

What makes one civil?: The associations between civility scores, gender, rational-experiential processing styles, self-consciousness and socioeconomic factors in Singapore.

Thai-Shawn Cheok^{1,2*}, Yuan-Sheng Quek^{1*}, Bryan Jun-Keat Choo^{1,2}, Samuel Ken-En Gan^{1,2,#}

¹ Department of Psychology, James Cook University, Singapore 387380

² Antibody & Product Development Lab, Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), Singapore 138671

*These authors contributed equally to the work.

#To whom correspondence should be addressed : samuel.gan@jcu.edu.au; samugan@apdskeg.com DOI: 10.30943/2020/03062020

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ABSTRACT

In studying the topic of civility and its association to other parameters, we modified Forni's *Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct* into an inventory for assessing civility. 220 Singapore residents completed an online survey that included a demographic survey, the civility inventory, SCS-R, and REI-40. Self-reported civility was correlated with age ($r(214) = .134, p = .049$), and experientiality ($r(210) = .255, p < .001$), but inversely correlated with social anxiety ($r(210) = -.172, p = .013$). There were no gender effects for civility ($p = .014, r = .11$), self-consciousness dimensions, and experientiality, even though males scored significantly higher on rationality ($p = .013, r = .17$). No effects were found for indicators of SES on civility scores. Our findings suggest that social standing may not necessarily be the most important factor as often presumed.

INTRODUCTION

Civility was theorized to be based on three "Rs": Respect, Restraint and Responsibility (Forni, 2002). It describes a set of behavioral rules that society follows to include respect for others, good manners, and politeness (Billante & Saunders, 2002; Dekker, 2009; Shils, 1997). Civility essentially describes social cooperation where people are civil to each other to minimize conflict for a harmony that all people can share in and are individually responsible for. However, the decline in civility (regardless of cultural and generational differences) has become a topic of discussion in recent years (Porath & Pearson, 2013; Lim & Tai,

2014; Yeung & Griffin, 2008; Chen, 2017). Given the decline of charity donations accompanying the increase of offensive and rude language usage, road rage, political deceitfulness (Carter, 1998; Moffat, 2001), and the diminishing social responsibility with rising vandalism that deterred socially-beneficial initiatives such as bike-sharing (Abdullah, 2018), there is a call for improving civility.

At the societal level, there is a need to first identify the factors associated with civility to identify possibilities for interventions. Well-established factors associated with civility such as age, socioeconomic status (SES), and gender are not practical parameters for interventions, thus there is a need to investigate the psychological processes within individuals that affect civility as possible intervention areas.

Civility represents the collective self-consciousness of a society that reflects how societies are formed and organized (Shils, 1992). A person's projected civility balances two self-concepts: (1) the collective/interdependent self-concept that focuses on the external or public aspects of life (status, role, relationships; such as the need to belong, sensitivity towards the needs of others, and the interactions and reciprocal obligations between the self and the group), and (2) the individualistic/self-focused pattern of cognition that bases one's worth on expression and validation of self and its internal attributes, such as the "focusing on one's own characteristic actions, thoughts, feelings, uniqueness, and self-

expression” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Civility is expressed when individuals prioritize the impact of their behavior upon the collective party over their internal, individual concerns (i.e., collective self-consciousness over individual self-consciousness; Shils, 1992).

Current civility-related literature on SES report higher SES individuals to elicit greater perceptions of control and self-sustenance (Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009), which in turn shaped the self-focused patterns on social cognition (e.g., self-construal, and moral judgment), emotional affect (e.g., decreased negativity; Kushlev, Dunn, & Lucas, 2015), and action (e.g., more trait-driven action; Piff, Stancato, Côté, Mendoza-Denton, & Keltner, 2012). Higher SES individuals also appeared to be less emphatic (Kraus, Côté, & Keltner, 2010), less conscious of others (Kraus et al., 2009), and less engaged during social interactions (Kraus & Keltner, 2009). On the other hand, lower SES individuals were reported to experience greater threats and decreased opportunities, which may lead to heightened vigilance towards other individuals (Kraus et al., 2009; Stellar, Manzo, Kraus, & Keltner, 2012), to less sociable behaviors. However, other studies (Piff, Kraus, Côté, Cheng, & Keltner, 2010; Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007) report the lower SES individuals to exhibit more prosocial behaviors. The literature seems to suggest resource scarcity as a factor on civility. For example, when an individual risks missing the public transport or faces food shortage, that individual’s concern for their own needs may outweigh their concern for others’ (Harbeson, Rothchild, & Chazan, 1994), leading to less civil behavior.

