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EASTERN PHILOSOPHIES AND PSYCHOLOGY: TOWARDS PSYCHOLOGY OF SELF-CULTIVATION

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The publication of this book, *East Asian Philosophies and Psychology: Towards Psychology of Self-cultivation,* signifies an important breakthrough for the indigenization movements of psychology which have happened in many non-Western countries since 1980s. Viewing from the perspective of scientific revolution (Kuhn, 1969), when Western paradigms of psychology are transplanted to non-Western countries and encounter anomalies which can not be explained by the imported theories, the foreign theories are in a state of crisis waiting for scientific revolution.

Academic Anti-colonialism

Most indigenous psychologists tend to take a position of academic anti-colonialism when faced with such a problematic situation (e.g. Enriquez, 1992). They argue that current mainstream psychology is basically a kind of Westernized or Americanized psychology. Because most Western theories of psychology are culturally bound and research methods contain a Western ethnocentric bias (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dason, 1992), when the Western psychology research paradigm is transplanted blindly to non-Western countries, it is usually irrelevant, inappropriate, or incompatible for understanding the mentalities of non-Western people (Sinha, 1984, 1986, 2002).The duplication of Western paradigm in non-Western countries may result in the neglect of cultural factors that may influence the development and manifestations of human behaviors.

The same story also happened in Taiwan. The indigenization movement of psychology in Taiwan was first initiated by K.S. Yang who organized a conference on "Sinicization of Social and Behavioral Sciences" at Academia Sinica in December 1981. In the preface of the proceedings of the groundbreaking conference, K. S. Yang and Wen (1982) wrote:

> The subjects whom we studied are Chinese people in Chinese society, but, the theories and methods we used are mostly imported from the West or of the Western style. In our daily life, we are Chinese; when we are doing research, we become Western people. We repress our Chinese thoughts or philosophy intentionally or unintentionally, and make them unable to be expressed in our procedure of research. … Under such a situation, we can only follow

> the West step by step with an expectation to catch up their academic trend. … Eventually, our existence in the world community of social and behavioral science becomes invisible at all. (p. ii)

The decision to make psychology more meaningful to Chinese people was reinforced by an episode happened in 1988 when he was invited to Harvard to give a talk on his research on Chinese personality.

Indigenous Compatibility

In the discussion session after his presentation a well-known developmental psychologist Kagan asked him one question: "What kind of psychology would have been developed by Chinese psychologists if there had not been any Western psychology?" Yang said that he was shocked by this question and admitted that Kagan's question gave him a chance to look more closely and squarely at the naked reality that "little was left in Westernised Chinese psychology after those elements that had been borrowed form, or influenced by, Western psychology were taken away"

The 'Harvard experience' stimulated him to consider seriously the possibility and legitimacy of developing a Chinese indigenous psychology. He felt that the most developed North American psychology, was a kind of indigenous psychology in the sense that its major concepts, theories, methods, and findings have originally evolved partly from the European intellectual traditions but mostly from the cultural milieu of American society. To treat American indigenous psychology as the psychology of all human beings was a big mistake. "If American psychologists could have their own indigenous psychology, why did not we Chinese psychologists have our own indigenous psychology?" (p.69)

In order to promote the indigenization movement, Yang organized an Interdisciplinary Symyosium on Chinese psychology and Behavior every two years since 1981; established a Laboratory of Research for Indigenous Psychology, inaugurated the journal for Indigenous Psychological Research in 1993; and proposed the concept of *indigenous compatibility* in the first issue of the journal, hoping to use it as a criterion for evaluating indigenous research (Yang, 1993b). According to K. S. Yang's (1993) original definition, *indigenous compatibility* means:

> Owing to the same cultural and biological influence, it tends to form a compatible state between the researcher's activity of research and knowledge system as well as local people's psychology and behaviors. This state of being tightly matched, tied, connected, or compatible, existing between local researcher's concepts as well as local people's psychology and behaviors. (p. 24).

Criterion of Positivism

But, the adequacy of this concept was questioned by many scholars either within or outside the camp of indigenous psychology. They took the same view to indicate that Yang's criterion represents a worldview of positivism which is very popular among non-Western psychologists.

With an intensive review on related literature, Hwang (2005) indicated that the controversies caused by K. S. Yang's 1993 article resemble those faced by other non-Western psychologists who have been trying to develop indigenous psychology in their own societies (Enriquez, 1993). Most indigenous psychologists advocated "a bottom-up model-building paradigm" (Kim, 2000, p. 265) to study people as "the interactive and proactive agents of their own actions" that occur in a meaningful context (Kim, Park, & Park, 2000, p. 71), and they believe that indigenous psychology is "the study of human behavior and mental processes within a cultural context that relies on values, concepts, belief systems, methodologies, and other resources indigenous to the specific ethnic or cultural group under investigation" (Ho, 1998, p. 94). Through "the scientific study of human behavior that is native, that is not transported from other regions, and that

is designed for its people" (Kim & Berry, 1993, p. 2), they are able to obtain "a psychological and practical system based on and responsive to indigenous culture and indigenous realities" (Enriquez, 1993, p. 158), in an expectation to develop a psychology whose "concepts, problems, hypothesis, methods, and test emanate from, adequately represent, and reflect upon the cultural context in which the behavior is observed" (Adair, Puhan & Vohra, 1993, p. 149).

Such advocacy for the indigenization of psychology was criticized by mainstream psychologists who argued that the advantages of indigenous approach are also claimed by anthropologists. Accumulating culture-specific data by this approach may have no direct implication for the progress of scientific psychology (Triandis, 2000). If the difference in behavioral repertoires across cultural populations implies that we need an indigenous psychology, how many indigenous psychologies will we have (Poortinga, 1999)?

Multiple-philosophical Paradigms

In order to meet the challenge, most indigenous psychologists have argued that is not their final goal. The development of numerous indigenous psychologies. Rather, they are working toward the development of an Asian psychology (Ho, 1988), a global psychology (Enriquez, 1993), or a universal psychology (Berry & Kim, 1993; Kim & Berry, 1993). Even K. S. Yang (1993) also advocated that the final goal of developing indigenous psychologies is to establish "a human psychology" or "a global psychology."

Hwang (2005) indicated that the goal of universal psychology cannot be attained by any inductive method of positivism. He mentioned a very important principle of cultural psychology "One mind, many mentalities" proposed by Shweder and his colleagues (1998) and advocated that the academic mission for indigenous psychologists is to construct not only universal theory that are supposed to be applicable to various cultures, but also culture-inclusive theories that can be used to explain psychology or behavior in a particular society.

This goal can be attained by the approach of so-called multiple philosophical paradigms (Hwang, 2015a, b). In order to attain this goal, indigenous psychologists in non-Western societies should abandon the inductive approach of positivism, they should change their attitude from anticolonialism to postcolonialism, make themselves be familiar with various paradigms of Western philosophy of science and be able to utilize them as resources for research to overcome various difficulties for constructing such kind of theories.

In order to help Chinese scholars to familiar with Western philosophy of science, Hwang (2000) spent more than 10 years to write a book *Logics of Social Sciences*, which discuss different perspectives on crucial issues relating to ontology, epistemology and methodology taken by 18 major philosophers in the 20th century. This book consists of two parts, the first part addresses the switch in the philosophy of natural science from positivism to post-positivism; the second part expounds the philosophy of social theory including structuralism, hermeneutic and critical science. Because psychology is characterized by both natural and social sciences, Hwang (2012) first demonstrated how to use the strategy of multiple-philosophical paradigms to construct culture-inclusive theories for conducting empirical research, then he organized a research team and encouraged them to use this strategy to construct their own theories. Recently, he even published a book to state this strategy explicitly (Hwang, 2017).

Most contributions of this book are members of this team. Now they label themselves as Siyuan School (思源學派) which means a group of scholars who determine to get familiar with both traditions of Chinese and Western philosophy in doing research of significant psychology or social sciences. Because Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are most important East Asian philosophies in China, the publication of this book signifies a new era for studying psychology of self-cultivation form the perspective of Asian cultural tradition.

Kwang-Kuo Hwang

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EDITORIAL
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Editorial: Eastern Philosophies and Psychology: Towards Psychology of Self-Cultivation

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Keywords: Eastern Philosophies, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, self-cultivation, culture-inclusive theiries, multiple-philosophical paradigms

Editorial on the Research Topic

Eastern Philosophies and Psychology: Towards Psychology of Self-Cultivation

Based on rich experience of developing Chinese indigenous psychology in Taiwan for more than 30 years, Hwang proposed a unique epistemological strategy for constructing culture-inclusive theories of psychology which consists of two steps: First, he constructed a *Mandala model* of self (Hwang, 2011, 2015a) and a *Face and Favor* model of social interaction (Hwang, 1987, 2012). Because these two models are supported to be universal, the second step of his strategy is using them as frameworks to analyze any cultural system in opposition to the pan-cultural dimensional approach of reductionism prevalent in mainstream psychology (Hwang, 2015b).

In his book *Self-exertion and Conscience: Getting out of Weberian maze* (Hwang, 2015c), he criticized the fallacy of Eurocentrism and the fallacy of conflation committed in Max Weber's (1864–1920) famous works *Religious in China: Confucianism and Taoism* (Weber, 1951), and he used this strategy to analyze pre-Qin Classics of Confucian for studying its morphostasis. He then traced the morphogenesis of Confucianism during its major progress in the history of China and Japan respectively (Hwang, 2015c).

Because Confucian ethics and morality are supposed to be the transcendental formal structure for Chinese people's life world, once it has been clearly identified, the formal structure can be utilized to construct a series of culture-inclusive theories with a careful consideration of its manifestations in varies contexts of social interaction (Hwang, 2016). In order to demonstrate the usefulness of this approach, Hwang (2012) constructed a series of theoretical models on social exchange, moral judgments, face dynamism, achievement motivation, and conflict resolution in his book *Foundations of Chinese Psychology*.

For the sake of establishing an autonomous academic tradition of social science in Confucian culture, we have organized a research team to promote this movement in Taiwan. Hwang encourages his followers to utilize this approach to construct their own theoretical models for conducting empirical research in Chinese society.

Highly impressed by their remarkable performances, we decided to increase the visibility of our research team by publishing their works in an international journal of high reputation, and *Frontiers in Psychology* became our first choice. We called for paper on *Philosophical and Theoretical Psychology* from international academic community and obtained total submission of 22 abstracts. Eventually 11 articles had been accepted for publication after a strict procedure of review in accordance with standards of FIP.

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Following Hwang's (2015a,b) strategy, Wu conceptualized the process of cultivating the ideal self in Confucian education on the basis of her cultural-semantic analysis of the "*Lessons for Learning*" (Xue-Ji) in the Classic of Rites (Liji). Fwu et al. studied the mediating role of self-exertion on the effects of effort on learning virtues and emotional distress after academic failure; Chen et al. examined high-school teachers' beliefs about effort and their attitudes toward struggling and smart students. Findings of both empirical researches can be used to illuminate Wu's theoretical analyses on the importance of education in Confucian society.

Huang proposed a dynamic model interpersonal harmony and conflict from a yin-yang perspective. Han studied the feeling of having or losing face in maintaining one's psychosocial equilibrium. Chen and Hwang extended the idea of personal face to national face in Confucian society. Hsu and Hwang proposed a tentative theory on the cognitive process of *yuanfen* to illustrate the idea of serendipity in relationship. All those empirical researches and theoretical analysis indicated the potentiality for the future development of Confucian theory of self-cultivation.

Chien's article reflected his own change from the trait approach of personality to the construction of culture-inclusive theory and showed the productivity of the later for future research on Chinese authoritarian orientation. Liu et al. tried to develop a virtue existential model of career development by integrating Western career theories of modernism and post modernism with the eastern wisdom of *I-Ching* (Book of Changes). Shiah made the first attempt to propose the Non-self Theory based on Buddhist teachings, as well as three ways for execution of the self-cultivation principle, namely, giving up desires, displaying compassion, and practicing meditation for seeking Buddhist wisdom. These three ways are essential ways to experience the reality of emptiness and the importance of compassion, leading to a sense of no identity. The transition from the self state to the non-self state is a deeply transformative experience of eliminating the sense of self and its psychological structures, seeing through, and overcoming the illusion of the self leading to authentic-durable happiness. Bianco et al. indicated the urgent necessity of a psychodynamic model for future development of positive psychology. Those articles provide us strong confidence that the strategy of constructing culture-inclusive theories by integrating Western and Eastern philosophies may open a new field of psychology for self-cultivation to compete with the popular positive psychology emphasizing the values of hedonism, individualism, and utilitarianism.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed, have made a substantial direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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The Process of Self-Cultivation and the Mandala Model of the Self

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In his Mandala model of the self, Taiwanese scholar Kwang-Kuo Hwang sees each human being as a combination or intersection of private individual and social person, and also of knowledge and action. To further elaborate the model—with a particular emphasis on teaching/learning, the development of the ideal self and spiritual transcendence—this article will explore the psychological process of self-cultivation in the light of traditional Confucian thinking, which means keeping a balance between inner/outer and self/other. The Neo-Confucian thinker Zhongsha Mou's theories of "the awareness of unexpected developments" and his meditation/cognitive thinking opposition will also be discussed. The analyzed sources will include the traditional Confucian classics (the Four *Books* and *Liji, or Classic of Rites*) and especially the "*Lessons for Learning* (*Xue-Ji*)" in the *Classic of Rites* (*Liji*), along with the relevant textual research. Based upon a cultural-semantic analysis of these classics as well as of Hwang's central ideas, the author attempts to further conceptualize the process of cultivating the ideal self in Confucian education[1].

Keywords: Hwang's Mandala model, Confucian education, self-cultivation, inner-outer harmony, psychology, teaching, learning

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THE CONCEPT OF THE SELF IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

In classical western philosophy, Plato is more focused on absolute ideas (ideals, "forms") than on any concept of the "self"; his student Aristotle does talk about the soul (*psyche*) as the "form of the body" but still does not really talk about the individual self. In early modern European philosophy, of course, we have the seventeenth-century rationalist Descartes emphasizing the split between the individual *cogito* or "I think"—"I exist insofar as I am, at least in this moment, a thinking thing"—and the physical body[2]. The British empiricist Hume is more body-oriented in the sense that he says "we" are just a series of sense-impressions coming in from outside; our concept of a unified "self" is, like that of "things" and also of "God," an illusion.

The German Kant, influenced by both, separates our rational mind, with it's *a priori* logical categories, from the act of perception and from the *Dinge-an-sich* (things-in- themselves) which lie beyond our perception and understanding. For Kant we do not "know" our self as an object of perception but presuppose it as lying "behind" all of our perceptions and thus our empirical

[1]This Mandala theory of the self, elaborated and understood in terms of classical Confucian thought, may naturally be helpful to people in the course of their daily lives—especially in times of crisis or sudden change—as a way of guiding and clarifying their self-reflections and self-evaluations. It could also become a part of the curricula in university-level social and educational psychology courses, as well as perhaps also in certain high school courses, and perhaps could even be used by student counselors at various levels. This theory might be especially useful and relevant in the context of East Asian cultures and societies.

[2]For Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, and Kant, see Frederick Copleston (1962).

knowledge. In twentieth-century philosophy we similarly have the split between Continental European "existentialism" (Heidegger, Sartre) and British analytic or empirical philosophy (Russel, Whitehead, A.J. Ayer). As for psychology, we have the Austrian Freud's psychoanalysis on the continental side and behaviorism (e.g., Skinner) on the British side, where Freud's theories, like the existentialists', may seem too "metaphysical" for the more empirically-oriented British thinkers. Kant's point that in one sense we do not "know" our self is arguably echoed with a variation by Freud's notion of the unconscious.

The "self"-concept naturally plays a significant role in western educational psychology (Purkey, 1988; Martin, 2007; Huitt, 2011). Freud's model of the psyche comprises three parts: the Id (*Das Es*), the Ego (*Das Ich*), and the superego (*Das Über-Ich*; Freud, 1923)[3]. Influenced by the self-concept of Freud among others, Erikson emphasized self-development and the self-identity crisis, and his follower Marcia's research also concerned the nature of our self-identity (Marcia, 1993; Erikson, 1994). Moreover, humanistic psychologists such as Rogers and Maslow regarded the self-concept and self-actualization as the core of their psychological theories (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1961). The "self" concept in western psychology originated from the rationalist and empiricist views discussed above, and from Hegel's more comprehensive notion of self-consciousness: our subject-object (observer-observed) consciousness forms our thinking and guides our behavior (Morgan, 1903). Self-esteem, self-regulation, and self-efficacy are derived from the ways in which the subject perceives the world around it and becomes self-conscious.

According to the Russian cultural-historical psychologist Vygotsky, the formation of human beings' higher mental functions was greatly influenced by their social-cultural-historical environment (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, the way Icelanders use language to describe "what is the feeling of cold" will be different from the way those who live near the equator use it to describe this. They grew up in different socio-cultural systems and also were influenced by different historical- semantic systems, and thus they will have different cognitive schema and linguistic symbols for describing "what is cold." Similarly, psychologists who grew up in non-western societies might adopt different cognitive schema and symbols to express the self-concept and descriptions of self-development, etc. In traditional Chinese Confucian culture and society, there may be slightly different ways to describe or express things or concepts that in English would be called "the family" (*jya-ting*)[4] or "benevolence" (*ren*)[5]. These Chinese terms/concepts suggest the ancient Confucian concept of "family" might include the "animals living under the house" as well as family members' activities in or around that same place or locus. This view, made clearer by the fact that ancestors were also seen as "extensions" of living individuals, is easily contrasted with the way modern western families may tend to see themselves.

This emphasis on the individual as an integral part of the family in more traditional cultures generally, then, and very clearly in ancient Confucian Chinese culture, is an example of how culture as well as language determines how we think, e.g., how we differentiate subject/object or use terms like "self" and "family." In fact, in ancient (and also present-day) Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese Daoist and Chinese- Confucian thinking the subject itself can also be the object to be observed. That is, there may be no clear distinction between subject and object, and in ways that go beyond Hegel's notion of self-consciousness as the unity or mutual-embracing of subject-and-object (Cheng, 1991, p. 42, p. 70; Man, 2015, p. 2). Thus, in traditional South and East Asian thinking the constitution of the "self"-concept may be based on an inner reflection on oneself which, when seen as part of the whole educational process undergone by young people, is also called "self- cultivation."

Indeed, in ancient Chinese culture there was a tendency to think of human life as a kind of open "field" that could be cultivated, and arguably the horizontality of this image may correlate with other forms of horizontality in ancient Chinese thinking. Most obviously, while western monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, Islam—assume a radically disrupted vertical-transcendent model, according to which an all-powerful Supreme Being and Creator has total power over His creatures, the dominant "religion" in very early Chinese culture was arguably ancestor worship. In the latter, of course, the spirits or ancestors that are honored and remembered by their still-living descendants are hardly on a higher ontological level, transcending this immanent world like the Supreme Beings of western religions. Rather, they may still be immanent in this world, still "around" us—in our "family" or "house"—and accompanying us, so that rather than a bifurcated vertical or transcendent model we have a model, picture, or conception of "pervasive immanence."

HWANG'S MANDALA MODEL OF THE SELF

Taiwanese psychologist and scholar Kwang-Kuo Hwang's Mandala model of the self—which has been influenced by ancient Hindu and Buddhist as well as Confucian thinking, and also by modern European thinkers such as the psychologist Carl Jung—not only pictures but actually already *is* a sort of highly-energized field, one which we are being invited to deeply reflect or meditate on, absorb, "cultivate." Jung had adopted the symbol of the Mandala, a graphic or pictorial representation of "the center," and used it to depict or represent the Self (Jung and Jaffé, 1963:20; Jung, 1964). According to his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung and Jaffé, 1963), this Mandala includes or embodies the living experience of the collective unconscious of the human race. In other words, the center of the Mandala, as the Self, embodies the harmony and balance of the various opposed forces within the human psyche, which are

[3]The German term "*Ich*" is normally translated into English as "I," "the self," "ego." In Freudian research it is translated as "ego."

[4]According to the etymology, the term of *Jia* (家) means that there are farm animals living under the house, and human beings living in or "above" the house. The term *Ting* (庭) refers to human beings' activities in front of or under the building.

[5]According to the etymology, the term for benevolence, *ren* (仁), means two persons, i.e., the interaction between person and person.

influenced by its socio-cultural or collective life experience and values.

The Mandala symbol, which originates from the Indian religion and represents the universe, has been widely adopted by Buddhism. Especially after early Indian and Tibetan Buddhism were transferred to China, this symbol became gradually embedded in Chinese philosophy. It was well-known by the time of China's Song (960–1279 AD) Dynasty, when Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist thinking had already been integrated as Neo-Confucianism. The basic form of most Mandalas is that of a circle inside a square which is inside a still larger circle. From the perspective of Chinese philosophy, the mandala means or depicts the "field of an altar (*tan-chang*, 壇場)" and/or a field within which one's personality can be cultivated and guided toward perfect spiritual happiness[6].

Partly influenced by Jung's and his followers' interpretations of the Mandala symbol in relation to the Self, then, and drawing upon his own research on the psychology of indigenous peoples, in which a major role is played by the individual's wider socio-cultural context, Kwang-Kuo Hwang also proposed a Mandala model of the Self (Hwang, 2015, pp. 87–88). This model also draws upon the ancient Chinese philosophical view of human life as an open field, the cultivation of which is really *self-cultivation* insofar as the self is formed or developed out of this wider field. For the Self taken as Person we may think of this wider field as one's family/community/society, while for the self-taken as Individual we may think of it also as the totality of one's own life experience, of one's own acts of experiencing life. Thus, these are two different directions or dimensions through which the Self may continue to be cultivated or perfected (Hwang, 2015, pp. 86–90)[7].

According to Hwang's Mandala model, then, the Self is in the middle and there are four forces in the field that it needs to integrate and regulate in order to create a harmonious and balanced way of life (*dao*, 道). This way of life is dynamic, given both its location within the horizontal context of changing social interactions and its own vertical-temporal dimension.

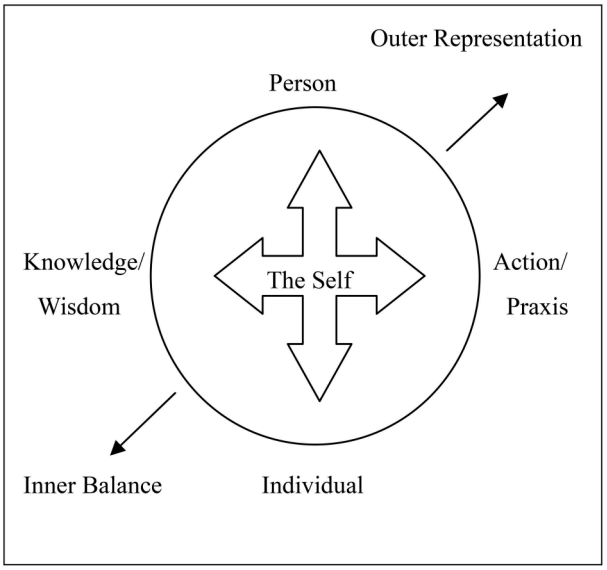

FIGURE 1 | Based upon Hwang's Mandala Model of the Self (Hwang, 2015, p. 92; "Outer representation" and "Inner balance" were added to Prof. Hwang's Mandala model by the author). Mandala as symbol of the self and its realization in the context of Confucian social Relations.

If the Self as Individual belongs to the psychological level, gathering, and regulating all of its experiences and its biological needs, the Self as Person belongs to the sociological level on which it serves as an agent-in-society, so that all of one's social roles—e.g., the roles of father, son, daughter, husband, wife, friends, co-workers—here come into play. If we also think of the Individual (as physical organism) as having a certain kind of relationship with (a certain awareness of) death and the cosmos, we may also think of the Person (as social organism) as having a certain but slightly different relationship with death and the cosmos (Hwang, 2014, pp. 38–39; Hwang, 2015, pp. 90–94).

Then we may see the horizontal line in the above model as extending from inner reflection (wisdom) to outer social action (praxis). The self is aware of the inevitable obstacles facing it, both in terms of its social roles within various contexts of social interaction and its biological needs and limitations. It absorbs the relevant knowledge based upon its own physical condition and social-historical-cultural background, and then transforms this knowledge into "insight wisdom" which it may act upon or project in the form of concrete social action or praxis. Here it would seem that Hwang is attempting to draw a universal model of the human mind on the one hand, and on the other hand a model that could describe the operation of the mind within the limits and under the constraints of various socio-cultural systems.

In other words, he is trying to elaborate an all-inclusive cultural theory which can describe not only the morphostasis (permanent or unchanging form or basis) of Confucian culture but also this culture's morphogenesis, its transformation within various East-Asian Confucian societies (e.g., China, Japan, Korea,

[6]In *tan-chang*, the left side of the character *tan* (壇) means or pictures the soil or ground, and its right side pictures/means to clean a space, a field where a ceremony like that of giving sacrifices to the ancestors or gods can be held; the character *chang* (場) means a place or area.

[7]In fact, Huang was much influenced by indigenous studies and by the anthropologist Grace Harris (who had originally proposed the individual/person/self-concept). Like Harris, he thought that while all non-western (including East Asian) cultures share with indigenous cultures an emphasis on the inter- connectedness of people and the community, so that individuals also tend to already be or will easily become members of the group or social "persons," western cultures tend to focus too much on the individual which they see "as a member of the human species, not so different from other creatures in the universe." For Huang, within the conceptual framework of the **Figure 1**, the Self is the locus of experience and as such is able to unite the roles of Individual and Person, interconnect various actions in different social contexts, and engage in self-reflection when blocked from attaining its goals. The Individual tends to have a more inward focus, while the Person takes a certain standpoint in the social order and plans a series of actions to attain a certain goal. Hwang was also much influenced by the French psychologist Piaget, whose theory of childhood development uses the core concepts of personal and social knowledge, and by the French sociologist Bourdieu's constructivist structuralism; the latter's term "*habitus*" denoted a kind of "structuralized behavioral tendency" (Harris, 1989; Hwang, 2011).

Vietnam, Taiwan, etc.)[8]. This self-transformation is just as crucial as the self-cultivation that it follows from, or perhaps these two are virtually the same thing, two sides of the same process. Thus, if again we take into account the "field" of the self that is being cultivated, the Mandala has both spatial and temporal dimensions.

A FURTHER ELABORATION OF HWANG'S MANDALA MODEL THROUGH READINGS OF SEMINAL CONFUCIAN TEXTS

The Confucian Cultural Value System: *Ren*, *Yi*, *Li*, *Zhi* in the Context of Existential Relations

In the early Han dynasty (220 BC—9AD), the philosophical thinking of the hundred schools had already been gradually integrated into the mainstream philosophical schools of Daoism and Confucianism. Then, especially beginning from the Song dynasty (960–1279 AD), Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism were integrated into Neo-Confucian thinking, and so the Confucian value system still served as the foundation of mainstream Chinese culture and society, continuing to influence the common people's daily life.

In the Confucian classics or Four *Books*, especially in the *Analects* and *Mengzi*, *ren* (humaneness, benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), *li* (ritual, propriety), and *zhi* (wisdom) express the core values of Confucian ethics. In the *Analects*, *ren* cannot really be separated from *li* (ritual, propriety). *Ren* is the most abstract and universal moral principle as it is the principle of humanness in the sense of human interaction: the character *ren* (仁) depicts "two persons." Thus, in his *Lunyu* or *Analects*, Confucius says his "golden rule" is "Doing one's utmost (*zhong*) and putting oneself in the other's place (*shu*)." Here we see that the abstract moral principle of *ren* (humaneness, benevolence) must be solidified through the concrete social actions or forms, the cultural rituals of *li*[9].

Then in the *Mengzi*, Mengzi takes *yi*-righteousness and *zhi*-wisdom as being in parallel with *ren*-humaneness and *li*-propriety[10]. When the *ren*-humane mind is represented or manifested *via li*-propriety, we may say that this manifestation is *yi*-suitable and *yi*-right, and so we have *yi* [義]-righteousness. However, the process of representation or manifestation of inner *ren* as outer *li*-action is always complicated by the changing socio-cultural context(s). One needs knowledge and experience in order to properly understand this changing context, and this process of reflection and judgment is called *zhi* (wisdom). In the context of Confucian self-cultivation, then, not only must innate *ren*-humaneness be manifested in/as concrete, *li*-proper social actions or rituals, but *zhi*-wisdom must be used to judge which social actions are *yi*- righteous.

The Confucian Self-Other(s) Duality and Individual Self-Cultivation

The Individual dimension in Hwang's model, then, is related to the fundamental instincts and needs of human beings. In the *Liyun* chapter of the *Liji* (*Classics of Rites*) it is said that "The things which men greatly desire are comprehended in meat and drink and sexual pleasure; those which they greatly dislike are comprehended in death, exile, poverty, and suffering. Thus, liking and disliking are the great elements in men's minds (*Liyun* Ch.19)" (Legge, 1885)[11]. Here we have a clear duality of physical pleasure and physical pain or suffering, where these further imply the duality of "liking" and "disliking" on the psychological level.

In the *Mengzi*, there is a famous dialogue on the nature of human beings (or human being). Gaozi said that "to enjoy food and sexual desire is the nature of human being(s)," but Mengzi claimed that this is just one part of human nature. The difference, he said, between human nature and animal nature is that human beings have *ren*-humanity (benevolence) and thus a sympathetic or "commiserating mind": "All men have a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others[12]." In other words, for Mengzi and the Confucian scholars this commiserating mind (*ren*-mind) is the foundation of the social order of Confucian society. Here we see that fundamental needs (e.g., for food and sex) are, in addition to being apparently more animalistic, are oriented toward *Individuals* (the self and the objects of its desires), while the *ren*-mind or benevolent mind has a humanistic orientation precisely because it has a *social* orientation—where here we may more likely think of Hwang's *Person*.

Here, however, the question arises: If both of these orientations (individual and social) may express the fundamental nature of human beings, then how does the outer (psychological) self-regulate the conflict between them in the inner psyche-self? We might want to set this question alongside one which arises from a passage in the *Liyun* of the *Liji* (*Classics of Rites*): "What are the feelings of men? They are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, and liking. These seven feelings belong to men without their learning them" (Legge, 1885). However, if such emotions are natural to human beings, does not their proper expression still need to be cultivated? And if so, how—in the Confucian context—does this emotional education work?

In the *Zhong Yong* of *Liji* (*the Classics of Rites*) we have: "While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of Equilibrium. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of Harmony" (Legge, 1885)[13]. In other words, even when various confused or conflicting feelings begin to arise out of a completely peaceful or "empty" mind—where the latter term may seem to more easily fit Daoism and Buddhism, and the practice of meditation—in the Confucian

[8]Regarding cultural inclusion theories and the concepts of cultural morphostasis and cultural morphogenesis, please also see Archer (1995) and Hwang (2015, p. 38).

[9]Regarding the *Ren-Li* issue in the *Analects*, please see Wu (2013).

[10]According to the author's analysis of the *Analects* and *Mengzi*, the four terms *Ren*, *Yi*, *Li*, and *Zhi* only appear together in the *Mengzi* 6 times, while they cannot not be found together in the *Analects*. In the latter, only *ren* and *li* often appear in the same passage. Please see Wu (2013).

[11]The relevant document retrieved from http://ctext.org/liji/li-yun.

[12]Mengzi used a well-known example to show this. For the relevant explanation, please see Wu (2013).

[13]The relevant document was retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/zhong-yong.

context a well-cultivated Self or Psyche can still regulate and harmonize them.

In the traditional Confucian classics the teaching of poems and music was highly valued. Confucius said in the *Jinjie* of *Liji* (*The Classic of Rites*): "When you enter any state you can know what subjects (its people) have been taught. If they show themselves men who are mild and gentle, sincere, and good, they have been taught from the *Book of Poetry* (*Shi*). If they have a wide comprehension (of things), and know what is remote and old, they have been taught from the *Book of History* (*Shu*). If they be large-hearted and generous, bland and honest, they have been taught from the *Book of Music* (*Yue*)[14]." As a humanist, Confucius believed that the cultivated man's emotional feelings will be well-expressed. He said that "The poem of *Guanju* in the *Book of Poetry* (*Shijin*) is expressive of enjoyment without being licentious, and of grief without being hurtfully excessive (*Lunyu* 3.20) (Legge, 1861)[15]." Moreover, "In the *Book of Poetry* (*Shijing*) there are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in one sentence—'Having no depraved thoughts' (*Lunyu* 2.2)" (Legge, 1861)[16].

In addition to the teaching of poems or literature, the Confucian teaching also emphasized music education. As the *Yuji* of the *Liji* (*The Classics of Rites*) said: "All modulations of the voice spring from the minds of men. When the feelings are moved within, they are manifested in the sounds of the voice; and when those sounds are combined so as to form compositions, we have what are called airs. Hence, the airs of an age of good order indicate composure and enjoyment (Legge, 1885)[17]. Confucius also said that "It is by the Odes (*shi*-Poetry) that the mind is aroused. It is by the rules of *li*-Propriety that the character is established. It is from Music (*yue*) that the finish is received (*Lunyu* 8.8) (Legge, 1861)[18]. In other words, the Confucian teaching emphasized literature, poetry and music education in order to *harmoniously* regulate the instincts and the natural feelings of human beings.

Another significant issue regarding the aspect of the individual is this: the physical life of the individual has temporal limits, and we are naturally conscious of these temporal limits and of the unexpected events which we will inevitably encounter in our lives. In the *Analects* Confucius sighed sadly when he heard that one of his students was dying. "The sickness is killing him," he said. "It is the appointment of Heaven, alas! That such a man should have such a sickness! That such a man should have such a sickness! (*Lunyu* 6.10)" (Legge, 1861)[19]. In other words, in the real world there is no guarantee that a good man will be rewarded with good fortune; life is filled with unexpected developments. Then, how can one continually live well in the world?

According to the Confucian teaching, although our lives are limited by our physical, temporal and social situation, one still can take the time to create a meaningful life for him/herself. Such a life is of course constituted within the self-others context of our social interactions, where to some degree such interactions may be more predictable than spatial and temporal changes or disruptions. Thus, given our temporal (and spatial) limits, we should take the time to develop and sustain meaningful relationships with others, including our family members, partners, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. As Confucius says in the *Analects*: "While his parents are alive, the son may not go abroad to a distance. If he does go abroad, he must have a fixed place to which he goes (*Lunyu* 4.19) (Legge, 1861)[20]. Of course, creating a meaningful life through "education" or through "cultivating the next generation" are also regarded as significant ways of going beyond one's limited physical life[21].

Learning As Self-Cultivation of the Person within the Confucian Social Matrix

In Confucian relations, a person can play several social roles, e.g., those of father/mother, son/daughter, husband/wife, friends, superior/subordinate in the modern period (or monarch/courtier in the ancient period), etc. A well-cultivated person has to learn to manifest the proper behavior in various social-interaction contexts by playing various social roles. Here the problem is that of how to *judge* which kind of social actions are proper *(li*-propriety) or right (*yi*-rightousness) within given social interaction. According to Confucian ethical doctrine, the fundamental moral standard of *ren*-virtue or *ren*- humanity could be expressed or represented in various forms of *li*-proper actions within different socio-cultural contexts (Wu, 2013). In other words, *ren*-virtue could also be expressed or represented in various forms of social action. In the traditional Confucian classics, there are particular ways to cultivate a person who has the wisdom to judge and enact *li*-proper actions within ever-changing social contexts.

The main issue when it comes to the cultivation of persons is that of self-environment interaction. A person is born into a given society, one itself constituted by long-established historical-cultural forms with their own particular series of codes and social rituals. In the Confucian society, this means that there is a sum total of all *li*-proper forms which are based upon those moral principles of *ren*-humanity; the latter have been described by Hall and Ames as a "social grammar" or as the "underlying syntax of community" (Ames and Rosemont, 1998 p. 51; Hall and Ames, 1998).

According to the *Liji* (*The Classic of Rites*), teaching and learning the proper social behavior involve hierarchical steps, i.e., moving from the more to the less familiar in one's life experience, from simpler to more complicated social actions. As the *Xueji* (*Lessons for Learning*) said: "The learners could not transgress the order of study (imposed on them; Legge, 1885)." Thus, "as for the craftsman who repaired the ironware, his son should learn to sew a fur coat first, then he can learn how to put the soft hot materials on the ironware; as for the craftsman who produced the well bows, his son should learn how to weave the soft bamboo to make a dustpan[22]." In other words, the learning process should

[14]Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/jing-jie
[15]Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/analects/ba-yi
[16]Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/analects/wei-zheng
[17]Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/yue-ji
[18]Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/analects/tai-bo
[19]Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/analects/yong-ye
[20]Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/analects/li-ren
[21]For a more detailed account of the relevant discussion see (Wu, 2016).
[22]Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/xue-ji

follow the learners' basic capacities, and thus should proceed step by step. A similar description appeared in the *Xueji* (*Lessons for Learning*):

> "If a student do not learn (at college) to play in tune, he cannot quietly enjoy his lutes; if he do not learn extensively the figures of poetry, he cannot quietly enjoy the odes; if he do not learn the varieties of dress, he cannot quietly take part in the different ceremonies; if he do not acquire the various accomplishments, he cannot take delight in learning. Therefore, a student of talents and virtue pursues his studies, withdrawn in college from all besides, and devoted to their cultivation; or occupied with them when retired from it, and enjoying himself" (Legge, 1885)[23].

In other words, the learner should learn the basic knowledge and skills needed in various social contexts *within the same and similar contexts*, and then he can learn more complicated forms of knowledge and more complex skills.

The strategies of "modeling learning" and "learning by doing" are also widely adopted for teaching a person the various roles he or she may need to play in particular modes of social interaction. As the *Xueji* (*Lessons for Learning*) says: "The suitability of the lessons lies in their adaptability to circumstances; and the strength of the influence of examples lies in their relevance to the situation (Legge, 1885)"[24]. However, for beginning learners it may be difficult to fully grasp the spiritual force of the *ren*-humanity embedded in the various *li*-proper social actions, social relations or more generally the "social grammar." Therefore, the need to learn the ethical principles by engaging in the relevant social activities (or social relations) is continually stressed by Confucian teaching. For example, in the *Analects*: "If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous; if, in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if, in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if, in his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere—although men say that he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has. (*Lunyu* 1.7)." (Legge, 1861)[25].

Moreover, inasmuch as the process through which the *ren*-humane mind is realized or expressed in concrete *li*-proper social actions is a dynamic one, there are various ways in which it may be displayed or illustrated. Therefore, the ways of teaching which appear in the Confucian classics often tend to include a number of possible social actions as the empirical examples to be looked at, and the emphasis is on flexibility and open-mindedness. That is, the student should learn how to judge which mode of behavior will be best in any given social interaction (or any given situation). As the *Xueji* (*Lessons for Learning*) tells us: "In a superior man's (a sage's) teaching, he leads and does not drag; he strengthens and does not discourage; he opens the way but does not conduct to the end (without the learner's own efforts). Leading and not dragging produces harmony. Strengthening and not discouraging makes attainment easy. Opening the way and not conducting to the end makes (the learner) thoughtful" (Legge, 1885)[26]. This teaching and learning process is based upon the *ren*-benevolence of both teachers and leaners which, as a common bond, unites them. It gives the learners enough social space and inner reflection to cultivate their ideal Selves, where here we may think again of this Self in the light of Hwang's social Person and also his biological Individual.

Hwang's Mandala Model of the Self and the Confucian Praxis of Self-Cultivation

The self, of course, needs to know how to be pragmatic, to take action. As the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong Yong*) says: "*Zhi*-knowledge/wisdom,*ren*-humanity/ benevolence, and *yong*-bravery, these three are the virtues universally binding. And the means by which they carry these duties into practice is singleness." That is, these three virtues are embodied in a single social action.

According to the Confucian teaching, we need to know how to choose the right direction, the right course of action, the one that will serve best to make our lives meaningful. Yet if one sincerely reflects on one's own *ren*-mind, then one will be able, step by step, to perform those social actions that are most proper to her/himself. That is, we cannot know how to perform these actions only through our pre-existing embedment in society but must look into ourselves, into our own *ren*-minds, to know this. Therefore, our education must allow us to cultivate ourselves, must give us, or rather allow us to discover, a space within ourselves where or through which we can enrich our own lives, make them meaningful.

As for the art of teaching, Mengzi distinguishes these five levels:

> There are five ways in which the superior man effects his teaching. There are some [students] on whom his influence descends like seasonable rain. There are some whose virtue he perfects, and some of whose talents he assists the development. There are some whose inquiries he answers. *There are some who privately cultivate and correct themselves.* These five ways are the methods in which the superior man effects his teaching (Legge, 1895)[27].

The best teaching is thus like a seasonable rain which nourishes students, and more generally which nourishes all beings in the world so that they may grow naturally. Therefore, we may say that Confucian teaching is not only very compassionate but—like the rain that nourishes a fertile field—also very open and free. It cultivates one by giving one enough personal—and individual—space, enough *ren*-humanity or *ren*-benevolence, to self-reflect and transform one's inner knowledge and wisdom into a worthy and fulfilling social praxis.

Hwang's Model, Meditation, Confucianism

The Mandala Model of the Self gives us the interaction or "overlapping" of the Individual—who/which may include not only what he/she has learned about the outside world but also his/her innermost depths of thinking and reflection, perhaps even self-reflection or meditation—and the Person, who/which

[23] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/xue-ji
[24] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/xue-ji
[25] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/analects/xue-er
[26] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/xue-ji
[27] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i

embodies the individual's participation in a larger group, a family or community, or society. As an active member of this larger group, one may choose a suitable job or career or other form of social action, based both on what he/she has already learned and on his/her ongoing experience of life in the world (in the society) (Eckensberger, 2012; Hwang, 2014, p. 42).

However, in order to make proper judgments and perform well in various social interactions, one may also need to learn how to transform his/her knowledge in the process of becoming-a-person. In the Confucian classics, which greatly influenced Hwang, we find a series of teaching and learning procedures whose purpose is to guide the self *to regulate its inner conflicts and its outer social relations* while maintaining a harmony between these two domains. As for the pursuit of knowledge, the Confucian teaching generally emphasized the hierarchal order of learning—moving from easier to more difficult subjects, from concrete life experiences to more abstract principles. In the *Xueji* (*Lessons for Learning*) of the *Liji* (*Classic of Rites*):

> According to the system of ancient teaching, for the families of (a hamlet) there was the village school; for a neighborhood there was the *xiang* (a kind of school); for the larger districts there was the *xu* (bigger than a *xiang*); and in the capitals there was the college. Every year some entered the college, and every second year there was a comparative examination..... In the ninth year, when [the students] knew the different types of subjects, had gained a general intelligence (wisdom), and were firmly established and would not fall back, they were said to have made great attainments (Legge, 1885)[28].

The above passage describes the hierarchical learning order, where the last step is the most difficult: the transformation of knowledge into wisdom. In fact, at this point the Confucian teaching particularly emphasizes "reflection." There is a series of procedures for attaining wisdom step-by-step through self-reflection. In the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*) of the *Liji* (*Classic of Rites*), there is a paragraph describing this process in detail:

> The point where to rest being known, the object of pursuit is then determined; and, that being determined, a calm unperturbedness may be attained to. To that calmness there will succeed a tranquil repose. In that repose there may be careful deliberation, and that deliberation will be followed by the attainment of the desired end. Things have their root and their branches. Affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in the *Great Learning* (*Da Hsueh*) (Legge, 1885)[29].

Here we see the movement back to one's inner self or mind, to a state of tranquil repose—comparable perhaps to the Hindu or Buddhist meditative state—which makes possible "careful deliberation" and thus "the attainment of the desired end."

After this transforming of his knowledge into wisdom, then, the student will be able to judge the rightness and wrongness of social actions. The *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Doctrine of Moderation*) (*Zhong Yong*) in the *Liji* (*Classic of Rites*) says: "He who attains to sincerity is he who chooses what is good, and firmly holds it fast. To this attainment there are requisite the extensive study of what is good, accurate inquiry about it, careful reflection on it, the clear discrimination of it, and the earnest practice of it" (Legge, 1885)[30]. That is, once one can carefully reflect and then clearly distinguish right and wrong, the next step is to sincerely practice what is right. If one can often do this, then he or she will have a happy life.

In terms of the Confucian *Analects* (*Lunyu*), this means that one (a student) with a *ren*-humane mind will naturally (spontaneously) know how to perform *li*-proper actions in the society. Confucian knowledge, then, is based on a moral orientation (ethical distinctions), and not—like cognitive knowledge—on the distinctions made by our senses, our sense perception. In fact Neo-Confucian scholars in the Song dynasty (960–1279 AD), such as Chang Zai or Cheng Hao, distinguished cognitive knowledge (*wen jian zhi zhi*, 聞見之知) from moral knowledge (*de xin zhi zhi*, 德行之知), and they also said that moral knowledge provides us with a foundation that is more general or universal than that provided by cognitive knowledge. In other words, we should first determine whether something we have learned or created *via* our senses has a moral meaning or purpose before we go ahead to base our actions on it[31]. Finally, then, our wisdom is grounded in our moral knowledge, and our primary goal is to transform our knowledge into wisdom, which is what guides our actions.

In fact, in ancient Confucian culture there are two main stages in the pursuit of self-cultivation: the "inner sage (内聖)" and "outer kingdom (外王)." The "inner sage" refers to the process of inner moral development, while the "outer kingdom" refers to the process of outward social development: here one's social development is regarded as the further fulfillment of his or her moral development. In the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*) of the *Liji* (*Classic of Rites*), we have these two stages: "Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated" (Legge, 1885)[32].

The above is seen as inner self-cultivation, which guides one to develop his/her own inner moral discrimination or moral knowledge to know what actions are right or wrong. However, only knowing what is right or wrong is not enough. One needs to further realize this moral knowledge by following the steps of "outer kingdom" to make the world better. These steps are found in the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*) of the *Liji* (*Classic of Rites*): "Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed. Their States being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy" (Legge, 1885)[33].

[28] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/xue-ji
[29] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/da-xue
[30] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/zhong-yong
[31] Obvious examples are cases involving the use of atomic bombs in war (or even the testing of them on remote Pacific islands), or more recently issues regarding national security that have arisen from the creation of the Internet. These inventions were, of course, a product of the physical sciences.
[32] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/da-xue
[33] Retrieved from: http://ctext.org/liji/da-xue

This process of reaching the "outer kingdom" of self-cultivation could be regarded as moral-based social development and as "outer representation" in the Mandala model. Here, as the "inner sage" stage transforms into the "outer kingdom" stage, it needs wisdom to judge which is the most proper form of behavior or knowledge. Yet this transformation from "inner sage" to "outer kingdom" may also be understood as the transformation of inner self-reflection (of the reflective mind) into outer cognition (the outer cognitive mind).

Mou's Meditation/Cognition Opposition, His Awareness of Unexpected Developments, and Self-Society-Cosmos-*Tian*

Self-reflection or meditation is an inner operation of the mind which is peaceful, silent, beyond the subject-object distinction; in contrast, in cognitive learning the mind is oriented toward the outside world and needs the cognitive knowledge provided by the five senses. However, it is not so clear that Hwang's Mandala model of the self, which can clearly account for inward meditative thinking and outward social awareness or social thinking, can also account for or encompass cognitive thinking. The well-known Neo-Confucian scholar Zhongshan Mou, who also influenced Hwang, claims that self-reflection (or meditation) and cognitive learning are not only different mental operations, but that they are mutually exclusive–we cannot engage in both at the same time. Yet he thought that today one also needs scientific knowledge in order to fulfill his/her moral ideals. This means a self-transformation process that moves from inner self-reflection to the outer cognitive mind (Mou, 1980, pp. 44–62).

However, while Hwang was influenced by Mou in some ways, it is not clear that Hwang's Mandala model can enable, account for, serve as a foundation for the acquiring of empirical scientific knowledge. On the other hand, it is also true that Mou, who was influenced by Hegel as well as Kant, believed that no objectivity is possible apart from subjectivity, and he may seem to have ultimately emphasized subjectivity insofar as he believed in an ultimate reality (*benti*, 本體), and—like the classical Confucians—believed that human morality is ultimately validated by the "Way of Heaven"(*Tiandao*), the ultimate moral principle. Moreover, Mou claims that a person's uncomfortable reaction to crime and degeneracy indicates the existence of a moral consciousness, which he regards as the inner essence of human beings (Mou, 1990, pp. 37–56).

Coming back to Hwang and his Mandala model, while Inner Balance could clearly be correlated with, or be the goal of, meditation, it is not so clear that Outer Manifestation can be correlated with cognitive thinking/learning/knowledge. The correlation in the model of Knowledge/Wisdom with the Individual may also seem to suggest a priority to private, inward meditation, whose opposite or "other side" may not be cognitive thinking or learning but rather that same social harmony (via the Person) which the original Confucius would correlate with *Tian* (Heaven) and the *Tian Dao*. Thus, while it is clear that—as regards the Mandala model—individuals, families and communities today might want to "keep the whole model," it is not so clear that cognitive and empirical subjects such as mathematics and the sciences could be included within it[34].

Moreover, as for Ethics, it could be argued that the concept of "morality" in Chinese philosophy originates from what Zhongshan Mou calls "the awareness of unexpected developments, or existential anxiety" (*you huan yi shi*, 憂患意識)[35]. On the individual level the self is always already aware of its *temporal limitations*, for human life is short, temporally very limited within a vast and changing cosmos[36], but now, as we are speaking of morality within the context of Neo-Confucian thought, we are already understanding this sense of life's contingency, uncertainty, finitude as it is experienced on a social level (Mou, 1990, pp. 16–18). The self as an Individual has to deal with individual needs and, as a Person, to deal with social needs, with the obligations and proper forms of behavior that arise with social relationships[37]. Here then the "Confucian awareness of unexpected developments" (*you huan yi shi*) can be seen as a form of anxiety experienced on both the individual and social level, but the latter is clearly seen by (Neo-) Confucianism as taking priority.

For one thing, while each self as an Individual and thus (in Hwang's model) as a biological entity may be concerned about physical (biochemical) survival, each self as a Person and thus as a member of society may be concerned with something that seems far more momentous—the survival or continuation of the whole society (which would also ensure his/her continuation as a Person). After all, it would be difficult for someone to create a meaningful life for him/herself if there seemed to be a lack of harmony or meaning or happiness in the whole society. It is also possible to see this the other way around, and say that each individual must be well-ordered if the whole society can itself

[34]However, if we consider Huang's discussion of cultural inclusion theories and the concepts of cultural morphostasis and cultural morphogenesis, then, we can say that the Mandala model is a universal model which can be applied to various cultural systems. If we apply Piaget's concept of adaptation, which is related to the concepts of assimilation and accommodation, to a developing cultural system, we may say that once a cultural system cannot adapt to a new experience, such as western cognitive thinking, by assimilation, then it may develop its schema by means of accommodation, that is, by absorbing new cultural experiences. For example, some Confucian scholars in modern China and Japan suffered from western aggression beginning in the nineteenth century; therefore (as we know from a series of documents) they set out to acquire cognitive, even scientific knowledge in order to save their countries. Here their desire to absorb western knowledge could be regarded as a moral decision to pursue self-cultivation, and thereby transform (their) inner transcendence into outer transcendence, fulfilling the ideal Self. For the relevant research, please see Hwang (2015, p. 38); and Wu (2009, pp. 309–328).

[35]This anxiety may be similar to that of Heidegger (*angst*) and existentialism, except that now we are already looking at this awareness and this anxiety as they are experienced by the whole society.

[36]Laozi said: "What makes me liable to great calamity is my having a body (which I call myself); if I had not the body, what great calamity could come to me? (Laozi Ch. 13)" (Legge, 1891).

[37]For further discussion of the time-engaged self as individual and as social self, see also Cheng (2004). Regarding the relevant arguments, please see also Wang et al. (1989, pp. 1–78.) In Chapter 1, entitled "the ideal of human life," Wang claims that as one is aware that human life has an objective limit, he/she needs to undertake a series of self-cultivation processes to realize his/her ideal Self. In Chapter 2, "The limitations of our existing life," Zheng discusses how (Neo-)Confucian scholars overcame various difficulties to extend their limited physical lives into permanent spiritual ones.

be in a state of harmony. Thus, in a famous passage from the beginning of a Confucian Classic, *Daxue* (*Great Learning*), we read:

"Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy. From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides. It cannot be, when the root is neglected, that what should spring from it will be well-ordered" (Legge, 1885).

Of course, if the "Individual" (in the model) inevitably suffers from anxiety regarding his/her own existence, then the Person may also suffer from a different kind of anxiety regarding the whole family or whole Society. If the actual life of the Individual is at stake, then so is the actual "life" of the Society—its well-being, harmony, ability to avoid war, and so continue to enjoy a Peaceful state[38]. A poor beggar may die of hunger in the streets of a city whose inhabitants do not care about him or her, just as a whole city may tend to disappear if all its citizens are being killed or starving to death in a terrible time of war and/or famine.

Both Hwang and Mou, who as Confucians have a solid background in classical Confucianism, of course stress the ultimate need for a sort of spiritual transcendence which goes beyond both the Individual and the Person, the self and society—and the need for this sort of transcendence might seem to be felt especially in times of social chaos, as for example, once again, in times of terrible war or famine. This giving of priority to a fully transcendent level, beyond both individuals (persons) and the whole society, tends to support the idea of the greater importance of Whole. Here we may think of religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, Daoism, and perhaps also Near-Eastern religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In fact, while the ancient Chinese conception of *Tian* (Heaven) implied at first the supernatural or religious power of Fate (the *Tian Ming,* Decree of Heaven) and then the power of political forces ("imperial decrees"), it had become for Confucius, in the sixth-century AD, an ideal that was at once personal, social and fully transcendent, that is, in some sense "divine." The individual, his society and his ancestors were all seen as a manifestation of *Tian*.

Tian for Confucius in the later Zhou dynasty was thus paradoxically both an immanent and a transcendent concept, for now everyone had the right to receive the "Decree of Heaven." That is, if one could truly understand and appreciate what *Tian* had conferred upon him—his essentially good human Nature, his Self—and could then go on to fulfill—through his social actions and social relationships—his own potential, his own true Nature in the society—we could say he was following the will or spirit of Heaven. As Confucius said, *Tian* gives birth to all things on earth equally and yet lets each one of them "arise differently" (Wu, 2015), Thinking in terms of Hwang's Mandala model, then, we could say that once the Self can regulate *its inner conflicts and its outer social relations*, transforming its moral knowledge into wisdom, then it/she/he will be able to completely develop and make use of his/her talents in the society as well, in a certain sense, as in the cosmos. We could say that this person has then fully realized within him/herself—and also has seen or understood as being the "decree of Heaven"—that which Hwang tries to encapsulate with, within and through his Mandala model.

CONCLUSION

Kwang-Kuo Hwang, in his Mandala model of the self, is influenced by the ancient Chinese Confucian conception of human life as an open field, so that our cultivating of this field is really our own self-cultivation—for after all, our self was formed out of this wider field and as such it (our self) can still be further cultivated. We will also recall that, for Hwang, the Person (at the top of the circle) belongs to the sociological domain, playing various social roles within society, while the Individual (at the bottom) belongs to a purely biological and physical level as an individual being within nature. Correlated with Person and Action/Praxis on the top and on the right, we also have "outer representation" in the top right corner of the square; correlated with Individual and Knowledge/Wisdom on the bottom and on the left, we also have "inner balance" in the bottom left corner. As for the praxis of "cultivating the self or Self," this is of course the function of schools, of education.

Here it is clear that Hwang's Mandala model may capture or express the basic framework, contours, vectors according to which one may fulfill or realize his/her need for self-understanding, both as a private Individual and a social Person, through both inward meditative thinking and outward social engagement, social action. After all, the pictorial form of the model suggests a series of overlapping *fields to be cultivated*. Here we might think first of *self-cultivation,* but may also think of "education" which comes from the Latin *educare*—to draw out, bring up, rear, raise (a child). Self-cultivation (self-education) is one thing, but schools are places that "cultivate" (educate) young people, teaching them various subjects but most fundamentally, perhaps, helping them to develop (cultivate) themselves, to grow, both as private Individuals and as social Persons, where the "sociality" would already seem to imply "as moral Persons."

Zhongshan Mou, in addition to his conception of the "self-negation of consciousness" (*lian zhi zhi zi wou kan xian*), emphasizes "the awareness of unexpected developments" (*you huan yi shi*), that is, the Individual's awareness of the spatial and temporal limitations of his/her own life, his/her own finitude, and the utter unpredictability of life, of the future. Yet this awareness may well force the Individual to choose which courses of action to take in life, to determine which actions would be moral, wise, humane, socially correct, and socially beneficial—in other words, force him to become (also) a Person. To be an ideal modern person from the (Neo-)Confucian perspective, one may need to follow two paths—to gain an objective understanding (through perception and objective conscious awareness) of one's role, one position, or location in the world (as Individual and person), and also (through an emptying of the mind) to follow the Tian Dao, Way of Heaven.

[38]Here one might think of the mass anxiety felt by Clinton supporters, and the widespread rioting in the streets—threatening to create disorder throughout the whole society and put its own peaceful and orderly future at risk—in the wake of Trump's winning of the recent presidential election in the USA.

Thus, though (Neo-)Confucianism may seem at first to give a priority to moral knowledge (or wisdom) over purely sensory or cognitive knowledge, and to the society over the individual, its core concern is really the interrelationship of individual and society, of knowledge (wisdom), and action (praxis)—as should already be clear from Hwang's model. Moreover, communities, societies, and nations themselves tend also to be transient in the long run, and to experience "existential anxiety" about their own (in)stability, their (im)permanence[38]. We can see how the individual's awareness of life's finitude and of the inevitability of death, his/her feeling that our own short lives are finally meaningless within the vast universe of space and immense ocean of time, could suggest a perspective closer to that of Hinduism, Buddhism, and perhaps Daoism than to that of Confucianism.

Yet the latter has had, since the late Shang and early Zhou dynasties (circa 1000–1200 BC), the conception of *Tian* (Heaven) and the *Tian Ming* (Decree of Heaven). This at first seemed mainly to represent the emperor's absolute power but then gradually came to represent, and very clearly by the time of Confucius in the 500's BC, something much closer to a transcendent moral ideal that was present in each individual and also embodied in the whole community, society, empire. Thus, perhaps this transcendent moral, individual and also communal ideal of *Tian* might just embody the fusion of individual/person, wisdom/action, inner/outer, immanent/transcendent. For Confucius himself, who accepted young men from all social classes as his students, the fusion of self/other, the *ren*-humane putting of oneself in the other one's shoes (so that in a sense the duality disappeared) was of course the essential paradox and the very embodiment of wisdom. For him the concept or ideal of *Tian* also captured this idea, this paradox.

[39]We may also think about this anxiety, uncertainty, *disorder* in the realm of political power. "When looking at society we see the importance of the family;... even states in China can be viewed as the family writ large. There is an overall orientation toward conciliation and harmony and a deep-seated anxiety of disorder (*luan*). Even the Confucian golden rule [do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you] is predicated on the notion that order should prevail, that disorder is dangerous, and hence that discipline is necessary" (Tu, 1992, pp. 17–18). Here this golden rule is implicitly being contrasted with the "positive" western one: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

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The Mediating Role of Self-Exertion on the Effects of Effort on Learning Virtues and Emotional Distress in Academic Failure in a Confucian Context

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Previous studies have found that in East Asian Confucian societies, hardworking students are often trapped in a dilemma of enjoying a positive moral image while suffering from emotional distress due to academic failure. This study intends to further explore whether the cultural-specific belief in self-exertion acts as a psychological mechanism to lessen these students' negative emotions. A group of 288 college students in Taiwan were administered a questionnaire to record their responses to past academic failures. The results from structural equation modeling showed that self-exertion functioned as a mediator between the effects of effort on learning virtues and emotional distress. Self-exertion to fulfill one's duty to oneself positively mediated the effect of effort on learning virtues, whereas self-exertion to fulfill one's duty to one's parents negatively mediated the effect of effort on emotional distress. Theoretical and cultural implications are further discussed.

