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of NON-EAST ASIAN CHILDREN IN A CHINESE CONTEXT.

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ORIENTED CASE STUDY OF THE LEARNING IDENTITIES OF
NON-EAST ASIAN MINORITY CHILDREN IN A CHINESE-DOMINATED SCHOOL IN
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Department of Education

NON-EAST ASIAN CHILDREN IN A CHINESE CONTEXT.

**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ORIENTED CASE STUDY OF THE LEARNER
IDENTITIES OF NON-EAST ASIAN MINORITY CHILDREN IN A
CHINESE-DOMINATED SCHOOL IN CHINA.**

**This dissertation is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of**

Master of Arts in

International Education

by completion of five taught units and dissertation.

GARY ILINES

MAY 2014

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- ◆ The Indian children**
- ◆ The primary class teachers**

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to gain understanding of the processes by which the experience of being a non-East Asian minority child in a dominant Chinese context may affect learner identity and education outcomes. From an interpretive perspective and using an ethnographic oriented approach based on Berry's and Walcott's three-stage methodological approach of etics-emics-derived etics, a sample of minority children were observed, interviewed and lastly parents, children and class teachers were surveyed. The findings of the study suggest that, although the children generally declare a positive habitus, the minority children and their parents view the Chinese pedagogical approach, the perceived aggressive behaviour of the Chinese children, the dominant Chinese influence on the school, and the host attitudes towards minorities as being to their disadvantage. This is a view which is supported by the views of the primary class teachers, and it is argued that this can have a negative effect on a learner's identity and education outcomes.

AUTHOR DECLARATION

1. The author has not been registered for any other academic award during the period of registration for this study.

2. The material included in this dissertation has not been submitted wholly or in part for any other academic award.

3. The program of advanced study of which this dissertation is part has included completion of the following units:

- ◆ Transferred credits from University of Sussex PGCE**
- ◆ Research Methods in Education (RME)**
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4. Where any material has been previously submitted as part of an assignment within any of these units, it is clearly defined.

Gary Ilines

May 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

The study of international education goes back to the rise of international schools during the first period of globalisation around 1910 (Hayden et al, 2007). However, it is only in the past two decades, fueled by a second round of globalisation and the polarization of wealth (Brown and Lauder, 2007), that the world has seen a large scale proliferation of such schools. International education in China has been even slower off the mark (Wang, 2003), and the school where this research takes place is a new and uncharted variation of international education (Ilines, 2012), being as it is a unique experimental bilingual school in The People's Republic of China (PRC).

The subject of this study is the experiences of a minority group of students in a Chinese dominated majority school environment. Although the specific context of my study – a non-Chinese minority in a Chinese-dominated school in China – is a young area of research, the issue of being a minority in a majority peer culture at school and the implications for academic attainment is by no means a new one, although in the literature it invariably refers to Black Americans or Native Americans in US schools (Delpit, 1995; Tatum, 1997) or the experience of Asian immigrants in the West (Chiang, 2000; Allan, 2002). There are plenty of studies on the difficulties experienced by Third Culture Kids (Pollock and Van Reken, 1999), including recent studies such as Dewaele and Oudenhoven's (2012) study of the effect of multiculturalism on personality, or Hoersting and Jenkins's (2011) study of cultural homelessness and self-esteem, but the specific study of the academic difficulties of non-East Asian children in China is a new topic. I hope that the findings of this study may be useful in adding to the understanding of the experiences of other minorities in international schools inside and outside of China. Furthermore, it is conceivable that within the next decades China will relax its laws prohibiting PRC nationals from attending international schools in accordance with WTO membership regulations, and in such a scenario the country would experience an unprecedented mushrooming of English-language 'experimental' primary and secondary schools, many of which would have their own non-Chinese minority (Wang, 2003; Ilines, 2012). This study aims to demonstrate that the experience for these minority children of studying in a Chinese-dominated school is fraught with potential academic and social difficulty and to provide recommendations as to how the children, parents and schools may adapt to provide better support for these minority children. Such recommendations may also be usefully submitted to the management of the school which is the subject of this case study.

This study sets out to understand some of the processes by which a minority child in China may experience difficulties or disadvantages at school and the effect this may

have on a learner's identity and education outcomes. Professional experience over six years in two schools in China led to the proposition that many of the difficulties or disadvantages experienced by minority children may have a cultural basis. In this study, three broad areas of prior research are considered and then I will attempt to explain the findings from observation, interview and survey by drawing on the three areas of theory, as follows: 1) cultural capital and habitus, 2) teaching/learning styles and 3) the Third Culture Kid (TCK) experience.

The first studies to be examined are those regarding cultural capital, which suggest that a child who is not a member of the host culture will have limited access to institutional support and interaction with adults, as well as peers, access which is considered influential on in-school attainment (Marjioribanks, 2005; Lee & Bowen, 2006). According to this theory, the non-host children have reduced access to social and institutional experiences, including access to and influence on the school itself, which are influential on a child's development, and also perhaps receive less academic support at home (Dwyer et al, 2010) or a form of support which is not aligned to the ethos or culture of the school and is therefore less effective (Lee and Bowen, 2006). The second area examines the possibility that the teaching ethos of a Chinese-dominated school - which culturally may tend towards teacher-centred rote learning in groups, academic tests and homework in the Confucian tradition - benefits the learning style of the host and dominant majority whose educational background is grounded in the Confucian tradition, especially when delivered by host teaching staff. Thirdly, this study examines the possibility that academic achievement may be related to low self-esteem which is a product of social and personal difficulties derived from being an ethnic minority or TCK. These theories are evaluated qualitatively through in-depth interviews of a non-host sub-group and Likert questionnaires to students, class teachers and parents,

In this study, I will begin in chapter 2 by reviewing the literature in three sections according to the three areas of theory as just described. In chapter 3 I will explain my methodology, the reasons for choosing to conduct an ethnographic oriented approach, ethical considerations and I will explain my three-step imposed etics-emics-derived etics approach (Berry 1989; Walcott, 2008) and methods of data collection. Chapter 4 examines the data collected from observation, interview and three questionnaires. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings. Finally, in Chapter 6 I will formulate my conclusion, limitations and suggestions for further research

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the absence of precisely comparable studies in this new area of research, it becomes even more important to firmly underpin the research with existing theory (Knight, 2002). In this section, I will examine a range of existing theories and studies in three areas which have a cultural basis and have the potential to be influential on the education outcomes of the non-East Asian children relative to their East Asian counterparts: 1) the availability of cultural capital and the resulting habitus consequent to being in a foreign host environment; 2) the effect of a mismatch between learning and teaching styles; 3) the experience of being a TCK and the effect this can have on (academic) self-concept.

2.1 Cultural Capital and Habitus

Considering reasons why the non-East Asian children as a whole may perform worse academically than their East Asian counterparts, and looking for characteristics these children have in common which may explain their shared experience, one obviously distinguishing factor is that they are far (in distance and culturally) from their home environment. What does existing theory have to say about the nature of being educated in a geographically and culturally different environment and the effect this can have on education outcomes?

One theory which appears as a possible umbrella explanation for why majority children may out-perform minority children is the concept of cultural capital which was first formulated in the 1970s by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu as an attempt to understand the education outcomes of minorities in France and the consequent ‘social reproduction’ or lack of social mobility. The concept of cultural capital has subsequently been usefully applied to studies of the attainment gap between immigrant minorities and the host majority in Western settings (van de Werhorst, 2009; Byun et al, 2012) such as in Spain (Subiros, 2011) and America (Lee and Bowen, 2006). Cultural capital is frequently quantitatively measured in such terms as museum visits and reading habits (Byun et al, 2012; Jaeger, 2011; Gaddis, 2013) as such activities are deemed indicative of a family’s participation in the dominant culture (van de Worst, 2009). Bourdieu suggests that differences in participation levels between the dominant group and non-dominant groups can affect relative education outcomes (Bourdieu, 1977). The theory suggests that not only do the group with more access to outside learning experiences learn more outside of school, but that the school system itself is set up to reward those experiences (Bourdieu, 1977, 1997; Jaeger, 2011). In addition, Bourdieu’s framework supposes a situation where the experiences of both dominant and non-dominant groups play out essentially as a game (Gaddis, 2013), a game wherein the non-dominant group is not quite sure of the rules (Gaddis, 2013). Bourdieu describes the rules in terms of ‘cultural signals’ which include attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods and credentials (Byun et al, 2012) or “dominant conceptual and normative codes inscribed in a culture” (Jaeger, 2011: 283) which may not be so easily decipherable by or accessible to the non-dominant group. The experience of playing this strange game

may affect a child's self-concept in terms of subjective well-being (Lau and Li, 2011), his or her own perceived ability to succeed at school (Gaddis, 2013) – also discussed below in terms of Academic Self-Concept or ASC – and his or her views of the value of (the) school itself (Gaddis, 2013). According to the theory, this can create an attitude or outlook, known as the child's 'habitus', which may be negative and such negativity may have an adverse effect on educational outcomes (Gaddis, 2013). To put it simply, not only does the child from the non-dominant group not entirely understand the 'game', also they do not like playing it and do not expect to do well in it.

