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ARE TAIWANESE AFRAID OF TERRORISM? THE IMPACTS OF HARD AND SOFT TERRORISM ON TAIWANESE

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Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi pada dua puluh terakhir telah memengaruhi kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat dan menghasilkan banyak inovasi. Internet dan sosial media merupakan salah satu dari perkembangan terpenting dan perkembangan ini telah mengarah ke peningkatan pada kecepatan penyebaran berita dan terbukanya akses masyarakat yang cepat untuk informasi di berbagai topik. Akan tetapi, perkembangan di bidang teknologi juga turut memengaruhi kelompok teroris. Pengaruh ini dapat dilihat dalam metode, strategi, dan visi dari kelompok teroris. Dengan metode dan strategi yang baru, kelompok teroris mampu memengaruhi psikologi dari masyarakat yang tidak terdampak secara langsung oleh terorisme global. Contoh yang paling baik adalah Taiwan. Di dalam penelitian ini, penulis membahas mengenai dampak dari hard dan soft terrorism di Taiwan. Dengan arah ini, penulis menggunakan pendekatan metode gabungan dan menganalisa ombak ketujuh dari World Values Survey dengan metode Ordinary Least Square regression. Wawancara tatap muka kualitatif dengan orang Taiwan akan dapat mendukung hasil kuantitatif.

Kata kunci:

Strategi soft terrorism, Strategi hard terrorism, Taiwan, Media sosial, Media massal.

Abstract

Technological developments in the last 20 years have affected people's daily lives and caused many innovations. The internet and social media are among the most important developments, and these developments have led to an increase in the speed of news and people's rapid access to information on various topics. However, progress in technology has also affected terrorist organisations. This effect has changed the methods, strategies, and visions of terrorist organisations. With these new methods and strategies, terrorist organisations could negatively affect the psychology of the people who are not directly affected by global terrorism. The best example of this is Taiwan. In this study, I focus on the impact of hard and soft terrorism on the Taiwanese. In this direction, I use the mixed-method approach in this study. I analyse the 7th wave of the World Values Survey with the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression method. Qualitative face-to-face interviews with Taiwanese will support the quantitative results.

Keywords:

The Soft Terrorism Strategy, The Hard Terrorism Strategy, Taiwan, Social media, Mass media

INTRODUCTION

Technological developments in the last 20 years have led to transformations in many areas. These transformations also affect International Relations and Terrorism Studies. Developing technologies, one of the most important transformations in recent years, are more integrated into International Relations and Terrorism Studies. Two of the most important of these developing technologies are social media and internet technologies.

Social media and internet technologies have become an important part of people's daily lives. Like people, today's terrorist organisations have adapted to social media and the internet. Therefore, these developing technologies have also become an important part of terrorist groups' strategies. Terrorist organisations and individual terrorists can now easily use sophisticated communication technologies, such as social media, internet technologies, and mass media, to create and increase fear among people.

Nowadays, terrorist groups use violent photos or videos as a psychological weapon on social media and mass media because creating fear among the public is one of the purposes of terrorist organisations (Weinberg, 2009). Terrorist attacks on social media, the internet, and mass media have adverse effects on a community's psychology. Even the psychology of nations that are not directly affected by recent terrorist attacks is negatively influenced because of the social media posts of terrorist organisations or news on mass media.

However, the existing literature in Terrorism Studies has not adequately explained this situation. Because the existing literature focuses on the ideologies of terrorist organisations rather than the strategies used by terrorist groups (i.e., Rapoport, 2002; Kaplan, 2011). For this reason, the existing literature has difficulties explaining the strategies of today's terrorist groups and the effects of these strategies on the public. In this direction, I develop hard and soft terrorism to explain the strategies of today's terrorist groups.

In this study, I examine hard and soft terrorism on the Taiwan case. Taiwan is not currently affected by terrorism, at least not directly. I analyse the World Values Survey, and I support the results of the quantitative analysis with face-to-face interviews conducted with ten Taiwanese. I have two main criteria for the selection of interview participants. The participant had to have resided in Taiwan for over fifteen years and be a Taiwanese citizen as the first condition. The second requirement was that participants have a high level of English proficiency.

In the following part of this study, the hard and soft terrorism will be defined in detail. Subsequently, the methods used in the research will be described. After explaining the case selection, the research results obtained will be explained in the following section. Finally, the final part will conclude this article.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Rapoport (2004), there have been four waves of terrorism. The first wave of modern terrorism is the anarchist wave between 1878 and 1919. The second wave of modern terrorism is the anti-colonial wave. This wave started in the 1920s and ended in the 1960s. The third wave is the New Left wave. This wave started during the 1960s and ended during the 1990s. The fourth wave is the religious wave and this wave started in 1979 (Rapoport, 2004). However, the terrorism we encounter today is not like any of the Rapoport's waves. Instead, the terrorism we experience today is more complicated.

Today's terrorist organisations can create a general feeling of anxiety and fear among people, which is one of the main purposes of terrorism, without using any weapons or with a small-scale attack (Weinberg, 2013). In a very short time, thousands and millions of people in Japan, Canada, and South Africa can access many information and images that will create fear and anxiety about a terrorist attack in France. As a result of the news of the atrocities and social media posts, emotions such as fear and horror emerge. In other words, people are affected by these attacks even though they are far from the area where the terrorist attacks took place (Dolliver & Kearns, 2019). It is all made possible by the developing technologies and especially the popularisation of social media (Tulga, 2022).

However, the existing literature is still lacking in terms of a concept that can explain today's increasingly complex terrorist groups. Existing studies generally compare today's terrorist organisations with groups defined as parts of Rapoport's 4th wave of modern terrorism. It acknowledges that today's terrorist organisations are different. However, the number of studies that examine the effective use of social media and internet technologies by terrorist organisations and how they affect people in many parts of the world through these channels is still limited (i.e., Ceron et al., 2019; Secara, 2015). Based on the research conducted for this paper, I find that it is possible to examine the methods used by today's terrorist groups using two basic strategies: "hard" and "soft" terrorism (Tulga, 2022).