Keywords: self-exertion, effort, learning virtues, emotional distress, Confucianism

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INTRODUCTION

Because East Asian societies in the Confucian circle place much emphasis on effort in academic achievement (Hau and Ho, 2010), students are under great pressure from their parents, teachers, and peers to make effort to pursue academic success (Ang and Huan, 2006; Tan and Yates, 2011). Given the high value of academic achievement in these societies, academic failure tends to be a serious blow to students and cause severe emotional distress. Previous studies have found that effortful Asian students tend to be trapped in a dilemma of enjoying a positive moral image while suffering from emotional distress from academic failure (Fwu et al., 2016b). Despite the positive image, they are often distraught with negative emotions, including loss of face, shame, guilt, anxiety, and depression (Matsumoto, 1991; Mortenson, 2006; Lei, 2009; Tao and Hong, 2014). It is important to inquire if there are any cultural-specific mechanisms that may help these students lessen distressed feelings and cope with academic failure.

Hau and Ho (2010) reviewed evidence on Asian students' motivation for academic achievement and found inconsistency in applying Western achievement motivation theories, such as intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; d'Ailly, 2003), self-efficacy and competence

beliefs (Leung, 2002; Salili et al., 2004), or salience of mastery vs. performance goal (Ho et al., 2007; Ho and Hau, 2008), to East Asian contexts. The roots to such inconsistency may be traced back to the fundamental views about learning. In the Western intellectual tradition, the purpose of learning is to understand the external world, and its process focuses on developing cognitive/intellectual capacity (Li, 2012). On the other hand, in the East Asian cultures, the purpose of learning is to cultivate internal virtues, and its process focuses on perfecting oneself, with an emphasis on diligence and persistence (Li, 2012).

Central to these East Asian views about learning for self-perfection is the cultivation of one's virtues and fulfillment of filial obligations to one's parents (Li, 2002, 2005, 2012). On one hand, an individual needs to improve oneself constantly to possess learning virtues such as diligence, perseverance, and earnestness. On the other hand, a person has to fulfill filial obligations to glorify his or her parents by attaining high level of achievement. Therefore, making the upmost effort to fulfill (self-exertion, *jin-ji*) the dual obligation toward self and parents may serve as both a criterion to evaluate one's learning virtues and a buffer to alleviate negative emotions resulting from failure.

Thus, the present study aims to investigate the role of self-exertion in the relationship among effort, learning virtues and emotional distress. More specifically, we wonder if effort positively predicts self-exertion; second, if effort positively predicts learning virtues and emotional distress; and third, if self-exertion positively predicts learning virtues but negatively predicts emotional distress. In the following sections, specific hypotheses were further developed based on theoretical inferences.

Vertical Achievement Goal in Confucian Cultural Context

According to Chen et al. (2009), there are two types of achievement goal, personal vs. vertical goals, in the Confucian cultural context. A *personal goal* is defined as a goal constructed on the basis of autonomous interest and self-determined choice. Children are given the freedom to pursue or give up such a goal. The pattern of learning motivation and behaviors based on personal goals is rather universal and can be explained by the existing achievement motivation theories. On the other hand, a *vertical goal*, which is based on social expectations, is shaped by cultural and social values. Individuals' performances in the pursuit of these goals will be ranked on a vertical ladder of achievement by others. Individuals are usually under great pressure to compete with their peers to excel and have little choice but to climb higher and higher up the "achievement pyramid" by getting good grades, going to top schools, getting high-paying jobs, acquiring high status and fame, and so on. Individuals are obligated to fulfill their role as filial children to pursue such goals to satisfy parental expectations (Tseng, 2004; Chen et al., 2009; Hwang, 2012; Huang et al., 2015; Fwu et al., 2016a,b). Those who fail to pursue vertical goals tend to feel that they have failed their obligation to their parents. In many East Asian countries, academic achievement is often viewed as a vertical goal for students (King and McInerney, 2014; Tao and Hong, 2014; Fwu et al., 2016a,b). Empirical studies have shown that Taiwanese students perceive a significant difference between academic (vertical) and non-academic (personal) goals. For them, the pursuit of academic achievement is characterized by a stronger sense of role obligation, higher parental expectations, greater social importance, and less personal choice than non-academic pursuits such as hobbies and sports (Fwu et al., 2016a,b). Major achievement motivation theories developed in the West may have overlooked such the culturally unique characteristics of vertical goals, and this may be the reason why the learning performances and behaviors of some East Asian students could not be fully understood.

As vertical goals are so crucial in this cultural context, adults tend to instill the value of vertical goals into the minds of youngsters through the process of socialization at home and in school. In the process, adults' goals for pursuing vertical achievement are so embedded in the consciousness of young children that such goals may be gradually experienced as the children's own goals (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Children learn to adopt the values and beliefs of their parents about the vertical goals and gradually integrate the goals into their own pursuits (Chao, 1994, 1996). In this way, vertical goals become a common pursuit shared by both parents and children. Through realizing such consensually shared goals, children tend to incorporate and adjust themselves to fulfilling their role obligations in order to maintain harmonious relationships with their parents (Triandis, 1989; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Su et al., 1999; Heine et al., 2001).

Two Types of Self-Exertion in the Pursuit of Vertical Achievement Goals

In Confucian thought, self-exertion is the fundamental principle of being a moral person. According to Confucius' Analects, his doctrine can be summarized in one phrase: exerting yourself to the utmost in order to perfect yourself in both the moral and the social realms. On the one hand, individuals should try their best continuously to cultivate virtues and character. On the other hand, they should also do their best to maintain ethical and harmonious relationships with their parents. In this way, self-exertion *(jin ji)* in the Confucian tradition is defined as "exerting the utmost effort" to fulfill the dual obligation to oneself morally and to one's parents socially in pursuit of vertical goals.

Underlying the obligation for parents is the deep-rooted Confucian ethical principle for ordinary people (Hwang, 1999, 2012). Since individuals' lives are the continuation of their parents' physical lives, signifying an inseparable blood bond between parents and children, mutual fulfillment of moral obligations is prescribed: parents should be benevolent, and children should be filial (*fu ci zi xiao*) (Hwang, 1999, 2012; De Bary, 2003; Fwu et al., 2014). Children's education is considered an arena for reciprocal obligation. Benevolent parents should fulfill their duty by providing their children with the best education possible; in return, filial children should do their duty and study hard (Hwang, 1999, 2012).

Moreover, the root to fulfilling one's obligation to the self derives from the need to realize one's optimal potential through

a continuous process of self-perfection. In Confucianism, it is widely believed that an individual's talents and attributes are endowed by Heaven. Only through exerting the utmost effort to do what one is obligated to do can one's potential be realized to the ultimate level, and then one's purpose/destiny of life, which is decreed by Heaven, can be revealed (Hwang, 2012). In this way, an individual has fulfilled his duty to his own life (*jinxi zhixing yi zhi tien*). In the case of pursuing the consensually shared goal of academic achievement, an individual can exert himself to self-perfect in order to realize his full potential, while simultaneously fulfilling this filial obligation to parents. Furthermore, such self-exertion to pursue academic achievement also signifies a character building process. By exerting the utmost effort in academic learning, an individual gradually cultivates such virtuous qualities as concentration, earnestness, diligence, persistence, and endurance of hardship (Li, 2012). Therefore, self-exertion to fulfill one's duty to both one's parents and oneself are closely related because oftentimes fulfilling one's filial duty is a way to accomplish one's personal duty, based on the inseparable relationship between parents and children.

Self-Exertion as a Mediator between Effort and Virtue vs. Distress

Since cultural beliefs, meanings, and values encourage corresponding psychological processes, individuals living in a certain cultural context tend to absorb salient cultural beliefs and develop conforming psychological tendencies (Kitayama and Markus, 1999). Individuals who are brought up in a Confucian cultural system stressing the moral value of self-exertion tend to develop a psychological disposition to appraise the appropriateness of their conduct and regulate their emotions in order to adhere to the cultural norms of self-exertion (Hwang, 2013). According to the teachings of the Confucian classics on self-exertion (*jin-ji*), if an individual fails to achieve his goals, he should not attribute the failure to external factors or blame others; instead, he should reflect on whether he has exerted the utmost effort in the process (*xin you bu de, fan qiu zhu ji*) (Dobson, 1963). If an individual decides he has tried his best, he is assured of having fulfilled his obligations both to self and to parents. Therefore, the degree of effort is the criterion by which one evaluates whether one has exerted oneself, for both one's parents and oneself. The more effort one has put in, the more effort one has exerted. We hypothesize that effort positively predicts exertion to oneself (H1) and to parents (H2).

Furthermore, effort also has an impact on learning virtues and negative emotion. Previous studies indicated that the more effort one expends, the more virtuous qualities, such as diligence and responsibility, one may possess (Fwu et al., 2014, 2016a,b). We hypothesize that effort positively predicts learning virtues (H3). Previous research has also indicated that the more effort one expends, the more emotional distress one may suffer (Fwu et al., 2016b). The emotional distress may result from a lack of competence and violation of the "just world" belief that one should reap what one sows. We hypothesize that effort positively predicts emotional distress (H4).

On top of effort, self-exertion also plays a role in predicting learning virtues and emotional distress. There are two types of self-exertion: one to the self (self-exertion_personal, SE-P), and the other to one's parents (self-exertion_filial, SE-F). The degrees of both SE-P and SE-F are the criteria for evaluating the extent of one's possession of learning virtues. The more SE-P and SE-F one has expended, the more learning virtues one possesses. We hypothesize that SE-P and SE-F positively predict learning virtues (H5-1 and H5-2). Lastly, self-exertion also functions as a regulatory factor to reduce emotional distress. After reflecting on failure, if an individual is assured that he has exerted himself in the process, he will not feel indebtedness, either to himself or to others. Such peace of mind and a clear conscience would help to regulate the negative emotions. The more SE-P and SE-F one has expended, the less distress one may experience. We hypothesize that SE-P and SE-F negatively predict emotional distress (H6-1 and H6-2). In summary, the proposed model illustrated in **Figure 1** demonstrates the hypothetical framework integrating the above hypotheses in this study.

In sum, the aim of the study is to inquire the cultural-specific mechanisms that may help East Asian students lessen distressed feelings and cope with academic failure. More specifically, we intend to examine the role of self-exertion *(jin-ji)* in the relationship among effort, learning virtues and emotional distress. We hypothesize that effort positively predicts self-exertion to self and to parents; effort positively predicts learning virtues and emotional distress; and self-exertion to self and parents positively predict learning virtues but negatively predicts emotional distress.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants and Procedures

Convenience sampling was used to collect data. A total of 317 college students from seven public universities in Taiwan were recruited for the study. Students in Taiwan are admitted to college mainly based on their performance on academic subjects on the competitive college entrance examination. As public universities in Taiwan are generally considered more

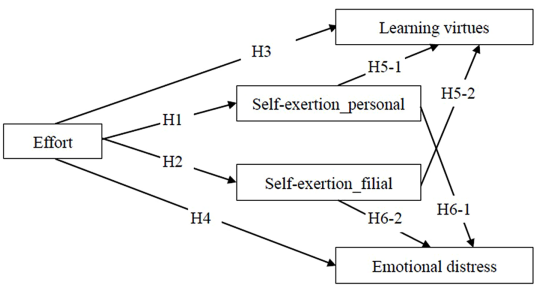

FIGURE 1 | Hypothetical framework.

prestigious, they are more likely to recruit students with higher levels of academic performance. Such students are likely to take academic work seriously. They usually take around 3–6 required courses in their majors each semester. Participants in our study were recruited from four courses offered by these public universities. A questionnaire was administered in class immediately after the release of mid-term grades to gather their immediate recollections of a course with less satisfactory grade compared with other courses. It was assumed that the participants would have fresh memories of and responses to unsatisfactory grades in these courses. The grade distribution of 288 participants was as follows: 48 participants below 30 points, 127 participants between 30 and 59 points, 80 participants between 60 and 69 points, 29 participants between 70 and 79 points, 4 participants between 80 and 89 points, and none with 90–100 points, indicating that the majority of participants did choose courses with relatively unsatisfactory grades. Participants with missing values on the variables were deleted from the analysis. The valid sample size was 288, with 181 females ($M = 21.90$, $SD = 3.75$) and 91 males ($M = 23.90$, $SD = 6.55$).

Instrument

All participants were asked to read and answer a questionnaire after they gave informed consents. The questionnaire included a recollection of failure on mid-term exams and 18 response items regarding the experience of failure. These items were divided into the following 5 subscales. A Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) was used.

Self-Exertion_personal (SE-P)

Self-exertion_personal, based on the aforementioned definition, meant fulfillment of one's responsibility and duty to oneself. It consisted of two items: *"I have fulfilled my responsibility"* and *"I have exerted the utmost effort to fulfill my duty."* Exploratory factor analysis revealed that a single factor accounted for 91.62% of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$). The average of the two items indicated the participant's level of duty fulfillment to him- or herself.

Self-Exertion_filial (SE-F)

Self-exertion_filial, also based on the definition mentioned above, meant fulfillment of one's responsibility and duty to one's parents. It consisted of two items: *"I have fulfilled my obligation to my parents" and "I don't feel indebted to my parents because I have done my duty."* Exploratory factor analysis revealed that a single factor accounted for 74.24% of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.65$). The average of the two items indicated the participant's level of duty fulfillment to his or her parents.

Effort

Effort was defined as intensity in time or energy used to pursue academic achievement and the persistence in that endeavor before the exam. Cooman et al. (2009) developed a work effort scale (WESC) with a three-factor structure, including direction (the behavior a person chooses to perform), intensity (how hard one works to perform the behavior), and persistence (how hard a person keeps trying to perform the behavior successfully). Five items were modified from the WESC to measure the level of effort. The five items were: "*I study hard for good grades*" (direction),*"I spent plenty of time on this subject/activity," "I put a lot of energy into this subject/activity"* (intensity), *"I tried my best to figure out what's difficult to understand,"* and *"I don't give up easily in the face of difficulty on tests"* (persistence). Exploratory factor analysis revealed that the five items represented a single factor, which accounted for 58.56% of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$). The average of the five items indicated the participants' degrees of effort.

Learning Virtues

Learning virtues were defined as positive traits/qualities related to academic learning that are deemed to be morally good. Li (2012) proposed attributes of learning virtues, including earnestness, diligence, concentration, perseverance, endurance of hardship, and steadfastness. Six items were developed as follows: *I think I am a student with (1) commitment (2) diligence (3) perseverance (4) devotion (5) steadfastness (6) a good learning attitude.* Exploratory factor analysis revealed that the six items represented a single factor, which accounted for 78.28% of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$). The average of the six items indicated the participants' perceptions of their own learning virtues.

Emotional Distress

Emotional distress was defined as the level of negative affect derived from failure. Three items were adopted from previous research (Fwu et al., 2016b), including: *After I got my grade on the exam, I felt (1) upset (2) disappointed (3) depressed about my performance.* Exploratory factor analysis revealed that the three items represented a single factor, which accounted for 84.61% of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$). The average of the three items indicated the participant's level of negative emotions.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 presents descriptive and correlational statistics for the variables of self-exertion_personal, self-exertion_filial, effort, learning virtues, and emotional distress.

Test of Path Model

Structural equation modeling was used to test our path model among effort, negative emotion, self-exertion, and learning virtues (see **Figure 2**). The results showed that the model fit the empirical data well [Chi-square of $\chi^2[3] = 0.299$, $p = 0.826$, CFI = 1, AGFI = 0.994, RMSEA = 0.000, SRMR = 0.0095, GFI = 0.999]. The model is presented in **Table 2**, with parameter estimates. Standardized parameter estimates are illustrated in **Figure 2**. Examination of these paths indicated six sets of relations. First, effort was positively correlated with self-exertion_personal ($\beta = 0.697$, $p < 0.001$), self-exertion_filial ($\beta = 0.418$, $p < 0.001$), and learning virtues ($\beta = 0.310$, $p < 0.001$). Second, effort was positively related to emotional

TABLE 1 | Descriptive statistics and inter-variable correlations ($N = 288$).

Variable	*M(SD)*	Correlation coefficient				
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Self-exertion_personal	3.52 (1.33)	–				
(2) Self-exertion_filial	3.34 (1.20)	0.63**	–			
(3) Effort	3.95 (1.13)	0.70**	0.42**	–		
(4) Learning virtues	3.91 (1.09)	0.52**	0.35**	0.52**	–	
(5) Emotional distress	4.05 (1.25)	0.20*	0.36	0.34**	0.15*	–

*$p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

distress ($\beta = 0.396$, $p < 0.001$). Third, self-exertion_personal was positively related to learning virtues ($\beta = 0.301$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, self-exertion_filial was positively related to learning virtues ($\beta = -0.13$, $p < 0.05$). We further applied bootstrapping to substantiate the mediation effect. The results showed that self-exertion_personal as a mediating variable between effort and learning virtues because the bootstrapped confidence interval of indirect effect did not include zero (95% C.I. = [0.109, 0.308]). Similarly, self-exertion_filial acted as a mediating variable between effort and emotional distress because the bootstrapped confidence interval of indirect effect did not include zero (95% C.I. = [−0.112, −0.008]).

In summary, the model provided a good fit to the empirical data. All but two of the hypotheses were supported. Effort positively predicted SE-P (H-1) and SE-F (H-2), and effort also had a positive impact on learning virtues (H-3) and emotional distress (H-4). Furthermore, SE-P positively predicted learning virtues (H5-1), while SE-F (H6-2) negatively predicted emotional distress. The impacts of effort were mediated by self-exertion, in which SE-P was a source of learning virtues and SE-F was a buffer against negative affect. However, two hypotheses were not supported. SE-P could not predict emotional distress (H6-1), probably due to the relatively stronger prediction of SE-F than of SE-P. Similarly, SE-F could not predict learning virtues (H5-2), possibly because of the relatively greater effect of SE-P than of SE-F.

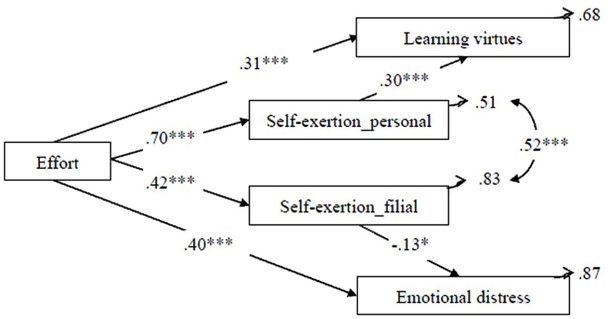

FIGURE 2 | The model of self-exertion as mediators between effort and learning virtues/emotional distress. Only significant paths are included in the figure. Standardized coefficients are reported. ***$p < 0.001$, *$p < 0.05$. Chi-square of $\chi^2[3] = 0.299$, $p = 0.826$, CFI = 1, AGFI = 0.994, RMSEA = 0.000, SRMR = 0.0095, GFI = 0.999.

DISCUSSION

In summary, there appears to be a double-edged sword of effort, indicating that those who expend effort but fail tend to possess learning virtues but suffer from emotional distress. In addition, there is a shielding effect of self-exertion to parents, which reduces emotional distress from failure. The "sword and shield" effect is discussed in the following sections.

Double-Edged Sword of Effort

In his studies on the effect of effort upon failure, Covington (1984, 2000, 2009) found that many students faced a "double-edged sword" between "making efforts to avoid teachers' reproach" and "feeling incompetent owing to expending too much effort." Behind this dilemma is the conflicting beliefs held by students and teachers. While students generally believe that trying too hard indicated a lack of ability (Nicholls, 1989), teachers tend to stress the work ethic and disapprove of students who did not expend enough effort on academic work (Hamilton et al., 1990;

TABLE 2 | Parameter estimates and significant levels for the model.

	Unstandardized coefficient	*SE*	*Standardized coefficients*
Effort→Self-exertion_personal	0.821	0.050	0.697***
Effort→Self-exertion_filial	0.446	0.057	0.418***
Effort→Learning virtues	0.300	0.066	0.310***
Effort→Emotional distress	0.439	0.067	0.396***
Self-exertion_personal→Learning virtues	0.248	0.056	0.301***
Self-exertion_filial→Emotional distress	−0.135	0.063	−0.130*

*$p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Weiner, 1993, 1994). These incompatible beliefs about ability vs. effort in academic achievement create the potential for inter-personal conflict between students and teachers. Covington's notion of a 'double-edged sword' can apply both to failure in academic pursuits, such as math and science, and in non-academic activities, such as sports and the arts.

Unlike the inter-personal conflict between teachers and students in Covington's study, previous studies conducted in Taiwan have shown that high school teachers and students all hold the same belief that effort is an act of virtue in fulfilling one's duty (Fwu et al., 2014). No inter-personal conflict exists between the two groups. However, Taiwanese high school students also suffer from a double-edged sword of effort, an intra-personal conflict between a potential threat to one's image and one's emotional well-being (Fwu et al., 2016b). They are trapped in a dilemma between "feeling bad" (emotional distress) for exerting too much effort and "being bad" (negative image) for expending little effort. The trapping effect of effort is greater in the academic than in the non-academic domain. The present study corroborated these findings with Taiwanese college students and found that effortful college students were also faced with a double-edged sword, developing learning virtues but suffering emotional distress due to academic failure.

Shielding Effect of Self-Exertion on Emotional Distress

Our study found that self-exertion to fulfill one's duty to one's parents has a shielding effect on emotional relief. Although the effect is relatively modest, it does reach statistical significance, implying such shielding effect exists and may open a window to explore this overlooked unique phenomenon. One possible explanation for this unique finding is that academic achievement is a culturally specific vertical goal for students in Taiwan. Parents expect their children to exert themselves to study hard and excel on the achievement pyramid. Although students who work hard but fail do not meet parental expectations of achieving academic excellence, they nevertheless tend to view themselves as partially meeting parental expectations and fulfilling their duty to their parents as filial children. Such positive appraisal of oneself may offset the negative feelings caused by one's inability to achieve academic excellence. Moreover, when an individual believes that he has exerted himself, he will not feel he has failed his parents and may thus experience peace of mind and a clear conscience. It is clear that self-exertion to fulfill one's role obligation to one's parents acts as a shield to partially lessen one's negative feelings.

This shielding effect of self-exertion to parents reflects the unique perspective of role obligation in Confucian culture (Hwang, 1999, 2012). In the Western tradition, which tends to hold an autonomous view of the self, individuals are socialized not to violate others' rights nor to view others' expectations as one's own responsibility, which may have a negative effect of restricting one's autonomy (Bedford and Hwang, 2003; Hwang, 2015). On the matter of academic learning, individuals have the right to choose whether they want to expend effort to pursue academic goals, and their parents' will should not influence their choices. Academic learning is in essence is an individualized matter (Wigfield and Eccles, 1992, 2002; Eccles and Wigfield, 1995; Tao and Hong, 2000). In contrast, in the Confucian tradition, which stresses role ethics in the family (Ames, 2011), individuals are cultivated to play appropriate roles, such as those of parents and children, and to meet obligations inherent in the respective roles in the ethical relationship. For children, fulfilling the role of the filial child is a must, and conforming to parental expectations, an act of filial piety. As pursuit of academic achievement is often viewed as a vertical goal that is expected by their parents, children have little choice but to expend effort to pursue the goal. Thus, academic learning is not an individualized matter but a social obligation (Tao and Hong, 2000, 2014; Li, 2002, 2005; Tseng, 2004; Hau and Ho, 2010). When an individual exerts his utmost effort to study hard academically, he will feel that he has fulfilled his obligation to his parents. Such cognition of being filial and ethical through self-exertion to his parents may provide the individual with a sense of worth that may shield him from the psychological distress of failure.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the data presented are correlational and thus do not imply causal directions. Relations among the variables are likely to be bidirectional. Conclusions concerning cause-and-effect should be drawn with caution. Second, our data were gathered from self-reports based on individuals' intentions, rather than on actual behaviors, and on recollections of past experiences, rather than on responses to current situations. Caution should be exercised in making inferences about individuals' actual behaviors. Third, each participant was asked to select one course grade that was less satisfactory when compared with other required courses. However, since everyone may hold different criteria for assessing level of satisfaction with one's own grade, it is suggested that future research measure directly the subjective self-perception of one's performance on a course to investigate the impact of one's subjective perception on emotional distress. Fourth, since the degree of shielding effect was not high, but reach the level of statistically significant, it is advisable to increase the items measuring the constructs of self-exertion-personal and self-exertion-filial to substantiate the effect of self-exertion on emotional distress. In addition to the emotional effect, it would be interesting to further investigate the relationship between self-exertion and attributional patterns (cognitive), moral sentiment (affective), and future engagement (behavioral). Finally, self-exertion has an effect on learning virtues and emotional distress in academic failure. It would be worthwhile to further explore the degree to which self-exertion is also needed in situations of academic success and its effect on individual psychological processes.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors substantially contribute to the conception, analysis, and interpretation of data for the work; and revise it critically for

important intellectual content; and finally approve the version to be published; and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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High-School Teachers' Beliefs about Effort and Their Attitudes toward Struggling and Smart Students in a Confucian Society

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Previous studies conducted in Western societies showed that instructors' beliefs about intellectual ability affected their attitudes toward students. However, in many East Asian societies influenced by Confucian culture, teachers not only hold beliefs of ability but also two kinds of beliefs about effort: *obligation-oriented belief* (i.e., believing that effort-making is a student's role obligation) and *improvement-oriented belief* (i.e., believing that effort can conquer the limitations of one's ability). This study aimed to investigate the relationships between teachers' effort beliefs and their attitudes toward favoritism, praise, and expectations toward struggling and smart students. The participants were 151 Taiwanese high-school teachers. Results of Structure Equation Modeling showed that (1) teachers' obligation-oriented belief about effort was positively correlated with their favoritism, praise, short-term and long-term expectations of struggling students, but negatively correlated with their favoritism and praise of smart students, (2) teachers' improvement-orientated belief about effort was negatively correlated with their short-term expectation of smart students and favoritism of struggling students, but positively correlated with their praise of smart students, and (3) the entity theory of intelligence was negatively correlated with favoritism and praise of struggling students, but positively correlated with favoritism of smart students. The theoretical and cultural implications are discussed.

Keywords: beliefs about effort, Confucian culture, implicit theory of intelligence, role obligation

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INTRODUCTION

Just as scientists develop theories to interpret the phenomena they investigate, laypersons may develop theories or beliefs about ability and effort. For example, some people believe that a person's ability is something that he/she cannot change much. Others may believe that anyone can improve his/her ability by exerting effort. Furthermore, some people may hold the belief that even if the ability cannot be changed much, one still has a duty to work hard when pursuing certain goals.

In the present paper, we argue that, especially in a society influenced by the Confucian cultural heritage (e.g., Taiwan), people tend to emphasize the value of effort in pursuing specific goals with high social expectations, such as pursuing academic achievements. When pursuing those goals, people may hold two beliefs about effort: an *obligation-oriented belief* (i.e., believing that effort-making is one's role obligation) and an *improvement-oriented belief* (i.e., believing that effort can conquer the limitations of one's ability). We investigated the relationship between teachers' effort beliefs and their attitudes about favoritism, praise, and expectations toward struggling and smart students.

The Implicit Theory of Intelligence

Previous studies showed that people's beliefs about effort and ability may influence their learning motivation. Dweck and Leggett (1988), Dweck et al. (1995), Dweck (1999), and Hong et al. (1999) proposed a model to explain the relationships between learning motivation and the implicit belief in intellectual ability. According to this model, people may hold different implicit theories about the nature of intelligence. Some believe that intelligence is more of an unchangeable, fixed entity (i.e., an entity theory). Others think of intelligence as a malleable quality that can be developed (i.e., an incremental theory). Many studies conducted in Western societies have shown that students' implicit theories of intelligence may affect their learning motivation. In sum, those holding an entity theory, unlike those holding an incremental theory, tend to draw conclusions about their academic ability from setbacks and are more likely to give up or withdraw effort when faced with difficulty (Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Dweck, 1999; Hong et al., 1999; Heine et al., 2001; Blackwell et al., 2007).

Hong et al. (1999) argued that different implicit theories of intelligence are associated with distinct frameworks or "meaning systems." Therefore, a belief in intellectual ability can affect not only learners' motivation but also teachers' attitudes toward their students. In a simulation experiment (Rattan et al., 2012), undergraduate participants first read an article that manipulated their implicit theories of math intelligence. Then they took the role of a seventh grade math teacher and were asked about their attitudes toward a simulated student who scored 65% on the first test of the year. Results showed that instructors holding an entity (versus incremental) theory were more likely to both comfort the student for his/her low math ability (e.g., explain that not everyone is meant to pursue a career in this field) and use "kind" strategies which were unlikely to promote engagement with math (e.g., assigning less homework). In a follow-up study, graduate students who were actually math-related instructors or teaching assistants in undergraduate courses were recruited. The participants were told to imagine that they were working as teaching assistants for an introductory course in their department and asked about their attitudes toward a simulated student who had received a failing grade on the first test of the course. The results were the same; instructors who held a more entity (versus incremental) theory readily expressed significantly lower expectations of this students' future performance based on one low test score and endorsed the comforting and potentially unhelpful practices (e.g., talking to the student about dropping the class).

Two Beliefs about Effort in East Asian Societies

Most studies of the dichotomous model of entity versus incremental theory and its consequences have been conducted in Western societies (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). Whether this model can be generalized to East Asian societies (e.g., Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, and Japan) is an issue required further investigated. Under the influences of Confucian cultural traditions, parents, and teachers in those East Asian societies generally place a tremendous emphasis on the importance of their children or students' academic achievements. Many high school students in those countries attend cram schools to improve their performance of exams, which influence or even determine they can get into top universities (Crystal and Stevenson, 1991; Morris and Sweeting, 1995; Li, 2012). It has been reported that the primary obligations of children and adolescents in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea are considered to be to study hard and to excel in academic performance (Hong, 2001; Li, 2012). Apparently, East Asians place strong emphasis on making effort to achieve academic goals. We argue that, in order to understand the psychology and behaviors of East Asian people pursuing such goals, it is necessary to use the emic approach of cultural psychology to analyze the internal meanings and values within a cultural system (Hong et al., 1999; Hwang, 2012).

Many East Asian societies are culturally and historically rooted in the Confucian tradition, which has a meaning system stressing role-obligations, effort-making, and academic achievement (Chen et al., 2009; Li, 2012; Fwu et al., 2014). The thoughts and behaviors of a virtuous person, as depicted in the Confucian doctrines, should be in accordance with his/her social roles (Ames, 2011; Hwang, 2012), such as the beliefs that "a son should obey his parents" or "a student should study hard." Chen et al. (2009) proposed a "framework of Chinese achievement goals" and argued that, in many East Asian societies, people are expected to continuously expend great effort to achieve a special kind of goals: *vertical goals*. Vertical goals are achievements with high social expectations and are related to the obligation of one's social roles. The performances of individuals in their pursuit of these goals are ranked into a vertical ladder of achievement by others. Individuals are usually obliged to meet the expectations of significant others, such as parents, and compete with their peers to climb up the "achievement pyramid" (Fwu et al., 2014). In many East Asian societies influenced by Confucian values, pursuing academic achievement is often regarded as a student's vertical goal (King and McInerney, 2014).

Some cultural psychologists (Chang, 2000; Shweder, 2000; Hwang, 2012) argued that the operationalization of the psychological constructs had better to be contextualized via the cultural meaning system. However, the influential meaning system of values in a society usually coexists with social institutions (Archer, 1995). For over 1000 years (from ∼600 AD to 1905), China implemented an "imperial examination system" (kē-jǔ) to select government officials. On the one hand, this system assessed scholars on their knowledge of traditional

Confucian classics and instilled Confucian values into the mind of the general public for generations. On the other hand, the system in turns was regarded as an effective method by Confucian scholars to select and promote talented and virtuous persons to be officials (Chan, 2014). Consequently, this examination system not only established the influence of Confucianism, but also became a dominant and fair way for ordinary people to acquire high social status (Hwang, 2012; Li, 2012). The impacts of high-stakes exam and Confucian cultural system may vary among East Asian societies (Park, 2010; Brown and Wang, 2015), however, academic achievement which is usually assessed by exams is still an important vertical goal in Taiwan nowadays (Chen et al., 2009).

Because pursuing vertical goals is regarded as an obligation of one's social role, people tend to believe that it is one's duty to exert oneself and that effort-making is the most important way to improve their performance in the pursuit of such goals. Li (2012) argued that, in the Confucian tradition, the meaning of "learning" entails role obligation and improvement of oneself. A "good" student is a one who has a positive image, one who has the qualities of diligence, earnestness, sincerity, perseverance, steadfastness, and endurance of hardship in learning. These characteristics are all synonymous with "effort" and could be termed as "learning virtues." In other words, "to study hard" is regarded as the obligation of a student. Previous study found that the duty conceptions were strong predictors for Asian students on academic performance (Peterson et al., 2013).

Moreover, effort-making is regarded as a necessary means to improve one's learning. As many popular Chinese proverbs describe, "Learning is like rowing upstream; not to advance is to drop back (xúe rú nì shuǐ xíng zhoū, bù jìn zé tuì)," "practice makes perfect (shú néng shēng qiǎo)," "effort can make up for inability (qín néng bǔ zhuō)," "With persistence, an iron pestle can be ground down to a needle (tiě chǔ mó chéng zhēn)." These beliefs are the reasons why many East Asian parents and teachers constantly encourage their children or students to make effort in academic learning, even if the pupils are already performing well (Li, 2012).

Therefore, we argue that, in societies influenced by the Confucian tradition, people will develop two important beliefs about effort: *obligation-oriented* and *improvement-oriented* beliefs. In academic learning, to hold the obligation-oriented belief about effort is to believe that it is a student's role obligation to make effort in learning. To hold the improvement-oriented belief about effort is to believe that effort can conquer the limitations of one's ability and improve one's academic performance. Furthermore, under the influence of cultural values and from the experiences of their daily lives, laypersons may develop not only one dimension but multiple beliefs about effort and ability at the same time. Hong (2001) found that many Chinese teachers viewed making effort as an indication of lack of intelligence, similar to the view of entity theorists on intelligence. But these teachers also believe that effort, more than intelligence, determines the outcomes of academic performance. In other words, it is possible that a teacher can believe the entity theory of intellectual ability while at the same time accepting to a certain degree the improvement-oriented belief about effort.

Teachers' beliefs about effort and ability could influence their affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes toward learners. Few studies have investigated the relationships between teachers' beliefs about intellectual ability and their attitudes toward students (Hong, 2001; Rattan et al., 2012), and no studies to date have aimed to investigate teachers' obligation-oriented and improvement-oriented beliefs about effort and their relationships with the teachers' attitudes toward students in East Asian societies. In the present study, we measured Taiwanese high-school teachers' beliefs about effort and implicit theories of intelligence and then adopted the situation simulation method used in previous studies (Peng et al., 1997; Hong, 2001; Rattan et al., 2012) to ask participants about their attitudes toward a "struggling student" (i.e., a student who studied hard but performed mediocrely) and a "smart student" (i.e., a student who did not study hard but performed outstandingly). In addition to cognitive (i.e., short-term and long-term expectations toward students) and behavioral attitudes (i.e., praise of students), participants were also asked about their affective attitudes (i.e., tendency of favoritism) toward those students.

Hypotheses of the Present Study

According to the framework of Chinese achievement goals (Chen et al., 2009) and the meaning system of learning virtues in Confucian culture (Li, 2012), the more a teacher believes in the obligation-oriented belief about effort, the more he/she may tend to think of "struggling students" (students who studied hard but performed mediocrely) as fulfilling a student's role obligation and manifesting learning virtues. Moreover, teachers' improvement-oriented belief about effort may be positively correlated with their expectations of struggling students and negatively correlated with those of "smart students" (students who did not study hard but performed outstandingly). Therefore, we hypothesized that: (1) Teachers' obligation-oriented belief about effort was positively correlated with their affective and behavioral attitudes (i.e., favoritism and praise) toward the struggling student (H-1). (2) The improvement-orientation belief about effort was positively correlated with their short-term and long-term expectations of the struggling student (H-2). (3) The improvement-orientation belief about effort was *negatively* correlated with their short-term and long-term expectations of the smart student (H-3).

Furthermore, according to the model of the implicit theory of intelligence (Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Dweck, 1999), we hypothesized that: (4) Teachers' entity theory of intelligence was positively correlated with their favoritism and praise of the smart student (H-4). (5) The entity theory of intelligence was *negatively* correlated with their short-term and long-term expectations of the struggling student (H-5). (6) The entity theory of intelligence was positively correlated with their short-term and long-term expectations of the smart student (H-6).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

A total of 174 high-school teachers participated in this study. However, based on the responses of the manipulation check

items, the data of 22 participants were deleted and not analyzed further. Another participant was deleted because of gender unidentified. Therefore, 151 valid samples were included in the present study (118 females; 33 males; age mean = 38.18, $SD = 8.47$).

Procedures

All participants were asked to read and answer a questionnaire after they gave informed consents. The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part depicted two different students. One was a "struggling student" who studied hard but had mediocre performance. The other was a "smart student" who did not study hard but performed outstandingly. These two students were depicted by their behaviors and performances in academic achievement in the questionnaire. The terms "struggling" and "smart" did not appear in the descriptions of the two students in order to avoid conventional labeling. The description of the "struggling student" was "*Student A is not only attentive and takes notes in class but also does homework seriously and studies very hard. However, the academic performance of Student A is at roughly 35th percentile in the class.*" The description of the "smart student" was "*Student B is not attentive in class, puts little effort into homework, and does not study hard. With just a little bit of studying before exams, Student B is among the top three in the class.*"

After reading the two descriptions, participants were asked to answer four questions about their attitudes toward these two students, respectively: "*I like to be an instructor of this student*" (Favoritism), "*I will praise this student in public*" (Praise), "*I think this student will perform well on the university entrance exam*" (Short-term expectation), and "*I think this student will be an accomplished person in society*" (Long-term expectation). All items were scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Participants were then asked to answer the second part of the questionnaire, which contained three scales on beliefs about effort and intelligence.

Measures

Three items were modified from the Students' Role-obligation Scale (Chen and Wei, 2013) to measure participants' obligation-oriented belief about effort: "*To study hard is a student's duty,*" "*It is a student's responsibility to study hard,*" and "*A student should feel shame when he/she does not study hard.*" All items were scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Five items were developed to measure participants' improvement-oriented belief about effort, e.g., "*One can improve his/her ability with no limitations,*" "*If one makes persistent efforts, his/her ability is unlimited,*" and "*Effort can conquer the limitations of one's ability.*" All items were scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Three items were adopted from the Implicit Theory of Intelligence Scale (Dweck, 1999; Hong et al., 1999; Molden and Dweck, 2006) to measure participants' entity theory of intelligence: "*One has a certain amount of intelligence and really cannot do much to change it,*" "*One's intelligence is something about him/her that one cannot change very much,*" and "*One can learn new things, but one cannot really change his/her basic intelligence.*" All items were scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

There were two manipulation check items in the questionnaire: "*I think Student A is smart*" and "*I think Student B is smart.*" These items were also scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale. If a participant's response on the first item (Student A is smart) was larger than that on the second (Student B is smart), then his/her data were deleted and not analyzed further. This step was taken because such responses might not be based on the descriptions on the questionnaire or the images of the students they perceived did not match what we delivered. Thus, data on 22 participants were deleted and not analyzed in this study.

Furthermore, there were two simple (yes/no) questions in the questionnaire: "*Have you ever taught students like Student A (or Student B)?*" 98.7% of all participants gave the positive response to Student A and 82.6% to Student B. These results indicated that the descriptions of the two kinds of students might be in accordance with teaching experiences of most participants.

RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In order to verify the reliability and validity of the scales of beliefs about effort and intelligence, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of three factors model was conducted. The expectation-maximization analysis was used to estimate missing data. Results of CFA showed that the fitness of the three factors model was acceptable, χ^2 (41) = 99.264, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.42$, CFI = 0.913, TLI = 0.883, RMSEA = 0.097, SRMR = 0.069, gamma hat = 0.93 (Browne and Cudeck, 1993; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Fan and Sivo, 2007; Hooper et al., 2008). The values of composite reliability (CR) of three factors (Obligation-oriented belief = 0.74, Improvement-oriented belief = 0.87. Entity theory of intelligence = 0.78) were all above 0.7 (Hair et al., 1998). The values of average variance extracted (AVE) of three factors (Obligation-oriented belief = 0.49, Improvement-oriented belief = 0.58. Entity theory of intelligence = 0.56) were mostly above 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In sum, the CR and convergent validity of the scales were acceptable.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of participants' three beliefs about effort and intelligence. The correlation between Obligation-oriented and Improvement-oriented beliefs about effort was positively significant ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, the correlation between Obligation-oriented belief about effort and Entity theory of intelligence was also positively significant ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of participants' attitudes (i.e., Favoritism, Praise, Short-term expectation, and Long-term expectation) toward Student A (the struggling student) and Student B (the smart student). Results of 2 (students) × 4 (attitudes) within-subjects MANOVA indicated

TABLE 1 | Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients among the beliefs about effort and intelligence factors.

	Mean	*SD*	Obligation-oriented belief about effort	Improvement-oriented belief about effort
Obligation-oriented belief about effort	4.53	0.87	–	
Improvement-oriented belief about effort	4.23	1.01	0.49***	–
Entity theory of intelligence	3.15	1.07	0.36***	−0.03

*N = 151. ***p < 0.001 (two-tailed).*

TABLE 2 | Means and standard deviations of participants' Favoritism, Praise, Short-term, and Long-term expectations toward Students A and B.

	Student A		Student B	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Favoritism	5.22	0.97	3.80	1.40
Praise	5.39	0.76	3.50	1.44
Short-term expectation	4.19	1.02	4.42	1.03
Long-term expectation	4.55	1.05	4.04	1.07

N = 151.

that the interaction effect was significant, $F(3,450) = 70.10$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.318$. Results of simple main effect analyses showed that participants would rather teach Student A, be more likely to praise Student A in public, and had higher expectations that Student A would be an accomplished person in society than student B ($ps < 0.001$).

Structure Equation Modeling

In order to investigate the relationships among the participants' beliefs about effort and intelligence, an analysis of Structure Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted. The criterion variables were the items of participants' Favoritism, Praise, Short-term, and Long-term expectations of Student A (the struggling student) and Student B (the smart student). The predictor variables were participants' Obligation-oriented and Improvement-oriented beliefs about effort as well as their Entity theory of intelligence. In addition, the participants' genders and ages were included in the model as covariates.

According to the results of CFA, both Obligation-oriented and Improvement-oriented beliefs about effort were correlated with Entity theory of intelligence, therefore these two correlations were included in the SEM model (Cole et al., 2007). Furthermore, because the short-term and long-term expectations for a person should be correlated, and the correlation between participants' Short-term and Long-term expectations for Student A was significant ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$). The same result was obtained for Student B ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, these two correlations were included in the model.

Figure 1 and **Table 3** shows the results of SEM analyses. The results indicated that: (1) Participants' Obligation-oriented belief about effort was positively correlated with their Favoritism and Praise ($\beta s = 0.95, 0.73$, $ps < 0.001$, respectively) of Student A. These results supported H-1 of the present study. (2) Participants' Improvement-orientation belief about effort was not significantly correlated with their Short-term ($\beta = 0.07$, *ns.*) and Long-term expectations ($\beta = -0.13$, *ns.*) of Student A. The H-2 was not supported. (3) Participants' Improvement-orientation belief about effort was negatively correlated with their Short-term expectation ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.001$) but not their Long-term expectation ($\beta = -0.10$, *ns.*) of Student B. These results partially supported H-3. (4) Participants' Entity theory of intelligence was positively correlated with their Favoritism ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$) but not Praise ($\beta = 0.15$, *ns.*) of Student B. The results partially supported H-4. (5) Participants' Entity theory of intelligence was not significantly correlated with their Short-term and Long-term expectations of Students A ($\beta s = -0.11, -0.23$, *ns.*, respectively) and Students B ($\beta s = -0.03, 0.03$, *ns.*, respectively). Therefore, H-5 and H-6 were not supported.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical and Cultural Implications

The present study developed measurements of two beliefs about effort: obligation-oriented and improvement-oriented beliefs. Furthermore, we found that Taiwanese high school teachers' beliefs about effort and intellectual ability had predictive effects on their attitudes toward struggling and smart students. Existing theories about learning motivations and achievement goals developed in Western cultures do not emphasize the construals of obligation-oriented and improvement-oriented beliefs about effort in academic learning. However, these two beliefs may be prevailing in many East Asian societies and have psychological and behavioral consequences.

First, the results of the present study showed that Taiwanese teachers' obligation-oriented about effort could predict their affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes toward students. The obligation-oriented belief could positively predict teachers' favoritism, praise, short-term, and long-term expectations of struggling students and negatively predict teachers' favoritism and praise of the students who did not study hard but performed well. Note that the obligation-oriented belief of effort was a strong predictor for most of teachers' attitudes toward the students who studied hard but performed mediocrely. The patterns of results support the framework of Chinese achievement goals (Chen et al., 2009) and the meaning system of learning virtues in Confucian culture (Li, 2012).

Second, the improvement-oriented belief about effort could positively predict teachers' praise of the smart students, but negatively predict their short-term expectation of the same students. It's interesting that the improvement-oriented belief could also negatively predict teachers' favoritism toward the student who studied hard but performed mediocrely ($\beta = -0.39$, $p < 0.01$). This result may be because that the performance of the struggling students was not in line with the belief that effort can improve one's ability. Therefore, in order to reduce the feeling of dissonance (Festinger, 1957), the more a teacher held the

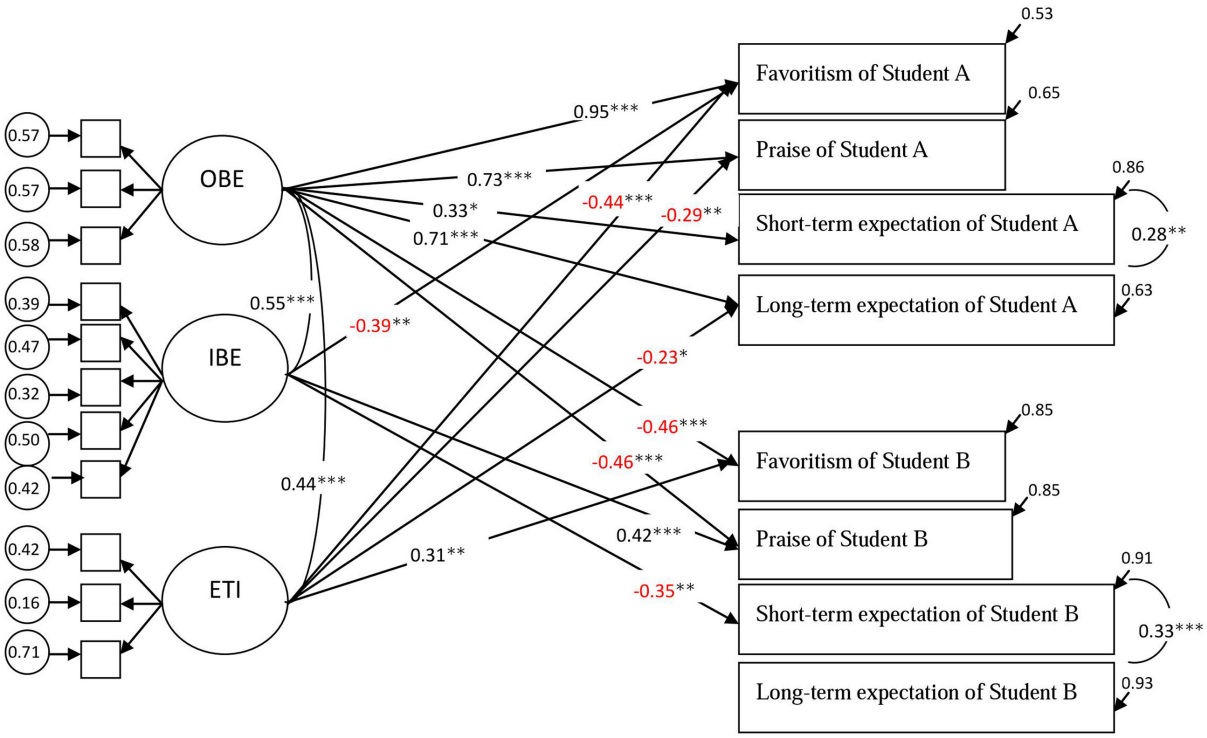

FIGURE 1 | The model of effects of participants' beliefs about effort and intelligence on attitudes toward Student A and Student B. OBE, obligation-oriented belief of effort; IBE, improvement-oriented belief of effort; ETI, entity theory of intelligence. Only significant paths are included in the figure. Covariates (gender and age) were not included in the figure. Standardized coefficients are reported. Negative effects were colored in red. $^{*}p < 0.05$. $^{**}p < 0.01$. $^{***}p < 0.001$. χ^2 (154) = 302.31, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/df = 1.96$, CFI = 0.843, TLI = 0.785, RMSEA = 0.08, SRMR = 0.075, gamma hat = 0.91.

improvement-oriented belief about effort, the less she or he would like to teach the struggling students.

Third, our results showed that teachers' entity theory of intelligence could negatively predict their favoritism, praise and long-term expectation toward struggling students and positively predict their favoritism toward smart students. These results are consistent with previous studies conducted in Western societies (Rattan et al., 2012). However, the results also showed that participants' improvement-oriented belief about effort was not correlated with their entity theory of intelligence ($r = -0.03$, *ns.*). This finding may indicate that the improvement-oriented belief about effort and the entity theory of intelligence are independent construals. A previous study showed that some Chinese teachers believe that effort can facilitate the application of ability while also believing that people who have a high level of ability will not need much effort to succeed (Hong, 2001). Therefore, it is possible that some people can simultaneously believe the entity theory of intellectual ability and also accept the improvement-oriented belief about effort to a certain degree, even though these two beliefs seem contradictory on the surface. The results of the present study provided corroboration for previous researches which revealed that teachers' beliefs can be simultaneous and contradictory (Green, 1971; diSessa, 1988; Brown, 2008).

Fourth, the results showed that the correlation between the participants' obligation-oriented belief about effort and the entity theory of intelligence was positively significant ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$). It is interesting that the predictive effects of these two beliefs on favoritism toward struggling students were both significant, but with different signs (βs = 0.95, −0.44, *ps* < 0.001, respectively). The patterns of the predictive effects were the same on praise of struggling students (βs = 0.73, −0.29, *ps* < 0.001, 0.01, respectively) and favoritism toward smart students (βs = −0.46, 0.31, *ps* < 0.001, 0.01, respectively). Similarly, the correlation between the participants' obligation-oriented and improvement-orientated beliefs about effort was positively significant ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$). The predictive effects of these two beliefs on favoritism toward struggling students were both significant, but with different signs (βs = 0.95, −0.39, *ps* < 0.001, 0.01, respectively). The patterns of their predictive effects were reverse on praise of smart students (βs = −0.46, 0.42, *ps* < 0.001, respectively). These results indicated that teachers may hold these three beliefs simultaneously and the effects of their affective and behavioral attitudes toward struggling and smart students may be opposite. In fact, we informally interviewed some teachers and asked them about their impressions and evaluations of these two kinds of students. Many teachers seemed to have mixed affects and gave uncertain responses, especially toward the students who did not study hard but performed well. On the one hand, they favored the intelligence of these students. On the other hand, they

TABLE 3 | Parameter estimates and significant levels for the model.

	b	*SE*	*t*	*p*	β
OBE→Favoritism of Student A	1.25	0.222	5.61	***	0.95
OBE→Praise of Student A	0.74	0.15	4.91	***	0.73
OBE→Short-term expectation of Student A	0.45	0.19	2.43	0.015	0.33
OBE→Long-term expectation of Student A	1.01	0.21	4.91	***	0.71
OBE→Favoritism of Student B	−0.86	0.27	−3.25	***	−0.46
OBE→Praise of Student B	−0.90	0.28	−3.28	***	−0.46
OBE→Short-term expectation of Student B	0.33	0.19	1.74	0.082	0.23
OBE→Long-term expectation of Student B	−0.02	0.19	−0.09	0.931	−0.01
IBE→Favoritism of Student A	−0.44	0.14	−3.12	0.002	−0.39
IBE→Praise of Student A	−0.13	0.10	−1.32	0.186	−0.15
IBE→Short-term expectation of Student A	0.07	0.13	0.56	0.578	0.06
IBE→Long-term expectation of Student A	−0.16	0.14	−1.17	0.243	−0.13
IBE→Favoritism of Student B	0.20	0.19	1.08	0.278	0.13
IBE→Praise of Student B	0.69	0.20	3.44	***	0.42
IBE→Short-term expectation of Student B	−0.42	0.14	−2.98	0.003	−0.35
IBE→Long-term expectation of Student B	−0.12	0.14	−0.88	0.382	−0.10
ETI→Favoritism of Student A	−0.61	0.17	−3.48	***	−0.44
ETI→Praise of Student A	−0.31	0.12	−2.61	0.009	−0.29
ETI→Short-term expectation of Student A	−0.16	0.15	−1.06	0.288	−0.11
ETI→Long-term expectation of Student A	−0.35	0.16	−2.21	0.027	−0.23
ETI→Favoritism of Student B	0.61	0.23	2.68	0.007	0.31
ETI→Praise of Student B	0.31	0.22	1.37	0.170	0.15
ETI→Short-term expectation of Student B	−0.05	0.16	−0.30	0.767	−0.03
ETI→Long-term expectation of Student B	0.05	0.16	0.30	0.766	0.03
Gender→Favoritism of Student A	0.017	0.169	0.103	0.918	0.007
Gender→Praise of Student A	0.093	0.134	0.697	0.486	0.051
Gender→Short-term expectation of Student A	−0.204	0.192	−1.064	0.288	−0.083
Gender→Long-term expectation of Student A	−0.274	0.182	−1.503	0.133	−0.108
Gender→Favoritism of Student B	−0.212	0.266	−0.795	0.427	−0.063
Gender→Praise of Student B	−0.365	0.273	−1.335	0.182	−0.106
Gender→Short-term expectation of Student B	−0.161	0.200	−0.808	0.419	−0.065
Gender→Long-term expectation of Student B	−0.468	0.207	−2.264	0.024	−0.181
Age→Favoritism of Student A	−0.007	0.008	−0.817	0.414	−0.059
Age→Praise of Student A	−0.011	0.007	−1.713	0.087	−0.125
Age→Short-term expectation of Student A	−0.020	0.009	−2.151	0.032	−0.167
Age→Long-term expectation of Student A	−0.027	0.009	−2.976	0.003	−0.108
Age→Favoritism of Student B	0.018	0.013	1.343	0.179	0.106
Age→Praise of Student B	0.005	0.013	0.410	0.681	0.032
Age→Short-term expectation of Student B	0.001	0.010	0.085	0.932	0.007
Age→Long-term expectation of Student B	0.015	0.010	1.521	0.128	0.122

*OBE, obligation-oriented belief of effort; IBE, improvement-oriented belief of effort; ETI, entity theory of intelligence. Gender and age were included as covariates. ***$p < 0.001$.*

disapproved the laziness of the same students because it showed a lack of learning virtues. These phenomena may indicate that people can hold multiple beliefs about effort and ability, even though these beliefs have opposite effects on their attitudes.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study had several limitations. First, the items measuring each attitude on the questionnaire were few in number. Future studies could measure responses more broadly. Second, the scale of obligation-oriented belief about effort in the present study was specific to the student role and academic learning because we aimed to investigate teachers' beliefs about the learning virtues and role obligations of students. It may be possible to develop scales in the future to measure obligation-oriented beliefs about effort in general or in other specific social contexts; e.g., at home or in the workplace. Third, we only investigated the relationships between teachers' beliefs and their attitudes toward two kinds of students: struggling students (i.e., students who studied hard but performed mediocrely) and smart students (i.e., students who did not study hard but performed outstandingly). It would be more comprehensive if future

studies could investigate other scenarios, such as students with different levels of effort and performance or students who are improving, staying the same or getting worse on effort or performance. Fourth, there were 22 participants responded in manipulation check items that the struggling student is smarter than the one who did not work hard but performed well. It is possible that these participants think "the student who works hard is smart." However, we are not sure if these participants might misunderstand the descriptions of the two students. It would be worthwhile to explore whether individuals' beliefs about effort and ability can influence their interpretations of "smartness" (Hong, 2001). Finally, future studies could cross-culturally compare students' obligation-oriented and improvement-oriented beliefs about effort as well as their relationships with affects, cognitions, and behaviors.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors substantially contribute to the conception, analysis, and interpretation of data for the work; and revise it critically for important intellectual content; and finally approve the version to be published; and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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REVIEW
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Interpersonal Harmony and Conflict for Chinese People: A Yin–Yang Perspective

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This article provides an overview on a series of original studies conducted by the author. The aim here is to present the ideas that the author reconstructed, based on the dialectics of harmonization, regarding harmony and conflict embodied in traditional Chinese thought, and to describe how a formal psychological theory/model on interpersonal harmony and conflict was developed based on the Yin–Yang perspective. The paper also details how essential theories on interpersonal harmony and conflict were constructed under this formal model by conducting a qualitative study involving in-depth interviews with 30 adults. Psychological research in Western society has, intriguingly, long been focused more on interpersonal conflict than on interpersonal harmony. By contrast, the author's work started from the viewpoint of a materialist conception of history and dialectics of harmonization in order to reinterpret traditional Chinese thought. Next, a "dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict" was developed, as a formal psychological theory, based on the real-virtual notions in the Yin–Yang perspective. Under this model, interpersonal harmony and conflict can be classified into genuine versus superficial harmony and authentic versus virtual focus conflict, and implicit/hidden conflict is regarded as superficial harmony. Subsequently, the author conducted a series of quantitative studies on interpersonal harmony and conflict within parent–child, supervisor–subordinate, and friend–friend relationships in order to verify the construct validity and the predictive validity of the dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict. The claim presented herein is that Chinese traditional thought and the psychological theory/model based on the Yin–Yang perspective can be combined. Accordingly, by combining qualitative and quantitative empirical research, the relative substantial theory can be developed and the concepts can be validated. Thus, this work represents the realization of a series of modern Chinese indigenous psychological research studies rooted in traditional cultural thought and the Yin–Yang perspective. The work also mirrors the current conflict-management research that has incorporated the Chinese notion of harmony and adopted the Yin–Yang perspective on culture.

