

Surf Around the World !
An Exploration of
Why More and More Young People Choose to be
CouchSurfers



劉潔瑩

Liu, Chieh-Ying

Department of English, Wenzao Ursuline University of

Languages,

jessicaliu0224@gmail.com

Instructor: 顏楚蓉

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Abstract

Due to the advance in technology, millions of people are engaged in hospitality exchange, which offers an alternative way of travelling compared to traditional tourism. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the culture of these hospitality exchanges. Specifically, I seek to find out factors which influence young people to choose to be CouchSurfers. Four participating subjects were selected. Except for one male, other three female interviewees all had experienced CouchSurfing. The 3C (coding, category and concept) method proposed by Lichtman in 2012, was employed in the data analysis procedure. The results indicate (1) adventurous, sociable and talkative are predominant characteristics for CouchSurfing, (2) saving travel expenses, experiencing local cultures and making new friends are predominant motivations for CouchSurfing, (3) sharing life, creating connection and staying curious are predominant values for CouchSurfing, and (4) pressure and unknown risks as two factors influencing people's intention of CouchSurfing. Implications of future study of CouchSurfing suggest: first, more male participants should be recruited; second, in order to find out more potential factors which influence young people to choose CouchSurfing, quantitative method should also be conducted in the future.

Introduction

Owing to the advance in technology, the spread of online communities has allowed people to form personal connections to make a wide variety of shared interests and activities. Millions of people are engaged in hospitality exchange, which offers an alternative way of travelling compared to traditional tourism. CouchSurfing, with more than 3.5 million registered members to date (CouchSurfing Statistics, 2011), is one of the most popular hospitality networks, where members (surfers) stay with other members (hosts) and create personalized experiences (hosting/surfing) instead of going to sightseeing attractions and sleeping in hotels. With the vision to “change the world one couch at a time”, it claims to offer members more than just free accommodation, but also meaningful relationships, cultural exchange and self-development.

When I went to America for summer internship last summer vacation, I went backpacking after the end of my internship. I chose two different kinds of accommodations for my backpacking. I stayed at the hostel in Austin for the first two nights but at a woman’s couch in San Antonio for the last two nights. To be honest, it was my first time to be a CouchSurfer although I have heard about it and known it is getting more and more popular all over the world for a while. It offers the free accommodation between people who do not know each other, but it carries greater risk as well. Out of my expectation, I was very lucky to meet a really nice female host and had so much fun with her during my two stays. Apart from me, I also have some friends who have already done it several times. Therefore, after being a real CouchSurfer, I have a strong interest in finding out why more and more young people choose to be CouchSurfers.

CouchSurfing as an emerging trend is a new form of tourism as well as a lifestyle for some members. The exploration of the phenomenon of CouchSurfing can

provide new angles for an investigation into the modern shift in people's lifestyles (Liu, 2012). Current studies of CouchSurfing have focused on an online resource exchange community which explores elements such as sense of belonging, connectedness, and trust. For example, Devan, Pascale & Blake (2011) mentioned that CouchSurfing provides a friendship feature where members link themselves to others and may accumulate references from others, get verified, and/or be vouched for by others. These features play a significant role in the initial building of trust and help to build the connections that individuals make with one another (p.981). Besides, as Molz (2010) claimed "instead of responding to the stranger with mistrust, CouchSurfing encourages strangers to trust each other and to get to know each other in a deep and meaningful way." Lauterbach, Truong, Shah & Adamic (2009) further elaborated

“Though these communities enable the exchange of goods and services between parties who do not know each other, these transactions often carry greater risk than those based on long-term offline relationships. This makes trust and reputation a crucial factor for users who are deciding whom to interact with.” (p.1)

We can know that other research also investigated the “trust” and “exchange culture” found in CouchSurfing and how this non-profit community worked. They analyzed the exchange of couches as an emerging social and cultural phenomenon, and found the relation between members and this community are bound together by a desire to pursue cultural understanding, human connection, and personal and intellectual growth through traveling. However, few attempts have been made directly towards exploring what are most important factors foster young people choose to be CouchSurfers.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the culture of these

hospitality exchanges. Specifically, I seek to find out factors which influence young people to choose to be CouchSurfers. That is, it attempts to explore why these young people would rather stay at strangers' couches than hotels, cheap hostels or inns when they travel around.

Based on the exploration, the motivations and intentions of young people being CouchSurfers and relationships are constructed between hosts and surfers through this exchange of hospitality and culture will be investigated.



Literature Review

There has been a growing trend in the range of tourism activities available. Increasingly informed with a huge amount of information, people are more attracted to go travelling more than ever before. At the same time, more alternative ways for traditional tourism have emerged with the new possibilities that technology brings. The phenomenon of online hospitality networks, where people's contacts online are aiming to have physical meetings is one of the rapidly growing practices (Liu, 2012, p.3). Therefore, building online hospitality networks becomes important among young people and it also fosters these online communities to be built up; for instance, Servas, GlobalFreeloaders, Homestay and CouchSurfing.