The first strategy is “hard terrorism.” This strategy refers to terrorist organisations that use arms to achieve their objectives (Tulga, 2022). The most important elements of hard terrorism are bombings, suicide attacks, and coordinated attacks. As Braithwaite (2013) said, fear of terrorism is closely related to experiencing a physical terrorist attack, and the effect of fear continues for a long time after the attacks. For example, the effects of the 2014 Peshawar terrorist attack in Pakistan were still felt even in 2020. As a result of the face-to-face interviews with the students from Government College University in Pakistan, Ashraf Maeem Nadia Rafique and Yasmin Anila found that the students became psychologically unstable due to terrorist attacks and that terrorism adversely affected their emotional health (Rafique & Yasmin, 2020).

The second concept is “soft terrorism” which refers to strategies used by terrorist groups that affect people's psychology with social media posts, propaganda messages, violent videos, pictures, and fake news (Tulga, 2022; Tulga, 2020). The most important elements of this strategy are social media and mass media. The best example of the soft terrorism strategy is the violent pictures and false and exaggerated news shared on social media. ISIS and its attacks are examples of soft terrorism (Tulga, 2022).

ISIS employs a highly effective strategy in deploying the online unit or battalion known as “*the mujtahidun*” (industrious), a small group of 500-2,000 active users who post and retweet specific tweets to make ISIS posts trending, increasing the group's visibility and outreach (Berger & Morgan, 2015; Badawy & Ferrara, 2018). For example, when ISIS invaded Mosul in 2014, its members tweeted up to 44,000 times a day (Berger, 2014). Most of these tweets contained violent messages, and some of the tweets contained fake news. As a result of the atmosphere of fear that resulted from these tweets, the Iraqi government tried to shut down internet access in the areas occupied by ISIS and reduce internet traffic by a third across Iraq (Farwell, 2014). Also, images of the killing of hundreds of Iraqi troops posted on Twitter as ISIS stormed into the country caused fear and worry throughout the world. For instance, an hour-long video posted on YouTube during the invasion of Iraq shows the brutal house invasion of an Iraqi police chief. In the video, the police chief is blindfolded first and then beheaded. ISIS tweeted a picture taken from this video with the comment, “This is our ball... it has skin on it” (Richards, 2014).

These were all part of a calculated plan to incite fear among the people. These violent posts use vivid language and images to describe negative outcomes, and such posts increase attention as well as anxiety and fear in viewers from all around the world (Ali et al., 2019; Klausen, 2015). Such posts, which make terrorist attacks sensational,

cause increased stress and panic among people in many different countries and regions of the world (Pfefferbaum et al., 2014). It is the soft terrorism strategy that causes such effects (Tulga, 2022).

Combining these two strategies enables terrorist groups to achieve their goals of negatively affecting people's psychology. A hard terrorist attack that takes place at a distant point in the world hurts people in many parts of the world through the soft terrorism strategy (Tulga, 2022). Today, these two strategies complement each other. Terrorist organisations using both strategies effectively reach their goals faster than in the past (Tulga, 2022).

An example of the impact of the combination of hard and soft terrorism strategies is the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks in India. Terrorist attacks in Mumbai remain one of the deadliest coordinated terrorist attacks in history. A team of terrorists assaulted several areas in Mumbai in November 2008 and used a variety of techniques, including bombs, random shooting, hostage abduction, and torching (Roy et al., 2011). The attacks lasted four days, from November 26 to November 29, killing 164 people and wounding 308 others, until all of the perpetrators were slain by Indian security forces, except one who was apprehended injured (Mahadevan, 2019). The terrorists targeted nine separate locations throughout the ordeal, killing and kidnapping individuals randomly (Iqbal, 2015). The coordinated and protracted clashes were broadcast live on the news channels of many countries. The dead and the wounded were also televised.

By simultaneously targeting multiple iconic places across Mumbai, the terrorists created and perpetuated chaos. Moreover, the use of automatic weapons caused the media to suggest that Mumbai was under siege and increased the level of fear. Attacking soft targets such as foreigners also attracted international media attention, making the atmosphere of fear in Mumbai felt in many parts of the world.

Similarly, Finseraas and Listhaug (2013) found that the massive terrorist attack in Mumbai had a negative impact on public opinion in Western Europe. They argued that with the increase in the speed of news spread, people can get live and fast information about terrorist attacks in other countries and, therefore, even a terrorist attack that is not in their own country affects people negatively (Finseraas & Listhaug, 2013). In short, physical attacks within the hard terrorism strategy can trigger widespread and long-lasting fear in people where they occur (Braithwaite, 2013). However, the mass media, social media, and the internet have caused the rapid spread of pure violence and sensitive

information about terrorist attacks and strengthened the fear by affecting the perceptions of people in other countries (Makkonen et al., 2020). In other words, today's terrorist organisations negatively affect the masses in the country where they carry out the attack with the hard terrorism strategy and negatively affect the audience who are not the direct victims of the attack with the soft terrorism strategy (Bolanos, 2012; Marin, 2016).

Finally, the relationship between mass media and terrorist attacks has led to the emergence of the "theatre of terror" concept. Weimann (1983) argued that terrorist attacks are often carefully choreographed to attract the attention of the mass media and the international press and that terrorist attacks target audiences, not actual victims. Terrorist organisations, in their desire to attract worldwide media attention, organise spectacular and grandiose attacks to maximise the psychological and symbolic impact of their attacks (Sweeney et al., 2021).

Suicide attacks could be a good example of the concept. Jetter (2019) argued that the theatrical images of suicide bombings lead to greater media coverage of suicide attacks. Because suicide attacks are often accompanied by video broadcasts of the perpetrator's pre-attack speech, they further disseminate the organisation's message and broaden its media coverage (Jetter, 2019). Terrorist groups could create the screenplay and act in the play, but the "theatre of terror" can only exist if the media provides the stage and access to a global audience. To summarise, terrorist attacks provide the media with the dramatic elements of a good narrative. As Laqueur said, the mass media is the terrorist organisations' best friend (Laqueur, 1999). Indeed, terrorist attacks are meaningless without the mass media and publicity. Because the mass media controls the flow of information, they have the option not to broadcast certain terrorist attacks. The mass media, in other words, have a major role in the "theatre of terror."

