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Abstract

The Philippine Thematic Apperception Test was administered to 22 intellectually superior Filipino children aged 4 to 9 years from private and public school settings as a means to explore their socio-emotional concerns. A grounded analysis of their narratives revealed the following themes: (a) importance of family relationships, (b) perceptions on school and intelligence, (c) predominant characterization of heroes, (d) peer relationships, and (e) concerns related to God and spirituality. Significant differences in the narratives of the public and private school children are also examined. The implications of using projective measures as a window to gifted children's socio-affective concerns are discussed.

Keywords

pTAT, gifted, socio-emotional concerns

If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,
A Hope-er, a Pray-er, a Magic Bean buyer,
If you're a pretender, come sit by my fire
For we have some flax-golden tales to spin
Come in!
Come in!

—Shel Silverstein

There is growing awareness of how socio-affective concerns and children's emotional intelligence influence their academic performance (Robinson, 2002). Knowledge of these issues provides insight into student underachievement (Colangelo, Kerr, Christensen, & Maxey, 2004; Reis & McCoach, 2002), as well as family (Dettman & Colangelo, 2004; Olszewski-Kubilius, 2002) and peer concerns (Cornell, 2004; Rimm, 2002). It has been recognized that such socio-affective concerns may vary across different cultures (Ford, 2002; Robinson, Reis, Neihart, & Moon, 2002; Tomlinson, Callahan, & Lelli, 2004). It is, then, my intent to tap into the socio-affective concerns of culturally different gifted students with the help of projective measures such as gifted children's creation of stories in the Philippine Thematic Apperception Test (PTAT).

The power of storytelling and the magical enchantment of tales have long been documented (Bettelheim, 1977; Raines & Isbell, 1994) and traced to the time of the Ancient Greeks, who acclaimed the power of literature by inscribing a sign above a library, claiming it to be a "healing place for the soul" (Zaccaria & Moses, 1968, as cited in Sullivan & Strang, 2002). The power of the written word to "heal" can be seen through

bibliotherapy with high-ability learners. The intensity of their emotions, their remarkable ability to identify with the characters in the stories, and their love for books serve to make bibliotherapy an effective therapeutic intervention for high-ability learners (Hebert, 1991; Hebert & Kent, 2000). In this article, the use of stories and tales as a window to the child's soul, or in this case their socio-affective concerns, is explored in detail.

Literature Review

Although a great deal has been written when it comes to identification of gifted ethnic minority students (Harris, 1993; Sarouphim, 2004; Strong, Deuel, Jean-Francois, & Urbano, 2004), culturally different gifted children (Abbott, 1982; Mitchell, 1982; Pierce et al., 2007; Tomlinson et al., 2004), and socio-economically disadvantaged students (Baldwin, 2004; Borland, Schnur, & Wright, 2004; Cross & Burney, 2005; McBee, 2006), such a literature base is not available when it comes to the exploration of socio-affective concerns of ethnically different and culturally diverse gifted communities.

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Thus far, studies have primarily focused on Western populations, such as the work done on the social and emotional issues with exceptionally intellectually gifted students in the Australian context (Gross, 2002). There have also been studies focusing on the impact of racial identity among intellectually gifted African American learners (Ford, 2002) and the socio-cultural contexts that affect talent development among high-ability Hispanic learners (Kloosterman, 1999). The inner voices and experiences of gifted Latino/a adolescents have also been explored (Shaunnessy, McHatton, Hughes, Brice, & Ratliff, 2007). There is paucity in the literature, however, when it comes to the socio-affective concerns and issues in South-east Asian contexts.

Robinson et al. (2002) have compiled some of the leading research findings on socio-affective concerns of gifted students. One of their central conclusions in relation to ethnicity is that “gifted students who come from families that differ because of race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, or a combination of these factors face their own special challenges” (pp. 269-270). The authors recommend that future research on the social and emotional needs of children with high potential include the need to prioritize the understanding of the “ways in which demographic and personal variables interact with children’s abilities and environments to determine the patterns of their lives” (p. 284). It is time to heed the voices of ethnically diverse students, such as the gifted Filipino learners, as researchers explore the socio-affective concerns of non-Western cultures.

Quantitative Measures of the Socio-Affective Concerns of the Gifted

Two personality tests that are used to get a glimpse of gifted children’s inner world are Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and 16 Personality Factor (16 PF) Test. The MMPI was administered to gifted adolescents, with a mean chronological age of 17 years, by Kennedy (1962), whereas the 16 PF Test was administered to 50 gifted students in South Korea, 53 American students in gifted programs in Florida, 45 gifted students in Finland, and 30 students in Slovakia (Shaughnessy et al., 2004). The authors intended to demonstrate through the pencil-and-paper personality tests that there are specific personality factors more likely to characterize gifted children aged 12 years and less (Shaughnessy et al., 2004) as well as among gifted adolescents (Kennedy, 1962).

Gross (2004), however, noted the limitations of administering a pencil-and-paper test to discern gifted children’s perception of self. This was revealed in the Piers–Harris Children’s Self-Concept Scale where there is an underestimation of the scores of children identified to be gifted. Furthermore, it has been found that the exceptionally high value afforded by gifted children on unswerving truth and morality could also affect their scores on the built-in lie

scales of various personality tests. This led Gross (2004) to note that lie scale items on self-esteem inventories or self-concept scales that deal with questions of ethics or personal morality “may function differently for exceptionally and profoundly gifted children than for children of average intellectual capacity” (p. 197).

