



Advancing the Two-Tiered Mind Metatheory: Theoretical Expansion and Preliminary Validation of the Core Human Propensities Scale

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Article Info

Research Article

Article History:

Received 9 July 2025

Revised 20 August 2025

Accepted 23 August 2025

Keywords:

metatheory of psychology,
core human propensity,
human nature,
psychology

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Abstract

This research article is aimed at two goals. First, it is aimed at exploring the theoretical expansion of the proposed metatheory of the psyche, the Two-Tiered Mind Model, which the author introduced in a 2024 conceptual work. The Two-Tiered Mind Model aims at attempting to unify diverse psychological frameworks and offer a comprehensive yet succinct model capturing the core nature of the human mind. Second, it is aimed at developing and conducting a preliminary empirical validation of two core human propensities proposed in this metatheory through the creation and initial testing of the Core Human Propensities Scale (CHPS). The proposed two core human propensities are the propensity to cling to the self via comparison and competition, and the propensity to cling to perceived pleasure while avoiding perceived displeasure. These two core human propensities emerged from the author's synthesis of foundational psychological perspectives. The CHPS item set was adapted from the Nonclinging to Ego Scale (NCES), which was originally developed in a 2022 study. With the use of secondary data from 817 Thai university students collected in the 2022 study, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses supported a two-factor structure, with good concurrent and discriminant validity.

1. Introduction

The field of psychology lacks a unified theory, though many attempts have been made to develop such a metatheory of the psyche (e.g., Badcock, 2012; Henriques, 2011). In 2024, Ridthikerd proposed that the mind has two tiers, or levels. Within this metatheory, two core human propensities were proposed. The current paper lays groundwork to further establish the Two-Tiered Mind Model as a metatheory of the psyche by illustrating how the model captures core commonalities across psychological theories. The current paper aims to (1) lay the groundwork for further establishing the Two-Tiered Mind Model as a metatheory of the psyche by illustrating how it captures core commonalities across psychological theories, with a focus on the developmental realm. It also (2) presents preliminary empirical validation of the model's proposed core human propensities. The core human propensity scale (CHPS) was adapted from subscales of the Nonclinging to Ego Scale (NCES; Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022). Validating the CHPS would provide direct empirical support for the Two-Tiered Mind Model (Ridthikerd, 2024).

A metatheory is a comprehensive psychological theory that deconstructs major psychological theories and models to find their core assumptions and commonalities, to reinterpret and align them with one another, and to provide a comprehensive yet succinct theory that captures those theories (Wallis, 2010). Metatheories unite theories that seem contradictory to each other on the surface, bringing cohesion into a larger and often more meaningful model (American Psychological Association, n.d; Wallis, 2010). A number of metatheories have been developed in psychology. The Unified Theory of Knowledge (UTOK; Henriques, 2011; Henriques & Cobb, 2004) and Evolutionary systems theory (Badcock, 2012) are two such examples. However, few if any metatheories provide a comprehensive view of the psyche. The current paper focuses on arguably the two most fundamental human propensities, to lay the groundwork for further continued development of the Two-Tiered Mind Model as a metatheory of the psyche.

The Two-tiered Mind Metatheory of the Psyche

Ridthikerd's (2024) Two-Tiered Mind Model (TTM) proposes that there are two core human propensities drive humans biologically, psychologically, and socially. These propensities are not explicitly stated in existing psychological theories but

emerge from the author's original synthesis and in-depth analysis of diverse foundational psychological perspectives. The following summary briefly restates key theoretical content from a prior paper (Ridthikerd, 2024) to provide context for this paper's developmental focus.

The first core propensity is the propensity to cling to self via comparison and competition, previously named the propensity to be trapped in the inferior-superiority duality mode of self-perception (Ridthikerd, 2024). This propensity is defined as the propensity to constantly and easily be driven by a strong need to measure oneself against others; to cling excessively to self via comparison and competition (Ridthikerd, 2024). The second core propensity is the propensity to cling to perceived pleasure while avoiding perceived displeasure, previously named the human tendency to strongly cling to pleasure and happiness (Ridthikerd, 2024). The propensity is defined as the propensity to cling to what one perceives to be pleasure while avoiding what one perceives to be displeasure. Being excessively driven by these propensities brings fear, frustration, and suffering (Adler, 1992; Badcock, 2012; Berne, 1964; Bodhi, 2012b; Britannica, 2024; Feist et al., 2018; Freud, 1964; Hayes, 2004; Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Kegan, 1982)

According to TTM, the human mind is composed of two levels. Diverse, seminal psychological theories and frameworks were deconstructed and synthesized by the author to arrive at this metatheory. According to the TTM framework, the lower mind is primarily instinctual, automatic, and of lesser awareness (Ridthikerd, 2024). This is the default level (much more commonly used or experienced). The higher mind is able to comprehend what is taking place in one's life internally and externally (Adler, 1992; Badcock, 2012; Berne, 1964; Bodhi, 2012b; Britannica, 2024; Feist et al., 2018; Freud, 1964; Hayes, 2004; Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). The higher mind is characterized by the human's ability to live life in a well-integrated way. While serving the instinctual needs, one with higher mind can also be simultaneously aware of the instinctual need and, when deemed appropriate and with much mental work, rises above it (Adler, 1992, 2019; Badcock, 2012; Berne, 1964; Bodhi, 2012b; Britannica, 2024; Feist et al., 2018; Freud, 1964; Hayes, 2004; Kegan, 1982)

As detailed in Ridthikerd's 2024 paper, the two proposed core human propensities were derived through a synthesis and integration of psychological theories spanning intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group levels. These theories range from psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and Buddhism to evolutionary-based psychology (Adler, 1992; Badcock, 2012; Berne, 1964; Bodhi, 2012b; Britannica, 2024; Feist et al., 2018; Freud, 1964; Hayes, 2004; Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede & Bond, 1984).

Regarding the propensity to cling to self via comparison and competition (Ridthikerd, 2024), Freud's theory, for example, implies the driving force behind the human psyche is the propensity to hold inferior-superiority modes of being (Freud, 1964). Individuals feel small, ashamed, and guilty, primarily by the unbending, impractical standards imposed by the superego (Freud, 1964). In Adler's theory, feelings of exaggerated inferiority and superiority can both be described as excessive self focus (Adler, 1927; Feist et al., 2018). In Eric Berne's transactional analysis theory, people operate in mental states described these states as "I'm okay, you're okay," "I'm not okay, you're okay," "I'm okay, you're not okay," and "I'm not okay, you're not okay" – four interpersonal realms that fit within the inferiority-superiority modes of being. (Berne, 1964). In Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, in some cultures, social inequality is tolerated or even encouraged (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Power distance among groups in some cultures is so pervasive that it goes unquestioned (Hofstede & Bond, 1984).

