

IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ATTITUDES OF CHINESE YOUTH TOWARD THE SECOND-GENERATION RICH

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We investigated the implicit attitudes of Chinese youth towards the second-generation rich, and the relationship of these with their explicit attitudes. Participants were 119 undergraduate students (58 men and 61 women). Using the Semantic Differential Measure and the Feeling Thermometer Scale, we examined the participants' explicit attitudes, and we used the Implicit Association Test to assess their implicit attitudes toward the second-generation rich. Results

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The authors wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for their constructive suggestions, and to thank Mr Muntazir Mehdi and Miss Gina for proofreading this manuscript. This study was partially supported by the National Nature Science Foundation of China (31300833) and the Teaching Reform Project of Chongqing University of Arts and Science (140307).

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showed that the participants did not show a negative implicit attitude towards the second-generation rich. However, the participants exhibited a negative explicit attitude toward the second-generation rich. These results are consistent with previous research. This suggests that the second-generation rich can take advantage of these findings and project a more positive image of themselves to other people in China.

Keywords: second-generation rich, implicit attitude, explicit attitude, Implicit Association Test, Chinese youth.

Literature Review

Three decades after the reforms policy was introduced in China, there exists a group of young people who were born into wealthy families that have connections with people in decision-making, powerful roles, who have high social visibility, and who have an entrepreneurial advantage. These people are referred to as the *second-generation rich* (Fu Er-dai, 富二代; Gu & Ma, 2013; Kan, 2013), a term first used in a report by Luo published in the *China News Weekly* in 2004. Until 2008, the second-generation rich were mainly regarded as a topic of economic concern about inheriting private enterprises in the commercial field, but this has now become a term with negative connotations as there has been a lot of negative media coverage about the second-generation rich in China (Wang & Juslin, 2011), which has led to many people holding derogatory stereotypical views about them (Zhu, 2009). However, although the second-generation rich have advantages that others lack because they do not have wealth inherited from their parents, the second-generation rich are also hedged in by constraints and expectations set by their wealthy parents. For example, their parents may expect them to be high achievers in a professional field. Therefore, our aim was to establish exactly how other people in China evaluate and perceive the second-generation rich.

Previous researchers have studied explicit attitudes toward the second-generation rich through surveys, content analyses, and literature reviews. For example, Chen and Zhao (2013) conducted a study with college students belonging to the lower economic class, and asked them to fill in a questionnaire about their impressions of the second-generation rich. Results showed that most of the college students with low socioeconomic status reported perceiving the second-generation rich as money wasters, show-offs, extravagant, arrogant, and lacking in a sense of responsibility. These findings suggest that the respondents had a negative impression of the second-generation rich. Consistent with the survey results, other researchers using content analyses also found the same negative tendencies in reports in the Chinese mass media. For instance, Xie (2012) analyzed reports (i.e., types of report, themes, wording, and key words) in 20 different Chinese newspapers about the second-generation rich for the year 2011. Results showed that the print media tended to report on the personal lives

of the second-generation rich, and their reports had a labeling effect, tagging the second-generation rich as offensive and as wealthy showoffs. Results from another content-analysis study (Zhong, 2012) showed that negative discussions about the second-generation rich can be exaggerated through a variety of communication modes such as blogs (Weibo), social networking sites, and television, as well as in print media. Through the electronic and print media, the bad behaviors of the second-generation rich are publicized, and such negative impressions of the second-generation rich are further reinforced by forum discussions via the Internet.

In addition to surveys and content analyses, Gu and Ma (2013) used literature reviews to examine research on the second-generation rich on the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). They found that all research from 2004 to 2012 was focused on the implications, problems, group characteristics, and the cause of the formation of the stereotypical view of the second-generation rich. However, in the discussion of the group characteristics of the second-generation rich, they found a tendency for this group to be generalized and labeled. Because of the immoral, unlawful, and violent behavior of some of the second-generation rich, the general public was inclined to think of the whole group as arrogant and immoral, along with other negative characteristics. The findings in the studies we have reviewed suggest that, on the level of explicit attitudes, Chinese people's evaluation of the second-generation rich is negative. However, we did not locate any studies that were focused on implicit attitudes toward the second-generation rich.