Keywords: Chinese indigenous psychology, conflict, emotionalizing, harmony, Yin–Yang perspective

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INTRODUCTION

This article provides an overview on a series of research studies that the author conducted on interpersonal harmony and conflict. The primary objective here is to present a method to develop a formal psychological theory/model regarding interpersonal harmony and conflict founded on one specific aspect of Eastern philosophy, the Yin–Yang perspective. Moreover, the work discussed in

this paper shows that by combining qualitative and quantitative empirical research, the substantial theory can be developed and its underlying concepts can be validated. According to the definition and typology of Li (2012), this theory/model and the related series of research studies could be attributed to the "Eastern *emic*-as-*emic*" type of indigenous research, in which the aim is to build novel Eastern theories that complement/supplement or supersede Western theories.

Conflict has invariably been a common topic of interest in the social sciences and in psychology because conflict is inevitable in human society. Numerous psychological studies have examined conflict: A search of the APA PsycINFO database in 2015 retrieved 73,167 papers on conflict and conflict resolution, and from 2007 onward, 2,000–2,500 research papers have been published annually on this subject, which shows that conflict is a major topic of debate in psychology. By contrast, only 1,422 papers on harmony have been published to date, and since 2012, less than 100 papers related to harmony have been published annually. It is intriguing why the publications about harmony are 50 times fewer than the publications about conflict.

The Chinese philosopher Cheng (1977) indicated that, from a metaphysical perspective, the prevailing dialectic of conflict in the contemporary West was inherited from Hegel and Marx, which contrasted the focus of Confucianism and Taoism on the dialectic of harmonization. These dialectical views differ in their ontological assumptions (realism) and in the logic and purpose of their reflections. A marked distinction also exists between their cultural backgrounds and problem-solving methods (conflict resolution). The following section briefly introduces conflict and its development within a Western context.

Western View of Conflict and Its Evolution

The Western view of conflict has evolved through its interaction with various perspectives. Since the time of Plato and Aristotle, maintaining order has been considered beneficial for a society, and conflict-induced chaos has been regarded to pose a threat to state and society (Rahim, 1986). In the 19th century, Darwin used the phrase "survival of the fittest," with the underlying suggestion being that species survive and grow by coping with the challenges presented by the surrounding environment. This concept, when applied to human society, indicates that conflicts between humans and the environment are opportunities for humanity to evolve.

In the middle of 20th century, the American sociologist T. Parsons (1949) proposed the theory of structural functionalism, which suggests that the core features of society are stability, integration, and functionality. Here, conflict is considered a "functional disorder" that includes destruction, division, and dysfunction, and is regarded as a social disease. By contrast, the sociologist Simmel (1908–1955) held that moderate conflict, like order and cooperation, commonly performs a positive function in, and can facilitate the formation and sustainability of societies or groups. This perspective coincided with the view of **conflict dialectics**: The existence of two opposites, thesis and antithesis, is an objective fact, and the conflict between these opposites leads to an elevated level of synthesis after coordination, and the world can continuously develop toward an "ideal" world by following the same path, in a spiral manner. Since this proposal, the perspective of conflict as a constructive function has dominated the field of social science. However, this perspective mainly focuses on society (organization) and groups, and further clarification of this view is required if it is to be applied to interpersonal relationships or scenarios that entail interpersonal conflict.

Western psychological studies have primarily focused on individual mind and behavior and have thus considered conflict at an individual level. For example, Freud's psychoanalytic theory is a psychology of conflict (Luborsky et al., 2011): Freud noted that people are inevitably caught between two opposing forces that cannot be changed, as in the case of the conflict between the id and the ego or between the id and the super-ego. A person's mental health condition depends on adjusting these two opposing forces while concurrently maintaining their dynamic balance, and a loss of this balance might cause conflict and, subsequently, lead to neurosis (Fenichel, 1945). Interpersonal conflict results from people transferring their inherent conflict to interpersonal relationships. In summary, conflict is an internal state that causes tension or anxiety when a person is unable to clearly decide between two opposing goals.

The definition of dyadic conflict (including interpersonal, intergroup, and international conflicts) appears contradictory; however, the common accepted feature of conflict is that it is *interactive* (Rahim, 1986). Conflict, by definition, includes opposition, scarcity, and blockage; thus, conflict must involve at least two opposing parties whose interests, goals, and benefits are incompatible. Resources such as money, status, and power are limited, and both parties in a conflict are responsive with regard to emotion, cognition, and behavior.

The prisoner's dilemma game (PDG) is the most widely used model for dyadic conflict in social psychology studies in a laboratory setting. In follow-up studies conducted since the PDG was developed, researchers converted competitive reactions to the PDG into "pursuing personal goals" and thereby converted cooperative reactions into "considering interpersonal relationships." Subsequently, five conflict resolutions were proposed, competition, accommodation, avoidance, integration, and compromise (Hall, 1969; Filley, 1975; Thomas, 1976), as were two conflict results, lose–lose and win–win. The five categories of conflict resolution were derived from the social exchange theory, which assumes that human behavior is rational and its aim is the pursuit of maximal profit. Thus, the model of conflict resolution could be discussed suitably within the context of "realistic conflict." However, the five categories emphasize rationality while neglecting sentiment, and they have been used to justify traditional psychology when conducting quantitative empirical research and analyzing cause and effect. It is a drawback that the model of conflict resolution was thus changed from a dynamic model into a static model.

However, Braithwaite (1997) conducted a study in Australia that included 197 university students (aged 17–64 years), and the results showed that "pursuit of harmony" was a crucial value that connected people, interpersonal relationships, and social groups. Moreover, by studying "wisdom" as it is commonly recognized

by adults, Jason et al. (2001) determined that "harmony" is one of the five most critical relationship factors. Furthermore, Kwan et al. (1997) indicated that both "maintaining harmonious relationships" and "self-esteem" are intermediate variables that affect life satisfaction. These studies indicate that research perspectives have gradually eluded the restrictions of the Western view of conflict.

In other studies, Leung and Brew (2009) performed a cultural analysis on harmony and conflict, and Leung et al. (2002) developed a dualistic model of harmony; in this model, harmony included harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance, and the model was used for investigating the differences between Chinese and Australian people in terms of the two harmony facets (Leung et al., 2011). Furthermore, Hwang (1997–1998) argued that pursuing goals and maintaining harmony are mutually exclusive in Chinese conflict resolution. Although these models and research studies considered conflict and harmony concurrently, they mostly emphasized conflict resolution or management without adopting the Yin–Yang perspective.

Value of Harmony in Chinese Culture and Its Influence

Chinese people hold a deep-rooted desire to pursue "harmony" when cultivating one's self, handling interpersonal matters, and confronting the universe and nature. The Chinese anthropologist Lee (1992) indicated that Chinese culture is based on pursuing harmony and balance and maintaining them within three subsystems: nature (heaven), organisms (humans), and interpersonal relationships (society). In an analysis of the data on social change in Taiwan, Huang and Chu (2013) indicated that since 1985, "harmony" has been considered the most critical underlying value. Shek and Daniel (2001) studied 400 Chinese parents and teenagers, and reported that all study participants agreed that harmony and a lack of conflict were the most crucial elements of a "happy" family. Chinese people have been widely suggested to be typically peaceable, submissive, and friendly, and to dislike resistance, defiance, opposition, competition, and fighting (Wen, 1972; Yang, 1972; Sun, 1983; Liang, 1989). Chinese people commonly link "conflict" with "turmoil" and thus tend to dislike conflict and even avoid it out of fear. Pye (1992, 1982) indicated that the Chinese political culture and bureaucracy strongly emphasize maintaining order and avoiding conflict.

The widely recognized Chinese philosopher Feng (1991) indicated, in *History of Chinese Philosophy*, that dialectics can end not only in conflict but also in harmony because the universe mainly consists of *tai he* (unification). This mirrors the theory of Cheng (1977) that Chinese culture, Confucianism and Taoism in particular, is the metaphysic of harmony and conflict and the dialectics of harmonization based on the Yin–Yang perspective.

Yin–Yang is both an indigenous and traditional notion and a type of Chinese philosophy, and it could be regarded as a symbol (Fang, 2012), a dialectical logic system (Li X., 2014), a cognitive frame (Li, 2012), or an epistemology. However, in modern social sciences, Yin–Yang is typically presented as a perspective, particularly a perspective on Eastern culture (Fang, 2012). As a symbol, Yin and Yang might represent any pair of dichotomous categories or elements, such as male and female, good and bad, top and bottom, right and left, and black and white, but the two contrary elements can be mutually transformed. However, Li P.P. (2014) noted that the application of the Yin–Yang frame is context-specific rather than context-free.

Harmony and conflict could correspond to Yin and Yang, and most concepts in Chinese philosophy can be conceived and evaluated in a framework of harmony and conflict as two modes of thinking, two orientations, or two aspects of a changing reality (Cheng, 1977). Therefore, Cheng (1977) also suggested a metaphysical view of harmony and conflict, and, consequently, proposed that "the dialectics of harmonization" is suitable for denoting Chinese thought, such as Confucianism and Taoism, and is logically distinct from both Hegel's dialectics of conflict and Madhyamika dialectics. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines metaphysics as a division of philosophy that is concerned with the fundamental nature of reality and being and which includes ontology, cosmology, and often epistemology. According to the notion proposed by Cheng (1977), a metaphysic will determine the manner in which objects in the world are viewed and will also present a method of solving problems and conducting inquiry.

The preceding discussion suggests that the Cheng (1977) view of "dialectics of harmonization" considers "harmony" and "conflict" to be mutually defined categories that also involve mutual relationships. Moreover, the entire universe, human society, and individual life are all considered to incline toward harmony and unification: Conflict is an unnatural disorder and an imbalance. The diversity and duality of entities are the causes of conflict and opposition. However, complementary and alternating elements exist within conflict and opposition: two opposing parties are equal overall and might reach harmony through regulation. In this regard, harmony is not a static structure but a dynamic process. Harmony is the ultimate ideal and goal, and in the pursuit of harmony, the resolution of potential conflicts can be found within the mechanism of harmonization.

In summary, "harmony" is the core concept and value of Chinese culture. Furthermore, from the perspective of Yin–Yang dialectics, the concept of harmony is correlated with conflict. Therefore, to comprehensively understand the interpersonal conflicts of Chinese people, we must begin by examining interpersonal harmony. The following section describes how harmony and conflict among Chinese people were clarified through an exploration of the history of China and its cultural context, and how a dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict was constructed based on the Yin–Yang perspective.

HUANG'S "DYNAMIC MODEL OF INTERPERSONAL HARMONY AND CONFLICT"

Concepts and Implications of Harmony and Conflict among Chinese People

Disregarding the traditional approach used for categorizing culture and schools of thought (Confucianism, Legalism, and

Taoism), Huang (1999) delineated three traditional Chinese (cultural) ideologies from the perspective of substructures affecting superstructures (i.e., by using a historical materialism approach). In Huang's view, the structure of traditional Chinese society primarily entailed an agricultural society bound by kinship under an extensive but unified political and religious system. The superstructures that corresponded with these three substructures were the integration of heaven and humanity (天人合一思想), the theory of rituals (*Li*-thoughts, 禮治思想), and a state-ideological Confucianism (國家意識型態化儒學). The "integration of heaven and humanity" defines the relationship between humanity and nature; Chinese people claim that, at the universal level, the relationship of humanity and nature is one of dynamic harmony, and that by following the law of nature, humans can pursue inner freedom and peace. The "theory of rituals," which entails interpersonal ethics, describes how people must discipline themselves and express their emotions within various relationships in a manner that achieves interpersonal harmony. The standard used for these relationships is the Five Cardinal Relationships (五倫): ruler–subject, father–son, brother–brother, husband–wife, and friend–friend relationships. The "state-ideological Confucianism" is applied distinctly at various levels of groups, organizations, and societies; when seeking to achieve a collective goal, complying with normative roles benefits the most number of people in a group.

The aforementioned three perspectives of harmony involve the ideals of individual personality, interpersonal ethics, and the interests and effectiveness of groups and organizations. These perspectives imply that the results of adjustments and efficacy can transform harmony from a dynamic and carefree state into a static and formal one. Thus, the Chinese people's concept of harmony manifests itself dissimilarly at distinct levels; this implies that the states of harmony differ at various levels and in distinct interpersonal relationships, and thereby demonstrates the existence of diverse methods that can be used for reaching harmony. Corresponding with these three concepts of harmony are the Chinese people's three concepts of conflict: in a conflict, a person drops to a morally inferior position, maintains a losing stance emotionally and rationally, and pays a high price in personal, societal, and survival aspects.

In summary, for Chinese people, harmony is the most crucial core concept, and their concepts of harmony are correspondingly complex and diverse. Therefore, considerably more knowledge can be gained by examining ethnic Chinese people's harmonization mechanisms than from exploring their methods of conflict resolution.

Building a Formal Psychological Model Regarding Interpersonal Harmony Conflict

Huang (1999) developed a formal psychological theory, the dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict (**Figure 1**), based on real-virtual dialectics (虛實辯證) of the Yin–Yang perspective. In this model, interpersonal harmony and conflict are divided into *genuine/superficial* harmony and authentic/virtual focus conflict, whereas implicit/hidden conflict is regarded as superficial harmony. According to this framework, the state of harmony versus conflict between two people is dynamic and evolves within the web of their relationship.

Genuine harmony (實性 和諧) is defined as a relationship in which two parties concurrently sense tangible coordination, cooperation, congeniality, or even integration. By contrast, in *superficial harmony* (虛性和諧; hidden disharmony, 不和), both parties attempt to maintain a deceptive outward harmony as a camouflage, but inwardly sense disharmony. Harmony between two parties can transform from genuine into superficial harmony as a result of changes in the similarity and differences between the parties (**Figure 1**).

Conflict, like harmony, can also be distinguished into *genuine* (實性) and *superficial* (虛性) types, and this depends on whether the two parties involved focus on the core characteristics of the specific dispute or extend their conflict to encompass peripheral matters while concurrently allowing the negative emotions diffused during the conflict process to predominate. In a genuine conflict, the focus is on the specific matters underlying the existing differences of opinion and incompatible goals or concerns, and negative emotions are only a peripheral part of the conflict. By contrast, in a superficial conflict, the focus slowly drifts away from the specific problem or is extended, and negative emotions escalate gradually. Huang (1999) noted that a genuine conflict can transform into a superficial conflict through an ***emotionalizing process*** (情緒化; defocusing) and a superficial conflict can transform into a genuine conflict through a ***cooling-down process*** (冷靜化; refocusing). Typically, genuine conflicts can be resolved more readily than superficial conflicts because of their relatively clearer focus on solvable problems, and thus the probability of the postconflict relationship between two parties being harmonious is also comparatively higher in the case of genuine conflict. Conversely, superficial conflicts are commonly over emotionalized and therefore more challenging to resolve as compared with genuine conflicts, and, correspondingly, the postconflict relationship in has a relatively higher probability of being only a superficial harmony or of completely breaking down.

Subsequently, Huang (1999) conducted a qualitative study involving in-depth interviews with 30 adults; in the study, Huang adopted the grounded-theory approach, used the previously developed dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict as the formal model, and combined it with the Chinese concepts on the three aspects of harmony. Next, two essential theories regarding interpersonal harmony and conflict were constructed. In the first substantial theory, the meaning of various types of harmony and the relationships between the harmonies were developed. The results showed that in the case of *genuine harmony*, the parties involved in the relationship tend to hold positive perceptions of each other and typically interact in a sincere, trustful, active, supportive, accepting, and natural manner. Genuine harmony can be further distinguished into three subtypes, the rapport, affiliation, and role-fitting types. By comparison, in the case of *superficial harmony*, people tend to hold a more negative view of their relationship partners, and their behavior is

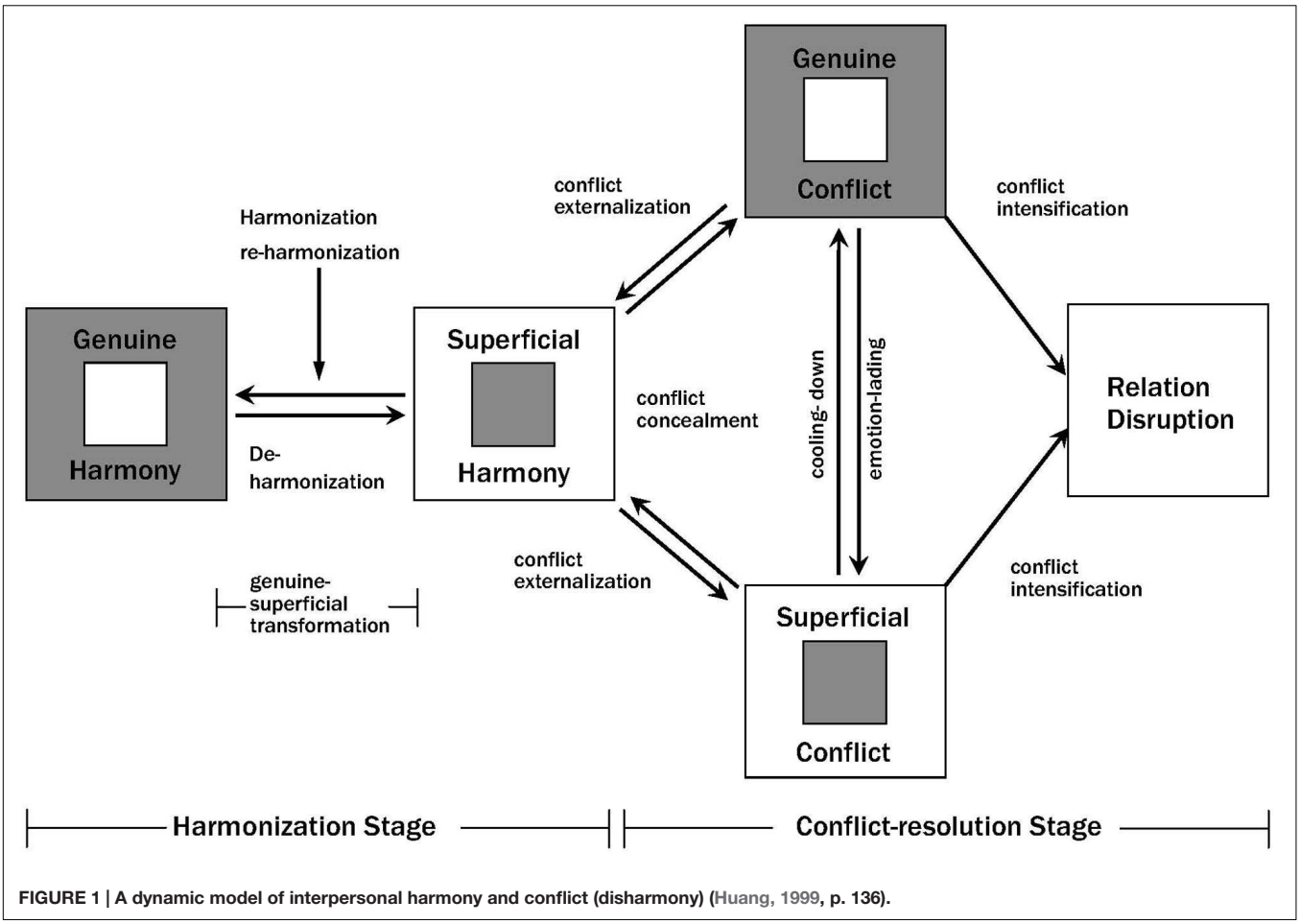

FIGURE 1 | A dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict (disharmony) (Huang, 1999, p. 136).

commonly cautious, defensive, and ceremonious; accordingly, the reactions tend to be passive, rejecting, delaying, ignoring, and segregating. Moreover, superficial harmony, like genuine harmony, can be distinguished into three subtypes, the segmentation, alienation, and inhibition types. The *inhibition-type superficial harmony* (隱抑式和諧) is the strongest form of unobservable conflict and can transform into explicit conflict at any time (**Table 1**; arrows indicate the direction of transformation).

In the second substantial theory, interpersonal conflict was defined as a verbal or other visible behavior that openly expresses a difference of opinion, incompatible goals, requirements, or concerns, and the accompanying emotions; conflict was also classified into genuine and superficial types according to the level of focus on the issue and the degree of diffusion of emotion. *Genuine conflict* refers to a conflict in which the dispute is focused and emotion is diffused. When emotion is not diffused, a genuine conflict could transform into a superficial conflict, which would lead to a reduction in the clarity of the conflict focus. Here, *conflict* refers to the explicit type of conflict, and *implicit conflict* is equivalent to *superficial harmony*.

Huang (1999) further classified interpersonal conflict into three types of genuine conflict and three types of superficial conflict (**Table 2**; arrow: direction of transformation). A *Reasoning-Persuasion genuine conflict* (Type 1, 論理式衝突), the most rational type of conflict, occurs when people engage in a debate with others to defend their values, or when they persuade others to agree to support their viewpoint. If the process becomes emotionally charged and loses focus on the contended point, the conflict might transform into a *Quarreling superficial conflict* (Type 4, 抬槓式衝突); this type of conflict occurs when the dyad disputes orally with a high level of wit, repartee, tension, and competition, and the participants are unable to maintain emotional control and lose the point of the discussion. A *Contending genuine conflic*t (Type 2, 抗衡式衝突) arises when people sense that they are being treated unfairly by others and thus fight for their own benefits or rights. If this type of conflict is over emotionalized, it might transform into a *Fighting superficial conflict* (Type 5, 爭鬥式衝突); this conflict results when in order to win, each party uses all available resources, such as power, legal action, physical force, or even a weapon, with anger, rejection, rage, and hostility until the dispute is settled. A *Friction genuine conflict* (Type 3, 摩擦式衝突) occurs either when people sense that their autonomy has been constrained or their intentions have been misperceived, or when one party is dissatisfied with the other. If the accumulated dissatisfaction from the past emerges during a current conflict, this type of conflict might transform into an *Entanglement superficial conflict*

TABLE 1 | Various type of interpersonal harmony: Main characteristics and transformative relationship.

	Genuine harmony			Superficial harmony		
Type of harmony	**Rapport-type**	**Affiliation-type**	**Role-fitting-type**	**Segment-type**	**Alienation-type**	**Inhibition-type**
Interaction mode	Nature orientation	Affection orientation	Adjustment orientation	Domain orientation	Form orientation	Suppression orientation
Characters of interaction	Respect, share, care, support	Active, care, emotion	Cooperative, obligation-prior	Plain relationship	Distance-keeping, spurious	Mutual-exclusive camouflage
Emotional perception	Carefree feel at ease	Dependence warmth, lucky	Reasonable, smoothness stable, soundness	Plain, irrelevance, carefulness	Distance, cool formal	Disappointment, dissatisfaction, depression, anger
Interpersonal relations	Friend, colleague, peer	Family, spouse	Colleague, partners, boss vs. staffs	Encounter, boss vs. staffs, colleague vs. partners	Neighbors, relatives, work relationship	Family members, work relationship, leader–follower relationship
Transformation direction and mechanism	More Concern Less Easiness	More Formal Less Initiative	More Boundary Less Penetration	More Protocol Less Congruence	More Bearing Less Peace	
	Less Dependence More Distance	Less Utility More Affection	Less Rule More Loyal	Less Alienation More Benefit	Less Complain More Distance	
Common characteristics	Trust, support, initiative, acceptance			Defensive, reject, passiveness, segment		

(Type 6, 糾葛式衝突), the most emotionally escalated type of conflict. The dispute leaves the problem unresolved and the participants filled with complaints, hate, disappointment, and a sense of helplessness.

The dynamic model of Huang (1999) proposes that the degree of focus on a problem moves gradually from high to low from Type 1 to Type 6, whereas the degree of emotionality increases gradually from Type 1 to Type 6. Thus, conflict is at the lowest level in Type 1 and at the most escalated level in Type 6. The relationship between the two elements (problem and emotion) is identical to the relationship and transformation between Yin and Yang.

Validating the Essential Theories of Interpersonal Harmony/Conflict

While the two essential theories were constructed from the qualitative study conducted using the grounded-theory approach, certain new concepts and their relationships were also developed. These essential theories also correspond to the discourses on the "relationalism" of Hwang (2000), which implies that distinct relationships entail divergent details of interpersonal harmony/conflict. Subsequently, the author conducted a series of quantitative studies to verify the construct validity or predictive validity of the two essential theories of dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict.

TABLE 2 | Genuine/superficial conflicts and their relationships.

Genuine Conflict (focus on the issue)	Transformation	Superficial Conflict (lack of focus, negative emotion)
T1.Reasoning/Persuasion	⟷	T4. Quarreling type
↕		↕
T2. Contending type	⟷	T5. Fighting type
↕		↕
T3. Friction type	⟷	T6. Entanglement type

Two Questionnaires for Testing the Construct Validity of Various Types of Harmony

According to the first substantial theory, the six basic types of interpersonal harmony and their main interaction rules were systematically investigated (**Table 2**). In *Natural-oriented* (*本真取向*) interaction, both parties in a relationship present their natural "persona" and show mutual acceptance and respect in all scenarios, and this interaction frequently occurs in rapport harmony (投契式和諧). In *Affection-oriented* (*情義取向*) interaction, one party assigns higher priority to the other party's requirements than to its own, even if this costs the first party in terms of personal suffering, and this interaction invariably occurs in affiliation harmony (親和式和諧). *Adjustment-oriented* (*順適取向*) interaction mostly appears in role-fitting harmony (合模式和諧), and in this interaction, the two parties follow their own roles carefully, although affection will occasionally be involved in making the relationship between the parties smooth. In *Domain-oriented* (*領域取向*) interaction, the parties aim to simplify their relationship and avoid becoming involved with irrelevant events; this interaction mostly appears in segmentation

harmony (區隔式和諧). In *Form-oriented* (*形式取向*) interaction, the parties interact with each other in a plain manner and maintain a light and almost spurious relationship; this interaction mostly appears in alienation harmony (區隔式和諧). Lastly, inhibition harmony (隱抑式和諧) invariably leads to *Suppression-oriented* (抑制取向) interaction, in which one party must suppress its anger or dissatisfaction toward the other party, because failure to do so will offend or cause an argument with the other party.

To verify the construct validity of the six types of harmony, two self-report questionnaires were designed and each was administered to approximately 250 adults (total 500) living in northern Taiwan (Huang, 1999). Six scenarios were presented to demonstrate each of the six types of harmony, and six statements were also prepared to indicate the aforementioned six types of oriented interactions related to distinct types of harmony. In the questionnaire, each scenario was presented first, and this was followed by a series of questions on the scenarios and the oriented interactions. Moreover, background information on the participants was collected. Two versions of the questionnaire were used, each questionnaire included three scenarios each of genuine harmony or superficial harmony, and the order effect was balanced in the questionnaires.

The result obtained in the study supported the construct validity of the six types of interpersonal harmony (**Table 3**). The statistical values along the diagonal in **Table 3** are higher than the adjacent statistics, which supports the conclusion that the main harmony was correlated more closely with the main oriented interaction and was less correlated (irrelative) with other oriented interactions. The results also indicated that various types of harmony exist according to distinct relationships and concerns, and further that maintaining superficial harmony is more common than conflict externalization among Chinese people.

Laboratory Test for Validating the Various Types of Interpersonal Conflict

Huang's model is a dynamic model (rather than a static or structural model) focused on explicit but not implicit conflict, and methods involving the use of a structured and self-reported questionnaire cannot demonstrate the features of dynamic conflict. Consequently, a **laboratory** study imitating the strange situation experiment, which was originally developed to classify attachment relationships in children (Ainsworth et al., 1978), was conducted to examine the validity of various types of interpersonal conflict (**Table 2**).

The study was designed to observe the interaction process during the conflict between a parent and a child, as well as the parent's parenting style (Huang and Huang, 2002). Most parent–child conflicts in Chinese society occur during the parents' attempts to guide or monitor their children's homework and daily habits. Parents expect their children to cooperate and follow rules, whereas children seek to either engage in activities that they enjoy, such as watching TV or playing video games, or simply behave as they wish to. In a typical Chinese family, the mother is most frequently responsible for monitoring the child's schoolwork.

In the study, the aim was to design a paradigm to revalidate Huang's dynamic model of conflict in a mother-and-child interaction based on the following three assumptions. First, although the six basic types of conflict were derived from adult samples, the six types of conflict should also be identifiable in the relationship between mothers and young children. Second, if conflicts occur in a seminatural mother–child supervisory scenario, as pressure gradually increases, conflicts should typically develop with increased ease and become progressively more emotionalized. Third, if various types of mother–child conflict can be successfully classified, the emergence of four prototypes of mother–child conflict (combinations of genuine/superficial and mother/child) should be identifiable.

The participants were 45 pairs of mothers and sons or daughters living in southern Taiwan. All children were fourth-grade students in elementary school, and the study included an almost equal number of boys and girls. The mothers' ages ranged from 30 to 49 years old and averaged 39 years and 8 months. The average length of marriage was 13.6 years. Most of the mothers enrolled in the study were the primary caregivers of the children.

A semi-natural scenario was designed to induce mother–child conflict. Based on previous research and observations, in the scenario established, the mothers could monitor their children doing homework in our laboratory, and pressure was gradually increased to induce conflict. Observation of the mothers' handling of the conflict was the key to understanding the mothers' attitudes toward parenting.

Each mother–child pair was required to complete three tasks of distinct levels of complexity: sorting materials (low complexity), solving a puzzle (medium complexity), and completing mathematical exercises (high complexity). The problem in each task was solved by the mother and the child working together or by the child working alone under the mother's direction and supervision. The procedure was divided into six stages, with the stress level being increased gradually across the stages to provoke conflict. To induce conflict between mother and child, distraction elements and time pressure were included. The distractions were cartoon videos for the child and the filling out of a family information questionnaire for the mother. When the child was distracted from the task, the mother was required to urge the child to concentrate. Conversely, when the mother had to both work on her task and supervise the child's work, she was placed under added pressure and thus more readily provoked into conflict than when not under pressure. Time pressure was applied in the form of informing participants of the amount of working time remaining, and this would result in the mother urging the child to complete the task. **Table 4** displays the design of the mother–child conflict procedure used in the laboratory.

A workbook for the experiment was organized and compiled after the pretest; the workbook contained detailed information on the experimental procedures, methods, and working definitions used for observation and classification of mother–child conflict. The formal test involving the 45 pairs of participants was then conducted according to the workbook. Two observers monitored the behavior of the mother and the child separately from behind

TABLE 3 | Interaction orientation under six types of interpersonal harmony.

Interaction-oriented	Genuine Harmony ($n = 248$)			Superficial Harmony ($n = 252$)		
	Rapport-type ($n = 214$)	Affiliation-type ($n = 205$)	Role-fitting type ($n = 170$)	Segment-type ($n = 231$)	Alienation-type ($n = 190$)	Inhibition-type ($n = 81$)
Nature-oriented	**174[a] (81.3)[b]**	74 (36.1)	48 (28.2)	29 (12.6)	13 (6.8)	8 (9.9)
Affection-oriented	20 (9.3)	**91 (44.4)**	28 (16.5)	7 (3.0)	7 (3.7)	11 (13.6)
Adjustment-oriented	17 (7.9)	26 (12.7)	**76 (44.7)**	69 (29.9)	45 (23.7)	16 (19.8)
Domain-oriented	2 (0.9)	6 (2.9)	7 (4.1)	**80 (34.6)**	48 (25.3)	14 (17.3)
Form-oriented	1 (0.5)	2 (1.0)	5 (2.9)	36 (15.6)	**63 (33.2)**	15 (18.5)
Suppression-oriented	0	6 (2.9)	6 (3.5)	10 (4.3)	14 (7.4)	**17 (21.0)**

a, number of sample; b, percentage.

a one-way mirror through all stages of the trials, and all trials were video-recorded. Each observer coded the behaviors of the participants and, after each trial, classified the type of mother–child conflict.

Mother–child conflict was classified based on the dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict of Huang (1999); as noted in preceding sections, the classification system is based on transformations derived from Yin–Yang dialectics (**Table 2**). The details of the operational definition of classification and the experimental procedure have been described previously (Huang and Huang, 2002).

The results obtained were the following: almost half of the study participants (44.4% of the children and 46.7% of the mothers) started to engage in conflicts during the first two stages of the trial; more than half (51.1%) of the participants reached the peak of conflict at the fifth stage; and the small increments of pressure applied according to the experimental procedure were adequate for intensifying the mother–child conflict. The results also revealed that with an increase in the applied pressure, genuine conflict transformed into superficial conflict and reached its peak during the last two stages of the trial, and further that the conflict became progressively less focused and more emotionalized.

Other results of the study showed that in the case of mothers, 80% of the initial conflicts were of the reasoning-persuasion type, whereas for children, 62.2 and 35.6% of the initial conflicts were of the contending and reasoning-persuasion types, respectively. As anticipated, mothers maintained focus on genuine conflict to a greater extent than the children did at the initial stage of the trial. Conflict was commonly triggered by a mother's insistence that her opinion or judgment be followed by the child (persuasion-type conflict). When persuading a child to agree with her opinion or follow her directions, the mother initiated verbal conflict with the child, and at this point, there was comparatively less emotional argument and more guidance. However, the children frequently assumed that they were being treated unfairly, or that their wellbeing was not being considered (contending-type conflict). Lastly, 86% of the mothers maintained genuine conflict (i.e., most did not become angry), but in the case of the children, 22.2% of the conflicts evolved into superficial types of conflict, among which fighting conflict appeared most commonly. Thus, the children lost control of their temper more frequently than the mothers did.

The study demonstrated that all six types of conflict predicted by the model could be successfully induced using the quasi-experimental design, and further showed that genuine versus superficial conflict can be reliably observed and classified, much like the transformation between the distinct types of conflict. The study also indicated that a small amount of experimentally induced pressure is adequate for provoking dyadic conflict, and that as the pressure is increased, such a conflict can transform from an issue-focused conflict into a conflict in which focus is lost and emotions escalate. These results validated the dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict. This study represents the first attempt to experimentally operationalize a dynamic model of conflict that originated in indigenous Chinese theory. Because the mother–child relationship can be considered the most elementary of all relationships, the prototypes identified here could be applied validly and effectively in diverse dyadic conflicts involving other types of actors and other types of relationships.

The aforementioned study also presents key implications for indigenous Chinese psychology. The Yin–Yang dialectic is a unique and central element of traditional Chinese thought; however, because of the complexity of the transformations between Yin and Yang, previous researchers have found it extremely challenging to operationalize them into a quantifiable psychological theory. The research discussed in this section represents a first step in showing that a science of transformations can potentially be developed. Such a science would hold critical implications for conflict resolution. When conflict and harmony are conceptualized as ongoing sequences of dialectical transformations between problem focus and emotionalization, it represents the identification of the current stage of the process and its prototypical sequences of change that are most

relevant for conflict resolution, and not the determination of the existence or absence of a particular cause and effect. Traditional Chinese thought was centered on the concept of transformations occurring over time, not on the isolation of cause and effect. The type of contribution that such an indigenous approach can make to social science remains to be ascertained.

EXTENSION OF "DYNAMIC MODEL OF INTERPERSONAL HARMONY AND CONFLICT"

After verifying the construct validity of the concepts of harmony and conflict in the dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict, studies were conducted to both verify the dynamic model and concurrently apply the model to various relationships and distinct cases of harmony and conflict.

Subordinate–Supervisor Conflict in the Chinese Workplace

A literature review reveals that the bidimensional five-style framework of conflict resolution (avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, competing, and compromising) is now universally accepted (Thomas, 1976; Rahim, 1986). Moreover, even the so-called win–win and lose–lose types of concepts have been derived from this structure, which has also been confirmed by several cross-cultural studies. All previous cross-cultural studies have supported the concept that in a collectivist culture, people tend to adopt the compromising, accommodating, obliging, or avoiding styles of conflict resolution, whereas in individualist cultures, people commonly adopt direct, competitive, and dominating styles of conflict resolution (Ting-Toomey et al., 1991; Trubisky et al., 1991; Weldon and Jehn, 1995).

However, recent research suggests that people typically do not use only a single conflict-resolution style when handling interpersonal conflict: they instead adopt a combination of several styles (Munduate et al., 1999), termed *conglomerated conflict behavior* or *patterns of conflict resolution*, which has not been tested in cross-cultural studies.

Western studies have indicated that the relationship between two parties involved in a conflict plays no role in the pattern of conflict resolution (Munduate et al., 1999). By contrast, a theory developed in a culturally Chinese context commonly treats relationships as a major factor when determining conflict-resolution patterns. In addition to emphasizing the dynamic nature of conflict, the dynamic model of harmony and conflict stresses the role of relational context in the conflict-resolution style of culturally Chinese people (Huang, 1999; Leung et al., 2002).

The study conducted by Huang et al. (2007) integrated the dynamic model of harmony and conflict of Huang (1999) with the commonly accepted five-style framework of conflict resolution in order to analyze and test the process of multistyle dynamic conflict resolution. In the study, the first requirement was to confirm that the patterned conflict-resolution behaviors could be observed and to identify the specific patterns of conflict-resolution behavior in a culturally Chinese society. The second requirement was to determine whether the type of relationship between two parties in a conflict influences the selection of the conflict-resolution style, and whether the patterns of conflict resolution affect the subsequent relationship.

In the study, the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) was used to collect instances of common conflict between supervisors and subordinates. This technique is well-suited for examining conflict as a dynamic process because it can capture conflict issues and scenarios, the reactions of each party, and the results of the conflict-resolution style(s) applied.

Culturally Chinese people commonly hold a negative attitude toward conflict (Huang, 1999), and thus they might not wish to describe conflicts with their supervisors to strangers. Even where a large sample size is obtained through the use of questionnaires, the study participants might not include adequate details regarding such conflicts. To avoid this drawback, all data for this study were collected through personal interviews conducted in a private setting. The interviewees were 23 people in Taiwan (13 males), aged between 25 and 47 years old, who reported a total of 28 instances of conflict, 23 of which were conflicts with supervisors. Each participant reported at least one conflict with a supervisor.

The results showed that in 78% (18/23) of the reported instances, people adopted more than one conflict-resolution style to resolve the dispute. This result is similar to the results from Western studies. Thus, the concept of conglomerated conflict resolution also applies in the case of culturally Chinese people. Two main patterns of conflict behavior were affirmed: "direct encounter followed by compromise or coordination" and "direct encounter followed by avoidance."

The most prevalent pattern of conflict resolution identified was direct encounter followed by compromise. The people who adopt this pattern first seek to achieve their own target or have their demands met or opinions accepted, and failing that, they attempt to reach an agreement in order to create a win–win scenario. Both the avoiding and accommodating strategies require forgoing one's own target or demand. These two strategies could be combined to create the second major pattern, direct encounter followed by avoidance. In this pattern, subordinates initially present their own demands or opinions but eventually discard them, which creates a win–lose scenario. This pattern has not been identified in Western studies (Munduate et al., 1999).

In more than two-thirds of the cases, the prevailing reaction to conflict with a supervisor was neither accommodation nor avoidance. This result clearly differs from the previous finding that culturally Chinese people tend to adopt avoiding or accommodating conflict-resolution styles (Trubisky et al., 1991). The result is also distinct from the finding reported by Hwang (1997–1998) that obliging is the dominant reaction in a vertical conflict, particularly in the case of a child–parent or subordinate–supervisor conflict. However, the results of this study (Huang et al., 2007) agree with those of a study conducted by Huang et al. (2005), which determined that Taiwanese employees typically use collaboration or compromise to handle workplace conflicts.

TABLE 4 | Mother–child conflict situations and procedures.

Stage	Task	Cooperation or Supervision	Benchmarking	Distraction	Duration (minutes)
1	Low complexity task: sorting materials	Mother–child cooperation	None	None	3
2		Mother directs child in task	None	Child: cartoon	3
3	Medium complexity task: puzzle	Mother–child cooperation	None	Child: cartoon	5
4		Mother directs child in task	Time pressure	Child: cartoon	5
5	High complexity task: mathematical exercises for grade 2 or 3	Mother–child cooperation	Time pressure	Child: cartoon	7
6		Mother directs child in task	Time pressure	Child: cartoon Mother: questionnaire	7
Total					30

When analyzing the study data, new insights were gained through an examination of how preconflict and postconflict relationships between supervisors and subordinates were related to the conflict-resolution patterns adopted. The results showed that when the superior–subordinate relationship was a genuine harmony, the direct-encounter or the direct-encounter-then-compromise pattern was highly likely to be adopted; this means that subordinates expressed their own opinions and attempted to reach a compromise or used integration as the solution to problems. When the subordinates stated their own opinion, although the conflict was typically resolved through accommodation or avoidance, the postconflict relationship typically continued to be of the genuine harmony type. By contrast, when the preconflict relationship was a superficial harmony, subordinates were comparatively less inclined to expose the conflict, and they commonly adopted either the accommodating or avoiding style or the direct-encounter-then-yield pattern to handle the conflict. The postconflict relationship here fell under the inhibition subtype of superficial harmony. Thus, the nature of the preconflict relationship affects the style and pattern of conflict resolution, and then continuously influences the postconflict relationship.

Conversely, if the preconflict relationship is considered to affect the type of conflict, then the type of conflict could be expected to influence the postconflict relationship. To further analyze the study data, explicit conflict was classified into the following six types based on the dynamic model for harmony and conflict proposed by Huang (1999): three types of genuine conflict (reasoning, contending, and friction), which are clearly issue-focused; and three types of superficial conflict (quarreling, fighting, and entanglement), which are highly emotional and not issue-focused.

The analysis results showed that half of the reported conflicts were genuine conflicts and were triggered by matters of reasoning, power or privilege, or resource allocation. These conflicts tended to remain rational and focused when the preconflict relationships were of the genuine harmony type, and then the postconflict relationship also continued to be a genuine harmony. Similarly, when preconflict relationships were of the superficial harmony type, the postconflict relationship continued to be a superficial harmony. However, in some of these cases in which the preconflict relationships were of the superficial harmony type, the parties became emotional and the conflict lost issue-focus and transformed into a superficial conflict. The fighting type of conflict was the main type of conflict that developed. In cases in which the conflict became superficial (fighting or quarreling type), the postconflict relationships remained at the level of superficial harmony. Thus, the preconflict relationship appeared to exert a stronger effect on the postconflict relationship than the conflict type did. Four instances of hidden conflict (inhibition harmony) with the supervisor were also reported in the study. The participants involved might have strongly disagreed with their supervisors on certain matters but not have exposed this, and thus the supervisors might not have been aware of the disagreement. Subordinates in this type of a scenario typically harbor strong negative feelings toward, and keep their distance from, the supervisors. Consequently, morale was low among these four participants.

The "direct encounter followed by compromise or coordination" pattern of conflict resolution allowed genuine harmony to flourish in the postconflict relationship. Conversely, the "direct encounter followed by avoidance" pattern resulted in superficial harmony in the postconflict relationship. Lastly, the accommodating style tended to cause the conflict to remain implicit, and thus only the inhibition type of superficial harmony remained in the relationship.

In summary, this study demonstrated that if an emic approach is adopted, particularly using the Huang's model on interpersonal harmony and conflict, to investigate conflict-resolution patterns in the workplace, numerous insights can be gained that are considerably distinct from those yielded by the results obtained using an etic approach, and that this should provide a new conflict-management strategy for Chinese organizations.

Hidden Conflict and Harmonization Mechanism in the Relationship between Mothers- and Daughters-in-Law: From Superficiality to Genuineness

The most complex vertical relationship in Chinese society is the one between mothers- and daughters-in-law, which has long been described as "the war between two women." Studies to date on the relationship between mothers- and daughters-in-law have emphasized the static rather than the dynamic conflicts

between them. However, one previous study (Huang and Hsu, 2006), which is discussed here, used the dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflicts of Huang (1999), a model that is highly favorable for understanding this relationship and can precisely portray the progress in the transformation of the relationship.

Analysis of the data gathered from 19 in-depth interviews revealed an extensive range in the harmony between mothers- and daughters-in-law. The findings revealed that the relationship between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law is initially a superficial harmony, because they interact with each other through the same person but do not interact directly. The harmonization process begins with both parties avoiding face-to-face conflicts and maintaining superficial harmony during the beginning stages of the marriage, following which the relationship changes depending on whether the mother- and daughter-in-law change their ***obliffection*** (***chin-yi,*** **情義**), which refers to obligations and affections involved in the interaction leading toward the relationship.

If the mother- and daughter-in-law wish to maintain a relationship of genuine harmony, their outward behaviors must closely match their hidden emotions. Outer behaviors within this genuine harmony invariably transform the hidden emotions into progressively more positive emotions. Positive hidden emotions and outer behaviors make this form of harmony a dynamic progression that includes three phases in terms of the distinct intensities of the relationship quality and the harmonization mechanism of dynamic interaction in the transformation process. In Phase 1 (formation of genuine harmony), a relationship of the genuine harmony type begins to develop as each person fulfills her mutual obligations as a mother- or daughter-in-law. In Phase 2 (maintenance of genuine harmony), the mothers- and daughters-in-law freely express affection for one another and identify transforming solutions to hidden conflict, and their genuine harmony relationship at this stage is steady. In Phase 3 (refinement of genuine harmony), the genuine harmony is reinforced as the relationship becomes progressively more interactive, and the parties no longer focus on merely fulfilling their obligations as mothers- and daughters-in-law. Conversely, if the relationship continues to remain a superficial harmony, the interactions and their consequences differ completely from those in a genuine harmony.

The study revealed that obliffection (*chin-yi*) is the core harmonization mechanism operating in the relationship between mothers- and daughters-in-law. Therefore, Hsu and Huang (2006) confirmed that the traditional optimal relationship between mothers- and daughters-in-law is the affiliation type of harmony, which indicates that the core interaction mode is the affective-orientation mode and that it also involves active caring emotion. However, in the case of present-day mothers- and daughters-in-law, the optimal relationship they seek might be a role-fitting-type of harmony, which suggests that adjustment-orientation, cooperation, and obligation priority are highly favorable (Hsu and Huang, 2006).

Hidden Conflict or Ignoring in Adolescent Friendships

Hidden conflict is more widespread than explicit conflict in Chinese society, as suggested by the theory of Huang (1999). Previous Western studies have treated ignoring (hidden conflict) as one type of relationship aggression. However, ignoring (不理) and ending of relationships occur in close friendships. From the relationship aggression viewpoint, no explanation is available for why the actor senses pain and guilt in this scenario. Chinese people emphasize relationships, and thus they cannot readily confront conflict and prefer to allow a conflict to become implicit. Instead of damaging a relationship explicitly and directly, ignoring the target friend is one approach used for coping with interpersonal conflict and leading the relationship into a superficial harmony: Ignoring silently conveys a sense of dissatisfaction and reduces intimacy in a friendship. Therefore, Lai and Huang (2013) examined the meaning and process of ignoring (hidden conflict) in adolescent friendships in a previous study by adopting the dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict, which is based on the Chinese cultural context rather than on the relational aggression viewpoint.

In the study (Lai and Huang, 2013), data on past instances of ignoring experiences were gathered by interviewing 14 participants (13–29 years old; 11 females). The results showed that the ignoring process was a practice of the method of balancing the "I-Thou" psychological distance. Close friendships in adolescence are high-support relationships but can be unstable. The role obligations between friends are obscure, and the causes of conflict in these relationships are also illegitimate, such as "unwittingly harm," "inequitable affections," "anger transferring," and "more independent space." Conversely, the cultural demand for maintaining harmony results in a dilemma in which by acting out, a person harms the other person in the relationship, but by not acting out, one harms oneself. When faced with this "stuck in the mud" or "lose–lose scenario" period, four paths were followed by the study participants.

If the conflict remained vague, the relationship entered into a superficial harmony in which the intimacy between the parties decreased. If the conflict escalated, the relationship became broken. If an opportunity presented itself for communicating clearly and expressing the value of each partner in the relationship, the relationship developed into a genuine harmony.

Lastly, in certain cases, even after the contact between friends ceased to exist, the people involved did not readily accept or become aware of the end of the relationship, which suggests that the consequences of ignoring were not all negative. However, from the relationship aggression viewpoint, no positive results can be observed here.

Emotion Sharing and Its Effect on Superficial Friendships Developing into Genuine Friendships

Previous research on friendship mostly subscribed to the "social penetration theory" and considered that the interacting dyads progressively disclosed themselves through daily interaction and developed intimacy gradually. The theory of Huang (1999)

suggests that attention must be devoted to the superficially harmonious aspect of friendship. Friends in a superficial harmony might conceal their disagreements, and even when they claim the other as "a friend," they might not genuinely care for each other, and they will also not be willing to engage in a close mutual friendship voluntarily. According to the self-disclosure theory, a superficial friendship appears to remain frozen in this state forever. However, this view has been called into question.

A series of studies attempted to examine whether the automatic process of "social sharing of emotion" (Rime et al., 1991) might result in a change or breakthrough that leads to a superficial-harmony friendship developing into a genuine-harmony friendship (Huang and Huang, 2012).

In Study 1, questionnaires were answered by 383 Taiwanese college students. The results showed that emotion sharing occurred in both superficial- and genuine-harmony friendships in Chinese society and that distinct types of harmony displayed the same sharing pattern. All types of emotion were shared, and the friendship quality was affected after the sharing of emotions. Study 2 was focused on the types of emotion shared in a superficial harmony that appeared at a low frequency in Study 1, and the in-depth interview was used as the qualitative study method. The outcome revealed that emotion sharing in a superficial friendship can potentially end the superficial relationship itself, and that the main influencing factors could be "change in impression," "the same feeling," and "feeling of secret sharing." To further examine the findings from these two studies, a quasi-experimental method was used in Study 3. The experimental stories included four manipulated emotions, sadness, happiness, guilt, and affection, plus one control condition, non-emotion sharing. The results indicated that friendship quality was affected by emotion sharing and that the change was moderated by the previous harmony type. Furthermore, in a superficial friendship, the effect of negative-emotion sharing on friendship quality was mediated by "feeling of secret sharing," which did not occur in the case of positive-emotion sharing.

The findings of this series of studies clearly reveal that the emotion sharing theory is more appropriate than the self-disclosure theory for interpreting the breakthrough that results in a superficial-harmony friendship developing into a genuine-harmony friendship.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Most Western studies on conflict are based on the social exchange theory, conflict dialectics, and PDG. Because Chinese culture or political ideology emphasizes the value of harmony and devaluates conflict, a harmony theory is specially required for understanding Chinese people (i.e., an indigenous Chinese theory that considers harmony and conflict concurrently is necessary).

Based on the Yin–Yang perspective or the dialectic of harmonization, the author first reconstructed and reinterpreted the concepts regarding harmony and conflict embodied in traditional Chinese thought, specifically the theory of integration of heaven and humanity, the theory of rituals (*Li*-thoughts), and the state-ideological Confucianism, which imply, respectively, the ideas of individual personality, interpersonal ethics, and the interests and effectiveness of groups or organizations. Concomitantly, the author established a formal psychological theory/model, "the dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict," based on the Yin–Yang perspective/dialectic of harmonization/real-virtual dialectics, which reflected the basic views of Confucianism and Taoism. This model referred to genuine versus superficial harmony and authentic versus virtual focus conflict, but it regarded implicit/hidden conflict as superficial harmony. Based on this formal model, a qualitative study was conducted to construct, respectively, substantial theory regarding interpersonal harmony and conflict. Lastly, to validate this model, the author conducted a series of quantitative and extensive studies on interpersonal harmony/conflict within the relationships between parents and children, supervisors and subordinates, mothers- and daughters-in-law, and friends, and the results provided new insights into various types of relationships.

In summary, the work discussed in this article demonstrates that a formal psychological theory/model can be developed based on the Yin–Yang perspective. Furthermore, the described findings have revealed that by combining qualitative and quantitative empirical research, a substantial theory can be established and the concepts can be validated. Thus, a Chinese indigenous psychology rooted in traditional cultural thought and Eastern philosophy has been realized.

Additionally, this article might raise certain arguments in the Chinese indigenous research field. First, the meaning of Yin–Yang is highly controversial. Yin–Yang, as an indigenous Chinese notion, could be regarded as a type of Chinese philosophy (Feng, 1983). "Philosophy" means the love of wisdom, and the modern science of philosophy originated in the West. Yin–Yang, as a traditional Chinese philosophy, lacks methodology and operationalizable methods. However, Li X. (2014) argued that Yin–Yang is one type of logic system (the other three being Aristotle's formal logic, Bohr's complementarity logic, and Hegel's dialectic logic) and could be applicable and powerful in certain contexts. Thus, Li X. (2014) suggested that Yin–Yang might inspire but cannot guide Chinese indigenous research. By contrast, Li (2012) proposed that Yin–Yang must be viewed as one of three basic cognitive frames (the other two being Aristotle's formal logic and Hegel's dialectical logic). Furthermore, Li P.P. (2014) noted that Yin–Yang as an epistemology contains three core tenets, "holistic content," "dynamic process," and "duality integration," as well as three operating mechanisms, "asymmetrical balancing," "transitional balancing," and "curvilinear balancing." Therefore, Li P.P. (2014) suggested that "Yin–Yang Balance" is of unique value for Chinese indigenous management research and its application to the case-study method in particular (Li P.P., 2014).

The author agrees with Ping Li's viewpoint and regards Yin–Yang as an epistemology and as being context-specific. Because Yin–Yang is an epistemology, the author used the Yin–Yang perspective to develop the formal model. Moreover, because Yin–Yang is context-specific, the author used the Yin–Yang

perspective under the context of harmony and conflict, and then adopted the viewpoint of Cheng (1977), according to which the dialectic of harmonization is regarded as one of metaphysics (the other two being Hegel's dialectics of conflict and Madhyamika dialectics). As a metaphysics that includes ontology, cosmology, and natural philosophy and denotes a non-empirical type of philosophical enquiry into the nature of existence, the dialectic of harmonization can serve as a new perspective on culture (Huang, 2008; Fang, 2012).

Thus, considering Yin–Yang as an epistemology might not only inspire research on traditional thought/philosophy but also integrate the philosophy into modern scientific research. Although Yin–Yang was regarded as an epistemology and the formal model of interpersonal harmony and conflict was constructed based on this epistemology, the model corresponds to the three core tenets of the Yin–Yang frame proposed by Li P.P. (2014). Moreover, the research extended previous work and confirmed two of the three operating mechanisms of Yin–Yang balancing, asymmetrical balancing and transitional balancing, and only the mechanism of curvilinear balancing remains to be confirmed.

The Huang's (1999) dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict also inspired certain advanced concepts and research in the conflict management field. Leung (1988) initially reported that conflict avoidance is more common in the East Asian society than in Western society; however, in contrast to this, Leung subsequently constructed a dualistic model of harmony (harmony enhancement and disintegration avoidance) and combined conflict and thus suggested an integrated model for conflict management (Leung et al., 2002; Leung and Brew, 2009). Furthermore, the new concepts were used, without being regarded as indigenous concepts, for conducting a cross-cultural study (Leung et al., 2011).

The author's dynamic model of interpersonal harmony and conflict rooted in Yin–Yang dialectics is a monocultural theory (Yang, 1999) or an "Eastern *emic*-as-*emic*" type of indigenous research (Li, 2012), and thus the model and the outcomes from related studies are highly suited to Chinese society. According to the notion of Li P.P. (2014), although the Yin–Yang frame was originated from Chinese culture, it can be applied to people from all cultures. Brew (2007) perceived a requirement to integrate Western and Chinese conceptual frameworks into a single model that would be ontologically meaningful for Western and Asian study samples; however, Brew still focused on conflict and not on harmony. In this respect, whether the Huang model can be applied to international societies must be investigated further in cross-cultural comparisons. Regardless of the type of current research being conducted on conflict management, an emerging trend has been the incorporation of the Chinese notion of harmony into conflict management, and the adoption of Yin–Yang as a new perspective on culture in the field of management.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

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REVIEW
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The Feeling of "Face" in Confucian Society: From a Perspective of Psychosocial Equilibrium

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Previous research on the feeling of "face" has long described "face" as a complicated phenomenon in Confucian societies. Indeed, the feeling of face is highly context dependent. One may have very different (having or losing) face perception if the same face event occurs in a different context. To better capture the features of how face is felt, effects on possible responses need to be considered. Therefore, this article adopts a perspective of psychosocial equilibrium to elaborate people's feeling of face in Taiwan, a Confucian society. The first section illustrates the concept of psychosocial equilibrium and its psychodynamic effects on people's feeling of face. Then, the second section of this article takes positive social situations (having face events) as backdrop to exhibit how people balance their psychosocial equilibrium with different relationships. Following the positive social situations, the third section of this article then focuses on the negative situations (losing face events) to explain how losing face is felt due to unbalance of psychosocial equilibrium with one's relation in that specific context.

Keywords: having face, losing face, modesty, psychosocial equilibrium, self-enhancing

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"Face" has long been a topic of study in the fields of psychology and sociology (Hu, 1944; Goffman, 1955; Brown, 1968; Ho, 1976; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Chen, 1988; King, 1988; Ting-Toomey, 1994; Zai, 1995). Although Goffman (1955) claimed that "face-work" is one of the universal human needs, comparing to take "face" as politeness and/or freedom of one's action (Goffman, 1967; Brown and Levinson, 1987), face plays a more complicated role in Confucian societies and is apparently different from that in the West (Ho, 1976; Cheng, 1986; King, 1988; Hwang, 2006; Hwang and Han, 2010). Previous studies on face phenomenon in Confucian societies tend to adopt a more static point of view to describe the concept and contents of face (Ho, 1976; Cheng, 1986; King, 1988; Chu, 1991; Zai, 1995; Kim and Nam, 1998; Hwang and Han, 2010). To name a few, King and Myers (1977) differentiated two types of face: social face versus moral face; He and Zhang (2011), from a different angle, classified *Mianzi* (face) into three different levels: individual, relational, and group. As face has profound implication on people's daily life, these studies are helpful for an outsider to understand what face is in Confucian societies.

Interestingly, the feeling of face is not a static status; instead, it is a dynamic process and can be affected by different factors in the context it occurs. For example, a student made a presentation for a case study in his/her class but could not properly answer questions proposed by others after his/her presentation. From a static point of view, we know s/he would definitely experience the feeling of losing face. However, if we take a perspective of dynamic process, whether this student would experience the feeling of losing face or how badly s/he would have the sense of losing face would depend on the factors in the context. For example, who proposed those questions, a teacher

or a classmate? How was the atmosphere in the classroom, supportive or competitive? Even the way those questions were proposed, friendly or criticizing? All these factors matter because they can all potentially affect how this student interprets his/her situation; and thus, have an impact on this student's feeling of face. In order to better capture the dynamic features of how face is perceived and works in a Confucian society, this article will elaborate the concept of "psychosocial equilibrium" in the beginning. Then the psychological process for feeling of face, especially from the perspective of how one reacts to maintain his/her psychosocial equilibrium among different relations in a face situation will be illustrated.

THE CONCEPT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL EQUILIBRIUM

Hsu (1971) proposed a concept of "psychosocial homeostasis" to address man's relationship with his fellow men in the human mode of existence. To do so, Hsu (1971) divided the psychosociogram of a person into seven irregular, concentric layers, i.e., wider society and culture, operative society and culture, intimate society and culture, expressible conscious, unexpressed conscious, pre-conscious, and unconscious (from Layer 1 to Layer 7, respectively). In these different layers, Hsu named Layers 3 and 4 with slight extension into Layer 2 and 5 "*jen*," which is the Chinese word meaning "man." The Chinese conception of man sees the nature of an individual's external behavior especially in terms of how it fits or fails to fit the interpersonal standards of the society and culture.