There are two key issues to be discussed before such a concept may be applied to a context such as in this current study. The first question is: can cultural capital and habitus be distinguished from socio-economic status (SES)? This is an important question because the theory was originally formulated and evaluated in Western settings where the minority children invariably came from poorer and less educated families, whereas in my study children from both dominant and non-dominant groups come from privileged backgrounds. Also, commentators have suggested that the effect of SES may be the dominant effect and that the importance of cultural capital has been over-stated (Werhorst, 2009; Jaeger, 2011). The second question is: can the concept of cultural capital be usefully applied to a completely different cultural background, such as in East Asia? This is also an important consideration since the theory has been almost entirely formulated and developed in the West.

Understanding the exact relationship between cultural capital and education outcomes has always been difficult because the issue is invariably blurred by SES (Jaeger, 2011). Lucia Tramonte and J. Douglas Willms's 2010 study on cultural capital and its effects on education outcomes attempts to tackle this issue by controlling for "traditional measures of socio-economic status" (Tramonte and Willms, 2010: 200). This study examines two aspects of cultural capital termed 'static' and 'relational'. Static cultural capital refers to the activities of parents and relational refers to cultural interaction between children and parents (Tramonte and Wilms, 2010). They conclude that, after controlling for socio-economic differences, both types of cultural capital have a significant effect on education outcomes: "Our results provide compelling evidence that relational cultural capital has strong effects on students' reading literacy, sense of belonging at school, and occupational aspirations. Static cultural capital has slightly smaller effects, which are also statistically significant even when controlling for socioeconomic status" (Tramonte and Wilms, 2010: 210). If cultural capital works independently of SES, this bodes well for a study such as mine which examines dominant and non-dominant groups with similar SES.

Byun et al's 2012 study which examines the role of cultural capital in East Asia tackles the second of those questions by asking if a theory which has been found useful in understanding education in the west but has always been tested in "country specific" contexts can be applied to other regions of the world (Byun et al, 2012), although their study also fully takes into account the first issue of SES and therefore their study is divided into two parts, one which examines the relationship between SES and attainment and the other which examines the relationship between cultural

capital and attainment. Byun et al's study is unable to make any concrete statements due to the fact that they believe that studies of the effect of cultural capital in the West has seen mixed results and this is combined with the complex relationship between SES, education outcomes and cultural capital. However, they tentatively conclude that the concept of cultural capital may have a significant, if slightly reduced role to play in East Asian educational settings. They believe that the role cultural capital plays may be negated slightly by institutional features of East Asian education, such as an "extreme focus on test preparation and extensive shadow education" (Byun et al, 2012: 1). This is a complexity which will be examined later.

Although my study occurs in a unique setting, it may still be considered a case study of how being a minority may affect the education outcomes of non-dominant groups, in particular pertaining to non-Chinese children in a Chinese context. In the section below I discuss an example of a case study which takes place in an elementary school in America (Lee and Bowen, 2006) and is an examination of the cultural capital paradigm.

Lee and Bowen conducted a 2006 study of an American elementary school which examined the relationship between cultural capital and achievement at school. The study was underpinned by Bourdieu's framework which considers that "one source of inequality in access to relationships and resources of interest...is the fit between an individual's culture and the culture of the larger society" and that "non-dominant groups [have] unequal access to institutional resources" (Lee and Bowen, 2006: 197). Parental involvement at school would also be highest "for those parents whose culture and lifestyle were most likely to be congruent with the school's culture" (2006: 210). However, Lee and Bowen's study cannot clearly distinguish the connection between being a minority culture and academic attainment because in such studies conducted in America, the issue is invariably blurred by the different socio-economic and educational background of the minority who are inevitably poorer and less well educated. In the context of this study of a school in China, the parents of all ethnic groups within the school are wealthy middle class and well-educated and as Lee and Bowen (2006) suggest in their recommendations for further research, an investigation of children from different ethnicities but comparable educational and socio-economic backgrounds would be "a valuable addition to the research" (Lee and Bowen, 2006: 214). The subject school of my study provides such an opportunity.

In addition to the theoretically reduced access to "resources of interest", Lee and Bowen's study makes one further interesting suggestion that, although parents from all cultural groups readily support their children at home, especially well-educated parents such as in my study, the support received from the parents of the dominant group may be more aligned to the learning ethos of the school and may consequently be more effective: "These findings support the notion of cultural capital as represented in the academic benefits for dominant groups that derive from congruence between family habitus and the educational field" (Lee and Bowen, 2006: 212). If this notion is correct, it would predict that, for example, the support received at home by a non-Chinese child would *ceteris paribus* be less effective in increasing attainment within school than that received by a Chinese child if the children are in a

dominantly Chinese school, even though the help is given by an adult equally well-educated and from a similar socio-economic group. This would affect the entire family habitus which in turn may have a significant effect on the child's habitus and his or her academic success at school.

This concern from minority families regarding the teaching approach of the school and the way their child is treated at school and which in turn may affect the child's habitus and success at school brings us on to the next section which concerns the teaching ethos of this school.

2.2 Confucian and Non-Confucian Teaching and Learning Styles

“Western educators emphasise individual learning while Chinese educators pay more attention to group learning.” (Zhang, 2008: 556)

There is broad general agreement over the fact that Chinese and Western teaching styles differ, most simply expressed as teacher-centred versus student-centred (Ho, 2010). The following three aspects of Chinese traditional education are discussed in the literature: a) the academic examination oriented approach to education (Li and Li, 2010; Yip, 2012); b) teacher-centred rote learning in groups versus the student-centred learning with the teacher as facilitator (Zhong et al, 2011; Zhang, 2008; Yip, 2012; Ho, 2010); c) modeling and imitation versus individuality and creativity (Zhong et al, 2011; Kim et al, 2011) also expressed as a surface approach versus a deep approach (Yip, 2012).

Furthermore, it has been observed that teachers who move abroad to teach children from different cultural backgrounds can come to feel deskilled (Stirzaker, 2004) because the children are accustomed to different teaching styles and exhibit alternative learning preferences to the one to which the teacher is accustomed (Van Oord, 2005). It is conceivable, then, that teachers who feel ‘deskilled’ may adapt their teaching styles to suit the majority of the children and this could be investigated qualitatively. As I discuss below, studies have shown that teachers can adapt their teaching methods in simple and practical ways to accommodate different learning preferences (Chiang, 2000; Ho, 2010). Certainly it could be argued that school policy is pushing its teachers in this direction, with its insistence on regular homework, testing, and the use of text books, at a time when such approaches are falling out of favour in the West. This policy stems from the expectations of the majority parents who, despite choosing a non-traditional school for their children, still have traditional expectations of their child's educational experience and this links back to the cultural capital argument wherein the host majority has greater institutional access.

As with the investigations of the effect of cultural capital, investigations into East-West learning styles and their effect on education outcomes have focused on the experiences of East Asian children in Western settings (Chiang, 2000) or Asian students with Western instructors (Ho, 2010) rather than the investigation of the education outcomes of non-East Asian children in East Asia which is the subject of my study. Linda Chiang's 2000 study of Asian children in America uses qualitative

methods such as observation and interview to investigate how Asian learning styles and Western teaching styles may be mismatched. She concluded that there are differences which a) affect the education outcomes for the Asian children and that b) may be accommodated through a number of practical suggestions for teaching practice (Chiang, 2000). Raymond Ho (2010) conducted a study of the preference of Chinese students for the traditional teacher-centred Chinese teaching style and discovered that the students have a strong preference for the teaching style with which they are familiar and struggle with an unfamiliar teaching style. Like Chiang, Ho also concludes that this affects education outcomes and that instructors need to adapt their teaching styles to the students and also makes simple and practical suggestions as to how this might be achieved (Ho, 2010).