Researchers (Gawronski & Payne, 2011; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995) have shown that the behaviors and judgments of individuals are affected not only by their explicit attitudes, but also by their implicit attitudes. *Explicit attitude* is a kind of reaction that can be understood, reflected, or reported through self-reflection, and the individual's response can be controlled through higher cognitive processes (Rydell & McConnell, 2006; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000). Preexisting information (Petty & Cacioppo, 2012), and semantic attitude—that is, when the connotative meaning is used to derive the attitude towards a given object, event, or concept (Gawronski & Payne, 2011)—have a controlling impact on the explicit attitude.

Implicit attitude (Gawronski & Payne, 2011) is unconscious and automatically activated and is difficult to measure through traditional methods such as questionnaires, interviews, and other direct measuring methods. Therefore an indirect measuring method should be used (Wilson et al., 2000). One of the most common research methods used for measuring implicit social cognition is the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). The IAT is designed to detect the strength of a person's automatic association between mental representations of objects (concepts) in memory. It is the indirect

measurement of an individual's implicit attitude assessed through the length of reaction time evaluated by means of the automated link between words and attributes using a computer. Many researchers have shown that the IAT is an effective method to measure implicit attitude (Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001; Fazio & Olson, 2003; Karpinski & Hilton, 2001).

However, the measurement of implicit and explicit attitude is not highly correlated (Gawronski & LeBel, 2008). First, according to the dual-memory-systems model, different memory systems are activated in the measurement of implicit and explicit attitudes (DeCoster, Banner, Smith, & Semin, 2006). The implicit measurement is equated to the slow learning memory system; it is a simple connection with, and response of, existing beliefs and stimulation. By contrast, the explicit measurement relies on the stimulation of a quick combination memory system, which is more direct than implicit measurement. Consequently, implicit and explicit attitudes are inconsistent.

In addition, the associative-propositional evaluation model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, 2007) can also be used to explain the disconnection between implicit and explicit attitudes. In this model the construction of attitude is described as being the result of a dynamic and dual processing system, in which the tendency to evaluate the attitude is the result of two different, but at the same time, interactive cognitive processes in memory: the associative process and the propositional process. The *associative process* in the model equals implicit attitude. When an individual receives the relevant stimulation, in the associative process he or she will automatically and unconsciously search the existing information in the brain and respond to the object with immediate affective reaction, without being affected by any belief or value, which means the associative process will be activated regardless of the individual's subjective attitude. On the contrary, in the *propositional process* the individual uses thinking, analysis, and the consistency with other related propositions to make an evaluation, which generates the overt attitude. Therefore, based on the possible inconsistencies between explicit and implicit attitude, so as to get a full understanding of other people's attitudes toward the second-generation rich in China it is necessary to focus on the measurement of implicit attitude.

Method

Participants

We recruited 128 undergraduate students (M_{age} 21.8 years; range from 19 to 24 years, 63 men, 65 women) by advertising on campus at the Chongqing University of Arts and Sciences. All the participants had normal or corrected to normal vision with no color perception deficiency, and all were well versed in computer usage. To avoid any experience effect in the test, the researchers ascertained

that none of the participants had participated in this kind of experiment before. Informed consent was obtained from participants prior to their commencing the experiment. All of the scales and the procedure used in the study were approved for use by the Ethical Committee of the Chongqing University of Arts and Sciences.

Measures

Measurement of explicit attitude. We used two measurements to assess the participants' explicit attitudes toward the second-generation rich.

Semantic Differential Measure (SDM; Hummert et al., 2002; Su, 2014). The SDM has five items: ugly versus beautiful, bad versus good, annoying versus pleasant, dishonest versus honest, and terrible versus nice. Our respondents were requested to rate the second-generation rich and other people through the five items on a scale of 0 to 6. The closer the rating was to 0 the more negative was their impression; the closer it was to 6 the more positive was their impression. The average score for the five items indicated the respondents' explicit attitude toward the second-generation rich and toward other people.

