

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY ON SOCIAL ATTITUDES OF CHINESE AND SCOTTISH ADOLESCENTS

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Forty-two Scottish and forty Chinese junior high school pupils drawn from the subjects of a previous study are tested again two years later. The instrument used is a selected set of TAT cards (6BM, 14, 8BM, & 12BG). In addition, TAT protocols for 6BM and 12BG from 50 university students are collected from both Glasgow, Scotland, and Taipei for comparison.

Theme analysis of the materials thus obtained confirms some of the findings of the previous investigation: (a) In comparing with youths in Scotland, Chinese adolescents have a stronger positive feeling toward and more dependent upon their parents who in turn, exercise greater influence upon their children than Scottish parents; (b) Chinese adolescents are more passive and self-restraint than Scottish subjects. The result, however, does not provide a consistent support to the hypothesis that Chinese people tend to have a global and general perception toward the outside world. Nearly half of those subjects retested produce similar themes for the same card in two sessions which are two years apart.

INTRODUCTION

In many cross-cultural researches, the investigators often just pick a certain group of subjects from one culture and a matched group from another and compare their responses on one or more psychological instruments. The results thus obtained would then be regarded as similarities or differences between the two cultures concerned and not infrequently, the investigators have a difficult time to find some appropriate interpretations for their findings. In most of the cases, those reported results are just accepted as such. Few scholars have questioned: (a) Would the reported findings remain the same as time goes on? In other words, do they represent some more or less persistent personality characteristics of the subjects? (b) Would the reported findings also exist in groups other than the subjects studied in the concerned cultures? Can they be

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considered as generalized similarities or differences between the two cultures? These are actually very important questions. We all know that sometimes test results may have been greatly influenced by the particular testing situation and consequently, may not represent a good picture of the personality of the subjects. Likewise we are aware of the fact that no one culture has a homogenous composition; what is true among one specific group may not be generally true in the entire culture. Hence we should always be cautious when we come across a report concerning cross cultural comparisons.

In a previous investigation, the present author studied the social attitudes of Chinese and Scottish adolescents. Some attitudinal similarities and differences between those two cultural groups were reported (Hwang, 1974). It was found that among other things, Chinese adolescents (aged 12-15), in comparing with their Scottish counterparts, had closer and more positive relations with their parents, tended to have greater amount of self-restraint which led to passivity, had a stronger sense of morality, and often adopted a more general, abstract approach in dealing with their problems.

One can doubtlessly find good bearings, as the author has, for the abovementioned findings in Chinese and Scottish cultural heritages. However, a conscientious researcher would still like to find out whether those reported differences are reliable ones between the Chinese and the Scots, and whether those attitudinal differences exist also between groups of a different age level of the two cultures. The objective of the present study is to find answers for these questions.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The subjects covered in the present study are composed by four sub-groups:

- (a) 50 Scottish university students enrolled to the class of Introductory Psychology, University of Glasgow.
- (b) 50 Chinese university students randomly selected from the class of Introductory Psychology, National Taiwan Normal University.
- (c) 42 Scottish junior high school pupils who participated in the previous study (tested in 1971 for the first time).
- (d) 40 Chinese junior high school pupils who, matched those in (c), also participated in the previous study.

The instrument used in this study is one of the three tests used in the previous research. It is a set of TAT cards, enlarged to the size of 30×40" for group administration. This has been proved to be a good substitution for slides as the cards can be

adequately seen by the subjects. For Groups (c) and (d), four cards are used and they are Murray's 6BM, 14, 8BM and 12BG; for Groups (a) and (b), only 6BM and 12BG are used.

The administration of the TAT, as in the previous study, follows the standard procedure suggested by McClelland (1957). The subjects are told to write a story for each picture by answering four questions: (1) What is happening? Who are the persons? (2) What has led to the situation? That is, what has happened in the past? (3) What is being thought? What is wanted? By whom? (4) What will happen afterwards? What will be done? 75 seconds are allowed to write for each question and altogether five minutes for one whole story. The time limit is so set because that has been proved satisfactory by other previous researchers and according to Murstein, "five minute stories obtained in group administration are significantly more similar to individual productions than are eight minute ones" (Murstein, 1963, p. 46).