The second currently proposed core human propensity is the propensity to cling to perceived pleasure while avoiding displeasure. Freud, for example, emphasized this propensity by giving the pleasure principle a prominent position in his theory (Freud, 1964). In behaviorism, there is a strong propensity to cling to pleasure (i.e., reinforcement theory, wherein rewarded behaviors are more likely to reoccur (Skinner, 1963).

The two propensities are also highlighted in applied Buddhist and evolutionary psychology (Ridthikerd, 2024). Based on a deconstruction of Buddhist thought, humans have these two core propensities (Bodhi, 2000, 2012a, 2012b; Walshe, 2005). From an applied Buddhist framework, humans are enslaved by the propensity to succumb to the need for what they perceive and believe to be pleasurable, and to avoid what they perceive and believe to be pain (Bodhi, 2000, 2012a, 2012b; Walshe, 2005). Humans are also enslaved by obsession over what they believe to be self, part of self, or belonging to self (Bodhi, 2012a, 2012b; Walshe, 2005). By not knowing how to handle

these instinctual drives, humans end up suffering (Bodhi, 2000, 2012a, 2012b; Walshe, 2005).

By cultivating awareness and wisdom one can raise oneself above the force of these two instinctual forces (Bodhi, 2000, 2012a; Walshe, 2005). In short, applied Buddhist thought concurs with psychological thought: both emphasize two core human propensities (Bodhi, 2012a, 2012b; Walshe, 2005). At the lower level of mind, one is unable to comprehend, and is excessively obsessed by the two drives (or propensities), while at the higher level of mind, one is able to comprehend, and find balance in serving the two propensities until transcending them, living with a higher sense of purpose and meaning (Bodhi, 2000, 2012a, 2012b; Walshe, 2005). In sum, the two propensities represent an intersection between Western psychology and Eastern psychology (or Buddhist thought) (Bodhi, 2000, 2012a; Walshe, 2005).

As mentioned in previous work (Ridthikerd, 2024), the notion of two core human propensities and the two levels of minds, is, in the deeper analysis, also appears in evolutionary based psychology. Evolutionary based psychologies, at the deeper level, intersect with Buddhist psychology. Buddhist views pleasure as an illusion, something that human beings are being tricked or deceived by nature (Bodhi, 2000; Walshe, 2005). Evolution based psychology also views pleasure, i.e., emotion, as a higher level and sophisticated tool nature installs in the human mind for the purpose of manipulating human beings to act in the way that allow highest possibility for human species to survive, such as eating, resting or mating (Grinde, 2002). Like Buddhism, what human perceive and believe to be pleasure and pain sometimes is just an illusion, a trick played by nature. Human beings who does not develop maturity will cling obsessively to the need for perceived pleasure. At the deeper level, it can be seen that the notion of lower mind, a stage of obsession over pleasure and higher mind, the mode of raising above pleasure (although not completely), are congruent in psychology, Buddhist and evolutionary based framework (Bodhi, 2000, 2012a, 2012b; Grinde, 2002; Ridthikerd, 2024; Walshe, 2005).

In sum, from the prior paper (Ridthikerd, 2024), the author draws upon intrapersonal theories (e.g. Adler, 1927, 1938, 1992, 2019; Freud, 1964), interpersonal theories (e.g. Berne, 1964), social and cultural level theories (e.g. Hofstede, 1980, 1984), as well as Eastern-based psychological frameworks (applied Buddhist frameworks) and evolutionary psychology-based frameworks, to showcase that the purposed two core human propensities and the purposed two levels of mind, although not explicitly, have been,

more or less, the undercurrent theme that seems to underline core human nature depicted in these mentioned psychological frameworks. Given the occurrence of the two propensities across multiple, diverse psychological frameworks, it would be reasonable to suppose that the human mind reflects processes that align with these two human propensities.

In the second section, the theoretical expansion and the development and preliminary validation of the core human propensities scale—which the author will explore—aims to lay the groundwork for further establishing the Two-Tiered Mind Model as a metatheory of the psyche that captures core commonalities across psychological theories, including those regarding the human mind in the developmental realm. It also (2) presents empirical validation of the model's proposed core human propensities. The Core Human Propensity Scale (CHPS) was adapted from subscales of the Nonclinging to Ego Scale (NCES; Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022). Validating the CHPS would provide direct empirical support for the Two-Tiered Mind Model (Ridthikerd, 2024)

2. Theoretical Expansion and the Development and Validation of the Core Human Propensity Scale (CHPS)

2.1 Theoretical Expansion to the Development Realm

In presenting this section, the author aims to explore the meta constructs, presenting the proposed two-tiered mind in terms of the human stages of development, showcasing that the notion of the two core human propensities and the two levels of mind also seem to be the overarching theme that seems to occur throughout the human stages of development, as depicted in various development theories, thereby expanding the theoretical scope of relevance of the Two-Tiered Mind Model in the developmental theory realm of psychology.

To further elucidate the Two-Tiered Mind Model as a metatheory of the psyche, the author proposes that the purpose-driven meta-construct—the two core human propensities: (1) clinging to self via comparison and competition, and (2) clinging to perceived pleasure while avoiding displeasure—manifests throughout human psychological development. These propensities are not explicitly stated in developmental theories but are extracted through the author's synthesis of multiple frameworks. When deconstructing developmental theories, development largely involves the attachment process and letting

go of attachments (Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004). Although not directly stated by these theorists, the present analysis suggests that we can relate these developmental processes to the currently proposed two core propensities to attach to pleasure and to compare and compete with others (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Torbert, 2004). This synthesis offers a metatheoretical interpretation that integrates and reframes existing developmental insights. Based on the author's synthesis, human development can be conceptually organized into three phases, which—upon deep analysis—appear to align with these two propensities. This interpretation draws on insights from several theorists (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004).

In early development, humans are in the default mode of pleasure seeking. In Kohlberg's moral development theory, a child's action at the instrumental-relativist stage is to, a large extent, driven by reward and punishment (Kohlberg, 1981). A child at an early age, according to Kohlberg, pursues pleasure, rather than morality (Kohlberg, 1981). Likewise, in Kegan's "instrumental" or "imperial" stage, Loevinger's "impulsive" stage, and other developmental models, a child's behavior is mainly driven by self-indulgence and impulsivity while the sense of self is not yet fully formed (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004).

As development progresses and the sense of self fully emerges, the fear of being reprimanded, or judged as inferior, starts to emerge (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004). As the fear and the need to protect the sense of self become prominent, the phase that might be called the self-focus phase emerges (Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004). At this stage, one becomes concerned, or even obsessed, with gaining approval from others and society (Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004). As one's sense of identity starts to develop, focus and concern about the self increase (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994). Fear of being rejected becomes driven by social comparison and a constant fear of being judged as inferior. This phase, reflected in Kohlberg's "interpersonal concordance" stage, drives people toward gaining social approval (Kohlberg, 1981). Conformity to social rules

at this stage is not done out of true respect for one's culture and norms but out of a fear of being rejected by others and society.

