

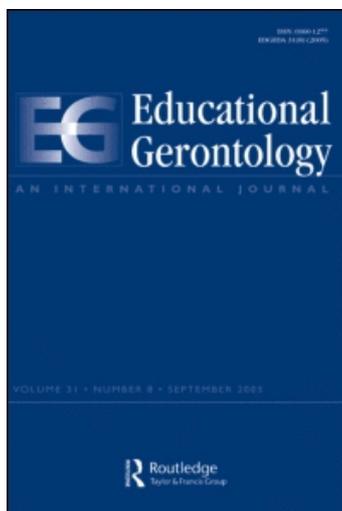
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The Development of Educational Gerontology in Taiwan: An Interpretive and Critical Perspective

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GERONTOLOGY IN TAIWAN: AN INTERPRETIVE AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Educational gerontology is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon. Taiwan, a small island in the western Pacific Ocean, has responded to its aging population with the development of the studies and practices of educational gerontology. This study, first, traces the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan, based on Peterson's definition and perspective of educational gerontology. Second, the researcher identifies the factors that influenced the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan. Finally, further discussion and recommendations regarding the studies and practices of educational gerontology in Taiwan are made in order to facilitate its future development.

THE DEFINITION OF EDUCATIONAL GERONTOLOGY

The first use of the term *educational gerontology* was probably at the University of Michigan in 1970 (Peterson, 1976, p. 61; Glendenning, 1985, p. 32). According to Glendenning (2000, p. 77), many attempts have been made to define the term over the years: Peterson in 1976, Agruso in 1978, Sherron and Lumsden in 1978, and Peterson again in 1980. Glendenning also contributed to the definition of educational gerontology from the British perspective in 1985 and 1987, and so did Thornton in 1992 from the Canadian perspective.

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However, Glendenning's and Thornton's definitions of educational gerontology were derived from Peterson's, which is much clearer, more poignant, and, therefore, lays the basic framework for all the other definitions.

According to Peterson's definition, educational gerontology, developed at the interface of adult education and social gerontology, has three aspects: "education for older people" (EOP), "education about aging" (EA), and "education of professionals and paraprofessionals" (EPP). These three aspects could be further divided into two categories of functions: "study" and "practice." According to Peterson's definition, educational gerontology includes six basic elements, namely, *Instructional Gerontology (IG)*, *Senior Adult Education (SAE)*, *Social Gerontology (SG)*, *Advocacy Gerontology (AG)*, *Gerontology Education (GE)*, and *Professional Gerontology (PG)* (Peterson 1976, pp. 62–66; 1980, pp. 68–69).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GERONTOLOGY IN TAIWAN

In comparison with the development and application of educational gerontology in the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), and Canada, Taiwan is a latecomer. This section will trace the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan by means of Peterson's definition and the perspective of educational gerontology. Briefly speaking, the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan can be categorized into three stages separated by two major events. First of all, two Graduate Institutes of Adult Education (GIAE) were established and focused on the studies and practices of adult and continuing education at the National Chung Cheng University (NCCU) and the National Kaohsiung Normal University (NKNU), both in 1993. Although the studies and practices of educational gerontology were not highlighted in the early beginning of these two GIAEs, some scholars in these two graduate programs took the initiative in doing research on educational gerontology and, therefore, triggered the attention of academia in regard to the development of educational gerontology at the same time. Ten years later in 2003, the Graduate Institute of Educational Gerontology (GIEG), exclusively focused on the studies and practices of educational gerontology, was established at NCCU and marked a new epoch in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan. The studies and practices of educational gerontology in Taiwan have mushroomed ever since. Based on these two important events,

the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan could be categorized into the following three stages:

Initial Stage: Before 1993

Little attention was given to the development of educational gerontology before 1993, so the three aspects of educational gerontology defined by Peterson, including EOP, EA and EPP, were not comprehensively developed. Only the first aspect of educational gerontology, EOP, including IG and SAE, was initially developed during this period of time. The following section discusses its details.

