

Psychological Characteristics Predicting Socio-Political Tendency: A Trans-Generational Study in China

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Abstract

This article explores the link between psycho-social factors (empathy, flexibility, perspective taking, egalitarian sex role, normative identity style, interpersonal trust, openness, suggestibility, prosocial behaviour, and right-wing authoritarianism) and democratic values in Chinese young and older groups. Also, it examines the differences on these variables across generation and gender. The set of measures underwent 'translation and back-translation' procedure in order to provide the Chinese versions. The sample included 400 Chinese university students (young generation: 18-25 years) and 333 Chinese older participants (45-60 years). The results show that most of the psycho-social characteristics are correlated with adherence to democratic values in both Chinese young and older groups. Also, egalitarian sex role was found to predict adherence to democratic values in both groups. Moreover, there were generation and gender differences on most of the variables. It will be discussed that how Chinese cultural background and the reform of Chinese policies in the recent decades potentially laid a foundation for the observed differences between Chinese young and older generations.

Keywords: Psychological characteristics; Democratic values; Personality; Culture

Introduction

Eastern/Asian countries have experienced socio-political movements towards establishment of democratic systems over past century and are still struggling for establishing democracy. China is an evident example. Since the foundation of new China in 1949, this country has experienced massive changes including the reform and the opening-up policy in 1978, along with economic growth, public education plan and technology advancement [1]. Such changes under Chinese cultural context might imply that the Chinese citizen's support for democracy may have altered over the past forty years.

Studies suggested that the degrees of support for democratic values can be linked to psycho-social characteristics, such as empathy, openness to experience, normative identity style, interpersonal trust and authoritarianism [2-4]. Besides, these psycho-social factors may change over time under various economic circumstances, educational development, and modern living surroundings [5,6]. With this in mind, people (especially young generation) raised in a different socio-economic context compared to previous generation might adopt different opinions and views concerning adherence to democratic values.

Living surroundings that refer to family growth environment, school education and cultural involvement would play an important part in the development of individuals' personality [7]. Cultural background can contribute to the shaping of individuals' psychological traits; which in turn, might influence individuals' political attitude [8,9]. Though some early studies began to illustrate the importance of the personality traits influencing individuals' political attitude to some extent, most of these studies focused on the Western countries, such as

United States of America, United Kingdom, and other European countries [10-12]. For instance, Miklikowska's showed how psychological factors (e.g., empathy, openness, normative identity style, interpersonal trust and authoritarianism) would impact on the support for democratic values in Finland [2]. The author examined the link between "big five" personality traits and political ideology across 21 countries including only one Asian country (Thailand). Recently, the impact of psycho-social characteristics on adherence to democracy in Western (United Kingdom) and Eastern students (Iranians) has been explored [3,4].

It is of a great interest to study such a particular link in a society like China with a long authoritarian history and conservative culture, in order to gauge any potential change. It can be argued that the massive and rapid developments in terms of culture, economy, education of China over past few decades, have created a new context in which the Chinese' particularly youngsters' political attitude has changed. The present study was carried out to gain insight into generational differences on political behaviour and tendency in China.

Personality and political behaviour

Previous research proved how the sense of empathy would be related to democratic values [2,12,13]. Empathy could probably enhance individuals' positive attitude towards out-group that can result in more tolerance towards others' different opinions [14]. Empathy can be divided into emotional and cognitive components [15,16]. Cognitive empathy refers to the ability for perspective taking, whilst understanding others' feelings and emotions is referred to emotional empathy. Empathy, as a personality characteristic, would enhance the ability of overcoming biases, prejudice, and discrimination against the dissimilar group [17]. Moreover, empathy facilitates positive social action including morality, which in turn positively influences individuals' social interaction, such as prosocial behavior [18].

Flexibility and openness might be seen closely bound up, that could give rise to tolerance of dissimilar viewpoints through getting rid of the rigidity and searching a wider set of solutions in problem solving [19,20]. Thus, people having higher levels of openness and flexibility are more likely to show their support for democracy [3,20-22].