Qualitative Measures of Socio-Affective Concerns

According to Sigel (1960), the use of projective tests for personality research with children has grown because they provide richer material with which to illustrate the perceptions and interpretation of children’s realities. Inner thoughts, attitudes, and feelings about the various facets of the child’s world, which would otherwise be unobtainable, are said to be revealed through projective measures. Sigel claimed that projective tests allow the gathering of material that is a reflection of the child’s inner life—something that has been found to be superior by most research workers, especially when compared with more objective methods and observational approaches.

Using projective tests as a means to understand gifted children is not a new concept and has been used by Louttit (1947) and Smith (1962). However, most of the studies dealt with adolescents (Crespi & Politikos, 2008; Franklin & Cornell, 1997; Schaefer, 1970; Smith, 1962) rather than elementary-school-aged children. Louttit’s (1947) review of Ford’s application of the Rorschach to 3- to 8-year-old children with IQs of 124 was intended to address the gap in the literature concerning the administration of projective tests to younger children. However, in Louttit’s (1947) study, the Rorschach was administered to obtain normative data based on age-groups of young subjects and was not intended to illuminate the gifted children’s socio-emotional concerns.

The Rorschach test has also been administered to high-ability adolescent females (Franklin & Cornell, 1997) and to children of superior intelligence aged between 11 and 16 years (Gallucci, 1989). The administration of the Rorschach, however, was intended to explore the divergence or originality of the gifted adolescents’ responses. Smith (1962) pointed out that rather than qualitatively looking into emerging themes and patterns evident in the stories in projective measures, the primary focus of most research is on exploring predefined themes such as interpersonal accounts found in the narratives. A further illustration of this would be Schaefer’s (1970) use of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) along with personality and historical data in a study of exceptionally creative adolescent girls. He analyzed the narratives in light of identity conflicts the teenage girls were experiencing and their struggles between conformity/affiliation and independence. These are issues that are believed to be reflective of the developmental stage that the adolescent girls are in (Schaefer, 1970).

The TAT has also been administered to elementary-school-age children (Malgady, Constantino, & Rogler, 1984). The psychometric properties of the Tell Me a Story test (TEMAS),

a Hispanic version of the TAT—consisting of chromatic stimuli depicting Hispanic characters in urban settings—was evaluated by Malgady et al. The TEMAS was administered to 73 low socioeconomic status students in grades K to 6 in public schools in New York City. This group was compared with 210 Puerto Rican children identified to have clinical problems and recruited by teacher referrals in New York City public schools. Malgady et al.'s study was spurred by previous research indicating that Hispanic children showed greater verbal fluency in telling stories about TEMAS pictures when compared with the TAT pictures. However, the TEMAS was not used to demonstrate the predominant socio-affective concerns of the children in the study. Malgady et al. wanted to further investigate the psychometric properties of the TEMAS to examine its clinical usefulness.

Gust (1996) has also advocated the efficacy of the children's self-report and projective inventory as potential tools in assessing the emotional and social needs of the gifted aged between 5 and 12 years. The self-report consisted of statements dealing with possible clinical concerns as well as perceived competence. The projective inventory, on the other hand, included instruments such as the kinetic family drawing, projective story cards, and using colors to depict emotions. Gust reported a case study of a 7-year-old boy and discussed how the boy's responses to the projective instruments provided the author with insight into the child's social and emotional world. However, an in-depth analysis of the socio-affective themes emerging from projective tests was not discussed.

The use of the TAT as the instrument in discerning the socio-affective concerns of ethnically diverse and culturally different gifted children in the primary school years is yet to be explored. The present study aims to address this gap in the literature and illuminate gifted Filipino students' socio-affective concerns and "inner life" through a qualitative analysis of their narratives in the Philippine adaptation of the Thematic Apperception Test (PTAT).

Specifically, I examined how gifted Filipino children characterize family relationships, school-related concerns, peer issues, and spirituality concerns through the stories that they create in the PTAT. I also looked into the differences between the private and public school gifted children's themes and narratives. Rather than come up with a predefined template of socio-affective issues and concerns as is commonly found in pencil-and-paper tests, I believe that a more grounded analysis of their stories would be a more subtle and incisive methodology in discerning their inner affective states.

Method

Twenty-two children aged between 4 and 9 years participated in the study. Eleven children were from the private school setting, and 11 students were from a public school setting. The children were nominated by their teachers (for both

groups) or by developmental pediatricians (for children from private school settings). Initially, 15 students were nominated for the private school group and 21 students for the public school group. Purposive sampling was used to get only students who obtained a full-scale IQ score of 120 or more (superior category) on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children—Revised (WISC-R). The objectives of the research were detailed in the letter provided to the school principal and the parents to obtain informed consent.

Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' anonymity (see Table 1). The range of the children's IQs was from 120 (8-year-old Lenny from the public school setting) to 156 (8-year-old Adrian from the private school group). Table 1 provides details of the names, ages, and IQs of the participants.

