

CHAPTER II

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

SAMPLES

The samples are 144 adolescent students studying in three different schools. Two of the schools are selected because they are composed of at least 40% ethnic Chinese students, and in the other school about 98% of the students are ethnic Chinese. From personal correspondence with the principals of the schools, the author has been informed that Chinese students are fully accepted; and that the schools do not in any way arouse ethnic consciousness among the student. Besides, the schools in the samples do not have any specific aim to encourage or enforce assimilation of the Chinese as have many government schools.

THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The Cultural Scale

The Cultural Scale was tentatively prepared by the author after several discussions with an expert on the Chinese and many Chinese friends. From this material, a questionnaire composed of 29 items was constructed. Examples of items are:

1. A person who studies in a Chinese primary schools.
2. A person who habitually speaks Chinese to his friends.
3. A person who earns his living by trade.

4. A person who wants to have a Chinese funeral when he dies.
5. A person who reads Chinese habitually.

Sixty university students were asked to judge each of these items on a ten-point scale of Chineseness. If the judges felt that the items had a high degree of Chineseness they assigned high point values to those items, and on the same principle, assigned low point values to the items they felt had a low degree of Chineseness. Arithmetic means and standard deviations of these twenty nine items were then computed. Nine items with the smallest standard deviation and relatively high arithmetic means were selected for the construction of the Cultural Scale. The final scale was composed of nine items. Each item was transferred into the form of a Likert type scale.

Examples of items in the final Chinese Cultural Scale are:

I speak Chinese to my friends

- a every day
- b almost every day
- c sometimes
- d rarely
- e never

I worship at a Chinese ancestor's shrine at home

- a every day
- b twice a month
- c only on important festivals (e.g. New Year, Shingming)
- d rarely
- e never

The scale point value of each choice is

a = 1, b = 2, c = 3, d = 4, e = 5

The most devout Chinese would score low in this scale. The Thai would score high; and the ones who score in between are the

Chinese who adopt Thai culture and are called in this study the "Sino-Thai".

The operational definitions of the Chinese, the Sino-Thai, and the Thai in this study will depend upon their scores in the Cultural Scale. The division of the score is done in the following way. The maximum score is 45 and the minimum score is 9, and the subjects are supposed to be divided into three groups according to their scores. The range of scores within each group is $\frac{45 - 9}{3} = 12$.

Therefore, the ethnic Chinese who score between 9 and 20 are called "Chinese"; the ethnic Chinese who score between 21 and 32 are called "Sino-Thai", and the ethnic Thai who score between 33 and 45 are called "Thai".

However, when this Cultural Scale was administered to the subjects and the scoring was worked out, we found that there was one group of subjects who could not be assigned to any of these categories. They were ethnic Chinese who scored between 33 and 45. Therefore, a new group had to be set up, and we called these people "High-Thai-culture Sino-Thai".

TABLE I
 MEAN CULTURAL SCORE OF THE FOUR CULTURAL GROUPS

	Mean scores on the cultural scale	N (total = 144)
Chinese Group	18	15
Sino - Thai Group	24.8	40
High Thai Culture Sino-Thai group	35.6	16
Thai group	42.8	73

To avoid jeopardizing the validity of the answers by making the subjects too self-conscious of their ethnic background, the questionnaire was diversified as much as possible. Nine comparable Thai and Western items were added, together with twenty three items concerning everyday life and activities. The nine items on Thai cultural behaviour patterns also served as a check on the construct validity of the Cultural Scale. That is the "Thai" should score low and the "Chinese" should score high on this Thai Cultural Scale, and on the Chinese Cultural Scale it should be the other way round, i.e. negatively correlated. Then from the computation of the scores on the two scales we found that the correlation coefficient was $-.68$. (The correlation is not perfect because many of the "Sino-Thai" scored low on both scales.)

The Social Distance Scale

The development of the Social Distance Scale was conducted in two phases. The first phase was the collection of the statements loaded with social distance. These statements were collected from the sixty university students' responses to questions such as :-

If I met a male Chinese labourer, I would.....

If I met a female Thai trader, I would.....

If I met a female Chinese physician, I would....

Through personal contact with Dr. Harry C. Triandis, the author also obtained another 50 statements Dr. Triandis used to standardize his Social Distance Scale in his study.⁽³⁶⁾

The translation of the fifty statements was done by the author. The items which were not applicable to Thailand were discarded. The 45 final statements were prepared from those two sources. In the second phase these statements were administered to 45 Students in the Faculty of Education who acted as judges. Thurstone's equal appearing interval technique was used in selecting the items. The judges were asked to place the items into 20 categories that were arranged in order of favourableness.

Two statements were given as anchorages at both ends. The statement "I would marry this person" represents zero social distance score. The statement "I would exterminate this person",

36. Triandis, op cit.

represents 100 social distance score.

Twenty statements were then selected according to the following criteria: They represent the satisfactory ranges of social distance score from zero to one hundred. Since the majority of the statements were judged to be on the favourable side, a high proportion of the statements selected were also on the favourable side. And if two or more items lay in the same interdecile range, the one with the least standard deviation was preferred.

Six descriptions of the stimulus persons were prepared. Four of the descriptions were based on the cultural characteristics of the four groups, which have been discussed already. That is each group of subjects has to indicate the amount of social distance towards the members of their own group and towards the members of the other three different groups. Two more additional stimulus persons were added because it was felt that the plain description of cultural characteristics of Chinese and Thai stimulus persons may not have been sufficient to arouse the ingroup feeling in the Chinese and Thai subjects. Therefore, the descriptions of an extremely pro-Thai and an extremely pro-Chinese person were added. It was expected that the Chinese would respond most favourable to the extreme Chinese and most unfavourable to the extreme Thai; and the Thai would respond in the reverse to each extreme.

The Social Distance Scale was administered to the groups of subjects who had previously taken the Cultural Scale. The time interval between the two tests was 5 weeks. Informal interviews with the subjects after the last testing suggested that the subjects were not aware of the relationship between the two tests.

The scoring procedure of the respondents' answers on the Social Distance Scale was the one suggested by Green.³⁷ That is the median of the score values of the statements the subjects endorsed, was counted as their final social distance score.

37. Bert F. Green, "Attitude Measurement", Handbook of Social Psychology (Gardner and Lindzeyed) Vol. I, (Addison and Wesley, 1954), p. 350.