The Internet in the 1990s paved the way for a number of other hospitality exchange services and Couchsurfing is the biggest hospitality exchange service nowadays. It is a non-profit organization that focuses on building connections through the Internet, which further leads to real world interactions. The project was launched in 2003, when many other SNSs (Social Network Services) started but it was in 2004 that the core features became functional. The website provides travelers with a platform containing communicative and networking functions, and affordances to negotiate resource exchanges. The primary purpose of CouchSurfing is to help people to find a free place to stay while traveling, with added functions to meet local people, exchange information, and provide cultural exchanges.

As a result, CouchSurfing has already been the topic of a few research investigations and as a phenomenon of global tourism reflects a kind of lifestyle created in the process of globalization (Liu, 2012).

Previous studies shows that there is a friendship feature where members link themselves to others and may accumulate references from others, get verified, and/or be vouched for by others.(Devan, Pascale & Blake, 2011) These features play a

significant role in the initial building of trust and help to build the connections that individuals make with one another.

Lauterbach and Rosen (2011) have further discussed the trust issue in CouchSurfing from the perspectives of information technology, reputation, and reciprocity. Besides, other previous studies (e.g., Snijders, 1996; Sproull, 1996; Tidwell & Walther, 2002; Buskens, 2002; Lea & Spears, 1995; Whitty & Joinson, 2009) have touched on individual topics such as the role of expectation and temptation, and other factors related to motivation in “trust behaviors,” “self-presentation through the Internet,” and “trust in cyberspace.”

In addition, Lauterbach (2011) have also discussed in actual situations when CouchSurfers need to place trust on whether or not to meet other members whom they have not had face-to-face interactions with before, it leads to the question of how trust is generated in the virtual community. This is different to a regular question regarding trust on the Internet, because CouchSurfing brings online encounters into offline experiences.

Besides, CouchSurfing itself has many facets that reflect different aspects of online/offline interactions, and the linking of the different theoretical perspectives can provide an enlarged view of these interactions. Theories from different disciplines could provide new insights for the understanding of CouchSurfing, which is not a single-faceted phenomenon, but a complex concept comprised of various factors interrelated to each other. (Liu, 2012).

In conclusion, people build online hospitality networks all over the world in CouchSurfing. Surfing on someone’s couch helps CouchSurfers to find the belonging and trust and respond to diversity with curiosity, appreciation and respect. The appreciation of diversity spreads tolerance and creates a global community and make them live in the global village. Most important of all, people can earn friendship and

free accommodation at the same time.



Subjects

Four participating subjects were selected from college student population in Taiwan. Except for one male, other three female interviewees all had experienced CouchSurfing. The first interviewee was A, 20 years old, and she studied at Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages. There were five people in her family, her parents, brother and sister. She had no part-time job and her parents gave her about NTD5,000 for living per month. She had done CouchSurfing once in Singapore. The second interviewee was the only male, B. He was 25 years old and studied in graduate school at National Taiwan Normal University. There were three people in his family, his mother and brother. His living expenses came from his job in the newspaper office and scholarships of school and he earned approximately NTD20,000 per month. He had never been a CouchSurfer but he had tried other accommodations which were quite similar to CouchSurfing before. The third interviewee was C, 22 years old, and she studied at National Central University. There were three people in her family, her father and brother. She had done CouchSurfing three times in Germany and France. The last interviewee was D, 21 years old, and she studied at Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology. There were five people in her family, her parents and two brothers. Her parents gave her NTD10,000 for living per month. Sometimes she helped the travel fair and she got NTD1,000 for one day. She had done CouchSurfing three times as well in England, Italy and Norway.

Instrument

Interview was the instrument used in the study. The interview questions are composed based on the literature review and my personal experience of CouchSurfing. The first question was “What are your perceptions toward CouchSurfing? The second question was “What characteristics you think people need if they want to be CouchSurfers? And what characteristics you have are helpful when you are doing it?”

The third question was “Compared to other kinds of accommodations, why do you choose CouchSurfing? (Save traveling expenses, meet new friends, experience culture, love adventuring and so on)” The fourth question was “What values of CouchSurfing do you think are important to you? (Share life, create connection, offer kindness, stay curious, build friendship and so on)” The fifth question was “What suggestions will you give for those who want to try CouchSurfing in the future?” And the last question was “Will you still choose to be a CouchSurfer under the sufficient travel expenses?” These six interview questions were designed from finding out the motivations of why more and more young people choose to be CouchSurfers.

Data Collection

The individual interview was conducted from December, 2014 to February, 2015. My four participating subjects lived in different cities and it was not easy to find the time to meet all of them in person. Therefore, I interviewed them online through Skype. I made an appointment with each person on Feb 8th, 9th and 10th and we interviewed around 15-30 minutes each time. Before starting our interview, I would have a small talk with the interviewee to make the atmosphere not too serious or pressured. I asked them those six questions step by step and when there was any detail I wanted to know more, I spend more time asking the specific question. In addition, I also asked their permission to do sound recording and then I transcribed the recordings verbally.