A supervisory team of clinical practitioners and developmental psychologists from the University of the Philippines also reviewed the research framework and the use of the projective instrument for ethical viability. The respondents' anonymity was also protected during the entire data collection process; identifying marks were subsequently removed to further preserve the confidentiality of the research proceedings.

Respondents

Private school respondents. Among respondents from private schools, four were from big school settings. (A big school is operationally defined as a school that has two or more sections per primary level. The school also has more than 20 students in a single classroom and has been in existence for the past 20 years and more.) Seven children were from a gifted school setting. (A gifted school is operationally defined as an establishment that specifically claimed to cater to the needs of gifted and talented children. The school has 7 to 25 students per class, with one section per grade level.)

Public school respondents. The public school in the study has been in existence since the 1940s in the Quezon City area. The school has a total student population of more than 2,000, from the preschool to the secondary level. On average, there were eight sections per class in the primary and secondary levels, with a total of 50 to 60 students per classroom.

Measurement Instruments

The WISC-R was used as the screening instrument for this study because it is a widely used instrument for the identification of ethnically different gifted groups (Johnson, 1994) and has also been used to increase the number of underrepresented minorities for selection in gifted and talented programs in the United States (Masten & Morse, 1995). Saccuzzo, Johnson, and Russell (1992) compared the verbal and performance IQs of gifted African American, Caucasian, Filipino, and Hispanic children in Grades 1 to 9. Results indicated that for Filipino children their Performance IQs (PIQ) were higher

Table 1. Participants' Pseudonym, Age, and IQ Test Results

Private School Respondents and Age	Full-Scale IQ	Public School Respondents and Age	Full-Scale IQ
Pink Princess, 4 years, 2 months	135, Very superior	Jaycee, 4 years, 8 months	139, Very superior
JM, 5 years, 6 months	134, Very superior	Jayjay, 5 years, 6 months	127, Superior
Jaydee, 6 years, 4 months	137, Very superior	Ricky, 6 years, 1 month	141, Very superior
Kitty, 6 years, 11 months	133, Very superior	Katrize, 6 years, 6 months	123, superior
Amelia, 7 years, 7 months	152, Very superior	Vic, 7 years, 5 months	128, superior
JP, 7 years, 1 month	134, Very superior	Gerald, 7 years, 5 months	133, Very superior
Adrian, 8 years, 3 months	156, Very superior	Lynne, 8 years, 4 months	123, superior
Ysabella, 8 years, 9 months	130, Very superior	Lenny, 8 years, 11 months	120, superior
Donnie, 9 years, 4 months	137, Very superior	Frank, 8 years, 11 months	125, superior
Gabriella, 9 years, 1 month	134, Very superior	Harry, 9 years, 8 months	133, Very superior
Jody, 9 years, 5 months	128, Superior	Carmina, 9 years, 8 months	127, Superior

than their Verbal IQs (VIQ). VIQ was also found to be higher than PIQ for gifted African Americans and Caucasians. A comparison was also done between WISC-R and WISC-III as a screening instrument for potentially gifted children by Sevier and Bain (1994). Their findings demonstrate that elementary school children being served by specific gifted programs scored significantly lower on the WISC-III than on the WISC-R. The implication of this is that a large proportion of gifted students would not have been identified and placed in gifted programming if the WISC-III had been employed.

Philippine Thematic Apperception Test. The PTAT, which was developed by Lagmay in 1965, is distinct from the TAT in using drawings depicting Philippine situations and scenarios. This is significant given the fact that culturally congruent stimuli are said to make the communication of story ideas and themes much easier in the TAT (Teglasi, 1993). There were originally 64 cards that were developed and validated with students from the University of the Philippines Integrated School (secondary level) for the purpose of coming up with the final set of 25 cards. A second long-range validation study was performed including normal and pathological and urban and rural respondents of varying ages (Lagmay, 1965). Other studies that were performed on the PTAT involved studying the cards' ambiguity values and comparing Tagalog-English bilinguals' responses to the cards (Ventura, 1987). A scale for the needs affiliation, power, and achievement was also conducted on the PTAT by Lazo and Ventura (1987).

There are 25 black-and-white cards in the PTAT, with Cards 1BM, 1GF, 2BM, 2GF, 6G, 6B, and 6FM identified as cards to be administered specifically to either males (M) or females (F) or to young girls (G) or young boys (B); Card 13 was a blank card. In this study, 22 cards were administered to the 22 children (Cards 1GF/1BM, 2GF/2BM, 3, 4, 5, 6G/6B, 6FM, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21), obtaining a total of 484 stories in all.

Procedure for the PTAT

The instructions given to the participants during the one-on-one PTAT sessions were very similar to what was found on the manual, with a few modifications that were deemed essential, such as the reiteration of some test directions, given the age-group of the respondents (see Appendix A for PTAT directions).

On average, there were two sessions scheduled for each of the participants to provide the children greater time to reflect and compose their stories. Test administration for 10 PTAT cards ranged from 15 to 41 minutes for the private school group and from 18 to 48 minutes among the public school group.