Normative identity style is regarded as one of the essential factors that can impact on individuals' political attitudes and behavior [2]. Previous studies illustrated that normative identity style would predict authoritarian orientation, with higher level of normative identity style being linked to higher level of authoritarianism [11,23]. Suggestibility, in its own right, can be regarded as a correlate of normative identity style. Suggestibility indicates lack of critical thinking and highlights the extent to which people can be influenced by others [24]. Recent research has shown that normative identity style is positively correlated with suggestibility [3]. In other words, normative identity style and suggestibility might attenuate people's tendency to support democratic values, hypothetically speaking, owing to the deficit in critical thinking [25].

Another psycho-social factor that might have to do with political behaviour is interpersonal trust, which can potentially reinforce the tendency in political participation [26]. Previous studies have proved that those who report more interpersonal trust would be more likely to support democratic values [3,27].

Furthermore, egalitarian sex role is another psycho-social factor that seems to have an important link with the support for democratic values. Research suggests that people with high level of belief in egalitarian sex role might have strong support for democracy [28]. In fact, adherence to equality between men and women in family, workplace and social affairs is in line with adherence to democratic values [28-30]. Previous research on people from middle-east support the idea that egalitarian sex role would contribute to the adherence to democratic values [3,4].

This study aimed to examine the extent to which the psycho-social characteristics, as mentioned above, might be linked with and predict political attitudes for both Chinese young and older generations. Moreover, the generational and gender differences on these characteristics as well as the political attitudes were tested.

Method

Participants

A sample of 733 Chinese from Guizhou province voluntarily took part in this study. Young group included 400 participants [18 to 25 years old, mean age=21.56; 132 (33%) male and 268 (67%) female]. Chinese older group consisted of 333 participants [45 to 60 years old, mean age=51.04; 144 (43.2%) male and 189 (56.8%) female]. In terms of education background, 176 (52.9%) of older group had undergraduate, 77 (23.1%) high school, and 56 (16.8%) middle school degrees. All of the young participants were university students.

Procedure

Two universities in Guizhou province (Guizhou University and Guizhou Normal University) were contacted to recruit young participants. Two academic staff facilitated the data collection by distributing the questionnaires among volunteers in the two universities. The data were collected in lecture rooms with silent and comfortable surroundings. The Chinese older volunteers were

recruited from three different working places including a middle school, a hospital, and a branch of Construction Bank of China in Guizhou province. The participants filled in the questionnaires at their workplaces. An informed and a consent form were signed by all of the participants prior to taking part in the study.

Measurements

Eleven questionnaires and scales as well as a demographic inventory were utilised.

Empathy: This scale is a short form of 10 items extracted from Toronto Empathy Questionnaire [31] which examine one's ability of understanding others' emotional states. Each item ranges from 1 (never) to 5 (always). An example of the items is: 'it upsets me to see someone being treated disrespectfully'.

Flexibility: This short 8-item scale derived from HEXACO. FLX [32] aims to measure the ability of accepting the opposite standpoints of others. The scale consisted of items such as "when people tell me that I am wrong, my first reaction is to argue with them", with response option from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Perspective taking: This short 6-item scale is abstracted from Interpersonal Reactivity Index [33] which measures the individual's ability to understand other's viewpoints. One example item is "before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place". The response options range from 1 (does not describe me well) to 5 (describes me very well).

Egalitarian sex role: This 12-item scale which included 4 domains (marital parental, vocational and social domains) was selected from the original measure of Egalitarian Sex Role Attitudes [34]. This scale had been initially used in Japan among women [34] to measure the extent to which the respondent sees women as equal to men in terms of sex roles. Items are rated based on a 4-points scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). One example item "Women should work even if they are not in need economically".

Normative identity style: Several items were extracted from Normative Identity Style-4 (ISI-4) [35] to form this short scale. It measures the extent to which an individual automatically adopt and internalize the goals and standards of a significant person or group. Responses range from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me). A sample item is "I never question what I want to do with my life, because I tend to follow what important people expect me to do".

Interpersonal trust: This is an 8-item short scale [36] to measure level of trust that people have when dealing with others. The response options range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). One item sample is 'most repairmen will not overcharge, even if they think you are ignorant of their specialty'.