2.3 Self-Concept and Academic Self-Concept – the TCK Experience

Thus far, I have considered two areas of research which are concerned with the experience of a child from a non-dominant ethnic group in relation to his local environment and the approach of the school. This section attempts to build on this analysis by examining the TCK experience and by considering how children are affected by the TCK experience as a result of their interactions with the host culture and also their personal experiences of loss and instability independent of their interactions with others.

Research regarding the TCK experience tends to focus on the effect the experience has on personality traits such as: self-esteem (Hoersting and Jenkins, 2011; Navarette and Jenkins, 2011); open-mindedness (Melles and Schwartz, 2012; Dewaele and Oudenhoven, 2009); homelessness and identity (Grimshaw and Seers, 2008; Gilbert, 2008; Navarette and Jenkins, 2011; Hoersting and Jenkins, 2011). Especially in the American literature, there is a concern regarding the effect on adults of growing up as a TCK and consequent experiences as an adult (Gilbert, 2008) and experiences of repatriation (Hoersting and Jenkins, 2011; Peterson and Plamondon, 2009).

There is research in the TCK literature which supports this idea that the social difficulties experienced by children in an alien environment can affect the way a child views him or herself. In their study of identity, Grimshaw and Sears (2008) describe the expatriate children as actors wherein how they perceive themselves is a function of how others react to them: “The performer’s self-concept is either reinforced or modified depending on the reaction of the audience” (2008: 265). This is reinforced in Dewaele and Oudenhoven’s study of the effect of multiculturalism on personality (2010). They claim that the “ability of the immigrant to cope with the new environment will be linked to...the attitude of the host community” (Dewaele and Oudenhoven, 2010: 444) and cites a number of studies within the last decade which report that “migrant children suffer from lower self-esteem with higher depression and anxiety” (2010: 444). Contact Theory, developed by Gordon Allport in 1954 (Williams, 2010) furthermore suggests that the forces of alienation from host peers and low ASC may work in both directions. On this subject, Moody concludes that “if the school setting is structured such that positional hierarchy is correlated with race, then interracial friendships are unlikely” (Williams, 2012: 483). In this

dynamic, if the school is dominated by the Chinese and the Chinese are more successful academically, then it becomes even more unlikely that the Chinese and non-Chinese children will interact. This has implications not only for the minority children and their self-concept but also for the majority Chinese and their success in learning English and becoming internationally-minded, which is a double-edged sword for a school which is aspiring to offer an international education in China since this is one of their main selling points and one of the key reasons why Chinese parents choose this school for their children. (Ilines, 2012).

As I show statistically below, the non-Asian children at the school are demonstrably lower attainers and this knowledge is available to the children through setting in Mathematics, English and Chinese. The abundance of literature which examines the experiences of blacks and Native Americans in North America (Tatum, 1997) suggests that “students academic self-concept (ASC) can be damaged when a stereotype demeans the intelligence of their racial or ethnic group” (Lehman, 2012: 411). Lehman makes the direct connection between self-concept, defined as “the perceptions that one has about him or herself through interactions with the external environment (mainly other individuals)” (Lehman, 2012: 413) and ASC. If there was strong qualitative evidence that the non-East Asian children at the school felt academically inferior or were treated as academically inferior by the host majority – which indeed would reflect the current reality within the school – or were perceived by the host culture to be inferior in any other way, then one may be able to make a case of this being a significant contributing factor to low attainment, although the exact causality would remain uncertain.

Added to the possible low self-esteem derived from negative reactions from host students and the feeling of belonging to a less successful ethnic subgroup, there is also the reaction to the TCK experience which affects personality independent of others. Kathleen Gilbert conducted a qualitative study into the TCK experience and its resulting feelings of loss and grief which come from a life lacking in stability and continuity (Gilbert, 2008). This was a theme explored by Oberg as early as 1960 with his list of ‘culture shock characteristics’ which also include a sense of loss, lack of identity and anxiety (Hill, 2006). Through in-depth interviews with 47 adult TCKs, Gilbert discovered that much of the grief and loss they experienced as a child, combined with constant inconstancy, led to a feeling of insecurity which could be detrimental to a child’s development (Erikson, 1963). Loss of friends and difficulty making friends was also a common theme, and their experiences of “bullying in school, poor treatment from teachers and other adults, and of being essentially abandoned by their parents to their devices as their parents led their own lives” (Gilbert, 2008: 103). Gilbert (2008) describes such issues as generally hidden and unresolved. Interestingly, however, of all the issues covered, Gilbert does not examine or even mention academic consequences or difficulties and this study was conducted with adults looking back at their experiences. In the literature dealing with the TCK experience, there is a dearth of studies conducted with the children themselves while they are still children and this is a gap which might usefully be filled.

This research is conducted fully conscious of the complex, dynamic and indeterminate nature of social phenomenon (Knight, 2002). I have chosen to examine three theoretical areas because I believe that there is not one simple explanation or way of understanding. Even if I could demonstrate that these might be key factors, I would not attempt to claim that these are the exclusive factors. Furthermore, even within the existing theories and bodies of research which I have chosen to examine, I find there to be a number of overlaps which add further complexity. For example, theories of the TCK experience predict possible low self-esteem, but this low self-esteem could also be a result of negative habitus operating via Bourdieu's framework of cultural capital. In Byun et al's 2012 study of cultural capital in East Asia, it is found that the effect of cultural capital can be negated by a school's ethos if that school's ethos is grounded in a standardized curriculum and test preparation, which links with (and potentially undermines) the area of teaching and learning styles. In Bourdieu's 'game', there are rules and this concept overlaps with the predominance of the Confucian teaching approach which dominates the rules of teaching and learning.

In the above literature review, I have examined three areas of theory. In each case, the focus of most research has been on non-dominant minorities in Western countries. With the rise of China and Korea as economic powers and continued globalisation, there will be ever-increasing numbers of Western children being educated in schools in East Asia and I believe this is an area of research which warrants attention and which is currently quite sparse.

2.4 Research question

The theoretical assumptions reviewed above suggest that there may be multiple processes grounded in cultural differences at work which can influence the education outcomes of a minority child. In the light of this, the social problem which I have observed on a professional level over six years in China might be understandable as a cultural experience which affects a child's identity and education outcomes. The research problem is to gain understanding of these processes by which a child's experience of being a minority in China affects his or her identity as a learner.

The research question is as follows: How is a child's identity as a learner affected by the experience of being a minority in a Chinese context?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section, I will briefly describe the primary school where the research was conducted and then I will outline my conceptual framework. Following a discussion of culture, I will describe my methodology and data collection.

3.1 Context

This study takes place in a primary school in China with around 400 children, approximately four-fifths of whom are East Asian (Chinese, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Korean). It is a three-form entry primary school from Year 1-6 and consists of eighteen classes each with one Western-trained class teacher and one female Chinese teaching assistant. Maximum class size is 24 children and most classes are full. The school is over-subscribed in most year groups. The school advertises for teachers on the TES website as an ‘international school’ but in fact the school is technically not an international school. Chinese nationals are currently not allowed to attend international schools. The loophole is that a school can run as an international school with foreign teachers and curricula while operating under the aegis of ‘experimental school’, overseen by the local education bureau. The school is expensive, privately owned, and is run by an all-Chinese board of governors. The management of the school consists of a Western principal who is responsible for the foreign staff, and a Chinese vice-principal who oversees the local teaching and auxiliary staff. The primary school follows the English National Curriculum (NC). Class teachers teach English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities according to the NC. All primary children receive one lesson in Chinese each day delivered by a host teacher. In addition, the children receive weekly lessons in PE, Dance, Art, ICT and Music which may either be delivered by a foreign teacher or a Chinese teacher, but mostly Chinese. Consequently, up to two-fifths of a child’s schooling may be conducted by a host teacher. If the Chinese teaching assistant is factored in, and also the supervising staff at break times and on school buses, then it can be seen that a significant portion of the child’s day is spent with host staff. Furthermore, as discussed in the literature review, there may be a tendency for teachers to adapt their teaching approach to the preferences of the host majority.

Overall, it can be said with conviction that the school context for this study has an overwhelming Chinese influence.