Instructional Gerontology

Educational scholars and researchers in Taiwan paid most of their attention to the development of general education such as school education, higher education, educational policies, etc. Therefore, few studies or projects were focused on adult education or educational gerontology before 1993. In addition, there were no academic programs concentrating on the studies of adult education or educational gerontology among the universities. In such a difficult situation, some scholars from different fields of education interested in adult education or educational gerontology joined together to organize academic associations. Their purpose was to discuss and advocate the importance of adult education or educational gerontology. For example, the Association of Community Education (ACE) was founded in 1982, and the Association of Adult Education (AAE) in 1990. The main purpose of their establishment was to facilitate the development of community education and adult education in Taiwan. They also put some emphasis on the study of EOP (IG) because of the population increase of older people. Consequently, both associations not only focused on the study of community education and adult education, but also hosted conferences and published books regarding the development of IG. For instance, the ACE published a book entitled *Education for the elderly in the community* in 1984, and the AAE another book by twelve scholars entitled *Education for Older Adults* in 1991. The latter one contained issues such as (a) educational desires of older people, (b) motivations of older learners, (c) changes of intelligence, (c) effectiveness of various instructional methods, and (e) program models in the education of the elderly, etc. As a result, the development of IG in this stage mainly relied on a few scholars' individual interest or concern, with no specific organizations dedicated to IG at that time.

Senior Adult Education

As for the practice of EOP (SAE), Taiwan has responded to the educational needs of its aging population with the development of its own version of the University of the Third Age (U3A). People in Taiwan never used the title U3A, but called it the University for Older Adults (UOA) instead. According to Huang (2005), prior to the establishment of the first UOA in Taiwan, the Taipei Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) founded a learning organization called Evergreen Club for older people in 1978. Based on the experience of the Evergreen Club, the first UOA in Taiwan was founded by the Social Affairs Bureau of Kaohsiung City Government in 1982. According to Pai (1994), the idea of UOA in Kaohsiung came from various predecessors, including the successful experience of Evergreen Club, the community colleges in America and Canada, the University for the Aged in Japan, and the French U3A. Six months after the establishment of Kaohsiung UOA, Taipei UOA was founded by the Social Affairs Bureau of Taipei City Government in 1983, and became the second UOA in Taiwan. The striking achievement of both Taipei and Kaohsiung UOAs set examples for many more to be established by other local governments in Taiwan, and within a decade before 1993 there were a total of about 151 UOAs founded. Based on the above description, it is interesting to find that the practice of EOP (SAE) was developed much earlier than the study of EOP (IG), and the development of EOP was faster than that of EA and EPP.

Formative Stage: 1993 to 2003

Two significant events happened in 1993. First of all, as mentioned above, it was not until 1993 that two GIAEs were respectively established at NCCU and NKNU. The establishment of these two GIAEs ushered in a new period of the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan, even though their main purpose was not focused on it. Second, more than 7% of the population in Taiwan reached 65 years old or above in 1993. This percentage approximated that of the industrialized nations in the world and, thus, propelled Taiwan into the *aging society*. Owing to these two events, more scholars, experts, and practitioners started involving themselves in the development of educational gerontology. Consequently, more attention has been given to the study and practice of educational gerontology since 1993. However, the three aspects of educational gerontology, including EOP, EA and EPP, were not yet fully developed in Taiwan during this period of time. For example, the development of EA (including

SG and AG) and GE was still not valued yet in this stage. Therefore, only half of the six elements of educational gerontology are discussed in the following section.

Instructional Gerontology

The development of IG, as mentioned above, mainly relied on some scholars' individual interest or concern, and there was no specific organization exclusively focused on IG in the above stage. However, with the establishment of GIAEs and the increase of the aging population, there were more conferences and publications in the development of IG. For example, National Taiwan Normal University hosted the International Conference about Education for Older People in 1993, and most importantly, Professor David Peterson was invited as the keynote speaker. In addition, educational scholars from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan were invited in 1995 by the AAE and the GIAE at NCCU to give talks and presentations about education for older people in these individual areas. Furthermore, Professor Pei-Tsuen Tsai at NKNU published a book entitled *The learning and career development of older people* in 1996. In addition to conferences and publications, more theses related to the study of EOP (IG) were done because of the establishment of GIAEs. Besides, the two GIAEs began offering PhD programs in 1998 and 1999, respectively; consequently, this enhanced the number of dissertations at the doctoral level. As a result, the first doctoral dissertation on the study of EOP (IG) in Taiwan was completed by Dr. Li-Hui Lin in 2001. Compared with the initial stage, Taiwan made great progress in the development of IG in this formative stage. Two GIAEs joined their efforts to the studies of IG, and academic development no longer merely depended on the individual scholar's interest.