Openness to experiences: This 12-item scale was generated based on Neo- openness subscales [37], which examines individual's willingness to approach new challenges and accepting unconventional ideas. One item example is "I often try new and foreign foods". Participants were required to rate their response based on a 5-point rating scale, from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree".

Suggestibility: This short form consists of 8 items derived from Suggestibility Scale [24]. It was used to measure how easy individual could be influenced by outside surrounding and accept things uncritically. An item sample is "when making a decision, I often follow

other people's advice". A 5-point scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree" was used to rate each item.

Prosocial behaviour: It consisted of 10 items derived from Self-Report Altruism Scale [38]. This short form scale measures how frequent the respondent becomes engaged in the altruistic behaviour. Responses are rated using a 5-point scale from 'never' to 'very often'. An item example is 'I have given money to charity'.

Authoritarianism: This 9-item scale was extracted from Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) [39], and was designed to assess ethnic tolerance, racism and sexism. An item sample is "it would be best if newspapers were censored, so that people would not be able to get hold of destructive and disgusting material". Responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

Democratic values: It consists of 9 items which were extracted from Support for Democratic Values Scale [2]. This scale is intended to measure to what extent individuals might tend to support democratic values. An item sample was "it is necessary that everyone, regardless of their views, can express themselves freely". Items were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 4 ('strongly agree').

Translation and back translation

Of the measures employed in this study, only three were previously translated to Chinese and validated in China (namely perspective taking, openness to experience scale, and prosocial behaviour). The remaining eight measures used in this study underwent the translation and back-translation procedure. This was carried out to provide a semantically, technically, culturally and conceptually equivalent of Chinese version [40]. Figure 1 indicates the steps taken in this study to follow the translation and back-translation method. Two bilingual translators separately translated the target scales (E1) from English to Chinese. Then, the parallel translations were compared and double checked by the researcher (bilingual) to generate the initial Chinese version (C1). Then an official licensed Chinese translator who were not psychologist and did not have any knowledge about the original English measurements translated the Chinese versions (C1) back to English (E2). To keep content and conceptual equivalence, five native English speaking psychologists who did not know the target language (Chinese) compared the translated English versions (E2) with the original English measurements (E1); they checked whether E2 convey the same meaning as E1. In this stage, 24 problematic items were spotted which were required to be re-translated. In next step, based on the provided comments, the two bilingual translators who did the first translation (from E1 to C1) amended the problematic items (C1R). Then the new translated items were translated back to English by the same official licensed Chinese translator (from C1 to E2). Again, the revised back translations (E2R) were sent to the former native English speakers to re-check and confirmed. All items were verified and finalised at this stage.

Reliability and convergent/Divergent validity of translated measures

Among these eleven measures used in this study, only three, namely perspective taking, openness to experience and prosocial behavior scales were previously translated and validated in China [41-44]. In a pilot study on Chinese people, the internal consistencies (Cronbach's Alpha) showed the sound reliability of the translated measures (from .55 to .82). The Pearson correlations between the three scales and the

other eight scales was conducted which were deemed as evidence for convergent/divergent validity of the other related scales. The results showed the statistically significant validity of the remaining eight measures ranges from .02 to .32 [45].