"Homeostasis" is a term refers to an individual's biological tendency to maintain equilibrium across all systems within its body. For example, if a person is too stressed or upset by life's events, his sympathetic system will be triggered to increase the body's physiological arousal (into an alert state). However, it is potentially harmful to his body to stay stressed or aroused, the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems will work together to keep the body's level of arousal in balance for optimum functioning. On the analogy of physical homeostasis, Hsu (1971) emphasized that Layer 3 (intimate society and culture) and Layer 4 (expressible conscious) are the central substance of a person as a social and cultural being. It is the human constant, within which every human individual tends to maintain a satisfactory level of psychic and interpersonal equilibrium, in the same sense that every physical organism tends to maintain a uniform and beneficial physiological stability within and between its parts.

By the same token, Hwang (2011) proposed a model of self named "Mandala." In this Mandala model, self refers to an individual who has been socialized with the ability of reflexivity; therefore, it is the locus of experience and is able to take various actions in different social contexts. Hwang emphasized that the self exists in a field of forces in one's life world. When one intends to act, several forces may influence his decision, especially when he identifies with a particular social role. On the one hand, the individual has to think about how to act as a socialized person. On the other hand, he is pushed by various desires for he is also a biological entity. Therefore, when one takes action in a specific situation, he may reflect his disposition to maintain his psychological equilibrium in that specific social context.

Putting Hsu's (1971) psychosocial homeostasis and Hwang's (2011) self of Mandala together, it is apparent that they both stress that as social beings, people are simultaneously affected by their inner biological forces and expectations from the outside world in which they live. This article adopts and reconciles the concepts of psychosocial homeostasis and self of Mandala together from Hsu and Hwang and terms it as "psychosocial equilibrium" to elaborate how people react in face situations to balance their inner desires and outward relationships. Han (2010a, 2012a, 2014) conducted a series studies to classify the emotions people experienced in face losing situations and found that although losing face is more a holistic feeling, different emotions may involve depending on the contextual clues in the situations. The different emotions participants experienced (rated) in Han's studies can be viewed as an empirical evidence to support the existence of psychosocial equilibrium. For example, Han (2014) adopted a scenario experimental method to examine the feeling of face and emotions experienced in an ability failure situation. The ability failure event was kept the same across all episodes; however, the contextual clues for participants to interpret their situations were manipulated. The scenario in this study described a college student "A" who attended a family gathering where all family relatives celebrated a grandparent's birthday. Bantering together, A's cousins talked about their schools excitedly. Then Episode one described that A became conscious of inferiority because A was in a not-that-good college while all his/her cousins were in top universities. Episode two was exactly the same except when A became conscious of inferiority, s/he was also aware that his/her mother looked sullen about this. In Episode three, the mother of A compared him/her to his/her cousins for poor academic performance in front of the relatives. Episode four described A's mother mentioned the same issue to A later that day in A's bedroom. The results of this study showed that participants rated the highest degree of losing face in the mother's public comparison; the lowest in self-conscious inferiority. As for the emotions participants experienced, the feelings of depression, embarrassment, and shame were highly rated across all episodes. Feelings of anger and being humiliated appeared mainly in the public comparison context. According to the two-factor theory of emotion, an emotional state may be considered a function of a state of physiological arousal and of a cognitive explanation to this state of arousal. Because the physical states are difficult to label on their own, people will refer to contextual clues to make attributions for the state of arousal (Schachter and Singer, 1962). Following this rationale, the different emotions participants experienced in Han's (2014) study could be understood as participants experienced a state of physiological arousal due to losing balance of psychosocial equilibrium with their social world; then, they labeled the state of arousal with different cognitive explanations based on the clues in the contexts. To be more specific, psychosocial equilibrium in this article refers to a psycho-status that one has to maintain with his social world. In Confucian societies, the concept of social world mainly refers to different interpersonal relationships one is involved with in daily life. Therefore, when a face event happens,

will a person interpret this event as losing or having face depends on whether this person senses losing psychosocial equilibrium with his social world.

Taking psychosocial equilibrium as a framework, the aforementioned a student presenting a case report example will be easy to understand. If a teacher proposed a question and this student could not answer, s/he might feel embarrassed but not necessarily lose face. The reason is students in Confucian societies naturally take their teacher as a superior whom students should respect and be submissive to; therefore, little to no psychological equilibrium would be lost between them. On the contrary, this student should have strong feelings of losing face if a classmate proposed the same question that s/he could not answer. Because a student should psychologically view him/herself as good as his/her peer group, being challenged and/or defeated by a classmate is a threat to the balance of psychosocial equilibrium between this dyad. Losing balance of psychosocial equilibrium is an uncomfortable psychological status that generates psychodynamics and impacts this student's interpretation of the event and feeling of face. Han (2012a) adopted another scenario experimental method to examine this hypothesis. The scenarios were about a college student who was well prepared (vs. not prepared) for his/her midterm presentation. After the presentation, in the well-prepared episode, a classmate (vs. teacher) asked a very difficult question that s/he could not answer; in the not prepared episode, a basic simple question was asked. The results showed that participants rated the highest level of loss of face in the case where their classmate asked a simple question that they could not answer. On the contrary, the teacher asking a hard question in a well-prepared situation was considered the least harmful to the feeling of face. The results of Han's (2012a) study supported the perspective that different relations might have very different psychological implications for one's self-evaluation. An individual might feel losing face in one relation but does not feel the same way in another due to the effects of psychosocial equilibrium among different relationships.

PSYCHOSOCIAL EQUILIBRIUM AND RELATIONS

Hwang (1987) proposed a theory model to illustrate Chinese face and favor behaviors. In that model, Hwang emphasized that when a Chinese is interacting with others in a social context, two major things related to role relationships within the interacting dyad should be recognized. The first thing is the superiority of relative status of the dyad; and, the second thing is the degree of closeness between the dyad. Why superiority and closeness are important is because Confucian society is very authority and relation oriented (Yang, 1991; Ho, 1993; Hwang, 2000). People who grew up in this culture naturally internalized cultural values of respecting and submitting to authority (Yang, 1981) and taking the immediate relations around them in the interacting context as a reference framework for behavior guidance (Ho, 1998).

For people's relationships, Hwang (1987) classified three sorts of interpersonal relationship: instrumental ties, mixed ties, and expressive ties. Expressive ties are generally a relatively permanent and stable social relationship, such as family members; mixed ties include relationships with acquaintances outside the immediate family; and instrumental ties are established mostly by a dyad of strangers for specific purpose(s). Different rules will be applied when one interacts with others. If the interacting other belongs to expressive ties, "need rule" will be applied. According to this rule, every member should do his best for the family, and the family will in turn supply him the resources necessary for living. To be more specific, the rule of need cares more about distributing resources, profits, and/or other benefits to satisfy its members' legitimate needs, regardless their relative contributions. If the interacting other belongs to instrumental ties, "equity rule" may dominate the interactions. The rule of equity is primarily activated in economically oriented situations and encourages people to allocate resources in proportion to their contributions. In other words, people in this kind of relationship only take it as a means to attain their goals. If the consequences of the social exchange seem unprofitable, one may bargain or even completely break off the relationship without regret. However, if the interacting other is a mixed tie, which means the interacting dyad know each other and may expect to meet the other again in the future (some may be in a daily routine), "*renqing* rule" will be taken into account. The rule of *Renqing* connotes a set of social norms by which one has to abide in order to get along well with other people in Confucian society and it includes two basic kinds of social behavior. The first one is people should keep in contact with the acquaintances in their social network; and the second one is people should sympathize, offer help, and do a "*renqing* (favor)" for a member in their social network if that person gets into trouble or encounters a difficult situation.

On the other hand, instead of classifying different types of interpersonal relationship, Ho et al. (1989) and Ho (1998) claimed that one should adopt "methodological relationalism," i.e., "person in relations" and "persons in relation" to better understand and interpret Chinese social behaviors. According to Ho et al. (1989) and Ho's (1998) opinion, one will certainly get involved in a variety of social events. Others involved in those social events constitute his/her "persons in relation." Then, how s/he perceives these others will form his/her "person in relations." Hwang's different relational ties and Ho et al.'s (1989) person in relations can be a contextual framework to understand people's feeling of face because they both imply the dynamics of psychosocial equilibrium for people in social interaction. As psychosocial equilibrium is a psycho-status that a person has to maintain with his social world, whether a person interprets an event as losing or having face depends on whether this person senses losing equilibrium with his social world. To make it easier to understand, **Figure 1** presents the role psychosocial equilibrium plays in one's perception of face in his/her social world.

Brown and Levinson (1987) mentioned that "face" is the evaluation of one's public image after s/he reflects his/her own actions in certain social circumstances. It somehow equals to one's self-identification in a special situation; therefore, it can be called one's situated identity (Alexander and Knight, 1971). One may feel losing, maintaining, or increasing face based on recognizing

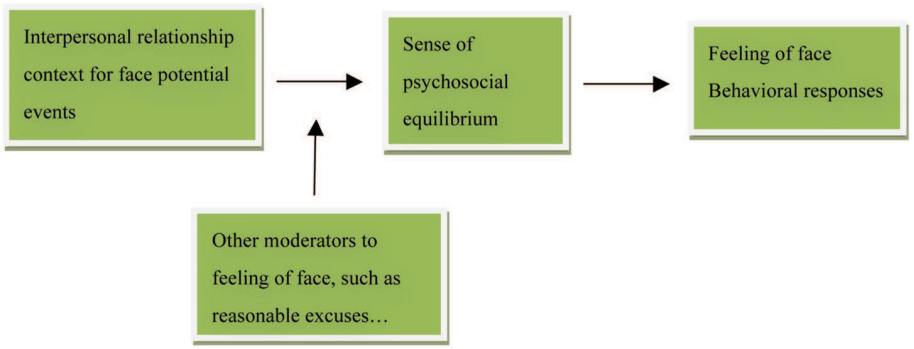

FIGURE 1 | The role psychosocial equilibrium plays in perception of face.

other's evaluation of his/her behavior in a certain situation. Generally speaking, people's feeling of face can be basically divided into two domains: having face and losing face. When the face related issue is positive, it is about face having; whereas, if the issue is negative, people will have to struggle to save face. Apparently, positive face issues have very different implications from negative ones for people's psychological equilibrium.

POSITIVE SOCIAL SITUATIONS AND FEELING OF FACE

As cultural psychologists have argued that "interpersonal relationships" and "individuals" are not equally stressed in the East and West (Triandis, 1989; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Ho, 1998; Crocker and Park, 2004), people who grow up in Western culture are supposed to be more self-affirmative and self-enhancing when sharing their success or achievements with others. On the contrary, people in Confucian societies are supposed to be modest toward their social achievements (Bond et al., 1982; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Heine et al., 1999, 2000). However, it might be a myth to take it for granted that a modest response will always be applicable and/or suitable for one's success in Eastern cultures. In Confucian societies, people can be either self-enhancing or modest to a positive event of face because different relations imply different rules for them to follow in order to maintain psychosocial equilibrium with their social world (Hsu, 1971; Hwang, 1987, 2000; Ho, 1998).

While Western Christianity advocates that each person is an independent entity created by God and should therefore strive to defend the territory of self that has been drawn around the immediate surface of the physical body, people in Confucian society tend to view their lives as a continuity of their parents' lives. As a result, one's family members, especially parents and children, are more likely to be included in the territories of his/her self. In other words, family members are usually perceived as a single body named "Big-Self" and are especially liable to the feelings of having glory or shame together (Su and Hwang, 2003; Hwang and Han, 2010; Han and Li, 2011). When the face issue is positive, one will be definitely happy to share glory and add face to his/her family because his/her face or honor also belongs to the family, the big self. In this case, it is unlikely that one will be modest or efface his/her success because it would be like s/he is denying the face or honor to the family (Han, 2010b). Therefore, the psychosocial equilibrium here is well maintained when one is sharing face or even bragging the positive issue to enhance the family's face. Except from family members, one still has to interact with other relations in his/her daily life. Strangers or persons in the relation of instrumental ties are those in which one does not have personal affection involved. Therefore, when the face issue to one is positive, strangers hardly know because there is almost no connection between one and a stranger for his/her personal issue. Even when this positive event is publicized and strangers deliver their admiration or compliments; being polite is enough, no glory sharing or modesty is needed.

Relations with acquaintances or mixed ties are the most complicated relations for one to interact with (Hwang, 1987). Acquaintances can be very different in the degree of closeness; some might be thought of as closer and trustworthy while others might be seen as distant and unfaithful. When the acquaintance is close, the feeling of we-ness between close friends somehow makes the relation like family; and thus, the psychodynamics for the interaction will be simpler. One will be willing to share glory with them and they will be happy for him/her when the face event is positive. Modesty of one's success in this case is possible but not necessary. If the acquaintance is not that close; then, it will be another story. In that case, one will have to calculate very carefully to figure out the best reaction. Not only because acquaintances are the people with whom there is daily interaction; but also because these acquaintances usually share other social networks. To complicate matters, it is highly possible that face issues will be spreading to those social networks. As a result, face related behavior will not only be judged by acquaintances, but it will also be gossiped about in social networks. Therefore, it would be understandable that one should be modest because others will judge his/her reaction for success by social modesty norms. Self-enhancing responses will make people think of him/her as proud or arrogant.

Following the rationale, it is clear that previous studies suggesting that people in Confucian societies tend to be modest for their social achievement were only partly correct.

Han (2010b, 2012b) focused on interpersonal closeness and threat of one's achievement in interaction with others to examine how these factors affect one's attribution to his/her achievement. The results of these studies found that one would adopt very different styles of attribution to different relations due to different motivations. When the achievement was a threat to the interacting other, one would attribute his/her achievement to luck, presenting a modest response whether that person is an intimate or not. The concern behind the modest attribution was empathy and saving other's face as previous references mentioned (Yang, 1981; Pong, 1993; Ho, 1998). It should be noted that when one's achievement is a threat to others, modesty is a gesture of empathy which is universal, even people in the West will do the same (Tice et al., 1995). The behaviors of empathetic modesty can be addressed from the viewpoint of Hardy and Van Vugt's (2006) "theory of competitive altruism." Competitive altruism suggests that people's attempt to outcompete each other in terms of generosity may be because altruism can enhance the status and reputation of the givers. In deed, the results of Hardy and Van Vugt's (2006) studies found that the most altruistic members gained the highest status in their group and were most frequently preferred as cooperative interaction partners. Different from the perspective of competitive altruism, this article focuses mainly on the effects of unbalanced psychosocial equilibrium to interpret the behaviors of empathetic modesty. When one's success or achievement reflects the failure of others (Beach et al., 1998; Tesser, 2000), the psycho status between the interacting dyad is apparently unbalanced. To be modest is a way to rebalance the psychosocial equilibrium with the interacting other, whether the inferior one is intimate or not is not a concern.

If the achievement has no threat to the interacting other; then, one's attribution to his/her success would depend on the closeness to this interacting person. The findings of Han 's (2010b; 2012b) studies showed that, when the person was an intimate, most participants attributed their success to efforts and ability just as their Western counterparts, presenting a self-enhancing pattern of response. The motivation for this self-enhancing behavior is sharing the glory. In fact, data collected from qualitative interviews in Han's (2010b) study found that modest responses in this situation were quoted as "not that appropriate" or "somewhat hypocritical" by the interviewees (pp. 14–16). However, when the interacting other was just an acquaintance, participants would be modest and attribute their achievements to luck. The motivation for being modest in this situation is to abide by social modesty norms, which is different from that of empathy because one's success has no threat to the interacting person in this case.

Being modest for one's success is prevailing in Confucian societies, even when the achievement is not a threat to others. Some psychologists adopt a viewpoint of impression management to explain this phenomenon, claiming that the purpose of being modest is to earn others' positive evaluation such as "decent upbringing" (Pong, 1993; Wang and Sun, 2007). On the other hand, some psychologists view modesty as a powerful social norm in East Asia. People are taught not to boast of their abilities or accomplishments in order to maintain interpersonal harmony (Yang, 1981; Ho, 1998; Kurman, 2001, 2003; Cai et al., 2007). Both views of impression management and modest social norm fit the perspective of psychosocial equilibrium. The intriguing part here is that modesty can also play a role to enhance one's self-worth and feeling of face through the responses of interacting others. For example, Muramoto (2003) found an "indirect self-enhancement" among Japanese that although participants in Japan attributed their success to external factors (luck, chance, and environment), showing a tendency of self-effacing, they would expect their intimates such as close friends and family members to emphasize the internal factors (ability, effort, and personality) to support their positive self-regards. On the contrary, those non-significant others were not expected to protect or enhance the self-worth of the achiever.

However, Han (2011) found that, in Taiwan, the face or self-esteem one lost from being modest could be well compensated through the latter part of social script executed by the interacting other (the admirer). In order to exhibit the dynamic face having process in social script, Han (2011) instructed her participants to recall an episode in which they had a success or accomplishment and their friend (just an acquaintance, not intimate) complimented them. If the participants had not had this kind of experience, they were instructed to imagine how people in such a situation might respond. The participants were then instructed to write down the conversations between the interacting dyad where the achiever was the participant and the admirer was their friend. The results of this study found that although some participants used "I am not that good" or "nothing special" to deny their accomplishments, most participants attributed their success to external factors such as luck, others' help, or team work. Apparently, the achievers were taking a social modesty norm as their behavioral standard. However, if the latter part of this social interaction was examined, we would also find that most of the admirers' responses to the achievers were to challenge the achievers' modesty by using phrases such as "you are much better than the opponents" or "your performance was perfect" to express their compliments more intensively. In other words, the modest achiever can enhance his/her feeling of face through the admirer's repeated compliments and maintain interpersonal harmony as well.

The reason why the modest person can both enhance his/her face and still maintain interpersonal harmony is also due to the function of psychosocial equilibrium. It is important to understand that the psychological process in a social interaction is always dynamic. If one encounters an acquaintance to admire his/her success or achievement and does not behave modestly, the psychosocial equilibrium between the interacting dyad is hurt. By the same token, when the achiever initially plays a modest role in a social script as being modest, the role for the admirer to take in the latter part of the social script is to re-enhance the face in front of the achiever by expressing the compliments more intensively. Failing to do so will also jeopardize the psychological balance between the interacting dyad.

NEGATIVE SOCIAL SITUATIONS AND FEELING OF FACE

Comparing positive events such as achievement can add glory to one's face, negative issues threaten one's face and make the situation awkward; therefore, they are more stressful and complicated in reactions. It is obvious that one will avoid or try to alleviate the harm from losing face if s/he has a choice. Under the concept of Big Self, if the face event one encounters is negative, s/he will not only harm his/her own face, but also put his/her family's face under threat. It is very possible that this person will cover this event from his/her family members because when one hurts the face of his/her family, s/he will be in a state of guilt for being the black sheep in the family. In addition, even though family members are supposed to give supportiveness when one is in need, it still embarrasses this person and the guilt feeling will be reminded every time s/he faces his/her family members if they are aware of the face losing event s/he has done.

Except from family members, one still has to interact with other relations in his/her daily life. It is natural for one to hide a negative event even from strangers to protect his/her feeling of face. However, if loss of face is inevitable, one has to find others to help solve that face threatening issue. Strangers or persons of instrumental ties will be one of the best choices. Again, the reason is psychosocial equilibrium that one has to maintain psychological balance with his/her social world. Persons of instrumental ties do not know who you really are, and actually, you are just one of their clients who all have similar troubles. In addition, the relation can be terminated as soon as the trouble has been solved. After that, one can again function in his/her life world as if nothing had ever happened.

When a face losing situation is foreseen but still inevitable, losing face in front of the most harmless person would be a plausible strategy for one to adopt. However, if one does not want or trust help from people of instrumental ties, close friends will be an alternative choice. One thing should be noted in this case is that, close friends are not family members; therefore, they will not suffer from the loss of face. In addition, close friends will cover the event for us because the code of brotherhood demands that we should help and keep secrets for our friends (Yang, 1991). After being helped by close friends, although one will feel indebted which make his/her psychosocial equilibrium unbalanced, the rule of *renqing* (favor) will work to recover the psychological balance between the dyad in the long run (Hwang, 1987).

As one's interaction with others of instrumental ties can and will terminate at the end of that event; interaction with others of expressive ties might be stable and durable (Hwang, 1987). Family is the most important relation of expressive ties for people in Confucian societies. Maintaining psychosocial equilibrium with family members plays an important part in people's daily lives. It will be reasonable to hypothesize that comparing relations of mixed and instrumental ties, when a negative event happens which may hurt a person's face, his/her family member will be the one they want to hide that event from most. To examine this hypothesis, two scenarios were constructed in one study of Han and Li's (2008) research. In one scenario, they described a person in the story who found that s/he was infected with venereal disease; while the same person had gallstones in the other scenario. The participants were instructed to imagine that they were the person in the scenario and had to choose a medical doctor from different relations (i.e., older brother/sister, classmate in senior high, and/or the doctor who is a stranger) for their disease. The results of this study showed that participants in different scenarios made very different choices of doctor. To be more specific, when the disease was sexually contracted which might be a threat to one's face, a "from far to near" helper seeking pattern was exhibited; most of the participants (91%) chose the stranger doctor to help. The remaining 9% chose a friend of a mixed tie, and no one chose a family member. The reason for participants looking for help from strangers was because they intended to "save their face," hoping that the loss of face from their contracted disease would not be exposed to the stable and durable relations such as family members and/or acquaintances in order to maintain the psychosocial equilibrium among them. Interestingly, getting better help is relatively not a concern in this situation. It was another story when the disease involved was gallstones, which has nothing to do with one's feeling of face. In that case, most participants (92%) chose a helper from family members of an expressive tie and no one chose a stranger. In this situation, participants based their choice of helper on the importance of "better help" and presented a "from close to distant" order of seeking help. The results of Han and Li's (2008) study implied that the need for people to maintain psychosocial equilibrium among different relations is not the same. Family members and friends are those one has to face all the time; therefore, when an issue might put his/her face under threat, strangers spontaneously become a better choice, for it can be terminated as soon as the issue ends.

There are two types of face in Confucian societies: social face and moral face (Cheng, 1986). "Social face" is gained through the status achieved by one's talent, endeavors, and/or ability. "Moral face" refers to the social evaluation of one's moral character, which is the baseline of one's integrity of personality (Hwang, 2006). One may argue that the reason why venereal disease has such dramatic effects on people's helper choice is because it is related to sexual morality that is the baseline for one to function in his/her community (Su and Hwang, 2003; Hwang and Han, 2010). Negative events related to social face would not have similar effects on people's decision making because the social standard for ability performance is more lenient and flexible. To answer this question, Han and Li (2008) constructed another two scenarios of social face event to examine whether participants would still exhibit the pattern of "from far to near" for seeking a helper. One non-threatening social face scenario described a father who was not capable of paying his two children's college tuition because he was robbed on the way to the bank; the second scenario was considered a threat to social face as it described a father who was not able to afford children's tuition because he could not save enough money. Participants had to choose a helper from different relations (i.e., family members, friends/colleagues, and/or banks). The results of this study were similar to the results of moral face (Venereal disease vs. gallstones) though the effect was not that overt.

Although moral face is more important than social face in terms of losing face, one may choose not to strive for social face, but must protect moral face in all situations (Hwang, 2006). The similar results in participants' choice of helper for both moral and social face situations in Han and Li's (2008) research highlighted the fact that, in Confucian societies, one's immediate responses and feeling of face to a specific social event are affected by the psychosocial equilibrium s/he perceived immediately in that context, not the type of face. In other words, to differentiate the importance from moral face to social face is more like static knowledge stored in one's mind; however, when one really encounters a situation which threatens his/her feeling of face, it would be an automatic response to the factor(s) that jeopardize his/her psychosocial equilibrium with his/her immediate social world. That impacting factor(s) could be either moral face or social face, or both.

MODERATORS TO FEELING OF FACE

Although losing face is harmful to one's self-image and dignity, it is very sensitive to contextual clues. Some factors other than interpersonal relationships in a face threatened situation might worsen or alleviate the face losing feeling. For example, the lack of personal closeness will moderate one's feeling of face when s/he is in a face losing situation. Liu (2007) found that if one has to give negative feedback like poor academic performance to a friend, expressing the message privately would be better than delivering the same message in front of others. Because delivering negative feedback publicly implies one's weak points will be revealed in front of others, which will definitely harm one's feeling of face. Corresponding to Liu's (2007) study, Han (2014) also found that, compared with being blamed privately, participants in her study rated stronger feelings of losing face if their mother condemned them for poor academic performance in front of family relatives.

On the other hand, whether one has a reasonable excuse for why s/he is distressed for losing face can also diminish the threat to the face. As Han and Li's (2008) study showed, although not capable of paying children's tuitions was stressful for a father, participants in the being robbed scenario did not have the feeling of losing face. On the contrary, not being capable of saving enough money for children's tuitions was rated by participants as highly harmful to one's feeling of face. The results of this study implied that being robbed is a reasonable excuse, which could save one from the harm of losing face. Actually, finding reasonable excuses or preferring private occasions for negative messages in order to protect one's self-image are universal; even people in the West will have similar responses. For example, Brown and Garland (1971) manipulated an embarrassing situation in which participants would be observed either by a stranger or by a friend. The results of this study showed that, compared with the situation of being observed by a stranger, participants were more willing to give up their money rewards to prevent their friend from observing them in an awkward situation. The reason why participants in Brown and Garland's (1971) study were more concerned about their self-image in front of their friends could be understood by the concept of psychosocial equilibrium. Interaction with strangers could be terminated immediately after the experiment; however, relationships between friends would not finish with the experiment and would make the feeling of embarrassment last much longer.

On the other hand, because authority-orientation is a feature of Eastern culture, it may have an effect on people's feeling of face. Hofstede (1980) proposed four dimensions of work-related values on which the differences among national cultures can easily be understood. These four dimensions of values are: "power distance," "uncertainty avoidance," "individualism/collectivism," and "masculinity/femininity." Nations in Confucian societies such as Taiwan are relatively high in power distance and low in individualism. Yang (1991) proposed that the reason why Chinese people are sensitive to the existence of authority is due to the patriarchal system in the society. As a matter of course, people are sensitive to the existence of authority and spontaneously obey the orders from superiors (Han et al., 2005; Wu et al., 2008; Chien, 2013).

Following this rationale, it would be easy to imagine that, if a face offensive situation is caused by a superior, the feeling of losing face or being humiliated would be less than that caused by a peer. The results of Han's (2012a) study supported this hypothesis. In this study, participants were instructed to imagine that they were blamed for not being well prepared for a term presentation by either a teacher or a classmate to induce the feeling of losing face. Indeed, the results of this study showed that, the feeling of losing face was significantly higher when the blaming was from a peer than from a teacher. Again, the face losing effect in Han's study could be explained by the concept of psychosocial equilibrium. Comparing with being blamed by a peer, being corrected or scolded by a superior is usually taken for granted by people in Confucian societies; therefore, it would be less likely to harm one's psychological balance with the superior. In another study, although not directly measuring feelings of face, Han et al. (2005) recruited graduate students in Taiwan as participants. In that study, participants had to decide whether they would accept or reject an unreasonable favor-doing request from a professor (vs. a classmate); then, they had to rate their feeling of being offended. The results showed that participants were more likely to accept an unreasonable request of favor from a professor than a classmate. In addition, they rated lower feelings of being offended when the unreasonable request of favor was from a professor.

CONCLUSION

This article adopted a perspective of psychosocial equilibrium and systematically focused on different relations to elaborate people's feeling of face and possible responses in face situations. However, as face is a prevailing and complicated phenomenon in Confucian societies, varied factors affect people's feeling of face and their range of responses. Face phenomena can be understood from different ways. For example, some researches

tried to illustrate people's face behaviors from a viewpoint of personality character of face orientation, such as "thin-skinned" vs. "thick-skinned." In general, one who is "thin-skinned" is more likely to feel "losing face" when his/her misconduct is exposed. On the other hand, one who is "thick-skinned" is less likely to have such a feeling (Chen, 1988; Hwang and Han, 2010). Chou (1996) also classified the face concern into two major face orientation types: protective and acquisitive. Furthermore, Chou also developed a Protective and Acquisitive Face Orientation Scale to examine people's face orientation in Confucian societies. There are still some studies focused on the connection of feeling of face and related social behaviors, such as gift-giving (Bao et al., 2003; Qian et al., 2007) and conspicuous consumption (Bao et al., 2003; Li and Su, 2007; Zhang et al., 2011) in China. All of these studies have offered different angles to understand the face phenomenon and how people perceive their feeling of face in Confucian societies.

It should be noted that, face events and their effects on people's psychosocial equilibrium in this article are limited to the person him/herself. Similar face events only involving others, such as family members, close friends, or classmates (Bedford and Hwang, 2003; Su and Hwang, 2003; Chu, 2008; Han and Li, 2011) and their possible effects on people's "face of Big Self" were not discussed in this article.

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The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

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Nation, Face, and Identity: An Initial Investigation of National Face in East Asia

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This research investigates a key concept in East Asia, *face*, and represents the first attempt to empirically examine the concept of face at the national level. Controlling for the level of national identification, Study 1 employed the scenario experiment method among samples of native Chinese and Taiwanese populations and revealed that national face exhibits patterns reverse of personal face. Using the experimental method, Study 2 replicated the findings of Study 1 and provided support for the different mechanisms underneath national face and personal face. Study 3 replicated the findings of Study 2 and additionally showed that national face exerts a significant inhibitory effect on face process. Findings are discussed in terms of possible implications for intergroup and international relations. Expanding on extant scholarship on face and across three studies with different experimental paradigms, this research turns our attention from face at the personal level to face at the national level by introducing the construct of national face and examining its manifestations in East Asia. The results advance our understanding of the psychological mechanism driving face concern in East Asia. They make a strong and unique case for the psychological existence of national face as an empirically distinct construct and an important psychological resource for East Asians.

Keywords: face concern, face process, inhibitory effect, national face, national identity, personal face

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INTRODUCTION

While the U.S. decided not to join the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the reluctance was perceived by Chinese as American response to a threat to face, as the United States gradually loses its predominance in the Asia Pacific (see AIIB, 2015). In her opinion piece for the Council on Foreign Relations, Economy (2015) further stated that "Joining now will be hard to accomplish in a face-saving manner, but the United States could begin by publicly recognizing the need for the financing capabilities in Asia that the AIIB can provide . . .." The pivotal role of face in social interactions, particularly in East Asia, has been well noted (e.g., Hwang, 1987), but is there only one type of face? How can the concept of face be applied to the national level? How does face manifest at the national level? What are the role and dynamics of national face? Those are the central questions this paper seeks to address. As such, this research represents the first attempt to empirically examine the concept of face at the national level.

Face in East Asia

What is *face*? Face is a concept that is intuitively meaningful to people, but one that appears difficult to define precisely. It is concerned with people's sense of worth, dignity and identity, and

is associated with issues such as image, respect, honor, status, reputation and competence (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998). Moreover, it has simultaneous affective (e.g., feelings of shame and pride), behavioral (e.g., facework), and cognitive (e.g., calculating whether and how much face to give or receive) dimensions (Oetzel et al., 2008). As Brown and Levinson (1987) contended, face is a universal human need.

Although face may not be a concept unique to Asian cultures, scholars have consistently pointed out that concern for face is of utmost importance in most Asian cultures (Hu, 1944; Ho, 1976; Bond, 1993). Indeed, face is originally a concept developed in the Chinese Confucian society as "the most delicate standard by which Chinese social intercourse is regulated" (Lin, 1935, p.200).

According to Hwang (1987, 2012), face plays a key and irreplaceable role in social interactions in Chinese culture. More specifically, face can be differentiated into moral face and social face (Hwang, 2006, 2012). Or, put another way, there are two main sources of face: morality, which is based on one's moral character, and performance, which entails a person's social status achieved through successful attainment of life's goals (Hu, 1944; Cheng, 1986; Ho, 1994).

Furthermore, previous research has shown that, compared with concern for face gain (FG), people attach greater importance to face loss (FL; Zane and Yeh, 2002; Kam and Bond, 2008; Hui and Bond, 2009). This is perhaps, implicitly, people have face as accorded with their roles—unless they lose it. A person can gain face, and one person can *give face* to another, but the major focus is primarily on not losing face (Hamamura et al., 2009; Lin and Yamaguchi, 2011).

Face at the National Level

Thus far, we have been delineating face at the personal level. While previous research almost exclusively focuses on personal face, however, is there only one type of face? Can we apply the concept to the national level? In April 2001, a Chinese F-8 fighter jet and a U.S. EP-3 spy plane collided over the Hainan Island, for which Beijing blamed the U.S. and expected Washington to apologize and take full responsibility. Both Chinese and Americans viewed the event as a threat to their face (Gries, 2004; Hwang, 2013). After some public outrage and much political maneuvering, the American government increased their regret from *sorry* to *very sorry*, which seemed to be a face-saving way out of the crisis for both sides (Beyond, 2001).

The aforementioned incident presents a fascinating topic for research. In this article we propose that an empirically distinct construct operating at the psychological level, namely *national face*, may help explain such political phenomena. We believe that face exists at the national level, just as it exists at the personal level. As such, it warrants a more direct measure and examination. To the best of our knowledge, no previous study has examined this intriguing topic empirically.

National Face vs. National Identity

In line with earlier definition, we conceptualize national face as the national self presented to other nations (Gries, 1999). We propose that it entails the feelings of FG/loss that are experienced on the basis of one's national membership. How is it distinguished from national identity? On a general level, national identity describes the basically positive, subjectively important emotional bond with a nation (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Previous research has shown that people experience various emotions on behalf of their national group membership (e.g., Smeekes, 2015). Tajfel and Turner (1986) proposed that the groups which people belong to are an important source of pride and self-esteem. In particular, a need for positive distinctiveness drives social identity. Thus, it seems reasonable to expect that the degree to which individuals define themselves in national terms would be closely linked to the concept of national face. However, national face and national identity differ in one crucial respect: public vs. private orientation.

The subjective meaning of identities entails that what it means to be a member of a national group differs for every individual, and it is a private matter in essence (Huddy, 2001). On the other hand, as face must be claimed from other people, there is something essentially public about the conception of face (Kim et al., 2010). As Lim (1994, p. 210) pointed out, ". . .face is not what one thinks of oneself, but what one thinks others should think of one's worth." Notwithstanding, we recognized that national face represents a way in which national identity may be expressed, so in the context of this research, national identity is being treated as a covariant.

As the first attempt to empirically investigate face at the national level, we thought to initially establish and validate the construct of national face through a pilot study.

Pilot Study: Construct of National Face

The goal of the pilot study was to establish the construct of national face. Drawing on previous research, we envisioned national face to stem from two sources, morality and national performance. We thought to provide initial evidence of the construct of national face and its sources through a pilot study conducted in Taiwan and China. A total of 60 participants, 30 in each country (50% male, M_{age} range = 23–30 for both samples), were first recruited from the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese student populations at National Taiwan University, then through the technique of snowball sampling. Abiding by the rule of thumb in the literature (Johanson and Brooks, 2009), we felt the sample size was sufficient for a pilot study.

The participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire which consisted of three open-ended questions: (a) What does the term national face remind you of? (b) Can you give an example of FG in the national context? (c) Can you give an example of FL in the national context? Samples of the answers included (to each question): (a) National image, reputation, status, dignity, collective esteem; (b) Good governance, winning the Olympic gold medal, global recognition of political/economic/cultural strength, tourists' favorable impressions of the country, upholding international values such as humanitarianism or environmentalism; (c) Loss of sovereignty such as territorial concession, gaffe made by national representatives, losing international negotiations or conflicts, negative international media coverage such as the food contamination scandal, poor infrastructure in the country.

The results suggest that, as expected, national face stemmed from morality and national performance; more specifically, we found that national performance entailed the international and intra-national domains. In short, national face stemmed from three unique sources: (a) morality, i.e., universal values such as humanitarianism and environmentalism, we thus termed them "universal morality," (b) international performance, e.g., outcome of an international competition, negotiation or conflict, and (c) intra-national performance, e.g., development of local infrastructure, governance, domestic law enforcement.

In addition, the results also reveal that a key channel for the manifestation of national face was the international media. That is, national face concern was activated through international media exposure. This is perhaps not surprising since face inherently entails an image issue (Hwang, 2012), given there is something essentially public about the conception of face as indicated earlier. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory delineated a connection between the kinds of acts that people put on in their daily lives and theatrical performances. In a social interaction, as in a theatrical performance, there is an on-stage area where actors appear before the audience; this is where positive self-concepts and desired impressions are offered. But there is, as well, a back-stage — a hidden, private area where actors can be themselves and drop their societal roles and identities. In this sense, perhaps the international media serves as the *stage* in accordance with Goffman's analogy.

In sum, the two major sources of personal face as identified by previous literature, performance and morality, seemed to be applicable in the national context. From the pilot study, we can see that national performance can further be divided into intra-national-related and international-related performances. Hence, national face is constituted from three sources: universal morality (FS1), international performance (FS2), and intra-national performance (FS3).

From Personal Face to National Face

As Hwang (2012) articulated, a person's moral face serves as the baseline in Chinese society, meaning it should be maintained in all situations. Indeed, compared with social face, moral face has been found to be of greater concern in Chinese culture (Cheng, 1986; King, 1988; Chu, 1991; Zhai, 1995; Su and Hwang, 2003).

At the national level, however, does this pattern still apply? Or do people attach more concern to face originated from performance? Specifically, would national performance in the intra-national domain be of higher face concern than in the international domain? We suspect that this would be the case given the fact that the Chinese political philosophy is said to be dominated by realpolitik thinking (Deng, 1998; Wang, 2014), resulting from its historical legacy. Specifically, the West's historic victimization of China, coined the century of humiliation, still looms large in most people's minds and shapes their worldviews (Cheng and Ngok, 2004). Many believe the international system is characterized by anarchy and power politics. Simply put, a nation has only itself to depend on and thus must ensure its own survival by securing its needs and interests before it looks to the needs of others (Deng, 1998). This implies that in the arena of international politics, where the realities of power and national interest triumph, one realizes that a nation must strengthen domestically before it can be competitive internationally. Hence, we hypothesize face concern for intra-national performance will be significantly higher than face concern for international performance and universal morality, controlling for the level of national identification (Hypothesis 1).

On the other hand, why do people attach less concern to personal FG than personal FL? A large amount of psychological research shows that losses loom larger than gains, a phenomenon referred to as loss aversion; that is, individuals weigh losses more heavily than gains (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). The concept was originally motivated by the study of choice under uncertainty (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979), but it has since been shown to be applicable across a range of real-world contexts (Camerer, 2000). For example, studies have suggested that losses in income have a larger effect on well-being than equivalent income gains (Boyce et al., 2013). In the case of face, as a Chinese proverb states, "a man needs face like a tree needs bark," and losing face is "like a tree being stripped of its bark—a life and death situation" (Gao, 1998, p.48). More important, in face cultures, people are supposed to display humility and not overreach on status claims (lest they learn a painful and humiliating lesson about how much status others are willing to accord them), since there is a built-in humility bias (Kurman and Sriram, 2002; Lalwani et al., 2006). Nonetheless, when expanding the face concept to the national level, would one still feel the need to be humble, as the pursuit of greater good triumphs over personal good?

In one line of research, it was found that while one's acquaintances may share FG resulting from positive events, they do not seem to share FL resulting from negative events. In a study conducted on Taiwanese college students, Liu (2002, unpublished) showed that while the feeling of FG may be contagious, we tend to sever our relationships (with the exception of family members) in the case of FL.

In another line of research, Cialdini et al. (1976) showed that we tend to associate ourselves with winners while disassociate from losers. In a series of field studies, Cialdini et al. (1976) found that some sports fans are happy to support group symbols following their team's success but rescind their identification following the team's failure. This phenomenon of basking in reflected glory was further tested in subsequent studies demonstrating the tendency to bask in the reflected glory of another's success while avoiding the shadow of another's defeat (Cialdini and De Nicholas, 1989), and that cutting off reflected failure can be distinguished as image-protection strategy for the purpose of avoiding a negative evaluation, while to a lesser degree, basking in reflected glory can be identified as an image-enhancement strategy (Snyder et al., 1986).

Moreover, Bornstein (2003) noted that pride in the group is a public good that is available to all members of a group, in an analysis of the prototypical problems of cooperation and competition within and between groups. Bornstein also noted that group members may have an incentive to *free ride* on the contributions of others. We thus hypothesize that contrary to face concern at the personal level, people will be more concerned with FG than FL at the national level (Hypothesis 2).

National Face vs. Personal Face

In sum, we expect national face concern to be higher for intra-national performance and FG, just the opposite of personal face concern. To further verify the different mechanisms underlying national face and personal face, we thought to distinguish the two with an experiment. In what conditions do we concern with national face only? In what conditions does personal face come into play? As aforementioned, Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory viewed social interaction as theatrical performance of which actors on stage are being evaluated by the audience. Correspondingly, if the subject is an audience, concern for FG will be higher than FL, since only national face will be involved; however, if the subject is an actor, concern for FL will be higher than FG, since personal face will come into play (Hypothesis 3).

This still begs the question of how national face interplays with personal face. How does face operate at the personal and national levels? Particularly, how does national face concern impact face process? Shi Ke-fa (1601-1645 A.D.), a renowned general in the late Ming dynasty in imperial China, once famously proclaimed that in the case of an army's defeat, regardless of how bravely the commander has fought, he deserved no commemoration. In the case of a conflicting result between personal and group performances (e.g., personal success/group failure), how does national face concern affect personal face concern?

In order to probe into the effect of national face, we thus thought to investigate national and personal face concerns in conflict vs. non-conflict conditions. Specifically, in a conflict condition, we expect to see an inhibitory effect; in a non-conflict condition, on the other hand, a facilitatory effect is expected to be seen (Hypothesis 4). In addition, since one will attach more concern to national FG (Hypothesis 2), we will witness a higher concern for personal FG than personal FL under such condition, demonstrating a reverse personal face pattern; under the condition of national FL, however, personal face pattern will not be reversed (Hypothesis 5).

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

Our research questions are threefold: (a) What is the nature of national face and how does it manifest in East Asia? (b) Are there different mechanisms underneath national face and personal face? (c) How does national face influence face process? The initial aims of the current research are to examine the manifestation of national face in East Asia, and to uncover the effect of national face on face process.

In all societies, people may experience the feeling of gaining or losing face due to positive or negative social evaluation (Hwang, 2006). Put differently, FL/gain denotes a mismatch between an attribute claimed (or denied, in the case of negatively evaluated traits) and an attribute perceived as being ascribed by others (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Hence conceptually, in the present research, we followed Ho's (1976) typology to distinguish two kinds of important changes in the status of one's face: gaining face and losing face (we termed this the "frame" of face concern).

We tested our hypotheses in three studies. In Study 1, we tested Hypotheses 1 and 2. Specifically, having established the construct of national face in the pilot study, we sought to explore the manifestation of national face concern in East Asia by measuring it empirically. To test Hypothesis 3, we examined the processes of national face and personal face in Study 2. In Study 3, to test Hypotheses 4 and 5, we further investigated the effect of national face on face process.

STUDY 1: NATIONAL FACE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN EAST ASIA

In the current study, we sought to explore how national face manifests in Taiwan and China by measuring empirically concerns for the three sources identified in the pilot study, namely, universal morality (FS1), international performance (FS2), and intra-national performance (FS3), and by taking into account the role of national identity. We hypothesize that face concern for intra-national performance (FS3) will be significantly higher than face concern for international performance (FS2) and universal morality (FS1), controlling for the level of national identification (Hypothesis 1). Moreover, concern for FG will be greater than FL (Hypothesis 2).

Method

Participants

A total of 270 participants in China and 248 in Taiwan took part in this study. Among the Taiwanese sample, 123 participants (51% male) completed the FL version of the survey and 125 participants (60% male) completed the FG version of the survey. Among the Chinese sample, 135 participants were surveyed for each version (53% male for the FL version, 39% male for the FG version). For a snapshot of the sample characteristics, please refer to **Table 1**.

Experimental Design

We implemented a 3 × 2 mixed experimental design. The independent measures included face source (FS1 vs. FS2 vs. FS3) as a within-subjects variable and frame (FL vs. FG) as a between-subjects variable.

Materials and Procedure

National Face Concern

The survey consisted of three scenarios, representing a source of national face apiece conditioned under international media exposure. The scenarios were constructed based on the responses collected in the pilot study. Each scenario was designed to include both FL and FG conditions to make up for the two versions of the survey. For example, the FS1 scenario read (underlined portions represent different wordings for the FL/FG version), "Country C was shattered by an earthquake of unprecedented magnitude, resulting in 100s of refugees awaiting international rescue. Country A neighbors Country C and has close economic ties with Country C. However/Therefore, after the earthquake, Country A neither/immediately joined international rescue work nor/and assisted with any/tons of needed relief supplies; it only/also donated USD$100,000/USD$1 million.

TABLE 1 | Sample characteristics as a percentage of the sample for Study 1.

	Taiwan		China	
Characteristic	**FL (n = 123)**	**FG (n = 125)**	**FL (n = 135)**	**FG (n = 135)**
Gender				
Male	51%	60%	53%	39%
Female	49%	40%	47%	61%
Age				
18–22	22%	15%	7%	5%
23–29	35%	17%	33%	37%
30–39	20%	22%	41%	44%
40–49	8%	17%	18%	13%
50–59	8%	19%	1%	1%
60–65	7%	10%	–	–
Occupation				
Student	50%	21%	7%	6%
Business	8%	19%	35%	32%
Service	15%	17%	18%	20%
IT	6%	10%	3%	5%
Education/research	3%	7%	14%	14%
Government	6%	6%	9%	8%
Others	12%	20%	14%	15%

FL, face loss; FG, face gain.

Country A's reactions elicited international media coverage and commentary."

Participants were randomly assigned to the FL or FG condition. After reading each scenario, participants were asked one manipulation check question presented as check of whether they read and understood the scenario. Each scenario was then followed by three questions relating to the specific events described in order to assess the degree of face concern on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). For example, a question following the above scenario read, "Regarding Country A's reluctance to come to Country C's rescue, if Country A was my country, I would feel a loss/gain of national face."

Measure of national identification

In order to assess the participants' level of national identification, we adopted the national identity scale by Huang (2007), which is an adaptation of the collective self-esteem scale (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992). Respondents indicated their agreement with statements on a 6-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6). Sample items were: "It is very important to me to be able to tell others that I am Taiwanese (Chinese)"; "I will never forget that I am Taiwanese (Chinese)"; "Overall, I enjoy being Taiwanese (Chinese)"; "When others criticize Taiwanese (Chinese), I feel like they are criticizing me." A total of eight items were included in the scale.

Since samples representative of the population were desired, the surveys were distributed online. Specifically, in Taiwan, we used Survey Monkey and posted links on college bulletin boards; in China, a paid-service was employed to collect data. After seeing a greeting message on the screen, the respondents were instructed to complete the section on national face concern first. After they have finished all the questions, they would then proceed to the section on national identification. Lastly, they were required to answer some demographic questions before leaving the webpage.

Results and Discussion

We hypothesize that face concern for intra-national performance will be significantly higher than international performance and universal morality, controlling for the level of national identification; moreover, concern for FG will be greater than FL. To test these hypotheses, we performed a Face Source × Frame two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on the degree of face concern with national identity as covariate using SPSS 20. Higher scores indicated higher concerns for national face. It should be noted that we pooled the data from Taiwan and China in the analyses below because participant characteristics (e.g., age) did not appear to yield any significant differences between the two sample sets.

After adjustment by covariate, the main effect of face source was significant, $F(2,1030) = 3.88$, $MSE = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$. The main effect of frame was also significant, $F(1,515) = 69.13$, $MSE = 1.35$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.12$. Furthermore, the analysis yielded a significant two-way interaction, $F(2,1030) = 17.31$, $MSE = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$. The covariate was significantly associated with the dependent variable, $F(1,515) = 20.75$, $MSE = 1.35$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$.

A further analysis showed that the simple main effect of frame was significant under FS1, $F(1,515) = 71.43$, $MSE = 1.22$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.12$, FS2, $F(1,515) = 7.40$, $MSE = 0.93$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$, and FS3, $F(1,515) = 40.08$, $MSE = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.07$. This demonstrates that across all three sources of national face, concerns for FG were persistently higher than FL. The simple main effect of face source was not significant.

In short, as **Table 2** shows, holding constant the level of national identification (NI = 4.88), face concern for intra-national performance ($M_{FL} = 4.90$, $SD = 0.05$; $M_{FG} = 5.32$, $SD = 0.05$) was significantly higher than face concern for universal morality ($M_{FL} = 4.06$, $SD = 0.07$; $M_{FG} = 4.88$, $SD = 0.07$) and international performance ($M_{FL} = 4.29$, $SD = 0.06$; $M_{FG} = 4.52$, $SD = 0.06$). Moreover, concerns for FG were significantly higher than FL across all three face sources.

Personal face theory contends that people have greater concern for FL than FG, in addition to valuing moral face more than social face. Notwithstanding, concern for national face yielded just opposite patterns. Are there different mechanisms

TABLE 2 | Adjusted marginal means (and SDs) for face source and frame (Study 1).

Variable	FS1	FS2	FS3
FL	4.06[a] (0.07)	4.29[a] (0.06)	4.90[a] (0.05)
FG	4.88[a] (0.07)	4.52[a] (0.06)	5.32[a] (0.05)

FS1, universal morality; FS2, international performance; FS3, intra-national performance; FL, face loss; FG, face gain. [a]*Covariate (national identity, NI) appearing in the model is evaluated at the following value: NI = 4.88.*

underneath national face and personal face? In order to further validate the pattern of national face concern and whether there are different psychological mechanisms underneath national face and personal face, we proceeded with an experiment in the next study.

STUDY 2: NATIONAL FACE VS. PERSONAL FACE

Having demonstrated the reverse pattern of national face concern for FL and FG in Study 1, in Study 2, we sought to examine whether the process of national face differs from personal face. We propose that if the subject is an actor, then face concern will be higher in the FL condition than in the FG condition; if the subject is an audience, then face concern will be higher in the FG condition than in the FL condition (Hypothesis 3). Since personal face will come into play as the actor himself is in the center of events; by contrast, only national face will be involved as the subject takes no part in the events presented.

Method

Participants

The participants were 32 undergraduate students (47% male, $M_{age} = 21.24$) at National Taiwan University. They took part in the study to receive extra course credit. After giving their consent, the participants received our manipulation instructions and completed a few trials before starting the task. They then answered the manipulation check and demographic questions after task completion.

Experimental design

The experimental design was a 2 × 3 within-subjects design. The independent measures included face level (national vs. personal) and frame (FL vs. FG vs. neutral).

Materials and Procedure

To distinguish between face concerns at the personal and national levels, we manipulated the roles a participant would play (actor vs. audience). Specifically, participants were first shown a photo of a man, who was described as a national representative, and were asked to play his role. Next, they were informed that they would see a series of photos all involving different national representatives, and to respond accordingly if they themselves appear in the photos; if not, then they were to judge in the role of an audience or citizen. In other words, participants were asked to imagine that they were acting as a state representative and instructed to think about their nation while responding to the items.

The stimuli consisted of 48 photos for each condition. In accordance with the three sources of national face identified in the pilot study, we first selected 16 photos each for the FG and FL conditions, in addition to eight photos for the neutral condition. Next, all photos were digitally altered to include two versions: one of the original and the other of the (manipulated) man. We then used block randomization to compose stimuli for the six conditions in each group; the order of groups was counterbalanced.

In sum, since theoretically, we would only experience personal FL/gain while we ourselves are involved in the situation, alternation of photos was required in order to have the respondents assume the role of the actor (i.e., the manipulated man). In addition to the original set of photos, therefore, each photo was altered to include the manipulated man. Respondents were expected to experience either FG or loss from looking at a series of photos because the photos exemplified FG/loss events with/without the actor (e.g., the national representative being arrested after committing a crime overseas, the national representative yielding serious concessions in an international negotiation, the national representative winning an Olympic Gold Medal, etc.).

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups. They were first asked to complete four trials to check whether they understood the instructions. Then, on the computer screen, they saw one photo at a time and indicated their degree of face concern on a Likert scale ranging from −5 (*extreme face loss*) to +5 (*extreme face gain*), with "0" indicating "*not face relevant*." In the end, they were required to answer four manipulation check questions before filling out basic demographic data.

Results and Discussion

We hypothesize that if the subject is an actor, then face concern will be higher in the FL condition than in the FG condition; by contrast, if the subject is an audience, then face concern will be higher in the FG condition than in the FL condition. To test this hypothesis, we performed a Face Level (national vs. national + personal) × Frame (FG vs. FL) two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the degree of face concern using SPSS 20. Scores in the neutral condition were subtracted from both FG and FL conditions as they represented a baseline level of face concern for each participant.

The main effect of face level was significant, $F(1,31) = 14.42$, $MSE = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.32$, while the main effect of frame was not significant, $F(1,31) = 0.75$, $MSE = 0.41$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$. The analysis also yielded a significant two-way interaction, $F(1,31) = 12.34$, $MSE = 0.94$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.29$. A further analysis of simple main effect showed that frame had a significant effect on national face, $F(1,62) = 11.51$, $MSE = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.19$, with higher concern for FG than FL, as well as personal face, $F(1,62) = 5.98$, $MSE = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.10$, with higher concern for FL than FG; face level, on the other hand, had a significant effect only under the FL condition, $F(1,62) = 24.42$, $MSE = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.40$, with concern for personal FL higher than national FL.

In short, consistent with the results in Study 1, concern was higher for FG than FL at the national level. We also provided further support for the argument that at the personal level, concern was higher for FL than FG (see **Table 3** below). These findings validate that there are different processes for national face and personal face, while they interact with each other.

Although we were able to replicate the results of Study 1 in the present experiment, we were still unclear of how national face

TABLE 3 | Means (and SDs) for face level and frame (Study 2).

Variable	NF	NF + PF	Neutral
FL	2.10 (0.93)	3.09 (0.75)	
FG	2.80 (0.86)	2.58 (0.93)	
Neutral			0.51 (0.54)

NF, national face; PF, personal face; FL, face loss; FG, face gain.

interplays with personal face and the effect of national face on face process. We thus conducted the next study to investigate this issue.

STUDY 3: THE EFFECT OF NATIONAL FACE

As we have revealed the reverse patterns of national face and personal face in Studies 1 and 2, in Study 3, we extended the results of Experiments 1 and 2 to a slightly different paradigm so that we can examine the crucial role national face plays in face process.

How does national face interact with personal face to influence face process? We hypothesize that in a conflict condition, national face will affect face process through an inhibitory effect; in a non-conflict condition, national face will affect face process through a facilitatory effect (Hypothesis 4). Furthermore, under NFL (national FL), personal face pattern will remain the same, i.e., concern for PFL (personal FL) will be greater than PFG (personal FG); however, under NFG (national FG), concern for PFG will be greater than PFL, thus reversing personal face pattern (Hypothesis 5).

Method

Participants

The participants in Study 3 were 35 undergraduate students at National Taiwan University (45% male, $M_{age} = 20.30$). They received extra course credit for their participation.

Experimental Design

The current study involved a 2 × 3 experimental design, including frame of national face (NFG vs. NFL) and frame of personal face (PFG vs. PFL vs. control) as within-subjects variables. Since our main interest lay in the conflict vs. non-conflict condition between face level and frame, we also added a control group with gain/loss of personal face only.

Materials and Procedure

The stimuli contained 40 scenarios written in paired- and single sentences, all controlled for sentence length (in Chinese). For example, a scenario for the NFL/PFG condition read, "Tourists from our nation have been rated the most unwelcomed tourists around the world. But I always mind my manners when traveling abroad." A scenario for the NFG/PFL condition read, "Our nation is regarded as a global sports giant. But the tae kwon do competition for which I represent has never won any major international medals." A scenario for the NFL/PFL condition read, "Our public transports are known for being late and for frequent violation of traffic rules. As a driver I also often violate traffic rules and run the red light." A scenario for the NFG/PFG condition read, "Our nation has been a leader in global humanitarian relief. I led the volunteer work when a neighboring country was struck by a major tsunami." A scenario for the PFL condition read, "I was caught fabricating research data in order to publish in academic journals." A scenario for the PFG condition read, "I invented a pioneering water recycling technique."

The order of stimuli was counterbalanced and participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups. After giving their consent, they read one scenario on the computer screen at a time and indicated their degree of face concern on a Likert scale ranging from −5 (*extreme face loss*) to +5 (*extreme face gain*), with "0" indicating "*not face relevant*." In the end, they were required to answer a few demographic questions.

Results and Discussion

We hypothesize that in a conflict condition, national face will affect face process through an inhibitory effect; in a non-conflict condition, national face will affect face process through a facilitatory effect. Moreover, concern for PFL will be greater than PFG under NFL; however, concern for PFG will be greater than PFL under NFG, a reverse of personal face pattern. To test these hypotheses, we performed a Frame of National Face (NFG vs. NFL) × Frame of Personal Face (PFG vs. PFL vs. control) two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on face concern using SPSS 20. The main effect of frame of national face was significant, $F(2,68) = 31.37$, $MSE = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.48$. The main effect of frame of personal face was also significant, $F(1,34) = 11.61$, $MSE = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.26$. Moreover, the analysis yielded a significant two-way interaction, $F(2,68) = 66.60$, $MSE = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.66$.

A further analysis of simple main effect demonstrated that when the process of PFL was involved, concern for NFL was significantly higher than NFG, $F(2,136) = 30.83$, $MSE = 0.79$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.45$; on the other hand, when the process of PFG was involved, concern for NFG was significantly higher than NFL, $F(2,136) = 36.68$, $MSE = 0.79$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.54$.

Does this suggest that national face played a rather minor role in face process? We think not. As **Table 4** shows, under NFL, the degree of concern for PFL was greater than PFG ($M_{PFL} = -3.01$, $SD = 0.90$ vs. $M_{PFG} = 1.18$, $SD = 0.76$); however, under NFG, the degree of concern for PFG was greater than PFL ($M_{PFG} = 2.83$, $SD = 0.83$ vs. $M_{PFL} = -1.64$, $SD = 1.08$), suggesting a reverse of personal face pattern under NFG.

Analysis of simple main effect also showed that when the process of NFG was involved, concern for PFG was significantly higher than PFL, $F(1,102) = 28.68$, $MSE = 0.87$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.28$, a pattern opposite of that suggested by personal face theory (e.g., Hwang, 2012). This demonstrates that the process of national face had a significant impact on face concern.

Moreover, comparing with results of the control condition (which only involved personal face process), in a non-conflict condition (e.g., NFG/PFG), the interaction was not significant; interestingly, in a conflict condition (e.g., NFG/PFL), national face exerted a significant inhibitory effect on personal face

TABLE 4 | Means (and SDs) for frame of NF and frame of PF (Study 3).

Variable	NFG	NFL	Control
PFG	2.83 (0.83)	1.18 (0.76)	2.66 (0.92)
PFL	−1.64 (1.08)	−3.01 (0.90)	−3.15 (0.91)

NFG, national face gain; NFL, national face loss; PFG, personal face gain; PFL, personal face loss.

(see **Table 5** below). This suggests that under PFL, when NFG was involved, the degree of face concern would lessen, $F(2,136) = 30.83$, $MSE = 0.79$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.45$; similarly, under PFG, when NFL was involved, the degree of face concern would also lessen, $F(2,136) = 36.68$, $MSE = 0.79$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.54$. In short, we replicated and extended the results of Studies 1 and 2 showing that, national face had a significant impact on face process through an inhibitory effect.