3.2 Conceptual framework

This study was originally planned as a paper submitted for the Research Methods in Education (RME) unit (Ilies, 2012) and was planned as an ethnographic case study of a group of French children in an international school in Shanghai whom I observed to be experiencing social difficulties. This study was to be grounded in the interpretive paradigm as defined by Cohen et al (2007) as an attempt to ‘understand actions and meanings rather than causes’ (Cohen et al, 2007: 33) and also “to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors” (26). I was at that time interested in how the French children perceived their social surroundings and how this

affected their self-concept and the way they consequently behaved, which was frequently belligerently and disruptive. It was hoped that I could show that the behaviour of the French children at school which was negatively affecting education outcomes was a consequence of their perceptions of their host environment. I then moved to an experimental Chinese international school in a different Chinese city – the context of this study - and noticed comparable issues with the Indian children at the school and decided to continue with a similar approach with the Indian children as I had begun with the French children. Eventually, this created a research crisis because the difficulties of the two separate ethnic groups were being manifested very differently. The disruptive or difficult behaviour from the French children could perhaps have been easier to link to a perceived (by the French children) cultural clash and its resulting overtly negative behaviour. With the Indian children, it was manifested differently, in ways which were not so easily categorized, and I began to consider that there may be underlying causes of difficulties for a minority in China which are not ethnically specific. If this were the case, I concluded, perhaps it would be more fruitful to look for causes of difficulties which result from being a minority in a Chinese host majority rather than looking for commonalities amongst the Indian children which would help to understand their experiences. Later, from the in-depth structured interviews I conducted with the Indian children, I discovered that in fact there were many differences between the Indian children themselves – including regional differences such as mother-tongue, SES, religion, academic achievement and opinions - and that the only really unquestionable commonality they shared was that they are a minority in a Chinese dominated school environment.

Nevertheless, I continued to feel committed to the interpretive paradigm. The key objective of this study is to understand the experience of the minority children from their perspective and therefore to illuminate the processes by which that experience affects a child's identity and therefore possibly the education outcomes. The large majority of the findings discussed below come from the perspective of the minority subjects. According to the literature, there appeared to be a strong cultural element to the experience of being a minority in a learning context and so I continued to place value in the ethnographic oriented approach which I will discuss in the following section beginning with a discussion of culture.

3.3 Defining 'culture'

For purposes of clarification, this study borrows this definition of culture:

“Culture refers to the various ways different groups go about their lives and to the belief systems associated with that behaviour” (Walcott, 2008: 22).

A concept of culture is at the heart of all three of the areas examined above in the literature review – cultural capital, cultural learning styles, and the experience of Third Culture Kids – and therefore this study is conducted in the spirit of ethnography and as such the ultimate goal of the research is to understand rather than explain in positivist terms. However, it is to be clearly understood that ethnography is *just one tool*, as Lisa Delpit describes it, which can be used when we are deciding “how to

recognize when there is a problem for a particular child and how to seek its cause in the most broadly conceived fashion” (Delpit, 2006). Yon (2003) too states that ethnography can only ever be “a partial representation” or as Walcott expresses it: “We must ask ‘whether and how cultural interpretation might enhance understanding of the topic or problem under investigation’ “(Walcott, 2008), the key word here being ‘enhance’. Walcott, a lifelong ethnography guru, even himself is not describing ethnography as holding the key to ultimate explanations. In other words, although in my study I am ultimately looking for explanations for education outcomes – is it because of limited cultural capital or is it because of a conflict of learning styles? – I am more specifically looking for possible ways of understanding the experience, tested qualitatively in a way which puts emphasis on the beliefs, perspectives and experiences of the actors in the situation (children, parents and teachers). Therefore, my data collection is qualitative and comes from the children, parents and teachers and is designed to seek out their views on what is happening at the school and in the lives of the children.

Moreover, it is important to recognise that there are those who cast doubt on the usefulness of using the term culture at all. Some commentators argue that the term is too easily defined so that everyone is therefore at liberty to make their own private interpretation. Van Oord (2008) asks whether or not cultural differences are really distinguishable from social or individual differences and asks for a ‘theory of culture’ which can supersede and unite all the different strands. I feel however that this is not so different from the message given by Walcott who in his book “Ethnography. A way of Seeing.” advises ethnographers to never actually use the word ‘culture’ but to always instead refer to the specific thing (Walcott, 2008). This is what I have attempted to achieve in this study. Whereas I believe that cultural differences are at play in the background, I am following Walcott’s advice and I am focusing on specific elements such as outside experiences with family, learning styles, or the emotional reaction from being in a strange land and always on the move – all of which have a cultural element however you choose to define ‘culture’. To put it simply, I believe that the experiences of the minority children can be understood in cultural terms but that it is more useful to focus on specific elements of this experience. Commentators such as Van Oord might then argue that actually I am looking at individual differences or social differences and that the term culture is redundant.

A final word, though, on Van Oord’s criticism of culture as a useful concept. In his 2008 paper he uses the word ‘culture’ repeatedly and I think the fact that he needs to talk about culture in order to not talk about culture demonstrates the power of the term ‘culture’ and that it is not so easy to circumnavigate. Van Oord (2008) also makes a big leap from negating the usefulness of the term ‘culture’ when he begins to discuss differences between ‘Western culture’ and ‘Asian culture’ – indeed in a similar way as I am doing in this paper. Van Oord’s call for a ‘theory of culture’, again fails to avoid the word. It is interesting, though, that in Van Oord’s paper attacking the concept of culture, he suggests that a theory of culture could for example be based around ways of learning and his example is that of learning differences between the West and East as defined by Western

cognitivism/beliefs/orthodoxy versus Asian orthopraxy/ritual. From this I would like to assume that Van Oord might approve of my study which investigates the education outcomes of non-Chinese minority children in an East Asian dominated learning environment.

Nevertheless, Van Oord's warning is taken on board. For the purposes of this study, it is important for the researcher and reader to keep in mind the subjective and generalized nature of culture and to not forget that the ethnographic approach will at best give us partial understanding.

3.4 Methodology

"...the issue of description versus comparison has been compressed into a short-hand label, the emic/etic distinction. Emic calls attention to the differences important within a particular community, etic to differences for the social scientist making intergroup comparisons" (Walcott, 2008:142).

One of the major difficulties with the ethnographic approach occurs because the researcher is invariably 'looking in' from a different cultural perspective and ethnography ultimately is about understanding the insider's perspective. (Walcott, 2008). Using terms originally derived from linguistics, the two approaches came to be known as the emic/etic distinction (Walcott, 2008; Berry, 1989; Allan 2002). Using the etic approach, the ethnographer, who comes from a different cultural background, is the outsider observing and describing what she sees, as she sees it. The emic approach, on the other hand, attempts to facilitate the description of the cultural processes of the group being studied as understood by the members of that group, usually through narrative and certainly in their own words. Walcott states all ethnography should be emic but the problem to taking an exclusively emic approach is that the research can become overly descriptive, especially for the purposes of an academic paper. On the other hand, an exclusively etic approach, such as comparing the Indian to the non-Indian TCKs would mean having to leave the ethnographic framework. Walcott concludes his discussion of the emic/etic distinction as, "It now seems questionable how one could conduct ethnographic research without being a bit of both" (Walcott, 2008: 142).

Berry (1989) offered an alternative approach to either emic or etic which he terms the imposed etics-emics-derived etics approach, which was used by Allan (2002) and has been influential on my approach in this project. This is a three part approach to an ethnographic research project which takes into account the realities of researcher bias as well as academic requirements. In the first part, the imposed etics component, the researcher is an outsider looking in and mainly observing. In the second part, the emics component, the researcher listens to the members of the group being investigated and hears stories and descriptions in their own words. Finally, underpinned by understandings gained from the emic investigation, the researcher again turns to his own perspective and attempts to make comparisons and form conclusions. Walcott describes a similar three-step approach without using the terms 'emic' or 'etic' but which follows a similar process. Firstly, Walcott describes, 'We

make sense of things in terms of our own cultural frameworks' (Walcott, 2008: 247) – the imposed etics component. The second step, Walcott continues, requires the ethnographer to try to “discern how things more or less make sense to *those in the setting* [his italics]” (Walcott, 2008: 247) – Berry’s emics component. Lastly, “one attempts to draw generalizations about the problems and resolutions that life presents for humans everywhere” (Walcott, 2008: 248) – the derived etics component.

During my project, I attempted to follow a similar route. For the first year, I observed and listened and attempted to form a picture in my outsider’s mind of the key dynamics in the experience for the minority children – although as a parent of TCKs at the school I was not entirely an outsider. I took photographs of Indian children in social groups and at play and made notes on informal conversations that took place between me and Indian parents. In the second part, I allowed the participants to describe their experiences in recorded, in-depth interviews during which I would begin with a question of my own but as much as possible I would allow their conversation to flow without interruption. Finally, based on the perspectives given in the informant interviews, I formulated questionnaires designed to test my outsider’s theories derived from observation and interviews and underpinned by the literature.