Data Analysis

The collected data was coded separately. The 3C (coding, category and concept) method proposed by Lichtman in 2012, was employed in the data analysis procedure. First, I coded data from the data pool of the semi-structured interview and summarized the content of each interviewee by finding out key words which were related to each interview question in sequence. Then the clear main points would

come up. After that, I compared each piece of coded data with others as the analysis progresses. I discovered the cause-and-effect connections between points and reasons. Through the process, the coded data were compared and contrasted and categories were generated. After ensuring and identifying the relationships among each category, concepts emerged.



Result

As analysis of all the data sets indicate that why more and more young people choose to be CouchSurfers can be grouped into four main concepts: (1) predominant characteristics for CouchSurfing, (2) predominant motivations for CouchSurfing, (3) predominant values for CouchSurfing, and (4) factors influencing people's intention of CouchSurfing.

Predominant characteristics for CouchSurfing

Adventurous, sociable and talkative are predominant characteristics for CouchSurfing. Interviewees reported people who were adventurous would choose CouchSurfing. For example, two interviewees in my study said: "I loved not only local life experience but also adventures; I could know more about local cultures through CouchSurfing" (Interviewee A) and "you needed to be enthusiastic about knowing new people and cultures when choosing CouchSurfing; as for myself, I loved novelties including things and people" (Interviewee B). Therefore, adventurous and enthusiastic are important characters of CouchSurfers.

In addition to being adventurous, people who were sociable would choose CouchSurfing. Interviewee B commented, "people needed to be outgoing and sociable when participating in this activity." Interviewee C added, "people who liked to make new friends and share were important characteristics of CouchSurfers." "I thought being a CouchSurfer should also be generous" (Interviewee D). In light of the sayings of Interviewee D, sociable is characterized by outgoing and sociable.

Last, people who were talkative would choose CouchSurfing. Three of my interviewees admitted that they enjoyed chatting with new friends. "at least, you must love talking when choosing CouchSurfing" (Interviewee B), "I liked to chat with people" (Interviewee C) and Interviewee D said:

People would ask questions when I stayed at their places; hence, you needed to

know how to interact with them. When you had further conversations, it might help both of you to have next CouchSurfing exchange.

That is, CouchSurfing was not simply surfing on strangers' couches; people needed to treat them as their friends. People must talk and share something about themselves with them.

Predominant motivations for CouchSurfing

Saving travel expenses, experiencing local cultures and making new friends are predominant motivations for CouchSurfing. Since all my interviewees were students, their first and primary motivation for CouchSurfing was to save travel expenses. "I would rather spend travel expenses on transportation and food; hence CouchSurfing saved a lot of accommodation fees" (Interviewee A), "it was expensive to travel abroad" (Interviewee B), and "students had no money" (Interviewee C and D). As a result, we could find that having sufficient travel expenses or not was the most important factor for young people to choose CouchSurfing.

Besides, people could experience local cultures directly through CouchSurfing. "Normally, locals knew where to play and eat or when to do something. Their suggestions were usually more helpful than information you searched online" (Interviewee C) and "I could know about a local culture in a short time and also got information from locals" (Interviewee D). As a result, hosts provided a quick and helpful way of understanding new cultures for surfers.

You could view a new place from locals' perspectives. When you wanted to experience a new environment, the most important was to get involved in its culture and interact with locals. It helped you to experience many things which were not found on travel guides. (Interviewee A)

Since most hosts were locals, people could have direct and immediate connection with new environments through CouchSurfing. For example, hosts would usually give

CouchSurfers useful travel suggestions including transportation, food, tourist spots, cultures and so on. As a consequence, people could experience authentic cultures from their perspectives.

Apart from saving travel expenses and experiencing local cultures, people could make new friends immediately. “You could make local friends and my host was also my first Singaporean friend” (Interviewee A), “you could make new friends. It was good to travel with a companion if you traveled alone” (Interviewee B), and “maybe because we thought we were still young, we were braver; thus, we wanted to make more friends” (Interviewee D). It was easy for CouchSurfers to develop friendships with hosts. Especially both of them had to stay at a same place for a couple days.

Predominant values for CouchSurfing

Sharing life, creating connection and staying curious are predominant values for CouchSurfing. Interviewees reported CouchSurfing could help both hosts and CouchSurfers to share mutual lives. For example, three interviewees in my study said: “usually, people who hosted you were interested in Taiwan, then you can introduce it to them” (Interviewee A), “being CouchSurfers, you had many chances to chat with hosts. As a result, sharing your life was the core value of CouchSurfing to me” (Interviewee C), and “you needed to watch and learn how to get along with different kinds of hosts and also think about how to share your own cultures to them” (Interviewee D). In short, sharing lives with each other was an important process during this social activity.

Aside from sharing life, CouchSurfing could create human connection of which Interviewee C said, “meeting locals was the most important value to me. The whole value of CouchSurfing was how to know locals. Interacting with them was like creating connection.” Interviewee B added:

Surfing on someone’s couch made me feel more convenient or warmer. You

would not feel like home if you stayed at hotels or hostels. Therefore, CouchSurfing would help you to create connection with new environments.