Research on the influence of SES has shown a relationship between levels of entitlement and SES and proposed that self-interest might be a more rudimentary motive among the higher SES individuals during civil misconduct (Côté, Piff, & Willer, 2013). Higher SES individuals may have an inflated sense of entitlement and self-importance, thus seemingly more selfish, likely to lie and cheat

when gambling, and break driving laws (Piff et al., 2012). Thus, higher SES individuals are more likely to be indifferent to the good of a community as they prioritize self-interest and pleasure before others (Feldmann, 2001). Although the links with social uprisings and civility are not fully established, it is worth noting that the higher SES class often attempts to keep society as a status quo, whereas the destitute are historically often the driving force of revolutions; for example, the rise of Communism in Russia (Wade, 2017) and China (Roberts, 2018).

Besides income, education levels also distinguish status differences and could lead to a top-down flow of incivility (Porath & Pearson, 2012). An attitude of superiority held by those in power are more likely to condone uncivil treatment towards those in inferior status positions (Scott, 2007). This may explain a study where participants with lower formal education levels reported greater and more frequent experiences of incivility than colleagues with higher formal education levels (MacLennan, 2015). In some studies (Ferriss, 2002; Keyes, 2002), civility was not associated with income, but was found to be more pronounced among higher educated, married and older females, and was predicted by regular religious attendance. In fact, religious attendance was also suggested to mediate the relationship between these demographic variables and social civility (Keyes, 2002).

Due to likely confounding variables such as the context of local culture, we sought to investigate if the findings of the above studies also applied to multicultural Singapore. We hypothesize that SES had some correlation with civility, where levels of education, household income, and housing types would be correlated with civility scores (hypothesis 1). Since research has indicated gender differences in civil behavior, and on the self-report measures that we will use for this study (on self-consciousness and rational-experiential processing styles), we hypothesize that there would be differences between genders for

scores on the civility inventory (hypothesis 2a), Self-Consciousness subscales (hypothesis 2b), and Rational-Experiential Inventory subscales (hypothesis 2c).

Since there was also a report of sociability factors being associated with experientiality (Epstein, Pacini, Denes-Raj, & Heier, 1996), we also hypothesize that civility scores would be associated with higher scores on public self-consciousness (hypothesis 3a) and experientiality (hypothesis 3b).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional survey design was employed digitally to explore associations between demographic variables and self-reported measures of self-consciousness, civility, and cognitive processing styles. Ethics approval (H7341) for recruitment involving human subjects was obtained from the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee (JCU HREC) prior to data collection for this study.

Power Analysis

Power analysis indicated that a minimum sample size of 128 was required with a power level of 0.8 (power estimated using G-Power 3.1; see Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996). We accounted for participants who may drop out or fail to meet inclusion criteria, thus we aimed to recruit a minimum of 192 participants (50% over N indicated by power analysis).

Sampling

Participants were recruited through digital advertisements (social media platforms using a public link to the survey site), physical advertisements (posted on the advertisement board at James Cook University Singapore), and snowball sampling. James Cook University students earned credits through research participation. Interested participants were directed to the survey site where they were presented with the information page providing an overview of the study, which also stated an inclusion criterion of being a resident in Singapore. Implied consent was

deemed given when participants proceeded on to the study.

Participants

A convenience sample of 220 participants remained (from total collected responses, $N = 264$) after removal of submissions that were incomplete or from those who were under 18 years old. There were 78 males (35.5%) and 138 females (62.7%). Four (1.8%) participants did not state their gender. One participant did not indicate the household income level, and three participants did not include their age. The 217 adult participants who indicated their age ranged from 18 to 68 ($M = 35.4 \pm 11.9$) years. To represent the SES distribution of our sample, we used gross monthly household income level as an indicator. Gender and ethnicity are shown in Table 1A, while education level and housing type are shown in Table 1B.

Procedures

Interested participants accessed the survey on the Qualtrics web survey tool and were required to provide digital consent by checking the relevant boxes before proceeding. As the survey was conducted online, participants were free to complete the survey at their convenience. Four questionnaires were presented in the sequence of 1) the demographic survey, 2) the Self-Consciousness Scale – Revised (SCS-R), 3) the civility inventory, and 4) the Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI-40). The demographic survey gathered data on age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, education level, gross household income, housing type, and nationality. Upon submitting the completed surveys, participants were shown the debriefing page where they were thanked for their participation in the study.