Likewise, Loevinger's "conformist" stage, Cook-Greuter's "group-centric" stage (Cook-Greuter, 1999), and Torbert's "diplomat" (Torbert, 2004) represent a stage of development wherein one becomes constantly obsessed with the self, and becomes fearful of being judged, a pattern that, while socially oriented on the surface, may stem from a deeper drive for self-protection. At this stage, the need for social approval often supersedes the impulse toward pleasure (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004). While Torbert's theory may not explicitly address attachment to pleasure or its avoidance, the identification of self through social approval is clearly evident within the Diplomat action-logic.

At a third stage of human development, with growing awareness and realization that humans are basically conditioned by biological, psychological, and social forces to be governed by these two forces, one starts to break free from these types of psychological enslavement (Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976). In this stage, which could be called the "self-transcendent" stage, one starts living life with a greater sense of psychological freedom, greater awareness, and a greater sense of purpose (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Torbert, 2004).

Eventually, with greater maturity and reflective capacity, some individuals may reach what this analysis considers a stage of self-transcendence (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004). At this stage of human development, one finds balance and more wisely manages attachment to pleasure and desire for social approval, or even transcends these things. The shift in human development toward being wiser and more aware is depicted in Kohlberg's theory as the post-conventional stage, where an individual relies on wisdom, high morals, and independent thinking, rather than making decisions out of fear or succumbing to social pressure (Kohlberg, 1981). In Kegan's theory, this stage is called the "self-transforming" mind. Loevinger calls this stage "autonomous" or "integrated." Cook-Greuter calls this stage "self-actualizing," "construct-aware," and "unitive." Torbert's models describe this higher level of human development as the "transforming" or "alchemical" stage (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004).

When deeply analyzed, many development theories specify that humans move through stages of development toward finding balance, toward being free from attachment, and from being free from the need to compare or compete (Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994).

Upon further deconstructing, human growth and development could be categorized into two stages. In a default stage, one is attached to seeking pleasure, dwells on the self, and dwells on social comparisons. In a transcendence stage, one is highly aware of attachments yet finds a way to balance and integrate those needs, or even transcends them (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994).

Deconstructing development theories, it becomes evident that attachment to pleasure and the social comparison tendency together play a critical role in human development (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004). In Torbert's framework, the emphasis is particularly evident in relation to the latter. Although earlier in life, Torbert's Opportunist stage of mind—despite not being explicitly stated—could likely represent a phase dominated by a strong attachment to pleasure and the avoidance of displeasure. One's unaware attachment to pleasure is so pervasive and consuming in this stage that it often manifests as focusing solely on one's own happiness, not caring about others, or even going so far as to take advantage of others for the sake of one's own interest or satisfaction. The fact that the notion of the two core propensities and the overarching two levels of mind is not only the recurrent theme in depictions of human nature at intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group levels, Eastern-based psychological frameworks, and evolutionary-based frameworks, but also in major developmental theories, further suggests these two propensities and the two overarching levels of mind could potentially be the core underlying parts of what drive human beings (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994; Torbert, 2004)

Although this paper focuses solely on the developmental realm, the author proposes that the Two-Tiered Mind Metatheory—with its two core human propensities and two levels of mind—could serve as a meta-theoretical lens for unifying frameworks across multiple areas of psychology, including personality, psychotherapy, self-development, intergroup relations, and advertising. These additional realms will be explored in future research

2.2 Development and Preliminary Validation of CHPS

This section outlines the development and preliminary validation of the Core Human Propensities Scale (CHPS), consisting of eight subsections (2.2.1–2.2.8). It begins with a conceptual distinction between nonclinging to ego and core human propensities (2.2.1), followed by a description of the use of secondary data and bootstrapping methods for robust scale development and item selection (2.2.2, 2.2.3). Next, four empirical studies evaluate the psychometric properties and validity of the CHPS. Study 1 investigates the factor structure and reliability using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses along with bootstrapping (2.2.4). Study 2 examines concurrent validity by assessing correlations between CHPS and psychological well-being, hypothesizing a positive relationship due to CHPS's focus on reducing suffering (i.e., higher CHPS scores reflect lower levels of clinging to the self via comparison and competition, as well as lower attachment to perceived pleasure and avoidance of perceived displeasure) (2.2.5). Study 3 assesses discriminant validity by comparing CHPS with the Nonattachment Scale (NAS-7), testing whether CHPS better predicts depression beyond NAS (2.2.6). Study 4 further tests discriminant validity through hierarchical regression to determine if CHPS explains additional variance in well-being beyond other NCES subscales (2.2.7). The section concludes with a general discussion synthesizing findings and highlighting future directions (2.2.8).

2.2.1 The conceptual distinction between nonclinging to ego and core human propensities

The Nonclinging to Ego Scale (NCES) is based on a Buddhist framework; it measures nonclinging to ego in nine forms (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022). It was developed based on applied Buddhist literature to measure the tendency to be psychologically free from over-identification with physical appearance, thoughts, and emotions—in other words, the tendency to have a lower need to satisfy, protect, and enhance self. The NCES contains Likert-scale items rated from 1 (“disagree strongly”) to 6 (“agree strongly”). Nine theoretical factors were derived through a critical review of Buddhist literature. These nine facets of the nonclinging to ego construct are as follows: non-obsession with body and physical appearance, non-dwelling on emotions, nonclinging to suffering-inducing thoughts, non-grasping (for things and reputation), non-defensiveness (referred to interchangeably as non-self-defensiveness in Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022), non-controlling of self, non-controlling of others (social environment) (referred to

interchangeably as non-controlling of group in Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022), non-self-preoccupation, and non-comparing and competing (referred to as noncomparing and competing in Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022). All nine factors are from Ridthikerd and Huansuriya (2022).

Table 1

A comparison between the nonclinging to ego and the human core propensities.

Conceptual distinction	Nonclinging to ego scale (NCES; Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022)	Core human Propensities Scale(CHPS)
Purpose	Measuring nonclinging Applied Buddhist framework on the concepts of nonclinging	Deriving from deconstructing a wide variety of theories to empirically verify propensities that are nearly universal among psychological models
Structure	Nine subscales represent detailed dimension of nonclinging derived from an applied Buddhist framework	Two subscales derived from extensive review of literature regarding the commonalities of human nature found among psychological theories
Orientation	Reflects degree of nonclinging depicted by nine subscales	Rather than measuring absence of clinging, this scale identifies the core presence of these universal drives found in almost all psychological frameworks
Aim	Aims at measuring 9 dimensions of nonclinging	Aim at providing preliminary evidence supporting TTM as a metatheory of psychology, with the propositions that human have two core propensities. Attempt to find meta-construct or meta model that unite theories that seem contradictory to each other on the surface, bringing cohesion into a larger and often more meaningful mode

Psychometric properties were measured and tested to validate the NCES. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to evaluate the derived factor structure. The factor structure and internal consistency of the nonclinging to ego construct were examined. Concurrent validity, criterion validity, and test-retest reliability were examined, and the psychometric properties of NCES were empirically verified (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022). The nonclinging to ego construct was derived from a Buddhism framework. It supposes nine fundamental dimensions of nonclinging. It purports to measure the degree to which a human is psychologically free in an applied Buddhist sense (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022).