After interacting with hosts, CouchSurfers felt like they had a human connection instead of being outsiders to a new place. They had someone to share what happened every day just like when they were at home.

Moreover, CouchSurfing could make people stay curious; for instance, two interviewees in my study said: “I was a curious person, so I thought staying curious would broaden your horizons.” (Interviewee A) and

In my opinion, it was important to keep fresh and stay curious. You might stay at one place for three to four days. If you went out with the same person, that would decrease excitement. (Interviewee B)

CouchSurfing made people experience new things and it further kept making people stay curious and fresh since we knew nothing about a new place and culture.

Factors influencing people's intention of CouchSurfing

Three-fourths of my interviewees would not choose CouchSurfing under the condition of sufficient travel expenses which was due to two factors: pressure and unknown risks. Two of my interviewees thought CouchSurfing was a high-pressure activity.

Personally, CouchSurfing made me feel pressured because you did not need to pay accommodation fees. In other words, surfers might need to pay their hosts back in other ways. It might sound a little bit strange but it was true. Since CouchSurfing was a social activity, you must exchange something with hosts to satisfy their expectations. Thus, if you were not very outgoing, you might feel high-pressure. (Interviewee B)

It was high-pressure because before you met your hosts, you would think of what kinds of person they were. You might also worry you had no topic during

meal time. It was suffering if you met someone who was out of step with you; particularly you had to stay with this person for a few days. (Interviewee D)

People met new people and had to meet each other's expectation in CouchSurfing. If CouchSurfers were not good at socializing, they might feel strong pressure.

In addition, interviewees mentioned other unknown risks as well. "females needed to protect themselves when they stayed at strange males' places because they might have some impolite behaviors." (Interviewee A), "CouchSurfing was a risky activity, you needed to know more about your hosts before meeting them" (Interviewee C), and "you had better be prepared that your hosts could stand you up; therefore, you must have alternative plans when choosing CouchSurfing" (Interviewee D).

Consequently, CouchSurfing was not only a high-pressure activity but also full of unknown risks.

Discussion

The results obtained in this experiment suggest the following:

1. CouchSurfing needs participants to be sociable and enthusiastic about knowing new things,
2. CouchSurfing is characterized by more abundant experiences and lower costs,
3. CouchSurfing can be a process of cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding of participants, and
4. CouchSurfing can be a process of satisfying mutual expectations between hosts and surfers.

In what follows, we probe four factors influencing young people to choose be CouchSurfers.

CouchSurfing needs participants to be sociable and enthusiastic about knowing new things

People who are adventurous, sociable and talkative are probably to choose CouchSurfing. CouchSurfing is a social activity where people meet new people; when participating in this activity, people must interact with strangers. Interviewees' comments that "I love novelties including things and people," "CouchSurfers need to be outgoing and sociable," and "I like chatting with people" reveal that CouchSurfing needs participants to be sociable and enthusiastic about knowing new things. This result is similar to the findings of a study by Tsai (2014). Tsai noted that openness to experience, extraversion and agreeableness can best represent CouchSurfers' personal characteristics.

For those reason, generally, people who have these three characteristics are bolder and have higher interests in choosing CouchSurfing.

CouchSurfing is characterized by more abundant experiences and lower costs

CouchSurfing helps people to save travel expenses, experience local cultures and

make new friends. CouchSurfing is a new favorable way to travel among young people nowadays. People from different countries offer their couches without any charges. As locals, hosts will also give useful travel information to surfers. Interviewees' mentions that "CouchSurfing saves a lot of accommodation fees," "suggestions from hosts are ... helpful than ... searched online," and "you can make local friends" indicate that CouchSurfing is characterized by more abundant experiences and lower costs.

Previous studies remarked that the types of motivation of CouchSurfers can be analyzed consequently as two types. The first type is push factors, which are: cultural motivation, interpersonal motivation, self-actualized motivation. The second is pull factors, constituted of the features of journey's destination and the lodging conditions provided by their hosts. To CouchSurfers, free accommodation, curiosity towards people and culture, and different experience of way of living are most concerned (Tsai, 2014).

CouchSurfing can be a process of cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding of participants

CouchSurfing helps people to share life, create human connection and stay curious. Participants share their lives by interacting with each other, create connection by making new friends and stay curious by being involved in a new place. Interviewees' sayings that "you can introduce Taiwan to them," "CouchSurfing helps to create connection with new environments," and "staying curious will broaden horizons" show that CouchSurfing can be a process of cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding of participants.

This finding resembles a previous study by Skog (2012). A great part of CouchSurfing is how people connect and share their lives and travel stories. CouchSurfers are motivated by a desire to make local connections, experience

different cultures, and learn from the people and ideas they encounter through traveling. (Liu, 2012)

CouchSurfing can be a process of satisfying mutual expectations between hosts and surfers

CouchSurfing is not only a high-pressure activity but also full of unknown risks. Since hosts offer free accommodations, they may want to get some benefits from surfers as well. It can be chatting, sharing lives with them or other token gifts. Interviewees' mentions that "you must exchange something with hosts to satisfy their expectations," and "it was suffering if you meet someone who is out of step with you" point out CouchSurfing can be a process of satisfying mutual expectations between hosts and surfers. Both participants hope their counterparts can meet their expectations.