TABLE 1A. Demographic Distribution (Proportion per Subgroup) for Valid Cases Grouped by Gross Monthly Household Income (SGD) for Overall, Gender, and Ethnicity.

	<i>n</i>	<\$1000	<\$2000	\$2001- \$5000	\$5001- \$8000	\$8001- \$10,000	>\$10,000
<i>N</i> Overall	220	7 (3%)	4 (2%)	66 (29%)	56 (25%)	34 (15%)	51 (23%)
Gender							
Male	78	2 (4%)	2 (3%)	26 (33%)	17 (22%)	12 (15%)	18 (23%)
Female	138	5 (4%)	1 (1%)	40 (29%)	38 (28%)	22 (16%)	32 (23%)
Ethnicity							
Chinese	185	5 (3%)	3 (2%)	53 (29%)	50 (27%)	30 (16%)	44 (24%)
Malay	10	1 (10%)	0	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
Indian	13	0	0	6 (46%)	2 (15%)	2 (15%)	3 (23%)
Others	11	1 (9%)	0	4 (36%)	3 (27%)	0	3 (27%)

Note. See <https://tradingeconomics.com/singapore/wages> for monthly wages in Singapore.

Measures

Civility Inventory. We adapted the twenty-five rules from Forni's (2002) book "*Choosing Civility: The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct*" to construct a 25-item inventory for civility (henceforth civility inventory) with a five-point Likert scale (from 1 = 'All the time' to 5 = 'Definitely not'). The civility inventory and all its items were reverse-scored during analysis for consistency with the other measures in directions of association. Reliability analysis performed with Cronbach's alpha on the civility inventory across all twenty-five items scored satisfactorily in this study for internal consistency at $\alpha = .96$. We noted that the removal of the items "*Assert yourself*" and "*Avoid personal questions*" would raise the Cronbach's alpha of the inventory, though only by a small increase in alpha coefficients of .001 and .002, respectively.

Self-Consciousness Scale – Revised (SCS-R). The SCS-R by Scheier and Carver (1985) is a 22-item measure for three components of self-consciousness: nine items for Public Self-Consciousness ($\alpha = .75$); seven items for Private Self-Consciousness ($\alpha = .84$); and six items for Social Anxiety ($\alpha = .79$). It utilizes a four-point Likert scale from 0 = 'Not like me at all' to 3 = 'A lot like me'. Items 8 and 11 were phrased negatively and reverse-scored for analysis. SCS-R had exhibited adequate internal consistency, as well as acceptable test-retest reliability coefficients of $\alpha = .76$, $.74$, and $.77$, respectively, for each component with a 4-week interval between administrations (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Within

TABLE 1B. Demographic Distribution (Proportion per Subgroup) for Valid Cases Grouped by Gross Monthly Household Income (SGD) for Education Level and Housing Type.

	<i>n</i>	<\$1000	<\$2000	\$2001- \$5000	\$5001- \$8000	\$8001- \$10,000	>\$10,000
Education Level							
PSLE	1	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0	0
GCE ‘N-Levels’	2	1 (50%)	0	1 (50%)	0	0	0
ITE	2	0	0	1 (50%)	0	1 (50%)	0
GCE ‘O-Levels’	16	2 (13%)	0	9 (56%)	3 (19%)	2 (13%)	0
GCE ‘A-Levels’	12	2 (17%)	0	2 (17%)	3 (25%)	2 (17%)	3 (25%)
Diploma	32	0	2 (6%)	15 (47%)	8 (25%)	2 (6%)	5 (16%)
Bachelor’s Degree	133	1 (1%)	0	36 (27%)	34 (26%)	27 (20%)	35 (26%)
Master’s Degree	15	0	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	6 (40%)
Doctorate Degree	6	0	0	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	0	2 (33%)
Housing Type							
3-room HDB	20	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	9 (45%)	7 (35%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)
4-room HDB	69	1 (1%)	0	29 (42%)	19 (28%)	14 (20%)	6 (9%)
5-room HDB	53	1 (2%)	0	14 (26%)	14 (26%)	12 (23%)	12 (23%)
Public (Other)	14	2 (14%)	1 (7%)	3 (21%)	4 (29%)	1 (7%)	3 (21%)
Shoebox Condo.	2	0	0	0	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0
Private Condo.	30	2 (7%)	0	5 (17%)	8 (27%)	3 (10%)	12 (40%)
Terrace House	22	0	1 (5%)	4 (18%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	13 (59%)
Semi-Detached	9	0	0	2 (22%)	3 (33%)	0	4 (44%)