3.5 Data collection

After almost a year of participant observation and informal interviews with the Indian children and parents, I formally contacted a cross-section of the Indian children and parents from years 3-6 and conducted formal interviews with twelve children and six parents. I selected the Indian children on the basis of which children I already knew – either because I was teaching them, or they were in the same year group as me, or because I had taught them in an extra-curricular activity, or because they were the children of teachers at the school. I chose these particular children because I felt that they would be more likely to accept and having accepted would feel more comfortable taking part in the in-depth interviews which I had planned to deliver. In all, fourteen children were selected, made up of nine girls and five boys from Year 3 to Year 6. Having received permission from the senior leadership of the school, I emailed the class teachers of the fourteen children to ask for their permission to conduct the study and I gave the class teachers a clear opportunity to tell me if they had any reason why any individual child should not take part in the project. After that, I met with the fourteen children at break time and explained to them my intention and issued them with letters to take home to their parents asking for permission (Appendix 1). I received twelve out of fourteen replies granting me permission. I then conducted one-hour in-depth recorded interviews with all of the children in same-sex groups of two or three with a pre-prepared list of questions (Appendix 2). I decided to interview the children in friendship groups and not individually in order to maximize the comfort of the children and also in order to make them more likely to speak freely. I also conducted unrecorded in-depth interviews with four parents, in addition to continuing to engage in informal conversations with the parents of children whom I was currently teaching.

In the final stage of the research, based on the key issues arising from observation and were supported by interview data, I issued a Likert Scale questionnaire to the Indian children, Indian parents and class teachers (Appendices IV-VI). Although at this point the focus of my research was on the non-East Asian children and TCKs as a whole, I decided to continue to restrict my research to the Indian families having already received their permission, with concerns such as time constraints and maintaining the goodwill of the school's leadership in the background.

There are certain concerns about the use of the Likert questionnaire as a form of collecting data, especially for research which claims to be conducted within the ethnographic framework. Each of the questionnaires – one for the children, one for the parents, and one for the class teachers – is a series of statements to which the recipient must express a level of agreement. Inevitably, the statements are created by the researcher in order to evaluate factors which I suspect may be key in influencing education outcomes, so although I am attempting to collect the perspectives of others, it is done with a bias which comes from the researcher. Allan (2002), in his study of cultural minorities in an international school in Holland writes:

“For data collected to have any significance in understanding student interactions, they must be part of the students' own perspectives and situated in their own discourse and in their own culture. Any instrument designed by the researcher is bound to be based on preconceptions about the data to be collected (2002: 6).”

As I have collected and assessed the data, I have been mindful of Allan's warning. My original intention was to collect narrative from the students, but I elected not to take this course because I was concerned that a) it would be too much extra work for the recipients and would lead to a lower return rate, and b) because I was concerned that the data it would yield may not be specific enough for the purposes of a paper such as this, as I have already discussed above. Moreover, as the project evolved, interactions between students of different cultural backgrounds and the consequences of those interactions developed from being the focus of the research to a component of the research. Student interactions were still projected to have a significant influence, such as with habitus, ASC and the TCK experience but other factors such as learning styles and life outside school were added.

Furthermore, in the spirit of ethnography as described by Walcott, any subjectivity on my part which derives from either my vested interest in the school as a parent and a teacher or from my outsider point of view need not necessarily be viewed as a weakness provided it is recognized and revealed to the reader and in such a way “to maximize the potential of the fieldwork as personal experience rather than deny it” (Walcott, 2008: 49).

Finally, I requested to parents, children and teachers that they not discuss their answers with other recipients until they handed in their questionnaires. I wanted to be sure that any consensus was reached unilaterally. I also asked parents to try not to influence their children's replies and to ensure that the answers came from their heart (Appendix 7).

Drawbacks to my choice of data collection are recognized but I believe that it is still appropriate within Berry's framework and Walcott's suggested course of action for ethnographers.

3.6 Ethics

Punch (2005) gives a clear warning that there is no social research project devoid of ethical considerations: "All social research involves ethical issues. This is because the research involves collecting data from people, and about people" (2005: 276). Moreover, because of the particularly personal nature of qualitative research, and the close relationship between me as a teacher/employee at the school where I am conducting the research, acute ethical issues are more likely to arise (Punch, 2005; Blaxter et al, 2006):

"Ethical research involves getting the informed consent of those you are going to interview, question, observe or take materials from. It involves reaching agreements about the uses of this data, and how its analysis will be reported and disseminated" (Blaxter et al, 2006: 158).

Punch (1994) outlines four main ethical issues: harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality. This study was conducted with the full knowledge of all members of the senior leadership in the school, including the principal and heads of Primary and Secondary. All of the participants in this study – including the children, parents and class teachers – were kept fully informed of my intentions and all participants were given the choice to opt out of the study. After the sample of children were chosen, I informed the class teachers of my intentions and asked them for any reservations about using any particular child in the project. No class teacher offered any reservations. I met with all the children together and explained to them my intentions and made it clear that it was optional. When I interviewed the children I did so in small groups of friends in order to minimize any feelings of intimidation. In addition, none of the children or class teachers are identifiable in the study in order to maintain complete privacy and confidentiality. No real names are used, including the school. No data, including the recorded interviews or Likert questionnaires will be show to anyone and will be treated anonymously and confidentially. The questionnaires received back from parents, children and teachers are not named or labeled and I have only looked at the results in their entirety and have not been aware of which individual gave what reply in particular, so no information is even traceable back to any individual, not even by me. Assessment data which I have been able to access as a teacher at the school has not been passed on to any third party and is not published in this paper in its raw form but only as summaries and averages.

As a researcher, I honestly endeavoured to be impartial and to put the interests of the children first. Moreover, I also strongly consider it in the children's interest to not harm the school in any way, which includes not sharing any information which any third party might use to criticise or attack the school or the management of the school. The interviews with the children were carried out during 'Golden Time' at the end of

the day on Fridays, so no lesson time was sacrificed, and the interviews with parents were conducted in my own free time and therefore had no detrimental effect on my work as a teacher at the school. The children's questionnaires were completed at home and the class teacher questionnaires were distributed to teachers during a non-contact day at the end of term and would not have distracted the teachers from performing their duties.

Miles and Hubberman (1994) also include in their list of ethical issues the question of whether or not the project is worthwhile, beyond just the self-promotion of the researcher. In the case of this study, I believe that this is a project which can benefit TCKs and other children who are experiencing difficulties at school in China and whose findings and suggestions may lead to greater understanding of these difficulties and potentially better support or even solutions.

One final ethical issue, which is raised by Allan (2002) regards the interpretation of the data. Allan writes:

“Guidelines must include honesty with the subjects and the readers of research, and openness in acknowledgement of possible bias during interpretation.”

To this end, I have endeavoured to be honest in my conclusions, including a clear statement of limitations (see below). It is then important at this point to make it clear that I also have two children at the school (currently in Year 7 and Year 8) who are part of the non-East Asian minority group and who can also be described, in my opinion as a parent, as having certain social and academic issues which I have often ascribed at least in part to the experience of being a TCK in a Chinese-dominated environment. It could be argued that my perspective as both a parent and teacher gives my research an advantage, but on the other hand it could equally be argued that there might be emotional bias in my research. Both reader and researcher should keep this in mind.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Participant observation

Although at the time I was not defining it as such, my participant observation began in 2008 when I first moved to teach in China. At first I noticed that my own children experienced disappointing learning outcomes and that they were unable or unwilling to make any Chinese friends. In mathematics, the East-Asian children outperformed the non East-Asian children as was observable from ability setting. The largest minority subgroup at this first school was the French children and I noticed that they too were unable to integrate and in fact exhibited some dysfunctional behaviour, in some cases quite serious including fighting and swearing, as well as academic difficulty. This group of children became the focus for my RME paper.