However, the crucial role in the hard and soft terrorism strategies still belongs to the terrorist groups themselves. All kinds of positive and negative propaganda are under the domination of terrorist organisations. In addition, today's terrorist organisations use soft terrorism strategies for recruitment. Moreover, in the concept of "theatre of terror," the elements of hard terrorism were not mentioned much, and the concept focused on mass media. Consequently, the hard and soft terrorism strategies are inspired by the concept of the "theatre of terror." However, more elements are added to the concept of "theatre of terror" and developed, and it has become more suitable for examining and understanding today's terrorist organisations.

RESEARCH METHOD

I analysed the 7th wave of the World Values Survey in this study. The World Values Survey is a global research project composed of a network of social scientists who explore people's values and beliefs, their stability or change over time, and their impact on the social and political development of their societies in different countries of the world (Inglehart et al., 2014). The World Values Survey comprises nationally representative polls utilising a standard survey conducted in almost 100 nations and territories (Inglehart et al., 2014). However, due to reasons such as the adequacy of the number of participants, and the quality and reliability of the data, the survey is not conducted in all 100 countries and territories. In short, the number of participants and the reliability of the results play an important role in the selection of the countries where the survey is conducted.

The 7th wave covers the period between 2017 and 2020 and includes 69,578 observations and 536 variables.¹ However, only 13 variables were selected for this study. The Cronbach's Alpha result of the selected variables was 0.72 and this result showed that the reliability of the selected variables was sufficient.² The minimum age in wave 7 was 16 years of age and the mean age was 42,58. 25% of participants were under 29 years old, 50% were under 40 years old and 40 years of age was the median result. Finally, 75% of participants were under 55 years old.

I used Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis in this study.³ The dependent variable of the analysis was "worry about terrorist attacks." The main independent variables were "obtaining information from social media and TV news." I chose "most people can be trusted," "obtaining information from radio, daily newspaper, and friends or colleagues," and gender as the control variables. In the analysis, these selected variables were chosen to analyse the effect of the soft terrorism elements such as social media on worry about terrorism.

The variable with the highest missing value was "obtaining information from social media." The missing value of the variable was 4.75%. Scholars such as Schafer (1999) and Bennett (2001) argued that missing values less than 10% were ideal for analysis. However, in this context, I also applied Little's test, performed for the result of "Missing completely at random" (MCAR).⁴ The result was not statistically significant ($p \geq .05$), so there was no evidence against MCAR. Based on this result, missingness could be ignored. However, to increase the reliability of the result, I discarded the missing values with the "random imputation" method.⁵

After examining the 7th wave of the World Values Survey, I obtained the results that showed the general framework and the relationship between the variables. However, I needed deeper information beyond the general framework drawn by regression analysis. Therefore, I conducted ten interviews with Taiwanese. As Altier, Horgan, and Thoroughgood (2012) argued, qualitative interviews help us understand people's personal experiences and subjective feelings. Interviews also provide us with deeper information about people's feelings (Lützing, 2010). In other words, this research was deepened with face-to-face interviews with Taiwanese.

I conducted interviews in English. All the participants were university graduates. For participant selection, I advertised in the student association of National Sun Yat-sen University. I started my interviews with four Taiwanese students who responded to the announcement. To increase the number of participants, I used the snowball sampling method.⁶ As a result, the number of participants increased to ten. I had two major criteria in the selection of participants. The first criterion was that the participant had lived in Taiwan for more than fifteen years and they should be Taiwanese citizens. The second criterion was that participants should have an advanced level of English.

I tried to interview people from many different professions. Five of the participants were full-time students. One of the participants worked in Academic Affairs of National Sun Yat-sen University, two were teachers in an elementary school, and two worked in a private company. I tried to choose an equal number of male and female participants. I conducted interviews with six females and four males. The age range of participants was between 22 and 60 years old. The average age of the participants was 31.4.

Face-to-face interviews with the Taiwanese were conducted in a semi-structured interview format. I prepared 30 questions, but depending on how the interview proceeded, some questions were not asked, or additional questions were asked. These draft questions were also sent to the participant the day before the interview.

Because the research subject was terrorism, which was sometimes misinterpreted and had harmful effects on people, participants were briefed before the interview. Therefore, questions that could psychologically disturb the participants were avoided. I also asked the participants to sign a form as part of the ethical procedure before the interview. This form was prepared to protect the rights of the participants. Both participants and I retained the signed forms.

Before starting the interview, the participants were informed about the research content. Besides, since the subject was terrorism and none of the participants specialised in terrorism study, short information was given about what terrorism is and how the research would proceed. This brief information was given not more than 10 minutes, aimed primarily at getting to know the participants.

At the beginning of the interview, several questions were asked to the participant about her or his age, profession, and English proficiency level. The scope of the remaining questions was generally about what the participant thought about terrorism; the things that came to mind when terrorism was mentioned; the participant's opinions on the solution to terrorism; the news about terrorism in the media and social media and the effects of these news on the participant; and how the participant used social media.

Most of the interviews generally lasted 40 minutes on average. However, the last interview lasted longer, completed in about 1 hour 20 minutes. The last participant shared her experience facing terrorist attacks in the country where she had lived before. The participant also joined social responsibility projects carried out in places where terrorist attacks happened. At the end of all interviews, the participants were asked about their opinions and suggestions. Necessary improvements in the subsequent interviews were made based on this feedback. All the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. The audio recordings were shared with the participants upon request after the interviews. Besides, the transcripts of the recorded interviews were also made and shared with the participants.

Existing studies on the impacts of fear on human behaviour have focused on two behavioural reactions. First is restrictive behaviour, which suggests that individuals limit their behaviour to avoid dangerous situations. The second reaction is assertive behaviour, which assumes that individuals adopt protective behaviours in unsafe situations (Liska et al., 1988). Similarly, Williamson et al. (2019) discovered that afraid persons behave more cautiously and change their lifestyles to reduce potential dangers. In this context, I asked several questions about whether there was a change in the behaviour of the interview participants.

Aly and Balnaves (2007) conducted face-to-face interviews and focused group discussions with Australians. They found that some participants took precautionary measures, such as avoiding public transportation and cancelling their flights to other places, because of their fear of terrorism (Aly & Balnaves, 2007). Similarly, I asked the

participants several questions in my research, including whether they took measures such as cancelling or postponing their trips abroad because of fears of terrorism.