Note. Condo. = Condominium. For education levels and housing information in Singapore, see <https://tinyurl.com/edumoesg> and <https://tinyurl.com/hdbhousesg> respectively.

this study, the Cronbach’s alpha for Private Self-Consciousness ($\alpha = .73$), Public Self-Consciousness ($\alpha = .84$), and Social Anxiety ($\alpha = .80$) demonstrated acceptable reliability coefficients.

Private self-consciousness is the self-concern aspect that involves the tendency for introspection upon one’s inner thoughts and feelings (Scheier & Carver, 1985), represented by SCS-R items 1, 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 17, 19 and 21. People with high private self-consciousness tend to regard themselves greatly and are more likely to

base their behavior on their own inner beliefs and values, focusing on their own personal accomplishments (Lalwani, Shrum, & Chiu, 2009). In contrast, public self-consciousness is the collective-concern aspect that involves the tendency to focus on one's outer public image, being particularly aware of the extent to which one meets the standards set by others (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Public self-consciousness is represented by items 2, 5, 10, 13, 16, 18 and 20. Those with high public self-consciousness were more likely to allow the opinions of others, rather than their own, guide their behaviors since they are concerned with making good impressions on others. Public and private self-consciousness do not function in a binary fashion. On the other hand, social anxiety portrays apprehensiveness over being evaluated by other individuals or doubt over one's own ability to create adequate self-representations (Scheier & Carver, 1985; Schlenker & Leary, 1982), which is more similar to self-concern rather than collective-concern. Items 3, 7, 9, 11, 15, and 22 represented social anxiety.

The Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI-40). The REI-40 by Pacini and Epstein (1999) is a 40-item self-report measure of Rationality (*need for cognition*; 20 items) and Experientiality (*faith in intuition*; 20 items) based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = 'Completely false' to 5 = 'Completely true'. Rationality described a conscious and analytical processing system based on reasoning, whereas experiential processing described a preconscious and automatic cognitive processing system based on intuition. Both processing styles were further distinguished by one's confidence in using them (Ability; Rational Ability & Experiential Ability), as well as favor for using them (Engagement; Rational Engagement & Experiential Engagement). Half of all inventory items were phrased negatively and reverse-scored for analysis so that a higher score would reflect a prominent tendency to support the measured processing style. Each sub-construct had

ten items each, and scores for items within each of the constructs were averaged.

The REI-40 demonstrated satisfactory test-retest reliability at $r > 0.76$, and good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficients $>.70$ for all constructs: rationality, rational ability, rational engagement, experientiality, experiential ability, and experiential engagement (Handley, Newstead, & Wright, 2000; Hodgkinson, Sadler-Smith, Sinclair, & Ashkanasy, 2009; Marks, Hine, Blore, & Phillips, 2008; Pacini & Epstein, 1999). In this study, rationality ($\alpha = .91$), rational ability ($\alpha = .87$), rational engagement ($\alpha = .83$), experientiality ($\alpha = .83$), and experiential engagement ($\alpha = .78$) demonstrated satisfactory reliability, but not experiential ability ($\alpha = .70$).

RESULTS

The data was analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. All tests conducted were two-tailed, $\alpha = .05$. We excluded analysis on occupation, because too many participants listed "other" under occupation data, and on ethnicity, because the disparities in group sample sizes were too great. We ran Spearman correlation analysis on the ordinal demographic variables (education levels, household income, and housing types) to the non-parametric civility inventory scores to test hypothesis 1. Normality and homogeneity of variances assumptions were violated as indicated by Shapiro-Wilk's and Levene's tests ($p < .05$). We used the Mann-Whitney U test for hypothesis 2 (gender differences in scores for civility inventory, SCS-R, and REI-40) because Shapiro-Wilk's and Levene's assumptions tests for independent t-test for gender effects on civility inventory total scores, SCS-R scores and REI-40 scores had significant assumption violations ($p < .05$); but scores for both males and females had similar shapes and spread as observed on their histograms, and met Mann-Whitney U test assumptions. We ran a non-parametric correlation analysis to test hypothesis 3, and to also explore associations between all ordinal

demographic variables and scores for civility inventory, SCS-R subscales, and REI-40 subscales.

