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Full Length Research Paper

Peacefulness of Chinese teenagers in a high school

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Teenager's peace tendency is one of the key factors for the peaceful world as they are the main part of peacemakers in the future. But there is little research on the extent to which Chinese teenagers endorse peacefulness. This paper reports the peacefulness of Chinese teenagers in a high school, where students come from two different areas. A new Chinese TNT scale is completed based on Mayton's TNT. The result show s that Chine se teenagers are more peaceful than American teenagers. And the differences of peacefulness difference s are also discussed.

Key words: Peacefulness, nonviolence, Chinese teenagers.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In China, many people agree with Confucius philoso phy that man is born to be kind and peaceful. Many teachers ask teenagers to read *Lunyu* by Confucius (Zhang, 2009) and use this reading to improve the moral level of the students. Most students appear to benefit from such reading and the ideas about how to achieve peace tendency (Yu, 2011). However, there is little research on the extent to which Chinese teenagers endorse peacefulness. In the United States, Mayton (2002) developed a scale to test American teenagers ' "nonviolent tendency" and us e it to report on the extent to which American teenagers appear to endorse peacefulness. The aim of this project is to see if the scale can be successfully translated into Chinese so it can be used to ascertain the peaceful tendency of Chinese teenagers. A successful translation would allow this study to examine peacefulness in Chinese teenagers and compare this with peaceful tendencies in American teenagers.

The items used on the TNT are based on the concept of pacifism of Elliot (1980), the writings on nonviolence of Kool (1990) and to some extent, on the philos ophy of Mohandas (1951, 1957, 1921) which concentrated on the concepts of ahimsa (nonviolence), satyagraha (s earch for wisdom and truth), and tapasya (willingness to accept suffering). The TNT contains 55 Likert items divided into 6 subscales. The first, labeled "physical nonviolence", uses 16 items to measure the conscious rejection of behavior or the threat of behaviors intended to inflict bodily injury on another person in an attempt to coerce, curtail, or eliminate their behavior. The second, labeled "psychological nonviolence ", used 16 items to measure the conscious rejection of behaviors which attempt to coerce by humiliation, intimidation, or other ways that demean the human dignity of another person or group. The other scales (with Gandhi in mind) attempt to measure "active value orientation" (the willingness to perform behaviors designed to achieve a situation commensurate with one's won norms, values and goals), "empathy/helping" (willingness to assist others with minor levels of need), "*satyagraha*" (active search for wisdom and the willingness to change one's own conception of truth), "*tapasya*" (the willingness to endure hardship or suffering rather than to inflict harm on others).

Mayton (2009) reports high internal consistency for five of the six subscales. He assessed the concurrent validity of the TNT by comparing its results with three self-rating tests in three separate samples. The measure correlates high with the 65-item NVT by Kool and Sen (1984), the Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) developed by Buss and Perry (1992), and student self-rating of their aggressive tendencies (Mayton, 2009). Further, the physical and psychological nonviolence scales correlate -0. 33 and -0.38 with teacher ratings of aggression as measured on the Teacher Rating Form (BAMED) (Baker et al., 1991). Validity was also tested by comparing small groups of American adolescents. The result shows that a Buddhist youth group had higher scores on the physical and psychological nonviolence than public school samples which, in turn had higher score than the troubled youth

Table 1. Internal consistency of the TNT.

TNT subscale	Alpha coefficient	
	American (Mayton, 2009)	Chinese
Physical nonviolence	0.90	0.79
Psychological nonviolence	0.86	0.83
Active value orientation	0.32	0.37
Helping/empathy	0.80	0.63
Satyagraha	0.77	0.65
Tapasya	0.78	0.60

and adolescents in a juvenile detention facility (Mayton, 2009).

Though Mayton's TNT is a good test to pacifist, he fails to test the gender scores on each item. In addition, unfortunately, none of Mayton's items attempts to assess the adolescence's tendency to take actions to suffer in order to struggle against the structural violence that was adhered by Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Luckily, in her *Peace Book* , Diamond (2001) developed a Nonviolence Self-Test (NST) and there are three items on the willingness to take actions for struggling against structural violenc e.

