

DOCTORAL THESIS

A psychological study of filial piety with special reference to the affective, cognitive, and behavioural aspects of moral development of Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong

AU YEUNG, Kit Yee

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ABSTRACT

Filial piety (FP) had been a deep-rooted morality of Chinese for over 20 centuries since Confucius advocated it as “the top virtue among a hundred”, yet research on FP in Westernised Hong Kong Chinese adolescents is found to be scarce. Three filial variables (FVs), namely filial affection (FA), filial judgement (FJ), and filial behaviour (FB) were devised to study FP in three approaches: (1) Psychoanalytical approach; (2) Cognitive developmental approach; and (3) Behavioural approach. Data collected was both qualitatively and statistically analysed by a scoring scheme rating three FVs of 22 child-subjects in the pilot study and 93 parent-child subjects (71 children, 22 parents) in the major study conducted between 2018 and 2019 summers. There were three sets of instruments: (1) one set of Child’s face-to-face interview questions in three filial dilemmas (FDs) concerning (a) the aged sick parent’s request of co-residence, (b) choice of child’s major, and (c) choice of child’s lover/spouse; (2) one set of Parent’s phone interview questions condensed and simplified from Child’s three FDs; and (3) three sets of questionnaires, namely Moral Identity – short scale (MI; Xu, 2014), Adolescent Behaviour Questionnaire (ABQ; Ma, 1988), and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire – revised short scale for Chinese (EPQ-RSC; Qian et al., 2000). Two out of the five research questions were resolved: (1) Internal consistency reliabilities were proved with the significant and positive correlations among three filial variables in the correlation tests of the filial scores (F-scores); whilst (2) Parenting styles such as the reciprocal democratic/authoritative one in RFP and authoritarian one in AFP in Yeh’s (1998, 2003) Dual Filial Piety Model (DFPM) influence child’s F-scores were proven by their significant intercorrelations with parental F-scores as reflected in correlational and regression analyses; whereas (3) gender differences, (4) age-education differences, together with (5) MI, AB, and personality other than the Psychoticism-scale, did not project significant effects on F-scores. Further research is thus recommended.

Keywords: filial affection, filial judgement, filial behaviour, dual filial piety model, parental influences