However, with one particular child, 8-year-old Ysabella, four sessions were needed, given the length and depth of most of her responses. Ysabella's gift is in creative writing and articulated her enjoyment for the task, allowing her to create more lengthy responses for each of the cards shown to her. The first five cards administered to her took a total of 59 minutes and 37 seconds. Normative data for the TAT suggested that stories of 300 words or more were to be anticipated from college students and that children in the first three grades may produce 60- to 75-word stories (Dana, 1986). Ysabella had 646 words for Card 1 alone. More details of the respondents' ages and the duration of their PTAT responses are listed in Table 2.

Data Analysis

In all, 484 stories were generated by the participants (22 cards for each of the 22 children). Given the magnitude of the data collected, I used nVIVO 7.0 for data analysis. Each story was analyzed for emergent patterns that were slowly generated throughout all the children's narratives. After all the 484 stories were studied for recurring themes, a template was created to record the citations from each of the children's

Table 2. Respondents and Duration of PTAT Narratives

Private School Group	PTAT Cards (C)	Duration of Stories (min:s)	Public School Group	PTAT Cards (C)	Duration of Stories (min:s)
Pink Princess, 4	C 1-21	27:39	Jaycee, 4	C 1-10 C 11-21	22:01 22:52
JM, 5	C 1-10 C 11-21	15:11 15:18	Jayjay, 5	C 1-21	34:27
Jaydee, 6	C 1-10 C 11-21	25:30 22:34	Ricky, 6	C 1-10 C 11-21	48:41 23:35
Kitty, 6	C 1-10 C 11-21	15:17 17:22	Katrize, 6	C 1-10 C 11-21	21:40 46:44
Amelia, 7	C 1-10 C 11-21	20:15 41:44	Vic, 7	C 1-10 C 11-21	24:17 27:17
JP, 7	C 1-19 C 20-21	28:38 29:07	Gerald, 7	C 1-10 C 11-21	35:09 26:17
Adrian, 8	C 1-10 C 11-21	22:44 22:28	Lynne, 8	C 1-10 C 11-21	32:51 29:48
Ysabella, 8	C 1-5 C 6-11 C 12 and 13 C 14-17 C 18-21	59:37 58:59 22:27 29:56 23:33	Lenny, 8	C 1-10 C 11-21	25:10 22:48
Donny, 9	C 1-10 C 11-21	26:28 26:55	Frank, 8	C 1-10 C 11-21	26:54 18:44
Gabriella, 9	C 1-21	55:45	Harry, 9	C 1-10 C 11-21	32:35 52:01
Jody, 9	C 1-10 C 11-21	37:56 27:00	Carmina, 9	C 1-10 C 11-21	40:18 31:11

Note: PTAT = Philippine Thematic Apperception Test.

narratives. A citation refers to a particular story that contains a recurrent theme (e.g., mothers as homemakers). The template of emergent themes was then used to review and code all 484 stories. Parameters for each of the themes created from the stories were not standardized, given the qualitative nature and grounded framework of the procedure. This is in stark contrast to the traditional self-concept scales where the domains are clearly delineated from the beginning. Here, the themes have been generated from the stories themselves and have been extensively discussed with the person doing the interrater analysis (see next session).

It is to be noted that although there were 49 citations of families helping each other, these 49 citations may have come predominantly from one or two children. Furthermore, not all the 484 stories have families portrayed in them; hence, generating percentages was perceived to be unwise and might have provided a skewed picture. However, the numerical figures could assist us in noting trends with regard to what the children appear to perceive as important. Furthermore, the demographics of the type of children who have highlighted specific themes were identified. Hence, qualitative comparisons could be made between private school and public school children. Possible interpretations as to why they may perceive this theme to be significant were

explored and examples of their narratives are portrayed in this article.

The general focus of this article is not so much to come up with a quantitative account of a largely qualitative procedure but to develop a grounded analysis based on the children's own narratives. I also want to demonstrate the intensity and quality of relationships shared among the characters in the PTAT stories and how it links to their socio-affective concerns as gifted children. Beyond the coding and numbers, however, I wanted to highlight the quality and depth of the sharing done by the children through their storytelling. Most of the stories revealed actual links to their own fields of experience: their perceptions on school and education, their ideas regarding family relationships, peer interactions, and spirituality concerns. Through their storytelling, the gifted children were able to paint an even substantive and deeper portrait of what their private worlds were like, through the tales they wove.

Interrater reliability

A PhD candidate (Rater B) in clinical psychology consented to analyze the PTAT narratives of six children (three from the private school setting and three from public school setting)

for interrater reliability/coding. The six children were selected with an eye toward a representation of the following three age-groups: 4-5, 6-7, and 8-9 years. Two children were selected from each of the three age-groups: one from a private school group and another from the public school setting. Because not all 22 cards could be feasibly analyzed by the person doing the interrater analysis, 7 PTAT cards were chosen for each of the six children (total of 42 stories) based on their representativeness with regard to possible stories that could be gleaned from them. For a greater description of the 7 chosen cards and the themes commonly found among them, see Appendix B. The selection of the 7 representative PTAT cards was approved by the supervisory team of clinical practitioners who make use of the PTAT in their own clinical practice.

