

MASTER'S THESIS

Assertiveness and argumentativeness: an investigation of self-reported tendencies by mainland Chinese

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Assertiveness and Argumentativeness: An Investigation of
Self-Reported Tendencies by Mainland Chinese

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ABSTRACT

Assertiveness and argumentativeness are two constructive traits in dealing with controversial issues in western cultures (Infante, 1987a). The present research examines assertiveness and argumentativeness in Chinese context. The focus is on the investigation of self-reported tendencies of Chinese assertiveness and argumentativeness as well as impacts of Chinese values on the two traits. Gambrill and Richey's (1975) Assertion Inventory, Infante and Rancer's (1982) Argumentativeness Scale are applied and revised to fit the Chinese context. The Chinese Value Survey (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) is modified to explore Chinese values. When controlling for demographic variables, Chinese values have significant inverse effects on assertiveness and argumentativeness. Results indicate that the more individuals believe Chinese values, the less assertive and argumentative they are. The findings imply that Chinese people who are influenced by Confucian emphasis on harmonious relationships and hierarchical social status do not consider assertiveness and argumentativeness as efficient ways in settling disagreements. Five dimensions of assertiveness, namely, *Standing up for one's own rights*, *Defending one's interests*, *Initiating interactions*, *Voicing one's own opinions* and *Admitting deficiencies* have been identified in Chinese culture background. The impact of Chinese values on the first two stable dimensions of assertiveness is also explored.

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