American SS isms put a great emphasis on Western “New Age” beliefs that are largely derived from Eastern religions and philosophy, but are rather distinct from beliefs proceeding from the Abrahamic (Judeo-Christian) religion predominant in the United States. These SS beliefs, however, found a home in our Chinese individuals who have incorporated these spiritual beliefs within a religious interpretative system. As a result, one observed less

of a split in Chinese populations between institutional religion (TR) and belief in spirits or pantheism.

On the other hand, institutional religion and *spiritism* have a separation going back, in some places, perhaps 10,000 years. Abrahamic religions have a theme of—at least part of the time—separating themselves from spiritism by condemning idolatry, sorcery, and witches. Thus, Exodus 22:18 says, “Do not allow a sorceress to live.” In some traditions and locales, one can find people or at least high priests who are religious but not spiritistic; this is a consistent theme in Islam, and in some forms of Protestantism.

It is possible for future research to uncover such a spiritism dimension independent of syncretic religiousness. In the current study, we did not isolate a spiritism factor from the syncretic religiousness compound. There could be two reasons for this. On one hand, terms reflecting spiritism were not fully represented as isms terms in the Chinese language; they were left out from the dictionary and thus from the study. On the other hand, the practices of some forms of Buddhism and Daoism (e.g., shamanistic healing) did not exclude those of spiritistic contents.

In addition to the reliable four-factor structure, we have also noted a fundamental bifurcation of egocentric versus collectivist concerns captured in a two-factor solution. In both studies, the extraction of a second factor led to a separation of USI from some kind of communal CR variable that is related to shared normative beliefs. This might be quite fundamental as a split of hedonistic values from those more tied to culture and cultural socialization. The association of USI with TR in mainland China might be rather sample-specific and arising from similarly positive-skewed distributions, with low levels of TR to match low levels of USI; variables with similar skew have an enhanced tendency to correlate with one another.

A possible limitation of the current study is that the unfamiliarity of some of the isms terms (e.g., *Manichaeism*) may cause confusion in responses. However, since we used the definitions to construct belief statement items, not the isms term itself, the respondents never saw an unfamiliar isms term—even though many of those ism terms would be unfamiliar to them. The literary accessibility of dictionary entries helped partially offset the bias introduced by unfamiliarity of isms terms. It also deserves noting that, by the “lexical rationale,” if an isms term appears in the lexicon (literally, in the dictionary) it counts, with the aim being removing investigator bias from variable selection by letting a neutral, fact-based source determine that selection.

5 | CONCLUSION

What are the implications of the current studies for the generalizable structure of belief-system components (e.g.,

isms)? One is that there are traces of a generalizable structure evident when both American and Chinese populations independently generate structures with at least three common, distinct themes (self-interest, religion, and a secular communal rationalism). But the quantitative magnitude of replication is not overwhelming, suggesting that this domain of psychological variables slides easily into somewhat culturally specific formulations. Rudiments of generalizable isms dimensions appear to exist, tending to differentiate dimensions of independent variation with respect to religion/spirituality, political views (e.g., communal rationalism), and the morality/amorality of purely economic behavior (unmitigated self-interest). But these rudiments are quite prone to take on culture-specific colorations. Taking these implications together, it is reasonable to conclude that more attention should be devoted to developing a culturally decentered (i.e., more “culture-fair”) framework for organizing the beliefs that are basic components of belief systems.

The key value-adding element in a lexical study of isms is that the terms and structure come as a function of the population, not from theorists, and those shared concepts represented in the lexicon, even if a government that affects or censors a dictionary has some effect on which concepts are regarded as worthy of mention. Taking such a lexical approach, the current study delineates a contour of belief systems in Chinese culture, with two Chinese populations from mainland China and Taiwan. This contour includes some elements that appear to be culture-specific, but also others that may be more universal.

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ORCID

Zhuo Job Chen  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0839-1627>

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Table B

Table C

Table D

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Supporting Information may be found online in the supporting information tab for this article.

Table A

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