The most commonly mentioned shift in behaviour in Aly's research was an increase in mistrust of others. Aly (2007) found that after the September 11 attacks, there was a discourse and a stereotype associated with Muslims in Australia that was against principles such as civilisation, democracy, and freedom. After 9/11, the general view of the Australian media regarded Muslims as "internal enemies." Aly revealed that this discourse and the following stereotype were also reflected in the public and a negative view of Muslims was formed in the community (Aly, 2007). In my research, based on Aly, I asked several questions to understand the thoughts of Taiwanese participants when terrorism was mentioned and the image of terrorists in the minds of the participants.

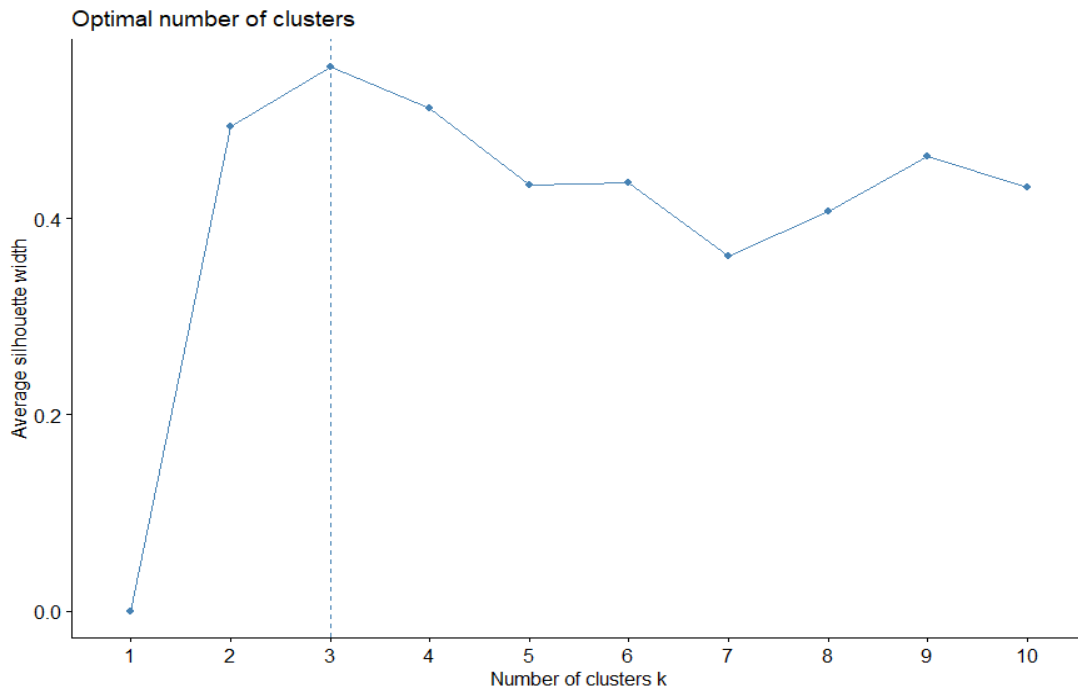
Finally, I conducted a Google Trends analysis for Taiwan to support the interview findings. It focused specifically on ISIS-related internet and social media searches because the most significant problems related to terrorism in the period covered by the regression analysis were related to ISIS. However, Google Trends analysis based on a single keyword did not give meaningful results and was misleading. For this reason, the analytical keyword should be compared with another keyword. Therefore, I compared searches related to ISIS with searches related to "Justin Bieber."

The results of the interview and Google Trends analysis made the results of the linear regression analysis more meaningful. More in-depth information was obtained about the general framework that emerged from the linear regression analysis.

Case Selection

I conducted a cluster analysis among 52 countries covered by the World Values Survey.⁷ I divided fifty-two countries into clusters based on variables of the "number of terrorist attacks" and "worry about terrorism." I first used the Silhouette method to find the optimal number of clusters.⁸ As a result of the Silhouette method, I found the optimal number of clusters to be three and divided the countries into three different clusters.