After I moved schools, the largest minority subgroup became the Indian children, as I have explained in the methodology section. As a year 4 class teacher, I was teaching two Indian children both of whom were experiencing academic and social difficulties. The parents of both of these children were keen to discuss their child's difficulties and often the discussion turned to the greater school context and the difficulties of being Indian at the school, such as racist bullying (skin colour, hair, smell, and eating with your hands were the common perceived insults) and a feeling of being powerless and wanting to have a say. Another of the common issues was the difficulties of the minority to get along with each other. I attempted to explain this by the simple fact that they have a small pool of peers from which to select and this consequently creates a higher incidence of personality mismatches. The Indian boy in my class was inseparable from his South-African female classmate, yet they were incessantly arguing and fighting. At the end of every lunch time they would come back to the class complaining to me about the other. The Indian girl in the class simply had no friends in that class at all and at play time would seek out her one year 3 friend in the playground. During classroom play time she would gravitate to me. The Indian girl in my class experienced difficulties also during normal class time because there was no other child in the class who wanted to work with her. I discussed this with another year 4 class teacher and a year 5 class teacher and they also both described Indian girls in their classes with the same issue. Also, an Indian colleague with a daughter at the school told me her daughter had the same problem in class. The mother of the Indian boy in my class described her son's difficulties playing with Chinese children due to, as she perceived it, the way Chinese children play in an aggressive manner which makes it difficult for her son to play with them. She also believed that this was an experience common for Indian children.

Year 6 had the largest group of Indian children, mostly girls. They would commonly have fallings out and exclude certain members of the group. At break times they could be seen gathered in a group, but rarely would there be any interaction with the Chinese children. On one occasion I watched as the mother of one of the Year 6 Indian girls, also a teacher at the school, spoke to the group of girls and reprimanded them for socially excluding her daughter. This is a problem which later comes up during a structured interview with that group of girls. My own daughter was also

experiencing difficulties. In her year group, there were only four non-East Asian girls. Three of them got along but one of them was being excluded and this was creating jealousy and finally a changing room fight which led to the excluded girl having a gash in her face scratched out by one of the other girls. The head teacher invited me to talk to the girls and I implored them to stick together. I explained my theory of the small friend pool and said, "In a different situation you might not choose to be friends," and the three girls said, "We would" in front of the girl who was being excluded. I realized that it can be difficult socially for some children depending on the friends with whom they are thrown together.

I was fortunate to have the encouragement also from the two female Indian teachers working in the secondary section of the school. Whenever our paths crossed we would chat and discuss my research. A common theme was the difficulties of making friends with the Chinese and the academic underperformance of the Indian children, especially in mathematics. One of these teachers put it simply: "The Chinese don't allow us to be friends with them." Both teachers were in favour of my research because they hoped it would raise awareness of the difficulties experienced by the Indian children at the school.

I also discussed the issue at length with my Chinese teaching assistant. She also agreed that the Chinese don't want to be friends with non-Chinese. She explained the dynamic like this: "The Chinese children don't want to be outsiders. Some of the Chinese children do want to be friends with the non-Chinese but their Chinese friends won't let them or they won't want to be friends with them anymore. The non-Chinese children are seen as outsiders and the Chinese children are afraid that they will also become outsiders." My assistant pointed out in one conversation that language plays a role also because friendships are often formed in the early years at the school before non-Chinese children can speak Chinese, so even the non-Chinese who later become fluent in Chinese find it hard to break into Chinese friendship groups.

At break times I frequently observed Indian children alone or with one other Indian friend, besides the group of year 6 girls. One year 2 boy in particular I observed. He was new to the school and I watched him sit alone on the steps looking out at the playground for weeks before I finally saw him sitting with another Indian boy. On one occasion, I asked him what he would like to do and he pointed to a group of Chinese boys playing a very loud and aggressive game of tag where you tag by throwing a ball at the other person. It seemed an incongruous choice coming from such an obviously intimidated child but it clearly demonstrated a desire to participate and an inability to break into the social group.

I also began to examine the assessment data of all non-East Asian children at the school (see Appendix 10). This included attainment levels according to UK National Curriculum Levels, end-of-semester reports, and sets (English, Mathematics and Chinese). I did this in order to ascertain whether or not there was a significant overall attainment gap between East Asian and non-East Asian children and I discovered that in Mathematics and writing the non-East Asian children were indeed

underperforming compared to their Chinese counter-parts.

The issues which commonly came up in my observations and informal conversation with the Indian children and parents were: 1) the problem of making friends; 2) racism bullying; 3) social difficulties between Indians. These areas became the basis of my questioning in the structured interviews described below.

4.2 Structured interviews

The difficulties experienced by the Indian children making friends with the Chinese children were explored in the interviews. The children were asked to describe their relationships with their Chinese peers. When I asked the children if they had Chinese friends, all of the children interviewed claimed to have Chinese friends. However, the meaning of 'friend' seemed to be very loose in the children's minds as illustrated by a Year 5 boy who said, "I have some Chinese friends but our relationship is not good." However, when I phrased the question as 'Why are most of your friends Indian?' there was no disagreement of the fact and all the children were open to discussing the problems they have with the Chinese children and with each other.

The theme of racist bullying which was prominent during the observation phase was confirmed in the interviews. I asked a group of year 6 girls how they think the Chinese children perceive them:

Year 6 girl 1: Disgusting country. Skin.

Year 6 girl 2: There's one girl and I come early and she talks to me and she says things to me that I wouldn't want to say in front of her because it would make her sad.

Year 6 girl 1: Tell me what she says about me.

Year 6 girl 2: She says that her face is creepy and head is so fat.

Year 6 girl 1: It's just because my hair is so curly. My skull is not big bit I have a lot of curly hair.

Another year 6 girl described it like this:

I remember when I was in year 3 and they made fun of my food...it was red beans and they said it looked like poop. And they say we are disgusting because we eat with our hands. They also care about our skin colour when skin colour technically doesn't matter at all. They use make-up, they get pimples so why should we care?

Another common theme from all of the interviews was the perceived bad behaviour of the Chinese children by the Indian children, especially aggressive behaviour and the use of bad language. The discussion with a group of year 5 and 6 went as follows:

Y 6 boy: Chinese people are very mean to us. Billy is always shouting at us

Y 5 boy: The Chinese children in our class can't control their anger. They just do anything.

Y 6 boy: They get angry very easily and they took anything.

In an interview with three year 6 girls, a similar discussion took place:

Y6 girl 1: It's like the Chinese children don't even respect elders. They make fun of them. Like suppose the teacher shows them something and they say 'this sucks' and they use the middle finger word.

Y6 girl 2: They say every single bad word they know.

Y6 girl 3: And Bassino is rude to the teachers .

Y6 girl 1: One time my hand was on Bassino's table and he shouted 'Get off!' so loudly.

Y6 girl 2: Chinese boys and Korean boys especially don't like to say 'sorry'.

Y6 girl 1: And today I was walking and this boy Jim kicked the ball and it went on my face and he didn't say sorry.

Y6 girl 3: It's like a tradition not to say sorry.

This perception of the behaviour of the Chinese children linked backed to discussions I had with Indian parents during the observation phase regarding the aggressive behaviour of the Chinese children and the cultural differences in the way the children are raised. One of the year 5 Indian boys mentioned specifically their poor treatment of books whereas Indian children are raised to think of books “as gods” and the Year 6 girls agreed that Chinese children often treat adults with disrespect. I asked the Indian children to think of their best friends and to describe them. The year 6 girls and the year 4 girls both mentioned kindness in not leaving them out of the group and not arguing:

Year 6 girl: I like one girl who is really polite and there are other girls who are like snack stealers. And two girls didn't want to sit with me at lunch because I was being rude to me [sic] and this girl said she would sit with me.

All of the Indian children I interviewed were keen to discuss issues they had with other Indian children at the school and on occasion turned the conversation to this subject when it was not my intention. The year 5 boy I interviewed said he was unable to be friends with the one other Indian boy in his year group:

Interviewer: There is one other Indian boy in year 5. Are you friends with him?

Year 5 boy: I used to be but I don't like him so much now.

Interviewer: And are you friends with the other Indian boys in year 6?

Year 6 boy: No, we are not really such good friends.

The year 6 girls, as was observed during the observation phase, also have social difficulties amongst themselves:

Interviewer: So the Indian girls have fights? What kinds of problems do you have with each other?

Year 6 girl 1: Back in year 4 we were all friendly then a new girl came and I found out that they were writing bad stuff about me so I told the teacher...and this stopped in year 5 but it started again in year six, like jealousy, like some Indian girls will be together and I will be talking to another friend, an Indian, and they will come and take them.

Year 6 girl 2: We don't take them...

Year 6 girl4: Sometimes there is a miscommunication between us and it can starts fights, like small things become big things.