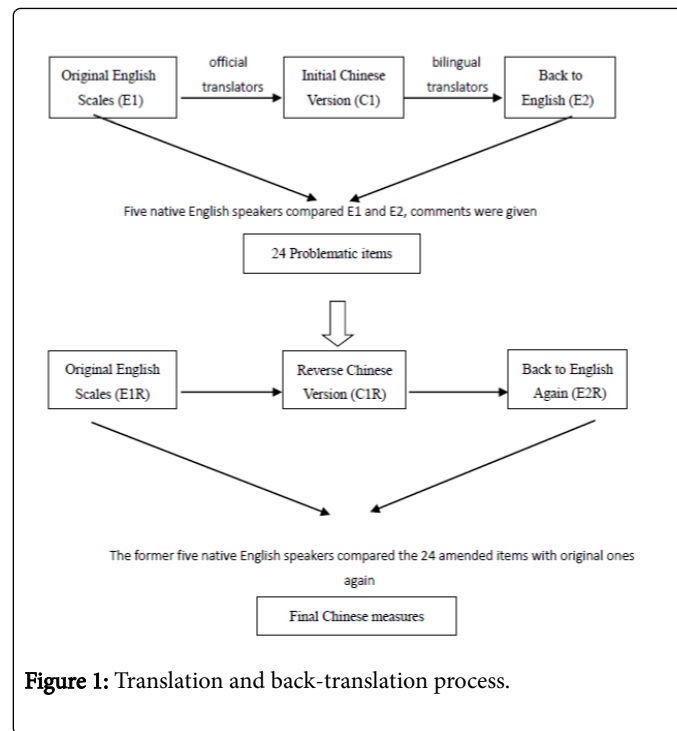


Figure 1: Translation and back-translation process.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 22. Pearson correlation was performed to examine the strength of relationship between the ten independent variables (empathy, flexibility, perspective taking, egalitarian sex role, normative identity style, interpersonal trust, openness, suggestibility, prosocial behaviour, and authoritarianism) and the dependent variable (adherence to democratic values). Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the predictors of democratic value. A two way ANOVA [group (Chinese younger and Chinese older)×Gender (male and female)] was used to test the differences across group and gender.

Results

Inter-correlations between variables

Table 1 shows the correlations between all variables (empathy, flexibility, perspective taking, egalitarian sex role, normative identity style, interpersonal trust, openness, suggestibility, prosocial behaviour, authoritarianism, and democratic values). In younger group, empathy, perspective taking, egalitarian sex role, interpersonal trust, and authoritarianism (inversely) are statistically correlated with adherence to democratic values. In older group, egalitarian sex role, normative identity style (inversely), interpersonal trust, openness, and suggestibility (inversely) are significantly correlated with adherence to democracy. Moreover, the inter-correlations among these variables are regarded as the convergent and divergent validity. Figure 2 highlighted the pattern of associations for two groups.

	Em	Flex	PT	ESR	NIS	IT	Open	Sugg	PB	Au
Demo-Y	19***	-.07	.10*	.28***	.00	.13**	.06	.01	.06	.10*
Demo-O	.02	-.05	.08	.22***	-.15**	.13**	.23***	-.22***	-.00	.04
Em-Y		.10*	.30***	.32***	.10	-.07	.16**	-.12**	.23***	.01
Em-O		.10*	.29***	.19***	.09	.01	.19***	-.01	.16**	-.13**
Flex-Y			.23***	.08*	-.04	.17***	.09	-.10*	.07	-.05
Flex-O			.07	.13**	-.00	.07	.09	-.18***	.11*	-.19***
PT-Y				.08	.12*	.05	.20	.03	.32***	.09
PT-O				.13**	-.04	.05	.10	-.03	.09	.10
ESR-Y					.06	.25***	-.01	.16**	-.01	-.14*
ESR-O					.04	-.05	.13**	-.02	.06	-.27***
NIS-Y						-.03	-.28***	.32	.07	.22***
NIS-O						.03	-.24***	.16**	-.02	.13**
IT-Y							.08	-.04	.11	-.12**
IT-O							.00	.03	.01	-.12*
Open-Y								-.26***	.18***	-.16**
Open-O								-.24***	.01	-.02
Sugg-Y									-.02	.11
Sugg-O									.10	.09
PB-Y										.11
PB-O										.11

Statistical significance: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.00; Y=young Chinese group; O=older Chinese group; Demo=Democracy; Em=Empathy; Flex=Flexibility; PT=Perspective Taking; ESR=Egalitarian Sex Role; NIS=Normative Identity Style; IT=Interpersonal Trust; Open=Openness; Sugg=Suggestibility; PB=Prosocial Behaviour; Au=Authoritarianism.

Table 1: Inter-correlations (r) among variables in young Chinese group and older Chinese group.