This study was done firstly to achieve reliable scales in Chinese context. Then the possible data from Chinese sample would evidence more or less peacefulness than Mayton's American sample, vice visa. The correlation among the "willingness to take actions" of NST and the subscales of TNT was also done in Chinese context.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The sample for this study included 313 adolescents from Huairou District, Beijing (51. 44%) and Xinjiang Province (48.56%) who were attending a public senior high school in Huairou District, Beijing. In the example, there was an approximate equal number of males (43.74%) and females (56. 23%). The respondents were made up of 10th graders (49. 20%), 11th graders (30.35%) and 12th graders (20.44%). The respondents who were predominantly non-religious range from ages of 16-19 with a mean age of 16.9 and a standard deviation of 0.92.

Procedure

This survey was conducted in early May of 2010. First, the principal in the school was contacted and granted for permission, then 9 teachers were assigned by the principal to be familiar with instructions and process of operating the questionnaires the day before the survey was done. And questions from the teachers were answered by the sincere author. Then the teachers administered the TNT to their classes who answered anonymously during class time. And all the students were highly motivated by the questionnaire, which was new for them. The TNT questionnaire took 25-35 min to finish. After completing the questionnaire, each participant was given a notebook as a reward.

The TNT items were rated from *definitely true for me* to *definitely not true for me* to the participant. The most nonviolent res ponse on a TNT item was decoded as 4. The next most nonviolent res pons e was coded as 3, the following most nonviolent response was coded as 2, and the least nonviolent response was coded as 1 (Mayton, 2002) for analysis purposes. Subscale scores first were computed by summing the scores for each item in the subscale and then divided by the number of items in the subscale. Therefore, scores above 2.5 (=62.5%) are indicative of nonviolent tendencies and those below 2.5 are indicative of more violent tendencies.

RESULTS

Reliability of TNT

The Chines e version of each subscale was examined. In order to achieve a high internal consistency, it was necessary to delete some items. Chinese TNT Alpha coefficients were computed for each subscale for the entire sample and are presented in Table 1. The TNT appears to have high internal consistency for two of the six subscales with alpha coefficients of 0.83 on the psychological nonviolenc e subscale and 0.79 on the physical nonviolence subscale. Three of the subscales are only moderately consistent ($\alpha = 0.65$ on "satyagraha" subscale, $\alpha = 0.63$ on "helping/empathy" subscale, $\alpha = 0.60$ on "tapasya" subscale). The "active value orientation" subscale failed to demonstrate an adequate level ($\alpha = 0.37$). The same patterns were found when male and female data were analyzed separately.

Mean score s by gender

In Chinese context, means scores for males and females were also completed for each subscale. And the differenc es were evaluated by computing means, standard deviation, and t-test; the result is presented in

Table 2. Mean scores by gender.

Subscale	Male		Female		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	t
Physical nonviolence	3.03	0.50	3.09	0.44	-1.18
Psychological nonviolence	3.02	0.50	3.18	0.50	-2.81*
Active value orientation	3.03	0.50	3.10	0.44	-1.18
Helping/empathy	3.35	0.58	3.34	0.58	0.19
Satyagraha	3.15	0.57	3.26	0.54	-1.62
Tapasya	2.95	0.80	2.98	0.71	-0.37

*P<0.05 significant, n = 313.

Table 3. Correlation among Items 8, 9 and 10 in subscale “w illingness to take action”.

	NST 9	NST 10
NST 8	0.41**	0.37**
NST 9		0.55**

Note： n = 313, ** Pearson correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Correlation among “w illingness to take actions” and s ix subscales.

Item	Phy-nonviolence	Psy-nonviolence	Active value	Helping/empathy	Satyagraha	Tapasya
Willing to take action	-0.16 **	-0.06	-0.08	-0.12 **	-0.12**	-0.10**

Note: n=313, ** Pearson correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2. There was significant difference between males and females on the psychological nonviolence subscale. It seems that female participants are more peaceful than male participants.

Comparison on intercorrelations among subscale

Two of the six subscales of the TNT are significantly interrelated. The correlation coefficient between physical nonviolence subscale and psychological nonviolence subscale for senior high age adolescents (16-19) are presented in Table 3. The Pearson correlation among the two subscales for American samples is 0.86 (N=376), significant at 0.001 level, while the Pearson correlation among Chinese samples is 0.56 (N=313), signific ant at 0.001 level.

Comparison on mean score s in TNT subscales

A comparison of the means for each item in each subscale for the entire American and Chinese samples are presented in the appendix (Appendix 1).