If CouchSurfers do not have these potential qualities to meet hosts' expectations, it can make them feel pressured and influence their intentions of CouchSurfing.

In addition to pressure, there are also unknown risks in CouchSurfing. Since both hosts and surfers have not known and met each other before, they cannot totally trust each other. Interviewees' comments that "females needed to protect themselves ... at strange males' places because ... some impolite behaviors" and "you must have alternative plans when choosing CouchSurfing" demonstrate that CouchSurfing is a risky activity. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Lauterbach, Truong, Shah & Adamic, 2009). Though these communities enable the exchange of goods and services between parties who do not know each other, these transactions often carry greater risk than those based on long-term offline relationships.

This study provides useful insights into why more and more young people choose to be CouchSurfers; however, some limitations should be pointed out. First, more male participants should be selected; there were four participants but only one

male participant in the study. Second, in order to find out more potential factors which influence young people to choose CouchSurfing, quantitative method should also be conducted in the future.



Discipline and Punishment in Chinese Children's Songs

Pei-rong Yo

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the implicit contents of Chinese children's songs and exhibit the unspoken rules in them. This study began by discussing the importance of nursery rhymes. Every child has his or her own distinctive features, and these characteristics are developed by different educational systems. Children's infancy is a golden period that needs most care and instruction, and nursery rhymes certainly occupy an irreplaceable position. This paper suggested four major factors Chinese nursery rhymes influence children unknowingly: animism, reduplication, collectivism, and appreciation of brutality. This research summarized some of the relevant Chinese children's songs in support of setting up institutions that contribute to children's cognitive development. It clarifies the standards and punishments which nursery rhymes have established. If children refuse to submit to the commandments in nursery rhymes, they should take responsibility for their behaviors like shoulder physical injuries and spiritual impairment. Alarming warnings is a keynote of this paper because they not only cause a reaction, but also call to action effectively. This paper concluded that the crisis in nursery rhymes could be a favorable turn if parents take advantage of it. In other words, children could benefit from nursery rhymes if parents make the right choice on option and interpretation.

Key words: Nursery rhymes, Chinese culture, Education

Nowadays, many parents read bedtime stories or sing nursery rhymes to their children every night, and these fairy tales and lullabies are multi-functional materials which help children to grow up through fantasy and eternal truths. According to *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* written by Bruno Bettelheim, “a child needs to understand what is going on within his conscious self so that he can also cope with that which goes on in his unconscious” (7) and “The child needs most particularly to be given suggestions in symbolic form about how he may deal with these issues and grow safely into maturity” (8).

Several studies have been conducted on issues related to the dark sides of European seemingly bright tales and lighthearted songs. For instance, “the prince and the princess lived happily ever after” is a typical cliché which ends as many fairy tales do. In fact, the reality may prick the bubble of people who live in an imaginary world knowing that the happy ending does not really exist. Two well-known psychoanalysts, Erich Fromm and Bruno Bettelheim, claim that a story everyone knows, Little Red Riding Hood, which originated from *Grimm's Fairy Tales* “concerns an adolescent’s confrontation with adult sexuality”; besides, the hidden meaning is shown by symbols of this folk tale (qtd.in Robert Darnton 3). Another example is “My mother has killed me” in Mother Goose nursery rhymes:

My mother has killed me,
My father is eating me,
My brothers and sisters sit under the table,
Picking up my bones,
And they bury them under the cold marble stones.

This creepy content is wrapped up by its merry background music. Therefore, it proves that no matter which fairy stories are told or which children’s songs are chanted, they are just like the sugar-coated poison which engages children’s attention

with modest storytelling and delightful melodies.

However, quite a few studies have been directly done on emphasizing behind obligatory regulations or causing a warning of potential threats in Chinese fictitious stories and children's songs. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the mental effect of Chinese children's songs in disciplining children to behave themselves and how these nursery rhymes build up spiritual and intellectual developmental systems. Children's songs are double-faced, that is, they have delightful and warm background music with spooky lyrics. This may misguide naïve children to conceive these folk songs are melodic tunes that evoke happiness and satisfaction while they are more cruel and sophisticated aspects. In response to this problem, this study is devoted in the hope of providing interpretation of dangerous outcomes and certain fates in classic Chinese children's songs. Most importantly, this study aims to investigate what criteria Chinese children's songs have established and show the evidence of punishments they would implement if anybody fails to follow the standard.