SUMMARY AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

Humans live in a cultural context. Numerous studies have demonstrated differences between East Asia and the West on perception and cognition, for instance, and highlighted the cultural reasons for their results. Indeed, as Norenzayan et al. (2010) pointed out, cultural differences influence the content of minds, or the domains of thinking to which cognitive strategies are applied? And these cultural differences are tied to different construals of the self, ecological differences in visual environments, in assumptions about the nature of the world, in beliefs about the origins of knowledge, in linguistic conventions, in expertise or familiarity with certain domains of life but not others, and in social practices that promote some cognitive strategies at the expense of others.

Although the concept of face is not confined to a specific culture, how people shape the meaning of face differs from one culture to another. Nearly all researchers across the East and West identify face as a major dimension of East Asian culture. East Asians are sensitive to face issues because of the cultural emphasis on enduring relationships and social networks. Due to the influence of Confucianism, which focuses on the morality and ideals of human relationships, the traditional self is viewed as relations with others, and face in East Asian culture stands for the social-self face of a big group (Hwang, 1987). Accordingly, one characteristic of face in East Asia is that it is shared. For instance, Chinese often talk of everyone having face, suggesting that if one member of a group loses face, the entire group loses face (Cardon and Scott, 2003). That is, face often refers to entire groups. Hence, it is possible to speak about the face of the Chinese people. Groups maintain a status or reputation, and individuals are concerned about not only their personal face but also the face of their groups (Jia, 2001). Therefore, East Asians tend to have strong face consciousness.

Indeed, over seven decades ago in a seminal article, Hu (1944, pp. 48, 50, 59) gave various examples of face where the referent object was the nation rather than the individual: (1) The appeasement policy under Neville Chamberlain had led to a loss of British face in the eyes of the Chinese. (2) Chinese locals were concerned about losing "the face of their country" when dealing with Americans. (3) During the Sino-Japanese war, the Chinese saw the British as "padding China's face."

In sum, the pivotal role of face in social interactions in East Asia has been well documented (Zhang et al., 2011; Hwang, 2012). Notwithstanding, much of the discussion has centered on face at the personal level. How can the concept be applied to the national level? The current research represents the first attempt to empirically investigate the construct and role of national face. In the present studies, we examined some very simple situations involving national face concern. Yet, even in these simple situations, national face proved to be an empirically distinct construct as it displayed a very different pattern compared with personal face.

The contributions of the current research are thus twofold. First, it extends extant literature by introducing the construct of national face and providing support for the need for national face, beyond national identity, in East Asia. Second, the current research unveils the reverse pattern of national face vis-a-vis personal face and its significant inhibitory effect on face process. This investigation is theoretically significant because it sheds light on the underpinnings of national face and deepens our understanding of the potential consequences of national face on face process. In sum, the results advance our understanding of the psychological mechanism driving face concern in East Asia. They make a strong and unique case for the psychological existence of national face as an important psychological resource for East Asians, particularly in the perception of events in the context of international relations.

TABLE 5 | Mechanism of national face and personal face in non-conflict vs. conflict conditions.

	NFG	NFL
PFG	None	Inhibitory national face effect
PFL	Inhibitory national face effect	None

NFG, national face gain; NFL, national face loss; PFG, personal face gain; PFL, personal face loss.

Understanding National Face

From the pilot study, we can see that at the national level, the three unique sources of face are: universal morality, international performance, and intra-national performance. Furthermore, Study 1 demonstrates that in East Asia, face for intra-national performance is of utmost concern. The results also indicate that, just the reverse of personal face pattern, FG at the national level is of greater concern than FL. At the personal level, morality serves as the source for greater face concern; notwithstanding, at the national level, as hypothesized, performance—particularly in the intra-national domain—takes priority in the realities of power politics.

Consistent with the results in Study 1, Studies 2 and 3 show that national face exerts a pattern reverse of personal face, i.e., concern for FG is greater than FL at the national level. In line with our hypotheses, people have the tendency to associate with winners while dissociate from losers. The results also allow us

insight into the different psychological mechanisms underlying national face and personal face. In particular, our research shows a significant inhibitory effect of national face on face process. Taken together, we believe the findings make a strong and unique case for the psychological existence of national face as an empirically distinct construct and important psychological resource for East Asians. As **Figure 1** shows, the concept of face exists not only at the personal level, but also at the national level.

National Face and National Identity

According to social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), a need for positive distinctiveness drives social identity. Our research demonstrates that the need for national face serves a significant motive beyond the identification with our national group in East Asia. Importantly, our results show that national face is empirically distinct from the potentially related construct of national identity. We believe this to be an original and critical finding, which yields unique contribution to social identity theories in general and to national identity theories in particular.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this research is that we have sampled from East Asia. Can our findings be generalized to other cultures? Indeed, the concept of face is not only salient in Asia, but is also of universal nature (Ho, 1976; Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998). As such, replication in other countries is needed to determine whether the findings obtained in this research can be reliably generalized to other cultural contexts.

This research turns our attention from face at the personal level to face at the national level. A critical review of previous literature reveals that the overwhelming focus has been on examining personal face experiences rather than cognition (e.g., Choi et al., 1997). In addition to exploring the nature of national face, the current paper emphasizes the psychological mechanism and intrapersonal processes of face from the perspective of the audience, rather than the actor. Future research could combine investigation of these processes among lay people, as we did in our experiments, with empirical investigations among political elites, whose national face concern might more directly influence political decision making.

What are the implications of national face concern for international relations? How does national face shape the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in international relations? What are its consequences? Do concerns over national face motivate nationalistic tendency, as Gries (1999, 2004) suggested in the term Chinese "face nationalism?" Future research could explore the consequences of national FL/gain in an international relations context, in order to promote intergroup understanding and relations.

In a sense, one might find our results to be interestingly counterintuitive, since it appeared that many controversies or conflicts in international relations in recent years were originated when a country felt to have their face threatened. Yet, our findings demonstrate that there is more concern about FG than FL. One explanation could be the fact that FL conditions often entail consequences for which countries feel the need to resort to means of face saving, thereby generating more public attention, whereas no actions would be deemed necessary after a FG on achievements.

It is important to note that, in this paper, one may find the concept of national face to be parallel to national image. The two concepts do share many similar aspects as illustrated in the discussions above; however, a key distinction between them is that face can be exchanged (Hwang, 2012). For example, one may intend to *give face* to someone as a favor; in fact, reciprocity is considered a core element of face and plays a key role in Chinese social interaction (Hwang, 1987). One's image, on the other hand, cannot be exchanged. How would this element play out at the national level (for instance, in an international negotiation) remains an intriguing topic for future research.

FIGURE 1 | Two types of face, as represented at the personal and national levels.

CONCLUSION

Living in China for over 20 years, German missionary and scholar Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930), who first pointed out the cultural origin of face, has noted almost a century ago that concern for face is intricate and deeply rooted in Chinese culture (as cited in Hwang, 2012). The current research investigates a key concept in East Asia, face, and represents the first attempt to empirically examine the concept of face at the national level. Expanding on extant scholarship on face and across three studies with different experimental paradigms, this research turns our attention from face at the personal level to face at the national level by introducing the construct of national face and examining its manifestation in East Asia. The results advance

our understanding of the psychological mechanism driving face concern. They not only indicate how the concept of face can be extended to the national level, but also make a strong and unique case for the psychological existence of national face as an important psychological resource for East Asians, particularly in the perception of events in the context of international relations. To our knowledge, this is the first empirical evidence of how face can be applied at the national level.

Although the initial focus is on psychological mechanism and intra-personal process, we hope that this first probe into the construct and role of national face will help bridge the gap between the social psychological science on the one hand, and political psychology on the other hand. We hope that insights from the current investigation will contribute new social psychological contents to the literature on face and identity, and inspire future studies in which a key concept that may be connected to international relations is examined. The ultimate goal is to increase cross-cultural understanding in the hope of enhancing intergroup relations, and perhaps even contribute to the reduction of global conflict.

AUTHOR NOTE

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

RC is the first author of this article. K-KH gave the final approval of the version to be published.

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Serendipity in Relationship: A Tentative Theory of the Cognitive Process of *Yuanfen* and Its Psychological Constructs in Chinese Cultural Societies

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The main purpose of this article is to combine three important themes in Chinese cultural societies: serendipity in relationship (yuanfen), relational interactions, and psychological adaptation through self-cultivation. People who live in Chinese cultural societies are deeply affected by relationalism and tend to be very different from their Western counterparts, who adopt individualistic methods when dealing with interpersonal problems. They are highly likely to access the perspective of yuanfen as part of their cultural wisdom to convert negative feelings, awkwardness, or setbacks caused by interpersonal relationship incidents, into a type of cognitive belief that can be used to combat anxiety and actuate coping actions. Based on this, this article proposes the tentative theory of a dialectical model which comprises elements of the philosophies of Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, to analyze the cognitive operation process regarding yuanfen and to explain and predict how people in Chinese cultural societies differ from most Western people in terms of psychological adjustment and coping actions when dealing with interpersonal problems. Canonical correlation analysis was used in the empirical study to describe this model and resulted in two statistically significant canonical factor pairs. The hypothesized model has been partially verified. It is hoped that this framework can serve as a pilot perspective for future studies, and at the same time provide the Western academic world with a reference for understanding the concept and substantive effects of serendipity in relationship. Further suggestions for future research direction are offered.

Keywords: fate, *guan-xi*, serendipity in relationship, social and personal relationship, *yuanfen*

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"Relationalism" is a fundamental premise for studying interpersonal relationships in Chinese cultural societies. The studies based on relationalism will supplement the inadequacies of social psychological theory and research outcomes that have long been dominated by the Western perspective of "individualism," particularly in the issue of interpersonal relationships. People who live in Chinese cultural societies are deeply affected by relationalism, and often apply different rules of engagement that change depending on their relationships with people around them. Compared to the people living in individualistic societies, it is more likely for them to experience intense psychological conflict between intrinsic drives and social norms when encountering interpersonal

dilemmas. Therefore, researchers should focus on the psychological integration of individuals in various specific social contexts, and explore how people find a balance between the individual at the biological level and the ideal person at the social level (Hwang, 2011). From the perspective of Chinese psychology, this process of seeking intrinsic self-integration and pursuit of psychological equilibrium can be referred to as "self-cultivation." This is a unique cultural practice that may motivate an individual to take the most suitable and ideal action under specific circumstances (Hwang, 2012), especially when people encounter interpersonal difficulties. In order to complete "self-cultivation," they often seek solutions from the cultural wisdom accumulated in their existing cognitive schemas to restore "psychosocial homeostasis" (Shang and You, 2010; Hwang, 2011). As theorized by Francic L. K., Hsu, a psychological anthropologist, "psychosocial homeostasis" is the state of good balance between an individual and his social world, in particular when dealing with various interpersonal problems (Hsu, 1971, 1985).

Among various types of cultural wisdom, *yuanfen* (serendipity in relationship) and *mingyun* (fate) are practical methods of attribution, and dialectical beliefs commonly used by people who live in Chinese cultural societies, to interpret one's statuses of social interactions (Chang and Holt, 1991; Yeh, 2002; Yang, 2005). *Yuanfen* is an indispensable "serendipity" in relationship which implies that "chance" or "destiny" is hidden under any relationship; even when the relationship comes to an end. It is an interpersonal wisdom for flexible decision-making and psychological adaptation in Chinese cultural societies. In Chinese language, the words *yuanfen* is composed of two meanings from two characters—one representing fatalistic (*yuan*) and the other, voluntaristic (*fen*). Similarly, *mingyun* (fate) is also composed of two characters—the first one represents destiny (*ming*) and the other, fortune (*yun*). These Chinese cultural beliefs form a pair of contrasting opposites, which lead to specific beneficial results when dealing with various interpersonal problems. However, the word, "fate," usually induced negative association for people who live in individualistic cultural societies. In fact, it is not really passive or negative in Chinese cultural societies; it may serve as the foundation of *yuanfen* and may be the key reason to make *yuanfen* work.

As an attributional thinking and defense mechanism used to solve interpersonal problems in Chinese cultural societies, *yuanfen* is not only a guiding directive of self-interpretation, but also widely applied in daily life. For example, any relationships must be based on *yuanfen* which is also the reason why these relationships occur or come to an end. A good and long relationship, such as a happy marriage can be called *liangyuan* while an unsuccessful and doomed long relationship can be referred to as *nieyuan*. Similarly, married couples who have a good relationship with one another indicates that they get heavenly blessings and can be considered as *ming hao*. On the other hand, married couples who have a bad relationship with each other implies that they do not have heavenly blessings and can be regarded as *ming bu hao*. Therefore, in Chinese cultural societies, when an individual is faced with interpersonal problems, these two concepts can motivate the individual to perceive "self-cultivation" as the means for getting through difficulties. If appropriately utilized and applied, these concepts may resolve the stress caused by the relational interactions, and even affect relationship satisfaction (Chang and Jou, 2004; Lee, 2005). Besides, some researches in Taiwan showed that the belief in *yuanfen* is significantly correlated with mental health and well-being (Lee and Chen, 2006, 2009). Hence, we hold that *yuanfen* can be drawn on in interpersonal situations to take the ideal coping actions in Chinese cultural societies. These ideal actions are expressed through expectations for "self-cultivation," such as: forbearance, forgiveness, effort-making, and gratitude. Through these actions, one may satisfy the personal need for self-esteem and meet social value expectations, in turn achieving a psychosocial homeostasis.

Based on the description above, this paper proposes the tentative theory of a dialectical model of *yuanfen* (**Figure 1**), in an attempt to explain the cognitive operation process of psychological adjustment of people who live in Chinese cultural societies when dealing with interpersonal problems.

CULTURE INCLUSIVE PSYCHOLOGY: THE PERSPECTIVE IN SOCIAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP STUDY IN CHINESE CULTURAL SOCIETIES

During a person's lifetime, cultural traditions may operate psychologically through heuristic processing. Accumulated through time and life experiences, these cultural traditions gradually become thoughts or habits that can be used to handle problems by the majority of the people in a society, which forms a cultural mentality unique in comparison to other societies. Such cultural mentalities affect how people adapt to their lives, and can be used as a method for self-healing. Since Chinese cultural societies are affected by relationalism, people tend to be very different from their Western counterparts, who take on individualistic ways in dealing with interpersonal problems.

According to Hwang (2011), if a person can use the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) of normal action to smoothly handle life events under certain social conditions, it is unlikely that they will engage in deep reflection. However, if habitus cannot be used to resolve a problem, the person will attempt to seek solutions from their personal stock of knowledge or social stock of knowledge. The former include schema, as proposed by Piaget (1977), while the latter are cultural traditions (Shils, 1981). In other words, some cultural traditions are instrumental to problem-solving, and provide the crucial origins for the creation of cognitive schemas. When a person encounters difficulties and a certain method from social stock of knowledge is found to be effective, it may be incorporated into one's personal stock of knowledge for future application.

In Chinese cultural societies of relationalism, the psychological stresses elicited by interpersonal incidents tend to arise from significant others. For instance, the marital tensions between a couple may not necessarily be caused by themselves, but due to the involvement of their natal families. Therefore, in dealing with interpersonal issues, one cannot

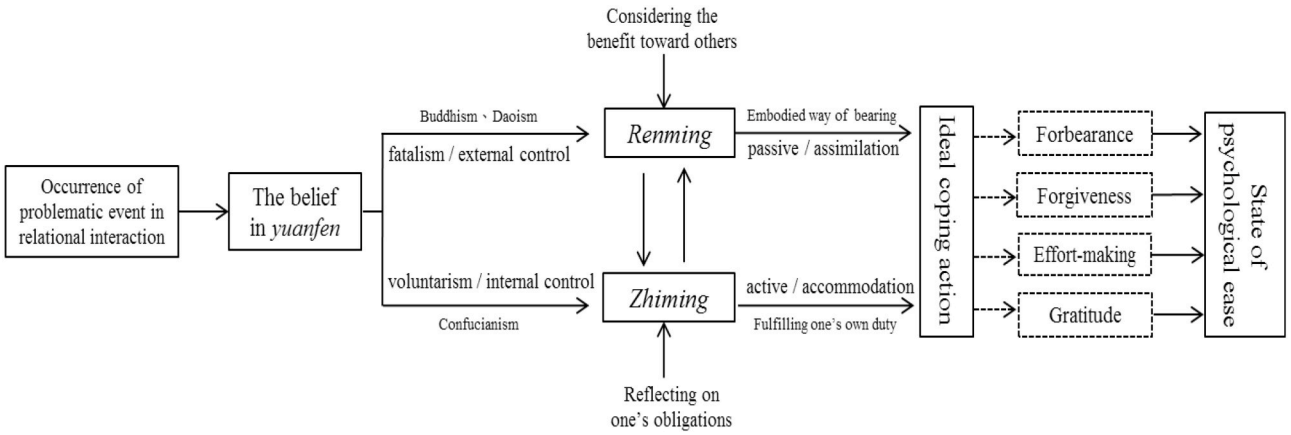

FIGURE 1 | A dialectical model of *yuanfen* and its function on psychological adaptation.

overlook significant others and situational contexts. Based on their life experiences, people are accustomed to appeal to *yuanfen* to convert negative feelings, awkwardness, or setbacks caused by interpersonal incidents, into a type of belief that can be used to combat anxiety. Its true functional mechanism is in embodying the perspective of the mandate of Heaven (Wang, 1987; Lee, 1995; Yang, 2005; Hsu and Hwang, 2013). These beliefs become practical wisdom or mechanisms of psychological adaptation for handling interpersonal problems. People use *yuanfen* to interpret the problem, and in turn adopt suitable actions to achieve psychological adjustment. *Yuanfen* demonstrates that people who live in Chinese cultural societies are accustomed to taking a continuous rather than fragmented perspective toward various interpersonal issues. They believe that the formation and destruction of various relationships may connect the past, present, and future as causes and consequences on the same timeline. This is particularly true for expressive ties that satisfy personal, intrinsic needs for love, warmth, security, and sense of belonging, such as parent-child, romantic, marital, and intimate relationships (Hwang, 2012), and may produce different judgments based on whether such expressive ties are inherent or learned.

In the field of Eastern psychology, *guan-xi*, a similar concept but not the same as "relationship" in Western psychology, has long been an important issue. However, existing literature has tended to focus on the explicit "*guan-xi* as it ought to be" rather than on the implicit "*guan-xi* as it is." According to Zhai (1993), in Chinese society, there are three localized concepts for interpersonal relationships: personal appeal (*ren yuan*), human sentiment (*renqing*), and human relations (*renlun*). These three concepts correspond, respectively, to psychology, values, and norms, in turn creating an overall framework for the exploration of interpersonal relationships. This study postulates that human sentiment and human relations correspond to the explicit "*guan-xi* as it ought to be," which can satisfy the expectations of Chinese social values and norms, but are also the sources of psychological disturbances. Since personal appeal corresponds to psychology, and is related to the overall configuration of the model of interpersonal relationships, it should have the most direct impact on psychological adaptation as part of relational interaction. For example, when a person forced to accept a breakup and attribute the failure of the relationship to lack of *yuanfen*, the relationship has also been framed as something that does not have to be taken seriously. Since there is a lack of *yuanfen*, the relationship should not be fought for. This interpretation is actually beneficial for psychological adjustment in terms of achieving a positive outcome.

Therefore, this paper postulates that adaptation in terms of interpersonal relationships should involve be a balance between personal appeal, human sentiment, and human relations in Chinese cultural societies. If the views of Harris (1989) and Hwang (2011) are incorporated, then human sentiment and human relations may be classified in the social culture dimension. In order to meet certain value expectations imbued by society, such as being an ideal person, social values and norms need to be taken into consideration in order to achieve a state of integrated psychological equilibrium. Considering the "Mandala Model of Self" postulated by Hwang (2011), at this point a person encountering difficulties would experience an internal tug-of-war, and would attempt to integrate primitive motivating drives and social norm requirements, the ideal action after reflection can be used to achieve the adjustment goal. This psychological process of seeking intrinsic self-integration can be referred to as self-cultivation, which has become a unique healing model in the Chinese culture. It stresses the situational context of problems, and can be used as an important basis for the construction of a localized psychological treatment model (Chen, 2009; Hwang and Chang, 2009; Leung and Chen, 2009; Hwang, 2012). Complemented with the views of "investigation of things, extension of knowledge, sincerity of the will, rectification of the mind, cultivation of the personal life" in *Great Learning* of Confucianism[1], the cultivation process is the work of the self. People use their own wisdom and knowledge to achieve

[1]References to this passage is based on *Liji Daxue pian* of Confucianism, as quoted in Cua (2003, p. 47).

an understanding of the dilemmas they face, as a result, they complete themselves and complete others, and ultimately achieving a state of ease with adaptation between subjective and objective conditions (Hu, 2009). At this time, personal appeal, human sentiment, and human relations can achieve a stately good balance. This not only helps one to understand the various problems encountered in relational interactions, but also to integrate the three major systems of psychology, values, and norms, so that the self can realize its greatest potential.

BUDDHIST, DAOIST, AND CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHIES AND THE DIALECTICAL THINKING PROCESS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF *YUANFEN*

Yuanfen is frequently mistaken to be a purely Buddhist concept, but its content actually integrates Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist wisdom. Because *yuanfen* has the Chinese conceptual element of unification of Heaven and human, which is an important belief advocated by Confucianism and Daoism. Therefore, people are accustomed to considering interpersonal relationships as part of their relationship with Heaven, creating the cultural knowledge of oneness of heaven, earth, and human sentiment and relationships (Zhai, 1993). Thus, "Heaven" may be a synonym for "nature," symbolizing a state that occurs without deliberate intervention. In the human world full of dilemmas, it is a concept of transcendence, generally referring to the original nature of all objects (Huang, 2006). Therefore, comprehension of the meaning and evolution of *yuanfen* requires an understanding of Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist views on interpersonal relationships.

Confucianism places greatest emphasis on ethics in interpersonal relationships, so it stresses the obligation to shoulder one's responsibility; Daoism places emphasis on naturalness in interpersonal relationships, so it stresses the ease of going with the flow; and Buddhism places emphasis on cause and consequences in interpersonal relationships, so it stresses the mercy of letting go. These three philosophies of life tend to appear through mutually dialectical conversion in the processing of interpersonal problems in Chinese cultural societies, becoming the sources of content for the cultural belief of *yuanfen*. Since troubles and suffering are only natural, and may happen again at any time, if one is desperate to dispel suffering from one's consciousness, this would only be the temporary suppression of a problem and one would not be able to achieve true liberation. Therefore, the ultimate expression of cultivation in Chinese cultural societies is the psychological transition from learning how to adjust to problems to converting them into positive interpretations. This also allows for the preservation of "face" (Hwang and Chang, 2009) and achieves a form similar to "self-verbalization" in Western theory. This kind of interpretation and application has affected Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) in the West, which has been proven to be effectively applied to the clinical treatment of patients with unstable interpersonal relationships (Linehan et al., 2006). However, self-verbalization that can truly benefit complicated interpersonal relationships must be the "self-dialectic" that can simultaneously combine thought from Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism to be the most effective practice.

Furthermore, Daoism stresses the following of the natural will of Heaven, so when people encounter problems, it would be best to maintain stillness and avoid actions without thinking, because heavenly principles would arrange fate. This view corresponds to the cause and consequences stressed by Buddhism. As the Buddhist aphorism states, "Nothing will follow one in death except for karma.[2]" If one wants to be freed from pain and suffering, one must maintain a merciful heart. This perspective would make it easier for one to see random encounters or interpersonal problems as fated to come because of causes and consequences, as a natural rhythm or flow. If one can freely accept difficult challenges, one would be able to implement embodied way to cultivate and elevate one's psychological state. Because one can account for the limitations of the objective relationship context, believing that any relationship involves necessary causes, problems and troubles are merely consequences and outcomes. Therefore, under certain interpersonal contexts, one would choose to forbear in response. Moreover, the consideration of another person's own karma would better enable one to exercise mercy and empathy, and as a result, people can forgive and liberate one another. Understanding this point allows one to achieve happiness, changing one's perception of the dilemmas originally present in the relationship. Thus, under the profound concept of passively accepting fate out of necessity to conform to natural trends, there is actually the latent notion that fate can be changed through the process of cultivation. In other words, one can understand the mission bestowed upon oneself as a person by heaven. As Mengzi stated, "To exhaust one's mind to know one's nature is to know Heaven.[3]" When faced with troubles, people should be able to self-reflect, and consider whether they have carried out their obligations, and whether they have been diligent in the existing constraints of destiny. This is the practice of using knowledge of fate to inspire one's active bearing of responsibilities. In doing so, when there are problems in interpersonal interaction, one would be able to convert grudges to gratitude, and repay the other with a grateful heart; this would be another elevation of the self. However, this assumption of responsibility is not easy, so it is unnecessary for people to be excessively insistent. At this point, one may experience a peaceful state of mind under the principle of "man proposes, Heaven disposes." When necessary, people should let go and let nature run its course. Here, the Confucian thought of "exhaust one's abilities" is connected to Buddhist and Daoist thought, as people learn to not insist on action, because ultimately all reality is transient.

Therefore, both the action and inaction of people faced with problems may have a positive psychological significance in

[2]This aphorism can be found in the *Chinese Buddhist Canon (Dazhengzang)*, 47, 259. [《大正新脩大藏經》，47，259。].

[3]See *Mengzi*, Jin Xin I, chap 1, as quoted in Sturgeon (2011).

Chinese cultural societies. This paper postulates that the main means of cultivation for people in Chinese cultural societies to put them at ease, is to first access the nature-abiding character of Daoism: learning to see things without expectations. Then, introduce Buddhist thought to analyze the causes and consequences in the problems, which would enable them to accommodate the other person's position. If they believe that they have not done enough, they should take more active action to fulfill their responsibilities. This is the application of Confucianism. Finally, in terms of overall reflections, they can learn to not overemphasize any specific relationship. From this, they are able to achieve the benefits of "self-cultivation" in psychological adjustment faced with interpersonal problems, and are able to express the wisdom unique to Chinese cultural tradition.

Based on the description above, we constructed a tentative theory to illustrate how *yuanfen* which comprises elements of all the above-mentioned schools of thought can draw on in specific situations to take the most suitable coping actions in Chinese cultural societies.

EXPLANATION OF MODEL CONTENT

In **Figure 1**, the model stresses that there are primarily four stages in the process of psychological adjustment when dealing with interpersonal problems in Chinese cultural societies: (1) Occurrence of an external event; (2) The cognitive processes of the culturally-inclusive wisdom; (3) The archetype of ideal responses after self-integration; (4) Achievement of psychological ease. It postulates that when people who live in Chinese cultural societies encounter relational problems, they tend to first access the cultural schema of *yuanfen*, in which *yuan* is originally a Buddhist thought, believing that everything has causes and consequences. The internal mechanism is the view of the will of Heaven though acceptance of fate (*ren-ming*) (Hsu, 2012). This is practiced through passively bearing (Hwang, 1978), being concerned with the other or related others. As a result, people are willing to undergo mental and physical training through experience to express one's mercy. Bearing bitterness transforms one's thoughts, and implies that all difficulties can be alleviated with time. This type of passive prosocial coping strategy (Chen, 2004) can help one to take some ideal coping forms to face interpersonal problems after reflection on the cultivation process. As a result, this reduces the potential for anger and fury, thereby achieving psychological adaptation. In contrast, *fen* primarily arises from the view of ethical obligation in Confucianism, emphasizing the virtue and obligation that should be fulfilled in relationship. Therefore, its internal mechanism is the heavenly will of understanding fate (*zhi-ming*) (Hsu, 2012), or practice through actively facing reality (Hwang, 1978). The subjects of consideration include not only others, but also themselves. Therefore, active exertion of the self and utmost sincerity can be used to transform thoughts and current conditions. If one can bravely shoulder responsibilities and obligations, one would take ideal coping strategies, in turn reducing the potential for regret and complaints and achieving psychological adaptation.

IDEAL COPING ACTIONS AFTER SELF-INTEGRATION

Seeking "harmony" is a positive and auspicious social value in Eastern Asian culture. It is also a common mindset among interpersonal relationships (Huang, 1996). This model infers that, in Chinese cultural societies where relationship doctrine and interpersonal harmony are advocated, when people are dealing with relationship problems, it is common to respond with the concept of harmony achieved by negotiation. In other words, people emphasize on using courtesy but no conflict to establish harmonious interpersonal relationships and social order. The ideal interpersonal responses of "tolerance" and "forgiveness" are therefore especially respected. Since harmony is a dynamic experience, not a static structure, in Chinese cultural societies (Huang, 1996), people emphasize on the need to actively return a favor, in order to properly fulfill the responsibilities and obligations in relationships. As a result, "making effort" and "having gratitude" are ideal interpersonal responses. Based on the above, the measurement for "ideal coping actions" in this model mainly aim to include "tolerance," "forgiveness," "making effort," and "having gratitude" as the primary moral acts. This model holds that these actions can be inspired through the belief in *yuanfen*, and in turn help people face interpersonal problems and maintain harmony. Their individual definitions and connotations are described as follows:

Tolerance

The term "tolerance" for most people can be easily associated with a sense of depression, grievance, and pain. In fact, to tolerate something, one must go through four psychological mechanisms, namely "restraint," "determination," "acceptance," and "retreat," in order to allow this person to control a particular psychological intention out of this person's own will (Lee and Yang, 1998). Besides, "tolerance" has been highly praised to be an important value and philosophy in Chinese cultural societies. If people can observe the limitations of their situations in reality, then people can learn how to be indisputable and conform when they are faced with difficulties, even if they have to deal with humiliation. However, in Chapter 73 of *Daodejing*, it says, "The heavenly way is to not compete but be good at winning, not speak but be good at responding." In addition, in "*Man in the World, Associated with Other Me*" by Zhuangzi:, "Know that there is no alternative to people acting as they do, and rest in it as what is appointed; this is the highest achievement of virtue.[4]" These mean that "tolerance" can help individuals to reach beyond their spiritual level, and highlight their integrity and cultivation in dealing with situations. In this instance, "tolerance" elevates virtue, and it is no longer merely about sacrifice or humiliation. It is valuable for individual achievement and happiness, and it also has the benefit of maintaining relationships and gaining praises from society(Lee and Yang, 1998). It can be regarded as one of the "ideal coping actions" when people are faced with challenges in relationships.

[4]See Chapter 73 of *Daodejing* and the Inner Chapters of *Zhuangzi* of Daoism, as quoted in Sturgeon (2011).

Forgiveness

"Forgiveness" is a universal value. However, in Chinese cultural societies, the way that people express love can be very unique. Although, Confucianism emphasize on "the principle of loyalty and benevolence," Confucius also stated that, "Only the benevolent is capable of truly loving or hating a person,[5]" which means that only a person who truly is benevolent, virtuous, and well-cultivated can be fair and selfless to like or dislike others in the correct way, and can then be close to the good ones and stay away from the malevolent ones. He also emphasized: "If a man sets his heart on benevolence, he will not do evil.[6]" This means that if a person is determined to pursue the path for benevolence, then this person will not have any dislikes toward anyone. Further, this person can help the malevolent to transform and become benevolent. In Buddhist teachings, there is a saying that "a butcher becomes a Buddha the moment he drops his cleaver." This means that everyone has a chance to attain enlightenment and become a Buddha through cultivation. As long as people are willing to repent, then they can change their path to the "Bodhisattva path.[7]" However, they still need good cause to make this good consequence happen. To "forgive" someone can be just simple as not giving this person a hard time, but it does not mean complete "absolution." In Chinese Societies, people can use "forgiveness" to save the "face" of the other party, and use that to maintain the harmony and ensure space for future development of the relationship.

Making Effort

The meaning of "making effort" contains the Confucian concepts of "moral and ethical obligation" and "exertion of the self" (Hwang, 2012). "Moral and ethical obligation" encourages people who live in Chinese cultural societies to have the habit of regarding "making effort" as an important virtue and obligation when dealing with people and handling situations. "Exertion of the self" focuses on the fact that individuals must mindfully obtain a profound understanding of their own human nature, so that they can understand the meaning of life. Influenced by Confucian concepts, while people who live in Chinese cultural societies obey the mandate of Heaven, they often make effort to respond to challenges. After people have fulfilled the responsibilities of their roles, then they are worthy of others. Through, the process of exerting oneself and making the best effort, they can then be worthy of themselves and have no regrets.

In addition, researchers Luo et al. (2010) used the "Hope Theory" of Snyder (2000) and proposed that the hopes in the Chinese society should contain two factors, namely "beyond adaptation" and "relentless effort." Different to western society where "making effort" is regarded as one's internal characteristic, people regard "making effort" as a method to improve one's ability in Chinese society. It is also an attitude of noble spirit. People who silently make effort firmly and persistently, overcome challenges, and work toward their goals are worthy of praise. In other words, people who can continue to make effort when they are in a challenging situation are regarded as self-cultivated gentlemen with virtues. Since hope is most commonly raised during difficult situations, "making effort" is bound to become a method for adjustment when facing challenges in relationships.

Having Gratitude

The concept of "gratitude" is commonly discussed in Buddhist way of thinking, which emphasizes that people should have gratitude to their parents, teachers, nation, and all the sentential beings. In addition, "having gratitude" is associated with the concept of "repaying." A person is regarded to be virtuous only if they understand the need to repay the favor when others have provided benefit to them. "Having gratitude" is not only an important guideline for interpersonal interactions, but it is also important for the self-cultivation of virtues when interacting with others and handling situations (Wood et al., 2007). In addition, it promotes harmony in relationships. Under the influence of Confucianism, if a person can maintain a kind heart, and in a relationship this person is actively aware of the responsibilities of the role they play, then this person can "restrain self and return to the rites,[8]" and have filial piety toward parents, be friendly to brothers and sisters, be trustworthy to friends, be loyal to the nation, and be kind to others. As a result, if people are actively aware of the benefits that they have received from others in the past, and due to their inner sense of sincere, or the favor they owe, they can encourage themselves to have a sense of gratitude and act accordingly.

Based on the "Resource theory" for social exchange (Foa and Foa, 1980), in addition to specific exchanges that are more about concrete resources, for example, status, money, etc., there are also a considerable amount of emotional exchanges that are based on love and affection. We suggest that "having gratitude" is also a form of emotional exchange during the process of interaction in relationships. Through this kind of interaction, it can help people to retain the initiative to take responsibilities, even if they are frustrated in their relationships—especially expressive tie with parents, spouse, partner, best friends, etc. People can transform their negative emotions into the ideal coping actions if they have gratitude when they are faced with relationship issues.

THE EFFECT OF DIALECTICAL THINKING OF BELIEF IN *YUANFEN* IN PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION

Previous studies indicated that the belief in *yuanfen* is related with psychological indicators in mental health, work satisfaction, and well-being (Lee and Chen, 2006, 2009).We postulate that *yuanfen* is correlated with psychological health is because of its latent character of dialectical thinking.

Sociologist Lee (1995) proposed a view of "fatalistic voluntarism," and argued that Chinese beliefs in fate contain both passive fatalism and active voluntarism, which implies a kind of dialectical thinking. Dialectical thinking has shown a positive correlation with coping flexibility (Cheng, 2003, 2009); in turn, coping flexibility is an effective indicator of psychological

[5]See *The Analects*, Li Ren, chap 3, as quoted in Sturgeon (2011).

[6]See *The Analects*, Li Ren, chap 4, as quoted in Sturgeon (2011).

[7]There are the six perfections in practice to complete Bodhisattva path: generosity, morality, patience, energy, meditation, and wisdom, as quoted in Trungpa (2013).

[8]See *The Analects*, Yan Yuan, chap 1, as quoted in Sturgeon (2011).

adaptation. Therefore, we anticipate that *yuanfen* may facilitate coping flexibility, and can be used to adjust psychological stress when one is faced with relational interaction problems.

Dialectical thinking refers to the cognitive style for acceptance of opposing positions in all things. Because the world is always changing, many seemingly contradictory or opposing views are actually mutually beneficial and reliant, each with inherent positive values (Peng and Nisbett, 1999). Although, these oppositions or contradictions are classified as good or bad, primary or subordinate, or positive or negative, their natures may change after a certain degree of evolution. Through the organic process of mutual infiltration and transformation, a higher form is achieved, thereby resolving the dilemmas in a changing world (Huang, 2006).

Coping flexibility can be described as an individual's ability to take different coping strategies in different contexts; it has been discovered to be clinically related to mental and physical health (Cheng, 2001; Vriezekolk et al., 2012). Most Western literature divides coping strategies into "active problem-focused coping" and "passive emotion-focused coping," and claims that the former produces more ideal psychological adaptation (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Folkman and Moskowitz, 2004), though there is no stable consensus on this view (Carver et al., 1989). Empirical studies showed that "active problem-focused coping" actually has a low positive correlation with psychological adaptation among children or adolescents with less social experience (Clarke, 2006). This fact suggests that the oppositional perspective of dichotomy is insufficient to explain the functioning of coping flexibility, and the factors of social context cannot be overlooked. In other words, "active" is not necessary positive, and "passive" is not necessary negative, the vision of dialectical thinking is broader and can better describe to the customary Chinese ways of dealing with people and events.

In Western literature, there has long been scholars that attempted to incorporate a dual-axis model of coping: the "active axis" and the "social axis" to explain the four possible types of coping strategies for interpersonal relationship (Hobfoll et al., 1994). Chen (2004) used this model as a basis to name the four coping styles: "active prosocial," "active antisocial," "passive prosocial," and "passive antisocial" in Taiwan, finding that "active prosocial," and "passive prosocial" are the greatest predictors of positive psychological health and reducers of depression and anxiety. This suggests that effective coping must account for social relationships, even though they might be passive actions such as forbearance, accommodation, and submission, all these can benefit psychological adaptation (Hsu et al., 2008).

Following dual-axis model of coping proposed by Hobfoll et al. (1994) and Hsu et al. (2008), our model in **Figure 1** also makes the distinction between "active vs. passive." Nevertheless, our model incorporated the concepts of Piaget (1977), creating the two forms of "active/accommodation vs. passive/assimilation." The former means actively changing existing cognitive schemas to incorporate new information from the external environment, while the latter uses existing cognitive schemas to receive external information passively. Both are necessary for psychological adaptation.

Furthermore, because Chinese society is affected by Confucianism, our model postulates that the indicator of "prosocialness" would have a more complex meaning on the active coping dimension, and actions tend to be different based on the closeness of relationships. In other words, people who live in Confucian societies follow a relationalism of differentiated order (Fei, 1948; Hwang, 2012), and would do their best to maintain psychosocial homeostasis with one's own interpersonal network. Therefore, our model theorizes that the practice of "exert oneself" in Confucianism may inspire the internal to external active/accommodation adaptation in a specific interpersonal situation, because there is a sense of obligation toward the relationship in that context. Affected by Buddhist and Daoist thought, we postulate that people who live in Chinese cultural societies may tend to adopt merciful and non-confrontational strategies, while trusting in the causes and consequences of natural cycles. That is, they may prefer inaction, holding to stillness, and avoid thoughtless action, and they are able to promote the external to internal passive/assimilation adaptation path. Based on our framework in **Figure 1**, we conducted an empirical study to demonstrate this tentative theory.

Empirical Study Based on the Framework

The objective of this study was to preliminarily explore the relationship between beliefs in *yuanfen* and the ideal coping actions, on the basis of the framework. The beliefs in *yuanfen* are divided into two main types, namely the type of "*ren-ming* based on obeying fate" and the type of "*zhi-ming* based on understanding fate." Four dimensions for measuring the ideal coping actions included: tolerance, forgiveness, making effort, and having gratitude. A scenario about family dilemma is used as an event. In this study, it is assumed that a canonical correlation exists between the beliefs in *yuanfen* and the ideal coping actions, and they are positively correlated.

METHODS

Participants

We created the questionnaires online and published the survey link on websites, social media, and bulletin board system. There were 188 adult volunteers with 67 males and 121 females in Taiwan to complete the questionnaires. The personal information in the questionnaires covered four age groups (20–24, 25–29, 30–35, 36 and over). There were 121, 37, 28, and 2 participants in each range, respectively. As for the education, there were 62 undergraduate students, 21 participants currently enrolled in graduate schools for master degree, 3 participants currently enrolled in PhD programs, 3 participants graduated from vocational high schools, 83 participants graduated from colleges, and 16 participants graduated with master's degree. This study received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and participants gave informed consent.

Materials

Yuan Belief Scale (Appendix 1 in Supplementary Material)

The items were modified based on the initial scale by Lee and Chen (2006). After the process of experts review, item

analysis and factor analysis, the scale finally includes two subscales for "*Ren-ming* type (obeying fate)" and "*Zhi-ming* type (understanding fate)." There were a total of six questions. 1 point represents "totally disagree" and 5 point represents "totally agree," which represents two ends of the extremes. Participants were asked to circle 1–5 based on how much they agreed with the description of the questions. We previously performed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on 118 adult participants. Using principle axis analysis and direct oblique rotation, two factors were extracted. The "*Ren-ming* type" subscale consisted of 3 items ($\alpha = 0.88$), and the "*Zhi-ming* type" subscale consisted of 3 items ($\alpha = 0.83$).

The Scenario Task and the Ideal Coping Action Scale (Appendix 2 in Supplementary Material)

Through the scenario, participants were asked to read the story, and imagine themselves as the main character. The details of the scenario are as follows:

> *It was love at first sight for you and your partner, and you have been together for many years. Recently you have plans to get married. When you excitedly try to share your happiness with your family, your mother does not like your partner, and she is also worried that you are rushing into your decision. You then started to have frequent disagreements with your mother, and your family relationship is now facing challenges. One day, after a serious and intense fight, your mother says to you suddenly, "I have done my responsibilities for raising you, but I am very disappointed in you. If you persist and want to marry your partner, then you are no longer welcomed in this family."*

We explored the meaning of the four actions in Chinese cultural societies through literature review. The content of the questionnaire were composed together with the scenario. The preliminary questions were consulted with three experts. They helped to modify and test the questions. Eventually, three questions were left for measuring each type of actions. For the assessment, 1 represents "extremely unlikely" and 5 represents "extremely likely." Participants were asked to imagine the situation was happening to themselves, and were asked to assess the extent they would take the four actions by selecting 1–5 based on how much they agreed with the questions. The measuring questions of four actions are as follows:

(1) Tolerance
The meaning of tolerance mainly contains restraint, persistence, endurance, and retreat, which are the four psychological mechanisms for individuals to self-control their specific psychological desire(Lee and Yang, 1998). This section consisted of 3 items ($\alpha = 0.76$); the average response was 10.51 ($SD = 2.43$).

(2) Forgiveness
The meaning of forgiveness mainly contains the Confucian concept of "benevolence" and the Buddhist concept of "compassion." This section consisted of 3 items ($\alpha = 0.81$); the average response was 9.86 ($SD = 2.57$).

(3) Making effort
The meaning of making effort mainly contains the Confucian concept of "moral and ethical obligation" and "exertion of the self." This section consisted of 3 items ($\alpha = 0.76$); the average response was 11.13 ($SD = 2.61$).

(4) Having gratitude
The meaning of having gratitude mainly focuses on the affection exchange in an interactive relationship, and thereby promotes harmonious relationships and transforms negative emotions. This is important in the self-cultivation of virtues. This section consisted of 3 items ($\alpha = 0.76$); the average response was 11.54 ($SD = 2.49$).

Research Procedure and Data Analysis

The participants were first asked to read the informed consent online. After they were aware of the objectives of the study and their rights, they were guided to another link to read the scenario. After reading the task, they needed to complete the ideal coping action scale, *Yuan* belief scale, and personal details. After data collection, the statistical program SPSS 20.0 was used to process the data. Canonical correlation analysis (CCA) was used to explore the two aspects of beliefs in *yuanfen*, namely the type of "*Ren-ming* (obeying fate)" and the type of "*Zhi-ming* (understanding fate)," as well as to explore the four aspects of "ideal coping actions" as criterion variables, namely "tolerance," "forgiveness," "making effort," and "having gratitude."

RESULTS

Canonical correlation analysis was performed by extracting two sets of canonical variables with statistical significance (*Wilks L.* = 0.76, $p < 0.001$; *Wilks L.* = 0.94, $p < 0.05$), indicating that, for the participants, "beliefs in *yuanfen*" and "ideal coping actions" have two sets of canonical variables with canonical correlations influencing each other.

From the statistical results in **Table 1** and the canonical correlation structure path diagram shown in **Figure 2**, the canonical correlation coefficient ρ was 0.44 ($p < 0.001$) and the coefficient of determination $\rho 2$ was 0.19, indicating that the first canonical variable $\chi 1$ of the predictor variable could explain 19% of the total variance of the first canonical variable $\eta 1$ of the criterion variable, and $\eta 1$ could explain 52.47% of the total variance of the criterion variable. Through the use of the first set of the canonical correlations ($\chi 1$, $\eta 1$), the predictor variable could explain 10.07% of the total variance of the criterion variable, and $\chi 1$ could explain 53.18% of the total variance of the predictor variable. Through the use of the first set of canonical correlation ($\chi 1$, $\eta 1$), criterion variable could explain 10.20% of the total variance of the predictor variable. The canonical correlation coefficient ρ for the second set was 0.24 ($p < 0.05$) and the coefficient of determination $\rho 2$ was 0.06, indicating that the second canonical variable $\chi 2$ of the predictor variable could explain 6% of the total variance of the second canonical variable $\eta 2$ of the criterion variable, and $\eta 2$ could explain 16.85% of the total variance of the criterion variable. Through the use of the second set of the canonical correlation ($\chi 2$, $\eta 2$), the predictor variable could explain 0.98% of the total variance of the criterion variable, and $\chi 2$ could explain 46.82% of the total variance of the

TABLE 1 | Canonical correlations between the belief in *yuanfen* and the ideal coping actions.

Belief in *yuanfen*	$n = 188$				
	Canonical factor		Ideal coping actions	Canonical factor	
	χ_1	χ_2		η_1	η_2
Renming	−0.34	0.94	Tolerance	−0.48	0.80
Zhiming	−0.97	−0.22	Forgiveness	−0.53	0.02
			Making efforts	−0.86	0.04
			Having gratitude	−0.91	−0.19
Variance extracted %	53.18	46.82	Variance extracted %	52.47	16.85
Measure of redundancy	10.20	2.72	Measure of redundancy	10.07	0.98
				ρ^2 0.19	0.06
				ρ 0.44***	0.24*

*$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.001$.

predictor variable. Through the use of the second set of canonical correlation ($\chi 2$, $\eta 2$), the criterion variable could explain 2.72% of the total variance of the predictor variable.

In addition, in practice, the "canonical structure coefficient," that is, after taking the absolute value of the canonical structure loading, the variable with a larger value and a more significant meaning would be used as the reference for the naming convention for the canonical variables. From **Figure 2**, it can be observed that, in terms of the predictor variable, "*zhi-ming* type" had the highest correlation with the first canonical variable $\chi 1$ with a loading of −0.97, and therefore the first canonical variable $\chi 1$ was named as the "concept of internal control (voluntarism)." In terms of criterion variables, "making effort" and "having gratitude" had the highest correlation with the first canonical variable $\eta 1$ with loadings of −0.86 and −0.91, and therefore the first canonical variable was named as "fulfilling one's own duties." For this study, from the first set of canonical correlation ($\chi 1$, $\eta 1$), it can be observed that, the "concept of internal control (voluntarism)" and "fulfilling one's own duties" have a close correlation. In addition, the canonical loading for the predictor variable and criterion variable both showed the same direction, indicating that they were positively correlated, which means that the stronger the "*zhi-ming* type," the easier it is for people to "make effort" and "have gratitude." In terms of the predictor variable, "*ren-ming* type" had the highest correlation with the second canonical variable $\chi 2$ with a loading of 0.94, and therefore the second canonical variable $\chi 2$ was named as the "concept of external control (fatalism)." In terms of the criterion variables, "tolerance" had the highest correlation with the second canonical variable $\eta 2$ with a loading of 0.80, and therefore the second canonical variable was named as "the embodied way of bearing." From the second set of canonical correlation ($\chi 2$, $\eta 2$), it can be observed that, the "concept of external control (fatalism)" and "the embodied way of bearing" have a close correlation. In addition, the canonical loading for the predictor variable and the criterion variable both showed the same direction, indicating that they were positively correlated, which means that the stronger the "*ren-ming* type," the easier it is for people to have "tolerance" as their response.

DISCUSSION

According to the results, when participants were facing the family relationships dilemma, "beliefs in *yuanfen*" and "ideal coping actions" had significant canonical correlations, indicating that the theoretical hypotheses in this study have obtained preliminary empirical validation. The "*ren-ming* type" (obeying fate) may support actions that are related to "the embodied way of bearing," and "*zhi-ming* type" (understanding fate) can initiate actions that are related to "fulfilling one's own duties."

This study has found that, in regards to "beliefs in *yuanfen*" and "ideal coping actions," two sets of canonical variables could be successfully extracted to achieve statistical significance. Based on the canonical loading, when people face family dilemma, those with a stronger "*zhi-ming* type," the easiest coping initiated is "having gratitude," followed by "making effort." It confirms that when facing their family dilemma, "having gratitude," and "making effort" can be initiated by one's "internal control (voluntarism)."

The loadings for "forgiveness" and "tolerance" were greater than 0.40, indicating that there was also a positive relationship with "*zhi-ming* type." Although, "forgiveness" and "tolerance" seemed as the result of "the embodied way of bearing," in practice, when participants face their family and love relationship dilemma, they are more likely to cope the situation by the strategy of "internal control (voluntarism)," in which "tolerance" has both the characteristics of "passively bearing it" and "actively taking responsibilities." However, the loading for "forgiveness" and "tolerance" for the first set of canonical correlation was significantly lower than that of "having gratitude" and "making effort." Therefore, in this study, "forgiveness" and "tolerance" were not included as part of the naming convention for the first set of canonical factors.

For the second set of canonical factors, it can be observed that, "*ren-ming* type" and "tolerance" indeed had a stronger correlation, indicating that when participants face their family and love relationship dilemma, "tolerance" originates from strong "*ren-ming*," and therefore is more likely to be seen in people who perceive that they are "passively bearing it." In terms of "forgiveness," the relationship with "*ren-ming*" was not significant, but the correlation was stronger with "*zhi-ming*," indicating that "forgiveness" can be regarded as an action that people are "actively taking responsibilities," and must be initiated by "*zhi-ming*."

This study is limited to family relationships. Even if the relationships between children and their parents are full of tension, under the influence of the Confucianism, despite the fact that parents make mistakes, children have a unbreakable bond with their blood-related parents, and they cannot use "forgiveness" to treat or interpret their relationship with the parents. It is obvious that for the relationship between children and parents, the self-cultivation involved for "forgiveness" is more complex, and can be explored in future studies.

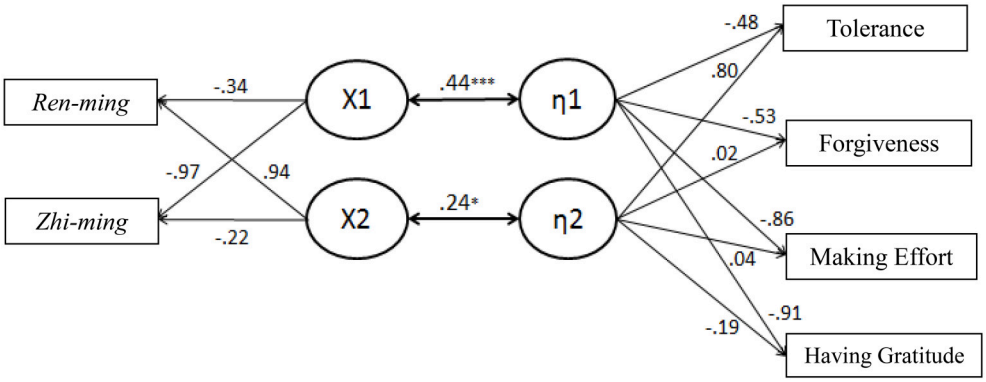

FIGURE 2 | Graphical representation of the significant canonical functions and the contributing predictors (left side) and criterion variables (right side). $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Taking a further look at the results, one's "internal control (voluntarism)" and "fulfilling one's own duties" was positively related to each other. It shows that, in a family relationship, if one is "fulfilling one's own duties" in terms of "making effort" and "having gratitude," then one must have the "internal control (voluntarism)." On the other hand, the "external control (fatalism)" and "the embodied way of bearing" were positively correlated. This means that, in a family relationship, if one can "tolerate," then one must have the "*ren-ming*." Conceiving in terms of Mandala model of self (Hwang, 2011), it indeed shows that the "cultural wisdom" with regards to "beliefs in *yuanfen*" can be a key strategy for "ideal coping actions" upheld by Chinese cultural societies. At the same time, when placing the research results in western consultative theories, it confirms that, cognitive beliefs triggered by external events is often related to the consequences of subsequent actions, as well as how people adapt psychologically. Such influence is more significant in major events relating to close relationships (Beck, 1989). As a result, people's cognitive interpretation of events is indeed the key for moving toward psychological homeostasis. In our study, "beliefs in *yuanfen*" was an expression for the state of awareness, which included "*ren-ming* type based on obeying fate" and "*zhi-ming* type based on understanding fate."

In addition, this study identified that when families experience challenges, "*zhi-ming*" promote the initiation of "forgiveness." In other words, the meaning of "forgiveness" is more about the "concept of internal control (voluntarism)," which can be considered to be actively "fulfilling one's own duties," rather than passively "the embodied way of bearing." From the common sense perspective, "forgiveness" indeed has the meaning of "bearing with the embodied way." However, under the influence of Confucianism on "benevolence" and "the differential mode of association" in Chinese society (Fei, 1948; Hwang, 2012), it is not agreed that everyone is entitled to be "forgiven," or that every situation is worthwhile or acceptable to discuss "forgiveness." Just as stated in *The Analects* that people should recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness which explains that people should use "justice" but not "forgive" in response to those who have harmed them. If people easily forgive those who have harmed them, then although it may appear as if it is an act of great kindness, it can inevitably cause confusion[9]. Seen in this light, "forgiveness" is not purely a mediating method for "passively bearing it." Instead, it requires a long period of time with deep contemplation in order to "actively take responsibilities" for one's action. In other words, "forgiveness" is not just tolerating with a sense of helplessness, but instead, people can choose to forgive. This means that people recognize that in terms of their responsibilities for the relationship, they are adopting the "fulfilling one's own duties" approach. As a result, this study revealed that "forgiveness" had a higher correlation with "*zhi-ming* type." In other words, people can have a higher order of self-awareness and a better integration with the concept of "fate." It is recommended that future studies can further explore the meaning of the active adoption of "forgiveness" in various relationships. In terms of the passive adoption of "forgiveness," it is recommended to use "avoidance" as the subsequent measurement. This is due to the fact that, for the interactions within relationships in Chinese cultural societies, people's objective is pursuing harmony and avoiding conflicts (Huang, 1996). As a result, it is reasonable to define "avoidance" as the passive approach. However, it requires in-depth literature exploration and researches to clarify that avoidance is the optimal ideal coping action.

When conducting this study, economic considerations and timeliness must be taken into consideration. Future studies should use a more optimal sampling method to improve the ecological validity. In addition, one should consider different age groups and the balance between genders, so that the sample will be more representative. A longitudinal study that involves repeated observations of the same variables may help to know if the tendencies would change over time. If one wants to expand the results to societies with Chinese cultures, then samples from the following areas should be collected: China, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, etc. If adequate data can be collected, then it will provide more meaningful results, and one can compare the difference between regions.

[9]See *The Analects*, Xian Wen, chap 34, as quoted in Sturgeon (2011).

Secondly, this study mainly focused on validating the theoretical model used in previous literature. Therefore, for the empirical exploration, the variables were limited to the relationship between two beliefs in *yuanfen* and four ideal coping actions. However, in practice, it can be other important influencing factors, for example, personality. Since Eastern indigenous psychology usually focused on the importance of the situation, it may cause "situational bias," and ignore the fact that personality can have a mediating effect for initiating actions. It is recommended that in future studies, personality can be included as one of the measurement variable.

Finally, this study suggests that for any constitutional research on psychology focusing on cultural wisdom, regardless of the objectives or methods, it is recommended that each researcher should have an appropriate respect. In other words, whether the cultural wisdom has any meanings for its existence in the world people live in, it also contains an element called "insight" which is difficult to measure. Taking this study as an example, only when people realized karmic affiliation can they then know how to stop in the utmost excellence (*Zhizhi*), and developing a different mindset or behaviors through the process of "meditation, peacefulness, calmness, contemplation, acquisition,[10]" in order to effectively adapt psychologically. In other words, people cannot obtain actual benefit in real life by just understanding karmic affiliation literally. Instead, to a certain extent they need to go through the process of "self-cultivation."

Zhizhi can have two interpretations. One means that people can use the concept as the objective of "self-cultivation," and this is the most important agenda proposed in *Great Learning*: "The way of great learning consists in manifesting one's bright virtue, consists in loving people, and consists in knowing to rest in the utmost excellence.[11]" At the same time, it also stresses on the importance of implementing appropriate interactions when dealing with people and situations, as well as taking responsibilities of the relationship (Fu, 2013). The second meaning can be explained in general terms, "knowing when is the appropriate time to stop," "knowing the limitations of the boundaries," "knowing how much you can advance and how much you can retreat." As chapter 44 in *Laozi* stated, "Being contented with one's lot, one will not be disgraced by others for it. He who is content with his lot will not be humiliated. To be always contented means a lifetime without disgrace." In other words, people should know how to be less selfish and have fewer desires in order to stay away from danger, which also include the fact that people should exercise their restraint to "lust," just as the concept of the Buddhist study on "*The twelve links of cyclic existence*": "you can be liberated if you do not grasp on attachment and you can let it go, in other words, when you have desire but you do not take it as an attachment, then there is a way of eliminating it" (Bhikkhuni et al., 2008). In other words, once you attain insight of the karmic phenomenon of creation and elimination for various complex relationships, the path to liberation and open mind can then be created. As a result, in general, any research can only present part of what is actually there from a particular perspective, which means that it can only show the knowledge that the researchers are trying to establish themselves. If researchers can accomplish self-realization through their research activities, and try to have the knowledge that they have established to be used by people in practice, then they can promote the research results from a scientific micro world into practical activities in real life. Therefore, there will be opportunities for scientific micro worlds with various fields and perspectives to interact with each other, in order to achieve the objectives of implementation (Shen, 2002). This is the concept of knowledge upheld in this study. It is recommended that future research can follow the concept of "one mind, many mentalities" (Shweder et al., 1998). Starting from the social environment that one is currently in, and the search for the research topic that is in line with the mindset generally accepted by people, while explaining the unique cultural mentality in local societies. Based on this, one can establish unique theories or perspectives, and perform empirical research. At the same time, one can pay attention to the source of samples and sample characteristics, as well as various limitations for derivations, in order to propose a research finding that is more innovative and unique, in the development of worldwide knowledge of psychology.

CONCLUSION

On the premise of fate as part of life, *yuanfen* comprises the various life experiences of people who live in Chinese cultural societies that connect various tangible and intangible matters and drive good and bad relationships. Therefore, there are qualitative differences in the nature of *yuanfen*. Negative *yuanfen* is likely to bring people pain, and should be cut off rationally. However, Chinese cultural societies places emphasis on virtue, and is affected by the Buddhist view of cause and consequences and the Daoist view of following nature. Thus, unlike the decisiveness with which interpersonal problems are handled in the West, it is usually difficult for people in Chinese cultural societies to sever a relationship that is not good enough, rather opting to maintain the relationship after seeing it as a necessary trial in life. The various psychological and cultural factors involved still need to be clarified.