Correlation among three items on NST

Though Mayton’s TNT is a good test to pacifist, he failed to test the indolence’s tendency of taking actions to suffer to struggle against injustice. In *the peace book* (Louise, 2001), Louise Diamond developed a Nonviolence Self-Test (NST), but she did not show any data to prove how the items correlate. The correlation among the three items (Items 8 to 10), and the ones on testing the “willingness to take actions to suffer ” are analyzed (Table 3). The result shows that the three items are highly correlated at a significant level. It is reasonable to create the three items into a new subscale as “willingness to take actions to suffer against structural violence” and the reliability of it is 0.70. The correlation among “willingness to take actions” to suffer against structural violence and six subscales of TNT is also at significant level (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

By comparing the reliability between American and Chinese subscales, it appears that the Chinese TNT subscales have lower reliability than the American subscales among senior high school teenagers. But two of the six subscales of the TNT (physical nonviolence subscale and psychological nonviolence subscale) appear to be promising instruments both in American and Chinese context as well. In addition, the active vale orientation subscale appears to be an independent

construct (Mayton, 2002) in the two different contexts as well.

It is interesting to examine why a number of items need to be deleted in order to formulate reliable subscales. In a few cases, examination reveal ed poor translation (Items 12 and 18); however, in a number of cases, the items were not suitable in the Chinese cultural context. In subscale 1, “physical nonviolence” (for example, Item 28: “If someone pushed me in the hall, I would just keep walking; ” Item 36: “If someone cuts in front of me in the cafeteria, I shove them out of line”) are about the teenagers’ nonviolence tendency on lining. There are some cultural differences in the two states on this perspective. In America, it is a custom and good manner to wait in line and it is a shame to shove or cut in line (Yu, 2007). However, China has a larger population and it is often more crowded in public places such as halls and cafeterias. Being pushed by others is common and people often take it for granted and sometime they have to be tolerant at others cutting in line because of limited public service (Ouyang, 2007). The intention of Item 24: “Violence on television bothers me” and some other uncertain reasons need to be explored in future research.

The result on the comparison of mean scores by gender among Chines e samples shows that there is no significant difference on five of six subscales. However, the significant difference on the psychological nonviolence subscale shows that females have higher nonviolence tendency than males. This result correlates the res earc h that females are ex pected to behave at a higher nonviolent level in Chinese cultural context (Fang, 2007).

By comparing the intercorrelations among the TNT subscales, it appears that in American context most of the subscales of the TNT are significantly interrelated among junior high age adolescents (12-15 years old) (Mayton, 2002). However, in Chines e context, only the physical nonviolence subscale and psychological subscale are significantly interrelated and the interrelation is less than the American interrelation, which has weak er interrelation than the American result.

By computing the mean scores of each subscale among Chinese teenagers, it is clear that female teenagers are more peaceful than the male teenagers. By comparing the mean, standard deviation and p value on each item in every subscale among the Americ an teenagers and Chinese teenagers, it seems that Chinese teenagers are more peaceful than American teenagers on most items in every subscale and only a few items show that there is no significant difference among the teenagers in the two states. But it is too early to come to the conclusion that Chinese teenagers are more peaceful than American teenagers. After all, there exist some limitations for this study. First the samples are from one school and the number of samples is not big enough. Second, test-retest reliability, concurrent coefficients and group validity among different groups of adolescents have not been done yet in Chinese context. Third, the concurrent validity of the TNT has not been assessed with other scales at all. Fourth, it is not suitable to put every item of the American TNT into use directly in Chinese context. The five negative correlations among the “willing to take actions” and 6 subscales of TNT in Chinese context appear to show Chinese teenagers’ peacefulness at different aspects. The higher level that the Chinese teenagers are on the intra or interpersonal perspective is the reason why the higher tendency that they have enables them to be willing to take actions to struggle against injustice system and other structural violence.

There are still several nec essary tasks for the future research on TNT in Chinese context. Firstly, it is needed to determine the reliability of the TNT with bigger number of samples among younger teenagers in junior high schools, young men in colleges in different grades both in cities and rural areas. Secondly, the test-retest reliability, coefficiency and group validity among different groups of adolescents are needed to be done among volunteered samples of teenagers. Thirdly, the concurrent validity of the TNT will be assessed with different scales, for example, the comparison of TNT and the Nonviolent Relationship Questionnaire (Eckstein and La Grassa, 2005), personality scales (Hasan and Khan, 1983), and Multidimensional Scales of Nonviolenc e (Johns on et al., 1998) across separate samples. Fourthly, the degree of peace culture (de Rivera et al., 2007) and the emotion climate (de Rivera, 2004a, b, c) need to be put into consideration when the TNT data are being analyzed and compared in a cross cultural background. The last but not the least important, it is much needed to design more Chinese items in each subscale and more dimensions of Chinese definition on nonviolence personality should be considered in the future. Anyway, this study shows a good start for TNT in Chinese context.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Physical nonviolence subscale (Alpha=0.79).