Senior Adult Education

As mentioned above, there were about 151 UOAs in Taiwan before 1993, a remarkable achievement of the development of SAE. However, with the rapid increase of the aging population afterwards, the pressure of providing older people with both leisure and educational activities forced the central and local governments in Taiwan to intervene actively in this public issue. For example, Dr. Kuo, the newly-appointed Minister of Education in 1993, stated that "from now on, workers, housewives, and older adults are the main objects of adult education" (Lin, 1995, p. 133). Furthermore, the white paper entitled *Heading for a learning society* was announced by the Ministry of Education in 1998, and the same year was also proclaimed the Lifelong Learning Year in Taiwan. Due to the extensive advocacy of lifelong education and learning in later life, many local authorities,

institutions, organizations, associations, and charities aimed to set up UOAs to enrich the lives of older adults. According to Huang (2005), there were about 317 UOAs in Taiwan in 2001, which doubled the amount in the initial stage. Hence, the leisure and educational activities for older people were apparently in great demand in this stage.

Professional Gerontology

No professional courses on educational gerontology were offered by colleges or universities before 1993 in Taiwan. After the establishment of two GIAEs in 1993, more courses on educational gerontology were offered to adult educators to equip them with knowledge and skills about learning in later life. For example, Adult Development and Aging was offered by the GIAEs at NCCU and NKNU in 1993, and Educational Gerontology for PhD students was offered by NCCU in 1999. Then, Dr. Lin, the first PhD in educational gerontology in Taiwan, offered a course named Learning in Later Life at Hsuan Chuang University in 2002. In addition to formal courses in colleges and universities, in 1997 Professor Fu-Shun Huang at NCCU offered a series of in-service courses aiming at training participants to be more professional and efficient. The courses included Psychology of Older People, Learning in Later Life, and Program Planning. Most participants were administrators of informal educational institutions, foundations, museums, libraries, UOAs, or school teachers. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the development of PG in Taiwan was still limited in this stage, with only two or three related courses offered in universities or colleges. The reason why the importance of PG was not adequately stressed in this stage is that the development of PG was not the main purpose of the GIAEs, which mainly attempted to train students to be professional adult educators or researchers. That is to say, the courses or training on PG were not offered extensively by the graduate programs. Thus, the development of PG still depended on individual scholar's interest or concern, and it made slow progress in Taiwan before 2003.

Expansive Stage: 2003–Present

Three important events happened around 2003 in Taiwan: the GIEG was established at NCCU in 2003; the Act of Lifelong Learning officially passed in 2002; and most important of all, the announcement in 2006 of a new educational white paper entitled *Toward to aged society: Policies on education for older people* by the Ministry of Education. These important events made remarkable advances

in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan and motivated the studies and practices of educational gerontology after 2003. In this stage, each of the six elements of educational gerontology was emphasized in Taiwan, with the exception of the study of EPP (GE). The other five elements are discussed in detail in the following section.

Instructional Gerontology

The establishment of the GIEG in 2003 demonstrated the importance of IG. More and more attention was given to the development of IG by the publication of books, government research projects, and supervision of students' theses. First, professor Fu-Shun Huang published three books entitled *Learning in later life* in 2004, *International educational gerontology: A comparative study* in 2007, and *Education for older people* in 2008. Second, the GIEG acquired funding from the Ministry of Education and the National Science Council in Taiwan for government projects including The Study of the Educational Needs of Taiwanese Older People, The Educational Policies for Older People in Taiwan, etc. Finally, as for the supervision of students' theses, the GIEG annually recruits 15 students to do master's research. And due to the prestigious academic reputation of NCCU, many students register for the entrance examination of the GIEG every year in order to be qualified to do master research at this university. More than 100 master's theses have been completed at GIEG since 2003. Thus, the impact of these master's studies on the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan is important and contributive.

Besides, resulting from the announcement of the act and white paper, more people became concerned about the studies and practices of educational gerontology, and the demand for conferences on educational gerontology increased significantly. Under such circumstances, more conferences and seminars were hosted by colleges and universities in this expanding stage. The Ministry of Education hosted an international conference in 2007 and invited speakers from the Beth Johnson Foundation in the UK, the Human Services Department of the City of Fremont in the USA, the Setagaya Lifelong Learning College in Japan, the Singapore Action Group of Elders, the Senior Citizens' Association of Melaka in Malaysia, and the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement in the USA. Speakers from these organizations shared their knowledge and experiences about the studies and practices of educational gerontology. Two decades ago in the initial stage, the development of IG depended mainly on the interest or concern of individual scholars, but now the importance

of IG was valued by the GIEG and the Ministry of Education, and more emphasis was placed on its development.