Year 6 girl 2: Yes.

Year 6 girl 1: But normal fights will be okay for us...

Year 6 girl 3: ...because that's daily life.

Year 6 girl 1: Yep.

Year 6 girl 2: But sometimes when I am with your group...sometimes I really feel out of it.

Interviewer: When you are in the group?

Year 6 girl 2: Yes.I feel like I don't fit into the group because they are all playing and no one is talking so I just left. So I feel left out.

One final key point which came out of the interview with the Indian girls was the perceived favouritism of the Chinese teachers towards the Chinese children, unfairness, and a general feeling that the school is geared towards the Chinese children. One girl explained it like this:

Year 6 girl: One time I was walking and there was water on the floor and I slipped and fell on my leg, I fell on my fractured leg and they laughed. And the teacher didn't tell them anything. Because this is China and it is a government school and that is why they put the Chinese in the lead because if they don't put them in the lead then they might close the school.

Interviewer: Who makes this decision to put the Chinese in the lead?

Year 6 girl: The government.

Interviewer: But who in the school makes these decisions.

Year 6 girl: The teachers. The Chinese teachers. Like if they are setting out a play it is always the Chinese children who take the lead. role. They are the popular people in this place. And they can't even speak proper English. Yet they still get the lead role because...

Interviewer: Do you mean the class teachers as well?

Year 6 girl: No

4.3 Likert questionnaires

Having observed from an outsider's point of view, and then heard the experience described directly from the subjects, the third and final step of my investigation was to attempt to generate a suggestion as to which of the theories outlined in the literature might underpin the process by which a child's experience as a minority might affect his or her identity as a learner and therefore education outcomes. Key topics which came out of the observation and interviews were: difficulties making friends; difficulties with Chinese teachers; racist bullying leading to possible low self-esteem.

The parents, children and class teachers were given statements set out in three sections related to three broad areas of theory: the experience of being non-Chinese; the experience of teaching and learning at the school; self-concept; They were asked to answer on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Surprisingly, overall the Indian parents were in disagreement with the statements but were also more extreme than the teachers in their choices, with some statements

overwhelmingly rejected and some meeting overwhelming agreement. The results from the student questionnaires brought plenty of disagreement with consensus most significantly coming in the section devoted to learning and teaching. Overall, the students were more in agreement with the statements than the parents and there are some interesting disagreements discernable between parents and children which suggest that perhaps parents are underestimating certain aspects of school life. This will be examined below in the discussion section. The tables below show the statements which brought the strongest agreement and disagreement.

Class teacher strongest disagreement

- 2.54 Non-East Asian children are more demanding on my time than their East Asian counterparts.
- 2.63 The overall educational ethos of the school favours the learning styles of the East Asian children.
- 2.8 East Asian parents are generally more involved in their child's education than non-East Asian parents.
- 2.8 The policy of the school is pushing me as a teacher towards a greater focus on test preparation than I would prefer.

Table 1: The 4 out of 15 statements with mean scores lower than 3.

Class Teacher Strongest Agreement

- 3.91 Chinese parents have a greater influence on school policy than non-Chinese parents.
- 3.90 Non-East Asian children have greater difficulty making friends than their East Asian counterparts.
- 3.73 Since working at this school, you have adapted your teaching style to accommodate the learning preferences of the majority East Asian children.

Table 2: The three highest scores on the Likert Scale.

Parent Strongest Disagreement

1.57 - My child does not expect to do well at school.

2.00 - My child suffers from a sense of loss because of living in a foreign country.

2.43 - My child suffers from low self-esteem because of social difficulties at the school.

Table 3: Parent questionnaire statements which scored the lowest scores on the Likert scale.

Parent Strongest Agreement

3.86 - My child performs better with Western teachers than with host staff.

3.43 - I feel that being in a foreign country limits how much my child can benefit from life outside of school compared to being in our home country.

3.14 - I feel I do not have as much influence on school policy as I would like because I am not Chinese.

Table 4: The three highest scores on the Likert Scale.

Student Strongest Disagreement

1.43 – It is harder for Indian children to be successful at GOS than for Chinese students.

1.86 – The way Chinese teachers treat me makes me feel bad about myself.

2.43 – I don't have many friends outside of school.

Table 5: Statements which scored the lowest scores on the Likert scale.

Student Strongest Agreement

4.71 – I prefer to have specialist lessons like Art, PE or Music with non-Chinese teachers.

4.43 – I am a successful student at school.

4.43 – I am happy to go to #name of school#.

Table 6: The three highest scores on the Likert Scale.

5. DISCUSSION

This study asks the question: how might the learner identity of a minority child in a Chinese-dominated school be affected by the experience of being a minority? Data was collected which came from the actors either directly or according to my interpretation. In accordance with the interpretive framework, I have attempted to use this data to increase understanding of the actions of the Indian children in terms of how their perceived experience affects their view of themselves.

In this section, I will consider three coded categories from the findings in the Likert questionnaires which provoked the strongest and most wide-spread agreement from teachers, students and parents: 1) the importance of the different pedagogical approaches of the Chinese and Western staff; 2) the significance of the Chinese influence on the school; 3) the positive student habitus. These findings will also be linked back to findings from the student interviews. I will then discuss the limitations and implications of these findings. Lastly in this section, I will make recommendations for further study.

5.1 Pedagogical approach

The category which evoked the most wide-spread agreement from the questionnaires was the preference for the Western teachers, which recalls Van Oord's call for a theory of culture based on learning styles (Van Oord, 2008), discussed in the literature review. Replies from teachers, parents and students strongly indicate that whether or not the teacher is Chinese is considered to be a key factor in the education outcomes of the children. Teachers, parents and students all agree that the minority children perform better with Western teachers and there would appear to be a better rapport between Western teachers and minority children during non-lesson time than with Chinese children. The minority children show a very strong preference for non-Chinese teachers in specialist lessons, and they generally agree that Chinese teachers should talk less and allow them to be more creative – showing a preference for student centred learning. This finding is in accordance with Ho (2010) who finds that students prefer a familiar teaching style and commonly struggle with different teaching styles, and also Linda Chiang's study (2000). This finding also corresponds strongly with feedback from the interviews (see Appendix 8) where the children were in agreement that the Chinese children are favoured by the host teachers and their perception that the Chinese are unfairly given the leading roles in school activities.

At the same time, class teachers are strongly in agreement that they have adapted their teaching styles to accommodate the East Asian majority, as predicated by Stirzaker (2004) and this may be seen as pulling in the opposite direction to the minority student learning preferences.

5.2 Host influence and cultural capital

The second category where there is considerable agreement is regarding the Chinese influence on the school. In an in-depth interview, one Year Six female student (see

Appendix 8) described the school like this:

One time I was walking and there was water on the floor and I slipped and fell on my leg, I fell on my fractured leg and they laughed. And the teacher didn't tell them anything. Because this is China and it is a government school and that is why they put the Chinese in the lead because if they don't put them in the lead then they might close the school.

This statement is a very extreme perspective, and is by no means a fair assessment of the school, but it does show strength of feeling from that child and this is confirmed by the questionnaires. Class teachers agree that Chinese parents have a greater influence on school policy than minority parents and also generally agree that management decisions are often influenced by pressure from the Chinese parents. In one of only three statements scoring higher than 3.0 on the parent questionnaire, the Indian parents agreed that they would like to have more influence on the school but cannot because they are not Chinese. This finding agrees with Lee and Bowen (2006) who find that parental involvement in the school is highest for the host parents and links back to findings from the observation stage.

It is also interesting to remind ourselves that host influence on the school is part of the cultural capital argument (Lee and Bowen, 2006) and to note that of the three statements generally agreed by the parents, two pertain to cultural capital, namely that they cannot influence the school. Moreover, the highest Likert score from the parents fell to this statement which is itself a summary of the cultural capital argument: *I feel that being in a foreign country limits how much my child can benefit from life outside of school compared to being in our home country.* However, over all according to the findings of this study, the affect of cultural capital is present but does not come across as a major factor. This is in accordance with Byun's study (2012) which finds that the effect of cultural capital is reduced in East Asia and is negated by test preparation and shadow education. It is true that most of the Indian children have tutors and I have observed that Indian parents are commonly keen to have text books taken home. Werhost (2009) and Jaeger (2011), as discussed in the literature review, also find the effect of cultural capital to exist but to be over-stated. The findings of this study support this view.