In addition, *yuanfen* is not an absolutely unreachable concept in Chinese cultural societies. People usually believe that those with "beneficial *yuan*" have the opportunity to change their fate (Wang, 1987), so it can be used to explain various types of relational interactions, and can be a life attitude (Chang and Holt, 1991). However, further exploration is required to assess whether knowledge cumulating from cultural traditions as well as the wisdom derived therefrom, both have positive effects on psychological health or whether they can produce negative effects under certain circumstances. This is necessary in order to propose relational theories

[10]References to this passage are based on *Liji Daxue pian* of Confucianism, as quoted in Cua (2003).

[11]See *Liji,* Daxue, chap 1, as quoted in Sturgeon (2011).

or psychological treatment regimens with greater cultural compatibility.

Based on the cultural view, this article proposes a dialectical model to interpret the construct of *yuanfen* and the psychological adaptation processes in interpersonal interaction in Chinese cultural societies, and it also provides a tentative framework for understanding people in non-Western societies. In short, we define *yuanfen* as serendipity in relationship, an important cultural wisdom, flexible determinism and a way of psychological adjustment when dealing with interpersonal issues in Chinese cultural societies. In today's global communities, indigenous and cultural perspective toward social and personal relationship is indispensable. This framework may contribute to the development of relational studies, but in need of more empirical verification.

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All authors listed, have made substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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Beyond Authoritarian Personality: The Culture-Inclusive Theory of Chinese Authoritarian Orientation

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In a dyad interaction, respecting and obeying those with high status (authority) is highly valued in Chinese societies. Regarding explicit behaviors, Chinese people usually show respect to and obey authority, which we call authoritarian orientation. Previous literature has indicated that Chinese people have a high degree of authoritarian personality, which was considered a national character. However, under Confucian relationalism (Hwang, 2012a), authoritarian orientation is basically an ethical issue, and thus, should not be reduced to the contention of authoritarian personality. Based on Yang's (1993) indigenous conceptualization, Chien (2013) took an emic bottom-up approach to construct an indigenous model of Chinese authoritarian orientation; it represents a "culture-inclusive theory." However, Chien's model lacks the role of agency or intentionality. To resolve this issue and to achieve the epistemological goal of indigenous psychology (that is, "one mind, many mentalities"), this paper took the "cultural system approach" (Hwang, 2015b) to construct a culture-inclusive theory of authoritarian orientation in order to represent the universal mind of human beings as well as the mentalities of people in a particular culture. Two theories that reflect the universal mind, the "Face and Favor model" (Hwang, 1987) and the "Mandala Model of Self" (Hwang, 2011a,c), were used as analytical frameworks for interpreting Chien's original model. The process of constructing the culture-inclusive theory of authoritarian orientation may represent a paradigm for the construction of indigenous culture-inclusive theories while inspiring further development. Some future research directions are proposed herein.

Keywords: authoritarian orientation, authoritarian personality, Confucian relationalism, culture-inclusive theory, cultural system approach, indigenous psychology, Mandala Model of Self

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INTRODUCTION

In "My First Teacher," Lu Xun, a well-known Chinese writer, stated, "In the center of our house, a memorial tablet was worshiped on which heaven (天), earth (地), emperor (君), parents (親), and teacher (師) were written in gold color. They represented the five figures we have to respect and obey." In traditional Chinese society, emperor (ruler), parents and teacher were regarded as the supreme authorities comparable to heaven and earth. Chinese society had long been ethic-based (Liang, 1949; Hwang, 2012a). From birth to death, Chinese people are embedded in various interpersonal networks, including relationships between ruler-subordinate, father-son, husband-wife, older brother-younger brother, in addition to friend-friend. The hierarchies of relationships are particularly emphasized in Chinese society. Among the five cardinal relationships, four are

vertical and those who occupy the superior roles are regarded as authorities (Chien, 2013). As the worshiped tablet in Lu's house demonstrates, Chinese people emphasized a reverence for, and obedience to, authorities (i.e., emperor, parents and teachers); authorities were even regarded as gods (heaven and earth).

The influence of Western culture has persisted for over 100 years; recently, globalization has been an inescapable trend. However, reverence for, and obedience to, authorities has never faded away in Chinese societies. American sinologist Wright (1962) listed 13 traits of traditional Chinese; the first was "obedience to authority (parents or superiors)." In a qualitative study (Chuang, 1987) 14 Chinese adults with different backgrounds were interviewed for their experiences in interacting with various authorities (e.g., parents); it showed that most participants revealed fear of and/or obedience to authorities. Furthermore, in a case study, Cheng (1995) found that, in a private enterprise, the subordinates usually complied with the boss's opinions without raising their own ideas in meetings. Such interaction patterns are quite distinct from those in Western cultures. Similar patterns were found in quantitative studies with large sample sizes. Chien and Huang (2010) found that that "reverence for teachers" and "obedience to teachers' instructions" were regarded as role obligations for students from elementary school to college. Huang and Chu (2012) found "obedience to superiors" and "filial piety" to be highly valued; "respecting superiors" was considered the most important value orientation. Also, Zhang et al. (2005) found "relational hierarchy" to be an important value in contemporary Chinese societies.

The aforementioned studies demonstrated that even under the trend of modernization or globalization, the tendency of respecting and obeying authorities, which we called "authoritarian orientation" (Yang, 1993; Chien, 2013), is still ubiquitous in contemporary Chinese societies. The modernization process of Chinese societies mainly takes that of Western societies as a paradigm. Chinese authoritarian orientation was regarded as one of the most negative characters that had to be removed from Chinese culture. As a result, it became the focal topic for many Chinese scholars (Yang, 1965; Li and Yang, 1972; Wei, 1974; King, 1979). Authoritarian personality (Adorno et al., 1950) was taken as the theoretical framework to interpret Chinese authoritarian orientation and was even considered the national character of the Chinese people (Wright, 1962; Yang, 1965; Li and Yang, 1972; King, 1979).

However, as the influence of Western mainstream psychology spread all over the world, psychologists from non-Western cultures began to reflect on whether the imported Western psychological knowledge and theories could be applied to the local context. Since the 1980s, an indigenous approach to psychology (indigenous psychology) has emerged in non-Western societies, representing a challenge to Western psychology (Allwood and Berry, 2006). At the same time, an increasing number of psychologists in Chinese societies, especially in Taiwan and Hong Kong, have committed to the development of Chinese indigenous psychology. Recently, much progress has been made on various topics (see Yang K.-S., 1999). As for Chinese authoritarian orientation, Yang (1993) offered preliminary descriptions. Only recently has a systematic model of authoritarian orientation been proposed from an indigenous emic approach (Chien, 2013; Chien and Huang, 2015). The formation process and psychological components of authoritarian orientation constructed by Chien (2013) illustrate why Chinese people revere and obey authority to a great extent; however, it cannot explain their resistance to authority in specific situations.

The main purpose of this paper is to construct a "culture-inclusive theory" of Chinese authoritarian orientation that can not only explain Chinese people's reverence for, and obedience to, authority but can also explain their resistance to authority. In order to have a context to follow, the theory is proposed in the process of theoretical progress. First, the theory of authoritarian personality suggested by Western psychology is presented and the reason why it fails to offer an appropriate understanding of Chinese authoritarian orientation is explicated. Second, Yang's (1993) preliminary conceptualization and Chien's (2013) model based on Yang (1993) are introduced. Third, to overcome the deficiencies in Chien's model, this paper goes a step further to propose a comprehensive culture-inclusive theory from a "cultural system approach" with supporting studies provided. Finally, the advantages of the new theory are addressed and future directions are discussed as well.

THE FALLACY OF THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

It has long been believed that the theories constructed by Western psychologists (mainly psychologists in North America) are universal. Before the emergence of Chinese indigenous psychology, the authoritarian personality was used as a framework for understanding Chinese authoritarian orientation. Although cross-cultural comparisons indicated that Chinese people had higher scores on authoritarian personality (measured by F scale) than did Westerners (Singh et al., 1962; Meade and Whittaker, 1967), these studies using the etic approach failed to reveal the cultural system and meanings behind Chinese people's tendencies to respect and obey authority.

Theory of Authoritarian Personality

Western scholars' interest in the authoritarian personality originated from anti-Semitism. Adorno et al. (1950) claimed that German anti-Semitism could be attributed to their authoritarian personality, which was regarded as the potential psychological roots of anti-democratic tendencies and fascism. It is composed of a set of psychological syndromes including conventionalism, authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, anti-intraception, superstition and stereotypy, power and toughness, destructiveness and cynicism, projectivity, and concern with sex (Adorno et al., 1950; Brown, 1965). In addition, the authoritarian personality was seen as a significant predictor of ethnocentrism and prejudice toward outgroups, not restricted to Jews (Brown, 1965; Whitley, 1999).

Initially, the theory of the authoritarian personality was developed based on the theories of psychoanalysis, and it was hypothesized that the formation of an authoritarian personality

originated from the experiences of interacting with authority figures (parents) since childhood (Brown, 1965; Sanford, 1973). Brown (1965) indicated that if children were treated strictly by authority figures or parents, they would probably hold hostile and aggressive tendencies toward authority figures. Since these inner psychological conflicts could not be expressed explicitly, they had to be transformed into socially acceptable forms through defense mechanisms. As a result, hostility and aggressiveness toward authority would be transformed into authoritarian personality syndromes. A recent cross-cultural study found that children's authoritarian disposition was fostered by authoritarian parenting (Kornyeyeva and Boehnke, 2013).

The launch of "The Authoritarian Personality" (Adorno et al., 1950) initiated a series of studies, discussions and criticisms since the 1950s (Stone et al., 1993). The theory has been challenged and modified many times (Altemeyer, 1998; Funke, 2005; Oesterreich, 2005), and keeps evolving (Duckitt, 2013). As Duckitt (2013) indicates, in the beginning, it was defined as a set of personality dimensions or a personality structure composed of psychological syndromes. Subsequently, it was regarded as a set of social attitudes or ideologies (right-wing authoritarianism, RWA). Recently, authoritarianism was further defined as the response patterns toward external threats. Among the various modifications, the conceptualization of RWA and its measures are perhaps the most investigated. Authoritarianism was reduced to three components: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism (Altemeyer, 1998). It was used to predict political attitudes and behaviors, for example, American Whites' prejudice toward African Americans (Whitley, 1999).

The Gap between Western Theory and Chinese Life World

Western psychological theories represent the scientific micro-world constructed and developed based on the life world of Western cultures. From the perspective of constructive realism, there is always a gap between micro-world and life world (Hwang, 2012b). Furthermore, life worlds across different cultures are quite divergent. As a result, if we use theories constructed based on the Western life world to explain Chinese psychological character and behaviors, there will not only be a gap, but rather an unbridgeable gap. This gap may also lead to the alienation between the local people and the discipline of psychology in non-Western cultures.

Based on sociology of knowledge, any theories in social science are bound by socio-cultural contexts (Hamilton, 1990; Yang, 2000). The conceptualization of the authoritarian personality was greatly affected by Jewish left-wing intellectuals (Shih, 1998). As researches progressed, the authoritarian personality was found to reflect right-wing authoritarianism instead of being neutral (Altemeyer, 1998). In short, the authoritarian personality was developed under specific social, cultural and historical contexts, and was also closely related to the ideologies of Western political development. Although the authoritarian personality is constantly evolving, it reflects an imposed etic approach for understanding Chinese people's tendency to respect and obey authorities, incompatible with Chinese cultural tradition.

In addition, the authoritarian personality is based on the assumption of individualism, specifically "methodological individualism," which claims that individuals are the unit of social scientific analysis (Hwang, 2000). However, this assumption cannot be applied to Chinese culture based on relationalism (Ho, 1998; Hwang, 2012a). Chinese relationalism particularly emphasizes role ethics originating from relational proximity and hierarchy (Chuang, 1998; Hwang, 2012a). Thus, in Chinese societies, social interactions in vertical relationships entail special cultural meanings (Hwang, 1995), that is, role ethics in dyadic relationships. Most importantly, this is where the authoritarian personality cannot apply. In sum, the authoritarian personality is not an appropriate conceptualization to understand Chinese people's interactions with authorities.

Calling for an Indigenous Theoretical Model

As cultural influences have increasingly been highlighted in psychology, the assertion that psychological theories from North America are universal has been challenged. Currently, many psychologists claim that North American psychology is culture bound and is based on the assumption of individualism; as such, it can be said to be the indigenous psychology of North America (Yang, 2000; Allwood and Berry, 2006).

In order to reflect cultural influences, cross-cultural psychologists have developed various cultural dimensions to locate different societies around the world. Among these dimensions, individualism-collectivism (I/C) is the most representative one in explaining the differences among psychological characters and behaviors across different cultures (Oyserman et al., 2002). Chinese culture is regarded as characterized by vertical collectivism (Triandis and Gelfand, 1998) and high power distance (Hofstede, 2003). However, the I/C approach, also a "pan-cultural dimension" approach (Bond, 2015; Hwang, 2015b) has been criticized for its over-simplicity and vagueness (Fiske, 2002; Miller, 2002). Under such an approach, Chinese people's psychological characteristics can be understood only if they are described in contrast to Americans (Hwang, 2012a).

Some indigenous dimensions, such as hierarchical interdependence (Bond and Hwang, 1986), authority-directed (Lew, 1998), and hierarchical relationalism (Liu, 2015) are used to refer to Chinese culture by Chinese psychologists. Those labels enable people to form a rough impression of Chinese people. However, they fail to offer a systematic and detailed understanding of Chinese people's interactions with authorities. Therefore, an indigenous theoretical model is needed.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF AUTHORITARIAN ORIENTATION

After the emergence of Chinese indigenous psychology, Yang (1993) proposed the preliminary conceptualization of

authoritarian orientation. Yang never explicitly stated that his conceptualization was meant to replace the authoritarian personality; however, it has much higher "indigenous compatibility" (Yang, 1997, 2000) than the authoritarian personality.

Yang's Preliminary Conceptualization

Yang (1981, 1993, 1995) has worked on the concept of social orientation as a theoretical construct for describing and understanding Chinese people's personality and social behaviors. Chinese social orientation is composed of four sub-orientations: "familistic" (the Chinese version of group orientation), "relationship," "authoritarian," and "other" orientation. Authoritarian orientation was defined as the inclination of a subordinate to submit to, cooperate with, or merge into the authority figures. It consists of three parts: "Authority sensitization" signifies a social interaction; Chinese people always try to find out if there is any authority present so that they will know how to interact with another party. "Authority worship" means that Chinese people worship not only living authorities but also ancestors and historical heroes. In addition, authority worship is usually unconditional, without restrictions or limitation in scope and time. "Authority dependence" means that Chinese people see authorities as trustworthy and almighty so that they are completely dependent on those authorities. Moreover, they tend to show a kind of self-surrendering submissiveness and display a syndrome of psychological disability when facing an almighty authority. "Authority dread" was added as a new component by Yang (2004).

Traditionally, Chinese people made their living in an ecological environment suitable for intensive agriculture, which probably led to Chinese familism (Yang and Yeh, 2005). Under familism, most relationships in a family were vertical-based and the family head had the greatest authority. Authoritarian orientation was very likely generated in such a context (Yang, 1993). Through constant interactions with authority figures (e.g., parents and elders) in the family, Chinese people gradually acquired a set of authoritarian-oriented inclinations. People's repeated authoritarian- oriented interactions thus eventually resulted in certain authoritarian-oriented traits, which in turn inclined them to interact in an even more authoritarian-oriented way under identical or similar social conditions (Yang, 1993). Through the process of "pan-familization," Chinese people also exhibited behaviors similar to authoritarian orientation when interacting with authorities outside the family.

Model of Chinese Authoritarian Orientation: Emic Approach

Although Yang's (1993) conceptualization is highly compatible to the indigenous context, it only represents preliminary constructs that are more like a description or classification than a systematic framework. Based on Yang's conceptualization, Chien (2013) attempted to reconstruct authoritarian orientation as a systematic model.

Cultural Ideals in Vertical Social Interaction

Based on Confucian relationalism, Chinese culture can be regarded as a system structured mainly on the principles of "favoring the intimate" and "respecting the superior" (Hwang, 2012a). These principles represent the norms governing Chinese people's social interactions. Furthermore, the principle of "respecting the superior" represents the norm by which a subordinate should treat or serve a superior in hierarchical relationships (Hamilton, 1990; Hwang, 1995). Five relationships (the five cardinals) are particularly important in Confucian culture; they have corresponding role obligations which emphasize that a subordinate should obey and respect a superior.

> *"Kindness on the part of the father, and filial duty on that of the son; gentleness on the part of the elder brother, and obedience on that of the younger brother; righteousness on the part of the husband, and submission on that of the wife; kindness on the part of elders, and deference on that of juniors; and benevolence on the part of the ruler, and loyalty on that of the minister."* (Li Yun, Li Chi).

> *"The love for one's parents is really humanity and the respect for one's elders is really righteousness. All that is necessary is to have these natural feelings applied to all men."* (Jin Xin, part one).

A famous scholar, Wei (1974), indicated that "not disobeying" and "respecting elders" were the core spirit of Chinese socialization. However, these cultural ideals are the discourses at the sociological level as well as at the sollen level. In order to examine how Chinese people interact with authorities in real life, which is a question at the practical level, empirical researches will have to be conducted (Hwang, 2012a). Chien (2013) conducted a qualitative study in which 18 participants (10 men and 8 women) were interviewed for their experiences of interacting with authority figures (e.g., parents and teachers) since childhood. The components and formation process of authoritarian orientation were constructed as a substantive theory of Chinese authoritarian orientation, as illustrated below (see **Figure 1**; **Table 1**).

Components and the Formation Process

At the inception of life, a naïve and uneducated self with instincts and impulses comes to the world. In the stage of *pre-authoritarian orientation*, the naïve self, also a biological individual, is tolerated with social indulgence. It then enters the cultural world that emphasizes role obligations, particularly for a subordinate to respect and obey the authorities, which we call Chinese "hierarchy ethics." Social disciplines are implemented by socialization agents (e.g., parents) to shape, train and educate the biological individual to become a cultured person.

However, the naïve self and cultural demands are always in conflict to some extent. The agents usually utilize punishment and reward to force individuals to accept and practice these cultural values and norms. However, under such conditions, ethics will not be genuinely accepted but will probably be alienated to "authority-dread" and "authority-dependence" in the stage of *alienation orientation*. In addition, children are not completely passive in socialization. Social learning also plays an important role. For example, a child may fear an authority through observing that his sibling was strictly scolded by parents.

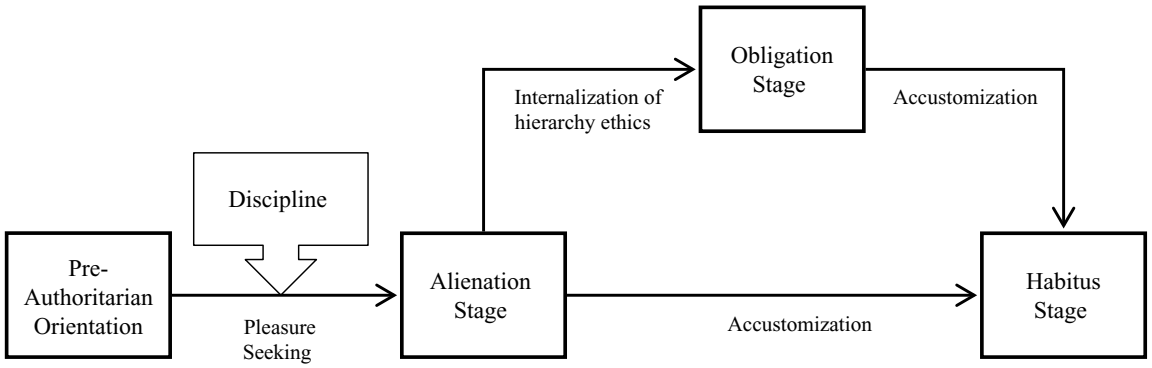

FIGURE 1 | The process of authoritarian orientation formation (adapted from Chien, 2013).

For the alienation orientation, authority-dread is defined as an affective attitude that is based on fear and dread toward authorities. Authority-dependence is regarded as a desire for positive regards, affirmations and praise from authorities.

As one starts to internalize hierarchy ethics and accept the role obligations, "authority-reverence" and "authority-obedience" emerge as new components in the stage of *obligation orientation*. People behave respectfully and obey authorities due to the fact that hierarchy ethics has been internalized as their core values in accordance with Confucian cultural ideals. Compared with "teaching through words," "teaching by personal example" is more important for the internalization of hierarchy ethics. Children are more likely to identify with their parents and model what parents do if children and parents have positive affection (Li, 1998). If they do not have a positive relationship, social learning will probably not happen as expected. Authority- reverence and authority-obedience are both defined as obligation-based beliefs reflecting appropriate interactions with authorities. The former refers to the cognition that a subordinate should behave respectfully in interactions with authorities; the latter refers to the belief that a subordinate should submit to authorities' opinions and commands.

When people repeatedly make authoritarian-oriented actions, these actions will become habitus. In the stage of *habitus orientation*, people acquire a set of authoritarian-oriented habitus. On a social occasion like a wedding reception or a conference coffee break, for example, people are accustomed to verifying whether an authority figure is nearby (*authority-searching*). Subsequently, they will automatically behave respectfully if an authority figure is present. In addition, they will automatically obey authority figures as well. This authoritarian-oriented habitus is named *authority-sensitization*. The automatization of authoritarian-oriented actions is the focal point in this stage. One may have learned authoritarian-oriented habitus before going through the obligation stage. However, theoretically, the habitus should be more stable after going the obligation stage.

The emic approach with bottom-up strategies is advocated by many indigenous psychologists. Chien (2013) also took this approach to construct the formation process and psychological components of Chinese authoritarian orientation. Authoritarian orientation involves the psychological characteristics and behavioral tendencies acquired through repeated social interactions. As a result, the authoritarian-oriented actions will be exhibited in different vertical interactions with authorities. This corresponds to the perspective of "person-situation interactions" (McAdams, 1997) and has high compatibility with Chinese relationalism.

TABLE 1 | Components of authoritarian orientation (adapted from Chien, 2013).

	Stage	Components	Possible Actions
1.	Pre-authoritarian	–	–
2.	Alienation	Authority-dread	Keeping a distance with fear
			Interacting with caution
			Submitting with self-suppression
		Authority-dependence	Conforming and coordinating
			Pleasing and ingratiating
3.	Obligation	Authority-reverence	Respecting heartfully
		Authority-obedience	Obeying sincerely
4.	Habitus	Authority-sensitization	Authoritarian-oriented Habitus (responding automatically and habitually)

Problems to Be Solved

Instead of authoritarian personality, Chien (2013) elaborated on Yang's conceptualization and developed a systematic model with high indigenous compatibility. However, there were still problems to be solved. The formation process of authoritarian orientation begins with a non-authoritarian orientation and progresses to the final stage of habitus. Through the formation process, people (subordinates) are guided to be submissive toward authorities. That is, there seems to be no space for agency or intention of self in the model, although the model is never against human agency and intention. This is the first issue and the main problem to be solved in this paper.

Based on the principle "one mind, many mentalities" (Shweder et al., 1998), Hwang (2011b,c) advocated that the epistemological goal of indigenous psychology is to construct a series of "culture- inclusive theories" that represent not only the universal human mind determined by biological factors but also the particular mentality of people in a given culture (also see Hwang, 2015a,b). Although Chien's (2013) model is highly compatible with indigenous culture, the emic approach he took does not guarantee the achievement of the epistemological goal "one mind, many mentalities." If a theory is not based on the deep structure (one mind), it is probably biased and faces the risk of "infinite regress" (Hwang, 2011b). This is the second issue that will be addressed.

TOWARD A CULTURE-INCLUSIVE THEORY OF AUTHORITARIAN ORIENTATION

In order to solve the problems abovementioned, formal theories based on universal human deep structure are needed to investigate the substantial theory of authoritarian orientation. More specifically, the authoritarian orientation model needs to be located in a universal theoretical framework in order to be supplemented, modified, or adjusted. Through such a "cultural system approach" (Hwang, 2015a,b), a culture-inclusive theory of authoritarian orientation can be developed that reflects not only the universal mind (one mind) but also the mentality of Chinese authoritarian orientation (one mentality among many).

The Universal Models of Self and Social Interaction

In social psychology, two of the most important domains are "relation (social interaction)" and "self." Hwang (2015a) constructed two theoretical models to represent the universal mechanisms of self and social interaction. One is the *Face and Favor Model* (Hwang, 1987, 2012a) and the other is the *Mandala Model of Self* (Hwang, 2011a,c). According to the principle of "one mind, many mentalities," both models represent the universal mind and can be used as theoretical frameworks for analyzing a cultural or a sub-cultural system in any given culture (Hwang, 2011b, 2015a,b). In other words, these models can be regarded as formal theories of social psychology.

The Face and Favor Model

The *Face and Favor Model* depicts the universal mechanism of social interaction. Compared with Fiske's (1992) four elementary forms of relations, this model is based on the deep structure of social relations (Sundararajan, 2015). In Hwang's model, the dyad involved in social interaction comprises "petitioner" and "resource allocator." When the resource allocator is asked to allocate a social resource to benefit the petitioner, the first thing that the resource allocator would do is make a relationship judgment, that is, to consider "What is the relationship between us?" In **Figure 2**, relationship is divided into two parts by a diagonal line. The shaded part stands for the affective component of the relationship, while the unshaded part represents the instrumental component. According to the proportion of the affective relative to the instrumental component, interpersonal relationships can be divided into expressive ties, mixed ties, or instrumental ties. Different exchange rules are applicable to these three types of relationships during social interactions. Based on this model, Hwang (2012a) further developed a series of indigenous theories, some of which have been supported by empirical studies (Han et al., 2005; Han and Li, 2008; Chen et al., 2009).

The Mandala Model of Self

Considering the deep structure of self, Hwang (2011a,c) constructed a universal model of self to illustrate the relationship between cultural traditions and an individual's actions. This model has been incorporated into various indigenous researches (Chuang et al., 2014; Hsu et al., 2014; Shiah and Hwang, 2014). In **Figure 3**, "self" is situated in the center with bi-directional arrows: The top of the vertical arrow points at "person" and the bottom points at "individual." The right end of the horizontal arrow points at "action" or "praxis," while the other end points at "wisdom" or "knowledge." All four concepts are located outside the circle but within the square.

The difference between person, self and individual was pinpointed by Harris (1989). "Person" is a sociological or cultural concept. A person is conceptualized as an agent-in-society who takes a certain standpoint in the social order and plans a series of actions to achieve a particular goal. Appropriate behaviors are defined by every culture, and are endowed with specific meanings and values that can be transmitted to an individual through various channels of socialization. On the other hand, "self" is a psychological concept. It is the locus of experience, able to take various actions in different social contexts and to indulge in self-reflection when hindered from attaining life goals. "Individual" is regarded as members of the human species who are no different from other creatures in the universe.

The self in the *Mandala Model* is able to monitor and to give reasons for his or her own actions. In addition, the self is able to memorize, store and organize various forms of knowledge and make them a well-integrated system of knowledge. However, it is unnecessary for the self to reflect on each of his or her own actions. In everyday life, one intends to, or even has to take some actions when identifying with a particular social role. Over time, the actions become "habitus." In this model, habitus means an actor's disposition toward praxis or action in a specific social context that enables the actor to carry out the dynamic physical and mental practice within specific socio-cultural orders. In most social situations, an actor may take the action of habitus to engage in social interactions, or to deal with daily affairs.

The "self" exists in a field of forces. When an individual intends to take actions, his or her decisions may be influenced by several forces. When an individual identifies with a particular social role, he or she has to think about how to act as an ideal person in society. On the other hand, an individual is also a biological entity that is motivated by various desires. When these forces are in conflict with each other or when one takes the action of habitus and encounters problems, one may reflect on the actions and search for solutions in the personal stock of knowledge. If the solution is not available, one may take

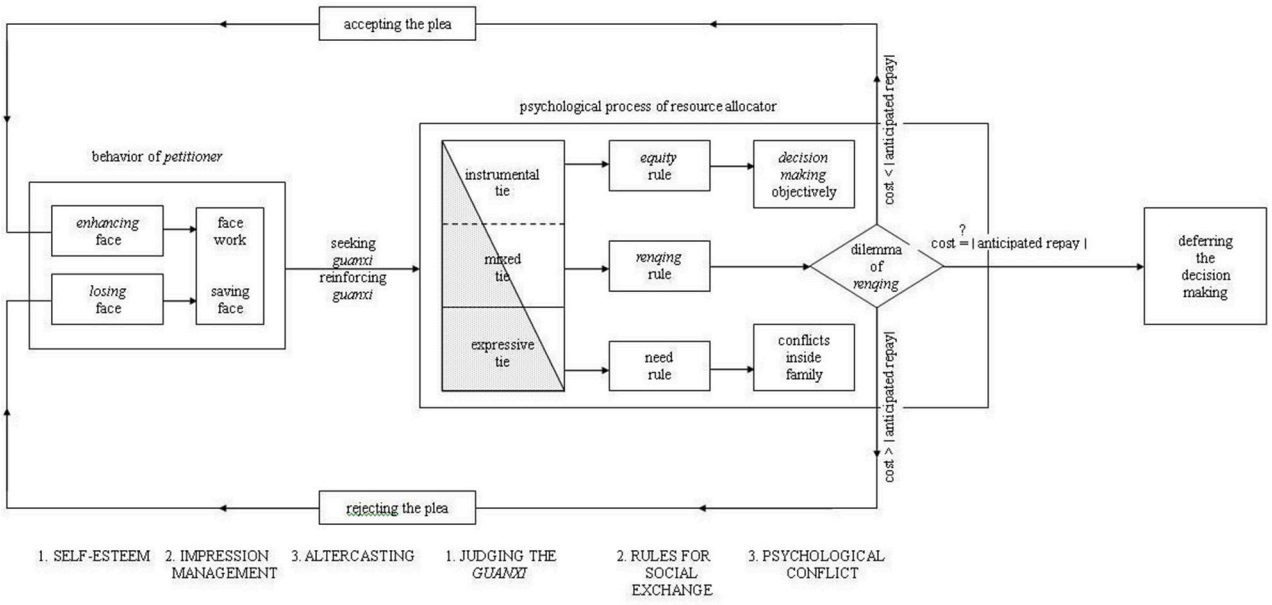

FIGURE 2 | Face and Favor Model (adapted from Hwang, 1987, p.948).

further steps to search for the solution from the social stock of knowledge. Thus, the *Mandala Model* assumes a self with agency and intentionality.

Link between the Models of Self and Social Interactions

Based on Confucian relationalism, theory development and empirical studies on psychology and social behaviors should take "persons-in-relation" and "person-in-relations" into account (Ho, 1998; Hwang, 2012a). As such, the "self" is inseparable from "relationships" and should be investigated within the relational context. Since the *Face and Favor Model* and the *Mandala Model of Self* represent universal theoretical models for social interaction and self, they should/can be considered together to reinterpret Chien's (2013) emic model.

According to the *Face and Favor Model*, in a social exchange, the allocator should first make a judgment on the relationship. Then, the allocator should follow the need, *renquing* or equity rule to distribute the resources to the petitioner based on their relationship. According to the *Mandala Model*, the allocator in social exchange would follow "benevolence (*ren*)," (favoring people with whom one has a close relationship) which is the criterion of an ideal person in Confucian society. Such an action would become habitus through repetition. If the habitus does not work well, the *Mandala Model* advocates that one may search for a solution from the personal or social stock of knowledge.

Accordingly, if we link the two models of self and social interaction, we are able to explain why Chinese behaviors are usually determined by relations (that is, the relationship determinism) and why relationship determinism can be broken under certain conditions, followed by autonomous actions. Therefore, if the "cultural system approach" (Hwang, 2015a,b) is taken to reinterpret Chien's (2013) model, a culture-inclusive theory of authoritarian orientation will be constructed that achieves the goal of "one mind, many mentalities." In addition, this theory will be endowed with agency and intentionality.

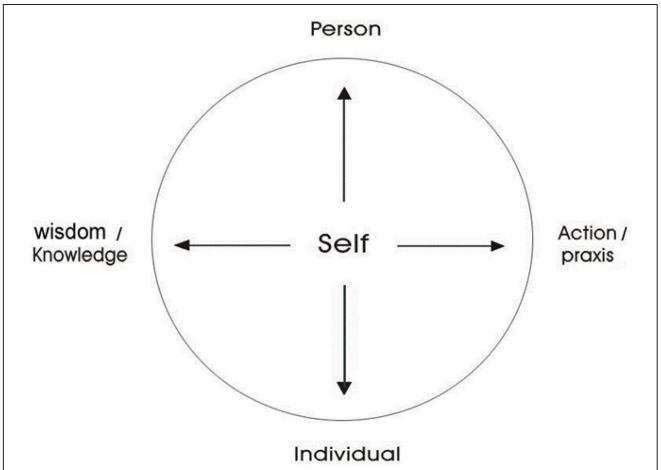

FIGURE 3 | Mandala Model of Self (adapted from Hwang, 2015a, p.41).

Reinterpreting Authoritarian Orientation in Universal Models

Relationship Judgment: Authority or Not?

The *Face and Favor model* concerns psychological processes and social behaviors of allocators, who own much more resources and are thus more powerful than petitioners. The model of authoritarian orientation deals with Chinese people's psychological processes and social behaviors in vertical social

interactions, especially for subordinates. Although the contexts of the two models are not exactly the same, the *Face and Favor Model* does have important implications for developing a culture-inclusive theory of authoritarian orientation. The *Face and Favor Model* indicates that when the resource allocator is asked to allocate a social resource to benefit the petitioner, the first thing that the resource allocator would do is make a relationship judgment. This claim explicitly reflects the fundamental assumption of relationalism, which can also be applied to the theory of authoritarian orientation. Accordingly, we propose that during social interactions, except for judgment of the closeness between the two parties, people would also judge whether the other party is authority or not in order to interact appropriately. The deep structure of Confucian relationalism is organized by proximity (closeness) and hierarchy of relationships. It is the dimension of hierarchy to which the theory of authoritarian orientation pays more attention. Following the authority judgment, the self will be able to decide on the appropriate actions depending on whether or not the other party is an authority.

Mandala Model and Authoritarian Orientation

According to the *Mandala Model*, authority-reverence and authority-obedience belong to aspects of an ideal "person." They are the cultural demands or ideals for a subordinate in Confucian societies. Authority-dread and authority-dependence are considered components derived unexpectedly from the socialization process; therefore, they are called the "alienation orientation" that emerges to become part of the psychological "self." They are neither part of an ideal person nor part of a biological "individual." During an interaction with the authority, Chinese people usually act in accordance with the demand of "person." Specifically, they would behave respectfully toward the authority and strictly obey the order or request from the authority. In addition, they may feel dread toward the authority and may hope to earn praise and recognition from the authority. As a result from authority-dread and authority-dependence, they may respond in a particular way (**Table 1**).

The *Mandala Model* claims that, in everyday life, when one identifies with a particular social role (e.g., subordinate role), one would intend to take some actions. As one acts repeatedly, such actions would become a habitus. Similarly, as one identifies with a subordinate role, one would succumb to authoritarian orientation. As one takes authoritarian-oriented actions repeatedly, the actions would become authoritarian-oriented habitus. In this paper, the term "habitus" is used instead of "habit." Habit is a concept originating from behaviorism, representing the automatic association between an environment or stimulus and a behavior (Wood and Neal, 2007). Although habitus is similar to habit to some extent, habitus entails more socio-cultural meanings. Thus, habitus is more suitable to the cultural perspective we take in this article.

It is worth noting that, based on the *Mandala Model of Self*, if the authoritarian-oriented habitus is not the best strategy or does not work well in some vertical social interactions, other actions or strategies can be taken. Therefore, the revised theory of authoritarian orientation has taken the agency and intentionality of self into consideration. Accordingly, people's interactions with authority are not only determined by habitus but are also relatively flexible.

More on "Person": Cultural Principle of Resistance

According to Hwang's (1995) social psychological interpretations, *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* (當不義則爭之) should be a cultural principle; if a person commits a wrongful act, then anyone who witnesses this act should fight against it. Based on this principle, even in a vertical relationship, if the superior (authority) violates his or her obligations, those in the subordinate role should voice, resist and even directly revolt. On the cultural level, *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* is a cultural ideal in Confucian society and can be regarded as part of "person." At the individual level, just as with "authority-reverence" and "authority-obedience," *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* is defined as a normative belief that a subordinate should resist against the authority violating a superordinate's obligations. Thus, the Confucian cultural system provides a cultural mechanism for disobeying or revolting against the authority, which is endowed with moral legitimization.

It is hypothesized that such an internalized belief will probably influence people's actions. According to the belief, if the superior (authority) violates obligations, those in a subordinate role will resist or even revolt against the authority. The saying "If you're not benevolent, then I'm not righteous" is quite common in Chinese societies. However, once a subordinate takes the action of resistance, the conflict between the two parties becomes explicit. According to the theory on interpersonal harmony and conflict (Huang, 2006), after such an explicit conflict, the relationship will soon enter into superficial harmony (implicit conflict) since explicit conflict is an event that only occurs occasionally. If explicit conflict is too strong, the relationship will probably be broken.

Life Wisdom: To Obey Publicly but Disobey Privately

In addition to "person," "wisdom" plays an important part in authoritarian orientation theory. Chinese societies can be regarded as systems of "yang-ying duality" (陽陰默認/*yáng yīn mò rèn*), meaning people may follow the norms or rules in public but violate or resist them in private (Zou, 1998, 2000). Under such a system, "to obey publicly but disobey privately" (陽奉陰違/*yáng fèng yīn wéi*) is not ethically- or morally-legitimized but a social fact to which everyone acquiesces (Zou, 1998, 2000). On the cultural level, *yáng fèng yīn wéi* is life wisdom in Chinese societies and can be regarded as part of "wisdom" in the *Mandala Model*. At the individual level, *yáng fèng yīn wéi* refers to a strategic action, meaning that people say or do one thing in public, but another in private. In a vertical relation, it refers to a subordinate saying or doing one thing when facing the authority, but another in private.

In what conditions will a subordinate take the action of *yáng fèng yīn wéi*? Everyone has a biological "individual" and a psychological "self" in terms of desires, needs, thoughts and intentions. When these inner voices conflict with the demands of the authority, the default habitus (respecting and obeying responses) may fail to work well due to the fact that the inner

voices may not be realized through the existing habitus. If one insists on expressing the inner voice or pursuing personal goals directly, it may not be a wise choice in Chinese culture. However, if one takes the actions of *yáng fèng yīn wéi*, one can not only avoid direct conflicts with the authority but can also (at least partially) satisfy personal needs or goals privately. A subordinate may resist against the authority violating obligations based on the cultural principle *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī*. However, it may not be wise to resist under some conditions (e.g., the authority has much more power than the subordinate). As a result, the subordinate may also take *yáng fèng yīn wéi*. A subordinate is unlikely to disobey or resist against the authority directly until possessing enough resources or power (Huang et al., 2008).

Since *yáng fèng yīn wéi* can avoid direct conflicts with the authority, the relationship will not be broken but will maintain the state of superficial harmony. Although superficial harmony is not a very good state, it retains the possibility that superficial harmony will become genuine harmony 1 day. As we can see, *yáng fèng yīn wéi* has positive functions, as life wisdom is highlighted in interpersonal contexts. As a result, "psychosocial homeostasis" can be maintained or achieved (Hsu, 1971; Hwang, 2000). In Western societies, *yáng fèng yīn wéi* (self-*in*consistency) may be considered insincere; however, it may be considered conducting oneself well (huì zuò rén) in contrast with self-consistency, which is considered immature in Chinese society (Yang C.-F., 1999).

Preliminary Empirical Evidences

Until recently, only a few studies have examined Chinese authoritarian orientation. The reason might be that only preliminary conceptualization (Yang, 1993) was available and a first systematic model (Chien, 2013) was only constructed in 2013. A more comprehensive theory is proposed in this paper. Some studies that provided evidence directly or indirectly are briefly introduced below (Lin and Lin, 1999; Huang et al., 2008; Hsu and Huang, 2009; Chien and Huang, 2010, 2015; Liu et al., 2010; Huang and Chu, 2012; Chien, 2013; Chien et al., submitted).

The "Person": Cultural Ideals in the Theory

Chien and Huang (2010) investigated the social representations of students' obligations and rights. In a pilot study, undergraduate students were invited to write down a list of students' obligations and rights in an open-ended questionnaire. Their answers were classified into a few items referring to potential role obligations and listed in a checklist. In a follow-up study, participants were asked to check the items that they considered to include students' role obligations. The findings revealed that "reverence for teachers" and "obedience to teachers' instructions" were regarded as students' role obligations from elementary school to college. It indicated that from undergraduates' perspective, a student (a subordinate role) should fulfill the obligation of respecting and obeying the teacher (a superordinate role). In addition, Huang and Chu (2012) utilized a representative sample to investigate the trends of core values in Taiwan. "Obedience to superiors" was found to be highly valued and "respecting superiors" was considered the most important value orientation regarding adequate interpersonal interactions. Taken together, the results supported the cultural construction of a "person" in the theory of authoritarian orientation.

The "Habitus": The Validation of Authority-Sensitization

Chien (2013, study 3) investigated Chinese authority-sensitization in social interactions. Participants (mainly undergraduates) were instructed to imagine being "in a social occasion" and then to offer their responses to an authority under in a context. The findings suggested that most participants (more than 80%) were accustomed to verifying whether a person in a higher order of seniority or position (that is, an authority) was nearby on that specific occasion, labeled authority- searching or verification. The results indicated that Chinese people would try to identify the authority at a social occasion, supporting the claim that Chinese people would make hierarchical relationship judgments during social interactions. In addition, when people judged another party to be an authority, they would take authoritarian- oriented actions such as yielding seats, standing up immediately and using honorifics when speaking, to show respect to the authority.

Recently, Chien et al. (submitted, study 1) replicated Chien's study 3 using a sample including nonstudent adults. Following study 1, they investigated the ethical implications and social adjustment of authority-sensitization (study 2). The results showed that the behavioral model of high authority-sensitization, compared with that of low authority-sensitization, was more consistent with the cultural norm for a subordinate role. In addition, those with high authority-sensitization were more likely to have better interpersonal relationship and to be promoted by their superior. Taken together, Chien (2013, study 3) and Chien et al. (submitted) provide evidences for authority-sensitization and its association with positive social adjustment.

Resistance to Authority Violating Obligations

According to the culture-inclusive theory of authoritarian orientation, if the superior (authority) violates his or her obligations, those in the subordinate role would undertake the action of resistance. Several studies involving different kinds of vertical relations provide direct or indirect evidences for this proposition (Chien, 2013, study 2; Hsu and Huang, 2009; Liu et al., 2010).

In Hsu and Huang (2009), conflict events among parents and children were classified according to parents' fulfilling or violating obligation. Three kinds of conflict events, "fulfilling positive obligation," "violating uncompulsory obligation," and "violating compulsory obligation" were the best predictors of the parent-child relationship after the conflict event. Among the three conflict events, when the conflict was due to parents violating their compulsory obligation, the parent-child relation perceived by children after conflict became negative regardless of whether the prior relationship was good (genuine harmony) or not so good (superficial harmony). Although this study did not measure resistance as a dependent variable, negative relationship would probably drive children to disobey their parents.

Liu et al. (2010) examined the link between supervisor abusive supervision and subordinate supervisor-directed deviance. Hundreds of supervisor-subordinate dyads in private and state-owned companies from mainland China participated in the study. It showed that abusive supervision was positively related to subordinates' revenge cognition toward supervisors, and also positively related to supervisor-directed deviance. In addition, traditionality moderated the above relationships such that they were stronger among low traditionalists than among high ones, while revenge cognition mediated the effect of abusive supervision and the interactive effect of abusive supervision and traditionality on supervisor-directed deviance. Based on Chinese relationalism (Hwang, 2012a), abusive supervision can be considered as supervisors' violation of obligation (see Hsu and Huang, 2009). Therefore, the proposition *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* was supported.

In a scenario experiment, Chien (2013, study 2) examined the impact of advisors fulfilling or violating obligation on advisees' responses to advisors. Graduate students were instructed to read a scenario about the interaction of an advisor and an advisee and offer the advisee's possible responses to the advisor. It showed that when an advisor violated his or her compulsory obligation, the advisee's intentions of respecting the advisor and complying with his/her demands would be significantly decreased. Even after graduation, advisors violating compulsory obligations still had negative effects on these responses and also a destructive effect on the advisee's relationship maintenance intention. Thus, the proposition *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* was again supported in the advisor-advisee relational context.

The "Wisdom": Evidence for *Yáng Fèng Yīn Wéi*

Yáng fèng yīn wéi is ubiquitous in various domains, such as business, law, politics and social interactions (Zou, 2000) but empirical studies have been relatively scarce. An indigenous model on Chinese conflict resolution claims that when a subordinate has conflicts with a superior and knows that it is useless to argue with the other in dominant power, s/he may accept the superior's requests in public, but do his own business in private (Hwang, 1997-1998). The significance of *yáng fèng yīn wéi* during vertical interaction is made prominent in this model. Based on the philosophy of constructive realism, if a proposition in one theory (microworld) can be translated into the language of another theory, it implies a closer approximation to the truth (Hwang, 2000). The proposition on *yáng fèng yīn wéi* in the theory of authoritarian orientation can be translated into the language of another theory, so it is close to the truth to some extent.

The transformation process of "ren" (forbearance) was investigated in the context of vertical relations (Huang et al., 2008). Initially, one is obedient during interactions with an authority. As one feels oppressed by the authority, one would forbear (*ren*) and submit to the authority. However, submitting to authority is not the best strategy since long-term self-oppression will lead to psychological maladjustment and unsatisfied personal needs. Eventually, the self will be compartmentalized into public and private self. The public self may submit to authority and the private self may just do what one wants to do. It was also found that one would probably *yáng fèng yīn wéi* if one has a need or goal which conflicts with the demands of the authority (Li, 1998; Lin and Lin, 1999; Chien and Huang, 2015).

In sum, *yáng fèng yīn wéi* can not only help one to achieve one's goals but also contribute to a harmonious relationship. *Yáng fèng yīn wéi* as part of Chinese life wisdom can have positive functions as it is put into practice in an interpersonal context. The above studies provide evidence for *yáng fèng yīn wéi* although they are qualitative researches (idiographic approach). If we want to know how *yáng fèng yīn wéi* works and its functions in a larger society, a nomothetic approach can be undertaken in the future.

CONCLUSION AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

Summary

Briefly speaking, the theoretical development of Chinese authoritarian orientation can be divided into three periods. In the first period, Yang (1993) proposed a preliminary classification. In the second period, Chien (2013) took an emic approach to construct the formation process and components of authoritarian orientation from a bottom-up approach. In the third period (this paper), based on "cultural system approach" (Hwang, 2015a,b), this model has been modified and supplemented to be a comprehensive culture-inclusive theory of authoritarian orientation.

The formation of authoritarian orientation begins with the biological "individual" and goes through different orientations, including alienation orientation belonging to "self," obligation orientation belonging to "person," and finally habitus that represents people's routines or accustomed actions toward authority. Alienation orientation is a product of the interaction between the Confucian cultural system and society. Although it is not directly related to cultural ideals, it becomes the component of authoritarian orientation with significant impact on people's actions. Obligation orientation is the norm and standard for people's interactions with authorities. It corresponds to the cultural ideals in the Confucian cultural system, and represents the "person" in the *Mandala Model of Self*. When one identifies with the demands of a subordinate role, one may take the actions of respecting and obeying the authority as an ideal person. As time goes by, these actions would be transformed into the habitus of authoritarian orientation.

However, it is worth noting that the theory does not claim that people blindly or consistently respect and obey authority. As we can see, the *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* provides a cultural legitimate basis for resisting or revolting against authority. It is a fact that an authority usually holds more resources, which leads to an imbalance of power structure between the two parties in vertical relationships. As a result, it is difficult to achieve the cultural ideal *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* in practice. Fortunately, the wisdom of *yáng fèng yīn wéi* from the Chinese social stock of knowledge has offered another option whereby people can preserve their intentions or satisfy their own needs without disobeying the demands of an authority. As long as the subordinate has accumulated a certain level of capabilities and

resources, s/he can decide whether or not to fight against the authority.

Advantages of the Revised Theory

Compared with the original model of authoritarian orientation constructed by Chien (2013), the revised theory supplements the old one while being more inspiring. Although the old model did not deny the roles of agency and intentionality, it failed to provide a proper position and clear illustration for them.

The revised theory takes Hwang's universal theories of self and social interaction as meta-theories (Hwang, 1987, 2011a,c), especially the *Mandala Model of Self*. The *Mandala Model of Self* can be used to illustrate the relationship between cultural traditions and individual actions; it also advocates that the "self" exists in a field of forces and may be influenced by several forces. Therefore, the relationship between cultural values and individual actions is not deterministic. For example, when interacting with the authority, the "person" and "habitus" of authoritarian orientation would guide people's actions. However, their intentions also play an important role in directing behaviors, especially when habitus cannot be applied. Therefore, authoritarian orientation can be flexibly regulated in specific situations if needed. This is the key difference from the trait approach advocated by the authoritarian personality.

In addition, the original model of authoritarian orientation can illustrate why Chinese people revere and obey authority, reflecting conformity to Confucian cultural ideals, although it cannot explain why Chinese people would disobey or rebel against authority in specific situations. In this paper, such a possibility has been considered into the revised theory. Notwithstanding, if the authority possesses too much power or if the subordinate does not want an open break in the relationship with the authority, s/he would probably take the strategic actions of *yáng fèng yīn wéi*, which reflects the flexibility of the authoritarian orientation. Thus, the revised model can explain when Chinese people obey and disobey, showing a broader coverage than the original model's.

Robustness of Authoritarian Orientation

The mode of authoritarian orientation reflects the cultural "mentality" of interactions in vertical relationships for Chinese people. However, in the age of globalization, to what extent will the cultural traditions as well as authoritarian orientation be preserved? Li (2002), an indigenous psychologist, indicated that among social orientations, the "relationship" orientation would be preserved permanently due to its evolutional and biological basis, while "familistic," "authoritarian," and "other" orientations would probably gradually disappear due to the effects of industrialization, technological progress and urbanization. However, even under the influence of Western culture in the East, the authoritarian orientation may probably still remain robust, based on the perspective of structuralism and the cultural mechanism provided by Chinese wisdom.

From the perspective of structuralism, human social interactions can be divided into four elementary forms: communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching and market pricing (Fiske, 1992). These forms exist throughout human societies (Fiske, 1992) and are also deep structures of social interactions (Hwang, 2012a). Among the four forms of interactions, authoritarian orientation directly corresponds to authority ranking. Furthermore, Confucian relationalism is governed by the principle of "favoring the intimate" and "respecting the superior"; it is the cultural deep structure of Confucian ethics and a synchronic structure, which exists all the time (Hwang, 2012a). As we can see, Chinese authoritarian orientation can be regarded as a cultural mentality that is based on the universal human deep structure of social interactions, as well as the cultural principle of respecting the superior. Thus, authoritarian orientation would be preserved as well.

In addition, Chinese societies can be regarded as systems of "yang-ying duality." Under such systems, *yáng fèng yīn wéi* is a common action strategy and also a social fact to which everyone acquiesces (Zou, 1998, 2000). It enables a subordinate to preserve autonomy and intention without publicly resisting the authority. This might be another reason why authoritarian orientation is well-preserved today.

A Proposal for Future Directions

As a newly developed theory, a series of studies can be conducted to examine the propositions and hypotheses derived from the authoritarian orientation theory. First, a longitudinal research is needed to investigate the formation process of authoritarian orientation. The process herein was constructed through a qualitative study and was grounded in data (Chien, 2013). Although inspiring, researchers can conduct more studies with developmental research methods.

Authoritarian orientation can be investigated from the perspective of personality (trait) and that of social interaction (Yang, 1993). For the components of authoritarian orientation, no appropriate measurement was developed. Hence, a suitable measurement can be constructed in the future. Researchers can use a well-developed measurement to investigate various subordinate-superior interactions. For example, in regard to a teacher-student relationship, how does authoritarian orientation affect students' interaction with their teachers? How does authoritarian orientation influence students' learning outcome? How does authoritarian orientation interact with various social situations?

The theory has proposed that during social interactions with authority, the authoritarian-oriented actions (habitus) will be exhibited by a subordinate. In general, the habitus can be considered as default responses to authority. However, under some conditions illustrated in Sections More on "Person": Cultural Principle of Resistance and Life Wisdom: To Obey Publicly but Disobey Privately, instead of the authoritarian-oriented habitus, the actions of *yáng fèng yīn wéi* or resistance based on *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* will be undertaken. This means that Chinese people do not always respect or obey the authority. Actually, the habitus can be restrained if necessary. More solid and direct support for the triggering conditions of *yáng fèng yīn wéi* and *dāng bú yì zé zhēng zhī* are needed although some evidence does exist.

Furthermore, is authoritarian orientation helpful or harmful to psychological and social adaptation? It is hypothesized that authoritarian orientation emerges from the long-term interaction between an individual and authority under the cultural context

of familism. Authoritarian orientation meets Confucian cultural demands in Chinese societies. The cultural fit may contribute to psychological adaptation as well as psychological well-being (Lu, 2006). Based on the assumption of relationalism, authoritarian orientation should be investigated in relational contexts. People may interact with different authority figures in different vertical relationships. Hence, the relationship between authoritarian orientation and psycho-social adaptations may depend on specific relational contexts or the experiences of interactions between the two parties. As a result, the social interaction approach might be more appropriate than the trait approach for empirical researches.

The robustness of authoritarian orientation does not mean that it can never be changed. Authoritarian orientation has been constructed as a systematic model with various components. Thus, different components can be investigated independently. For example, Taiwan, a Chinese society, has gone through modernization and democratization. The values of democracy and egalitarianism emerged along with autonomy. They would be in conflict with authority-obedience. Moreover, authority-dread would be undesirable as it entails a negative component. Therefore, authority-obedience and authority-dread might evolve at the societal level. In sum, the evolution of authoritarian orientation involves lots of complicated factors. Further investigations will be needed.

CONCLUSION

This paper details the construction of the authoritarian orientation model as a systematic theoretical framework. Unlike the Western approach of authoritarian personality, this model takes a different approach to examining Chinese authoritarian orientation. Compared with Yang's (1993) preliminary conceptualization, the new model enables us to measure the relevant constructs more easily; thus, a series of future studies can be conducted. In addition to indigenous empirical studies, the construction of indigenous theories (culture-inclusive theories) is even more important for the development of indigenous psychology because only new theories, not empirical studies, can compete with and replace existing mainstream theories (Hwang, 2011c). The progress of the authoritarian orientation model has demonstrated a paradigm for the construction of indigenous psychological theories.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CC: Substantial contributions to the conception of the work and drafting the work. Final approval of the version to be published. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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Virtue Existential Career Model: A Dialectic and Integrative Approach Echoing Eastern Philosophy

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Our Virtue Existential Career (VEC) model aims at complementing western modernism and postmodernism career theories with eastern philosophy. With dialectical philosophy and virtue-practice derived from the *Classic of Changes*, the VEC theoretical foundation incorporates merits from Holland typology, Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment, Social Cognitive Career Theory, Meaning Therapy, Narrative Approach Career Counseling, and Happenstance Learning Theory. While modernism considers a matched job as an ideal career vision and prefers rational strategies (*controlling and realizing*) to achieve job security; postmodernism prefers *appreciating and adapting* strategies toward openness and appreciates multiple possible selves and occupations, our model pursues a blending of security and openness via *controlling-and-realizing* and *appreciating-and-adapting* interwoven with each other in a dialectical and harmonious way. Our VEC counseling prototype aims at a secular goal of *living on the earth with ways and harmony* (安身以法以和) and an ultimate end to spiral up to the *wisdom of living up to the way of heaven* (天道) *with mind and virtue* (立命以心以德). A VEC counseling process of five major career strategies, metaphorical stories of *qian* and *kun,* and experiential activities are developed to deliver VEC concepts. The VEC model and prototype presented in this research is the product of an action research following Lewin's (1946) top-to-down model. Situated structure analyses were conducted to further investigate the adequacy of this version of VEC model and prototype. Data from two groups (one for stranded college graduates and the other for growing college students) revealed empirical supports. *Yang* type of career praxes tends to induce actualization, which resulting in realistic goals and concrete action plans; *yin* type of career praxes tends to increase self-efficacy, which resulting in positive attitude toward current situatedness and future development. Acceptance and dialectic thinking often result from *yin-yang*-blending career praxes. Growing developers benefit from a strategy sequence of *yang-yin*-synthesized; stranded developers from a strategy sequence of *yin-yang*-synthesized. Our contributions and limitations are discussed in the context of developing indigenous career theories and practices for a globalized and ever-changing world.

Keywords: career theory, postmodernism, dialectical philosophy, virtue psychology, existential therapy, indigenous psychology, Chinese philosophy, *Classic of Changes (Yi-Jing)*

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Careers should always be seen as embedded in societal, political, and economic contexts (Collin and Young, 1986) and shaped by chance events (Bright et al., 2009). Nowadays, a critical challenge for career practitioners and scholars is to answer "how people live a summative life in such a globalized and ever-changing world."

The key to this question lies in the conceptual framework of career views. A career view reflects how an individual views and copes with his or her career issues, and it consists of career visions and projecting strategies (Liu, 2005). A career vision identifies WHAT one wants in one's career. One needs to figure out a meaningful and feasible life for one to live up to in one's world. A projecting strategy, as a way of *being-in-the-world,* identifies HOW one gets what one wants or takes what one is given or encounters. It also indicates the ways to live up to one's career vision. Everyone has his or her own career view, which indicates his or her ideal career evolution and favored career evolution strategies. Furthermore, each career theory reveals a kind of career view underlying its theoretical arguments.

In western literature, modernism and postmodernism career theories have proposed two types of answers (career views) to the question of summative life: settling down or opening up (Chudzikowski, 2012). **Table 1** summarizes the comparison of these two types of answers.

Modernism (Chartrand, 1991; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Sampson, 2009) pursues the goal of settling down. It prefers a matched job and a linear sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities, and experiences, which share common characteristics and cumulate occupational success and satisfaction. Change and career uncertainty are considered as something bad and people are encouraged to catch the constant parts out of changing lives. With the stress of instrumental rationality and subjectivity, the modernists rely on rational strategies (*controlling and realizing,* 掌控落實), which emphasize analytic thinking to capture a precise understanding of self and environment, to achieve job security. It values standardized quantitative assessments and aggregate factual career information.

Such a paradigm definitively has its merits; which is why it could survive for more than one century. Nevertheless, more and more western postmodern career theories have emerged to echo Trevor-Roberts's (2006) calls for positive reactions to career uncertainty. Gelatt's positive uncertainty (Gelatt, 1989, 1995), Krumboltz's happenstance learning theory (Mitchell et al., 1999; Krumboltz, 2009), and Pryor and Bright's career chaos theory (Pryor and Bright, 2003, 2006, 2007) are three of the most popular ones. These theories consider change and uncertainty as something good and people are encouraged to embrace the inconstant nature of lives. They advocate a life of opening up to multiple possibilities. With the concern of synchronicity and intersubjectivity, intuitive and expressive strategies (*appreciating* and *adapting,* 悅納變通) are provided for an experiential understanding of self and environment. As a result, the postmodernism summative career evolution may be a combination of employment-related or unrelated positions, roles, activities, and experiences, which may possess objectively different characteristics and subjectively constructed fulfillment and meaning.