Senior Adult Education

The 2006 white paper was composed of 11 action plans mainly focused on the development of educational gerontology. It, therefore, fostered favorable conditions for the development of the practice of EOP (SAE) in Taiwan. The eighth action plan, in particular, was chiefly concerned with providing learning activities for older people and aimed to fulfill the One Town, One LRCAE (Learning Resource Center for Active Elderly) policy proposed by the Ministry of Education. Under this policy, 368 LRCAEs would be founded within the following four years to encourage more elderly people in the communities to participate in the learning activities, and each LRCAE would be funded US\$15,151 annually. In the first year of 2008, 104 LRCAEs were founded by the Ministry of Education, many located in community centers, libraries, elderly centers, or schools. Elementary and secondary schools were also encouraged by local educational authorities to transform their classrooms—vacant owing to the declining birth rate—into LRCAEs. About 20 schools responded to this policy.

From the above discussion, it is evident that SAE in Taiwan has achieved remarkable development after 2003. As mentioned in the section on the formative stage, there were about 317 UOAs in Taiwan in 2001, and seven years later 105 LRCAEs were added. As a result, learning activities for older people in Taiwan have been provided by two different models since 2008—the UOAs by the social service section of the Ministry of the Interior and the LRCAEs by the educational section of the Ministry of Education. The former is categorized as a leisure-oriented approach; the latter is education-oriented. As a matter of fact, the founding model and operation system of both UOAs and LRCAEs are similar, though the latter claimed that their learning activities were based on the educational philosophy and theory fundamentally different from that of the former model. Their similarity can be explained by the fact that both are funded and under control of local governments and could be grouped into “institution-driven” organizations defined by Young (1992, p. 25). Due to the similarity between these two models, many scholars and experts recognized the necessity to integrate these two models into one to avoid wasting resources.

Social Gerontology

Social Gerontology as defined by Peterson (1980, p. 72) includes “roles of older people in contemporary society, stereotypes and

myths about aging and older people that exist, attitudes and perceptions about aging generally held, program models for changing attitudes and perceptions, use of the mass media to help educate people about growing old.” Little attention was given to these issues of SG in Taiwan, so not too much research was done on SG by scholars in Taiwan before 2003. However, with the aging population reaching 10% in 2006, the study of EA (SG) has been gradually valued in Taiwan. For instance, Professor Yean Tsai and Professor Kuo-Jen Tsang at National Chengchi University did a study entitled *The Influence of Symbolic Realism in New Media upon the Elderly in Constructing Their Self Image and Social Role* in 2006. They also ran a research group called Gerontology & Communication, which made a great contribution to the understanding of the condition of older people in contemporary society. As a result of these efforts, more studies on mass media and older people could be undertaken. In addition, Dr. Chin-Shan Huang at the GIEG NCCU put emphasis on SG from the educational perspective and gained funding from the National Science Council for two projects entitled *A Content Analysis of Aging Education in the Elementary and Secondary School Textbooks* in 2006 and *A Study of Elementary and Secondary Teachers’ and Students’ Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavior Intention Toward Aging* in 2008. From the above description, it is clear that due to the increase of the aging population, conditions became more favorable for the development of the study of EA (SG); but the development still depended on some scholars’ individual interest or concern, which was similar to the development of IG in the initial stage. Therefore, it can be concluded that the initial development of educational gerontology was mainly based on some scholars’ advocacy, which resulted in more studies and the increased practice of educational gerontology in Taiwan.