The aim of the current paper is to empirically verify the existence and relevance of two core human propensities, and to establish evidence supporting the TTM as metatheory indicating core commonality across human minds. This requires empirically

establishing the existence and relevance of these two human propensities. Table 1 portrays a brief comparison between the nonclinging to ego and the human core propensities. The main goal of the current study is to demonstrate the distinct utility of the Core Human Propensities Scale (CHPS) apart from its source, NCES, and similar scales. Establishing the utility of CHPS would provide further support for TTM (a metatheory of the psyche).

2.2.2 Using Secondary Data and Bootstrapping in Scale Development

Using pre-existing data has proved to be a valuable means of testing psychological research hypotheses (Smith, 2008; Wang & Wu, 2018). Although a set of pre-existing data might have some limitations, there are statistical methods that can help alleviate problems with a set of pre-existing data, for example, using resampling methods to create a new set of data, or using bootstrapping to resample to increase the precision and the generalization of the results (Efron, 1979; Lee, 2025; Smith, 2023; Wright et al., 2011).

Bootstrapping involves repeated sampling with replacement from an original dataset. Bootstrapping offers distinct statistical advantages by providing parameter estimation with strong precision and outcome generalizability. To ensure the stability and the reliability of parameter estimation, bootstrapping can provide confidence intervals, standard errors, and p-values. The recommended number of bootstrapping reiterations is 10,000 (Chernick, 1999; Hesterberg, 2014).

Following this recommendation, for this study of the development and validation of CHPS — except for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), for which bootstrapping could not be applied due to limitations of the statistical software used (SPSS) — the author used the 10,000 reiteration criterion of bootstrapping to make sure the statistical analysis was performed with precision and robustness in parameter estimation (Efron, 1979; Lee, 2025; Smith, 2023; Wright et al., 2011).

2.2.3 Item selection for CHPS

To measure the propensity to clinging to self via comparison and competition, three items were taken from the NCES's (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022) non-comparing and competing subscale, namely, (1) "I will feel bad if I am not as successful as others", (2) "I often feel stress from constantly comparing myself to others," and (3) "I usually compare myself to others in everything." The propensity to cling to perceived pleasure while avoiding perceived displeasure refers to a tendency to become attached to

pleasurable experiences and to resist or avoid painful ones. To measure this propensity, six items were taken from NCES's (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022). non-dwelling on emotion subscale, namely, (1) I can accept any negative emotions and feelings no matter how bad or intense they are, (2) I can enjoy pleasurable emotions and experiences without holding on to them, (3) I am able to remain at peace no matter what feelings occur in my mind , (4) I can stay at ease no matter what kind of emotions I am experiencing, (5) I can remain calm in the face of any emotional experiences, and (6) I am able to let go of the sorrows and regrets of the past. For scoring, higher scores on CHPS indicate lower levels of the two propensities.

Three experts, university professors and published scholars of Buddhist studies and psychology, agreed on the proposed conceptualizations of TTM and the currently proposed CHPS. Item-objective congruence (IOC) (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977) was used to test for content validity for conceptualization and representation of the intended construct. With this technique, the specialists were asked to rate how well these 9 items represented the intended construct in every dimension. Items were to be removed or revised if they presented an IOC below 0.5. However since all the experts rated all nine items as congruence with the measurement objectives, with IOC scores approaching 1.00, all nine items were retained.

2.2.4 Study 1: Dimensions and structure of core human propensities (CHP)

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was implemented to empirically verify the purported two-factor structure of CHPS and to verify the items' representativeness of the factors. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) next was used to assess the construct validity of CHPS. The stability and reliability of the two-factor structure was also tested, as were the convergent and discriminant validity of the construct. To assess the stability and robustness of the model's estimates, 10,000 bootstrapped replications were implemented.

Participants, Materials, and Procedure. For EFA and CFA, in the study in 2022 (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022), 989 Thai undergraduate students from universities in Bangkok and its vicinity were recruited, using a multi-stage sampling method. As the inclusion criterion of using less than 5% missing was implemented, data from 891 participants were retained (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022). After implementing Mahalanobis distance to detect multivariate outliers, data from 817 participants

(222 males, 584 females, 11 unspecified), aged 18–24 ($M = 20.17$, $SD = 1.28$), remained for the 2022 study. In the 2022 study, participants then were randomly split into two subsamples. Data from the first subsample ($n = 360$; 103 males, 251 females, 6 unspecified), aged 18–24 ($M = 20.12$, $SD = 1.23$), then was used in EFA. The second subsample ($n = 457$; 119 males, 333 females, 5 unspecified), aged 18–24 ($M = 20.22$, $SD = 1.32$), was used in CFA. In this study, the subsample from the 2022 study, 360, was used for EFA, and the subsample of 457 was used for CFA as secondary data. Participants rated the extent to which each item described them on a Likert scale of 1 (“disagree strongly”) to 6 (“agree strongly”).

Results. An initial EFA was conducted on 9 items, with the two factors accounting for 61.15% of the total response variance. One item, with the lowest factor loading (.589), was removed to reduce potential redundancy. A second EFA was then conducted on the remaining 8 items. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value was .813, and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(28) = 1143.908$, $p < .001$, indicating that the data were appropriate for these analyses (Bartlett, 1954; Kaiser, 1974). With principal component analysis and varimax rotation, both of the factors showed eigenvalues greater than one. All the items (5 items from non-comparing and competing, 3 items from non-dwelling on emotion) showed factor loadings greater than .3. The eigenvalues of the two factors were 3.514 and 1.717. The two factors accounted for 65.39% of the total response variance. The factor loadings for the 8 items on their factors ranged from .635 to .885 (see Table 2). The scoring of the new scale remains the same as the NCES, with higher scores on CHPS indicating lower propensities.

CFA was conducted using maximum likelihood estimation with 10,000 bootstrap replications to enhance both precision and generalization. The CFA evaluated the factor structure of the two propensities, implementing a two-factor correlated model. The model fit adequately with the data, $\chi^2 = 24.302$, $df = 17$, $p = .1115$; $\chi^2/df = 1.430$; CFI = .995; TLI = .991; SRMR = .035, RMSEA = 0.031. All eight items loading on the factors were significant at the $p < .001$ level. Bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals confirmed the stability of parameter estimates. The model was considered to fit the data well.

Although one item (Item 1, *I will feel bad if I am not as successful as others*) had a factor loading slightly below .30, for CFA, it was retained. Similar to EFA, in CFA, the general rule is that items retained should be those with a factor loading above .30. However, there are some exceptions: if, by dropping the item, the items representing

the factor are fewer than three, one should consider not dropping the item, as at least three items per factor are preferred (Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). As the loading of Item 1 approached .30 (loading = .29) and as the item is theoretically relevant to the construct, Item 1 was retained. Overall, the CFA results support the presence of a coherent and well-fitting two-factor structure in the CHPS.

