



Social-Emotional Development of Chinese Gifted Students: A Review Based within the Actiotope Model of Giftedness

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Overview

- 1. AGM and Social Emotive Development of gifted learners
- 2. Four critical issues related to Chinese gifted students' pathways to exceptional achievement,
 - a) connectedness to school, family and peer environment
 - b) perfectionism, goal orientation, and academic self-efficacy as intrapersonal determinants
 - c) career exploration and talent development
 - d) leadership and life skills development.
- 3. Implications for teachers and guidance professionals of Chinese gifted learners

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AGM and Social Emotive Development of Gifted Learners

- Conceptualization of giftedness and social environment
- **Social role of family, peers, teachers and mentors** in promoting and supporting the overall development of gifted students (Gagné, 2009; Ziegler, 2004).
- The AMG describes the complex interactions between a person's 'action repertoire', their 'subjective action space' and 'the environment' (Ziegler, 2004).

AGM

- Ziegler
- acknowledges the actual manifestations (*actions*) that gifted individuals display in a given context.
- argues that **excellence is recognized most readily by what an individual *does***, not by opaque characteristics such as intelligence (Ziegler, 2004; Ziegler & Stoeger, 2008).

AGM

- Ziegler also recognizes the role of environmental factors such as peer group influences, quality of instruction, and effective feedback in the development of individual excellence (Ziegler & Stoeger, 2004).

AGM

- Ziegler considers giftedness as a characteristic that must **develop over time within an environmental context**, and results from interactions between the individual and the environment. (Ziegler & Stoeger, 2004).

Actiotope and the learning path toward excellence

- Components of the Actiotope
 - 1) An *action repertoire* contains **all the actions a learner could potentially engage in** at a given stage of development and in a specific domain of endeavour;
 - 2) *Goals* represent what the learner wants to achieve;
 - 3) *Subjective action space* describes the beliefs the learner has about his or her own self-efficacy in relation to performing actions within their action repertoire;
 - 4) *Environment* is the variable that interacts with determinants in the learner, and influences their perception of their subjective action space.
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The learning path toward excellence

- Taken together, these components determine the learning path toward excellence for each individual — a path that is often lengthy and arduous
- Progression along this learning path is influenced by interactions among intrapersonal and contextual or environmental factors that contribute to an ever-increasing repertoire of actions that can contribute to excellence and to talent development
 - (Ziegler & Stoeger, 2004).

Social-emotive competencies

- According to Ziegler and Stoeger (2007, p.255) an individual ‘...must **acquire a wide variety of behavioural competencies** through learning in order to function in his or her actiotope.’

Social-emotive developmental issues

- related to Chinese gifted students' pathways to exceptional achievement:
 - 1. Chinese gifted learners' connectedness to school, family and peer environments.
 - 2. Chinese goal of self-perfection and academic self-efficacy as variables operating in their subjective action space
 - 3. Chinese gifted learners' career exploration and talent development
 - 4. Chinese gifted learners' leadership and life skills development.

What does it need?

- Trees
- Mother
- Other fellow monkeys

Connectedness to school, family and peer environments

- Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland (2004)
- Mother's quality of instruction prior to school entry --> IQ and achievement in 1st and 3rd grades.

- Furrer & Skinner (2003)
- Connectedness to parents was a reliable predictor of children's behavioral and emotional engagement
- Students who were connected to their teachers were more likely to engage in classroom activities.



Connectedness to school, family and peer environments

- Chao & Sue (1996)
 - Imparting socially-desirable work ethic and nurturing children to achieve excellence are generally considered the core duty and social goal of Chinese parents.
 - Parental supervision begins from an early age.

- Stewart et al. (1998)
 - A linkage between the Chinese notion of *guan* (to train, to govern) and parental warmth

Connectedness to school, family and peer environments

- Wu (2005)
- Influences from family, school and teachers are essential for the talent development of Chinese students.

- Yuen et al. (2010)
- Interviewed 52 high school student leaders in Hong Kong
- School curriculum, guidance and counseling programs, as well as relationships with family, teachers and peers, facilitate students to acquire life skills in academic, personal-social, and career planning domains.

Connectedness to school, family and peer environments

- In Fong & Yuen (2011)
- Individual semi-structured interview (N = 21)
- Sample: 4th to 6th graders (10 Girls:11 Boys)
- Age range: 9 - 12 years old

Connectedness to school, family and peer environments

- Benefits attributed to social connectedness:
- Conducive environment for learning (F & S)
- Academic assistance (F, S & P)
- Emotional supports (F & P)
- Lessons learnt from others' experiences (F, S & P)
 - Fong & Yuen (2011)

The Goals of Self-Perfection & Social Approval

- Kashdan & Yuen (2007)
 - Chinese students generally considered achieving academic excellence as their major duty.