Advocacy Gerontology

No emphasis was put on the practices of EA (AG) in Taiwan before 2003. It was not until 2006 that the announcement of the white paper led to a remarkable growth of AG. Most importantly, the sixth action plan in the white paper pointed out that the importance of aging education and intergenerational program should be stressed in schools, so students could be equipped with adequate knowledge about and positive attitudes towards aging and the elderly. In response to the white paper, a new proposal to run the first intergenerational program for older people and school children was formulated by the Ministry of Education and Shin-Tai Elementary School in Sin-Jhuang City. The proposal aimed to renovate and transform vacant

school classrooms into toy clinics where students could have their toys repaired. The first Toy Clinic Shop in Taiwan was established in March, 2006 at Shin-Tai Elementary School. According to Hong, Hwang, Liang, and Chang (2008), the Toy Clinic Shop provided training for the elderly to become *toy doctors*. By means of repairing children's toys, these senior citizens found a way to contribute their wisdom and life experience to society as well as interact and communicate with the younger generation. As a result, two different generations had the opportunity to share and learn with each other through the program, apparently an excellent example of an intergenerational program in Taiwan. In addition, more officials at the Ministry of Education and local educational authorities became aware of the importance of intergenerational programs and aging education, and the first Grandparents' Week was launched on the first week of October in 2008 by the Ministry of Education. Encouraged by the Ministry of Education, many elementary and secondary schools participated in this activity. From the above description, it is evident that most of the practices of educational gerontology, such as SAE and AG, have been organized and controlled by the central or local governments. This is the unique characteristic of the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan.

Professional Gerontology

The practice of EPP (PG) was initially developed in the formative stage, though its importance was not stressed at that time. Only two or three courses related to educational gerontology, such as Adult Development and Aging and Learning in Later Life, were offered by the GIAEs. However, with the population and problems of older adults ever increasing in Taiwan, more emphasis was put on the development of PG at this stage. The Ministry of Education approved the establishment of several new departments related to gerontology in colleges or universities, such as the Department of Senior Citizen Service Management at Ming Hsin University of Science and Technology in 2001, the GIEG at NCCU and the Department of Applied Gerontology at Toko University in 2003, the Department of Gerontological Service and Management at Mei-Ho Institute of Technology in 2004, the Graduate Institute of Gerontic Technology and Service Management at Nan Kai University of Technology in 2005, and the Graduate Institute of Gerontology at National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) in 2006. The establishment of these departments and graduate institutes at colleges or universities provided clear evidence that the practices and studies of gerontology and educational gerontology were highlighted in Taiwan. The issues of learning in later

life have also been addressed among these departments and graduate institutes, and the conditions for the development of PG in Taiwan have become more favorable. Among these departments and graduate institutes, the establishment of GIEG at NCCU is the most noteworthy and contributive to the development of PG because its main purpose is to educate and train professional educational gerontologists who will provide learning services to older adults. Consequently, courses such as Psychology of Aging, Social Gerontology, Educational Gerontology, etc. are offered at GIEG for students from diverse backgrounds including nurses, teachers, social workers, and foundation directors.

In addition to formal courses in the colleges or universities, there were also in-service training courses offered to adult educators and educational gerontologists from different organizations and foundations such as UOAs and community colleges. The in-service training courses attempted to provide those educational workers with the latest research results of IG in Taiwan so they could offer more professional services to older adults. For example, in 2007, GIEG at NCCU hosted workshops at four different areas in Taiwan under the coordination of Professor Meng-Ching Hu and Hui-Chuan Wei. Topics of the workshop included the design of programs for older adults and the learning needs and interests of the elderly in Taiwan.

THE RATIONALE FOR EDUCATIONAL GERONTOLOGY IN TAIWAN

From the above description, it can be seen that the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan was significantly influenced by the following five factors.

Changing Demographics

Changing demographics had a great affect upon the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan. In fact, society in Taiwan in the midtwentieth century was still largely rural, agricultural, and young, so the percentage of Taiwan's population over 65 years old was only about 2.5%. However, with rapid industrialization and modernization, the age structure of the population of Taiwan has experienced a critical change. Chan (1992) points out that the population aged 65 or over in Taiwan increased from 2.5% in 1950 to 4% in 1978, and then it dramatically increased to 6% in 1989. In 1993, more than 7% of the population was 65 years old or over, so Taiwan became a

so-called *aging society*. By the end of 2008, the population of people aged 65 or over was 10.4% and was estimated to grow to 14% (*aged society*) by 2017 and 20% (*super-aged society*) by 2025. Thus, the transformation of Taiwan from aging society to aged society will take about 24 years, but it will only take 8 years to go from aged society to super-aged society. Therefore, Copper (1999, p. 82) states that "Taiwan is currently experiencing the aging phenomenon faster than Japan Taiwan, in fact, has aged faster than almost any other country in the world." With the increase of the population of older people, more and more attention was given to the development of educational gerontology. Consequently, the studies and practices of educational gerontology in Taiwan have gradually become prevalent since 1993.