Although Rater B did not exhaustively include all possible needs and presses and themes and ending, everything that she noted were found in my analysis. I have also listed divergences and parallelisms among the 42 stories for the 6 children. A *major divergence* was defined as an analysis that is diametrically opposed to what the researcher noted down by way of analysis (totally opposite to how the characters are feeling and thinking and major difference in the interpretation of the narratives). *Minor divergence* was defined as the analysis having minor differences by way of wording but essentially and thematically alike. Out of the 42 stories, there were no indications of a *major divergence* for themes, needs, presses, and endings. In 39 of the 42 cards, Rater B and I had identical interpretations of the story endings as well as citations for themes and storylines. The generated themes were discussed with Rater B.

Results and Discussion

The narrative themes include the following: (a) Family Relationships, (b) Perception on School and Intelligence, (c) Predominant Characterization of Heroes, (d) Peer Relationships, and (e) Concerns Related to God and Spirituality. Points of divergence between the private and public school stories are explored.

It was possible to obtain the exact number of citations per theme through the use of the qualitative software nVIVO 7.0. These identified themes were grounded on the actual stories created by the children. Under the theme of Family Relationships, there were narratives indicating predominantly positive family connections. There were also indications of marital discord and problems within the family in their narratives, particularly among children who are coming from single-parent households. Portrayal of mothers and fathers as well as the strong presence of extended family and kin were likewise evident in the tales.

The children's views on school and their thoughts regarding its importance could be gleaned from their stories, and a separate category was created to document this. Another

major category was created to highlight how the children characterize their heroes in their tales, and a separate category showed how the gifted children characterize peer relationships in their stories. Although there were themes showing good belongingness with a peer group, there were also indications of peer rejection. The last category pertains to spiritual concerns as was seen through the gifted children's stories. Their views about God and about death were evident in the stories they told.

Family Relationships

The "highest value in Filipino culture" is said to be the importance placed on family and kin relationships and is even touted to be the "core of all social, cultural, and economic activity" (Quisumbing, 1963, as cited in Church, 1987, p. 276). It is not surprising then that narratives related to the family was dominant among the 22 gifted respondents. Out of the 484 stories, 107 citations were referring to the strong sense of togetherness felt among families in the stories (56 of which came from the private school students—showing good representativeness across private and public school settings). Because most of the narratives focused on family relationships, portrayal of mothers and fathers as well as the strong presence of extended family (aunts, uncles, grandparents) were discerned in their tales. Table 3 highlights the number of citations for this category as well as facilitates a comparison between the private and public school groups.

In the children's stories, there were families eating out or having meals together, birthdays being celebrated, and trips made to the park, among others. There were also indications of parent and child reading stories to and playing with each other, taking family vacations, and giving presents to each other. One story that would best represent such beautiful togetherness shared from within the family would be a fragment of 8-year-old Ysabella's story in Card 12 (quoted verbatim because the story was narrated in English):

Meanwhile, in the fields, while Mr. Gardner was working, Mrs. Gardner stopped to bring him a cold glass of water. Since their house was only a short walk away from the fields, Mrs. Gardner didn't find it hard to take a nice cold glass of water to her husband every afternoon. In the quiet household, while everyone was doing their work, Mrs. Gardner after doing her knitting, when she finished knitting early, would sit back and relax while reading a book. She thought that if their family could keep up this nice happy household, they would be able to save some money since the girls were too old for dolls and other toys, and the little boy Ned, had already started Nursery, didn't want too much toys either. And Mr. Gardner didn't need new shirts, they could save a lot. And maybe buy a better house with a bigger barn which would be cement. Everyday, it was

Table 3. Comparison of Narrative Themes Pertaining to Family Relationships

Themes Evident in the PTAT Narratives	Private School	Public School	Total No. of Citations
Strong sense of togetherness felt among families	56	51	107
Presence of family discord	15	30	45
Close mother-child relationship	20	30	50
Mother as caretaker of home and children	9	8	17
Close father-child relationship	10	26	36
Rejecting and irresponsible fathers	0	8	8
Father as provider for the home	4	11	15
Grandparents as primary caregivers of children	2	5	7
Aunts and uncles providing financial support to family	0	2	2
Cohabitation with extended family	0	6	6
Children as providing for parents financially in the future	1	14	15
Eldest sibling providing for younger siblings	2	5	7

Note: PTAT = Philippine Thematic Apperception Test.

like that, with nothing going wrong. Their family was healthy and Mr. Gardner's crops were good, Annie and Sally's grades were getting higher every quarter. Things were very much fine, finer than the family expected. So they continued this happy life. Until each of them grew old. And until now, that brown house was still on the hill, untouched with the portraits of the family all smiling together. And when you just take a look at the photo, you can easily tell how cheerful the family was.

Although there were also citations referring to rejection and abandonment by family members, such as leaving home (eight citations, all coming from the public school group), or being asked to leave home, these were comparatively fewer to those that indicated happier moments spent in togetherness. There were also 45 citations of stories (15 coming from the private school group) where there was discord in the family, such as children being punished, siblings fighting over a toy, or members of the family not liking each other. Whereas the private school group related heroes being reprimanded by family members for some misbehavior, the stories made by the public school group are of a different quality altogether, such as parents squabbling over who among them would go abroad to make their family's life better or family members getting on each other's nerves because they all live in the same small house. Cohabitation with extended family has six citations—all coming from the public school setting (see Table 3).