I. The Impact of Parenting with Nursery Rhymes

Speaking of preschool education it is well-known that parental involvement holds the strongest power in this field. Parenting is a tricky and subtle task for most of the parents, and it occupies an important position in their children's early education. Jerome Kagan, an American psychologist, points out how parents affect children based on three main ways which are "direct interaction, emotional identification and transmission of family stories" (164). He elaborates on every mechanism. Additionally, Kagan mentions that parents' direct interaction has "greatest effect on intellectual development and character traits". The second and third mechanism, parental emotional recognition and the conveyance of family accomplishments have "a greater influence on children's confidence or doubt about his/her talent" (166). It is

evident that parenting has enormous impact on the child's perspective on future success or failure.

Due to parenting is very crucial in children's infancy, parents should be cautious about which styles they will engage. Besides, childhood education has a strong connection in forming personality and nursery rhymes are matters for the cultivation of children's good qualities. Xu Si Ying (徐思颖) asserts that implicative lyrics of nursery rhymes can be deepened and rooted in children's mind to make personality develop smoothly and positively. Additionally, Xu categorizes various Chinese children's songs and specifies which of them should be recited in different age stages based on Erikson's previous four stages of psychosocial development (78). Xu declares that mothers can sing lullabies which have words like "love you" and "protect you" to pacify babies in the first stage, a period to establish trust. The second stage is about children's independence and awareness of shame, so parents can chant songs reflect life experiences and include reduplication that children can easily follow and hum (80). Parents should choose nursery rhymes sustain abundant words because children's comprehension of rhymes had greatly advanced among the third stage which develops children's self-motivation and feeling of guilty (81). The fourth stage is a period of deciding whether children are active or passive, hence except for complexity rhymes should resonate with positive values to encourage them to think and have a sense of responsibility (82). According to Xu's points of view, it can be inferred that nursery rhymes can be regarded as a resourceful educational material, and they are a significant element between adults and infants' conversation.

As a matter of fact, nursery rhymes initially are not as innocent as people think. Elaine Danielson defines nursery rhymes as "verses customarily told or sung to small children" (3). Nevertheless, she suggests that most children ballads are "originally composed for adult entertainment" and they were considered to be inappropriate for

children in seventeenth century England because “adult perceptions saw brutality, dishonesty, and irresponsibility” (4). Furthermore, Danielson keeps emphasizing on the importance of nursery rhymes, and also points out four benefits of learning nursery rhymes which include the competence of learning language’s intonation patterns, new terms and concepts, comprehension of basic reading and writing, and the appreciative ability toward poetry (7). Susan Partridge generalizes about how nursery rhymes have effects upon children’s learning competence. She mentions that children’s deep-seated interest in rhymes will facilitate their linguistic acquisition. Besides, Partridge claims that children’s songs “provide many thought-provoking questions, and they stimulate the imagination and creativity” (7). It is proved that preschool children are sensitive to nursery rhymes. Therefore, Partridge argues that children’s recognition of nursery rhymes “can be their path to read and enjoy it if handled properly by their teachers and parents” (11).

As mentioned previously, nursery rhymes need to be filtered by adults and send the right messages to children. Children’s songs are penetrating in children’s lives, and they are also shared with adults because they are chanted during growing process to transit naïve children to sophisticated adults. Therefore, children’s songs have hidden meanings which consisted of adults’ thoughts in some particular aspects. However, the situation could be more formidable. According to *BBC News*, it is mentioned that “nursery rhymes put kids at risk” because they “send dangerously inaccurate messages to young listeners.” On the basis of journal of *Canadian Medical Association*’s finding, it is examined that lyrics of nursery rhymes contain dangerous subtext. In addition, these rhymes are “often recited to children, but little thought is given to their content” (Sarah M. Giles, Sarah Shea 1295). Based on the standpoints of *BBC News* and *Canadian Medical Journal*, words of nursery rhymes should be on guard because they are inclined to become catastrophes.

On account of being insecure and seemingly nonsensical in lyrics, nursery rhymes are not considered to contain literary quality for the most part. Nonetheless they belong to children literature. Children literature is a general and integrated term which refers to variety of compositional genres to children. Fu Lin Tong (傅林統), an educationist, clarifies that a nursery rhyme is “a song exists in children’s life and also an earliest song for children to learn” (323). Fu separates nursery rhymes into culture inheritance and literary creation based on the distinction of functions (91). Another scholar Xu Yi Zong (許義宗) classifies children literature according to its forms, and he ranks nursery rhymes within the field of verses (Fu 88). What is more, Fu emphasizes on educative characters in children literature by indicating Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, the eighteen century French writer, because of her resolute stance for leading children’s thoughts and behaviors and patching children’s defects appropriately through conversation at the same time (67). Fu declares that emotion and knowledge are two main indirect experiences which children could obtain from literature, and former one intensely influences children’s mind to enrich children’s imagination and feelings while latter one cultivates children’s power of judging and thinking to improve their own values (73). Besides, Fu comments that real children literature should evoke potential wisdom and morality in children’s consciousness (71). All in all, it is quite clear that nursery rhymes are integral parts in childhood, and these songs embody the spirit of adulthood simultaneously.

