A Study on a Promoting Growth Group for new Immigrants with a Multicultural Perspective

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Abstract

Multiculturalism emphasizes mutual respect and tolerance between different ethnic groups, and multicultural education stresses the development of respect for cultural diversity and the pursuit of respect and care for others, as well as developing a positive self-concept and self-confidence to construct a wealth of self-identity. To understand how self-concept and self-confidence construct a rich self-identity.

This study used qualitative research. The study explored the possibility of promoting growth groups with a multicultural perspective for new immigrants, and through the growth group’s operation, develops the new immigrants’ self-identity.

Data collection included participant observation, to discuss and share the content as the basis for analysis.

The study showed it is useful to promote growth groups with a multicultural perspective for new immigrants because it helps them reconstruct their confidence and self-identity. The study also found picture books and videos were effective materials to promote group dynamics.

Keywords: Multicultural, new immigrants, growth groups.

1. Preface

In recent years, the number of new immigrants by marriage in Taiwan has exceeded 31 million, becoming the fifth largest ethnic group in Taiwan; it has made Taiwan's multicultural a new contour (Liu-mei Hui, 2011). New immigrants in Taiwan due to
culture, customs and language of communication differences in living adjustment makes marriages, parenting, interpersonal communication and other issues, highlighting the urgency of the needs of new immigrants (Shu-Jing, Gao, 2003). Syue, Cheng-Tai (2003) also analyzed Taiwan’s new immigrant and it has provoked some issues of concern, including social, cultural adjustment problems.

Entering an unfamiliar social environment and life changes, new immigrants faced considerable pressure to adapt, and what problems encountered in daily life? How to adjusted and interpret their own? In addition, if there is no happy marriage, of course, cannot create a family well-being. In order to create a good living environment for children, new immigrants have to construct a wealth of self-identity so that they will not put their projected characteristics and expectations on their children, (Ruei-Jhen, Zeng, 1998).

Multiculturalism emphasizes mutual respect and tolerance between different ethnic groups and multicultural education is aim to provide school education to develop and accept individual dignity and cultural diversity in order to fill the needs of society (Ya-Ling, Wu, 2009). In recent years, there are many studies of multicultural education; however, they have focused on new immigrants’ parenting, there are few studies of new immigrant’s self-valuation and self-belief. Even we can find some studies are about how to assist new immigrants to adapt the mainstream cultural in Taiwan, for example, the literacy class. Due to this background, the researcher plan to promote the growth groups of new immigrant to understand their living experiences and marriage adjustment process in Taiwan.

In summary, the purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of developing new immigrants’ self-identity through growth groups with a multicultural perspective.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The practice of multicultural education
Multicultural education ought to focus on different ethnic, class, gender, or other social groups with the principles of social justice critique. It also emphasizes on education and cultural practice for vulnerable groups’ fair treatment and discrimination and to explore the cultural diversity of interpretation of the facts, to reconstruct the education and the interpretation of cultural hegemony and meaning of social action (Sheng-Yi, Zhuang, 2007). Therefore, when it face different cultural backgrounds have to response the implication of contemporary cultural and complexity of multiculturalism. It is also need to rethink self-valuation of multicultural education and the liberation of the mainstream culture which are shaped on the basis of cultural hegemony and ideology (Ru-xi, Chen, 2011)

2.2 The implication of growth groups
There are three types of growth groups. 1. “Study group “growth group, members can select reading materials and base on it to have deep discussion; 2. “Leading-question” growth group, members can raise question and seek out solutions with other participants; 3. “Theme-based “growth group, members focus on one theme to have discussion and take turns to share and exchange their thoughts and experiences.
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Wei, Rao, 1996). Ryu, sheng-ying(1984) thought that study group is an autonomous, self-help, freedom, voluntary non-formal learning groups. Members to read through the material together, share experiences and discuss perspectives, to absorb new knowledge, stimulate new thinking eventually they can expand the life experience. Furthermore, Ciou, tian-jhu(1997), noted that growth groups’ activities emphasizes on group interaction, however, study group base on reading materials and discussions.

In summary, this study used “Study group “growth group namely the activity conducted by new immigrants’ personal experience sharing and interactive conversation via pictures and videos.

3. Research Method
This study used qualitative research and conducted by using “Study group” growth group through the learning of reading together, discussion and mutual inspiration with group members.

3.1 Activity planning
This study designed four activities, each was 120 minutes. Through reading picture books, videos, games, articles sharing, leading members to perceive their own deepest feelings, then life events linked to discuss their the introspection and discovery. The researcher designed a semi-structured discussion through dialogue to guide members link with their life experiences and feelings.