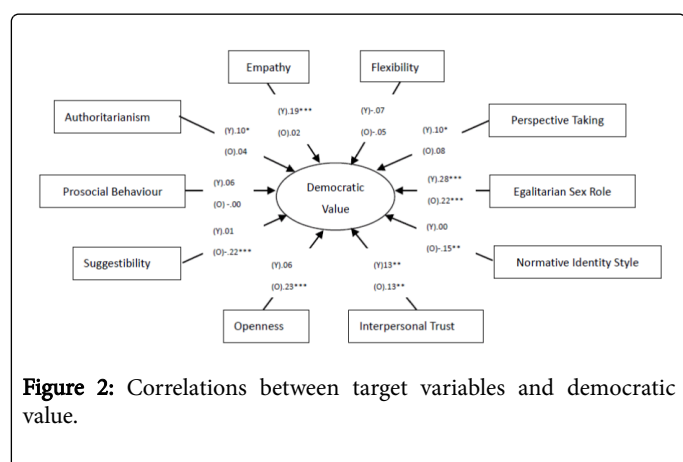


Table 1 displays the associations between variables for young and older samples separately. In two groups, empathy is positively correlated with perspective taking, egalitarian sex role, openness and

prosocial behaviour. Empathy is negatively correlated with suggestibility in young generation group and with authoritarianism in older sample. Flexibility is associated with egalitarian sex role and inversely with suggestibility in both groups. Moreover, flexibility is positively correlated with perspective taking and interpersonal trust in young group and with prosocial behaviour and authoritarianism (negatively) in older group. Perspective taking is correlated with normative identity style (inversely) in young generation and with egalitarian sex role in older generation. Egalitarian sex role is inversely related to authoritarianism in both group and correlated with trust and suggestibility in young participants and with openness in older group. In both groups, normative identity style is positively correlated with authoritarianism and negatively correlated with openness. Also, there is positive correlation between normative identity style and suggestibility in older generation group. Interpersonal trust is inversely associated with authoritarianism in both groups. Openness to experience is negatively correlated with suggestibility in both groups and correlated with prosocial behaviour (positively) and authoritarianism (negatively) only in young sample.

Multiple regression analysis

Using hierarchical multiple regression for each group separately, social level (egalitarian sex role, normative identity style, interpersonal trust, prosocial behaviour, authoritarianism) was entered at the first step and personality level (empathy, flexibility, perspective taking, openness, suggestibility) at the second step. For young Chinese group, personality level explained 5% of the variance in adherence to democracy. However, the model as a whole (including both personality and social levels) explained 11% of variation in outcome variable (adherence to democracy). The β value show egalitarian sex role is the

strongest link contributing to adherence to democracy in young group. For older Chinese group, personality level explained 9% of the variance in outcome variable (democratic values) while the whole model accounted for 15% of variance in outcome variable (democratic values). Moreover, for older group, contribution of four variables turn out to be statistically significant, including openness records the highest level, followed by egalitarian sex role, suggestibility, and interpersonal trust. Table 2 demonstrates the details of hierarchical multiple regression in each generation group.

Step	Personality Level	Young				Older			
		R ²	R ² Change	Sig F change	β	R ²	R ² Change	Sig F change	β
		.05		.001		.09		.000	
1	Empathy				.18				-.03
	Flexibility				-.11				-.10
	Perspective Taking				.06				.07
	Openness				.03				.20**
	Suggestibility				-.02				-.19**
Step	Social Level	.11	.06	.000		.15	.05	.001	
2	Egalitarian Sex Role				.22***				.19**
	Normative Identity				-.02				-.08
	Interpersonal Trust				-.05				-.12*
	Prosocial Behaviour				.02				-.00
	Authoritarianism				.06				-.00
Note: Statistical significance: *p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001.									
DW=2.0 in young group. DW=1.8 in old group.									

Table 2: Hierarchical Multiple Regression.

Between-group and gender differences

A series of 2 (Group: young, older) \times 2 (Gender: men, women) ANOVA shows that there are group differences on eight variables (not on flexibility, perspective taking and suggestibility). As depicted in Table 3, Chinese young group scored higher than Chinese older group on empathy [F(1,729)=9.21, p<.01], egalitarian sex role [F(1,729)=5.35, p<.05], openness [F(1,729)=19.42, p<.001], and democracy [F(1,729)=59.24, p<.001]. However, Chinese older group scored higher than young Chinese group on normative identity style [F(1,729)=37.30, p<.001], interpersonal trust [F(1,729)=40.22, p<.001], prosocial behaviour [F(1,729)=20.20, p<.001], and authoritarianism [F(1,729)=10.88, p<.01]. Gender differences shows Chinese males scored higher only on prosocial behaviour [F(1,729)=4.42, p<.05]; while, females scored higher on egalitarian sex role [F(1,729)=96.21, p<.001], suggestibility [F(1,729)=10.17, p<.01], authoritarianism [F(1,729)=4.20, p<.05], and democracy [F(1,729)=4.10, p<.05]. In addition, the last column shows that there are interactions between group and gender on egalitarian sex role (p<.001) and democracy (p<.01) separately.