Item	Amer		Chi		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
TNT17: Everyone has the right to injure another to protect their property *	2.66	1.02	3.00	1.93	<0.01
TNT 26: I won't fight if people call me names.	2.62	1.04	2.86	0.88	<0.01
TNT 31: I have been known to pick fights. *	3.24	0.88	3.34	0.88	<0.02
TNT 40: If someone pushes me, I push them back.*	2.26	0.94	2.95	0.87	<0.01
TNT 41: I sometimes bring weapons to school. *	3.82	0.53	3.58	0.82	<0.01
TNT 43: It is ok to carry weapons on the street. *	3.32	0.90	3.54	0.78	<0.01
TNT 44: If someone spit on me, I would hit them. *	2.13	1.03	2.53	1.04	<0.01
TNT 46: I don't like to watch people fight.	2.21	1.05	2.93	1.0	<0.01
TNT 47: It is often necessary to use violence to prevent violence. *	2.78	0.96	2.59	0.93	<0.01
TNT 53: A good way to get me to fight is to tease me.	2.96	0.93	2.94	0.95	NS

Note:
(1)* not true indicates nonviolent response.
(2) the following items from Mayton's scale had to be deleted in Chinese version.
TNT 5: If someone insulted me in front of my friends, I w ould smack them.
TNT 12: I don't get mad, I get even*.
TNT 18: If someone got in my face, I'd push them away*.
TNT 24: Violence on television bothers me.
TNT 28: If someone pushed me in the hall, I w ould just keep walking.
TNT 36: If someone cuts in front of me in the cafeteria, I shove them out of line.*

Table 2. Psychological nonviolence subscale (Alpha=0.83).

Item	Amer		Chi		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
TNT 3: When someone is rude to me, I am rude back. *	2.24	0.82	2.66	0.95	<0.01
TNT 6: Yelling at someone makes them understand me. *	3.04	0.76	2.62	0.91	<0.01

Table 3. Active value orientation subscale (Alpha=0.37).

Item	Amer		Chi		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
TNT17: Everyone has the right to injure another to protect their property *	2.66	1.02	3.00	1.93	<0.01
TNT 4	3.13	0.96	3.47	0.68	<0.01
TNT 30	3.19	0.58	3.22	0.78	NS

Table 4. Helping/empathy (Alpha=0.63).

Item	Amer		Chi		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
TNT 17: Everyone has the right to injure another to protect their property *	2.66	1.02	3.00	1.93	<0.01
TNT 11	3.01	1.13	3.20	0.72	<0.01
TNT 13	3.07	0.97	3.25	0.79	<0.01
TNT 16	2.57	0.87	3.19	0.88	<0.01
TNT 32	2.25	0.94	3.20	0.83	<0.01

Table 5. Satyagraha subscale (Alpha=0.65).

Item	Amer		Chi		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
TNT 17: Everyone has the right to injure another to protect their property *	2.66	1.02	3.00	1.93	<0.01
TNT 10	3.23	0.68	3.52	0.68	<0.01
TNT 15	3.06	0.72	3.12	0.74	NS
TNT 23	2.42	0.79	2.63	0.85	<0.01
TNT 27	3.22	0.67	3.11	0.86	<0.01
TNT 33	3.10	0.77	3.04	0.76	NS
TNT 35	2.91	0.86	3.05	0.99	NS
TNT 52	2.50	0.85	2.97	0.86	<0.01

Table 6. Tapasya subscale (Alpha=0.6).

Item	Amer		Chi		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
TNT 17: Everyone has the right to injure another to protect their property *	2.66	1.02	3.00	1.93	<0.01
TNT 51	2.78	0.89	3.05	0.83	<0.01
TNT 54	2.45	0.93	2.88	0.94	<0.01

Teenager nonviolent test

Three items were taken from Nonviolence Self-test (NST) (Louise Diamond, 2001) namely:

NST 8: I would take part in nonviolent action campaigns for a cause I believe in.
NST 9: I would be willing to be arrested in nonviolent action campaign for a cause I believe in.
NST 10: I would be willing to undergo a physical harm (tear gas, water hose, beating, pepper spray) in a nonviolent action campaign for a cause I believe in.