The researcher based on the purpose of the study “promote the immigrants development and self-identity”, the growth group named “explore the life of the width.” Activities are divided into two levels, 1. To construct new immigrants understand themselves, in order to approve their self-uniqueness by selecting the picture book, "You Are Special"(Max Lucado, 2005) and “Just the way you are”(Max Lucado, 2001) as materials for discussion. 2. To enhance the new immigrants beyond the limits of marital wisdom, choose a picture book, "Take care of my flowers"(Guang-cai, Hao, 2002) and the movie “precious oath”, which is adapted from "A lifetime commitment to hold"(Mackenzie, 2002) and "Honey, you remember who I am? "(Christine Burton, 2004).

3.2 Participants
There are 11 participants, two people from Indonesia, six mainland Chinese and three Vietnamese. Participants’ education level was one person from college; two people from high school, five people from junior high school and three people from elementary.

3.3 Data collection and analyze
Data collection was participant observation. The study spent two months since March to April in 2012. Some experts have suggested that observation recording should not only the field notes but also includes the researcher’s hypothesis, understanding and reflection(Babbie, Jia-yin, Lin, Fu-jhen, Syu, 2004; Wei-chin, Chang, 2003; Hsiang-
Luan, Yen, 1996). Therefore, the date would not only discussion recording of study group but also the researcher’s reflection notes after activities. Furthermore, study group activities’ discussion sheets and feedback sheets would also be collected.

4. Research Result and Discussion
The study group of "explore the life of the width" had been divided into four activities. First two activities focused on developing new immigrants’ self-identity; the last two activities were to construct respect and acceptance for new immigrants.

4.1 The development of self-identity
The picture book “You are special” tells the story of Punchinello, the wooden Wemmick who believes that he is not good enough to get gold stars, finally, he realize that the most important thing is how you think about yourself to be a special person. Another book “Just the way you are” is about one little girl who cannot sing, dance or write. However, she insist to be who she is, eventually she still gain others attention. Through these two books, members begin the discussion; at first, new immigrants have insufficient confidence and thought that they do not have any special merit. They just play their role to live their life.

After analyzing and guidance, new immigrants expressed their special merit, such as cooking and cleaning and so on. Through the process of sharing and interactive discussion, finally, they have reconstructed their confidence of self-identity.

4.2 Wisdom of respect and acceptance
Not only are faced with new immigrants adapt to married life problem, but face cultural, ethnic and other differences in values and issues, and restructuring must be adjusted in both physical and psychological(Xia-xiao Juan, 1997).

Therefore, the researcher by using the picture book “Take care my flower” and the video “The precious oath” as discussion materials. "Take care of my flowers," the story of Roland’s independence and growing, let her vision becomes broad,; Moya is experiencing the pain of parting and frustrating, but chose to "giving", "caring" to heal himself, but also indirectly to understand each other's situation and feelings. “Precious Oath” is about when the couple just entered the legitimate career peak; his wife had Alzheimer's, how families overcame this barrier together. However the husband at the time of emotional vulnerability emotional and had involved in a relationship. Fortunately, their friends kindly remind him of the commitment that he made for the wife in the past.

Marriage, some people would think is the yoke, a burden, but some people believes that is a testimony commitments. To enhance members to cherish their marriage, the researchers arrange viewing “Precious Oath videos; it is also draw the members attention and have discussion actively.
5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The study showed that growth groups are helpful for new immigrants. Discussion sharing and situational support allow new immigrants have positive feedback of their self-identity and marriage; in addition, picture books and videos are effective in promoting the growth groups.

The researcher has two suggestions of promoting growth group for new immigrants.

1. The content and nature of growth group should be diversified. Growth groups’ target is to develop self-identity; therefore, members must learn to understand their own values, beliefs, feelings and needs in the community. Organizations can contribute to the growth of the members perceive themselves and also to prevent problems arising. Therefore, the content and nature of the proposed development groups should comprise the following items, the growth and development of life, positive view of marriage, sex education, and marital communication.

2. Recent year, multicultural education has been spread in Taiwan, however, there are diverse implications of multiculturalism and the nature of theoretical framework, particularly in the absence of the concept and value of argumentation realistic view, multiculturalism has became its own view, and the school in their formulation of multicultural education practice self-identification, but these practices are often only reflect the surface meaning of multiculturalism(Ya-huei, Hsu, 2004)

With the trend of globalization, multicultural education rapidly deploys around the world, highlighting that the value of education. Through the implementation of multicultural education, ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups can be respected and accepted, and certainly approve mainstream culture, because they are indispensable.

Reference