II. Persona Buildup: Correction in Infantile Chants

As a saying goes “Spare the rod, spoil the child.” However, not everyone agrees with this proverb, so what are the proper solutions in nurturing the child? More often than not, when it comes to parenting it turns out to be the point at issue. Some parents hold the conviction of love and concern, while others are supporters of strictness and discipline. Actually there are no right and wrong of these two beliefs in education, but

they are evaluated by whether both of the child's outer behaviors and inner thinking are growing positively and normally. The better parents at handling the development of children, the easier children cope with their own problems in the future. Obviously, the literature infusion in childhood is the fastest and most efficient mechanism to give knowledge to the child and infect them directly. This section attempts to analyze the elements of those songs which take important roles in Chinese children's childhood and examine how these nursery rhymes generate chemical changes in children's progression. In short, this section decodes the intangible messages in Chinese children's songs. Lastly, by appreciation of nursery rhymes, not only sentimental element can be dug out, but cultural genes will emerge from unseen ideology in different countries.

Except for entertaining, the main purpose of nursery rhymes is utilizing various forms in music and lyrics to convey identical concepts to the child's mind. Nonetheless, the interpretation of children's songs could be different from person to person because of diverse gender, age, perspective, and especially cultural inheritance. Therefore, the conveyance of nursery rhymes requires much attention and concern to assure children of the accuracy of cognitive development, and it should avoid going beyond children's ability and hypercorrection when adults want children to conform their behaviors to the rules or customs of society. In accordance with Chinese culture, Chinese people value the morality of life and strong attachment between family members. As a result, ethical subjects or parents' anticipations are inserted into Chinese nursery rhymes. In these songs when the child fails to obey the regulations, he or she deserved to be punished for the sake of creating positive personalities. One typical example is *Auntie Tigress*, which is derived from the folktale:

It has been long time ago, my mommy told me so.

In the very deep of night, Auntie Tigress would show up.

Crybaby had better stop weeping, or she will bite your little ears.

Naughty guy had better go to sleep, or she will bite your little fingers.

I still remember, I still remember, I closed my eyes and said,

Auntie Tigress please don't bite me, good kid has fallen asleep.

This well-known song narrates the story of the evil spirit of tiger transforms into an old lady to deceive children and devour them. Mostly parents use this horrible chant to persuade their kids of stopping crying and going to bed immediately. The tigress in this song and the wolf in *Red Riding Hood* are different tunes played with equal skill. Both wolf and tigers are ferocious animals, and the clear-cut images of them cast an intense power upon children. Thus, children can connect the tiger with the monster which bares fangs and brandishes claws. Deep in the night creates a dark, silent, and dreadful atmosphere. "Bite ears" is the punishment for the child who cries on every occasion or whines all the time. "Bite fingers" is the punishment for the child who refuses to sleep. Specific penalties dominate over children and generate fears, so children choose to follow what parents have sung to them for the sake of protecting themselves. Little by little, the child would understand that holding back tears and closing their eyes are ways to survive. Once kids believe in the punishments of this nursery rhyme, they convert the fears into discipline.

Conventional wisdom holds that Animism is the attribution of a living soul to plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomenon. Children rely on their own imaginations to endow consciousness and sensibilities to characters in nursery rhymes no matter whether these characters are alive or not. The lyrics of *Auntie Tigress* describe an evil spiritual tiger disguises itself as a human and eats human being. The tiger with human looks represents that animals can have conversation with kids, and think of many strategies to seduce children to become their delicious cuisine. Another Chinese children's song which has to do with Animism is *A Fawn*:

A log cabin in the woods, a fawn stands at the window and looks out.

A poor lamb run desperately, knocks the door urgently.

Help me! Help me! Save me! That hunter wants to kill me.

Come on in! You poor lamb, I can provide you a shelter.

A fawn stands in the front of window in a log cabin, and it seems that he lost in thought. All of a sudden, a lamb runs to the cabin and asks for help. She looks like a damsel in distress. Because the hunter wants to hunt the lamb, her life is at stake. At the last, the fawn decides to provide the lamb with assistance to save her. Both portraits of the fawn and the lamb are vivid, so the child can draw a mental picture of two leading roles and realize the predicament. The song aims to inspire the sympathy and empathy of kids, and tell kids that people shouldn't be indifferent and should stand in others shoes when someone who is in need of the help. However, if looking at the reverse side, due to the lack of crisis consciousness, the punishment of the lamb is to put herself in danger. A sharp warning is shown directly in the chant and it can make children introspect if their mindsets toward different events happening in their daily lives are in the right way. Step by step, the cognitive development of children is enhanced. In addition, children become more mature and they become capable of possessing more knowledge of social life.