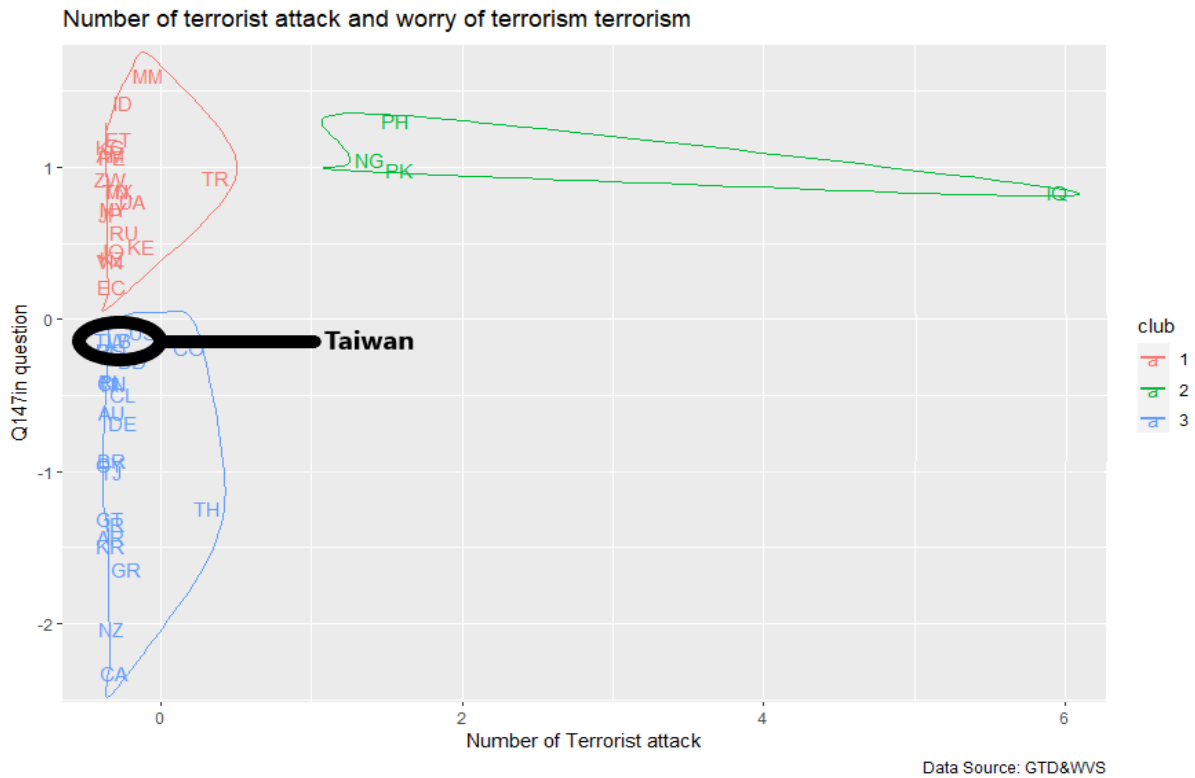
Figure 1. Optimal Number of Cluster



Source: Processed by the author

The common feature of the countries in the first cluster was that the number of terrorist attacks was relatively low compared to the second cluster. However, the fear of terrorism was high.⁹ In the countries in the second cluster, the number of terrorist attacks was high, and their worry about terrorism was high.¹⁰ The third cluster countries had a relatively low number of terrorist attacks than the second cluster countries.¹¹ Their worry about terrorism was also relatively low compared to the second cluster.

Figure 2. Cluster Analysis Results

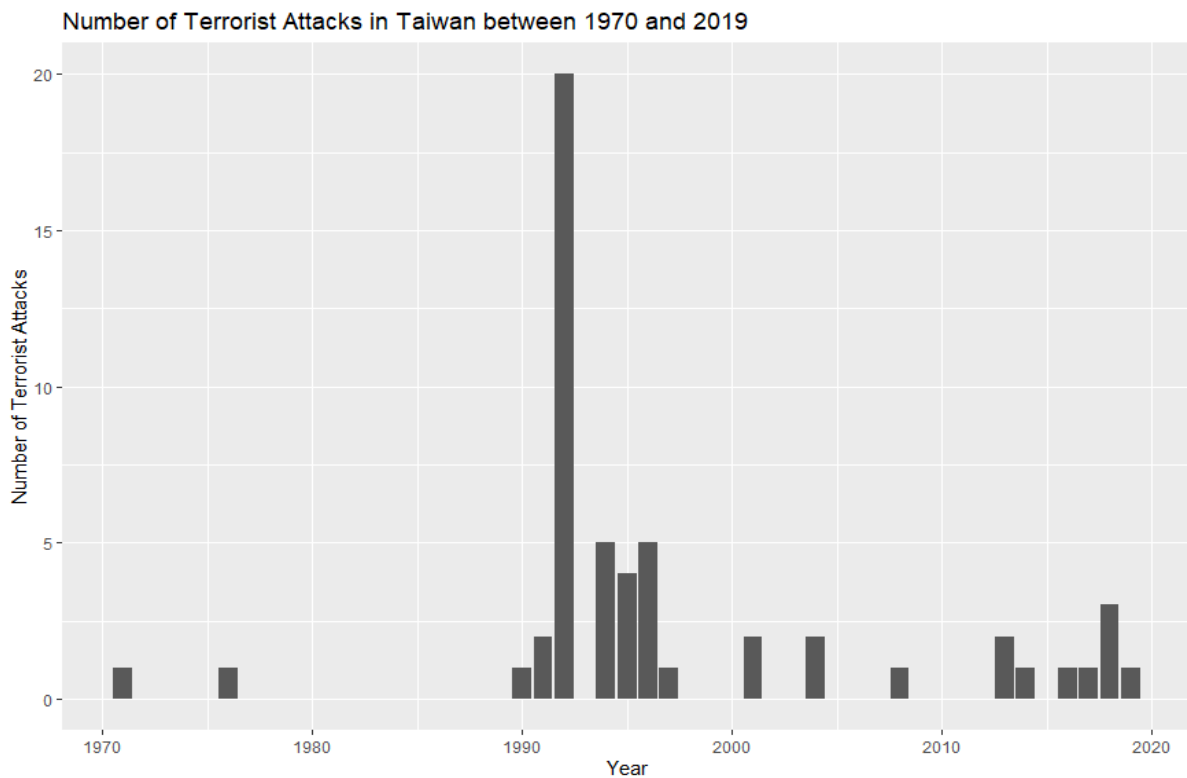


Source: Processed by the author using the indicators from Haerpfer et al. (2022) and LaFree et al. (2021)

Considering the characteristics of all three clusters, the focus of this study was on the countries in the third cluster. Taiwan differed from other countries in the third cluster. Between 1970 and 2019, Taiwan faced only a few terrorist attacks. Seven terrorist attacks took place in Taiwan between 2010 and 2021, and only one person was injured because of these attacks (Global Terrorism Index, 2021). Between 1970 and 2021, 54 terrorist attacks took place in Taiwan, and they were all domestic terrorist attacks (LaFree et al., 2021). According to the Global Terrorism Index (2021), Taiwan ranked 92nd among 93 countries, and Taiwan's Terrorism Index average score was 0,23 between 2017 and 2020.

On the other hand, Japan's average Terrorism Index score, which is in the same cluster as Taiwan, was 1.46, Austria's 3.26, Greece's 4.85, Canada's 3.88, and Brazil's 0.95. In the third cluster, Thailand and the U.S. differed from other countries regarding their Terrorism Index score. Between 2017 and 2020, U.S.'s Terrorism Index averaged 4.96 and was 28th in the world. Thailand's Terrorism Index score was 5.72, placing it 22nd out of 93 countries. When the fear of terrorism was considered, Taiwan differed from other countries in the third cluster. Because Taiwan was the country with the highest fear of terrorism after the USA in the third cluster.