Discussion

This trans-generational study aimed to explore how psycho-social characteristics (empathy, flexibility, perspective taking, egalitarian sex role, normative identity style, interpersonal trust, openness, suggestibility, prosocial behaviour, authoritarianism) can explain Chinese young and older generations' political tendency. We also examined whether or not there is gender differences on the measured variables.

Potential links between variables in young and older groups

Empathy, perspective taking, egalitarian sex role, interpersonal trust and authoritarianism were correlated to democratic values in young generation; whilst, egalitarian sex role, normative identity style, interpersonal trust, openness, and suggestibility were correlated with adherence to democratic values in older group. Furthermore, egalitarian sex role proved to be the only predictor for democratic value in young participants.

	Y	O	Male	Female	p-value		p-value
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Group	Gender	Group*Gender
Empathy	28.01(4.12)	26.88(4.62)	27.12(4.69)	27.72(4.19)	0.002	NS	NS
Flexibility	23.36(3.52)	23.69(2.98)	23.68(3.17)	23.41(3.36)	NS	NS	NS
Perspective Taking	14.64(4.26)	15.20(4.61)	14.78(4.77)	14.96(4.22)	NS	NS	NS
Egalitarian	38.76(4.70)	37.42(4.24)	36.09(4.12)	39.40(4.33)	0.05	0.001	0.001
Normative	20.39(4.47)	22.62(4.87)	21.49(4.94)	21.35(4.69)	0.001	NS	NS
Interpersonal Trust	18.09(2.52)	19.27(2.13)	18.66(2.56)	18.60(2.34)	0.001	NS	NS
Openness	37.07(4.53)	35.68(4.04)	36.66(4.33)	36.31(4.39)	0.001	NS	NS
Suggestibility	23.68(3.89)	24.02(3.70)	23.28(3.94)	24.17 (3.69)	NS	0.001	NS
Prosocial Behaviour	28.73(5.27)	30.89(5.91)	30.43(5.79)	29.28(5.55)	0.001	0.05	NS
Authoritarianism	24.14(2.48)	24.71(2.13)	24.21(2.34)	24.51(2.33)	0.001	0.05	NS
Democracy	26.17(2.88)	24.42(2.42)	24.99(2.87)	25.61(2.76)	0.001	0.05	0.005
N	400	333	276	457			

Note. NS=Not Significant. Y=young Chinese Group. O=old Chinese Group.

Table 3: Details of two way MANOVA (Generation X Gender).

In older group, openness, suggestibility, egalitarian sex role, and interpersonal trust proved to be the predictors for democratic values; among them openness to experience was the strongest predictive link with adherence to democratic values. This result in part support the previous finding that openness and interpersonal trust were sound predictors for democracy [2]

Regarding the differences on variables at social level, different social contexts in which the young and the older Chinese grew up should be taken into consideration. Over the past four decades, China has undergone massive social, economic and cultural changes and developments [46]. Undoubtedly, the rapid-developed period created a new era in which Chinese young generation is mostly affected. With this in mind, it can be argued that various social surroundings have had impact on psychological characteristics and political values particularly among Chinese young people [47].

From the personal level view, the degree of the support for democracy may be explained by a multifactorial model. Both of emotional empathy and cognitive empathy (perspective taking) would be positively linked to prosocial behaviour probably giving rise to the understanding of the dissimilar political ideas and values [17]. Similarly, openness to experience indicates tolerance of dissimilar ideas and acceptance of different views, which is indeed in agreement with the democratic values [27]. Recent research evidence shows that openness is positively related to the willingness to extend political rights to disliked groups [48], which provides support for values pertinent to democracy [47]. Also, openness shows an inverse association with normative identity style and right-wing political ideology, both of which referring to thinking and acting in accordance with conformity, conservative idea, social cohesion, and security [49]. Moreover, in line with the finding of the study, there was a positive link between suggestibility and normative identity style. People high on suggestibility and normative identity style might show more rigidity,

which might boost an authoritarian mind [25,50]. It is suggested that egalitarian sex role refers to belief in gender equality for domestic and social rights, which indeed is in line with democratic values [28].