Political Imperatives

As mentioned above, the practices of educational gerontology, such as SAE and AG, have been organized and controlled by the central and local governments, which made prominent contributions to the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan. Briefly speaking, three important policies directly influenced the studies and practices of educational gerontology. First, the white paper entitled *Heading for a learning society* was announced by the Minister of Education in 1998, and the same year was also proclaimed The Lifelong Learning Year in Taiwan. Second, the Act of Lifelong Learning was officially passed in 2002. Under these two political imperatives, the Taiwan government advocated the concept of lifelong learning and the vision of a learning society. Based on the concept and vision, the government also took some initiatives to promote the development of educational gerontology, though it was not yet the main focus of these two political imperatives. Finally, in 2006, the announcement of the white paper entitled *Toward the aged society: Policies on education for older people* led to a remarkable growth in educational gerontology. Therefore, the above three political imperatives have played an important role in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan, and both central and local governments were forced to put emphasis upon the development of educational gerontology.

Social Development

It was not until the 1970s that Taiwan became an urbanized and industrialized country, and the lives of the elderly in Taiwan were

profoundly affected by the rapid development of urbanization and industrialization. Most older people in Taiwan actually have a rural background and have been involved in farming during their lives, but now the world in which they lived is no more. Thus, it is very difficult for them to adjust themselves to the modern, urbanized, and industrial society, which did not exist before in the history of Taiwan. Hence, the pressure to provide various services and activities to help older people adjust to the modern society forced Taiwanese central and local governments to actively intervene in this public issue. However, the knowledge of and skills in gerontology and educational gerontology in Taiwan were insufficient to satisfy this purpose, because the demand for the provision of professional services has gradually become tremendous. Thus, many universities and colleges, as mentioned above, took the initiative in establishing departments or graduate institutes related to gerontology or educational gerontology for training and educating young students as professional gerontologists. As a result, the practice of EPP (PG) has been highlighted recently, and more people have participated in the conferences and in-services training courses. With the importance of PG emphasized, the level of professional services for older adults has been gradually promoted in Taiwan.

Academic Extension

The educational research in Taiwan has mainly focused on the study of general education for a long time, and studies of adult education and educational gerontology have been marginalized in the field of educational research. It was not until 1993 that the establishment of two GIAEs ushered in a new age for the study of adult education. At that time, the development of educational gerontology was categorized as being in its formative stage, because it comprised only a part of the study of adult education. However, 10 years later, the establishment of GIEG marked a new era in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan. Exclusively focused on the studies and practices of educational gerontology, the GIEG promoted the development of educational gerontology. Thus, this period is characterized as in its expansive stage. While more and more attention was given to this new academic field, both adult education and educational gerontology were highlighted step-by-step in educational research. With the changes of time, the focus of educational studies has extended from children to adults and, now, further to older adults. Thus, great progress was being made in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan.

International Influence

Taiwan, a small island in the western Pacific Ocean, has been influenced by international tendencies in terms of its politics, economics, academic research, etc., and the development of educational gerontology is no exception. For instance, David Peterson, the famous educational gerontologist, visited Taiwan in 1993. Scholars such as Professor Ronald J. Manheimer from the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement (USA), Dr. Matthew Kaplan from the Beth Johnson Foundation (UK), and Professor Atsushi Makino from the University of Tokyo (Japan) were also invited to share their knowledge and experience about the studies and practices of educational gerontology in Taiwan in 2007 and 2009. Since educational gerontology has increasingly become a global issue, contributions from international scholars significantly enhanced the professional development of educational gerontology in Taiwan.

DISCUSSION

The milestones in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan are listed in Table 1 and depicted in Figure 1.

As demonstrated in Table 1 and Figure 1, it is evident that there are three characteristics in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan. First, the three aspects of educational gerontology, EOP, EA and EPP, were developed at different times. EOP was developed the earliest, EPP the next, and EA the last. The reason for EOP's early development was due to the need for leisure and educational activities to help older people adjust to the modern society. The central and local governments in Taiwan were forced to actively intervene in this public issue and, therefore, paid more attention to the development of EOP. However, quality was deemed more significant than quantity after more activities had been provided to older people. That is to say, services would be more ideal and preferable if offered by professional gerontologists. Hence, the importance of EPP was acknowledged right after the development of EOP. The late development of EA was probably due to its wide and unfocused purpose and objectives, and it was given little attention because of the lack of urgency on the issue. It was also not an easy task to get rid of the stereotypes and myths about aging and older people or to endow the public with positive attitudes and proper knowledge towards aging and older people. Not until the increase of older population was the public aware of the importance of EA.