Table 2

Standardized Loadings from Exploratory Factor Analysis (N = 360) and First-Order 2-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis (N = 457) of the Core Human Propensities Scale (CHPS, $\alpha = .79$)

Factors and items	Factor Loading		
	EFA	CFA	95% CI (CFA)
Factor 1: The propensity to cling to self via comparison and competition ($\alpha = .79$)			
Item 1 I will feel bad if I am not as successful as others	.787	.288	[.185, .387]
Item 2 I often feel stress from constantly comparing myself to others	.861	.704	[.547, .844]
Item 3 I usually compare myself to others in everything	.789	.875	[.724, 1.108]
Factor 2: Propensity to cling to perceived pleasure while avoiding perceived displeasure ($\alpha = .86$)			
Item 4 I can enjoy pleasurable emotions and experiences without holding on to them	.712	.538	[.448, .620]
Item 5 I am able to remain at peace no matter what feelings occur in my mind	.849	.819	[.750, .873]
Item 6 I can stay at ease no matter what kind of emotions I am Experiencing	.885	.909	[.872, .940]
Item 7 I can remain calm in the face of any emotional experiences	.837	.835	[.784, .878]
Item 8 I am able to let go of the sorrows and regrets of the past	.837	.562	[.482, .633]

Note. In items 1-3, scores were reversed so that higher scores mean lower level of CHP.

Cronbach's alpha of the two latent variables (factors) generally should be at least .80 to establish the reliability of the scale (Hair et al., 2017; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to George and Mallery (2003), however, for Cronbach's alpha, the .70–.80 range is considered acceptable. Nunnally (1994) also notes that alpha values approaching .80 are acceptable, especially in earlier stages of scale development. Using the CFA dataset ($n = 457$) with the finalized 8 items, Cronbach's alpha for overall CHPS was .79. Cronbach's alpha for the CHPS's first factor (3 items), the propensity to cling to self via comparison and competition, was .79. The second factor, the propensity to cling to

perceived pleasure while avoiding perceived displeasure (5 items), was .86, hence indicating acceptable scale reliability for Cronbach's alpha (see Table 2).

Composite reliability of the two latent variables (factors) generally should be at least .700 (Hair et al., 2017; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Composite reliability values of .60 or higher are however acceptable in early stages of research development (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, p. 45). For composite reliability (CR), the first factor was .678, and the second factor was .859, hence indicating acceptable scale reliability for composite reliability (see Table 3).

According to Hair et al. (2017), in order to demonstrate convergent validity, it is suggested that the average variance extracted (AVE) of the factors should be at least .500 (meaning more than half of each indicator's variance is explained by the factor). However, AVE values above .40 are also acceptable if CR exceeds .60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The values of AVE for both factors exceeded the threshold, establishing convergent validity. When maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV) are both lower than AVE for all the factors, discriminant validity is demonstrated (Hair et al., 2017). The AVE and CR of each factor indicated convergent validity because MSV and ASV for each factor were lower than their AVE (see Table 3). These results provide evidence that the two factors achieved acceptable discriminant validity.

Table 3

Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Maximum Shared Variance (MSV), and Average Shared Variance (ASV) for the Two Factors of the Core Human Propensities Scale (CHPS)

Factors	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
Factor 1: The propensity to cling to self via comparison and competition	.678	.448	.032	.032
Factor 2: The propensity to cling to perceived pleasure while avoiding perceived displeasure	.859	.560	.032	.032

2.2.5 Study 2: Demonstrating the Concurrent Validity of the CHPS

To establish concurrent validity, the correlation between CHPS and a theoretically related measure was tested. It was hypothesized that participants' CHPS scores would be positively correlated with their scores on the Psychological Well-being Scale (PWB; Ryff & Singer, 1996), using the Thai version adapted by Maneesri (2007), because the

core human propensities function to limit psychological well-being (as mentioned, a positive correlation was expected because higher CHPS scores indicate lower propensities toward suffering, and therefore greater well-being).

To elaborate, Ryff and Singer's PWB Scale is grounded in a multidimensional model that defines six core dimensions of well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Although none of the psychological theories or frameworks that the author synthesizes explicitly states the hypotheses offered in this study, the author draws upon recurring insights across traditions to construct CHPS as a metatheoretical proposition.

With an in-depth analysis from an extensive review of the literature (Berne, 1964; Bodhi, 2000; Britannica, 2024; Feist et al., 2018; Freud, 1964; Hayes, 2004; Hofstede, 1984; Kegan, 1982; Ridthikerd, 2024; Walshe, 2005), the author hypothesizes that individuals with high CHPS—i.e., those with lower levels of clinging to self via the need to compare and compete, and lower levels of clinging to what is believed and perceived to be pleasure—are likely to demonstrate higher scores on the overall score of psychological well-being and, in detail, on all six psychological well-being subscales, particularly on the autonomy and self-acceptance subscales.

Ryff (1989) defines autonomy as “self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behavior from within; evaluates self by personal standards.” (Ryff, 1989, p. 1072). This concurs with what is defined as an individual with high CHPS in the proposed two-tiered mind model.

High CHPS scores should be correlated with a reduced need to measure oneself against others, as well as a lower tendency to cling excessively to the self through comparison and competition. This aligns with Ryff's (1989) definition of a person with a higher level of autonomy as more self-determining and independent.

In Kegan's theory, individuals with a higher level of mind (i.e., what Kegan calls a higher level of consciousness) often seem to transcend social pressure (Kegan, 1982). The self is not revolving around the opinion of others anymore as one reaches the stage of what Kegan calls the Self-Authoring Mind (Stage 4) and the Self-Transforming Mind (Stage 5). In contrast to individuals with a lower level of mind, the Socialized Mind (Stage 3) is characterized by conforming to social norms and expectations (i.e., constantly

measuring oneself up against others socially, unscrupulously driven by the fear of others' opinions.).

It could be inferred that the distinction between a higher level of mind and a lower level of mind is, in Kegan's theory, the state of being autonomous. In Ryff's (1989) terms, a state of high autonomy comes with the ability to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways, and to regulate behavior from within.

This depiction of a higher level of mind, through having high autonomy, is also recurrent across many theories. In Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development, the difference between conventional and post-conventional stages of moral development is an individual's level of autonomy. It can be said that those at a conventional stage of mind are still living through social conformity and fear of not being accepted or approved by society, while those at the stage of post-conventional morality, as the name implies, transcend what is conventional (i.e., social norm and pressure), and are able to think for themselves (Kohlberg, 1981).