The stories given by the subjects are analysed by the method of "theme categorization" developed by this author in his previous research (Hwang, 1974, p. 97). He has reviewed various scoring methods suggested by previous researchers but has found none of them very satisfactory for his specific purpose. Hence he decided to classify each story into categories and subcategories according to the nature of its "central theme" which is the dynamic organization of its separate themes together with its outcome. For each story, only one central theme is to be drawn to cover the main event therein described. The scheme of categorization is kept flexible and, in fact, stories given to the four cards are not classified by one uniform scheme of categorization, but by four different ones. But stories told for each card in the present study is analysed exactly in the same manner as that of the previous study.

Based on the findings of the last research and the general characteristics of Chinese and Scottish cultures, the following hypotheses are made:

- (1) In comparing with Scottish youths, Chinese adolescents, both university and high school students, would have a stronger tie with and be more dependent upon their parents who in turn, would exercise greater influence upon their children than Scottish parents.
- (2) Chinese subjects are in general more self-restrained and passive than Scottish subjects.
- (3) Chinese Ss tend to have a general, abstract approach in reacting to their outside world while the Scots tend to have a more specific, concrete approach.
- (4) Owing to the stimulus-nature of the TAT cards and the consistent perceptual pattern

of every individual subject, a considerable amount of similarities among the themes between two sessions is expected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The stories produced by both Chinese and Scottish adolescents for the four TAT cards are carefully analysed. The abovementioned hypotheses are tested one by one against the data collected. The results are given in the following.

1. *Hypothesis I is confirmed*

From the stories given to Card 6BM, it is found that Chinese subjects give more stories with positive mother-child relationship. This is true among both university students and high school pupils, and the trend is similar to that of 1971 findings (Table 1).

The mother is often depicted in stories of Chinese adolescents as a nurturant figure who gives advices and extends forgiveness to the son when the latter has committed some kind of misconduct. In reacting to this parental affection, the son tends to show regret about his own behavior and willingness to reform himself from evil activities (Table 2, A1, A2).

The Scots, on the other hand, do not see the positive parent-child relationship as frequently as the Chinese do. In a considerable number of the Scottish stories, the interpersonal feelings between the two family members are not even mentioned (Stories of Category B, Table 2). The Scots tend to attribute the depressive atmosphere in the picture to some kind of sad news which the mother and the son have to face together. In other words, they treat the two characters in the picture as equals without apparent interpersonal affection or love.

Parent-child discord is another frequent theme for stories given to 6BM. Both Chinese and Scottish adolescents have made many such stories. However, while Chinese subjects show a tendency to resolve the discord and bring the family back to harmony, the Scots seem to have a trend to allow the dispute sustained and to end the story with separation (Table 2, A14, A15, A16). It seems that the Scottish youths have less respect and affection with their mothers than the Chinese; when the Scots have difficulty to adjust to parental demands, they simply leave home. The fact that the theme of "running away from home" appears more often in Scottish stories than in Chinese ones for Card 14 is another indication of this trend (Table 3, CX). Probably no community, be it in

the East or in the West, is completely immune from parent-child conflict, the way how the adolescents react to such situation seems to be where cultural differences lie. This is also in good congruence with the result of the previous study.

Table 1. Mother-child Relationship in stories of 6BM

Relationships	1973						1971		
	High School Ss			University Ss			High School Ss		
	CH	SC	P	CH	SC	P	CH	SC	P
With positive feelings	19	8	.01	28	15	.01	56	24	.001
With neutral feelings	7	4		1	7	.05	12	14	
With negative feelings	6	4		11	17		21	18	
Not specified	4	15	.001	8	9		23	48	.001
Total	36	31		48	48		112	104	

CH—Chinese, SC—Scots.