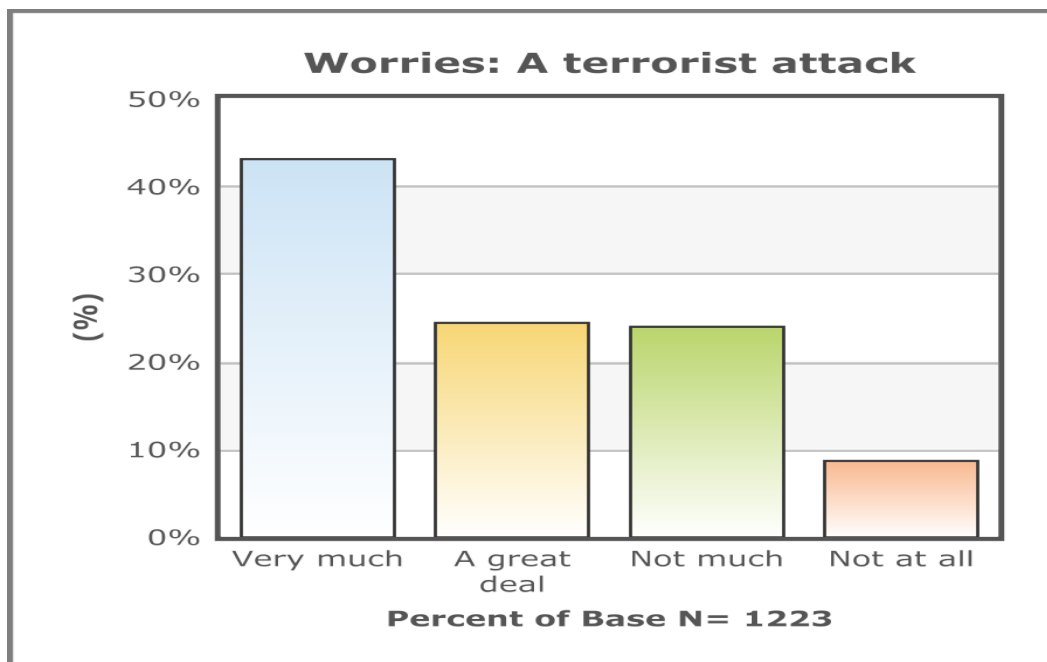
Figure 3. Number of Terrorist Attacks in Taiwan between 1970 and 2019



Source: LaFree et al. (2021). Retrieved 13 February 2022 from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

Despite the small number of terrorist attacks, the fear of terrorism in Taiwan was 67,4% among the participants of the seventh wave from Taiwan (see Figure 4).¹² Due to the small number of terrorist attacks and the high fear of terrorism, Taiwan was a suitable case to show the impact of the soft terrorism strategy.

Figure 4. Worry about Terrorism in Taiwan



Source: Haerpfer et al. (2022) Retrieved 13 February 2022 from <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV7.jsp>

DISCUSSION

To understand the impact of social media on Taiwanese worry about terrorism, I analysed the 7th wave of the World Values Survey. I first examined the 52 countries covered by the World Values Survey, and in the second model, I examined the Taiwan case.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	WORLD	TAIWAN
Information source: Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	0.029*** (0.004)	0.021*** (0.024)
Information source: TV news	0.020*** (0.004)	0.098*** (0.025)
Information source: Radio	0.007*** (0.003)	-0.009 (0.019)
Information source: Daily newspaper	-0.011*** (0.003)	-0.023 (0.019)
Information source: Talk with friends or colleagues	0.023*** (0.003)	0.001 (0.024)
Gender	-0.108*** (0.008)	-0.334*** (0.057)
Trust: Most people can be trusted	-0.313*** (0.011)	-0.266*** (0.064)
Constant	2.892*** (0.027)	2.935*** (0.181)
Observations	59,685	1,223
R ²	0.031	0.071
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

Based on the regression findings, Taiwan's results differed from the other 52 countries. When the Taiwan results were examined, there was a statistically highly significant relationship between receiving news from TV news and getting information from social media and worry about terrorism. The more Taiwanese get information from social media and TV news, the more their worry about terrorism increases. These results are consistent with some arguments put forward in the literature. Studies show that exposure to terrorism-related television news and social media posts significantly affects individuals' fears, feelings, and attitudes about terrorism (Shoshani & Slone, 2008; Iyer et al., 2014). Ben-zur et al. (2012) found that greater exposure to television news coverage about terrorist attacks is highly and positively associated with greater fear of terrorism. Similarly, Goodwin et al. (2014) found that exposure to social media resources is

significantly associated with fear of terrorism and psychological distress. They argued that the fear of terrorism among people increases due to the increased use of social media after traumatic terrorist attacks (Goodwin et al., 2014).

Another important result is a negative and highly significant relationship between gender and fear of terrorism. In other words, women are more afraid of terrorism than men. This result is consistent with a number of previous studies. Türk and Hamzaoğlu (2019) examined the relationship between fear of terrorism and gender in Turkey, and they found that women in Turkey are more afraid of terrorism than men. In a similar study conducted in the United States, Warr and Ellison (2000) concluded that women in the United States are worried about terrorist attacks more than men. Likewise, a study focusing on South Korea, which has many similarities with Taiwan, also found that women in Korea are more afraid of terrorism and experience more social anxiety (Hong et al., 2020).

However, fear is a powerful emotion and difficult to measure. In addition, the reasons behind the fear of terrorism are difficult to understand with quantitative research methods. For this reason, I interviewed ten Taiwanese to get a deeper and clearer understanding on why Taiwanese are worried about terrorism.

As a result of the interviews, I found that all of the participants had their definitions of terrorism, and almost all of the participants had similar views on terrorism. Regarding the image of terrorists, participants imagined terrorists as Middle Eastern people with beards and moustaches. Moreover, their understanding of terrorism is related to radical Middle Eastern organisations, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda. In other words, the phenomena that shaped the participants' views on terrorism were Middle Eastern organisations. Therefore, all but one participant cited the terrorist attacks of ISIS and Al-Qaeda as examples. Since the last participant witnessed the example of far-left terrorism, she frequently emphasised these forms of terrorist organisations.