An example of a research study depicting the self being attached strongly to external sources associated with low autonomy is that of Ito and Kodama (2006). The study shows that an individual with what is called contingent self-esteem is linked with a decreased sense of autonomy (Ito & Kodama, 2006). Contingent self-esteem is, in a nutshell, based on social comparison. It is other-directed, as self-worth revolves around others' opinions, based on what people think and feel toward them (Ito & Kodama, 2006). It can be inferred from the research study that individuals with contingent self-esteem may probably, for the most part, have a lower level of autonomy, as they still cling excessively to self via comparing and competing with others, attached and enslaved by other people's opinions and society. There are many more examples regarding the link between individuals who cling strongly to external validation and who have lower autonomy; however, one sample is presented here.

From theoretical and sample-based empirical evidence above, as CHPS is a meta-construct, the author proposes that individuals with high CHPS would have a high level of autonomy, the critical part of psychological well-being defined by Ryff (1989), in part due to the lower level of the need to cling to self via comparing and competition, i.e., having a lower need to push oneself up against others or social expectations, hence more freedom, more independence, i.e., higher level of autonomy.

As for self-acceptance, Ryff (1989) defines it, in part, as “possessing a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledging and accepting multiple aspects of the self, including both good and bad qualities” (p. 1072). With the emphasis on “accepts multiple aspects of self,” although not explicitly stated, a high level of one’s self-acceptance should include a high likelihood for an individual to be able to accept all aspects of self, including one’s own feelings and emotions, without being triggered or repulsed by any particular feeling. Although Ryff’s (1989) study did not explicitly highlight this, many researchers and articles point out that having a well-integrated emotional life is a critical part of self-acceptance.

This concurs with the proposed characteristic of a person with high CHPS. With this particular kind of quality of mind, the likelihood that a person does not cling excessively to the perceived feeling of pleasurable experience—which includes experiences from both internal sources (i.e., one’s own feelings) and external ones (i.e., what one experiences from the outside world)—and the freedom from the excessive need to avoid what is perceived as displeasure, the author proposes that this allows individuals with high CHPS to have a higher level of self-acceptance, with regard to dealing with emotions or feelings, particularly pleasure or displeasure (Bodhi, 2000, 2012a; Walshe, 2005). Individuals with this type of quality, i.e., high CHPS, from theoretical analysis, should be able to take on any emotion such as discomfort or displeasure, having the ability to stay calm in the face of negative impulses or feelings. Hence, the author hypothesizes that high CHPS (i.e., individuals with the lower need to cling to what is perceived as pleasure while avoiding what is believed to be displeasure) should positively correlate with self-acceptance.

In sum, based on an in-depth analysis of the reviewed literature, the author hypothesizes that individuals with high CHPS should likely score higher on the overall score of psychological well-being, and in detail, in all subscales of psychological well-being including autonomy and self-acceptance, as well as environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life (Maneesri, 2007; Ryff & Singer, 1996).

Participants. From the data ($N = 817$) used in Study 1 (EFA and CFA for NCES) in 2022 (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022), a subsample of 251 undergraduate Thai-speaking participants was assigned to also complete the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) scale (79 males, 171 females, 1 unspecified; the participants’ average age was $M = 19.96$,

$SD = 1.57$) in addition to the NCES. This dataset of 251 participants was used for the current study.

Measures and procedure. The CHPS items consisted of 8 items ($\alpha = .79$), scored in degrees ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Maneesri's (2007) Thai version of the psychological wellbeing scale (PWB) was adapted from Ryff and Singer (1996). This scale consists of 45 items ($\alpha = .86$), measuring six aspects of PWB: self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life. Responses are scored in degrees ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Results. The correlation between CHPS and PWB was tested using 10,000 bootstrapped samples. CHPS demonstrated acceptable concurrent validity, with a significant positive correlation with PWB ($r = .519$, $n = 251$, $p < .001$), 95% CI [.411, .616]. As expected, when considering the six subscales, CHPS was positively correlated with all six subscales. The strongest correlations were with self-acceptance ($r = .528$, $n = 251$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.417, .627]) and autonomy ($r = .430$, $n = 251$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.317, .530]). Positive correlations were also found with environmental mastery ($r = .371$, $n = 251$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.253, .480]), personal growth ($r = .282$, $n = 251$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.146, .414]), positive relations with others ($r = .302$, $n = 251$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.156, .437]), and purpose in life ($r = .291$, $n = 251$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.159, .415]). Together, these results provide evidence of acceptable concurrent validity for the CHPS in relation to both overall and domain-specific psychological well-being.

2.2.6 Study 3: The discriminant validity of CHPS over NAS-7

In this study the author aimed to demonstrate the discriminate validity of CHPS (i.e. the predictive power of CHPS scale score over similar constructs) over the Nonattachment Scale (NAS). CHPS and NAS both purport to measure human attachment (Ridthikerd, 2024; Sahdra et al., 2010). Nonattachment Scale (NAS) was development with the aim at assessing nonattachment. Nonattachment was found to be associated with a stronger degree of autonomous regulation, self-actualization, and psychological and subjective well-being (Sahdra et al., 2010). Nonattachment was found to reduce materialism and depressive symptoms (Sahdra et al., 2010). In this study, the author use short form of the Thai-translated Nonattachment scale, NAS-7, a short form, with 7 items, which found to display valid psychometric properties, including a one-dimensional

factor structure and measurement invariance across different samples (Sahdra et al., 2010). This study tested the ability of CHPS to predict depression beyond that predicted by NAS-7.

Method and Participants. In the Ridthikerd and Huansuriya (2022) study, a dataset of 66 participants completed the CHPS, NAS-7, and the 21-item Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), using the Thai version validated by Oei et al. (2013). In the current study, the same dataset of 66 participants was used.

Measures and Procedure. Depression. The DASS-21 comprises three subscales of 7 items each, depression subscale ($\alpha = .89$), anxiety subscale ($\alpha = .83$), and stress scale ($\alpha = .92$). In the current study, just the depression subscale scores were used. Respondents rated the extent to which they had experienced symptoms over the previous week on a scale ranging from 0 ("Did not apply to me at all") to 3 ("Applied to me very much, or most of the time"). Only depression scores were used in the current study. CHPS and NAS-7 scores were treated as predictors.

Results. The descriptive statistics for the sample ($N = 66$) were as follows: depression ($M = 14.27$, $SD = 8.84$), NAS-7 ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .72$) and CHPS ($M = 3.75$, $SD = .88$). To investigate the discriminant validity of CHPS over NAS, the author utilized hierarchical regression analysis with depression scores (DASS-21) as the dependent variable. For the analysis, 10,000 bootstrapped samples were used. NAS-7 was entered in the model as a first step. NAS-7 alone significantly predicted depression, $B = -4.71$, $SE = 1.56$, with 95% CI $[-7.80, -1.67]$, $p = .004$, and explained 14.5% of DASS-21's depression scores, $R^2 = .145$, $p = .002$. Entering CHPS into the model in a second step, the model's ability to explain depression scores increased by 18.2%, $\Delta R^2 = .182$, $p < .001$. Entering CHPS into the model raised the total variance accounted for to 32.7%, with $R^2 = .327$, Adjusted $R^2 = .305$ (explaining 14.5% more variance than the simpler model). With CHPS and NAS-7 in the model, CHPS still significantly contributed to predicting depression scores, $B = -5.57$, $SE = 1.35$, 95% CI $[-8.96, -2.72]$, $p < .001$, with a moderate partial correlation of $-.46$. However, NAS-7 became non-significant, $B = -.32$, $SE = 1.66$, 95% CI $[-3.64, 3.28]$, $p = .850$.