Portrayal of Parents

Mothers were generally portrayed as having a close relationship with their children (50 citations, 30 coming from the public school setting). Mothers were described as being happy with and proud of their children's accomplishment or good behavior and being pleased with their children's thoughtfulness.

Fathers were similarly described as sharing a close relationship with their children (36 citations, 26 coming from the public school setting). Fathers were portrayed to be active

in attending school functions, in providing advice or comfort to their children, showing pride and happiness over their children's accomplishments, and bringing their children to restaurants for a treat. However, there were also narratives indicating fathers who abandoned their children or who do not wish to provide for their family's needs (8 citations, all coming from the public school setting). It was interesting to note that almost all the children (except for one) who made such stories came from nonintact homes. A case in point would be 8-year-old Lynne, who was abandoned by her father before her birth. Her narrative in Cards 3 and 5 demonstrated a negative perception of fathers:

He became a beggar now because he is lazy. He didn't work, he just made his child and his wife work for him. Before, all he did was to drink liquor and gamble. (8-year-old Lynne's story in Card 3)

His father *po* is always gambling and drinking liquor. (8-year-old Lynne's story in Card 5)

Yet despite this, glimpses of the child's resiliency could be noted as seen in parts of Lynne's narrative in Card 12, which appeared more like her own life story (translated in English):

Before we used to live in a hut like this, with a lot of grass. We got our vegetables and rice from our fields. Now, we don't live there anymore. We went to Manila so that my *nanay* could work and I could go to school. I am just lucky that even if I have no more *tatay*, I have a *nanay* who loves me and takes care of me.

Strong Presence of Extended Family Indicated

There were narratives where the grandparents acted as the primary caregivers of the children while the parents were working (either abroad or locally), left home, or passed away (7 citations, 2 coming from the private school setting). There

were also indications of grandparents who simply doted on their grandchildren (as was evident in the private school narratives) as opposed to tales where the family has difficulty making ends meet (as was shown in the public school stories). There were also citations of aunts and uncles who provided financial support for their nieces and nephews (2 in all, coming from the public school setting).

The very strong sense of family obligation, typical of most Filipino households, was observed with narratives containing 15 citations of children working to help their families financially (14 coming from the public school group). Four-year-old Jaycee from a public school talked about a child protagonist in Card 9 who decided to sell his toys in order to help his family financially. Five-year-old Jayjay told a story about a boy who performed some errands in another house to earn extra money to give to his parents.

Perception on School and Intelligence

The children's perception on school and their motivations for studying hard varied depending on whether they come from a private school setting or a public school setting. In the former, doing their homework seemed to be matter-of-fact and natural. School work appeared to be part of their routine, or simply what was expected of them as students. There were no characters who actively asked them to do their school work; rather, they do it of their own volition. An illustration would be Pink Princess' story in the Blank Card (13) (story was related in English and copied verbatim):

There are four people there because there are two sons, and then there's a mommy and a daddy. They're doing their chores in the house, because they're done with their homework, the kids are done with their homework (Q: how are they feeling?) they're very happy. And then they rest. Then the kids watch a little TV, then they rest also.

For the public school group, the motivation to study was more goal-directed. The primary objective was to help their families in the future either by getting into a good college or transferring to a better school. The pragmatic view of education as a means to an end—as a means for survival and to make the family's financial state a little better—was keenly evident in the public school children's narratives. For the private school group, the primary objective was the love for learning. Although there were also goal-directed intentions, it was not so much the responsibility of providing a better future for the entire family but rather to help society in general or to enrich one's being in particular. Themes related to school and intelligence are listed in Table 4.

Predominant Characterization of Heroes

There were 117 citations of heroes who were dominant or actively controlled their environment through their determination

Table 4. Comparison of Narrative Themes Related to School and Intelligence

Themes Related to School and Intelligence	Private	Public	Total No. of Citations
Importance of studying hard	7	9	16
Education as the key to a better life	0	6	6

or desire (65 of these citations came from the private school setting; Table 5).

However there were almost an equal number of citations referring to submission to natural forces. This may be attributed to the *bahala na* mentality of most Filipinos, which is loosely translated as *fatalism* in English. However, as Salazar (1982) pointed out, *bahala na* does not mean giving up or absolving one's self of responsibility through an overreliance on mysticism. Rather, the person assumes responsibility for what is happening and leaves the rest to chance or God.

Difference Between Private and Public School Heroes

There were also several dimensions wherein the portrayal of the heroes between the public and private school groups diverged as seen in the following subthemes.

On sensuous impressions. Among the private school children, their narratives highlighted details about their surroundings, the scenery (19 citations), the weather (24), and the comfort afforded by objects (such as their lounging in their own beds or embracing their pillows, 12 citations). The heroes also seemed to take great delight in just taking time out to smell the flowers, play in the fields, run in the grass, and bask in the sun—something that was clearly lacking in the public school narratives. An illustration of such a narrative could be found in parts of Ysabella's story in Card 13, the blank card (quoted verbatim):

So the picture is, there's a sun here, this is sort of like a poem. The sky is blue, then there's grass all around with sunflowers all popping out. The poem is . . . the sun is shining warm and bright. It's so warm it makes me feel as if everything is all right. With the birds chirping and the wind blowing gently, blowing my hair here and there. The water in the pond is as blue as the sky. The fishes are jumping all around in a circle. The children are playing on the edge of the lake. And since it's summer they like to play there all day. The flowers would bloom all around. There are sunflowers everywhere you look. Their long pretty petals shining like the sun. At night, in the evening, there's a cool breeze with the full moon shining down on . . . the moon makes my face look pale in the dark, and I see my reflection on the lake.