Feeling Thermometer Scale (FTS; Hummert et al., 2002; Wen & Zuo, 2013). This scale has only one item. Participants in our study were asked to grade a feeling thermometer toward the second-generation rich and toward other people from 0 centigrade to 99 centigrade where 0 centigrade means *unpleasant*, 50 centigrade means *neutral*, and 99 centigrade means *pleasant*. Respondents can choose any temperature from 0 to 99 centigrade.

Measurement of implicit attitude. We used E-Prime 2.0 software to develop the experimental program for our study based on the IAT, to test the participants' implicit attitude toward the second-generation rich and other people. The computer automatically recorded the participants' response time and accuracy. All the concept words and attribution words required in the IAT were generated through our literature review and through a survey.

We first searched for information about the second-generation rich in the CNKI, and chose the 15 words most frequently used to describe the second-generation rich and the 15 words most frequently used to describe other groups of Chinese people. Next, we recruited 95 undergraduate students (not part of the main study) of whom 89 completed the task (45 men and 44 women). We asked them to rank each of the 15 words in each category according to their representativeness by matching them with their perceptions of second-generation rich and other people. The words they judged as most representative could score up to 15 points, the least representative word could score only 1 point, the higher the score the more representative it was of that group. Finally, we chose the five concept words that had been scored as the most representative to describe Chinese people other than the second-generation rich (i.e., working-class people, second-

generation farmers, second-generation migrant laborers, the children in families where the parents were not rich) and the five most representative concept words that had been scored as most representative to describe those who are termed the *purple offspring* in China (i.e., children of the rich, second-generation officers, descendants of rich and powerful families, second-generation celebrities).

To select the positive and negative attribution words, after searching through the information related to the second-generation rich on CNKI and correlation studies using the IAT (Breen & Karpinski, 2013; De Houwer, Custers, & De Clercq, 2006; Liu, Ma, & Luo, 2010), we chose 15 negative adjectives to describe the second-generation rich. After that we distributed the survey through the Internet, as well as asking the 89 participants to rate the words from 1 (the least conforming) to 15 (the most conforming). Next, we chose the top five words in the scale and found antonyms for each of these by locating the words in a thesaurus. Finally, we selected five negative words (i.e., ordinary, incompetent, unkind, hostile, fierce) and five positive words (i.e., outstanding, capable, kind, friendly, good-natured).

Procedure

We used the IAT paradigm developed by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003), which comprises seven steps (see Table 1). The first step is the group differentiation recognition of the concept words. Participants are asked to respond by assessing the word stimuli and pressing the response keys as quickly as possible. This first step constituted 20 trials with five words for the second-generation rich and five words for the other people with each occurring twice (the Z and M keys represented the second-generation rich and other people, respectively). The next step is the group differentiation recognition of the attribution words and consisted of 20 trials similar to step one. The participants were asked to respond as quickly as possible by assessing the word stimuli and pressing the response keys (Z for negative words and M for positive words). The third step requires the recognition of the combination of concept words and attribution words (incompatible task), which consisted of putting the nouns belonging to the second-generation rich and negative adjectives together as one grouping (participants had to press Z), and putting nouns belonging to other people and positive adjectives as one grouping (participants had to press M). There were 20 trials (appearing once). The fourth step is to repeat the third step but the stimulus words are presented twice (40 trials, five representative words for the second-generation rich and five negative words; five representative words for other people and five positive words). The fifth step is the conversion of the first step, the sixth step is the opposite of the third step, that is 20 trials of putting the stimulus words belonging to other people and the negative adjectives together as a grouping (press Z), put the stimulus words belonging to the second-generation rich and the positive adjectives

together as a grouping (press M). The seventh step is a repetition of the sixth step only the stimulus words are presented twice as compared to once in the sixth step (40 trials)

In addition, in order to balance the order effect, half of the participants finished the measurement of explicit attitude first before proceeding to finish the measurement of implicit attitude; whereas the other half used the opposite order.

