Age Changes in Agentive Perception to the Day Care Center Situation

Hui-Chun Lee
Tzu Chi University, Taiwan

Li-Chun Wang
Ching-Kuo Institute of Management and Health, Taiwan

Our Team

Finland  Jyrki Reunamo

Taiwan  Hui-Chun Lee (presenter)
        Li-Chun Wang
        Rosalind Wu
        Chao-Jung Lin
        Mann-Yi Mau
Reunamo’s Agentive Perception

Research Questions

1. What are the age differences in agentive perception?

2. How do children in Taiwan and Finland respond differ in the development of agentive perception?
Research Method

- 366 Taiwanese and 698 Finnish children
- Age 3-6
- Interview with 16 items about situations in day care setting
- Items concern adult-child or child-child interaction

Interview Story (English Version)

Tell your story:
What would I do?

By Jyrki Reunamo
Pictures: Tzung Ying Liao
Jan 2010

1. With whom do you want to play most?
Interview Story (Chinese Version)

Interview Items (Adult-Child Interaction)

10. A teacher comes to stop your play. What do you do then?

11. What if you don’t like the activity arranged by the teacher? What do you do then?
Interview Items (Child-Child Interaction)

6. Let’s think you are playing with someone and your friend wants to change play. What do you do?

7. What if a friend will not play with you? What do you do?

Data Coding

- Each response from each child was individually coded into the 4 categories suggested by Reunamo
- Sometimes the child’s meaning was not clear, and those responses were coded “uncertain”
- The 3 year olds gave the most “uncertain” responses, and there were very few unclear responses for the older children
- For the sake of simplicity, the “uncertain” responses are not included in the figures presented today
You are playing a game with somebody and the other does not follow the rules. What do you do then?

**Agentive-Assimilative**
- I play with somebody else.
- I play with the one who follows rules.
- We quit playing.
- I can take a friend who knows the rules.
- I stop the whole game.
- It has happened in the yard, I don’t take her with me.
- I take a friend who wants to play with me.

**Agentive-Accommodative**
- I tell him/her the rules.
- I tell a teacher.
- I say to him/her to follow the rules.
- I tell him.
- I stop them.
- I ask the teacher to come over, we obey the teacher.
- I ask the teacher.

**Adaptive-Assimilative**
- I do what he says (the one who does not follow the rules).
- No. I don’t know. I go away.
- I can not play with him.
- I go into rules, I leave the game.
- Then I don’t play with her.
- I go to another room.
- I play with Johnny.
- I can play ice hockey.

**Adaptive-Accommodative**
- I tell him/her the rules.
- I tell a teacher.
- I say to him/her to follow the rules.
- I tell him.
- I stop them.
- I ask the teacher to come over, we obey the teacher.
- I ask the teacher.

Results 1

First
We look at the data in terms of Piaget’s view
1. Assimilation vs Accommodation
2. Year 3-6 Age Trends
3. Taiwan vs Finland
As children grow older, they become more accommodative.

1. In general, Taiwan children's responses are more accommodative.
2. In both countries, something is happening between age 3-4.
3. Finnish children seem to make a large shift towards accommodative responses.
Results 2

Second

We look at the data in terms of Vygotsky’s view

1. Adaptation vs Agency
2. Year 3-7 Age Trends
3. Taiwan vs Finland

Vygotsky View
agentive
adaptive

At Age 3, children make more adaptive responses
After Age 3, children gradually become more agentive
Taiwan
1. Between 3 and 4, children’s adaptive responses drop, and agentive response rise most significantly.
2. After age 4, the trend continues.

Finland
3. Finnish children generally give more adaptive responses than Taiwan children.
4. The proportion of adaptive responses remain stable with age
5. The rise in agency is more significant between age 3-5.
1. **Agentive-Accom** Finland responses go from the lowest proportion at age 3, and makes a steep rise, but does not reach as high as Taiwan. Taiwan start higher and reach higher.

2. **Adaptive-Accom** Taiwan remains around the same. Finland start lower and reach about the same level as Taiwan.

3. **Assimilative** responses: Taiwan starts lower than Finland and go even lower than Finland.

4. Finland data shows an age x category interaction.

---

**Discussion**

For theory

1. Finnish and Taiwanese children interact with the environment in similar ways. They recognize that they can have an effect on the environment, and may negotiate with others in that environment.

2. Age 4 appears to be an important turning point in the development of agency. We see changes in the children’s responses in both countries. In Taiwan, children begin to stabilize in agentive responses starting at about 4 years.
3. There are differences in developmental trends between children in the two countries. Apart from the effects of smaller sample size in Taiwan, the role of cultural effects is worthy of further exploration.

Practical Applications

1. Teachers may review their curriculum and individualize their teaching according to children’s agentive perception; and also acknowledge that children may participate in changing their environment.

2. Teachers should understand developmental trends in agentive perception and increase opportunities for discussion, communication, and negotiation with children.
Suggestions for Further Research

1. Increase representativeness of sample – a stratified sampling design would be most effective in including different kinds of day care centres.

2. Look at the relationship between children’s agentive behaviour, teachers’ assessment, and social interaction between peers, etc. in relation to the interview responses in the current study.

3. Examine the effects of historical, social and cultural factors on the development of agency.

4. Explore the effects of agentive development on learning -- Further explore the relationship between agentive development and children’s learning experiences in day care, their language skills, their socialization. In addition, longitudinal studies would strengthen our knowledge of these relationships.
Thank You!

For further information
leetwuk@gmail.com
Hui-Chun Lee
Tzu-Chi University, Taiwan