Most of the other narratives indicated a quiet joy in solitude, happiness in relishing one's meal, or simply gazing out into

Table 5. Predominant Characterization of Heroes

Narrative Themes	Private School	Public School	Total No. of Citations
Dominant heroes actively controlling the environment	65	52	117
Heroes who are meek, passive, and submissive	44	67	111
Sensuous impressions			
Inclusion of details about the scenery	19	0	19
Inclusion of details about the weather	24	0	24
General degree of comfort (beds, pillows)	12	0	12

the open and appreciating the view. For the public school group, given their strikingly different realities, their concerns were found to be more down to earth and closely related to life's basic necessities as could be found in the next subtheme.

Degree of comfort versus deprivation. There were strikingly different interpretations on similar cards shown to the children depending on their background. A case in point would be the narratives created by the children in Card 3, which showed a man wearing tattered clothing and slumped on the floor:

The man is exercising and feeling tired. He's practicing to be strong for a sports club 'cause he wants to win. And he's ready and soon he is ready to go. The end is time for baseball. He's done jogging, racing, the end. (Qfeel); and now he is done in all the sports and he's feeling tired again. He's starting to exercise again, coz he's a sports man. (6-year-ole Jaydee in Card 3; no translation needed)

One day *po*, this person *po*, is having a hard time with himself and is begging for money so he can eat. But no one was giving him money, so his stomach was aching, and he felt very sad, and he could not do anything with himself, except cry. The ending *po* is that he died because he had no more food to eat and he was so hungry . . . Maybe when he was a child, he didn't study hard that's why he wasn't able to get a good job, and that's what happened to him. (8-year-ole Frank in Card 3; no translation needed)

As could be clearly seen, the stories were powerful reflections of the children's life experiences and sensitively depicted the situations they were going through despite their tender ages. It was particularly moving to note the degree of comfort and opportunities provided to the private school children, which they take as matter of fact. For the gifted children from the public school setting, however, these are mere dreams that they wish to attain through education and hard work.

Peer Relationships

There were 23 citations (17 coming from the private school group) that indicated a great sense of belongingness with peers from among the major characters in the story (Table 6).

The characterization of time spent with friends as depicted by the private school group differ qualitatively once again with the public school group. There was a degree of carefree-like enjoyment of time spent with peers from the private school setting, with mention of parks and playgrounds (as could be found in the narrative of 9-year-old Gabriella in Card 13), playing with balloons (as could be found in the story of 5-year-old JM), or just happily climbing trees as noted by Ysabella's story in Card 19. With the public school group, Lynne talked about the "stolen time" spent with friends, away from her chores and responsibilities at home.

There were also a few references made with regard to characters who were teased by their friends (three citations, all coming from the public school setting) and experiences of being bullied by friends or having classmates who were unruly (five citations, again all coming from the public school group). There were also narratives of heroes having no peer group at all (five citations, two coming from the private school group). A possible explanation for the larger number of references made to bullies by the public school group is the fact that they are more exposed to greater diversity within the school and the fact that they have 40 to 65 children inside the classroom.

Concerns Related to God and Spirituality

There were clear references to the supremacy of God's power and his omnipotence (see Table 7).

For the private school group, Ysabella talked about the constant presence of God despite our not being able to see Him as was noted in her story in Card 18: "nobody is watching, but God is always there, and He can see them." Nine-year-old Jody, on the other hand, talked about God as a creator of everything natural "except artificial" in Card 7. There were also clear references to God helping out those who help themselves, particularly those who were asking for forgiveness or redemption from past misdeeds committed. Hence, the perception of a forgiving God who provides solace and comfort to those who need it was very evident in the narratives of the gifted children, regardless of whether they come from the private or the public school setting.

With regard to the gifted children's conception on death, apart from the strong bereavement felt by characters whose family members or close friends died (or the need to avenge

Table 6. Narrative themes concerning peer interactions

Narrative Themes	Private School	Public School	Total No. of Citations
Sense of belongingness with peers	17	6	23
Friends providing support	2	7	9
Being teased by friends	0	3	3
Presence of unruly classmates	0	5	5
Having no peer group (friends)	2	3	5

Table 7. Narrative Themes Concerning God and Spirituality Concerns

Narrative Themes	Private School	Public School	Total No. Citations
Supremacy of God's power	4	3	7
Forgiving and helpful God	1	1	2
Death as a key to afterlife	2	2	4

family members who died tragically or unjustly), as well as the thought of a life after death (seeing family members in heaven), there was only a fleeting mention of how death was conceptualized. Mostly the ideations were tinged with the surreal or the magical with the marked presence of angels or ghosts or family members who had already died. Death was generally perceived as a chance to be reunited with departed loved ones. It was assumed that one's life here was not the end but a preparation for that which would come in the after life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This article was written to expand cross-cultural perspective on the socio-affective needs of gifted children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The primary goal of this article was to give voice to gifted children who are coming from culturally and linguistically different realities and allow them to express their innermost thoughts and feelings through the stories they tell. It is also meant to promote greater cross-cultural awareness of how issues related to socio-emotional domains may vary between and within cultures.