Generation gap and gender differences

The group differences showed that Chinese young participants had higher scores on empathy, egalitarian sex role, openness, and democracy. However, older group was high on normative identity style, interpersonal trust, prosocial behaviour, and authoritarianism. Moreover, female participants scored higher on egalitarian sex role, suggestibility, authoritarianism, and democracy; while male participants were higher only on prosocial behaviour. Furthermore, Chinese young females could be regarded as staunch supporters for both egalitarian sex role and democracy; but notably, Chinese young males seemed to be the least supporters for egalitarian sex role, and Chinese old females showed that they support democracy the least. Chinese young generation's higher scores on openness, egalitarian sex role, and democracy, as well as lower scores on normative identity style, and lower authoritarianism could be explained by the same token.

Openness to experience can be characterised by several traits such as having broad interests, being liberal and liking novelty [51]. These traits seem to be associated with critical thinking and creative ability [52]. Chinese young generation is involved in a new educational system, one aims of which is cultivating creative and critical thinking ability [53]. Evidently, updated Chinese educational system potentially can encourage openness in Chinese young population. Another important factor might be the information era, which includes the wide use of media and internet [54]. Information revolution (or explosion) not only brings people some daily-living benefits, but also brings the users (mostly new generation) some psychological change.

People can get new knowledge and information through quick and effective ways of modern technology; this might expose them to broad and diverse range of ideas that, in turn, may make them recognise differences and dissimilarities. The information era has much more profound impact on new generation than the older one, they are better prepared for complying with new things and changes [54].

Similarly, both of the new Chinese educational system and new growing surrounding could lay a foundation for egalitarian sex role for Chinese young generation, mainly females. The policies of gender equality in education and workforces diminished the conservative role of women, and offered Chinese females more chances to shift their focuses to their life achievements. In fact, Chinese women received more attention in terms of their rights towards gender equality after 1949 [55]. Working women tend to pursue more economic and ideological independence by participating in social events and seeking more life achievements [56]. It is also suggested that females, especially well-educated young females are more likely to embrace egalitarian gender attitudes than males [57]. Higher level of democracy might link to the higher ratio of workforce participation of women (including political affairs), as one aim of democracy is supporting the interests of those who are not in power [28].

Furthermore, Chinese young females turned out to be stronger supporters for both egalitarian sex role and democracy, than their male counterparts; It might be due to the current social context and a series of new policies in China. The new education policy allows girls gained the equal education chance as boys; meaning, education is no longer a privilege for boys. Therefore, Chinese young males are facing more competition challenge, as Chinese young females are offered the same chance to seek their life achievements. Chinese older females' low level of support for democracy might be due to their experience of the social change in the past few decades. Chinese officials encouraged more women participate in work that enhanced Chinese women's social status and finally brought them more life benefits. On one side, Chinese older females' higher egalitarian sex role might mean that they are defending their current rights and benefits; on the other side, their lower support for democracy implies the threat they may feel in losing their current rights and benefits from this aspect. This might mean being submissive and conservative is safest way to keep their benefits.

Caution should be taken when interpreting the present findings due to a shortcoming concerning the sample. The Chinese participants were all recruited only in one province of China (Guizhou province), a barrier which limits us to generalize the findings to the Chinese general population. Future study could recruit more representative participants from diverse target urban and rural areas of China using random sampling method.

Conclusion

This study examined generational differences on psycho-social factors and how they might predict support for democracy in a Chinese sample. In older participants, openness, suggestibility, egalitarian sex role, and interpersonal trust turned out to predict democratic values; while in the younger sample, only egalitarian sex role was the main predictor. This generation gap can be explained by the rapid developmental changes over recent decades in China.

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