

Short Research Report:
Exploring resilience development in a Taiwanese preschooler's narrative: An emerging theoretical model

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Individual resilience, that is, “an individual’s progressing development to adjust to life difficulties” (Lin, in press), is significant in preventing negative consequences, such as low academic achievement and dropping out of education (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005), mental health problems (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010) and even suicide (Roy, Sarchiapone, & Carli, 2007). To avoid such results from occurring in human development, it is important to foster resilience in early childhood. There is however, a lack of resilience research at preschool level in both Western and Taiwanese literature. Furthermore, as resilience is key to success, it is necessary to explore children’s resilience in different cultures. Although resilience research in Western culture has predominated, recent cross-cultural studies have emphasized that the importance of cultural awareness in the literature is still overlooked (Ungar, 2008). Hence, this narrative study provides a cultural perspective by investigating a Taiwanese context and shifts the attention to preschoolers’ resilience development in both Western and Taiwanese contexts.

Storytelling is utilized as a useful medium for cultivating children’s resilience. The literature has underlined storytelling as an effective means to support children’s resilience by providing social and emotional solutions to obstacles and difficulties (Fredericks, 2003). This research report discusses the development of resilience in Grace, a Taiwanese preschooler, through teachers’ storytelling.

As protective and risk factors of individual resilience are embedded in diverse environments, an adaption of Bronfenbrenner’s Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) model

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provides not only the interaction framework investigating the influential factors on Grace's resilience development, vital to the unique Taiwanese context, but also the analyses of the interactions between Grace's lived experience at home and preschool, and her resilience learning process and teachers' storytelling.

As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) conceptualized narrative inquiry as "a way of characterizing the phenomena of human experience" (p. 2), the narrative approach as a methodology was employed to capture the personal experiences of Grace's resilience development. When multiple data was gathered by classroom observation, interviews, Grace's documents and my research diary, the application of Riessman's dialogic/performance analysis (2008) interrogated narrative contexts by involving multiple voices in Grace's resilience story.

The data was collected in a Taiwanese public preschool, located on the edge of Taichung city, where 75% of the preschoolers' caregivers were blue-collar workers. The school consists of one class with two qualified teachers and one qualified educare giver. I primarily recorded Grace's observations and interviews in the role-play centre, reading centre, and the group discussion area, every Tuesday and Thursday over 16 weeks.

Through open and theoretical coding and identifying the theme and subthemes within the PPCT model, the main theme in Grace's resilience narrative revealed that teachers' storytelling enriched Grace's lived experience and bridged the differences between her family and preschool cultures by increasing the completeness of her sentence structure and promoting her understanding of new knowledge. The following subthemes indicated influential positive and risk elements within Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model on Grace's resilience development (Table I). For instance, Grace's high learning motivation, well-developed social skills and supportive extended family were protective factors in microsystems, whereas the main risk factor is her unadjusted cultural differences which negatively impacts on her academic achievement.

This study contributes to microsystems of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model as very few studies investigated extended family and family workplace as influential factors on children's resilience development. Grace's lived experience has been determinedly influenced by these factors as she has grown up in an extended family with the belief in Daoism and folk religion. Additionally, her family business is a shrine (Figure 1) where her father works as an altar servant (Figure 2). The influence of such unique microsystems on children's resilience development highlights underrepresented cultural factors for future research.

Table I. Grace's risk and protective factors analysis table based on Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model

Bioecological levels		Elements	Risk factors	Positive factors
Person	Individual	Grace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary loses self-confidence on preschool learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High learning motivation • Average intelligence
	Context	Microsystem	Parents	Hard to find
Parents' workplace			Hard to find	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting diverse people, extending social networks and practicing social skills
Grandparents			Hard to find	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative caregivers
Preschool (peers, teachers, curriculum, storytelling)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow learner • Disconnection between the content of preschool curriculum and lived experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High attendance rate • Connectedness with peers and teachers • Positive learning atmosphere • Extending lived experience from storytelling and reading storybooks
Mesosystem		Teachers-parents	Hard to find	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective parent-teacher communication
		Family workplace-preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unadjusted cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing different social skills
Exosystem		Family workplace-community-neighbourhood	Hard to find	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrichment of her narratives
Macrosystem		Religion	Hard to find	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family secure source
	Grandparenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts with parenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to find 	
Time	Micro-time	Storytelling - resilience	Hard to find	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing development in bridging both preschool and familial lived experiences by storytelling
	Meso-time			

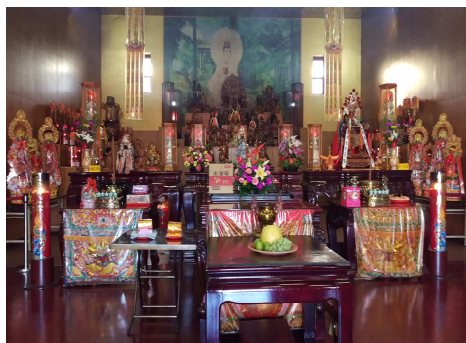


Figure 1 A shrine



Figure 2 An altar servant

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