The purpose of this research is to propose the third type of answers (career views) about a summative life, which complements western modernism and postmodernism career theories with ancient Chinese philosophy from the *Classic of Changes* (易經, an ancient divination text, also known as the *I Ching,* the *Book of Changes*, the *Zhouyi* or *Zhou Changes*). Such an ancient Chinese wisdom has been considered as the very essential of Chinese culture as well as a world philosophy which is rooted in the universal humanity and appeals to entire human being (Hwang, 2009; Hwang and Chang, 2009; Cheng, 2013; Liu, 2014). The Virtue Existential Career Model (Liu and Wang, 2014; Liu et al., 2014, 2016; VEC model, Liu et al., 2015) uses the *Classic of Changes* and its subsequent Confucian and Taoist philosophies to address ordinary people's practical and existential career concerns. Such a model echoes Hwang's (2012) advocacy for culture-inclusive psychology as well as Liu et al.

TABLE 1 | The comparison of modernism and postmodernism career approaches.

Career	Modernism	Postmodernism
CAREER VISION		
Targets	One matched occupation	Multiple possible selves and occupational options
Reactions to uncertainty	Controlling for security	Adapting to change
Ideal status	Actualizing stable personal characteristics within congruent environment	Constructing individual identity within varying contexture
Expected Outcomes	Occupational success and goal fulfillment	Life satisfaction and meaning
PROJECTING STRATEGY		
Archetype of strategy	Choosing and controlling	Appreciating and adapting
Functioning mechanism	Rational and analytic thinking	Intuitive and expressive thinking
Self-exploration method	Objective quantitative assessments	Subjective qualitative assessments
Environmental exploration method	Non-involved information processing	Involved information experiencing
CAREER EVOLUTION		
Nature of person and environment	Static and stable	Dynamic and varying
Evolution styles	Focus and controlling	Open and appreciating
Evolution pattern	Linear	Non-linear

(2008) proposition for social and cross-cultural psychology as a global enterprise.

Moreover, echoing pluralism advocated by postmodernism, the VEC model intends to incorporate merits from both modernism and postmodernism career views. Martin and Sugarman (2000) have articulated a middle-ground position between modernity and postmodernity; Casey (2000) has called for a revitalized project to transcend the limitations resulted from modern or postmodern approaches alone; Zhao (2007) has argued that it takes the postmodern value of intersubjectivity and mutual connection to nurture one's inner self and, therefore, make a modern subject without alienation. Still more, Sampson (2009) has pointed out directly that career practitioners can provide better services if modern and postmodern career theories go hand in hand with each other. Hence, our model pursues an enjoyable blending of security and openness via career evolution resulting from *controlling-and-realizing* and *appreciating-and-adapting* interwoven with each other in a dialectical and harmonious way.

This paper presents the VEC model in three perspectives: (1) its theoretical foundation, (2) its counseling prototype, and (3) situated structure analyses of two VEC group experiences.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

While modernism career paradigm is based on positivism and postmodernism career paradigm is derived from constructivism and contextualism (Sampson, 2009), the VEC model has its root in Chinese philosophy with its branches from modernism and postmodernism career theories and practices.

We will first introduce dialectical philosophy and virtue practice derived from the *Classic of Changes*. Both their original contentions and their applications in west psychology will be presented, followed by their applications to our model. Then, we will describe what and how our model adopts modernism and postmodernism theories. In addition, we also present what and how we adopt existential-phenomenological psychology and meaning therapy.

Eastern Wisdom: Dialectical Philosophy

The *Classic of Changes* articulated a cosmological model of changes via the fluxion of *yin* (陰) and *yang* (陽). Every element in every system of this universe is composed of these two essentials. *Yin* (literally, dark) represents *receptivity* and denotes the power of earth; *yang* (literally, light) represents *creativity* and denotes the power of heaven. Actually, *yin* and *yang* symbolize all kinds of dyadic opposites: anything relatively hard, high, light, strong, firm, moving, flow, noble is considered as *yang*, and anything relatively soft, low, heavy, weak, flexible, static, stuck, mean as *yin*. Dyadic opposites are not separable but rather form a unity together. Such *yin-yang* fluxion creates and transforms all things existing in between earth and heaven (Vincent Shen, 2003; Cheng, 2009a,b).

The principles underlying the *yin-yang* fluxion are basically dialectical, such as *mutual completion and enhancement* (相生相成), *generation by opposition* (對立轉化), and *joint production* (生生不息) (Cheng, 2009a; Liu et al., 2015). Harmony is the shared aim of these principles, which is signified in the opening passages of the *Classic of Changes* (Nelson, 2011). Through harmonizing, elements contradict and yet mutually supplement each other and thereby build a new relation or form a new unit (Vincent Shen, 2003; Cheng, 2009b; Yao, 2013). Such *yin-yang* fluxion entails a sustained and dialectical process as a temporally successive phenomenon with no linear theory of causality.

A similar dialectic philosophy has been articulated by Hegel, a universally influential philosopher (Brincat and Ling, 2014). This kind of dialectic thinking has been adopted by western psychological theories, such as Jung's Analytical psychotherapy (Solomon, 1994; Liang, 2012), dialectical behavior therapy (Bankoff et al., 2012; Linehan and Wilks, 2015), second wave positive psychology (Wong, 2011, 2012; Lomas and Ivtzan, 2015), and contextual action theory for career development (Dyer et al., 2010). Actually, more and more western research and theories have highlighted a dialectical nature of various psychological phenomena, such as human development (Komatsu, 2015) and creative process (Holm-Hadulla, 2013).

Based on all the above, our model applies this dialectic philosophy to career evolution and counseling. *Appreciating-and-adapting* types of career projecting are considered as y*in*; *controlling-and-realizing* types of career projecting as y*ang* (Liu et al., 2015). Career development is a harmonizing process with a continuous and discontinuous interplay of preceding and consequent moments in time. Such a career evolution process is different from the traditional linear pattern advocated by the abovementioned modernism career paradigm; rather, it is closer to a *boundaryless or protean* pattern (Stoltz et al., 2013) described by the abovementioned postmodern career theories.

Just as *inclusive opposites* is the power and energy of the harmonizing process, career explorers who flexibly utilized both types has been found to demonstrate more resilience, passion, and well-being (Lee, 2010; Kao and Liu, 2012; Peng et al., 2013). Empirical supports also revealed that the Middle Way (中庸, accepting the coexistence of *yin* and *yang* and emphasizing harmony) beliefs positively associated with life satisfaction (Huang et al., 2012) and mitigated the effects of stress on employee well-being and job satisfaction (Chou et al., 2014).

Eastern Wisdom: Virtue-Practice as Self-cultivation

There are many branches of interpretation; Confucian and Taoist philosophies are two of the most influential ones (Hwang and Chang, 2009). Confucian interpretations of the *Classic of Changes* are primarily ethical (Yao, 2013). Confucians take one's *de* (德, virtue) and cosmological *tao* (道) as the ultimate concerns of life meaning. The self is considered both the object that must be worked on, and the subjective agent that bears chief responsibilities for the well-being of oneself, one's family, and the world. Working on the self is to cultivate it, which undergoes a moral process starting from an ordinary person and reaching the ideal (Hwang, 2009; Yao, 2013).

Parallel to ethical living and self-cultivating advocated by Confucian in the east is "being-in-the-world-with-others" or "relatedness" advocated by phenomenology in the west

(Becker, 1992). Phenomenologists consider humans as inherently relational beings. "We are summoned ethically to cultivate our way of interrelating so as to serve others and the non-human natural community (Adams, 2007, p. 24)." Such a point of view has been brought into psychology and psychotherapy (Becker, 1992). Similarly, contextual action theory considers a career as a joint parent–youth project. That is to say, career is embodied in how youth relate to others (Young et al., 2008).

Taoist interpretations of the *Classic of Changes* are primarily authentic (Hwang, 2009). Taoists seek to emancipate their selves from the ethical bounds of a societal world and follow the way of Nature (Karcher, 1999). By practicing methods of self-cultivation, such as *qi-gong*, *tai-qi-chuan*, and Taoist meditation, one may return to the state of authentic self (Hwang, 2009).

Taoist interpretations of the *Classic of Changes* were first introduced to western psychology by Jung. His three principles of psyche actually echo Taoism (Karcher, 1999; Liang, 2012). Taoist techniques have also been integrated into Jung and other psychological therapy models with empirical supports (Williamson, 1992; Hwang, 2009).

Recently, two kinds of voices pro virtue emerge in western psychology. One voice came from positive psychology. Sundararajan (2005) pointed out that "an empirically based version of the good life as proposed by positive psychology is a donut with something missing at the core—the moral map (p. 35)." To make an amendment, Wong proposed Positive psychology 2.0 and advocated meaning-orientation visions of a good life (2011) and self-transcendence (2016). The other voice argued psychotherapy is a moral encounter (Burns et al., 2012). A tradition-sensitive psychotherapy should function emically within the client's own virtue grammar (Dueck and Reimer, 2003; Peteet, 2013) and help clients cultivate the qualities necessary to live a good life (Stewart-Sickin, 2008).

Based on all the above, our model emphasizes virtue-practice in career evolution and counseling. An ideal aim of one's career evolution should be two-folded:.(1) a *yin* horizon of *living on the earth with ways and harmony* (安身以法以和) and (2) a *yang* horizon of *living up to the way of heaven with mind and virtue* (立命以心以德) (Liu et al., 2014, 2015, 2016; Liu and Wang, 2014). Therefore, an ideal career evolution is an endless process of self-cultivating, that is, living a moral life while being entangled by worldly affairs and struggling for *living on the earth*.

The two horizons can be articulated with the terminology of Hwang's (2012) mandala model of self. *Living-on-the-earth-with-ways-and-harmony* is related to one's career praxes to find a place in real world to fulfill one's biological needs (as individual), to find a position in social networking to carry out one's social responsibilities (as person), and to establish an identity to actualize one's psychological characteristics (as self). One's knowledge might be used to exchange various resources in one's career pursuing. A morally cultivated person seeks good from others and at the same time exerts good effects on these others, by which a harmonious relationship is established (Hwang, 2009; Yao, 2013; Liu, 2014).

Living-up-to-the-way-of-heaven-with-mind-and-virtue points to one's wisdom and self-cultivation to become a Self. It assumes that one's self needs to be created, developed, and realized in the ethical life while the potentiality of building a self is given (Chen, 2014). Specifically, one is expected to possess a balance between *yin* virtue (embracing all aspects of humanity and accommodating all matters in this world, 厚德載物) and *yang* virtue (unceasingly striving for improving themselves with their great perseverance, 自強不息; Cheng, 2009a; Liu et al., 2015). Such wisdom helps one adapt to the inevitable uncertainty within career evolution and appreciate the underlying *way-of-heaven* within each life experience.

Western Wisdom: Career Vision

There are three key questions about career vision. (1) What does one want from the world? (2) What can one supply to the world? (3) Why should one live one's life?

As to one's wants in career vision, we adopt Holland's interest (Nauta, 2013) and Minnesota's needs and work values (Swanson and Schneider, 2013). Vocational interests are defined as "a preference for activities expressed as likes and dislikes" (Hansen, 2013, p. 387). Holland's theory focuses most explicitly on interests and its RIASEC typology pervades career counseling research and practice (Nauta, 2010). Several meta-analyses have supported the existence of the RIASEC typology among a variety of people (Nauta, 2010), the stability of vocational interests (Low et al., 2005), and the predictability of congruence on career choice (Sheu et al., 2010), stability of choice (Spokane, 1985), academic performance and persistence (Spokane, 1985), job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover (Tsabari, 2005; Van Iddekinge et al., 2011).

According to Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA), vocational needs refer to what one wants and expects from work; work values are defined as "second-order needs" or "underlying common elements of needs." TWA's 6-value and 21-need classification is adopted by O∗NET and becomes one of the most important value system (Rounds and Jin, 2013; Swanson and Schneider, 2013). Meta-analyses revealed value congruence was positively related to work satisfaction, overall work performance, and organizational commitment, as well as negatively related to turn-over intention (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

As to one's supplies in career vision, we adopt self-efficacy from Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent, 2013). According to Bandura (1986, p. 391), self-efficacy beliefs refer to "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances." Although, TWA emphasizes on one's ability to respond to environmental requirements (Swanson and Schneider, 2013), SCCT argues that self-efficacy, as subjective assessment of ability, is a better predictor of career development. Meta-analyses indicated that self-efficacy beliefs correlated significantly with academic choice, performance, and persistence (Brown et al., 2008; Sheu et al., 2010), vocational choice and work-related performance (Sheu et al., 2010; Brown et al., 2011).

As to one's meaning in career vision, Frankl (1992) asserts that the deepest and universal human need to reach beyond oneself and serve something greater. Along with this line of think, Kosine et al. (2008) proposed purposes; MacIntyre (1984, cited in Stewart-Sickin, 2008) proposed virtues. Wong (2016) takes

one step further and suggests three levels of self-transcendence, which can be summarized as ultimate meaning, situational meaning, and one's calling. On the other hand, Cochran (1997) suggests that one explores the implicit personal webs of meaning embodied within narrative scripts or plots. The fulfillment of meaning is related to greater certainty regarding career goals (Tryon and Radzin, 1972) and better work adjustment (Bonebright et al., 2000).

Western Wisdom: Projecting Strategy

Key questions to projecting strategy are the following. (1) How does one construct and reconstruct one's career vision in one's career evolution? (2) How does one live up to one's career vision?

We adopt Holland's (as well as other modernism theories of TWA and SCCT) *yang* type of strategies to: (1) use quantitative assessments to identify one's interest (or ability, need, or self-efficacy) pattern, (2) develop a list of educational and/or occupational options congruent with one's interest pattern, (3) search for and process factual educational and/or occupational information, (4) choose an educational and/or occupational goal based on rational evaluation, (5) search information about resources and strategies helpful for one's specific goal, and (6) break one's final goal into sub-goals and set up a step-by-step action plan to carry out those sub-goals (Nauta, 2013).

We also adopt Cochran's (1997) *yin-yang*-mixed type of postmodernism strategies to: (1) enhance a sense of agency in reality construction; (2) gain information from divergent sources and to gain the best evidence; (3) envision oneself working in an occupation; (4) identify needs and establish a tentative priority; (5) determine strengths in the way an individual and family function to get things done; (6) map the formal and informal sources of support that might help a person solve a problem or move from a deficient state of affairs to a better state of affairs; (7) establish an optional alignment of needs, strengths, supports, and resources to meet needs; (8) actualize ideals in the present through searching for and engaging in activities that are meaningful and enjoyable.

Finally, we learn from Krumboltz's postmodernism strategies of treasuring serendipity and uncertainty. At first, Mitchell et al. (1999) brought out five *yin* type of planned happenstance skills: Curiosity refers to exploring new learning, persistence to exerting efforts in spite of setbacks, flexibility to adjusting to change, optimism to believing in new opportunities, and risk-taking to taking action in spite of uncertainty. Positive relationship between these skills and career evolution has been found (e.g., Magnuson et al., 2003; Kim et al., 2014).

Later, the revised Happenstance Learning Theory (Krumboltz, 2009, 2011; Krumboltz et al., 2013) proposed a counseling process with the following *yin-yang*-mixed type of strategies: (1) orienting the client to viewing unplanned events as necessary and normal to initiate a ready mode; (2) setting the goal of creating more satisfying lives to induce career action, (3) expressing empathic understanding of the client's situation and concerns to unfold a counseling process, (4) identifying the client's past success to strengthen self-efficacy and support current action, (5) assisting the client to capitalize on unplanned events for learning and exploration, (6) brainstorming the next action step with the client to produce desirable chance events; (7) helping the client to overcome blocks to action, (8) following up the client's action and reinforcing their success in the real world, and (9) in case of need, helping the client to overcome fear of making mistakes and to take action.

THE VEC COUNSELING PROTOTYPE

A Whole Picture

Figure 1 portrays our model with a cone. The *yin-yang tai-ji* (太極) diagram at the bottom of the cone displays the characteristics of *yin-yang* fluxion. *Yang* career strategy of *controlling and realizing* is symbolized by the white. The white body of fish on the upper part (*Controlling*) represents creative career praxes, that is, all kinds of directing and controlling toward one's career vision; the white eye of the black fish in the middle part (*Realizing*) represents a realistic effort to manage personal weakness or environmental requirements or restrictions. On the other hand, *yin* strategy of *appreciating and adapting* is symbolized by the black. The black body of fish on the lower part (*appreciating*) represents receptive career praxes, which result from appreciating whatever one is given or encounters; the black eye of the white fish in the middle part (*adapting*) represents a flexible effort to transfer one's capacities or environmental resources to find alternative ways for one's career vision in the reality. Career praxes, generated by the above four career strategies, serving as means for the secular goal of *living on the earth with ways and harmony*, construct the bottom of career evolution pyramids. However, the greatest end for career praxis is to spiral up to the *wisdom of living out of personal virtue,* which is congruent with cosmological *tao.*

Based on the *Classic of Changes*, it should function best when *Controlling, realizing, appreciating*, and *adapting* interweave with each other at a good timing and the *tai-ji* diagram becomes an unceasingly running circle in career evolution. *Realizing* and *adapting* in small circles in the middle part are career strategies with *yin-yang*-mixed transformative power. They play a critical role in connecting the pure *yin* power (*appreciating*) with pure *yang* power (*controlling*), and, in a paralleled or symbolic way, also connecting rationalism with constructivism, objectivity with subjectivity, the ideal with the reality, the heaven with the earth, as well as the wisdom (or virtue or self-cultivation) with the praxes.

The Outline of Counseling Prototype

Dialectical philosophy is applied to our prototype in four ways: (1) mixing *yin* and *yang* types of career strategies; (2) guiding people to appreciate, master, and synthesize both *yin* and *yang* types of career capacities and strategies; (3) guiding people to make connection between their secular and spiritual horizons; (4) using our metaphorical stories of *qian* and *kun* as well as creative activities to help people develop versatile perspectives.

Virtue-practice is embodied in the following VEC concepts: (1) the unceasing and dialectical nature of *yin-yang* fluxion in career and life; (2) the harmonious and integrative way of blending *yin* and *yang* career capacities and strategies; (3) the

FIGURE 1 | Virtue existential career model.

coexistence and mutual influence between secular and spiritual horizons within career evolution; (4) career evolution as a learning process to make a living, have a satisfying yet moral life, and cultivate wisdom and virtues.

The VEC counseling process consists of five major career counseling strategies interwoven with each other in a dialectical and harmonious way. The five are CA-*controlling (yang),* CA-*realizing* (*yang* in *yin*), CA-*appreciating (yin),* CA-*adapting* (*yin in yang*), and CA-synthesizing (*yang* with *yin*). **Table 2** lists core and optional aims for each strategy. The arrangement principles are the followings. (1) A complete circle consists of a reflecting activity (to initiate a reflective attitude to find out underlying principles embodied within career phenomena) at the beginning, CA-synthesizing (to blend *yang* and *yin* power together) at the end, and the other four strategies in the middle. (2) For growing developer (those who are expecting to move on to the next developmental phase), CA-*controlling* or CA-r*ealizing* (to pursue what is wanted with or without consideration of environmental constraints) comes first; for stranded developer (those who are stuck in difficulties), CA-*appreciating* or CA-*adapting* (to accept what is given or encountered with or without consideration of one's wants) comes first. (3) CA-r*ealizing* and CA-*adapting* (both of which have a nature of blending of or transforming between *yin* and *yang*) are necessary between CA-*controlling* (pure *yang*) and CA-*appreciating* (pure *yin*). These three principles result in two possible sequences: for growing developer, a typical sequence may be: (1) reflecting, (2) CA-*controlling* or CA-*realizing*, (3) CA-*realizing* and CA-*adapting*, (4) CA-*appreciating* or CA-*adapting*, and (5) CA-synthesizing; for stranded developer, it may be: (1) reflecting, (2) CA-*appreciating* or CA-*adapting*, (3) CA-*adapting* and CA-*realizing*, (4) CA-*controlling* or CA-*realizing*, and (5) CA-synthesizing. **Figure 2** visualizes these two routes.

Activities and Materials

Various career activities are developed to help developers learn VEC concepts in an experiential way. Our prototype incorporates *yang* type of career praxes (e.g., quantitative assessments, factual career information, rational evaluation, and action plans) and *yin* type of career praxes (e.g., normalizing and reframing unplanned events, identifying past success, and brainstorming the next action step). In addition, graphical materials, expressive therapeutic skills, guided imagination, mandala drawing, and meditation are adopted to stimulate right-brain functions and spiritual energy. These career praxes appear as possible activities in **Table 2**.

Specifically, our stories of *qian* and *kun* are designed to deliver the principles of *yin-yang* fluxion in a metaphorical way. The *Classic of Changes* consists of 64 *guas* (卦); a *gua* is a figure composed of six stacked horizontal lines (爻), where each line is either *yang* (an unbroken, or solid line) or *yin* (broken, or an open line with a gap in the center). Each *gua* symbolizes a common human life situation; its *yin-yang* fluxion denotes appropriate action strategies and self-cultivation goals within such situatedness. The *qian gua* with six solid lines represents a pure *yang* situation; the *kun gua* with six open line represents a pure *yin* situation. Variation of these two *guas* results in the other 62 *guas*. In other words, these two *guas* are the door to all varieties of life situations (乾坤易之門, Huang, 2003). We intended to make our metaphorical stories universally-applicable. Our *qian* story narrates six growing-up statuses of the protagonist dragon in sequence: (1) hidden to learn and improve oneself, (2) visible to be noticed and given opportunities or resources, (3) diligent to work hard in a mindful way, (4) jumping to try to leap up to a higher level, (5) flying to bring into full play, and (6) over-excited so as to exceed proper limits and result in regret. Our *kun* story narrates how the protagonist mare searches and serves

TABLE 2 | The outline of VEC counseling prototype.

Career Strategies/Core Aims/Optional Aims/Possible Activities
1. CS-Controlling (Yang) (1) Core Aims: • Identify and create what one want via planning, directing, and controlling (2) Optional Aims: • Identify what one want • Count and make good use of whatever one has • Create, construct, and present one's strengths • Plan and take action to get more • Overcome personal or environmental obstructs (3) Possible Activities • Process assessments to identify what one want in terms of interests, values, aptitudes, and so on • Process assessments to identify what one has in terms of knowledge, skills, and so on • Process assessments to identify one's career capacities and strategies • Outline, narrate or portray career vision • Make an action plan to improve one's strengths • Make an action plan to actualize one's career vision • Actualize and follow up a career action plan
2. CS-Realizing (Yang in yin) (1) Core Aims: • Make a realistic effort to manage personal weakness or environmental requires or restriction (2) Optional Aims: • Understand and fulfill environmental requires • Search for and utilize external information and/or resources • Utilize one's power in a humble way • Understand and manage one's situatedness (3) Possible Activities • Reflect on qian stories • Explore one's environments • Practice information and/or resources searching • Practice self-promoting skills • Practice one's roles
3. CS-Appreciating (Yin) (1) Core Aims: • Enjoy the nature of career evolution and whatever one is given or encounters (2) Optional Aims: • Accept and make good use of whatever one is given or encounters • Enjoy serendipity and uncertainty • Learn from one's situatedness (3) Possible Activities • Reflect on kun story • Normalize, experience and treasure serendipity and uncertainty in life • Develop versatile perspectives of oneself and one's surrounding • Reflect on the nature of career with short films or imagination • Reflect on personal experience and life meaning • Portray or narrative one's experience and find out embodied values
4. CS-Adapting (Yin in yang) (1) Core Aims: • Make a flexible effort to transfer one's capacities or environmental resources to find alternative ways for one's career vision in the reality (2) Optional Aims: • Make creative use of whatever one is given or encounters • Create alternative career possibilities in spite of constraints • Be responsible for one's life meanings in spite of adverseness (3) Possible Activities • Brainstorm alternatives • Take advantages of serendipity
(Continued)

TABLE 2 | Continued

Career Strategies/Core Aims/Optional Aims/Possible Activities
• Take advantages of frustration, difficulties, and obstructs • Make a plan for alternative career possibilities in a creative way
5. CS-Synthesizing (Yang with yin) (1) Core Aims: • Utilize both yin and yang power in a creative and harmonious way (2) Optional Aims: • Synthesize opposites • Synthesize both yin and yang types of career capacities and strategies (3) Possible Activities • Practice brainstorming, creative art, or dialectical methods to synthesize opposites • Practice synthesizing both yin and yang types of career capacities and strategies

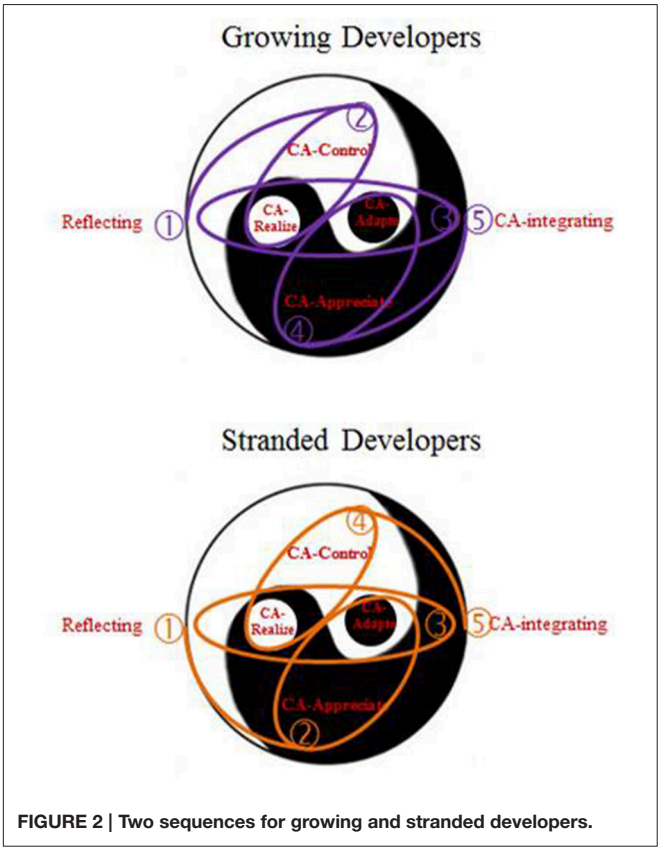

FIGURE 2 | Two sequences for growing and stranded developers.

a right master with six statuses in sequence: (1) cautious to watch out for any unremarkable sign for danger, (2) righteous to supports everything in a nature way, (3) dedicated to devote one's brilliance to the superiors without claiming credit for oneself, (4) invisible to hide one's candle and avoid making mistakes or threatening the superiors, (5) humble via doing influential work but adhering to one's subordinate role, and (6) arrogant so as to exceed proper limits and incur terrible danger. The *qian* and *kun* stories could be used in *yang* and *yin* types of strategies, respectively.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE OF TWO VEC GROUPS

Research Methods

The VEC model and counseling prototype presented in this research is the product of a previous action research following Lewin's (1946) top-to-down model with a cyclical-spiral process. In the planning stage, data from the third stage of the previous circle would be presented to a panel consisted of career experts and *Classic of Changes* experts. Based on the panel discussion, a revised VEC model and prototype would be proposed. In the action stage, groups would be conducted accordingly. During the evaluation stage, we conducted basic content analyses of observers' group process notes as well as products of and feedback from group members. Five versions of VEC model and prototype have been developed in this process from 2012 to 2015 (details reported in Liu and Hung, 2015). All studies conformed to the regulation of Research Ethics Committee of National Changhua University of Education.

The current study conduct situated structure analyses (Liu et al., 2016), a kind of phenomenological data analysis derived from Ricoeur (1981), Giogi (1989), and Gee (2005), to further investigate the adequacy of the fifth version of VEC model and prototype. Data from the third and fourth groups will be used. The third group was a 3-day 9-h group for 10 college graduates who had been seeking job without success and were referred by government's occupational placement service stations. The fourth group was a 3-day 18-h group for 8 recruited college students who were eager to prepare for future employment. **Tables 3** and **4** present the designed activities and their corresponding projecting strategies, functioning mechanism, and member participations for these two groups.

Constituent Themes

The constituent themes emerged from situated structure analyses of member experience are presented in **Table 5**. There were five clusters of themes. (1) Sense of situation (SS) described Ms' perception about their career development status. (2) Acceptance (Ac) referred to Ms' attitude toward their developmental status. (3) Self-efficacy (SE) indicated Ms' confidence about their power to unfold their career. (4) Actualization (At) pointed to Ms' planned or actual actions to unfold their career. (5) Dialectic thinking (DT) signified Ms' perception about the dialectic nature of career evolution. The SS themes were revealed in pre-group interviews; the others within group process.

Situated Structure

Figure 3 shows growing developers' transformative experience during group process. At the beginning, they stood along with no past or future since they didn't know where they were and where to go. At step 1∼4, with *yang* strategies and our *qian* story, they got an accessible future with a clearer career vision and a vague path toward their target. They felt more comfortable with uncertainty after step 1. They moved on and worked on their career visions, which resulted in a better sense of what they wanted from the world and what they needed to supply to the world. At step 5∼9, with *yang* strategies and our mind map technique, their future became concrete. They personalized their occupational strengths and went into details about their learning plans and job-hunting preparation, which resulted in self-efficacy. At step 10∼12, with *yin* strategies and our *kun* story, they got a powerful past, that is, lived workplace strengths applicable to future workplace adaptation and socialization. Their self-efficacy increased with a continuity from their past to their future. At step 13∼14, with *yang* strategies, they got an action-oriented now. Their self-promoting skills were improved via practicing. At step 15∼16, with *yang* strategies and mandala drawing, they depicted a cyclical-spiral action process toward future.

For stranded developers (see **Figure 4**), at the beginning, they stuck in a hole since they saw no way out. At step 1∼2, with *yin* strategies, they got a valuable self. Via their lived past, they were moved and empower. At step 3∼5, with *yin* strategies and our *kun* story, they got a workable now with a dialectic perspective. They accepted their current situatedness and found out their individual power to transfer their job-hunting frustration. At step 6∼7, with *yang* strategies and our *qian* story, they got a symbolic working-through experience with a dialectic perspective. Their self-efficacy and dialectic problem-solving skills increased, which resulted in their motivation to take action for their real-life challenges. At step 8∼11, with *yang* strategies, they got a workable future with a clearer career vision and a concrete path toward their target. They came out with what they could think and do differently for their real-life situatedness.

Yang and *Yin* Strategies for the Growing and the Stranded

An examination of **Table 5** reveals differential group experiences associated with *yang* and *yin* strategies. Although, not exclusively, y*ang* type of career praxes tended to induce actualization, which resulting in realistic goals and concrete action plans; *yin* type of career praxes tended to increase self-efficacy, which resulting in positive attitude toward current situatedness and future development. Acceptance and dialectic thinking often resulted from a blending of *yin* and y*ang* type of career praxes.

More importantly, a comparison of **Figures 3** and **4** indicates the growing and the stranded developers need a different arrangement of career strategies. At the beginning, for those growing developers missing a context, CA-*controlling* or CA-r*ealizing* (*yang* power) helps to make their goals clear and put their strengths together. For those stranded developers suffering, CA-*appreciating* or CA-*adapting* (*yin* power) helps to stop complaining or giving up, to come down, and to make up their mind to start with whatever they have. In the middle, a switch of *yin* and *yang* types is needed to create harmonization. For those growing developers, subsequent CA-r*ealizing* or CA-*adapting* or CA-*appreciating* helps to make them humble and open-minded. For those stranded developers, subsequent CA-*adapting* or CA-r*ealizing* or CA-*controlling* helps to make them strong and focus. Both growing and stranded developer needed to have CA-r*ealizing* and CA-*adapting* between CA-*controlling* and CA-*appreciating* to bring *yin*-*yang*-mixed power and transformative strategies into their career evolution. CA-synthesizing at the

TABLE 3 | VEC group design and member experience for growing college students.

Step	Projecting strategies	Functioning mechanism	Designed activities	Ms' Experience
1	(–) *Appreciate*	(R+I) Conceptualize with films	**Constructing VEC concepts** (Day 1, 50′): L presented short films (*yin*) and delivered the following VEC concepts (*yang*).	Ms felt more comfortable with uncertainty.
2	(+) *Control*	(I+R) Portray + analyze	**Portraying a career vision and evaluating personal career readiness** (Day 1, 130′): Ms did a collage with mixed media (*yin*) to visualize their career visions. Ms rated their overall readiness for their expected visions (*yang*).	Ms demonstrated a better sense of what they wanted from the world and what they needed to supply to the world.
3	(+in–) *Realize*	(I) Narrative with our *qian* story	**Reflecting on our *qian* story** (Day 1, 50′): L presented pictures and narrated *qian* story (*yin*). L guided Ms to identify with the flying dragon.	Ms failed to identify with the flying dragon. They though adapting was more important than controlling.
4	(+in–) *Realize*	(R) Analyze	**Exploring the world of work** (Day 1, 130′): At first, Ms outlined (*yang*) their imagination about their ideal occupations. Then, Ms searched factual information (*yang*) via the internet.	Ms were impressed with the substantial differences found between imaginative and realistic versions of occupations.
5	(+) *Control*	(R) Analyze	**Identifying occupational capacities** (Day 2, 150′): Ms took the CCN skill Inventory (http://careering.ncue.edu.tw/style/?20) and compare their mastery levels with required levels of their targeted occupations (*yang*).	Ms were interested in test results and asked related questions.
6	(+) *Control*	(R+I) Plan with our mind map technique	**Making a learning plan to improve occupational capacities** (Day 2, 90′): With the technique of tree-like mind map (*yin*), for each skill, Ms listed possible usage in the future workplace or strategies to improve mastery in college (*yang*).	Ms went into details about their occupational capacities and learning plans.
7	(+in–) *Realize*	(I+R) Portray+ Analyze	**Practicing our "surviving game in a workplace"** (Day 2, 60′): Ms drew up their possible challenges in their future workplace (*yin*) and narrated about how they would use their skills to meet those challenges (*yin*).	Ms demonstrated confidence in their narratives.
8	(+in–) *Realize*	(R) Rehearsal	**Outlining resume with personalized occupational strengths** (Day 2, 30′): Ms outlined personalized occupational strengths for their resumes (*yang*). Relevant past experiences and potential applications in their future workplace were identified.	Ms revealed that previous activities helped them come up with concrete information to put on their resumes. They became more confident.
9	(+in–) *Realize*	(R) Rehearsal	**Practicing promoting personalized occupational strengths in job interviews** (Day 2, 40′): Each M took turns to go on stage and practice answering a typical job interview question of "why should I (boss) hire you" for 2 minutes (*yang*).	Ms reported learning in how to organize relevant information.
10	(–) *Appreciate*	(I) Narrative with our *kun* story	**Reflecting on our *kun* story** (Day 2, 30′): L presented pictures and narrated *kun* story (*yin*). Ms were encouraged to learn from *kun* mare.	Ms identified with the *kun* mare to calm down and use what they have creatively as well as improve what they need progressively.
11	(–) *Appreciate*	(I+R) Portray+ Analyze	**Constructing lived workplace strengths** (Day 3, 60′): After guided imagery of their past (*yin*), Ms drew a life line with critical events (*yin*) and narrated their associated workplace strengths (*yin*).	Ms found the VEC concepts of *mutual completion and enhancement* and *joint production* in their past life narratives and became more confident in their workplace adaptation and socialization.
12	(–in+) *Adapt*	(I+R) Portray+ Analyze	**Practicing "meaning-making game in life field."** (Day 3, 60′): Each M took turns to add a gift, a challenge, and a comfort to other Ms' "surviving game in a workplace" pictures. Then, Ms utilized their lived strengths to make their disrupted pictures be their loved ones again.	The process of this activity was full of laughter and screaming. After reconstructing their pictures, Ms grasped the *generation by opposition* principle and the nature of harmonizing.
13	(+in–) *Realize*	(R) Rehearsal	**Writing resume with personal strengths** (Day 3, 60′): L gave a talk about the knack of resume writing (*yang*). Then, each M finished a complete resume (*yang*).	Ms got a better idea about what job interviewers wanted and improved their self-promoting skills.
14	(+in–) *Realize*	(R) Rehearsal	**Practicing a complete job interview** (Day 3, 80′): Ms practiced in pairs. Each M took turns to play the role of interviewee and boss (yang).	All "interviewees" did much better in their second practice.

(Continued)

TABLE 3 | Continued

Step	Projecting strategies	Functioning mechanism	Designed activities	Ms' Experience
15	(+with−) Synthesize	(R+I) Conceptualize with our VEC *tai-ji* diagram	**Constructing the VEC concepts of harmonizing with our VEC *tai-ji* diagram** (Day 3, 30′): L presented our VEC *tai-ji* diagram and articulated the VEC concepts of *yin-yang* fluxion. Then, L reviewed their group process and related it to these VEC concepts.	Ms mentioned that our VEC *tai-ji* diagram helped them develop a dialectic perspective of career evolution and a positive attitude toward whatever they might encounter.
16	(+with−) Synthesize	(I+R) Conceptualize with mandala drawing	**Practicing harmonizing with mandala drawing** (Day 3, 60′): Within a big circle (a mandala circle symbolizing Self), Ms synthesized all their positives and negatives into their ideal Self and career visions.	Most Ms presented their positive-negative-coexistence in a creative and harmonious way.

TABLE 4 | VEC group design and member experience for stranded college graduates.

Step	Projecting strategies	Functioning mechanism	Designed activities	Ms' Experience
1	(−) *Appreciate*	(R) Conceptualize	**Constructing VEC concepts** (Day 1, 10′): L introduced VEC concepts in a way similar to the group of growing college students (*yang*).	Ms' faces showed interests.
2	(−) *Appreciate*	(I) Paint & narrative	Constructing lived self-identity (Day 1, 70′): Ms painted themselves (*yin*) with their influential past experiences and characteristics associated with these experiences.	Ms reported a deeper self-understanding and higher self-confidence.
3	(−) *Appreciate*	(I) Narrative with our kun story	**Reflecting on our *kun* story** (Day 1, 100′): L presented pictures and narrated *kun* story (*yin*). Ms identified with one of the six *kun* mare statuses and related it to their job-hunting experience (*yin*).	Ms felt relieved with the sense of universality. They reported a dialectic perspective about job-hunting and accepted their situatedness.
4	(−in+) *Adapt*	(I) Portray	**Inspiring group power to transform job-hunting frustration** (Day 2, 50′): Ms split into groups based on their *kun* mare status." Each group portrayed its "job-hunting situatedness" (*yin*).	Ms' pictures revealed a dialectic perspective.
5	(−in+) *Adapt*	(R+I) Analyze with our *tai-ji* diagram & narrative	**Inspiring individual power to transform job-hunting frustration** (Day 2, 50′): Ms checked up their individual power to transform frustration with a *tai-ji* diagram (*yin*), within which the white body of fish symbolized individual capacities, black eyes within white body environmental risks, the black body of fish individual weakness, and white eyes within black body environmental resources (*yang*).	Ms identified both positive and negative effects of their own resources and risks in job-hunting. Such learning made a positive change in their evaluation of individual power.
6	(+) *Realize*	(I) Narrative with our *qian* story	**Reflecting on our *qian* story** (Day 2, 80′): Our *qian* story was processed in a way similar to our *kun* story (*yin*).	Ms grasped the dialectic nature and claimed to take action.
7	(−in+) *Adapt*	(I+R) Narrative with Analyzing	**Making a sequel (*yin*) to finish group transformation of job-hunting frustration** (Day 3, 50′): The two groups switched their drawing and worked on the other group' situatedness (-*yin*). Ms identified the protagonist's capacities and strategies as well as highlighted his/her transformative actions (*yang*).	Both *yang* and *yin* power and the principle of "*joint production*" were demonstrated in their sequel.
8	(+in−) *Realize*	(I+R) Portray and analyze	**Portraying a career vision and constructing occupational strengths** (Day 3, 50′): Ms portrayed their career visions (*yin*) and checked out their readiness for the targeted occupation (*yang*).	Ms revealed clearer career visions and improved their knowledge about occupational requirements.
9	(+) *Control*	(R+I) Plan and announce	**Making an action plan for ideal occupation** (Day 3, 30′): Ms developed and declared their action plans (*yang*) to actualize their occupational goals (*yang*) on stage; other Ms did strong-point-bombing in response (*yin*).	Ms declared specific occupation goals and action plans firmly.
10	(+in−) *Realize*	(R) Rehearsal	**Practicing resume-writing and job interviews** (Day 3, 50′): Ms in pairs took turns to play interviewee and interviewer for a complete job interview (*yang*).	Ms got a better idea about what job interviewers required and improved their self-promoting skills.
11	(+with−) Synthesize	(R) Conceptualize	**Reviewing and synthesizing group learning** (Day 3, 10'): L reviewed their group process and related it to the VEC concepts of *yin-yang* fluxion.	Ms reported what they could think and do differently in the future. They were eager to move on and to take a try.

TABLE 5 | Constituent themes of VEC group experience.

Cluster		G		S		Theme
		Type	Step	Type	Step	
SS	1		0			G: I am not sure where I am in the world.
SS	2				0	S: I am stranded and depressed.
SS	3		0		0	G: I am not sure where I can go. S: I see no way out.
Ac	1	+	1∼4			G: I feel comfortable with uncertainty.
Ac	2	±	15∼16	–	3∼5	S: I accept my current situatedness (what I encountered now). G: I will accept whatever I encounter.
SE	1	–	10∼12	–	1∼2	G: I see how I struggled and survived in my past. S: I see how I suffered and survived in my past.
SE	2	–	10∼12	–	3∼5	G+S: I believe I have more power than I thought.
SE	3	–	10∼12	–	1∼2	G+S: I believe in my power to survive in the future workplace.
SE	4	+	5∼9			G: I see how to use my power to meet future challenges.
At	1	+	1∼4	+/±	8∼11	G: I get an accessible career vision. S: I get a clearer career vision.
At	2	+	1∼4	+/±	8∼11	G+S: I see my targeted job (destination).
At	3	+	1∼4	+/±	8∼11	G+S: I see what my targeted job (destination) requires.
At	4	+	5∼9	+/±	8∼11	G+S: I see how to prepare myself for my targeted job (destination).
At	5	+	13∼14	+/±	8∼11	G+S: I see how to promote myself for my targeted job (destination).
At	5			+/–	6∼7	S: I decide to take actions.
At	6			+/±	8∼11	S: I am eager to take actions.
DT	1			–	3∼5	S: I see the dialectic nature of career power (risks and resources).
DT	2			–	3∼5	S: I see the dialectic nature of job-hunting (projecting strategy).
DT	3			+/–	6∼7	S: I see the dialectic nature of career success.
DT	4	±	15∼16			G: I see the dialectic nature of career evolution (VEC model).
DT	5	±	15∼16	+/–	6∼7	G: I synthesize all my positives and negatives to find an ideal Self and career vision. S: I use the dialectic nature of my power to find a way out.

SS, sense of situation; Ac, acceptance; SE, self-efficacy; At, actualization; DT, dialectic thinking; G, growing college students; S, stranded college graduates; +, yang type strategies; –, yin type strategies; ±, synthesized strategies.

end blended *yang* and *yin* power together, created a sense of integrity, built up a broader framework of career evolution, and strengthened both *yin* and *yang* power to be applied in the future.

Experience of Our Metaphorical Stories

The stranded developers revealed the following learning from our *qian* story. (1) One should keep hope and goal for one's life and never give up for learning or trying (S2 and S8). (2) One should build up one's strengths before setting off (S8). (3) One should accept others' help when needed (S11). (4) One should not get over-excited when things go well (S3 and S7). (5) Career evolution, like any other kind of human growth, unfolds step by step (S9). (6) Life goes on no matter what's absent. (7) You never know you may fly in the sky as a dragon someday. Ms also grasped the dialectic nature. S1, S2, S3, and S9 mentioned "goals could emerge from frustration" and "resources could be found within obstructs." S5, S6, S7, S8, and S11 mentioned "caution should be maintained after success." They claimed to take action instead of worrying about possible difficulties or problems. The growing developers failed to follow L's request to identify with the flying dragon. Nevertheless, they reflected on how and why the protagonist dragon could swim under the water and fly in the sky.

As to our *kun* story, the growing developers learned the following. (1) The *kun* mare needs to find their right masters; one needs to find one's right occupations (G5). (2) One can't identify one's strength and weakness unless one sets up a specific goal (G5). (3) Knowing one's strength and weakness is the starting point of current occupational preparation (G1, G2, G6, and G7) as well as the base for future workplace adjustment (G4). (4) One should calm down and use what one has creatively as well as improves what one has progressively (G3). The stranded developers learned the following. (1) "One should live within one's means and not go to inappropriate places (S3, S7)." (2) "One should improve one's skills first so as to seize opportunities (S2)." (3) "One should live in the present (S2)." (4) "Problems could be solved via circumventing obstruction (S8)." (5) "Frustration should be faced with a firm stand (S4)." (6) "One should adjust oneself even if life was not friendly (S2 and S5)." (7) "One should choose a rightful environment (S3, S6, S7, and S10)." (8) "One should appreciate, respect, and pardon everyone (S1)." Ms also expressed that they felt relieved and supported for "having other Ms as companions in the same boat."

In sum, experience difference between our *qian* and *kun* stories was vague. Both stories helped developers to grasp the dialectical nature of *yin-yang* fluxion. They reframed themselves

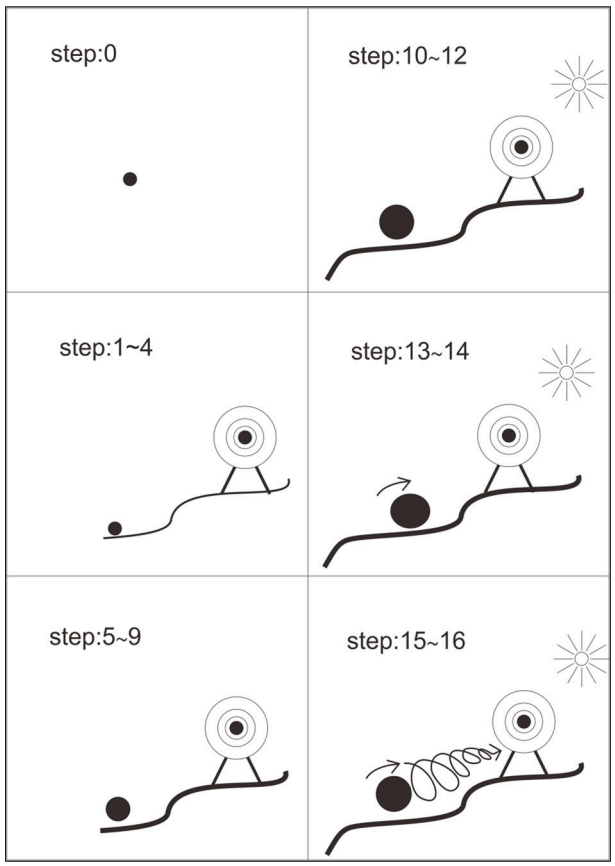

FIGURE 3 | Growing developers' transformative experience during group process.

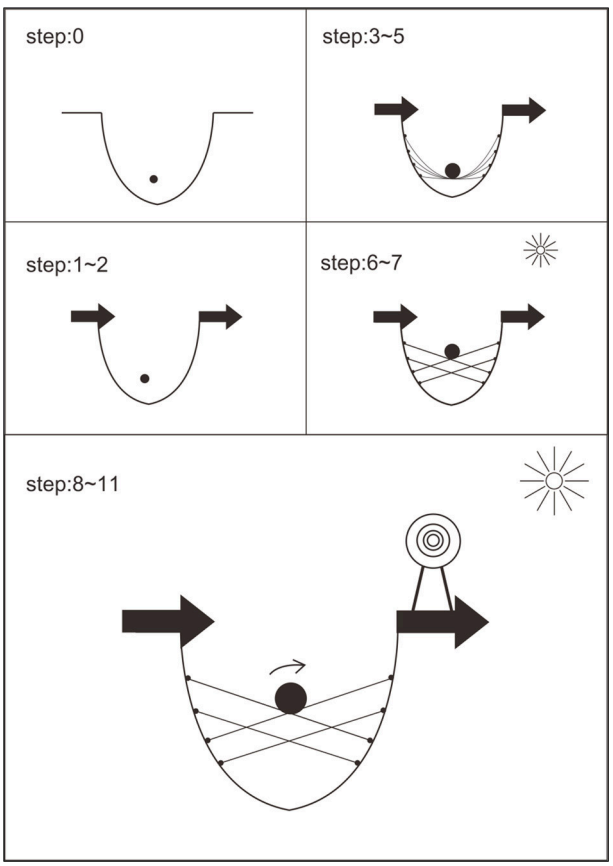

FIGURE 4 | Stranded developers' transformative experience during group process.

and their surroundings so as to find out versatile perspectives of managing their situatedness, which was helpful for their secular goal of *living on the earth with ways and harmony*.

VEC Concepts Learning from Experiential Counseling Activities

According to Ms' products and feedback, the followings are of special value to deliver VEC concepts. They induced Ms' reflective attitudes and opened the door to the *yin-yang* fluxion principles and a new perspective of their situatedness.

Via portraying individual power *tai-ji* diagram for job-hunting situatedness, the stranded developers revealed their learning of the VEC concept of "*completion and enhancement.*" For example, S3's good quality of "being good at observing others and environment" was found to have a negative effect of "being oversensitive and hesitating in any action." S1 found that his so-called risk of "low confidence" actually had a positive effect of "easy going." Such learning made a positive change in their evaluation of individual power.

Via constructing lived workplace strengths, the growing developers revealed the followings. (1) "I appreciated my life; whatever happened in my life was not a waste." (2) "Capacities used to deal with one's past life events could be transferred to adaptation and socialization in the future workplace." (3) "Even 'bad' thing could be worthwhile." (4) "I became much more confident in my workplace adaptation and socialization since what I have demonstrated or learned in my past life was much more than I thought." In sum, Ms grasped the VEC concepts of *mutual completion and enhancement* and *joint production.*

Via practicing "meaning-making game in life field," the growing developers revealed the following learning. (1) Change is inevitable in real life (S1). (2) One should appreciate and live with whatever happens (S1). (3) Obstructions can be overcome, adjusted, circumvented, transformed, or made use of (S3 and S6). (4) Unexpected stuff could create *inclusive opposites* and generate the power and energy needed for a harmonizing process (S4, S8, and S11). (5) One should accept what couldn't be changed at this moment and wait for a good timing or opportunities for transformation (S8, S10, and S11). (6) One should be responsible for making one's life meaningful to and loved by oneself (S1 and S3). Ms grasped the essentials of our *kun* story, the *generation by opposition* principle and the nature of harmonizing.

Via making a sequel to "job-hunting situatedness," the stranded developers demonstrated their learning of the principle of "*joint production of yin* and *yang*" in their sequels. The sequel to "where's the road" turned out to be "Move on, young man." The sequel to "invisible support" was "visible obstructs."

Via practicing harmonizing with mandala drawing, the growing developers presented their positive-negative-coexistence in a creative and harmonious way. Here were several examples. (1) G4 distinguished his positives and negatives clearly and placed them in separate areas within his mandala circle. However, he was surprised that those positives and negatives pieces formed a big peace symbol. (2) G8 placed his essentials in an umbrellas shape. He brought out a story that: "One should remain curious. If encountered something bad, one just learned to probe with curiosity." (3) G6 put a shining sun in the center, light blue sky on the upper half, and deep blue ocean on the bottom. His story was that: "A bright sky might be an illusion; just like one's limit might be imagination. Both light and dark were parts of oneself. One should explore widely and develop oneself at a good timing in order to bring one's potential to full play and realize one's version."

CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this research is to complement western modernism and postmodernism career theories with eastern Chinese wisdom derived from the *Classic of Changes*. Based on thorough theoretical analyses and an action research, we construct a VEC model and counseling prototype, aiming at a secular goal of *living on the earth with ways and harmony* as well as an ultimate end to spiral up to the *wisdom of living up to the way of heaven with mind and virtue*. There are five major career strategies to constitute a VEC counseling process. Situated structure analyses revealed primary empirical support for our model and prototype. In the context of developing indigenous career theories and practices in a globalized and ever-changing world, our contributions appear to be the followings.

(1) Echoing pluralism advocated by postmodernism, we propose a concrete career model to blend the virtues of modernism and postmodernism. Postmodernism emerged as the forces of reaction to modernism. As predicted by the *yin-yang* philosophy (Cheng, 2009a), such contradictoriness between these two paradigms did create the power of harmonization for the evolution of career literature. Our model and prototype present an important example which takes advantage of both paradigms and results in harmony.
(2) Derived from dialectical philosophy, *we* built up a complete *yin-yang* continuum of career praxes. In addition to *Controlling* (with pure *yang* power) and *appreciating* (with pure *yin* power), we include *realizing* and *adapting* (with *yin-yang*-mixed transformative power). Therefore, a broader range of career praxes is brought into play.
(3) We enrich the modernism and postmodernism career practice. Instead of plain preaching, a couple of experiential counseling materials and activities are developed to deliver dialectic philosophy. Two metaphorical Stories and several experiential activities guide participants to think or act in a dialectic way by unfolding the other sides, including the opposites, or making a dramatic extension or turn.
(4) We enrich the Middle Way literature. The *yin-yang*-mixed strategies are the apple of the Middle Way philosophy, which has produced fruitful and substantial influences in the indigenous psychology rooted in Confucian philosophy (e.g., Huang et al., 2012; Chou et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the Middle Way literature has little production in career theories or practices. Our model and prototype help to supply this gap.
(5) We extend the Middle Way literature by proposing specific arrangement principles. The Middle Way tends to focus on those strategies with *yin-yang*-mixed transformative power only; it fails to include strategies with strong *yin* or strong *yang* power. Our arrangement principles help to combine various strategies in a dialectical and harmonious way.
(6) Echoing second wave positive psychology and virtue psychology, we extend the mixture of modernism and postmodernism by embracing the spiritual/ethical essential of career evolution. With Confucian philosophy emphasizing both horizons, our model and prototype set up relevant conceptualization and practices to connect the secular and spiritual/ethical horizons in the process of career evolution.

To establish an alternative career theorization and practices for eastern and western people in a globalized and ever-changing world, the VEC model and prototype need further elaboration. As indicated by *yin-yang* philosophy, the limitation of our model and prototype lie on the other sides of their contributions. Serving as a meta-theoretical framework, our model and prototype possess great depth and wisdom, which also result in a need for more practical details. Also, future research should extend its applications to various career issues or phenomenon. Finally, standardized control studies are needed to further verify our breaking points.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

SL was the leader of this project. Her major contribution was the conceptualization and design of the project, interpretation of data, and writing this report. JH was co-leader of this project. His major contribution was the conceptualization of the project and interpretation of data. HP was the executor of counseling groups. She also helped to analyze data and wrote stories. CC was the literature organizer and help with group observation and data analyses. YL was the data interpreter.

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From Self to Nonself: The Nonself Theory

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The maintenance/strength of self is a very core concept in Western psychology and is particularly relevant to egoism, a process that draws on the hedonic principle in pursuit of desires. Contrary to this and based on Buddhism, a nonself-cultivating process aims to minimize or extinguish the self and avoid desires, leading to egolessness or selflessness. The purpose of this paper is to present the Nonself Theory (NT). The universal Mandala Model of Self (MMS) was developed to describe the well-functioning self in various cultures. The end goal of the self is to attain authentic and durable happiness. Given that the nonself is considered a well-functioning self, the MMS is suitable for constructing the NT. The ego and nonself aspects of psychological self-functioning and their underlying processes are compared, drawing on the four concepts of the MMS: biology, ideal person, knowledge/wisdom and action. The ego engages in psychological activities to strengthen the self, applying the hedonic principle of seeking desire-driven pleasure. In contrast, a nonself approach involves execution of the self-cultivation principle, which involves three ways: giving up desires, displaying compassion, practicing meditation and seeking understanding Buddhist wisdom. These three ways have the goal of seeing through and overcoming the illusion of the self to achieve a deep transformation integrally connected to the experience of eliminating the sense of self and its psychological structures. In addition, the NT provides a comprehensive framework to account for nonself-plus-compassion-related activities or experiences such as altruism, mindfulness, mediation, mysterious/peak experiences, elimination of death anxiety and moral conduct. The NT offers possible answers that might lead to a more comprehensive understanding of human beings and the deeper meaning of life, toward the ultimate goal of a well-functioning self. An examination of possible clinical applications and theoretical directions for future research in nonself psychology are provided.

Keywords: nonself, the nonself theory, Buddhism, compassion, meditation

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TWO TYPES OF SELF

Traditionally, Western psychology has attempted to understand the psychological functioning of the self from an individualistic perspective (Triandis and Gelfand, 1998; Triandis, 2001), emphasizing the need to satisfy, maintain and strengthen the self (Greenberg et al., 1990; Burke et al., 2010). There are numerous formulations of the self in Western psychology, and many of these are constructed on the basis of their being a definite "I" entity (Shonin et al., 2014). Thus, psychology has found an important role for the "self" in an abundance of subject-hyphen-

predicate relations (Klein, 2014) (e.g., self-affirmation, self-awareness, self-comparison, self-concept, self-consistent, self-control, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-determination, self-fulfillment, self-handicapping, self-image, self-identity, self-perception, self-regulation, self-reference). The origin of the concept of the individualistic view of self can be traced to early Christianity. Protestantism is considered to be the denomination most strongly related to American culture and, more specifically, to the American individualistic view of self (Oyserman et al., 2002; Cohen and Hill, 2007).