Regarding possible multicollinearity, the value of tolerance was at .591 and the VIF value was at 1.693, suggesting that the non-significance of NAS was not due to

multicollinearity. These results, using bootstrapped regression coefficients and confidence intervals, are displayed in Table 4. The results from this study demonstrate the ability of CHPS to predict depression (beyond what NAS-7 can predict). With CHPS entered into the model, NAS became non-significant. This result provides evidence of incremental validity for CHPS, indicating that CHPS uniquely explains depression beyond what NAS can account for.

Table 4

Bootstrapped Hierarchical Regression Predicting Depression from NAS-7 and CHPS (N = 66)

Step	Predictor	B	SE	β	95% CI	p	Tolerance	VIF
1	NAS-7	-4.71	1.56	-0.38	[-7.80, -1.67]	.004	-	-
2	NAS-7	-0.32	1.66	-0.03	[-3.64, 3.28]	.850	0.591	1.693
	CHPS	-5.57	1.35	-0.56	[-8.96, -2.72]	< .001	0.591	1.693

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient (non-bootstrapped); CI = 95% percentile bootstrap confidence interval based on 10,000 samples. Only B, SE, p, and CI were bootstrapped

2.2.7 Study 4: Discriminant Validity for CHPS over the 7 other subscales of NCES

Using the dataset used above in Study 2 (N = 251), hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to see if CHPS could account for variance in psychological well-being (PWB) beyond the other seven subscales of NCES.

Method and Participants. A dataset of 251 undergraduate Thai-speaking participants was assigned to complete the Nonclinging to Ego Scale (NCES) and the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) scale (Ridthikerd & Huansuriya, 2022). The same group of participants used in Study 2 was also included in the current study.

Measures and Procedure. The CHPS items consisted of 8 items. Maneesri's (2007) Thai version of the psychological wellbeing scale (PWB) was adapted from Ryff and Singer (1996). This scale consists of 45 items ($\alpha = .86$).

Results. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to evaluate the Core Human Propensities Scale (CHPS) as a predictor of psychological well-being (PWB) above and beyond seven other predictors. The seven initial predictors were the other subscales

from NCES after excluding the two subscales adapted for CHPS. These seven subscales are as follows: non-clinging to suffering-inducing thoughts, non-self-preoccupation, non-controlling of others, non-defensiveness, non-controlling of self, non-grasping (for things and reputation), and non-obsession with body and physical appearance. For robustness and precision, 95% confidence intervals were calculated with 10,000 bootstrapped samples for the parameter's estimation.

Table 5

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Psychological Well-Being (PWB) (N = 251)

Step	Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>β</i>	95% CI LL	95% CI UL	<i>p</i>
1	Nonclinging to suffering-inducing thoughts	0.129	0.037	.260	0.057	0.200	.001
	Non-defensiveness	-0.049	0.037	-.084	-0.120	0.025	.191
	Non-controlling of others (social environment)	0.125	0.047	.201	0.033	0.218	.008
	Non-obsession with body & physical appearance	0.016	0.038	.028	-0.057	0.092	.675
	Non-controlling of self	-0.087	0.043	-.132	-0.167	-0.002	.041
	Non-self-preoccupation	0.044	0.043	.082	-0.043	0.127	.312
	Non-grasping (things and reputation)	0.093	0.044	.157	0.007	0.178	.034
2	Nonclinging to suffering-inducing thoughts	0.049	0.037	.099	-0.023	0.123	.186
	Non-defensiveness	-0.040	0.034	-.070	-0.106	0.026	.232
	Non-controlling of others (social environment)	0.084	0.043	.136	0.001	0.172	.053
	Non-obsession with body & physical appearance	-0.002	0.033	-.004	-0.064	0.064	.943
	Non-controlling of self	-0.066	0.041	-.100	-0.143	0.019	.112
	Non-self-preoccupation	0.031	0.040	.059	-0.049	0.106	.431
	Non-grasping (things and reputation)	0.055	0.038	.092	-0.020	0.128	.148
	CHPS (Core Human Propensities Scale)	0.282	0.055	.387	0.174	0.389	<.001

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE* = standard error; *β* = standardized regression coefficient (non-bootstrapped); CI = 95% percentile bootstrap confidence interval based on 10,000 samples; *p*-values are two-tailed

In step 1, the seven NCES subscale factors significantly predicted PWB scores, accounting for 22.3% of the variance (adjusted $R^2 = .200$) of psychological well-being, $R^2 = .223$, $F(7, 243) = 9.938$, $p < .001$. Only four factors were significant predictors in this model: (1) non-clinging to suffering-inducing thoughts, (2) non-controlling of self, (3) non-controlling of others, and (4) non-grasping (for things and reputation). In step 2, entering CHPS into the model brought the total explained variance to 31.7% (adjusted $R^2 = .295$)—an increase of 9.5% more explained variance, $\Delta R^2 = .095$, $F(1, 242) = 33.573$,

$p < .001$. Moreover, with CHPS entered into the model, six of the seven other factors became non-significant in the model (with the non-controlling of others subscale being marginal; it approached significance with $B = .084$, bootstrap $p = .053$, and a 95% bootstrap CI of $[-.001, .172]$, which marginally included the null value and was therefore considered non-significant under the predefined bootstrap criteria). These results imply CHPS significantly accounts for variance in PWB beyond that accounted for by seven other subfactors of NCES, with $B = .282$, 95% CI $[-.174, .389]$, $p < .001$.

Multicollinearity was examined using the tolerance value for CHPS, which was .631—well above the common cutoff of .10—indicating no problematic multicollinearity between CHPS and the other predictors. The result from this multicollinearity analysis suggested that in step 2, the seven NCES factors were nonsignificant contributors because the CHPS (which was derived from the average score of the two NCES factors) better accounted for the same variance in PWB scores. Results were shown in Table 5.

2.2.8 General Discussion

For the first part (section 2.1), to further conceptually establish the Two-Tiered Mind Model, with the two core human propensities and the two levels of mind, the author, upon extensive review of the literature, explores and expands the Two-Tiered Mind into the developmental realm. With in-depth analysis and strong synthesis of the nature of human development as depicted in many developmental theories, it becomes evident that there is a possibility that the core concept of the Two-Tiered Mind—the two core human propensities and the two levels of mind—could possibly be the premise to tie almost all developmental theories together. Using the Two-Tiered Mind Model, one can connect almost all developmental theories about human development together in a cohesive way, seeing that human development often moves from a highly unaware state of mind and strong attachment to one particular thing in one stage of development, to the next stage—marked by the ability to let go of one attachment, while becoming attached to another.