Table 1. *Sequence of Trial Blocks in the Implicit Association Test*

Block	Trials <i>n</i>	Function	Items assigned to Z key response	Items assigned to M key response
1	20	Practice	SR	OP
2	20	Practice	NW	PW
3	20	Practice	SR + NW	OP + PW
4	40	Test	SR + NW	OP + PW
5	20	Practice	OP	SR
6	20	Practice	OP + NW	SR + PW
7	40	Test	OP + NW	SR + PW

Note. SR = second-generation rich, OP = other people, NW = negative words, PW = positive words.

Data Processing

We made further statistical analysis based on the IAT by excluding the participants who did not finish the test or whose average number of mistakes was above 20%. We also excluded the participants whose response time was shorter than 300 ms or longer than 10,000 ms, and then converted the mistaken responses into the average response time by adding 600 ms (Greenwald et al., 2003). After this process, there were 119 valid participants, of whom 58 were men and 61 were women. The calculations shown in Table 1 for the two practices (step three and step six) and two tests (step four and step seven) were acquired through following computational steps labeled in the IAT paradigm as $D1$, $D2$, and D , where D = the equal-weight average of the two resulting ratios: a) $D1$ is calculated by subtracting the mean value of step six from the mean value of step three and further dividing it with the overall standard deviation of steps six and three; b) $D2$ is calculated by subtracting the mean value of step seven from the mean value of step four and further dividing it with the overall standard deviation of steps seven and four; c) mean value of $D1$ and $D2$ is calculated to get D , that is, the participants' implicit effect towards the second-generation rich.

Data Analysis

An independent-samples t test was performed to confirm whether or not there were differences between participants who completed the explicit attitude tests first and those who completed them after the IAT.

A paired-samples t test was also conducted to investigate whether or not there was a significant difference in the participants' explicit (i.e., FTS and SDM) attitude toward the second-generation rich and other people. Similarly, the paired-samples t was also used to test their implicit attitude.

Pearson's correlation was used to examine the association between the participants' implicit and explicit attitudes toward the second-generation rich.

Results

Results of the independent-samples t test showed that neither the explicit attitude (i.e., scores for FTS and SDM) nor the implicit attitude (i.e., $D1$, $D2$, D) for the two groups (i.e., participants who completed the explicit attitude tests first and those that completed it after doing the IAT) was at a level of significance ($t < 1$). This indicates that the order of the experiments did not have an effect on the overall results (basing effect) between the two groups.

Explicit Attitude Toward the Second-Generation Rich

According to the t test, there was a significant difference ($t = -8.00$, $p < .001$, partial $\chi^2 = 0.359$) between the participants' responses on the FTS about the second-generation rich (50.81 ± 13.81) and their responses about other people (61.10 ± 14.08). Participants' scores on the FTS for the second-generation rich were significantly lower than were their scores for other people, that is, compared to their explicit attitude toward other people, their attitude toward the second-generation rich was more negative. There was also a significant difference ($t = -4.53$, $p < .001$, partial $\chi^2 = 0.153$) between their ratings for the second-generation rich (3.18 ± 0.82) and for other people (3.52 ± 0.89) on the SDM. Thus, participants showed a significantly negative explicit attitude toward the second-generation rich.

Implicit Attitude Toward the Second-Generation Rich

We conducted a paired sample t test between the participants' average response time in compatible and incompatible tasks, to test whether or not they had a negative implicit attitude toward the second-generation rich. The results suggest that the difference in the participants' response time in the compatible task (945.75 ± 314.10) and the incompatible task (921.47 ± 257.71) was not significant ($t < 1$). This means that there was no significant difference in the participants' attitudes toward the second-generation rich and other people. Inconsistent with their explicit attitude, the participants did not show a more negative implicit attitude toward the second-generation rich.

Relationship Between Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Toward the Second-Generation Rich

Neither the association between the score of FTS and the *D* score ($r = 0.03$, $p > .05$), nor the association between the score of SDM and the *D* score ($r = 0.08$, $p > .05$) was significant.