- Chan (2008)
 - Learning goal and performance goal are NOT contrasting goals.
 - Academic achievement is a social endeavor.

Social responsibility

Family/Social harmony

Self-perfection

Unquestionable obedience



Perfectionism, goal orientation, and academic self-efficacy as intrapersonal determinants

- Ng, Pomerantz, & Lam (2007)
 - Chinese parents downplayed academic success and emphasized academic failure.

- Fong & Yuen (2011)
 - “失敗乃成功之母” (failure is a precedent of success)
 - Mistakes = Room for improvement
 - “如果你失敗過便可以慢慢掌握到如何取得成功，因此我覺得失敗是學習的一個必然的步驟。”

The Journey to the Actiotope

- Lang Lang, the first Chinese pianist to be engaged by the Berlin Philharmonic and the Vienna Philharmonic.
- His father is a famous musician specializing in *Erhu*.
- Watched an episode of Tom & Jerry which featured Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 by Franz Liszt at age 2.
- Began learning piano under Professor Zhu Ya-Fen at age 3.
- Won the Shenyang Piano Competition and performed his first piano recital at age 5.
- Practiced the piano for 6 hours a day at age 7.

Diligence: The Fuel for the Expansion of Subjective Action Space

- Fong & Yuen (2011)
 - 「結果只是用來反映過程，你付出了多少，你的結果就會有多好。」 (Consequence is only a reflection of process, you will eventually get what you've given out.)
 - 我同意愛迪生的說法，「一分天才，加上九十九分的努力」 (I agree with Thomas Edison's saying, 'Genius is one percent intelligence and ninety-nine percent hard work'.)

“No one who can rise before dawn 360 days a year fails to make his family rich”

The Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell

Career exploration and talent development

- An individual's potential career path is (or should be) also a learning path to excellence.
- The conscious development of one's own talents,
- the acquisition of positive work habits and values,
- and an active involvement in making informed choices concerning career paths
 - (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002).

Career choices and decisions

- Career exploration encompasses all activities inside and outside school that are directed toward enhancing knowledge of the self and
- awareness of the work environment
 - (Blustein, 1989)

Positive work habits and values

- preparation for autonomy in lifelong learning
- working consistently without supervision,
- taking full responsibility for completing tasks,
- managing time effectively,
- assisting co-workers when necessary for optimum progress,
- it is important for students to have **confidence in their self-efficacy in relation to executing work routines**
 - (Lapan, 2004, p.148)

Talent development

- Researchers have contended that career
- development strategies in adolescents are closely related both
- to talent development
 - (Olszewski-Kubilius & Lee, 2004)
- to **the acquisition of work values**
 - (Gibson, 2004; Lien, 2005)

Career and talent development

- “*career and talent development* denotes a positive approach to helping students
- **strengthen and make optimum use of their abilities**, with particular reference to (but
- not restricted to) preparation of specific expert skills (talents) necessary for working in a particular career”
 - (Yuen et al., 2011, p. 47)

Talent development among Chinese learners

- Talent development programs – embracing enrichment activities, moral and citizenship education, aesthetic activities, physical activities, community service, and career-related experiences – have been organized in many schools in Hong Kong
 - (Curriculum Development Council, 2001; Education Department, 2000).

Talent development

- Bruce Lee 李小龍 (1940 – 1973):
- Hong Kong actor,
- Chinese American,
- martial arts instructor,
- philosopher,
- founder of the Jeet Kube Do (JKD)
- philosopher,
- screenwriter,
- film director,
- "Be formless... shapeless, like water. Now you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You pour water into a bottle; it becomes the bottle. You put water into a teapot; it becomes the teapot. Now water can flow, or creep or drip or crash! Be water, my friend..."
Bruce Lee (Little, 1997)
- <http://www.maniacworld.com/bruce-lee-art-of-dying.html>^{B1}

Art and philosophy of JKD

- Self-cultivated learner expanding one's action repertoire (Lee, 1996)
- Simple
- Direct
- Not limited by tradition or style
- Tapping into one's potentiality to develop one's own way
- Being a self-cultivated artist
- Interdependence within the social-cultural environment
- No way is way (Schwartz, 2003)

Hong Kong Chinese Learners

- (n=15,113) in Grades 7–9; (n=308) Grade 10 high ability students;
- *Career and Talent Development Self-Efficacy Scale (CTD-SES)*
- Most Hong Kong adolescents have reasonable confidence in career and talent development, although the level of self-confidence reduces slightly as students get older;
- students who aspire to go to university have more confidence in applying career and talent development life skills than those who do not
- (Yuen et al., 2010).
- Having a growth plan with some long-term career or study goals is important for students, in particular for talented students
 - (Feldhusen & Wood, 1997).