Descriptive Statistics

We conducted Mann-Whitney U tests for gender on age, education level, monthly household income, and housing type to identify demographic differences between the male and female participants. The only significant demographic difference between genders was found in age, $U = 3243.0$, z (corrected for ties) = -4.560 , $p < .001$, where female participants ($Mean\ Age = 38.2 \pm 12.3$) were older than the male participants ($Mean\ Age = 30.8 \pm 9.8$). Independent t -test confirmed that the age difference was significant, $t(211) = -4.52$, $p < .001$, and may have a medium effect on results ($d = 0.67$) for gender differences.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 – Levels of education, household income, and housing types would be correlated with civility scores

To test hypothesis 1, Spearman correlation was performed for the civility scores and socioeconomic variables. No significant correlations ($p > 0.05$) were found for civility scores and education level, household income, and housing type (Table 2). Thus, we rejected

hypothesis 1 on associations between SES and civility scores. Among the socioeconomic variables, we found significant correlations for education level and household income, education level and housing type, and housing type and household income.

We considered that age could be a confounding variable in the analysis since achievement-related variables such as education level and household income typically increase with age, so we re-examined the associations between civility and socioeconomic variables with a Spearman partial correlation analysis after controlling for age. There was still no significant correlation between civility scores and education, $r(210) = .104$, $p = .133$, household income, $r(210) = .119$, $p = .085$, and housing type, $r(210) = .033$, $p = .637$. Among the socioeconomic variables, we found significant correlations between household income and education, $r(210) = .294$, $p < .001$, and between household income and housing type, $r(210) = .297$, $p < .001$. After age was partialled out, these relationships accounted for just 8.6% and 8.8% of the variability in their scores respectively. No significant correlation was found between education level and housing type, $r(210) = .132$, $p = .054$.

TABLE 2. Spearman Correlation Matrix across Scores for Civility Inventory, Education Level, Gross Monthly Household Income, and Housing Type ($n = 216$).

Variable	Civility Scores	Education Level	Household Income	Housing Type
Civility Scores		.117	.130	.054
Education Level			.301**	.152*
Household Income				.307**
Housing Type				

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 3. Mann-Whitney *U* Test for Differences in Scores for Civility Inventory, SCS-R, and REI-40, between Male and Female Participants ($n = 206$).

Dependent Variable	Mean Ranks		Mann-Whitney	Sig.	Effect size
	Males	Females	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
Civility Inventory	98.13	112.02	4553.0	.114	.11
Self-Consciousness Subscales					
Private Self-Consciousness	113.06	97.79	4230.5	.075	.12
Public Self-Consciousness	103.35	103.59	4955.0	.978	.00
Social Anxiety	106.99	101.42	4698.0	.515	.05
REI-40 Subscales					
Rationality	116.86	95.52	3937.5	.013	.17*
Rational Ability	117.86	94.93	3861.0	.007	.19*
Rational Engagement	113.42	97.58	4202.5	.065	.13
Experientiality	103.00	103.80	4928.0	.926	.01
Experiential Ability	96.12	107.91	4398.0	.168	.10
Experiential Engagement	107.06	101.37	4692.0	.506	.05

Note. SCS-R = Self-Consciousness Scale – Revised. REI-40 = Rational-Experiential Inventory.

* $p < .05$.

Hypothesis 2 – There would be differences between genders for scores on the civility inventory, Self-Consciousness subscale, and Rational-Experiential Inventory subscales

Mann-Whitney *U* test was used to examine the differences in scores for the civility inventory, SCS-R, and REI-40 between male and female participants. Differences in mean civility inventory scores between genders were not significant. Thus,

we rejected hypothesis 2a on gender differences in civility scores. As for the SCS-R and REI-40 subscales, scores for rationality and rational ability were found to be significantly different between the genders, but not for the self-consciousness dimensions and experientiality ($p > .05$). Thus, we rejected hypothesis 2b on gender differences in SCS-R scores, and accepted hypothesis 2c on gender differences in REI-40 scores. Male participants ($n = 77$) scored higher than female

TABLE 4. Spearman Correlation Matrix across Age, Socioeconomic Variables, and Scores for Civility Inventory, Self-Consciousness Scale – Revised (SCS-R), and Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI-40) ($n = 203$).