Discussion

Negative Explicit Attitude Toward the Second-Generation Rich

We used the SDM and the FTS to test Chinese undergraduate students' explicit attitude and found that, consistent with findings reported by previous researchers (Chen & Zhao, 2013; Gu & Ma, 2013), Chinese youth's explicit attitude toward the second-generation rich was negative. Along with the rapid development of the Chinese economy, anxiety among young people in China is mainly related to practicalities associated with employment, status, and wealth (Wang, Wang, & Zhu, 2014). Compared with other groups in China, the second-generation rich can rely on their family background of parents who have connections with people in decision-making, powerful roles, who have high social visibility, and who have an entrepreneurial advantage, and the second-generation rich are more likely than others are to succeed in terms of getting better and more job opportunities, and receiving preferential treatment in their employment (Kan, 2013). As the participants in our study were in the transition period of leaving university and beginning their adult working lives, they would be experiencing a lot of stress in the process of finding jobs and starting a family, which would make them feel that, compared to the second-generation rich, they have unequal opportunities, and encounter unfair barriers to developing their career in the face of fierce competition (Chen & Li, 2014). This perception of unfairness can easily lead to, and intensify, an attitude of antagonism, hatred and jealousy among other groups in society toward the second-generation rich (Yu, 2015).

Nonnegative Implicit Attitude Toward the Second-Generation Rich

Even though the participants showed a negative attitude toward the second-generation rich in the explicit attitude measurements, the results of the IAT did not show that the implicit attitude of the participants toward the second-generation rich was negative. It is likely that values directly affect people's attitudes and sociability (Boer & Fischer, 2013). As China is a collectivist society (Ding & Zhao, 2015; Wu, Yang, & Zhao, 2014), it may be that people's explicit attitude toward others is mostly based on the public attitude and social expectations (Wilson et al., 2000). Although the participants did not show a negative implicit attitude toward the second-generation rich, it may be that they tended to show a negative explicit attitude because they did not want to be different from others or

to go against the social norms, so they hid their real thoughts and opinions. The mass media represent mainstream social opinion and expectations and, in China, have an important effect in the formation of the attitudes toward the second-generation rich (Zhong, 2012).

Inconsistency Between Explicit and Implicit Attitudes

Our findings showed that the association between the participants' explicit and implicit attitude was not significant. This is consistent with findings in previous studies (Breen & Karpinski, 2013; Dabby, Tranulis, & Kirmayer, 2015; Gawronski & LeBel, 2008; Goldstein et al., 2014), which suggests that implicit attitude and explicit attitude are two independent systems. Moreover, some researchers have pointed out that as for the stereotype toward the sensitive social attitude, the correlation between implicit and explicit attitude is low (Hofmann, Gawronski, Gschwendner, Le, & Schmitt, 2005).

The inconsistency of the explicit and implicit attitudes of the Chinese students who took part in our study can be explained from two aspects. First, according to the memory system theory (DeCoster et al., 2006), the measurement of implicit and explicit attitude activates different memory systems; the implicit attitude measurement corresponds with the slow learning memory system whereas explicit attitude measurement corresponds with the quick combination memory system. In other words, the speed of the change in explicit attitude is faster than that of implicit attitude. Media reports on the second-generation rich were initially mostly neutral (Zhang, 2013), and attracted the attention of experts in the commercial and entrepreneurial fields only. However, from 2009 a series of incidents occurred involving vehicles driven by second-generation rich young people. Each of these resulted in death—one victim being a pedestrian hit by a drag racer at a pedestrian crossing, another the victim of a drunk driver, and the third being a cyclist who was left to die after being stabbed repeatedly by the young driver who had driven into her (“On China’s ‘Second-Generation Rich’”, 2009; “My father is Li Gang!”, 2010; “Drunken Driver Boasts Father is a Police Official”, 2010; “Yao Jiabin Receives Death Penalty”, 2011).