Table 2. Theme analysis of stories for Card 6BM

Themes	1973						1971		
	High School Ss			University Ss			High School Ss		
	CH	SC	P	CH	SC	P	CH	SC	P
A10 Misconduct-Forgiveness	1	1		12	6		3	5	
A11 Misconduct-Reform	6	1	.10	8	3	.10	27	—	.001
A12 Misconduct-Imprisonment	4	2		3	3		3	—	
A13 Misconduct-Advice	3	—		1	—		3	7	
A14 Discord-Harmony	7	2		3	3		15	17	
A15 Discord	4	2		6	6		14	4	.05
A16 Discord-Separation	2	2		4	10		7	10	
A17 Separation, other causes	4	4		—	7		9	7	
A18 Others, positive feelings	1	2		2	0		8	2	
A19 Others, negative feelings	—	—		1	1		—	4	.05
B11 Facing difficulties	2	3		7	1		5	5	
B12 Sad news of family members	2	12	.001	1	8	.05	8	37	
B13 Unhappy events	—	—		—	—		10	6	
Total	36	31		48	48		112	104	

2. *Hypothesis 2 is also supported by the following findings from the TAT stories collected in the present study.*

(a) In their stories for 6BM, both Chinese high school pupils and university students show a greater tendency to attribute the gloomy air to the misconduct of the child than the Scots. Moreover, a misconduct or a crime in Chinese stories is frequently followed by either imprisonment or by reform.

This pattern of repponese is also witnessed in other places. In stories of Stealing given to Card 14, young people of both cultures put nearly equal number of thieves into prison; but cases of Reform appear only in Chinese stories (Table 3, A1 & A2). For the Card 6BM, many stories have a central theme of aggression. Among the eleven such stories told by Chinese adolescents, nine of the aggressors are put in the prison or are receiving other legal consequences, and only two of them are allowed to escape from being punished. In contrast, the Scots make four aggressive stories and set half of the aggressors free. All these seem to indicate that a Chinese youth has in his mind a very strict moral code: when one commits a crime or a misconduct, he will inevitably be punished unless he reforms himself from the improper activity. Such a strong sense of morality will, to a certain extent, restrict oneself from misbehaving.

Table 3. Theme analysis of stories for Card 14

Themes§	1973			1971		
	High School Ss			High School Ss		
	CH	SC	P	CH	SC	P
A1 Stealing-Imprisonment	5	6		30	30	
A2 Stealing-regret, reform	2	—		9	8	
A3 Stealing-Permissiveness	—	1		6	14	.05
A4 Stealing-other negative consequences	1	1		6	2	
CX Running away from home	2	6		9	17	.01
G1 Meditation, regret	8	2		14	7	
G2 Meditation, Inspired goals	4	1		11	10	

§ Only those mentioned in the text are presented here.

Table 4. Theme of stories for Card 12BG

Themes§	High School Ss			University Ss		
	CH	SC	P	CH	SC	P
A1 Aesthetic appreciation	2	3		7	10	
A2 Positive interpersonal relations	2	6		5	16	
A3 Luck in hunting fishing	1	3		—	4	.05
A5 Prosperity of a place	11	4	.05	4	—	.05
C2 Seasonal changes, description of scenery	3	1		7	2†	

§ Only those mentioned in the text are presented here.

- (b) In the stories written for TAT 12BG, a picture without the presence of a human figure, people often have a great deal of freedom to manipulate the situation.

The active-passive dimension of a personality is frequently projected in these stories. In Table 4, we find that the Scottish adolescents produce more stories in Categories A1 (Aesthetic appreciation such as a picnic, an outing, etc.), A2 (Positive interpersonal relationships, mostly young lovers) and A3 (Fishing and hunting) than the Chinese. The Scots express a great deal of happiness and joy in those stories indicating that their characters are actively enjoying their life and the outside world. The Chinese subjects make fewer stories in all these categories. On the contrary, they tell relatively more stories about Seasonal Change or Description of Nature, stories in the form of photographic reflections with little or no lively activities. They also talk more often than Scottish youths about "Prosperity of a place" (A5). Generally such stories contain expressions such as "... the place will later become a tourist center...", "More people will come to see the scenery and ...", but do not mention much effort-making activities that lead to prosperity.

This trend of passivity of Chinese subjects is also evidenced by the fact that they outnumber the Scots in producing stories of Meditation to Card 14 during which the "hero" is either in a mood of regret about his previous activities or making some plans toward an inspired goal (Table 3, G1, G2). These seem to suggest that among Chinese subjects, there is a great amount of inhibition which restrains them from being active and spontaneous. Again, this coincides well with what was found in the previous study.