As the author illustrates, in early age (early childhood), one unscrupulously attaches strongly to pleasure. In later age (later stages), as the self is developed, the attachment to pleasure—as a little child's attachment—is no longer acceptable. One is no longer able to cry loudly at the mall for the sake of wanting his/her mom to buy a toy or a treat for him/her, as one is now attached to self, feeling too embarrassed, as one knows that the self is being judged as bad, negative, or inferior. This guilt and shame

is, in a way, beneficial at this developmental stage, allowing one to prioritize and learn through the process of socialization. However, attachment to guilt and social approval—becoming excessively obsessed with social comparison, as often becomes the focal point of adolescence—can be detrimental to one’s well-being.

Until one moves to the stage where one can handle the need to cling to pleasure and the need to cling to self in an integrated way—not neglecting it while not being enslaved by it—one has reached a higher state of development, where one learns the art of balance between attachment and letting go. As Kegan (1982, 1984) states, one knows what to keep and what to throw away. This pattern seems to be universal, depicted in many developmental frameworks, even though they differ slightly in concept and name. With this first part of the article, the author hopes to successfully provide a strong ground for the Two-Tiered Mind as a meta-framework that can tackle human complexities even in the human development realm of psychology. However, this is an embryonic state in which much exploration needs to be done.

The second part of the article is aimed at developing and conducting a preliminary empirical validation of the proposed two core human propensities, by adopting items from the previous work. The results of four studies represent preliminary evidence supporting the unique value of CHPS (section 2.2.4–2.2.7). In Study 1 (section 2.2.4), the dimensions, structure, and fit of the two cores human propensities (CHP) were established. The results from Study 2 (section 2.2.5) showed CHPS scores positively correlated with PWB scores, as expected, establishing concurrent validity. Study 3 (section 2.2.6) showed CHPS’s predictive ability over NAS-7 for predicting depression. In Study 4 (section 2.2.7), hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that CHPS scores could predict PWB scores over and above the other seven subscales of NCES.

As TTM posits, people have two levels of mind. CHPS supports this model by differentiating between the higher and lower levels of mind, by identifying the presence or absence of the lower mind’s two propensities. It should be added that activation of the higher level of mind suppresses activity of the lower level, and vice versa, so that only one level of mind can operate at any given time. By analogy, there can be two passengers in a car, but only one operates the car at any given time. In the lower level mind, humans live with a lower level of awareness, unable to discern what drives their suffering. According to TTM and other theories, the roots of human suffering are

obsessions with the need to seek pleasure and the need to cling to self via comparison and competition, which are operations of the lower mind (Ridthikerd, 2024).

The result of CHPS having strong predictive power over psychological well-being, when measured against the 7 remaining Nonclinging-to-Ego subscales in Study 4, provides preliminary evidence of the existence of the two layers of mind—the higher mind (higher CHPS) and the lower mind (lower CHPS). More specifically, the result of this hierarchical regression analysis in Study 4 supports the incremental validity of CHPS. When the seven other subscales of the Nonclinging-to-Ego scale were entered first (Block 1), they significantly predicted psychological well-being. However, when the CHPS score—derived from the average of two subscales: nondwelling on emotion/pleasure and non-comparing and noncompeting—was added in Block 2, the model's explanatory power increased significantly, and the predictive power of the original seven subscales became non-significant. This suggests that these two subscales, now reframed as CHPS, hold a distinct and central predictive role.

The hierarchical regression using all nine original subscales of the Nonclinging-to-Ego scale demonstrated that only two—nondwelling on emotion/pleasure and noncomparing and noncompeting—significantly predicted psychological well-being. These two subscales, which constitute CHPS, appear to play a particularly strong role. This finding justifies their reconceptualization as measuring the core human propensities underlying ego activity: (1) clinging to self through comparison and competition, and (2) clinging to perceived pleasure while avoiding perceived displeasure.

Based on these results, it can be inferred that these two dimensions—nondwelling on emotion and non-comparing and noncompeting—may reflect fundamental psychological propensities, rather than merely being traits of nonclinging. While they are not necessarily fundamentally different from the other subscales in every respect, their predictive power in this analysis suggests a theoretically meaningful distinction. This supports the Two-Tiered Mind metatheory, which posits a deeper layer of psychological functioning governed by core egoic tendencies. The empirical evidence shows that this specific set of dimensions strongly and distinctively predicts psychological well-being. This suggests that CHPS is not simply a shortened version of the original scale, but a conceptually distinct and theoretically grounded tool aligned with the broader framework of the Two-Tiered Mind.

Building on this theoretical foundation, the current study also shows that CHPS demonstrated strong predictive capabilities over important intrapersonal constructs such as depression and well-being, which is especially impressive given its small number of items (eight). The identified core human propensities can be assessed alongside a plethora of psychological theories, from interpersonal, intrapersonal, and group level theories, to biological, psychological, cultural, and even neurological theories. Such analyses would be well discussed under the framework of the TTM metatheory and in conjunction with empirical analyses. The number of potential studies joining CHPS and/or TTM in analyses with new and existing psychological theories and behavioral domains is virtually limitless. More investigation and research does need to be done to better support the empirical basis of the currently proposed CHPS and its metatheoretical framework, the TTM.

3. Conclusion

The current study's chief aim was, first, to explore the theory expansion of the Two-Tiered Mind Model to the developmental realm, and the second aim was to provide preliminary evidence for the two core human propensities: to cling to perceived pleasure while avoiding perceived displeasure, and to cling to self via comparison and competition. The current paper documented how these two propensities appear in many other major psychological theories, thereby providing a conceptual foundation for the Two-Tiered Mind metatheory. One limitation of this study is its reliance upon secondary data, although bootstrapping has alleviated this weakness. Nevertheless, the wealth of information lying hidden in the existing data should not be underestimated.

Overall, the current study provides positive and solid evidence in support of the TTM (a metatheory of the psyche; Ridthikerd, 2024), both conceptually and empirically. To the author's knowledge, although several metatheories of the psyche exist (e.g., Henriques, 2011), few have developed and empirically validated underlying psychological constructs. The current study, therefore, is among the first attempts within the field of psychology to specify and empirically support any "core" human propensities. However, further development and support of the TTM is needed to establish its relevance and capabilities across domains within the field of psychology.

Ethical Statement: The data used in this study were drawn from the author's previously approved research project. The project fully complied with the American Psychological Association (APA) ethical guidelines and followed the regular approval process by the Research Ethics Board at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand (Protocol No. 190.1/59). The use of these data as secondary data has been confirmed to be ethically appropriate by the relevant ethics committee.

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