Variables	Age	Education	Income	Housing	Civility	Private SCS	Public SCS	Social Anxiety	Rationality	Experientiality
Age		.086	.134*	.164*	.134*	-	-	-.266**	-.075	.079
Education			.301*	.152*	.117	.111	.015	.115	.138*	.024
Income				.307**	.130	.016	-.004	-.155*	.111	.090
Housing					.054	-.076	-.055	-.040	.050	-.030
Civility						.034	.010	-.172**	-.011	.255**
Private SCS							.525**	.183**	.245**	.168*
Public SCS								.359**	-.038	.070
Social Anxiety									-.283**	-.095
Rationality										.178*
Experientiality										

Note: SCS = Self-consciousness

participants ($n = 129$) on rationality and rational ability, where both results demonstrated small effect sizes. Group comparisons between genders on the dependent variables analyzed are represented in Table 3.

Hypothesis 3 – Civility scores would be associated with higher scores on public self-consciousness, and experientiality

For hypothesis 3, Spearman correlation analysis revealed no significant correlations between civility inventory scores and public self-consciousness (Table 4). Thus, we rejected hypothesis 3a on an association between civility scores and public self-consciousness. There were significant correlations between civility inventory scores and experientiality. Thus, we accepted hypothesis 3b on an association between civility scores and experientiality.

Correlation analyses

Spearman correlation analysis was conducted across the scalar and ordinal demographic variables: age, education level, gross monthly household income, housing type, civility inventory scores, SCS-R subscales, and REI-40 subscales.

The correlation matrix is presented in Table 4. For demographic variables, we found that education level, household income, and housing type were intercorrelated (hypothesis 1). The current analysis revealed that age was significantly correlated with household income and civility inventory scores but was negatively correlated with all SCS-R subscale scores: private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety. Education levels were significantly correlated with rationality. Household income was significantly negatively correlated with social anxiety.

There were significant correlations between civility inventory scores and experientiality. Civility inventory scores were also significantly negatively correlated with social anxiety. Private self-consciousness was significantly correlated with both rationality and experientiality, as well as with the other two dimensions of self-consciousness: public self-consciousness, and social anxiety. Social anxiety was significantly positively correlated with public self-consciousness, and negatively correlated with rationality. Scores for both rationality and experientiality were significantly correlated.

We ran a Spearman partial correlation analysis controlled for age to identify the variables that remained significantly correlated with civility inventory scores excluding age effects, and found only experientiality to be significantly correlated, $r(203) = .271, p < .001$. Experientiality explained 7.3% of the variability in civility inventory scores after partialling out age.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to identify associations for civility within multicultural Singapore by examining socioeconomic variables, self-consciousness, and cognitive processing styles. We found that civility was associated with experientiality (hypothesis 3b), age, and social anxiety (inversely), but not with public self-consciousness (hypothesis 3a) or any of the SES indicators (i.e., education level, household income, and housing type; hypothesis 1). We also investigated gender differences in scores for our self-reported measures and found a difference only for rationality (hypothesis 2), where males scored higher. These findings were generally different from past studies, suggesting that the population/contextual differences could have yielded differences in civility factors.

One such difference was our rejection of hypothesis 1, which contravened conventional wisdom and other reports where civility was associated with indicators for higher SES (education levels and household income; Côté *et al.*, 2013; Helliwell & Putnam, 1999; Kraus & Keltner, 2009; Kraus *et al.*, 2009; Piff *et al.*, 2010; Stephens *et al.*, 2007), and lower SES (Harbeson *et al.*, 1994). It was also contrary to the reported tendency for civil behavior to confer social advantages (Porath & Gerbasi, 2015) that we expected to be reflected in SES. We propose that our higher SES participants might have been more conscious about how they should behave (civilly) or could have responded with self-bias (as found in Hoskin, 2012) on our study's self-reported measures, resulting in this dissonance.

Alternatively, the mandatory civics and moral education universally taught in Singapore public schools (see Chew, 1998) and social engineering campaigns could have been relatively successful in inculcating civic values in everyone, regardless of SES. We controlled for age, as it was strongly associated with SES indicators, and still found no significant associations between SES indicators and civility. Ultimately, the results imply that SES had no effect on Singapore residents for civil behavior.