3. *Hypothesis 3 is not well supported by the findings of the present study.*

In the previous study, we reached the conclusion that Chinese adolescents had a tendency to have WHOLE rather than PART perception, a characteristic which had been pointed out also by several scholars (Abbott, 1971; Abel & Hsu, 1949). The evidence was mainly derived from responses to the Sentence Completion Test plus one rather interesting fact that Chinese subjects tended to make statements covering the entire scene of TAT 12BG and did not utilize the Boat in their stories as frequently as Scottish youths did, or they tended to ignore the Boat completely (Hwang, 1974, pp. 112, 183). Since the Sentence Completion Test is not included in this study, it is not appropriate to draw any conclusion from the result of one single test. Moreover, the difference between the two cultural groups as related to the position of the Boat in stories of 12BG does not show a consistent trend. The Scottish high school pupils, as they did in the last

study, give a greater emphasis on the Boat and utilize it more frequently than their Chinese counterparts. But this difference does not exist between the university students of the two cultures (Table 5). This inconsistent result thus does not give a good support to the hypothesis that Chinese Ss have a greater tendency than the Scots to have whole perception. However, the result of the present study alone does not provide a sufficient ground to reject the hypothesis either.

Table 5. The position of the Boat in Stories for 12BG

Boat Position	High School Ss			University Ss		
	CH	SC	Level of diff.	CH	SC	Level of diff.
Boat ignored	10	6	P<0.06	14	14	n. s.
Boat mentioned	21	8	P<0.01	21	18	n. s.
Boat utilized	4	17	P<0.001	11	16	n. s.
Boat emphasized	3	9	P<0.07	2	1	n. s.
Boat centered	2	2	n. s.	2	1	n. s.
Total	40	42		50	50	
	$\chi^2=17.77, P<0.01$			$\chi^2=1.80, P>0.70$		

As we all know, the Boat is in the central position of 12BG and is very easy to be seen. Here the age factor may have some effect. For younger subjects whose stories are generally short, they may not have to mention the boat. For older subjects who want to make a good story may find it difficult to neglect that central figure in the picture even though they may still have the whole perception tendency. Thus the result of the present study is not conclusive in regard to this particular point; a further study is needed to settle this issue.

4. Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Although the two sessions of testing are two years apart, the number of those subjects who have produced similar themes to each picture is considerably high (Table 6). To the Scots, the chances for each of the four pictures to elicit similar response are not even, Card 8BM seems to have an unusually high reminding effect to help the subjects to recall their "old" stories. To the Chinese, however, the four cards do not differ much from each other in this aspect. The average percentage of the occurrence of repeated themes for the two cultural groups is nearly the same, i.e. around 50%.

In the cases of theme-repetition, some give stories almost exactly the same as the ones they wrote during the first session two years ago. These are classified as "To-

tally similar" in Table 7 whereas "Main theme similarity" denotes the cases whose second story to a card has its central theme and characters similar to their first story but with some change in small, unimportant details. Examples of each case are given below.

Table 6. Occurrence of theme repetition

Card	Chinese			Scots		
	A	B	Total	A	B	Total
6BM	19	3	22	8	10	18
14	6	13	19	9	4	13
8BM	18	3	21	17	13	30
12BG	14	5	19	8	7	15
Average occurrence			20.25			19
Percentage			50.62%			45.24%

A. Totally similar; B. Main theme similarity

a. Totally similar stories:

Subject: CF 1101, Chinese, Female.

(1) 1971 story for TAT 6BM

"Mother and child, they disagreed with each other on something, they had an argument which made both of them unhappy.

Something unpleasant happened in the past. The child wanted to marry a girl whom the mother did not like very much. The child decided to have his own way and left home. Now the child realizes that it was his fault; he comes to his mother to apologize.

The discord between the mother and the son is finally dissolved. The young couple will come to live with the mother. Happy days again."

(2) 1973 story for TAT 6BM

"In the past, the son had an argument with his mother over something. Now he comes to mother, asking for her forgiveness. Mother is in a state of emotions.