Children are pure and their minds are as clean as white walls. If they are colored or even tainted, the involvement and interference of adults are confirmed. An Italian physician and educator, Maria Montessori, remarks on a child's mind can "absorb knowledge quickly and effortlessly" and proclaims that "the child from birth to six years has an 'absorbent mind' ("The Montessori Dictionary")." In other words, the child's brain is compared to a sponge which incorporates information altogether and convert them to be his or her frame of reference. Therefore, the problem brings about a complex issue that is how much adult intervention should fit in for children's

learning environment. What is more, constructing a health, honest and real world for children is a rather fundamental assignment for parents. Adults have responsibility to straighten children's behaviors if they are not walking on the right way. One invisible and influential path is through nursery rhymes to make children obedient or even self-disciplined. *I am Willing to Be a Good Child* is a Chinese children's song which offers evident conditions about being a well-beloved person:

I am willing to be a good child, keep myself tidy and full of energy.

Wherever I go, everybody loves me, everybody loves me.

I am willing to be a good child, study hard and work hard.

Wherever I go, everybody loves me, everybody loves me.

The repetition of "I am willing to be a good child" has the function of brainwashing. Children inject the sentence to their heads, and gradually turn it into their mindset whenever they sing the song. Besides, being neat, vigorous and diligent are requirements of becoming popular. The child would realize that he or she could not be considered as a good person until he or she owns these satisfactory characteristics. "Everybody loves me" becomes an incentive for children to behave themselves without adults' commands. Supposed parents want to emphasize the points, they could give children assistance to look at the other side of the coin which being slack and filthy would make friends or peers stay away from them. The allusive principles are established to drill children in dignity and being hard-working.

Nursery rhymes may have either positive or negative affections. Chinese culture has powerful influences over Chinese children's songs in some sense. As a result, Chinese children's songs have control over children's mentality in terms of reduplication. Chinese people pay much attention to the ethic and interdependence between human beings. Moreover, Chinese culture values relationships between family members and even people's loyalty toward their own country under

collectivism. Spontaneously, the concept of guard home or defend the country were instilled in the Chinese children's songs. One well-known chant which shows perfect demonstration of patriotic spirit is *As Long As I Grow Up*:

... My neighbors are so honorable, fight for the well-being of our people,

Kill enemies with great bravery, with no fear of decease

Do it, do it, I will kill the enemy, too.

As long as I grow up, as long as I grow up.

Revolutionary soldiers are so honorable, shout for the virtue of our country

Risk lives to kill the enemy, make sacrifice for our country

Do it, do it, I will kill the bandits, too.

As long as I grow up, as long as I grow up.

The appreciation of those people who serve in the military exaggerates soldiers' merits and achievements. Violence, cruelty, and bloody scenes seem to be praised as brave deeds. "As long as I grow up" embodies a child's strong sense of duty to protect his own country, while this emerges the problem that children turn out to be captives of politics and wars. Because children naturally internalize soldiers' obligation of keeping an eye on their nation, they believe in unseen disciplinary standards. Without capacity of recognizing beautified and rationalized brutality in lyrics, children accept all the warlike messages and eventually have difficulty to eliminate the faith branded in their minds. Transparent logic in easy-memorized lyrics with simple melody gives a punch in the child's head. The song is chanted repeat and repeat again by parents, and children pay little attention to possessing their own ideas and only focus on the results in lyrics. As a passive recipient, the child does not understand that these lines can be a beginning of cognition. The advantage is that this rhyme can shape up patriotism in children's unconsciousness, but children become cold-blooded and inhuman little by little because they are penetrated with beliefs of slaughter and

salvation. Furthermore, children do not know they are losing egos and not able to filter the messages which mold them into an acrimonious person.

Undeniably, nursery rhymes feature very largely in constructing children's mental landscapes. Once children feel a sense of responsibility and guilty after knowing the bad consequences, they appear to be under control no matter how disobedient they are. However, adults' expectancy in lyrics could have counter-effect if behavior modification beyond the range of children's acceptance. For instance, children may easily under illusion that all animals are fierce or barbarous behaviors are reasonable. Therefore, children's fixation in thinking is hard to break down. In general, Chinese children's songs imperceptibly hypnotize children into following everything which these songs have already said; even so, children in a state of chaos should be put in order. Finally, nursery rhymes are productions of culture, and cultural inheritance is compulsory for every country and generation.

Conclusion

This paper has been concerned primarily with unfolding the doctrinal setting in Chinese children's songs and revealing connotations of penalties in these songs. Nursery rhymes are basic units in stimulating infantile sentimental emotion. In spite of the fact that parents inevitably need to educate children with musical assistance, parents are likely put their children into threatening conditions due to careless and improper disposition of nursery rhymes. Nursery rhymes employ children's sensibilities which mingle with imagination to reach consensus in thinking. So far Chinese children's songs have created a deep-rooted pattern of what a so-called role model should be. Regardless of concrete specification or unobvious dictates in lyrics, the standards in Chinese children's songs tell children to be submissive, upright, warmhearted, and so on. However, children's failure in abiding by regulations would bring certain chastisements. They may get hurt, feel shame or be blackballed, and so

forth. What is more, nursery rhymes do not only sneak in children's mind, but also accommodate them to the society in the future. On the whole, only choosing an adequate nursery rhyme with suitable explanation can ensure children against unintended attack of nursery rhymes, and parents should assure children of physical and mental health until they are full-grown.

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