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**百善孝為先: Filial Piety, Academic Self-Concept, and the  
Academic Achievement of Students in New Zealand.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master

in

Educational Psychology

at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand

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2016

## **Abstract**

Research has long argued in favour of the influence of culture on students' learning and achievement. New Zealand, with its recent influx of migrants and rich multicultural background, is no exception to the way in which culture can implicate how students see themselves as learners. For East Asian students, the Confucian virtue of filial piety ('xiao') can be a significant motivator in their academic success. Currently, there is a lack of research on the motivational qualities of filial piety in regard to the academic self-concept of students and their subsequent achievement. This study examines the relationship between filial piety, and students' academic self-concept and academic achievement in a New Zealand intermediate school. A quantitative method of self-reporting survey was used to assess filial piety and academic self-concept from a cohort of 43 students, and was collated in conjunction with their academic achievements in Literacy (English) and Numeracy (mathematics). Regression analysis is used to examine the relationships across the variables. Results indicate that filial piety does not have a significant impact on students' academic self-concept and their subsequent academic achievement. However, there is a consistent, positive, and significant correlation between participants' academic self-concept across both achievement areas. These findings suggest that students' academic self-concept can play a key role in their levels of academic achievement, and that school and home effort should focus more on encouraging the positive self-perceptions of students of all cultures within New Zealand. While filial piety does not have a statistically significant impact on students' academic self-concept and academic achievement in this study, future research is recommended with a larger sample in order to derive results that have greater representation of the New Zealand population.

## Acknowledgements

“Turning stone into jade.”

“雕石成璧”

“Diāo shíchéng bì”

- *Chinese Proverb (Fung, 2014, p.1)*

This Chinese proverb refers to the meticulous carving of a piece of stone to create a jade amulet. The metaphor echoes the endeavours of past generations of the Chinese New Zealand community to create a better life from often harsh and sometimes unforgiving environments.

It speaks of the ability of people to use what is at hand to bring into existence something more precious than the original.

獻給我的家人

感謝你們無止境的付出，支持，與愛

獻給我的父親

感謝您辛苦耕耘，給予我們安穩的生活及學習環境

您是我人生中的好榜樣

獻給我的母親

感謝您勇敢的移居紐西蘭，伴隨著我們學習成長

您是我生活中的支柱

獻給我的姊妹

感謝您的耐心和忍讓，添增我人生的色彩

您是最要好的玩伴

This is dedicated to my family; your unconditional love and support is my motivation to continually aim for the best and excel in everything that I do. You have my eternal gratitude. A huge thank you to my supervisors, Terence Edwards and Jhan Gavala, for your expertise, professional guidance, and words of encouragement every step of the way. Your never-ending high expectations of me continue to push, challenge and inspire me to be the best that I can be.

To my dear friends, thank you for your shared joy and excitement for my small achievements, and putting up with my cries of frustration during those sleepless nights. Thank you to my partner, Karl, for your love and patience with my tears and tantrums, and believing in me when I didn't even believe in myself.

Finally, my deepest appreciation to my participants; your contribution gave the most invaluable voice to my research. It would be near impossible to complete my thesis without your insight. I wish each one of you a very successful academic journey and that you flourish in your future endeavours.

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## List of Defining Terms

In research, it is important that terms are clearly defined in order to eliminate any misunderstanding the reader may have based on a differing definition.

For the purpose of this study, the most frequently used terms are operationally defined as the following:

**Culture:** Refers to a shared way of life, including knowledge, beliefs, values, and norms of behaviour for a group of socially interacting people.

**Ethnicity:** Refers to an individual's self-perception and affiliation with a particular ethnic group or groups.

**Filial Piety:** The emotional and material support children express to their parents, including, love, respect, and attendance to their needs, deference, and compliance to their wishes.

**Dual Filial Piety Model:** Filial piety consisting of two elements: reciprocal filial piety and authoritarian filial piety.

**Reciprocal Filial Piety:** Characterized by reciprocity and natural intimate affection between children and their parents, by showing respect, caring for and attending to their parents.

**Authoritarian Filial Piety:** Characterized by submission to hierarchical authority and the suppression of self-autonomy. Children may sacrifice their own wishes in order to comply with parents' wishes, and feel obligated to maintain the family reputation.

**Self-Concept:** The perception of an individual's attitudes, feelings and knowledge about their own abilities, skills, appearance, and social acceptability.

**Academic Self-Concept:** A domain-specific self-concept that refers to students' knowledge and perception about their own competency and ability within achievement situations.

**Academic Achievement:** A student's achievement record as measured in the areas of Numeracy and Literacy from the academic records of the participating school.