Table 1. Milestones in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan

Year	Event	Element
1978	~Evergreen Club founded by the Taipei YWCA.	SAE1*
1982	~The first UOA founded by the Kaohsiung City Government.	SAE2
1983	~The second UOA founded by the Taipei City Government.	SAE3
	~The book <i>Education for elderly in the community</i> published by the ACE.	IG1
1991	~The book <i>Education for older adults</i> published by the AAE.	IG2
1993	~The GIAEs established at NCCU and NKNU. The course Adult Development and Ageing offered.	PG1
	~7% of the population reaches age 65 or over in Taiwan.	IE1**
	~Professor David Peterson invited to visit Taiwan.	IG3
1995	~Educational scholars from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan meet to discuss the issues of learning in later life.	IG4
1996	~ <i>The Learning and career development of older people</i> published by Professor Pei-Tsuen Tsai.	IG5
1997	~A series of in-service training courses coordinated by Professor Fu-Shun Huang at NCCU.	PG2
1998	~The white paper <i>Heading for a learning society</i> announced by the Ministry of Education, and the year 1998 proclaimed Lifelong Learning Year.	IE2
	~PhD program in adult education offered at the GIAE of NCCU.	PG3
1999	~A course named Educational Gerontology for PhD students offered by NCCU.	PG4
2001	~UOAs in Taiwan reach 317 since the first one founded in 1982.	SAE4
2002	~The passage of the Act of Lifelong Learning.	IE3
2003	~GIEG established in NCCU.	PG5
2004	~ <i>Learning in later life</i> published by Professor Fu-Shun Huang.	IG6
2006	~The white paper <i>Toward the aged society: Policies on education for older people</i> announced by the Ministry of Education.	IE4
	~10% of the population reaches age 65 or over in Taiwan.	IE5
	~Research by Professor Yean Tsai and Kuo-Jen Tsang on gerontology and communication.	SG1
	~Research by Dr. Chin-Shan Huang on ageing education.	SG2
	~The first Toy Clinic Shop founded in Taipei county.	AG1
	~The Graduate Institute of Gerontology established at NCKU.	PG6
2007	~Members from six internationally famous organizations invited by the Ministry of Education to share their knowledge and experience about educational gerontology.	IG7
	~Workshops hosted by GIEG at four different areas in Taiwan, under the coordination of Professor Meng-Ching Hu and Hui-Chuan Wei.	PG7
	~The policy of One town, One LRCAE proposed by the Ministry of Education.	SAE5
2008	~105 LRCAEs founded.	SAE6
	~The first Grandparents' Week launched.	AG2

*The figure attached to each element stands for the chronological sequence of major events for that element; e.g., SAE1 for the first important event in the development of SAE, and so on.

**IE stands for Important Event in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan.

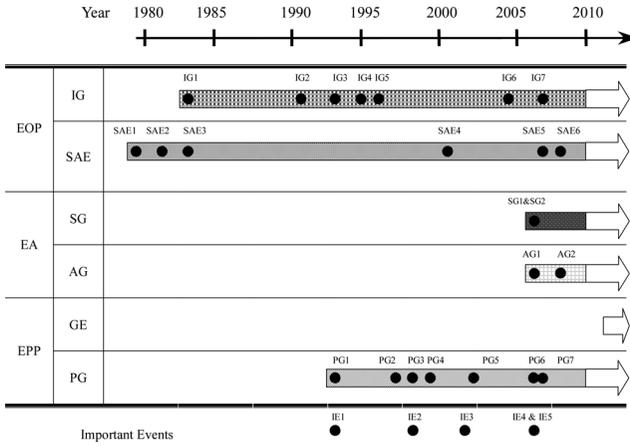


Figure 1. Milestones in the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan.

Second, the three aspects of educational gerontology, as mentioned above, could be divided into two categories of functions: study and practice. In this respect, it is interesting to find that in Taiwan's experience the function of practice seems to have run ahead of that of study. For example, the development of SAE happened much earlier than that of IG, and the development of PG was much faster than that of GE. In this respect, the researcher would like to point out that this is a natural phenomenon. It is always the case that most things happen prior to professional studies, and that explains why the function of practice ran ahead of that of study in Taiwan's experience.