It was probably something related to love or marriage. Both the mother and the son were strong-minded, each wanted to have things done in his or her way.

But deep in their heart, they wish to reconcile with each other. Nevertheless it is not easy to express that wish openly. It is a matter of 'face'.

Eventually, they both want to have a happy ending. The family has a reunion

and they live together happily”

b. Stories with Main-theme Similarity:

Subject: SM4103, Scottish, Male.

(1) 1974 Story for TAT 8BM

“A young boy’s father is being murdered by two criminals.

The young boy is tied up to a chain with his back turned.

The father was an eye witness at the trial of these two criminals and they are now out of jail and have come to get their revenge.

The boy is thinking that he wants someone to come to the door so as to scare the two men off.

Fortunately someone did come and the two men stabbed the father and ran. But fortunately they did not kill him. Afterwards, the boy give evidence and the two men are put in jail.”

(2) 1973 Story for TAT 8BM

“The young boy’s father is being tortured for secrets he knows, and the boy is made to stay in the room to watch their tearing his skin with a knife.

The man was blackmailed into giving secrets but after hin son was released, the secrets were found to be false.

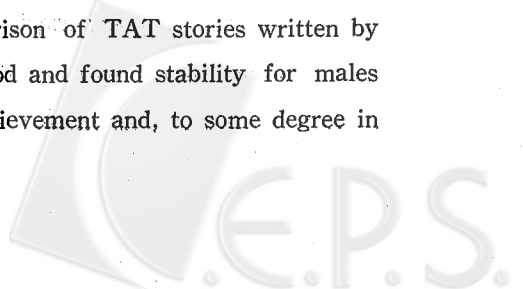
The boy sees the gun leaning on the wall and he wants enough courage to shoot the two men before they kill his father.

He finally shot the killing one and wounded the other.

The wounded one is put in prison and the body of his colleague is sent to his home.”

It is certainly interesting to see that so many people have repeated their stories for a card after a two year period. One would have to consider at least several factors that may have accounted for the repetition of stories by individuals. First, a subject may dig his old story out from his memory. Secondly, the perceptual pattern of an individual may predisopes him to associate a certain theme to a specific stimulus. Thirdly, the stimulus value of TAT cards may be sufficiently stable so that each card tends to elicite a specific category of responses.

Several investigators have tried to answer this question, but no satisfactory conclusion has been reached. Skolnick (1966) made a comparison of TAT stories written by the same individuals in adolescence and later in adulthood and found stability for males in power and aggression imagery and for females in achievement and, to some degree in



affiliation. A very similar result was also reported by Tuddenham (1959). Moss and Kagan (1961) found a moderate but significant degree of stability for both sexes on achievement imagery. In an earlier report, Kagan (1959) compared several kinds of TAT content categories over a 6-year period and found that only physical aggression and achievement to have significant stability. All these researchers have succeeded only in finding correlations between some need scores of two protocols of individual subjects, but cannot make sure what really has accounted for such correlations. Murstein (1963) touched this problem when he discussed the reliability of projective techniques including TAT, and did not offer any solution. Further investigation is needed to find the answer.

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中國及蘇格蘭青年社會態度之追蹤研究

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摘 要

筆者曾於民國六十年至六十二年間，利用三種心理測驗，就中國及蘇格蘭青年之社會態度，進行比較研究。現為求驗證其中一部分結果之確實性，特再就原有研究之被試中，選取蘇格蘭中學生四十二名，我國國中學生四十名，使之在前次測驗兩年之後，再度接受「主題統覺測驗」(TAT)；另外並選取兩國大學生各五十名接受測驗。將所得資料進行分析後，發現中國青年在和蘇格蘭青年相比較時，有下列特色：(1)中國青年和其父母有較親切，和諧的關係，並較能接受父母之指導；(2)中國青年在一般行為上有較高之自我約束，亦具有較高之被動性，至於前次所發現「我國青年有較高之整體知覺傾向」一節，則未能在本次研究之中獲得證實。約有半數被試在第二次測驗時之反應，在內容方面和兩年前之反應甚為相近。