We rejected hypothesis 2 on gender differences in civility (hypothesis 2a), self-consciousness (hypothesis 2b), and experientiality (hypothesis 2c). In the literature on gender differences, females typically behaved more sociably (Bem, 1974; Coates, 2015; Garai & Scheinfeld, 1968; Gilligan, 1982; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1978; Ruble, 1983; Wilkins, Caldarella, Crook-Lyon, & Young, 2010) and scored higher on the SCS-R self-consciousness dimensions (Alanazi, 2001; Higa, Phillips, Chorpita, & Daleiden, 2008) and experientiality (Epstein, 2003; Epstein, *et al.*, 1996; Sladek, Bond, & Phillips, 2010).

Although, our findings (hypothesis 2c) here agreed with past research where rationality was higher in males (Epstein, 2003; Epstein *et al.*, 1996; Sladek *et al.*, 2010). The general absence of gender differences in our population with regards to SES, civility, and self-consciousness might be explained by greater gender equality in Singapore as also seen in the lack of differences in education level, housing and household income between the genders.

Despite the lack of significance, we noticed a trend for our female participants to score slightly higher than males on every civility inventory item; but this might have been due to age effects because age was correlated with civility, and our female participants were on average, older.

Our finding for hypothesis 3b showed that civility was associated with experientiality. This was supported by Epstein and colleagues (1996), where strong links were found between experientiality (i.e., preconscious and intuitive processing) and traits that describe sociality (i.e., trait agreeableness and extraversion, emotional expressivity, and beliefs in favorable relationships; Pacini & Epstein, 1999). These traits were suggested to be useful for survival through social cooperation and affiliation (Sussman, Garber, & Cheverud, 2005). Given the association between these social traits and preconscious processing, civil behavior might bypass intentional or conscious thought and manifest through a matter of habit, principle, or an intrinsic motivation for sociality.

Our findings on hypothesis 3a showed that a general consciousness of one's public self-projection had no significant influence on civility, which contradicted the expectation that lacking awareness for one's conduct diminishes appropriate/civil behavior (Lustbader, 2015). It is interesting to note that both private and public self-consciousness did not correlate with civility despite the expectation that self-consciousness would guide socially desirable behavior, whether due to personal standards or the need for a favorable external self-representation. These results therefore suggest that any uncivil behavior in the local population could be conscious and intentional (which may be arguably worse than simply being ignorantly uncivil), though not necessarily rational, since rationality was not associated with civility. Alternatively, Forni's standards of civility may not be suitable for the measurement of civility in Singapore, being of a different culture in having inputs from her multicultural backdrop.

Social anxiety (another aspect of self-consciousness) was associated with a lower tendency to exhibit civil behaviors than other self-consciousness dimensions. This was surprising since we would expect a fear of interpersonal

rejection or disapproval to induce more submissive, agreeable behaviors (Russell et al., 2010; Sadikaj, Moskowitz, Russell, & Zuroff, 2015) that would be considered civil. However, socially anxious people were also found to be more self-focused during interpersonal interactions that demonstrated reassurance-seeking, self-protecting behaviors (Heerey & Kring, 2007). Such behaviors ultimately appear to be incongruent with Forni's (2002) rules for considerate behavior that espouse thoughtfulness for others, which is related to collective self-consciousness rather than an individual self-consciousness (Shils, 1992). Nonetheless, the SCS-R's social anxiety measured in our research reflected a degree of shyness and nervousness towards social interaction, but not the clinical diagnosis for *Social Anxiety Disorder* (or social phobia; see American Psychiatric Association, 2013), which entailed greater fear and panic reaction.

Anxiety towards social interactions appeared to be greater among low SES participants, and less among high SES participants, which corroborated with the results of Layte and Whelan's (2014) study on status anxiety (i.e., a sense of inferiority regarding social status). The status anxiety hypothesis might explain these results because status anxiety is significantly higher in societies with greater income inequality (see Layte & Whelan, 2014), which can result in greater status competition and comparison (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2006, 2010) that feeds stress and anxiety (among other negative health outcomes) among the less privileged (Layte & Whelan, 2014). Singapore is one such society with high income inequality (Dhamani, 2008) and status competitiveness, as evident from academic grades being the highest source of stress among students (Ho & Yip, 2003), and suicide being the lead cause of death for Singapore residents aged 10 to 29 years (an age bracket consisting mostly of students and fresh graduates; Samaritans of Singapore, 2019). The association of social anxiety with only household income among the SES indicators may reflect that Singapore's residents were generally

not anxious about their social standing on the other tested SES indicators, except household income.