Finally, it must be explained that the reason why the fifth element of educational gerontology, GE, has not yet been developed in Taiwan's experience is because the development of PG happened quite late in Taiwan. As mentioned above, the academic programs related to gerontology were established around 2003 in Taiwan's universities and colleges, and the function of practice always runs ahead of that of study. Thus, the study of EPP (GE) can be expected to flourish in the following few years in Taiwan. At that time, the six elements of educational gerontology defined by Peterson will be fully developed in Taiwan, and Taiwan may become a wonderful (EOP), friendly (EA), and professional (EPP) society for older adults.

CONCLUSION

The Studies of Educational Gerontology

The studies of educational gerontology—including IG, SG, and GE—developed at different times. IG started in 1983, SG in 2003, and GE has not yet started. Compared to the Euro-American countries, the development of the studies of educational gerontology in Taiwan started late. In this respect, there are two suggestions for this issue. First, more attention and funding should be given for advanced research on educational gerontology. Second, the studies of educational gerontology should be localized and based on the context of Taiwan. As discussed earlier, the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan has been influenced by international tendencies, especially by the American approaches. This provides the advantage of globalizing and linking the development of educational gerontology in Taiwan with the international trend. However, the disadvantage is that the studies of educational gerontology with American approaches and methods may not be suitable for the context of Taiwan. Therefore, the studies of educational gerontology in Taiwan should find a balance between localization and globalization in order to be more suitable for the context of Taiwan as well as being linked with international tendencies.

The Practices of Educational Gerontology

The practices of educational gerontology, including SAE, AG, and PG were also developed at different times. SAE started in 1978, AG in 2006, and PG in 1993. There are three suggestions for the development of the practices of educational gerontology. First, as far as SAE is concerned, both UOAs (by social service section) and LRCAEs (by educational section), as mentioned above, are similarly funded and controlled by local governments. That is to say, Taiwanese older people are used to relying on their government for all kinds of services, and such is not an ideal model. According to the philosophy and concepts of Laslett (1989) and Moody (1976), older people should be empowered and enabled to organize learning activities by themselves. However, it is difficult to challenge the prevailing attitude and stereotype of the public against older people in the society. Moody (1976, p. 8), therefore, believes that “older people must experience a kind of ‘consciousness raising’ that allows them to adopt a positive attitude toward their situation and to take steps to change it.” They may then have their second careers and enjoy their rights and lives in society, regardless of age.

With the transition of Taiwan society from autocracy to democracy, and its educational system from centralized and authoritarian to decentralized and democratic—as Huang (2005) points out—the Taiwanese model may be gradually modified by the next generation, who are the baby boomers approaching 65 or over. More educated, active, and confident than their older generation, the new generation is expected to operate and participate in all kinds of activities. Therefore, the researcher would like to point out that the best policy of the government is to play a less active role in providing services to older people.

Second, compared to the Western countries, AG in Taiwan is a late-comer. The reason is probably because parents and teachers usually put too much emphasis on major subjects such as language, mathematics, science, etc., which are used to evaluate students' academic achievement for entering competitive high schools and universities in Taiwan. Minor subjects including music, sport, and aging education are, therefore, neglected by teachers and school administrators. In this situation, the development of AG has not been valued, so courses and activities concerning aging education and intergenerational learning were uncommon in elementary and secondary schools. However, aging education, as McGuire, Klein, and Couper (2005) point out, is a key component of successful aging, and children nowadays have the potential to live longer than the previous generation. In this respect, it is suggested that aging education should be valued in schools and made mandatory nationwide. That is to say, the development of AG cannot be overemphasized since modern people will very likely spend more years in their old age than in their youth.

Finally, regarding the development of PG, its related academic programs at colleges and universities in Taiwan are inadequate. Therefore, with the increase in the population of older people, it is suggested that the higher education system in Taiwan should pay more attention to the development of PG. More undergraduate and graduate programs and research centers on gerontology and educational gerontology should be established at colleges or universities in order to train and educate more and more people with the abilities to provide professional services to older people. The hope is that such steps would assure older people in Taiwan the opportunities to enjoy a higher quality of life.

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