Life skills and leadership development

- “A student’s ‘life skills’ comprise a set of everyday competencies and perceived self-efficacy that facilitate academic progress, personal and social development, and career planning.” (Yuen et al., 2010, p.296)

Attitudes of mind

- Some of the 'skills' could be more accurately described as essential 'attitudes of mind' or 'predispositions'.
- Examples
- Persistence, resilience, effort, work ethic, optimism, empathy, respect, responsibility, integrity, and initiative.

Education for life

- Education for life has become the ultimate goal for schooling
- generic transferable skills which enable them to **take on various functions and life roles** such as learners, friends, workers, parents and citizens
 - (Gysbers, 2003;
 - Education Commission, HK, 2002).

Life skills development among Chinese adolescents

- 52 Hong Kong high school adolescents in six focus groups; boys = 23, girls = 29;
- Grade 10 students =18,
- Grade 12 students=34.
- student leaders or students who were
- active in extra-curricular activities
 - (Yuen, Chan et al., 2010).

Academic life skills

- *Academic development*
- Time management. Study skills. Examination skills. Learning with and from peers. Being a responsible and self-motivated learner.
- *Learning to learn*
- Setting own goals. Self-monitoring. Acquiring skills and strategies for independent learning.

Career life skills

- *Career planning*
- Setting career goals. Exploring possibilities. Career decision-making. Vocational training. Job hunting. Further study.

Developing students' life skills

- Participants talked first about
-
- activities within the school curriculum,
- **extra-curricular activities,**
- and aspects of the school's guidance and counseling program that could put them on the right track and provide opportunities to develop their talents.

Mentoring

- Individuals' whole actiotopes are enhanced through the mentoring process (Grassinger, Porath & Ziegler, 2010)
- A Grade 12 boy (S12) reported,
- “The peer counselor scheme is most beneficial. It is the most direct way to keep in touch with senior students and learn skills from them. Students from junior forms can observe the way the seniors behave and their special qualities. Junior students can learn from the seniors.”
 - (Yuen, Chan et al., 2010).

Personal-social and leadership life skills

- *Personal-social development*
- Understanding self. Understanding others. Cooperation and team spirit.
- Health and physical fitness.
- Avoiding drugs, drinking and smoking.
- Handling setbacks. Management of stress and emotion. Leisure-time management.
- *Thinking and expressive skills. Self evaluation. Solving problems, and decision-making skills. Leadership skills.*

Leadership talent among Chinese students

- A study involving Grade 5 primary school students in Hong Kong
- those with clear leadership talent displayed greater school connectedness,
- talent development,
- self-efficacy in work habits and career exploration
- than those without leadership talent
 - (Yuen, Chan, Gysbers et al., 2011).

- Using a scale that rated aspects of leadership, these gifted students tended to rate
- high on 'goal orientation' and 'leadership flexibility'
- but low on 'leadership self-efficacy' (Chan, 2007a).

Conclusion and Implications

- *Contextual factors influencing the development of life skills*
- experiences within the school curriculum
- the guidance and counseling program

- opportunities for talent development.
- family and peer relationships

- *Counsellors and teachers should help students to gain family support in educational planning and career development*
- take into account any culturally distinctive features that influence the actiotope of Chinese gifted learners
- encourage communication among parents, teachers, and students
- clarify and understand the expectations each party holds.
- (Assouline & Colangelo, 2006; Henderson & Chan, 2005; Ma & Yeh, 2010).

Long term learning outcomes

- Maximize the power of students' social environments,
- regulate Chinese gifted learners to focus on refining their action repertoire, and
- increase their abilities
- to evaluate themselves realistically for progressive development.

Future research

- *In-depth case studies*
- clarify the complicated **dynamic relationship** among individuals' goals, action repertoire, and subjective action space within the socio-cultural environment.
- *Longitudinal survey*
- test the **mediating effects** of the environmental variables on career and talent development.

- Qs & As

- Open Sharing

- & Discussion

Thank You and Keep in Touch

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