Mass media and social media play the most important role in the shaping of people's thoughts about terrorism, including the Taiwanese. When I asked the participants about the terrorist stereotype in their minds, most of the participants said that the terrorists were bearded, moustached, and dark-skinned. The fifth participant said that she imagined terrorists were people carrying AK-47s and bombs in their hands. When I asked about the reasons behind the formation of this stereotype, the participants stated they were influenced by the terrorist images they saw in social media, news, and Hollywood movies. For instance, the second participant stated that the stereotype in her mind was formed

because of the news about Syria and Iraq she saw on social media, while the sixth participant stated that the 2008 Hollywood movie "The Traitor" played a role in the formation of the first stereotype in his mind, and then the pictures of ISIS militants he saw on the news formed the current stereotype in his mind. He said that his first stereotype was of Middle Eastern and bearded characters he saw in the movie, but with ISIS, this stereotype evolved into Middle Easterners with long beards, black clothes, and long arms.

When I asked the participants about the impact of terrorist attacks on their behaviour, they said that as long as they were in Taiwan, terrorism did not affect their daily behaviour. However, it affected their psychology depending on how violent the news was that they were exposed to. For example, the fourth participant said she cried because of the images she saw on the news about the Yazidis massacred by ISIS, and this negative feeling persisted for the next few days. The seventh participant said that when she was in the Netherlands for an exchange programme, a terrorist attack took place, forcing her not to go to crowded places for a long time. These results are in line with the literature. Çardak (2020) found that participants for her research refrained from entering closed and open crowded places after the terrorist attacks.

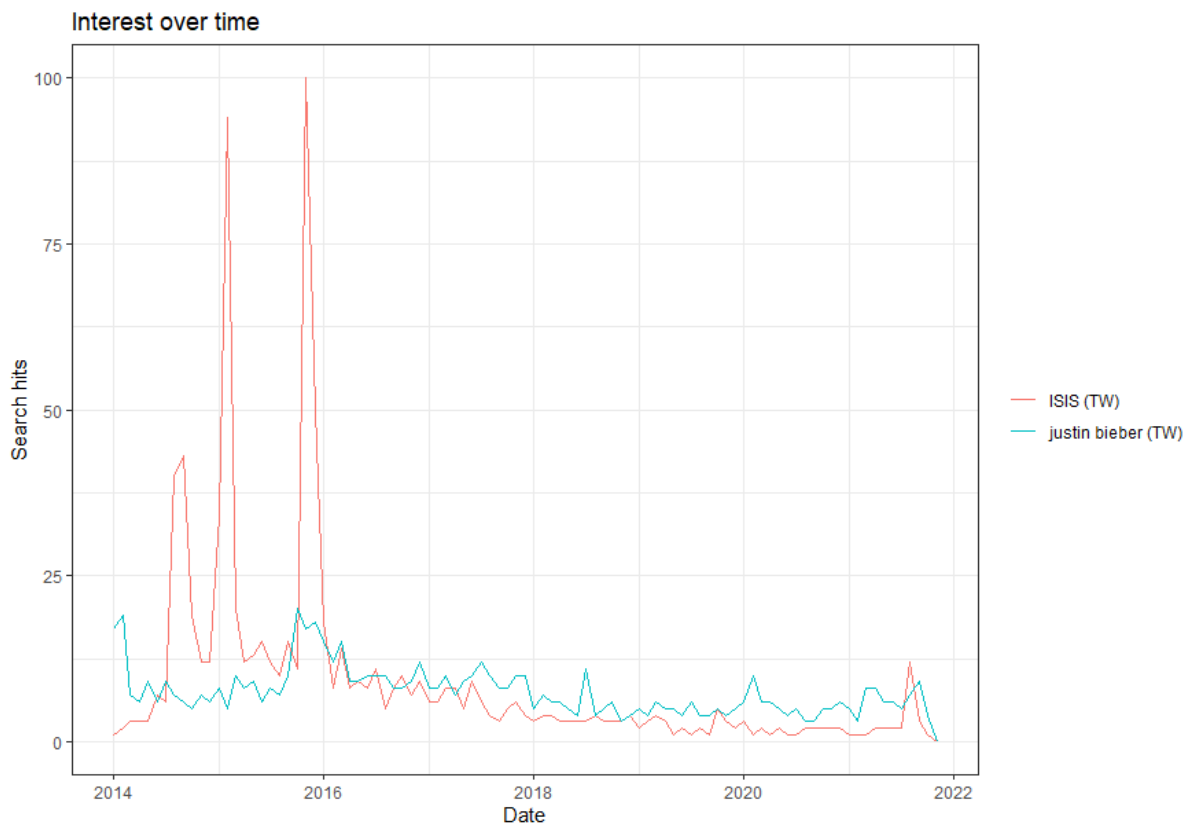
Gordon et al. (2007) found significant reductions in air travel after the September 11 terrorist attacks. Similarly, Rubin et al. (2008) also found that people's intention to travel decreased after large-scale terrorist attacks. Likewise, when I asked if the terrorist attacks had any effect on the travel plans of the participants, the first participant said that he had to postpone his trip to Florida in July 2016 for 6 months because of the Orlando attack in June that year. Similarly, the seventh participant said that she cancelled her planned trip from Amsterdam to Rotterdam because of the terrorist attack on the Netherlands.

The most important conclusion reached as a result of the interviews is that Taiwanese do not fear terrorism inside Taiwan, but they are worried about terrorist attacks in other parts of the world and the possibility of future terrorist attacks in Taiwan. To summarise, Taiwanese people are filled with uncertainty, ambiguity, and mostly afraid of the rest of the world. Participants' feelings can be characterised as dread rather than worry. This finding is consistent with the literature. Aly (2007), for instance, argued that in countries like Australia that are not affected much by global terrorism, there is a dread of terrorism because of the exposure to media and social media. Aly found that people are more afraid of the possibility of future global terrorist attacks in their country (Aly, 2007). Based on the interviews for this research, behind this feeling of the Taiwanese lies

what they see and hear on social media and mass media. This result shows how terrorist organisations affect Taiwanese people, who are not themselves the target of terrorist attacks but are nevertheless impacted by the attacks through the soft terrorism strategy.

Google search results specific to Taiwan also are consistent with the interview findings. The Google Trends analysis covering the years 2014-2021 found that searches related to ISIS often surpassed searches related to "Justin Bieber." The searches related to ISIS were the highest during the period between January and December 2015. When we focused on these periods specifically, we found that ISIS beheaded two Japanese citizens, Kenji Goto and Haruna Yukawa, in northern Syria in January 2015 (Abbadi, 2015). In December 2015, a married couple, allegedly ISIS sympathisers, carried out a mass shooting in San Bernardino, USA, killing 14 people (Braziel et al., 2016). These two brutal acts in different parts of the world were heard in Taiwan through social media, mass media, and the internet. The violent content of news and posts about ISIS affected the Taiwanese negatively and incited fear among them. In addition, since they mostly saw the news and posts about ISIS, their views on terrorism were shaped by this organisation.