Negative correlations between scores for social anxiety and rationality (i.e., need for cognition; Epstein *et al.*, 1996) suggested that individuals with high rationality are less afflicted by social anxiety, which is reasonable given that individuals who experience less anxiety-related interruptions may be able to afford higher preference and reliance on calculated cognitions. Similarly, individuals who were more anxious about social interactions may be less confident with and less likely to use the rational processing style, which is supported by studies that linked trait social anxiety to irrational thinking (Davison & Zigheboim, 1987; Lucock & Salkovskis, 1988). It may just be that socially anxious people tend to have less rational cognitions (Epstein *et al.*, 1996).

Even though only one of the cognition systems is believed to be utilized at a given time (Epstein, 1994), we found a positive correlation between both the rational and experiential styles, suggesting that our population may have a degree of cognitive flexibility that did not over-rely on either. Given the correlation between private self-consciousness and both processing styles (in ability and preference), this sort of cognitive flexibility might have benefitted from the introspective quality (Mittal & Balasubramanian, 1987) of private self-consciousness, which could have facilitated learning (whether consciously or not) to effectively utilize either processing system in the appropriate contexts (Epstein, 1994; Kahneman, 2003; Lalwani *et al.*, 2009; Sinclair & Ashkanasy, 2005).

On other demographic relationships, the lack of significant correlations for housing types with any of the scores except household income was not surprising as government-housing types in Singapore were often banded by household income. Yet the obvious lack of correlation with education levels seems to suggest confounding variables, where education level did not correlate

linearly with housing as an indicator of affluence. Education levels correlated with need for cognition, which was expected given that incremental years of full-time education may instill competence in cognitive reasoning abilities.

Of all the demographic factors, only age was found to significantly correlate with civility. This finding agreed with Keyes' (2002) study where social civility was higher among older women. Furthermore, age was also inversely correlated with scores for all three SCS-R subscales: private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety (Table 4). Assuming that self-consciousness is a facet of self-concern, our findings here may shed light on previous research that suggested higher self-focused concern among the younger individuals (see Twenge, 2013). Our findings also showed significantly higher levels of social anxiety and self-consciousness among the younger Singapore residents.

After controlling for age in a correlation analysis across all valid variables, we identified experientiality (faith in intuition) as the sole parameter associated with civility. Since experientiality neither correlated with age nor social anxiety, we propose that experientiality and social anxiety are two independent avenues for improving civility in Singapore. These measured factors may respectively link to prosociality and self-focused concern that could be the underlying factors for civility that our study cannot measure, and these relationships need to be confirmed in future civility studies that explicitly investigate relationships with sociality constructs and self-focused vs. collective-focused concern.

Future studies on civility should also assess religious faith and attendance, given that regular religious attendance was found to be a mediator of sociodemographic variables and civility (Keyes, 2002). Relationship status could be included as well, because the ability to sustain an intimate relationship could indicate an individual's capacity for consistent behaviors that reflect respect, restraint, and responsibility (Quek & Knudson-

Martin, 2008), and that civil-like behavior was observed more in older, married women (Keyes, 2002).

While we were able to adapt Forni's twenty-five rules of civility into a questionnaire to survey the residents of Singapore, Forni's rules might not be fully representative of what civility means to the Singapore population. Nonetheless, we show the correlations made from this adapted inventory, finding correlations on age, social anxiety, and experientiality.

CONCLUSION

We introduced a new measure for civility for general application and tested it within a sample of Singapore residents to conclude that experientiality and social anxiety are the two possible avenues for intervention at the individual level to improve civility at the societal level. These findings may be of interest to parties that intend to improve civility, particularly in Singapore or Asia, as well as in understanding the psychological processes related to prosocial or civil behaviors.

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COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the approved by James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee (H7341).

CONFLICTING INTERESTS

SKEG is also the Editor-In-Chief of the journal. To avoid conflict of interest, the article was handled by an independent member of the editorial board. The article-processing-charge for this article was also waived for James Cook University and A*STAR.

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent was obtained from all individual adult participants included in the study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

TSC and YSQ carried out the psychological surveys and drafted the manuscript. BC performed part of the statistics and wrote part of the manuscript. SG conceived the idea and supervised all aspects of the project and writing. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. TSC and YSQ performed the study as part of their final year project in the Grad Dip programme in James Cook University.

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