Since the 1965 Immigration act, 40% of the documented immigration to the United States is said to have come from Asia with the Philippines being the largest source, comprising nearly a quarter of the total Asian immigration and the second largest source of all immigration, next only to Mexico (Espiritu, 2003). Although recent literature addresses cross-cultural differences (Nokelainen, Tirri, & Campbell, 2004; Rostan, Pariser, & Gruber, 2002) and its impact on parental involvement in the child's cognitive development and eventual career choices (Alva, 1993; Sy, Rowley, & Schulenberg, 2007; Tang, 2002; Verna & Campbell, 1998), there is a tendency to lump all non-Whites together into the Asian or Southeast Asian or Pacific Islander category (Posadas, 1999),

notwithstanding the stark contrasts between these multiple subgroups, leading most researchers to conclude the necessity for "ethnic-specific research" (Agbayani-Siewert, 2004; Alva, 1993; Gloria & Ho, 2003; Yang, 2004).

Moreover, Filipinos who were initially found to be underrepresented in gifted programs in the United States are now believed to be overrepresented (Saccuzzo & Johnson, 1995). Looking closely at the data presented by Kitano and Dijosia (2002), which indicated the percentage of district students certified as gifted by APA subgroup, there were 306 certified Filipino students (out of 1,093 tested) identified to be gifted—the largest number when compared with Chinese, Japanese, Asian Indian, Cambodian, and other subgroups. Yet despite the figures, the socio-emotional and learning needs of gifted Filipino learners are yet to be found in the literature.

The Philippines is a huge country with 7,100 islands. The narratives clearly indicated that even among these 22 children who came largely from urban localities (Quezon City and Manila), clear diversity could already be discerned on how they view the world and express their ideas and emotions, depending on which contextual realities they are coming from.

What was also striking was the remarkable resilience of gifted children from public schools who were raised in impoverished conditions—a reality that was clearly reflected in their stories. The capacity to transcend one's present state and the motivation to strive harder and overcome one's present state through hard work as manifested in "studying hard" and "doing one's assignments" were recurring themes. The private school children, on the other hand, revealed vivid flights of fancy and imagination in their narratives. This is a clear demonstration of their keen appreciation of their surroundings. The importance and salience of family life among the gifted Filipino children, regardless of the economic background they came from, was also prominent. This echoes

what has continually been said about Filipino families being very closely knit (Dunn, Milgram, & Price, 1993; Wong-Fillard & Bustos-Orosa, 2007). Because gifted children are said to be endowed with overexcitabilities (O'Connor, 2002) and heightened multifaceted sensitivities (Mendaglio, 2003), this strong sense of family obligation (as well as the strong presence of extended family), as could be discerned in the narratives of the gifted children, may be more keenly felt and experienced. Counselors and educators should exercise sensitivity in the manner in which they motivate and nurture their gifted students' talents because their need for achievement may be linked to a culturally approved need to please their parents or to make their families proud of them. The divergences in the narratives clearly point toward caution in perceiving children who come from the same ethnic background as homogenous. This has clear implications for educators, counselors, and clinicians who may be dealing with the Filipino community in their gifted programs.

Moreover, the narratives indicated the remarkable ability of culturally appropriate projective measures such as the PTAT to elicit rich responses and imagery from the gifted children who were very candid in their sharing. The use of such instruments as a window to the child's socio-affective concerns should be considered further by clinicians, practitioners, and counselors.

Appendix A

Instructions Given for the PTAT

Hello (name). We are now going to do something different.¹ This is a test of imagination. I am going to show you some cards, one at a time. Your task is to tell me what the story in the card is. Tell me what happened before in the picture, describe what is happening at the moment, and what will happen in the future. So you are to tell me the past, present, and the future of this story. Tell me what the characters in the story are thinking and feeling and I will type down what you say. Imagine that I am your secretary and you are the storyteller. There are no right or wrong answers here. So just tell me what your stories are as they come to you.

Appendix B

Description of the Seven PTAT Cards for Interrater Reliability

- Card 2 shows a picture of an adult and a child—commonly seen as depicting parent–child interactions.
- Card 6FM shows an image of a young lady and two young men behind her—commonly seen as depicting peer relationships.
- Card 7 shows an image of a high-ceilinged infrastructure—commonly seen as a church. This is meant to represent

the children's spirituality issues (thoughts about religion and God).

Card 10 shows a picture of a young child sitting on the lap of an old lady while an old man offers the child a treat. The shadows of two people (male and female) could be seen in the background. This picture is meant to depict relationships with extended family.

Card 12 shows a picture of a *nipa* hut without any people on it, requiring the children to introduce their own set of characters.

Card 13 is the blank card.

Card 16 shows a picture of a woman fixing something on the bed while a boy plays with something on the floor—commonly seen as depicting parent–child interactions.

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Note

1. Prior to the administration of the PTAT, the WISC-R was initially administered to the gifted children during a different session/date.

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Bio

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