Figure 5. Google Trends Analysis in Taiwan about ISIS and Justin Bieber



Source: Processed by the author

In conclusion, existing terrorist organisations, especially ISIS, with the growing social media and internet technologies, affect those that are not their direct targets. As a result of the development of social media and broadcasting technologies, and the acceleration of the circulation of news or information, terrorist attacks that take place in a distant place adversely affect the people in other countries.

CONCLUSION

The development of technology in recent years has radically affected many areas of life and academia. Like many other academic fields, International Relations and Terrorism Studies are also affected by technological developments. The internet and social media, which are an integral part of people's lives in recent years, have been integrated into International Relations and Terrorism Studies.

However, studies focusing on the role of social media and internet technologies in the strategies of terrorist groups are still limited. For this reason, the existing literature has difficulty explaining the strategies of today's terrorist organisations. To close this gap, I have developed the concepts of hard and soft terrorism strategies (Tulga, 2022). I have also tried to show the success of these strategies in influencing public opinion in countries that are not the direct targets of terrorism. In this study, I chose Taiwan as a case to test the effects of the hard and soft terrorism strategies. The quantitative and qualitative analyses have established several important results.

As the soft terrorism strategy (Tulga, 2022) suggested, I found a strong and positive statistical relationship between Taiwanese who get information on social media or TV news and worry about terrorism. In other words, there is an increase in the fear of terrorism as the number of information obtained from social media and TV news increases. These findings support the findings of the existing literature. It is found, for instance, that people who are exposed to news about terrorism in mass media and social media have an increased fear of terrorism (Lavano et al., 2008). When the public's direct contact with terrorist attacks decreases, the rate of media and social media's influence on terrorism-related emotions increases (Bonanno et al., 2010; Goodwin et al., 2014).

Consistent with some previous research, women in Taiwan are also more afraid of terrorism. It has been suggested in the literature that one of the reasons women are more afraid of terrorism is because they are more active in following news from the internet and traditional media. Therefore, they are exposed to more terrorism-related news and, as a result, are more afraid of terrorism (Nellis, 2009; Williamson et al., 2019).

However, I have not elaborated on this topic in my research. Future studies could focus on this topic.

It was difficult to reach in-depth information about the findings of this study using only the quantitative method. Therefore, qualitative interviews were used to support the findings of the quantitative analysis. Throughout the interviews, I revealed that the Taiwanese are generally worried about terrorism. However, this concern is more related to the terrorist attacks that might take place in other places, not Taiwan itself.

The Taiwanese understanding of terrorism is shaped by the organisations based in the Middle East, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Moreover, the interviews revealed that the press and social media play an important role in forming Taiwanese perceptions of terrorism. When terrorism was mentioned, most of the participants thought about the terrorist attacks carried out by terrorist organisations like ISIS and Al-Qaeda which they frequently see in the media. They evaluated terrorism based on the attacks by these organisations.

Braithwaite (2013) argued that the fear of terrorism is related to the direct experience of a physical terrorist attack. However, the results of the Taiwan case show that there is a fear of terrorism in countries that are not exposed to physical terrorist attacks or hard terrorism. The reason for this is the soft terrorism strategy. The soft terrorism elements such as social media, television, and the internet expand the effects of terrorist attacks and cause an increase in the fear of terrorism even in the countries that are not directly affected by the attacks (Dean et al., 2012). The Taiwan case shows that today's terrorist organisations such as ISIS can increase the fear of terrorism in the Taiwanese public with their soft terrorism activities without carrying out a single terrorist attack in the country.

Despite these findings, this research has some limitations, the biggest of which is the relatively little use of the qualitative research method. More and deeper information could be obtained if more qualitative research is used in future studies. One way to do it is to increase the number of face-to-face interviews.

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¹ The number of observations in the seventh wave from Taiwan was 1223.

² Cronbach's Alpha is used to testing the reliability of a survey data and reliability could be defined as the consistency of a dataset (Chmielewski & Watson, 2009; John & Benet-Martinez, 2000).

³ Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression method is a statistical method for predicting the values of a continuous response variable using dependent, independent and control variables, as well as determining the intensity of the associations between them (Hutcheson, 2011).

⁴ The Little's test finds whether the missing values negatively affect the analysis.

⁵ Missing item scores are replaced with random estimation in this method.

⁶ Snowball sampling, also known as 'chain referral' or 'networking' sampling, occurs when a researcher obtains data from a single or small group of people and then asks them to connect the researcher with others, such as friends, family, coworkers, or other relevant connections (Babbie, 2014).

⁷ The seventh wave of the World Values Survey covers 52 countries such as Bangladesh, Iran, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Russia, America, Germany, Mexico, Thailand, Brazil, Australia, Argentina, Malaysia, Chile, Indonesia, Ecuador, China, Peru, Egypt, Andorra, Jordan, Greece, Nigeria, Iraq, Serbia, Philippines, Romania, Taiwan, Turkey, Canada, Bulgaria, New Zealand, Cyprus, Japan, Netherlands, Austria, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Ukraine, Tajikistan, South Korea, Singapore, Venezuela, Colombia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, France, Morocco, Lebanon, Hong Kong, Macau, Poland, Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar. These countries were chosen because of the large number of participants and the reliability of the surveys.

⁸ Silhouette is a method used to select the optimal number of clusters with a suitable ratio scale data for the separated cluster (Thinsungnoen et al., 2015).

⁹ The first cluster involves countries such as Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Ecuador, Japan, Zimbabwe, Russia, Ukraine and Ethiopia.

¹⁰ The second cluster involves Philippines, Nigeria, Pakistan and Iraq.

¹¹ The third cluster involves countries such as Taiwan, Germany, USA, Greece, New Zealand, Canada, Brazil, South Korea.

¹² The number of observations from Taiwan was 1223.