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## The Relationship Between Reasons for Religious Involvement and Distress in Taiwan:

The Examination of the Self-Selection Perspective\*

# 台灣社會宗教參與理由與心理困擾之關連： 自我選擇觀點的檢驗

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## Abstract

Research conducted in Western societies often demonstrates that religious affiliates display better mental health outcomes than nonaffiliates. However, the relationship between religious affiliation and psychological well-being in Taiwan is rarely found to be positive and significant. In this article we attempt to explain this pattern from a self-selection perspective. We compare the associations between the various reasons respondents provided for religious affiliation (i.e., instrumental, self-actualized, and conventional) and distress. Results from the 2004 Taiwan Social Change Survey suggested that people without religious affiliations tend to report a lower degree of distress than those with a religious affiliation. Instrumental reasons for affiliation and their corresponding religious behaviors, which represent the selection perspective, are positively associated with distress. In contrast, behaviors that correspond to self-actualized and conventional reasons for affiliation, which represent the functional perspective, are negatively associated with distress. The findings from this study supported the self-selection perspective.

**Keywords:** mental health, distress, reasons for religion, self-selection

## 摘要

西方社會的研究經常發現，有信仰宗教者的心理健康比無宗教信仰者更好。但是在台灣，卻很少發現宗教信仰與心理福祉之間有正向的顯著關聯。本文試圖從自我選擇的角度來解釋這個現象：台灣民眾常出現以宗教參與來應對心理困苦，並顯現工具型的信教理由，而其在宗教參與所得到的心理健康效果，容易被其原來較差的心理健康狀態所掩蓋抵銷。本研究對2004年台灣社會變遷調查的分析結果顯示，與有宗教信仰者相比，沒有宗教信仰者有較低的心理困擾程度。測量自我選擇作用的工具型信仰理由與宗教行為與心理困擾呈顯著正相關；而測量宗教功能作用的自我實現型與傳統型的信仰理由與宗教行為則與心理困擾呈負相關。本研究的發現支持了自我選擇假設。

**關鍵詞：**心理健康、心理困擾、信教原因、自我選擇