Media reports about each of these deaths made a profound negative impression about the second-generation rich, which provoked public awareness (Zhong, 2013) and this changed the explicit attitude of the Chinese public toward the second-generation rich, so that the attitude became negative (Gu & Ma, 2013). Mass media are important means for the public to get information and journalists and reporters can decide what information is provided about the issues and events and how that information is presented, and this then influences public attitude (Zhong, 2012). At the same time, the media play an important role in the awareness and shaping of new attitudes, and also in maintaining and guiding attitudes about existing value systems (Wang & Zhao, 2012). The participants

in this study did not have negative information associated with the second-generation rich in their implicit memory and, compared with explicit attitude, implicit attitude changes slowly and does not depend on external influences. Thus, the participants' implicit attitude toward second-generation rich was neutral.

Moreover, according to the associative-propositional evaluation model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, 2007), attitude is the result of associative and propositional processes. When an individual is stimulated with related objects, this provokes an instant and emotional reaction through an unconscious and automatic search of the existing information in his or her memory (associative process), and its trend will not be interfered with by belief and value, which means the associative process will be activated regardless of the individual's subjective attitude. Therefore, the general public's resentment of, and negative attitude toward, the second-generation rich (Huang, 2013) may have encouraged the undergraduate students to show a negative attitude toward the second-generation rich, and may have triggered the desire to live up to the public's expectations. That is to say, in the measurement of explicit attitude, the participants tended to show negative attitudes toward the second-generation rich because of the effect of public approval and conforming tendencies. However, in the measurement of implicit attitude, the participants did not show negative attitudes toward the second-generation rich because they were not obstructed in their evaluation by existing beliefs and values.

Implications and Limitations

Implications. Implicit attitude has received extensive attention from many researchers during the last decade (Breen & Karpinski, 2013; Dabby et al., 2015; Macy, Chassin, Presson, & Yeung, 2016; Sabin, Riskind, & Nosek, 2015) because measurement of attitude that is implicit can overcome the interference of social desirability in attitude research. However, in previous studies conducted in the area of attitude toward the second-generation rich researchers have focused on explicit attitude and not implicit attitude. In this study, we examined both implicit and explicit attitudes of Chinese youth toward the second-generation rich.

Attitude can be divided into one's attitude towards oneself and others' attitude towards another individual. People will refer to others' attitudes toward them to form an evaluation of themselves (Tice & Wallace, 2003), that is to say, others' attitudes toward an individual will affect the attitude of that individual toward himself or herself. If the news media and the public continue to make unfair and partial evaluations of the second-generation rich, these will strengthen the negative stereotype that has been established, and may make some second-generation rich perceive themselves as a generation alienated or estranged from the rest of Chinese society, and may, in turn, lead them to form personality charac-

teristics such as coldness, arrogance, and greed (Xie, 2012). Therefore, the news media should influence public opinion responsibly by reporting events in way that helps people to make a judgment of this group based on fuller information and, thereby, to reject labels and the current negative stereotypical view of the second-generation rich. Alongside this, part of the problem lies with the second-generation rich themselves, as the behavior and attitude of some of the second-generation rich has shown a carelessness in improving their image and they have been involved in events that further harm the perception that others have of them. To improve the impression that the general public in China has of them as a group, those in the second-generation rich who are at fault in this regard, need to develop self-discipline and a sense of morality, and use their inherited wealth and privileges more responsibly. Rather than enjoying the benefits of being rich, they could help government and nongovernment organizations to create charity and other funding systems to help those who are less privileged, and could take opportunities to meet up with people outside their group more often. By doing so, this could change the current image the public has of them being selfish individuals who mix only with others who are the second-generation rich.

Limitations. First, the participants in this study were aged between 19 and 24 years. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other populations (e.g., other age, income, and social-class groups). Future researchers may tackle this issue by expanding the present study to other age groups.

Second, our results showed that the explicit and implicit attitudes of youth in China toward the second-generation rich are inconsistent. Whether or not this inconsistency has any effect on the behavior of Chinese youth in regard to their attitude toward the second-generation rich is yet to be understood and should be investigated in future studies.

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