In the East, for more than 2500 years Buddhists have adopted a distinctive approach to the concept of the self (Kelly, 2008). Buddhism is commonly defined as including Southeast Asian Theravada Buddhism, East Asian Mahayana Buddhism, Indo-Tibetan Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism (Wallace and Shapiro, 2006; Shonin et al., 2014). The ultimate aim of these schools is to overcome the pain and emotional disturbances caused by life's difficulties, challenges, and stressors (Shiah and Yit, 2012). The Buddha's teachings are aimed at attaining an authentic, durable happiness by cultivating a transition from the self state to the nonself state (Dalai Lama, 1995a, 2005). Buddhism holds that personal identity is delusional (Giles, 1993), that each of us is a self that turns out to not actually exist (Dalai Lama, 1995b, 2005). Clinging to or being obsessed with the delusional self is the major cause of suffering (Dalai Lama, 1995a). In contrast to the concept of the self, the eternal goal of Buddhists is *nirvana* (Dalai Lama, 2005), a state of nonself that involves a process of renouncing worldly things, particularly those for which attractiveness springs from egoism and desires, while maintaining or elevating the self, or *atama-graha* (Hwang and Chang, 2009; MacKenzie, 2010). This process leads to *nirvana or* the state of nonself, a state of total liberation (Tsong-Kha-Pa, 2000; Shonin et al., 2014). However, the total liberation state concept in Buddhism is complex (Tsong-Kha-Pa, 2000) and transcends psychology. Nonetheless, the nonself state has consequences in the psychological domain, such as authentic and durable happiness (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011), and only these psychological consequences are discussed in the present paper. The generally agreed upon estimate of the number of Buddhists is around 350 million (6% of the world's population), most living in the East (Number of Buddhists worldwide, 2015). In the West, one in four British adults practices meditation, and over 20 million people practice it in America (6.5% of the population) (Shonin et al., 2014). Over the past 30 years, a growing number of psychotherapists, counselors and mental health workers have been engaged in various forms of Buddhist psychotherapy (Michalon, 2001; Kelly, 2008; Shonin et al., 2014; Murguia and Diaz, 2015), such as compassion-based therapy (Gilbert, 2009; Galante et al., 2014; Shonin et al., 2015), Buddhism-based grief therapy (Wada and Park, 2009; Lee et al., 2015a) and mindfulness-based techniques (Khoury et al., 2013, 2015). It is of academic interest to hypothesize that Buddhism provides an alternative perspective on the self and ways to manage one's daily life. In fact, there have been many studies attempting to link Buddhism to psychology (Wallace and Shapiro, 2006) and psychotherapy (Shonin et al., 2014), the majority of which have focused on meditation and its effects, such as increased emotional stability (Lee et al., 2015b), heightened positive emotion (Fredrickson et al., 2008), mindfulness (Brown and Ryan, 2003; Khoury et al., 2015) and improved attention (Sedlmeier et al., 2012; Lippelt et al., 2014). There have been few studies on theories directly relating Buddhist core teachings to nonself. Given that the most central concept in Buddhism is the nonself (Dalai Lama, 1995a; Hwang and Chang, 2009; Albahari, 2014), the purpose of this paper is to present a theory, named the Nonself Theory (NT), based on Buddhist teachings. The NT integrates different disciplines ranging from Western psychology to Buddhism.

The universal Mandala Model of Self (MMS) was developed to describe the well-functioning self in various cultures (Hwang, 2011). Given that the nonself is considered a well-functioning self, the MMS is a suitable basis for constructing the NT. In this paper, I compare the self and nonself aspects of psychological self-functioning, drawing on the four concepts of the MMS: biology, ideal person, knowledge/wisdom and action. An examination of possible applications and theoretical directions for future research are provided at the end.

Definitions of the Self and the Nonself

The self is the locus of empirical experience and it can take various actions depending on the social context (Hwang, 2011). The present theoretical model proposes two kinds of self, namely the self and the nonself. Two principal dimensions underline these two kinds of self: egoism and no self. I propose that these two kinds of self are end points on a continuum. Each of us falls at a certain place on this continuum. I define egoism as a desire-driven sense of self (Albahari, 2014). As long as we believe a self belongs to us, we are each an example of egoism (Dalai Lama, 1995a). The psychological functioning of egoism is characterized by such attributes as biased self-interest, self-centeredness and egocentrism (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011). Thus, it is assumed that egoism is a central point of reference for psychological activities, following the hedonic principle of pursuing stimulus-driven pleasure. The strong importance given to egoism emerges mainly from its connection with self-centeredness. Egoism is inclined to increased extent to which the individual considers that his or her own condition is more important than that of others and takes unquestioned priority.

On the contrary, as noted before, a state of nonself involves renunciation of worldly things, particularly those that are attractive because of egoism and desirse. Personal identity or the self is delusional (Giles, 1993; Joshanloo, 2014); such a self is assumed to not actually exist or not to be permanent (Dalai Lama, 1995b). The Dalai Lama (2005) asserted that the term *nonself* refers to the realization that the self or the I lacks intrinsic existence.

MANDALA MODEL OF SELF AND THEORY OF NONSELF

Mandala Model of Self (MMS)

The MMS was inspired by Buddhism and constructed to provide a universal model that describes the well-functioning self in all

cultures (Hwang, 2011). The end goal of the self in all cultures is to authentic and durable happiness (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011; Johnson, 2015). In this model, an individual living in his or her life-world is represented by a circle inside a square (see **Figure 1**). Jaffe (1964) noted that alchemists played an important role in Europe around 1000 A.D, when various sects appeared. European alchemist tradition or practice is to purify, perfect and complete certain objects. These sects sought to integrate mind and body, creating many names and symbols to denote this integration. One of these symbols was the quadrature circle.

Jaffe (1964) indicated that the circle represents the most important aspect of life, which she calls a well-functioning self. It exists in a wide range of contexts, such as sun worship by primitive peoples, modern religions, myths and dreams, the mandala of the Tibetan lamas, and the planar graphs of secular and sacred architecture in every civilization. The square, in contrast, symbolizes secularism, the flesh, and objective reality. Therefore, the mandala can be viewed as the symbol for a prototype or deep structure of the self.

In **Figure 1**, the self resides inside a circle located between two bi-directional arrows: One end of the horizontal arrow points to "action" or "praxis"; the other end points to "wisdom" or "knowledge." The top of the vertical arrow points to "person," and the bottom points to "individual." All four of these terms are located outside the circle but within the square. This arrangement of the concepts means that the self is being influenced by forces from the individual's external environment.

Anthropologist Grace Harris (1989) proposed that the terms "person," "self," and "individual" have very different meanings in the Western academic tradition. This tradition treats "individual" as a biological term; individual human beings are considered the same as other creatures. "Person" is a sociological or cultural term; the individual is conceptualized as an agent-in-society who adopts a certain role in the social order and plans a series of actions to achieve a particular goal. Every culture has its own definitions of appropriate and permitted behavior. Each class of actions is endowed with a specific meaning and value that is transmitted to the individual through various channels of socialization.

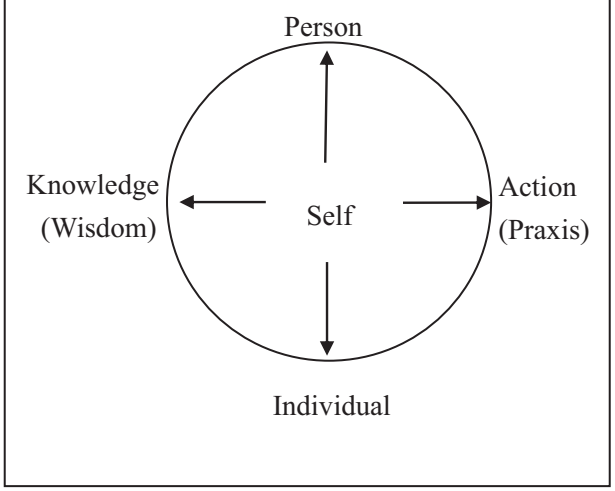

FIGURE 1 | Mandala model of self.

"Self" is a psychological term. In the conceptual framework of **Figure 1**, as noted earlier, the self is the locus of empirical experience, and it takes various actions depending on the social context. It also engages in reflexivity when blocked from attaining its goals. According to Giddens' (1984, 1993) Structuration Theory, the self as the subject of agency is endowed with two important capabilities: reflexivity and knowledgability. Reflexivity is a recursive loop in which a thing becomes self-referential (Sundararajan, 2008). Self-reflexivity is a process and a kind of action in terms of the ability to monitor and explain its actions. Knowledgeability is the ability of the self to memorize, store, and organize various forms of knowledge into a well-integrated system that guides reflexivity and action. An individual's self-identity and social-identity have very important implications for reflexivity. When individuals intend to act, their decisions may be influenced by all four forces in **Figure 1**, especially if they identify with a particular social role. On the one hand, individuals must think about how to act as socialized persons. On the other hand, as biological entities they are pushed by various desires. When they take action and encounter barriers, they may engage in action-oriented reflexivity (Eckensberger, 1990, 1996, 2012), using the information available in their stock of knowledge. If the barrier persists, they may take further steps to search for a solution from their social stock of knowledge. If they identify with a particular social group, they may communicate with other group members, thereby constructing a mutually shared social reality that may be plagued by specific problems. Individuals may then have to search their stock of knowledge to find solutions to these problems on behalf of the group.

The wisdom contained in the personal stock of knowledge can lead individuals to act intelligently in various social contexts. According to the theoretical model shown in **Figure 1**, the social praxis of the self in a given context is pulled by two forces—the person as a social agent and the individual as an organism. To act in a manner accepted by society, individuals who want to satisfy their own desires must learn how to act in accordance with the sociomoral order, using the process of socialization guided by their wisdom. According to the MMS (Hwang, 2011), one important characteristic of individuals is the ability to engage in agency-oriented reflexivity on the meaning of life. People in different cultures exhibit different kinds of wisdom when they think about spirituality, the meaning of their life, and their morality. Individuals' attempts to define their own moral conscience create a normative wisdom that circulates within the society. This wisdom can be used as material for thinking or for meta-ethical reflexivity. Because the MMS proposes a dynamic interaction involving self, individual, knowledge/wisdom and action/praxis, I draw on these four concepts to describe the process of self-cultivation that moves one from self to nonself. This description is based on Buddhist teachings as well as Western psychology.

From Self to Nonself

In the NT (see **Figure 2**), there is a single continuum from the bottom (self) to the top (nonself). In this section, we ask what Buddhism has to say about how and why our brains change, and how and why complex and pervasive patterns of desire-driven emotion and action are eliminated, resulting in a perceived identity or the self. How Buddhism helps us to achieve the nonself state is also addressed. Buddhism suggests that we apply the self-cultivation principle by obeying certain precepts, practicing compassion, and absorbing wisdom. The aim of all this is to see through and overcome the delusion of the self. The nonself state is authentic and durable happiness.

The Cause of the Delusion of Self Leading to Suffering: The Biological Individual Self

According to the NT (see **Figure 2**), only the top of nonself circle is not a delusion. As noted before, a state of nonself involves renunciation of worldly things, particularly those that are attractive because of egoism and desires. Thus, there is no square on the top of nonself. In general, one perceives the self via first-person subjectivity: the person has the experience rather than the object (Klein, 2014). The self is formed from perceptions, desires, needs and psychological functions of the biological individual; these functions are conation, motivation, attention, cognition, emotion and behavior (Dalai Lama, 1995a; Dambrun and Ricard, 2011; Shiah and Yit, 2012). The biological individual initially gives the self a personal identity or uniqueness, a feeling of ownership of various phenomena in the mind, body and external world (Albahari, 2006). This sense of self is part of a hedonic principle and a deep-seated, reflexive false belief (Albahari, 2014). The hedonic principle codifies a very intense desire-driven way of relating to objects, events, situations, substances, the body, and even life itself (Leifer, 1999). The self is powerful in shaping our lives and self-identity. In this paper, self-identity also refers to egoism.

Why does Egoism Cause Suffering?

Western psychologists recognize egoism as one of the basic motivations of the human mind: It is desire for pleasure and aversion to pain (Leifer, 1999). In Buddhism, as long as we have the self, we will be egoistic (Dalai Lama, 1995a). Why do egoism and application of the hedonic principle cause pain? There are four explanations. In Buddhism, suffering is caused by desire (Leifer, 1999; Dalai Lama, 2001). Clinging to the self is mainly an attempt to fulfill desires (Dalai Lama, 1995a). When we crave something pleasant, we tend to reject its opposite. The self-structure is completely devoted to mental "defilements," such as preferences and aversions. They make us attached to things being one way rather than another, causing us to suffer if the desire is frustrated (Albahari, 2014). The second explanation is that these desire-driven pleasures are contingent upon the appearance or disappearance of specific stimuli that can potentially satisfy egoistic desires. In general, such pleasures are unreliably contingent on stimuli from the environment, from interactions with other people, or from various kinds of physical and mental activity (Dalai Lama, 1995a). When the stimulus is present, the pleasure associated with it appears. However, as soon as the stimulus disappears or is supplanted by a new stimulus,

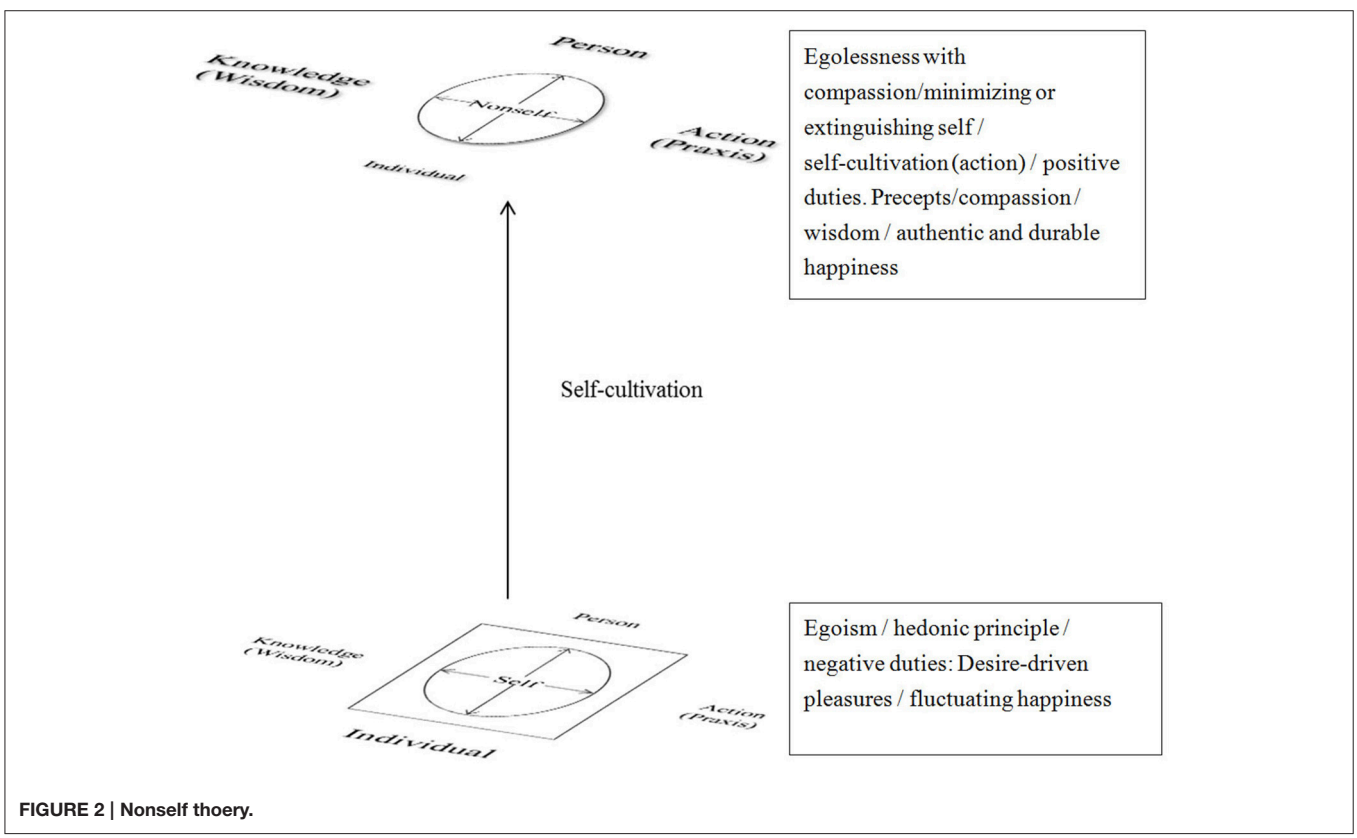

FIGURE 2 | Nonself thoery.

the positive feeling fades, which causes hedonic adaptation, the process by which people quickly become accustomed to the positive (or negative) effects of new stimuli and eventually return to their baseline level of happiness (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011). Therefore, the pleasure generated by applying the hedonic principle is short-lived and unstable (Steger et al., 2008; Hallam et al., 2014; Huta and Waterman, 2014). Regardless of whether the feeling is negative or positive, what is important is that the feeling can be seen as an object to be observed but that does not belong to us (Dalai Lama, 1995a). Thirdly, in Buddhism (as we discuss more fully later) egoism is not real. Thus, pursuing the delusion of the self ends up being in vain. This last proposition is grounded in Western psychology, which focuses on understanding the psychological functions associated with how the self deals with threats to the life of the individual. Undoubtedly, death is the greatest inevitable threat and a challenge to the self or the identity of a human being. The fact that we all will die means that the self will disappear and shows that life is fragile. The self needs to find a way to cope with death.

Arguably the most sophisticated theory on how the self copes with death is Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Greenberg et al., 1986, 1992), which defines self-esteem as a feeling of *significance*, a sense of significant meaning employed to defend against the fear of death. TMT treats self-esteem as a cultural construct with a variety of perceived meanings. These meanings importantly provide information about the presence of reliable patterns and coherence in the environment (Heintzelman and King, 2014), helping one cope with life's adversities (Park, 2010). TMT suggests that self-esteem is a sense of personal worth that is derived from the belief in the validity of the worldview of one's culture and from living up to the standards that are part of that worldview (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Feeling significant means seeing oneself as a valuable contributor to a meaningful universe and that one's life has both meaning and value. According to TMT, avoidance of death anxiety is the strongest human motive and it motivates all human activities. It triggers defenses against death anxiety that are erected by maintaining one's worldview and self-esteem (Burke et al., 2010). In fact, the threat of death never disappears and comes up in a variety forms all the time. Therefore, as soon as self-esteem is attained, a new threat may supplant the initial one. This replacement of the initial stimulus by another one might cancel the positive effect of the self-esteem generated by the first stimulus. In other words, we need endless action to maintain and strengthen the self so it can cope with death anxiety or unhappiness. We might find happiness sometimes, but we need to endlessly reboot it. Death anxiety is accompanied by endless negative emotion, which can take the form of, for example, anger, greed, jealousy, anxiety, depression, hatred, pride or fear of unhappiness.

Wisdom/Knowledge, Person and Action Conquering the Individual: Three Ways to Minimize the Sense of Self

The Buddha's teachings are aimed at helping us escape from the delusion of the self and attain a nonself state (Dalai Lama, 1995a, 2005). The way to achieve this goal is to implement a three-way process (Dalai Lama, 1995a; Kelly, 2008; Albahari, 2014; Shonin et al., 2014) that specifically is intended to reveal to one the emptiness of desires and of the self (Alt, 1980). In the present paper, these three ways are considered as the components of a self-cultivation process. Specifically, we describe the interaction of four components of the self as defined in the MMS in the context of Buddhism. The process uproots the deep-seated and reflexive false belief that one is a self, and it re-aligns and integrates one's emotional, cognitive and behavioral dispositions in accordance with the correct belief that there is no such self (Albahari, 2014). Note that eliminating the existence of the self does not entail denying the reality of every feature ascribed to the self, a consequence that some would find implausible. Non-delusional feature ascribed to the self can survive dissolution of the self-delusion, hence the phrase "eliminating the existence of self" should be read as "losing the sense of those delusional features ascribed to the self" (Albahari, 2014).

According to the MMS, the first and second ways of the process are actions aimed at the cessation of desire, and the second way (meditation) draws on the concepts of person and action. The third way draws on the concept of wisdom/knowledge. These three ways aim to annihilate the individual as defined in the MMS, especially its biological and psychological desires.

The first way is to renounce the worldly things that we desire (Dalai Lama, 2001). The psychological function of egoism affects the biological individual via application of the hedonic principle, which states that individuals are motivated to obtain pleasure and avoid displeasure. Egoistic behavior frequently is a response to impulses toward pleasurable stimuli and away from unpleasant ones. As a result, there is a strong focus on pleasurable stimuli, leading to satisfaction. This process mainly creates a sense of identity, which is a delusion (Dalai Lama, 1995a).

The link between egoism and desire is very robust and reflexive (Albahari, 2014). Obeying precepts is a self-cultivation process used to break this robust and reflexive link between the self and desire directly. Precepts define ways to give up desire-drive conations and actions that involve the nonself performing negative and positive duties. Negative duties are egoistic behaviors that follow from obeying the principle of refraining from harming and injuring others and the associated laws. Positive duties, which involve conation, motivation, attention, cognition, and emotion, as well as behavior, obey the precepts of meditation and wisdom.

In the first stage of the path to the nonself, three main strategies are used to turn off desire. The most basic and easiest strategy to execute is to follow the precept rules that specify the behaviors that are not allowed. Given that desires are innately linked to the biological individual, the desire conation inevitably and reflexively comes out when we intentionally cease desire-driven behavior. The desire conation is like a seed from which motivation, attention, emotion and behavior spring (Dalai Lama, 1995a; Sheng Yen, 1999). It is strongly stressed in Buddhism that the steps designed to stop or extinguish the desire conation must be executed fully. The other two methods to cause the cessation of the desire-driven connation (meditation and wisdom/knowledge) are discussed later. It should be stressed that completely eliminating a desire-driven connation is a very challenging and extremely hard first step on the path to the nonself.

Precept is an umbrella term that subsumes five major precepts (Sheng Yen, 1999; Salgado, 2004; Ariyabuddhiphongs and Jaiwong, 2010). The first precept is to refrain from killing. The central tenet of Buddhism is non-harming, as Buddhism teaches the sanctity and equality of all life—humans, animals, plants, and even the non-biological environment (which is assumed to be living). The second precept is to refrain from taking things not given to you. Aside from outright stealing, this also includes consuming more than necessary and wasting resources. The third precept is to refrain from sexual misconduct. This includes sexual assaults, infidelity, promiscuity, and for Buddhists, noncelibacy. The fourth precept is to refrain from speaking falsehoods. The fifth precept is to refrain from substance abuse. Buddhism emphasizes wisdom and clarity of mind. It teaches us to "look within" to find our Buddha nature. Substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs cloud our minds and thus impair our ability to practice precepts. Furthermore, when using such substances, we are prone to disobey the previous four precepts.

The second method to eliminate desire-driven conation and behavior is meditation. It has two additional purposes. The second, which applies specifically to compassion meditation and death mediation, is to facilitate the dissolving of the self-process via loving kindness. The third, which is described in a later section, is to acquire clear insight into the reality of all things. In Buddhism, obeying the precepts and meditating are the best ways to get a clear insight into this reality (Dalai Lama, 1995a). Meditation is not restricted to specific locations and times.

In general, two kinds of meditation are especially useful in achieving the first and third goals. They are focused attention (FA) and open monitoring (OM) meditation (Lutz et al., 2008). FA meditation entails voluntarily focusing attention on a chosen object in a sustained fashion. OM meditation involves non-reactively monitoring the content of one's experience from moment to moment, primarily to recognize the nature of emotional and cognitive patterns. There are three main purposes of FA and OA meditation. The first purpose is to cultivate our conation, motivation, attention, and emotion so that we can renounce the worldly things that we desire. The second purpose is to induce a quiet consciousness (Cahn and Polich, 2006; Sedlmeier et al., 2012) as indicated by low-frequency (alpha) electroencephalography (EEG) rhythms, thereby sharpening perception of the sensations, conations, motivation, attention, and emotion. It is natural for one to involuntarily or voluntarily link one's conation/behavior to one's desires. Practicing FA and OA can gradually minimize and eventually break these links between conation flow/behavior and desires (Dalai Lama, 1995a). This practice gradually increases insight into the reality of all things and causes a loss of the sense of self. The third purpose is to gradually minimize the conation flow and behaviors that are linked to desire. One also gets clear insight into the unreality of the body and all things (Dalai Lama, 1995a).

Compassion is habitually having the conation that all living beings are inextricably interconnected (Hofmann et al., 2011). Specially, compassion meditation involves practicing loving-kindness and compassion; sympathetic joy—joy in another's joy, the opposite of schadenfreude; and equanimity—being calm and even-tempered (Buddhaghosa, 1975; Dalai Lama, 1995b). These four components are called *brahma viharas*, sublime states, also known as noble and divine abodes, or "immeasurables," that can be cultivated. They are described in the Visuddhimagga, an influential Buddhist text (Buddhaghosa, 1975). This practice does not require concentration on particular objects, memories or images, although in other meditations that are also part of their long-term training, practitioners focus on particular persons or groups of beings. Compassion meditation induces an arousal of consciousness that is indicated by high-frequency (gamma) EEG rhythms in long-term Buddhist meditators (Lutz et al., 2004). In fact, according to this definition of compassion, obeying the precepts is actually practicing compassion (Sheng Yen, 1999). This is because in obeying the precepts one does not do bad things and is selfless. Not doing self-centered things is doing good things and is compassionate. Thus, obeying precepts is considered a kind of compassion meditation (Sheng Yen, 1999; Tsong-Kha-Pa, 2000). Most importantly, compassion meditation stops the conation and behavior that are linked to desire.

Death meditation has two forms: Asubha meditation and death contemplation (Shiah and Yit, 2012). In Asubha meditation, one visualizes the decomposition of a dead body. Its goal is to give one insight into the true nature of the body, the self and desire, i.e., that they are unpleasant, disgusting, ugly, impermanent and cause suffering. Another goal is to create insight into the impermanence and emptiness of body and self. As will be discussed in a later section, this meditation is considered conducive to overcoming desire and lust (Shiah and Yit, 2012). Death contemplation is to frequently think intensively that death will someday come upon one. These two death meditations aim to reduce desire and attachment to the body. It is the contemplation of death that helps destroy our infatuation with and desire for pleasure.

The third way is to obtain the Buddha's wisdom/knowledge through practicing the meta-ethical reflexivity that guides the actions of an ideal person. The major goal of the Buddha's teachings is for one to learn the reality of emptiness and to increase compassion. Ignorance of Buddhist wisdom leads to enhancement of the self, which in turn leads to suffering (Dalai Lama, 1995a). This suffering and pain become so great that the person tries to get rid of it (Alt, 1980).

There are four major components of the Buddha's wisdom/knowledge (Leifer, 1999; Kelly, 2008; Nickerson and Hinton, 2011; Albahari, 2014): impermanence, suffering, the doctrine of dependent origination, and emptiness. Note that these ultimate realities can be observed in all things, especially during meditation (Dalai Lama, 1995a).

The truth of impermanence means that all compound objects, including ourselves, eventually decay, disintegrate, and die (Rinpoche, 1998). Thus, the reality of the body and all things is emptiness leading to impermanence (Rinpoche, 1998; Dalai Lama, 2005). The universal law of impermanence applies as much to psychological phenomena, such as thoughts feelings, and perceptions, as it does to material phenomena, both animate (e.g., the birth, living and death of sentient beings) and inanimate (Dalai Lama, 1995a; Shonin et al., 2014). The concept of impermanence is related to suffering, because suffering arises from craving things we desire; this craving originates in the self (Dalai Lama, 1995a). All desires give rise to much suffering when

the self is attached to them. This is because they are changeable and impermanent, i.e., a reflection of emptiness. Again, obeying precepts and meditating keep the self from craving and stop suffering. They help us understand that impermanence and the actions that arise from emptiness are all related to the nonself. Life is full of suffering. We inevitably suffer at birth and suffer from not getting what we want, suffer from getting what we don't want, suffer from getting old, suffer from getting sick, and suffer from dying. Also, the threat of one's own death causes a great deal of terror and pain, which in turn creates a strong motivation to seek meaning in death (Burke et al., 2010; Shiah and Yit, 2012). Buddhism considers death the greatest threat and suffering to human beings (Rinpoche, 1998; Shiah and Yit, 2012). In Buddhism, death serves as both a conscious and an unconscious reminder that life is finite and impermanent; recognition of this directly leads to anxiety followed by a search for the meaning of life (Shiah and Yit, 2012). In its initial stages, Buddhist theory draws heavily on the idea that this innate mechanism motivates the person to seek and be aware of the truth mentioned above about what causes our anxiety. This mechanism also motivates the person to seek a solution for reducing the anxiety, and especially for the nonself to pursue meaning. In its later development, cultivation of the transition from the self state to the nonself state was added as a way to totally conquer or eliminate death anxiety. Cultivating an awareness of the reality of death and of impermanence can resolve the suffering (Rinpoche, 1998).

The doctrines of dependent origination (causality) and karma say that each and every occurrence becomes a cause of all subsequent occurrences throughout space and time (Shonin et al., 2014; Allen et al., 2015). Everything is composite; there may be a cluster of causes for any one effect and any one cause can lead to multiple effects (Kelly, 2008). Thus, nothing has an intrinsic identity or substance. Phenomena are outside and independent of the self, and all things are in a continual process of arising and passing away (Dalai Lama, 1995a). The failure to understand these facts is the root cause of suffering (Shiah and Yit, 2012). This is because we pursue those things that our body desires. Our desires are nearly always aimed at the happiness of the self (hedonic principle), which can make a person more selfish and thereby have a negative effect on the well-being of others (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011). Buddhists argue that the desire-driven pursuit of happiness can lead to such negative emotions as cruelty, violence, pride, and greed, which in turn cause happiness to fluctuate (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011). Note that the Buddha's wisdom/knowledge can be observed and learned from obeying precepts and meditating (Dalai Lama, 1995a). Pursuing desires not only creates a lack of awareness, but it also projects onto both the self and the external world something that is not there—namely, emptiness (Dalai Lama, 1995a).

The purpose of meditation is to get rid of desires. At the same time, one is obeying precepts and practicing compassion, which makes one aware of emptiness. The essential wisdom/knowledge in Buddhist teaching consists of the reality of emptiness plus the value of compassion. Thus, compassion can be considered an authentic from of wisdom and a way to attain the state of nonself. Buddhists believe that the nonself state projects an unconditional, limitless loving kindness and compassion. Buddhists have long believed that this state conquers death anxiety (Shiah and Yit, 2012) and achieves an authentic and durable happiness (Joshanloo, 2014). The function of compassion is to minimize or extinguish the self, leading to creation of the nonself or selflessness (Shiah and Yit, 2012). Thus, the state of nonself-plus-compassion is thought to provide one with the fundamental meaning of being alive (Shiah and Yit, 2012). This is the major reason why the core teaching of Buddhism is compassion (Dalai Lama, 1995b; Wallace, 2001; Fink, 2012; Shiah and Yit, 2012; Albahari, 2014).

Because we realize the impermanence experientially, we arrive at the understanding of nonself. This is not a loss of the self. It continues to exist, but we don't see it the same way. What we gain is the true insight that the self is not the body and the mind (Dalai Lama, 1995a). Specifically, according to the MMS, reflexivity plays an important role in extinguishing the link between desire and the self. It monitors and understands its actions through a recursive loop, in which a thing becomes obeying precepts, meditating, and absorbing Buddhist wisdom. We can imagine many conations arising to link our desires to the creation of a sense of self. Reflexivity monitors these conations and breaks them down. Each breaking, which lasts only for a short "breaking-moment," has three steps: emergence, presence, and dissolution (Nyanaponika, 1998). The conations that reflexivity monitors are linked to desires associated with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the whole body. Reflexivity draws on meditation and wisdom to neutralize the five senses by keeping one aware of the desire conation without actually perceiving it (Brown and Ryan, 2003). In the meantime, our practices aimed at absorbing wisdom eventually reach a stage at which we clearly understand that everything, including the self's activities and all physical phenomena, arise, change and eventually pass away (Dalai Lama, 1995a). Finally, step by step, we attain the deep reflexivity that sees through and overcomes the delusion of the self and then dissolves the self. Thus, reflexivity is essential for maintaining meditative awareness, obeying the precepts, absorbing Buddhist wisdom, and cultivating a state of the self that is conducive to the creation of the state of nonself.

On the contrary, egoism is inclined to avoid obeying precepts, meditating and understanding all objects of ultimate reality. It tends to perform only negative duties and seeks enjoyment from sensual pleasure, such as attractive visual images, sounds, aromas, tastes, and tactile sensations. As a result, there is a strong focus on the satisfaction derived from pleasurable sensations, self-defense and egocentric biases (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011). The acquisition of material goods, financial security, power and fame may also lead to happiness, but they are too transient. Desire is nearly always centered on the self in a hedonic way, which can make a person more selfish and thereby have negative effects on the well-being of others (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011). We suffer when egoism craves or clings to things or desires (Dalai Lama, 1995a). Thus, Buddhists tend to argue that the desire-driven pursuit of happiness can lead to negative emotions such as pride and greed, and negative behavior such as cruelty and violence; hence, happiness fluctuates (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011).

According to the NT, the psychological functioning of the self, in contrast to that of the nonself, is concerned mostly with the individual, rather than with the person and the

knowledge/wisdom and actions arising from the Buddha's teachings (see **Figure 2**). This means that the nonself minimizes the individual and maximizes the person, knowledge/wisdom, and good actions as described in Buddhist teachings. **Figure 2** illustrates that the bigger size of the individual, knowledge/wisdom, person or action, the greater its impact on the nonself or the self. The MMS circle in the figure refers to the creation of desire by the psychological functions of the individual the nonself state has no desires, thus it has no circle in the figure.

Psychological Functioning of the Nonself and Egoism

In this section, I explain how Buddhism helps us to eliminate unhappiness caused by maintaining the self, and how it strengthens the self and elucidates the psychological transition from the self state to the nonself state (see **Figure 3**). The self engages in psychological activities to strengthen itself by applying the hedonic principle for the purpose of avoiding the pain caused by desire-driven pleasure. However, it does not do so successfully. In contrast, the nonself aims to overcome this suffering directly and does do it successfully. It employs the self-cultivation principle by practicing renunciation of desires, compassion, meditation, and absorbing Buddhist wisdom to see through and overcome the delusion of the self, leading to a profound transformation integrally connected to the experience of eliminating the sense of self and its psychological structures (Dalai Lama, 2005; Albahari, 2014). Finally, one derives authentic and durable happiness as a result of cultivating Buddhist teachings and practices (Wallace and Shapiro, 2006; Albahari, 2014). Egoism employs the hedonic principle in a desire-driven way, leading to negative emotions and fluctuations in happiness (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011). This Buddhist critique of desire-driven pleasure has been indirectly supported by a great deal of recent research demonstrating that the hedonic principle does not predict lasting happiness (Deci and Ryan, 2008; Crespo and Mesurado, 2015).

The psychological processes that represent the self-cultivation approach transitions from the self state to the nonself state by renouncing things we desire (Hwang and Chang, 2009). There is a sense of egolessness that reflects awareness of the (causal) nonself-universe connection as well as compassion and the interdependence and impermanence of all things (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011; Colzato et al., 2012), leading to a sense of no identity. On the contrary, individuals who apply egoism consider themselves as being fundamentally separated from others, autonomous in the world and relatively unique (Dambrun and Ricard, 2011).

Why does perception of the nonself lead to authentic and durable happiness? In addition to the explanations mentioned in earlier section, according to TMT, the prospect of death cannot threaten self-esteem if there is no self or identity, because there is no self-esteem that death can threaten. There would be no anxiety and no unhappiness, but rather the greatest happiness, contentment and equanimity with no capacity to suffer the pain caused by life's adversities. The concept of the nonself provides information about the presence of reliable patterns and coherences in the environment and also helps one cope with these adversities.

CONCLUSIONS

The present research is the first attempt to propose a theory (the NT) based on Buddhist teachings. The universal Mandala Model of Self (MMS) was developed to describe the well-functioning self in various cultures. The end goal of the self is to attain authentic and durable happiness. Because the nonself is considered to be a well-functioning self, the MMS is a suitable basis for constructing the NT. The concepts of egoism and the nonself aspects of psychological self-functioning and their underlying processes are informed by four concepts in MMS: biology, the ideal person, knowledge/wisdom and action. The psychological functioning of the nonself incorporates three ways of the self-cultivation process: giving up desires (by obeying specific precepts), practicing meditation and absorbing Buddhist wisdom. These three ways are essentially ways to experience the reality of emptiness and the importance of compassion, leading to a sense of no identity. The transition from the self state to the nonself state is a deeply transformative experience of eliminating the sense of self and its psychological structures, seeing through and overcoming the illusion of the self. In contrast, the psychological function of egoism is to strengthen the self by applying the hedonic principle to pursue desires leading to fluctuating happiness.

To our knowledge, the NT is the first theory to logically and coherently elucidate the Buddhist teachings in a theoretical way. This is especially true of the three logically interconnected ways in the transition from the self state to the nonself state: obeying precepts, meditating, and absorbing wisdom. Current psychological research offers preliminary confirmation of the Buddhist teachings that can be explained by the NT. For example, many of the emerging Buddhism-related findings demonstrate that mindfulness (Baer, 2003; Brown and Ryan, 2003; Khoury et al., 2015), compassion (Hofmann et al., 2011; Galante et al., 2014; Shonin et al., 2015) and meditation (Cahn and Polich, 2006; Sedlmeier et al., 2012) lead to enhanced positive emotion, attention and subjective well-being. According to the NT, these positive effects can be explained primarily by the concept of the nonself. This is because mindfulness, compassion, and meditation all lead us away from our desires, and thus, from suffering and distractions. This in turn leads to heightened positive emotion, subjective well-being and attentiveness. The NT also offers explanations for the effects of nonself-plus-compassion (Clobert and Saroglou, 2013; Clobert et al., 2015). One of these effects is the promotion of altruism and helping behavior, which according to the NT leads one away from desires and self-centeredness. Moreover, the NT postulates that nonself-plus-compassion conquers the fear of death through a process of self-cultivation that attains the nonself state by minimizing the self state (Shiah and Yit, 2012). The NT provides a novel perspective on the meaning of death. Appealing to nonself-plus-compassion, the NT also provides plausible explanations for mystical and peak experiences. A mystical experience is a sudden, all-encompassing sense of unity underlying all things, often mediated by an experience of light or of pure luminosity, and felt as having its source in a universal love/compassion that eternally pervades the physical universe (Hunt, 2006). A peak experience is that "rare, exciting, oceanic, deeply moving,

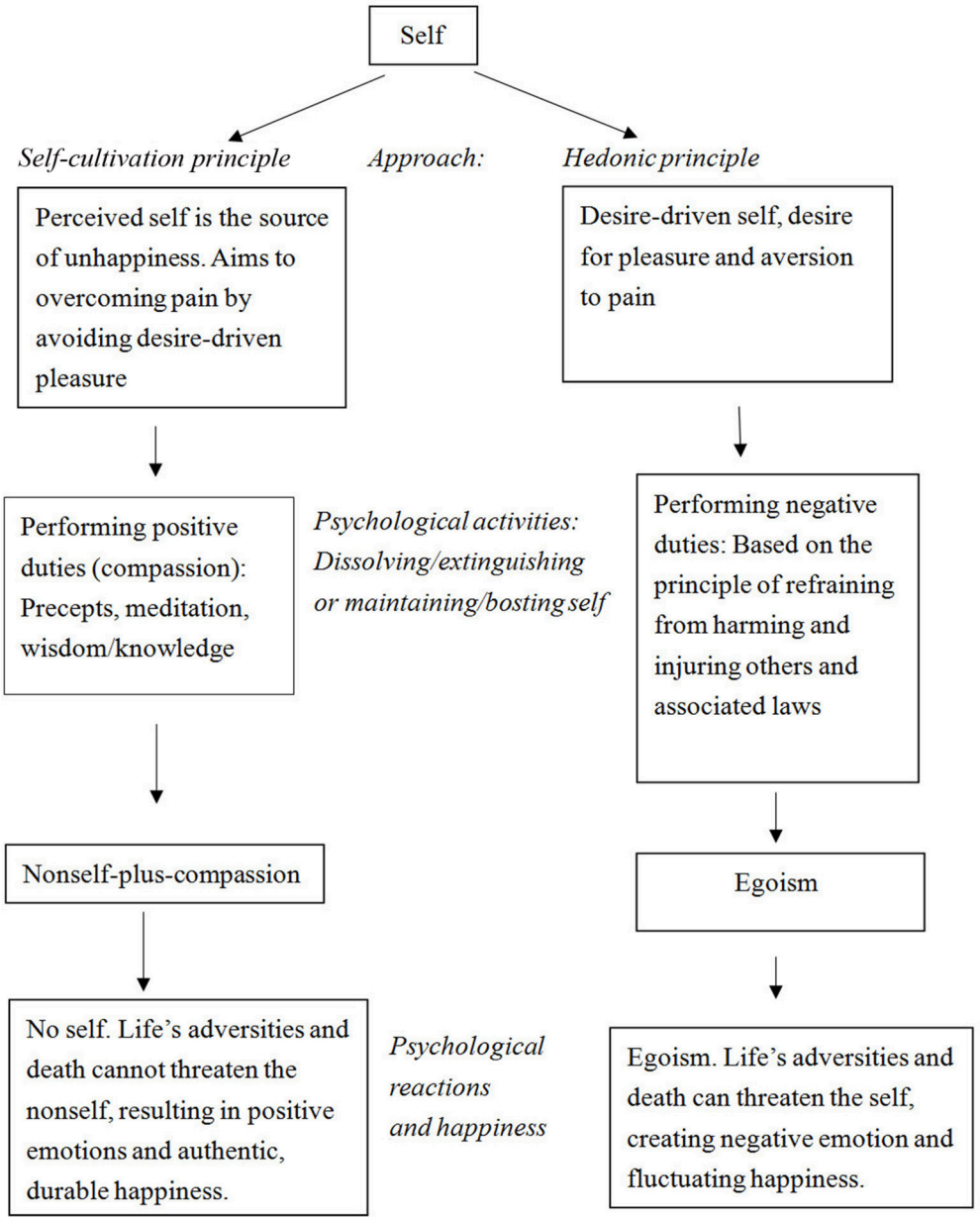

FIGURE 3 | Psychological functioning of the nonself and the self.

exhilarating, elevating experience that generates an advanced form of perceiving reality, and are even mystic and magical in their effect upon the experimenter" (Maslow, 1964). In the same way, the NT provides an explanation of the principles of moral conduct overwhelmingly endorsed by most cultures and religions.

Future Directions

Buddhist practice traditionally takes place in the context of spiritual development leading to enlightenment in the form of experience of the nonself, a state of total liberation and authentic and durable happiness (Dalai Lama, 1995a,b). Thus, Buddhist teachings can be used to help people maximize their full human potential. In fact, it has long been believed and testified to that Buddhist teachings and practices successfully remove pain and suffering, implying that they can be used to deal with all psychological problems (Dalai Lama, 1995a,b, 2005). This has practical implications for psychotherapy. Over the past 30 years, a growing number of psychotherapists, counselors and mental health workers have been engaged in various forms of Buddhist psychotherapy. The core idea of Buddhist teachings is not to attach to the self. As noted before, compassion is considered an authentic form of wisdom and a way to attain the state of nonself. The Buddhist construct of (non)attachment,

or nonself-plus-compassion, is not inconsistent with concept the Western psychological construal of attachment in the context of certain relationships (Sahdra and Shaver, 2013; Shonin et al., 2014). However, there is a strong and urgent need to ground Buddhist psychotherapy and psychology in more evidence-based research (Kelly, 2008; Shonin et al., 2014). The NT proposed in the present paper provides theoretical direction to the accumulation of such evidence-based data for use in Buddhist psychotherapy. Similarly, Buddhism has adopted an approach to the concept of the self that differs from that in Western psychology. There is a need to construct a nonself psychology based on the emptiness construct.

Obviously, it would take much effort and time to fully describe how one can achieve the ideal state of nonself through Buddhist cultivation and the avoidance of hedonic activities. In the present paper, only a very basic and initial framework of the nonself and the psychological processes that create it have been elucidated. An example is the widely-used and practical mindful-based meditation technique (Khoury et al., 2013, 2015) that forms a foundation of the Buddhist process of self-cultivation. Mindfulness was used as a technique to create enhanced subjective well-being because it was considered to be associated with an optimization of moment-to-moment experience in the West (Brown and Ryan, 2003). However, according to the NT, the main purpose of meditation is to get rid of desire conation and behavior rather than to create the positive effects of mindfulness. More sophisticated and detailed empirical research is needed on procedures for attaining the state of the nonself, including the three ways of obeying precepts, meditating and absorbing Buddhist wisdom.

Though the NT proposed in the present paper is very much in its infancy, it is built on very robust cornerstones of Buddhist teachings that have been practiced and tested for more than 2500 years. It also suggests a number of opportunities for further investigation. First, both contemporary and ancient Buddhist texts describe the "nonself state" in valid and illuminating ways that provide a different perspective on human beings than does the Western concept of personality (Hwang, 2011; Johnson, 2015). For example, answers to the profound questions the NT raises about the true nature of the whole person might lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of life and its ultimate goals. Secondly, preliminary results (Falb and Pargament, 2013) indicate that application of Buddhist coping mechanisms leads to positive subjective well-being and adjustment. Future research based on the NT should also examine its relationship to the successful implementation of such adjustment and coping strategies. Such research would have important implications for understanding the nature of these adjustment processes and mental health generally. Questions remain about how the nonself develops and what psychological and social conditions support and hinder the fulfillment of the goals specified in the NT. Buddhism's concepts of self, egoism and nonself are complex (Dalai Lama, 1995a; Tsong-Kha-Pa, 2000; Albahari, 2014). In the present paper, to link Buddhism to psychology, I used broad definitions of self, egoism and nonself familiar to psychologists. This approach likewise allowed me to link the NT to both psychological studies and Buddhist teachings. It also demonstrates that the NT is testable using the methods of psychological research. Future studies are needed to elucidate these complex concepts of self, egoism and nonself as well as their implications.

Buddhism offers ideas about how self-cultivation can be used to attain the ultimate state of nonself-plus-compassion. From the moral perspective, nonself-plus-compassion can be regarded as a very high standard of morality and a high level of moral expertise. It has been suggested that this moral expertise emerges from the interactions among beliefs, desires, and moral actions (Hulsey and Hampson, 2014). Little is currently known about these interactions. The NT not only offers insight into how these interactions work, but it also explains why we need moral codes and where they lead us to. For example, according to the NT, moral actions lead us away from desires and suffering and toward the nonself state. This line of future research also could include the effects of obeying the precepts, which is comprised of practicing compassion and acting morally.

Though Buddhism is thought to be practiced in all cultures, it developed and is mainly practiced in Asia. One might ask whether it is uniquely suitable to certain cultures. For example, the Buddhist core concept of avoidance of desire-driven pleasure can be found across cultures (Joshanloo, 2014; Joshanloo and Weijers, 2014). Other concepts similar to nonself-plus-compassion, such as altruism, mindfulness, mediation, mystical/peak experience, death anxiety and moral conduct, are also apparently found across cultures. The NT provides a sophisticated framework to explain a possible mechanism for these universal effects and phenomenon.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There have been very few empirical studies or theories directly targeting Buddhist teachings. This paper is the first to postulate an academically respectable theory based on a full consideration of Buddhist teachings. The hope is that the present research has helped to fill these conceptual gaps, because it suggests that Buddhism provides a reliable and useful way to cope with life's adversities. It guides us toward authentic, durable happiness, and it contributes to the solution of a variety of mental health problems. Thus, the intention of this article was to offer a theory to guide future and innovative research into the potential mutual enrichment of Buddhism and current psychological theory, research, and practice. Although more research is needed on this front, it is hoped that the NT will open significant new avenues for mental health research and unravel the secret of why Buddhism has lasted for thousands of years.

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The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

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OPINION
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Traditional Meditation, Mindfulness and Psychodynamic Approach: An Integrative Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

In the last three decades, we have been witnessing a growing interest toward academic research on mindfulness practices based on Traditional Meditation (TM) and Buddhist precepts (Pagnini and Philips, 2015).

Phenomenologically, meditation is a practice that could be meant as mind focalization on objects, body feelings, emotions and thoughts. It could have religious, spiritual, and philosophical purposes, but it can just be aimed to a deeper knowledge of themselves and/or an improvement of psychophysical condition.

Under a Buddhist's perspective, causes of all human sufferings should be eradicated through a progressive recognition of the real nature of the Self as impermanent and interdependent: meditation is meant as the practice aimed to achieve this goal (Dalai Lama, 1986).

This process of liberation from suffering is based on Samatha and Vipassana practices, as two-sided aspects of TM. The former is a concentrative meditation; this is a "*practice in which sustained attention is developed by attending to the target object to the total exclusion of all other objects and experiences*" (Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009, p. 154). The latter is an insight-based meditation; this is a practice in which awareness of impermanence and interdependence of Self and reality are obtained through observation of phenomena (Goleman, 1976).

Western psychotherapy approaches have been integrating their clinical practices with these Eastern techniques and doctrines. After the rise of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program, built up by Kabat-Zinn (1990), many protocols, the so-called Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs), spread out. To mention some examples among MBIs: Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT - Linehan, 1993), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT – Hayes et al., 1999), Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (Segal et al., 2002).

MBIs are typically grounded on a cognitive-behavioral perspective (for an overview see Mace, 2007) and usually they use meditation as a method to improve "acceptance of" and "focal attention on" the immediate present moment in a nonjudgmental way (Bishop et al., 2004; Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009). A number of randomized control trials has tested MBIs efficacy showing improvements in many medical and/or psychological disorders, such as depression and anxiety (Bohlmeijer et al., 2010; Hofmann et al., 2010; Piet and Hougaard, 2011; Piet et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2015) and neurological conditions (Rosenzweig et al., 2010; Pagnini et al., 2015; for a review of the literature, see Grossman et al., 2004; Keng et al., 2011; Galante et al., 2012, 2014; van der Velden et al., 2015).

Recently, TM and MBIs have been compared in order to underline theoretical and practical similarities and differences. Even if MBIs have demonstrated their efficacy, it seems that relevant components of TM may have been developed in a peculiar way, leading to a modern mindfulness

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concept that partially diverge from traditional, ancient one (Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009; Chiesa and Malinowski, 2011). For examples, at a theoretical level: TM and MBIs are similar since they both refer to meditation as main method to achieve their goals, and both of them assume that a mental training, to calm mind and develop self-observation skills, is required to reach psychological changes; but they are different in their purposes, since MBIs are oriented toward psychological welfare and treatment of psychopathologies (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Segal et al., 2002), whilst TM aims at reducing humans' afflictions through a path toward the comprehension of the nature of the Self (Dalai Lama, 1986; Epstein, 2008). Practically, both TM and MBIs use Samatha and Vipassana meditation, but in MBIs they are not taught as two different practices as in TM (Shapiro and Carlson, 2009).

Moreover, some MBIs, such as the DBT or the ACT, seem to be mostly content-focused: they are oriented to a modification of cognitions, thoughts and emotions (Chiesa and Malinowski, 2011). Conversely, TM is mostly process-focused and it is mainly concerned with introspective awareness of pure perceptions (Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009).

In synthesis, meditation practices have been efficaciously integrated in Western cognitive-behavior-oriented psychology, but some features of TM had been changed or not considered in the modern concepts of mindfulness (to deepen, see Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009; Chiesa and Malinowski, 2011).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Psychodynamic interventions are one of the most diffuse psychological approach in Western countries. The basic assumption of psychodynamic perspective is that thoughts and behaviors are determined by unconscious and often conflictual dynamics out of awareness. Ego functions, object relations relevance, defense mechanisms, intra-psychic conflict, transference and countertransference phenomena, and the relevance of past events on personality are some of the main theoretical concepts of these approaches (Fonagy and Target, 2009; Gabbard, 2014). Purposes of psychodynamic psychotherapy are various, partially depending on specific clinical orientation, but generally, they are focused toward the intra-psychic conflict resolution and the research of the truth about the Self, bringing unconscious material to awareness.

In our opinion, it is very peculiar that TM has not been well integrated into psychodynamic approach. These perspectives share many concepts and features: they are both introspective disciplines that aim to help humans in coping with psychological suffering, to find the truth about the self, and to assist awareness of unconscious processes in order to make people "*psychologically free*" (Germer et al., 2013).

We carried out a research on PubMed using the key words "psychodynamic and mindfulness," "psychodynamic and meditation," "psychodynamic and Buddhism," from 1990. On the basis of this simple search, we found out 24 articles. For the most, these papers were focused on the comparison between different psychotherapy models, such as psychodynamic psychotherapy and MBIs (Sørensen et al., 2011; Flynn, 2012; Hunot et al., 2013; Mayo-Wilson et al., 2014; Bandelow et al., 2015; van Dessel et al., 2015) and furnish a review of the different models applied in specific situations, such as sexual dysfunction, chronical pain, irritable bowel syndrome (Naliboff et al., 2008; Assalian, 2013; Purdy, 2013; Recordon and Köhl, 2014).

Actually, this scientific literature seems to highlight the differences and the peculiarities of these perspectives rather than the overlapping features and the possibilities to integrate.

Nevertheless, there are a few attempts to integrate meditation principles and psychodynamic approaches: Johansson et al. (2012) applied mindfulness measures to evaluate the process of an "online" psychodynamic psychotherapy; Schussel and Miller (2013) used a method called "best self visualization," which is aimed at increasing self-efficacy and reintegrating dissociated self-states, and they described it within the framework of meditation and psychodynamic theory; Twemlow (2001a,b) proposed to use specific precepts of Zen's practice to train psychodynamic therapists.

The only integrative structured model we found is the Mindfulness-Based Transactional Analysis (Žvelc et al., 2011), in which modern mindfulness techniques have been combined to Transactional Analysis, that is a psychodynamic-oriented approach at theoretical level. However, there is not yet any empirical study aimed to evaluate its efficacy.

To the best of our knowledge, scientific literature completely lacks of any integrative RCT involving the use of meditation in the psychodynamic clinical context.

However, Eastern conceptions of human psyche in Western psychology tradition has been already introduced by preeminent figures from European psychoanalytical panorama, such as Jung (1939), Fromm et al. (1960), and more recently, scholars as Stern (1997), and Safran (2003).

For instance, Jung's perspective is focused on the individuation process aimed at obtaining self-awareness of unconsciousness. This process permits a reduction of unconscious material influence on oneself through a widening of conscience. It could be described as an experience that brings to the discovery and acceptance of the real nature of Self, and the awareness of its relationship with all the other people and creatures.

By congregating the Freudian tradition with the Jungian perspective, Fromm explicitly recommends many contact points between Psychoanalysis and Buddhism, such as the same ethical orientation, similar goals, the need of a guide (master/psychotherapist) for the practice, and the idea that intellectualization is uselessness in the quest of oneself.

Stern focused on a radical awareness of *hic et nunc*. He claims that an aware and non-judgmental attention to the present moment could further a deeper understanding of oneself and others. This feature is very similar to traditional and modern mindfulness approaches.

Moreover, the Safran's relational perspective supports the conception of a Self as an ensemble of relational configurations, as it grows up in a contextual situation. Interestingly, this idea is partially overlapping the Buddhist perspective of an interdependent and contingent Self.

TOWARD AN INTEGRATION BETWEEN PSYCHODYNAMIC AND MEDITATION PRACTICES

Although these few but authoritative theoretical efforts and contributions, the integration process of meditation in psychodynamic psychotherapy has a number of criticisms mainly at theoretical level. These limits could have impeded psychodynamic therapists in applying meditation-based interventions during their clinical practice.

Part of this issue could be due to the conceptual ambiguity concerning the terms "Ego," "Self," and "emptiness," which makes TM and psychodynamic perspectives apparently incompatible. Indeed, on one side, concepts as "focal attention" or "awareness of the present moment" had been translated easily into the typical language of cognitive-behavior-oriented psychology; on the other side, the integration of Buddhism and psychodynamic assumptions of Ego seems to be more complex (Rubin, 1999). If Buddhism is conceived as an "egolessness" discipline and psychodynamic as an "ego-centered" approach (Hwang, 2011), it is necessarily impossible to build an inter-theoretical bridge between these two perspectives. Meditation is indeed described as a method directed to transcend Ego, whilst psychodynamic psychotherapy is classically aimed at strengthening Ego (Engler, 1984). Recently, Shiah (2016) positioned the Self (meant as pleasure-oriented) and the Nonself (meant as the realization that the Self lacks intrinsic existence) at the opposite ends of a continuum. In this framework, meditation is suggested as a method to promote the dissolution of the pleasure-oriented Self, and the acquisition of insights about the real nature of all things, toward a Nonself state. This represents an interesting translation of Buddhist psychology in a Western language, but Self-transcending processes still need further explorations for a better understanding of their dynamics.

In fact, conversely to common-sense language, during meditation some aspects of Ego, as conceived by Western psychological perspective, are boosted, and *not* abandoned. Meditation influences many positive aspects of Ego, enabling a development from *inside*, and not *beyond* Ego itself (Epstein, 2008). By considering Ego like a combination of functions and representations (Epstein, 1988, 2008), it is possible to understand in a Western perspective what is meant by Buddhist doctrine in the so-called "absence of ego" or "Nonself" (Shiah, 2016). Specifically, Epstein (1988) focused on that "abstract self-representation" that permits to everyone to build an image of oneself like an agent, independent, and immanent, based on a narcissistic representation of ideal Ego. "*Exposure of these representations through the non-judgmental light of mindfulness permits a simultaneous dis-identification from and integration of self-images that have often been unquestioned assumptions or split off rejections*" (Epstein, 1988, p. 65). It means that one, through meditation practice, could become aware of all the features that he abstractly ascribes to himself, but with a detachment from these images. The process of detachment from these features is represented by the "Self-transcending path" of Buddhist's tradition that aims at bringing awareness of the transitory nature of the Self, which is a feature scarcely considered in modern MBIs (Chiesa and Malinowski, 2011). By focusing on a deep introspective analysis of the Self, psychodynamic approach could be the eligible way to achieve the awareness of Self impermanence. This process is made possible by some alteration in functional parts of Ego due to the meditation practice. Indeed, this awareness can be referred to a function that implies an auto-observational capacity of Ego to be aware of itself and of what it is experiencing (Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009). Since self-representation as agent loses its centrality along the practice, a boost of this Ego function permits the "*integration of the experience of disintegration*" of the Self (Epstein, 1988, p. 67).

At the same time meditation could further a reduction of other Ego functions. Brown and Engler's studies (as cited in Epstein, 1990) showed that experienced meditators could avoid to use defense mechanisms dealing with their internal conflicts. Meditation practice promotes a reduction of defensive function of Ego, "*censoring of any kind is discouraged*" (Epstein, 1990, p. 21).

In this vein, when Buddhist psychology talks about "absence of Ego," "egolessness" (Epstein, 1988), or "emptiness," it does not refer to a simple "nothing," as in a lack of an Ego structure, but it involves a shift from a representation of an independent and solid Self to a conception of Self as relative, contingent and contextual (Epstein, 2015). Self is not meant as something that existed and then removed, but as something that has never been in the way we usually think about it (Epstein, 1990). "*To understand selflessness one had to first find the self as it exists, and then examine the feeling closely*" (Epstein, 2015, p. 22).

Meditation could be introduced in psychodynamic interventions, as Germer et al. (2013) proposed different ways to included mindfulness practices in psychotherapy: (a) "meditation-based psychodynamic psychotherapy," in which TM is meant as the core of the treatment to achieve therapy purposes; b) "meditation-informed psychodynamic psychotherapy," in which the therapist refer to Buddhist psychology without an explicit use of meditation practices during the treatment; (c) "psychodynamic therapist who practices meditation," in which the therapist employs meditation that could lead to a development of positive qualities like empathy and compassion, and an improvement in clinical skills, like emotional regulation and management of transferal and counter transferal dynamics.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The purpose of this article is to consolidate the inter-theoretical bridge between psychodynamic approach and TM, beyond the apparent incompatibility.

Our impression is that even if some authors have already worked in order to fill the gap between TM and psychodynamic psychotherapy at theoretical level, this integration could be underrated and these efforts remain isolated. This could be due mainly to ambiguities in the translation of those terms with respect to the fundaments of core concepts

of both perspectives, and a lack of empirical research on psychodynamic and meditation. Psychodynamic approach could embrace those aspects of TM that have been less developed in MBIs' theory and practice. Moreover, an integration of modern mindfulness practices into a psychodynamic framework should be explored. Further empirical studies and theoretical considerations are needed to corroborate testable hypotheses and comparing classical and combined models, in order to promote the integration between these perspectives, both for clinical practice and scientific research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed, have made substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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