5.3 Positive habitus

The most surprising finding was that the Indian children actually appear to have a very positive habitus. This reflects well on the school and its teachers. In the interviews, the children discuss a variety of issues which cause them difficulty but a sense of humour comes through and because of what they perceive as their better behavior in class and good relationship with the class teachers and TPs, the children see themselves as superior students (see Appendix 8) and it was interesting that the year 6 girls immediately associated being a 'good student' with behaviour rather than academic achievement. The parents are divided over the question of wishing their child had a more positive outlook, but on the five statements which suggest that their child is either unhappy, lonely, confused, having social difficulties or experiencing low ASC, the parents overwhelmingly disagree (25 votes to 5). There is unanimous

disagreement that their child does not expect to do well at school from the parents and almost unanimous disagreement from the students that it is harder for Indian students to be successful at school than Chinese students – also in accordance with interview data. Seven out of seven students agreed to being a ‘successful student’ and six out of seven children declared themselves to be happy to go to the school – with one neutral. The stone in the cherry, however, is the way the Indian children perceive themselves to be treated by the Chinese children. This again links back to Dewale and Oudenhoven’s and the attitude of the host community (2010). There is general agreement that being treated as inferior by the Chinese students can make them feel bad and in interviews with both parents and students, when asked how they consider themselves to be perceived by the Chinese, physical features are often the first thing which spring to mind, especially skin and hair (see Appendix 8 and 9). This is a common theme which came out of the interviews and this will be revisited in the conclusion.

This positive and happy outlook expressed by the children and parents runs contrary to the TCK literature reviewed in Chapter 3 of this study. One possible explanation is that, as discussed in the literature review, much of the TCK literature has focused on the adult looking back or has investigated repatriation (Gilbert, 2008; Hoersting and Jenkins, 2011; Peterson and Plamondon, 2009). Perhaps the adult looking back is more aware of drawbacks to the experience with hindsight, or perhaps the trauma of repatriation may colour the view of the subject. Overall though, the findings of this study do not give any strong reason to consider the instability of the TCK experience to be a key factor in education outcomes.

In summary, the key findings of this study - as perceived by Western class teachers, minority students and their parents; all non-Chinese people – present a picture of a minority group who feel at a disadvantage mostly because of difficulties with culturally Chinese phenomenon such as racial stereotypes, ways of interaction and play, behaviour in the classroom, pedagogical preferences, and lacking certain aspects of cultural capital, most notably the ability to influence school policy.

5.4 Limitations

The most obvious limitation of this study is the small size of the sample. Given the time constraints and the chosen methods, combined with the difficulty of receiving permission, it was decided to limit myself to the group of Indian children with whom I was familiar and who were comfortable with me.

Another consideration which appeared out of the data very quickly was that recipients may be unwilling in some areas of the questionnaire to be completely truthful for reasons such as respect for others or self-respect. Some of the statements I would like to have rephrased in retrospect, especially statements which refer to how a child or parent perceives him or herself. The Indian children describe themselves as happy and successful with lots of friends and the Indian parents reject the statement that their child has low self-esteem because of social difficulties. However, the teachers in their questionnaire agree that non-East Asian children have difficulty

making friends and this also comes out of the student interviews (see Appendix 8). In one informal interview with an Indian mother of a new student whom I knew was having social difficulties, she appeared slightly affronted at my question of whether or not her daughter had made any friends and replied that she had made lots of friends – although in fact she hadn't according to her class teacher. However, it comes out clearly from the student interviews that the Indian children feel that the Chinese children do not want to be friends with them and this is backed up in the questionnaire that Chinese children treat them as inferior and this makes them feel bad about themselves. This draws into question, I think, the picture of the positive habitus.

One other limitation is that perhaps the parents do not wish to declare that they are providing a less beneficial upbringing than the Chinese parents or that they are deficient as parents and this might bias questions regarding cultural capital. The example from the data is that the parents agree most strongly that being educated in India would provide their child with greater opportunities, but disagree that their child suffers from not being in India and also disagree that they are at a disadvantage not having extended family. I am an outsider looking in, but to me it comes across a little like, "This is just as good, but India is better."

6. CONCLUSION

This paper is designed to be an ethnographic oriented case study of minority children in a Chinese majority school environment. As the study is ethnographic, the assumption is that there are cultural influences at work (Walcott, 2008) and yet Walcott tells us that culture must be added and does not spring forth from the data (2008). In this chapter, I will review the research question and summarize the answers which observation, interviews and questionnaire data suggest. Finally, I will attempt to condense the dynamic of their experience into cultural difference.

This paper asks primarily: how might a child's identity as a learner be affected by the experience of being a minority in a majority Chinese environment? Three areas of theory were considered in the literature review: 1) cultural capital and habitus; 2) teaching styles; 3) the TCK experience. According to the approach advocated by Berry (1989) and Walcott (2008), participant observation was followed by structured interviews and finally Likert questionnaires were circulated and the results were coded. From the combined data from the three-step inquiry, the processes which may be seen to be causing the Indian children to have difficulties at school are their perceived racist mistreatment from host children, the perceived aggressiveness and rudeness of the host children, their social difficulties with each other based on a variety of factors including language and regional differences, and their difficulties with host staff and the perceived favoritism of the host staff towards Chinese children. Kindness, especially with regards to social group inclusion, is rated highly by the children in their choice of friends, along with respect, honesty and gentleness which is generally found to be lacking amongst their Chinese majority peers. Although the data shows that the Indian children declare a positive habitus, do not feel inferior and consider themselves to be successful students, all of the factors just described can be seen to contribute to a feeling of being at a disadvantage. Depending on the child, this may have a greater or lesser effect on their identity.

The two key factors according to agreement of statements in the Likert questionnaires from all key players (children, parents and class teachers pertain to: a) pedagogical approach, and b) host influence on the school. The factor most rejected was negative habitus. These findings suggest that a child who is experiencing poor education outcomes is probably not doing so due to low self-esteem. Rather, it appears more likely that the learner feels frustrated due to social difficulties especially with Chinese children but also with fellow Indians, a clash of teaching and learning preferences, and lack of influence on the workings of the school. This links back to my initial findings from observation that the Indian parents were keen to discuss their problems with me and also keen for me to study this social problem, although this is to take nothing away from their kind support and encouragement. The Indian parents want to have their say in what happens at the school and the Indian children want to have their say in what goes on in the classroom. This may come across in the children as neediness or a tendency to misunderstand the task, but I theorise that it may rather be due to social frustration, a sense of being at a disadvantage, and a desire to take greater ownership of their learning.

As an ethnographic study, one further question needs to be answered: can the experience of the Indian children at the school be understood in cultural terms? Or as Walcott puts it: “We must ask ‘whether and how cultural interpretation might enhance understanding of the topic or problem under investigation’ “ (Walcott, 2008) What I have surmised from the observations, interviews and Likert questionnaires is that there is a complex network of contradictory and interconnected experiences, with many different kinds of people expressing many different perspectives and opinions. Interviews with the Indian children in small groups often created disagreement between the children and contradictory statements. The Indian parents and students commonly perceived the way they are treated by the host children as being linked to physical features such as skin colour or hair, or to cultural traits such as eating with hands, and incidents of racist bullying at the school unfortunately are not uncommon. Language too plays a role and communication is a repetitive theme throughout the interviews. Many Korean students and parents, who speak fluent Chinese, can be seen to be fully integrated socially in the school and physical appearance and language can be seen to play a significant role. But these are ethnic and racial differences, not cultural. Teaching styles and learning preferences certainly are cultural. There is a difference between the Confucian and Western approaches to classroom practice, and data from the interviews suggests that the Indian children feel that being a well-behaved and creative student is the best approach whereas the Chinese children tend to be more competitive and respond better to rote learning. The aggressive, disrespectful, and loud behaviour of the Chinese children as perceived by the Indian children can also be seen in cultural terms, and this different cultural way of playing and behaving in the classroom has an impact on friendship groups and the learner identity of the non-Chinese children, especially when the child has no one who wants to work with him or her in class. The influence of the majority parents on the development of the school can also be seen in cultural terms because the parents are expressing their preferences for how the children should be taught and these preferences are cultural. Consequently, an ethnographic oriented approach to the question of how a minority learner’s identity is created seems justifiable.

Culture can realistically only be asked to produce a “partial representation” (Yon, 2003). In practice, as educators we deal with student difficulties one child at a time and it is not necessary to consider the child’s difficulty as anything other than an individual case. It is probably not helpful (or welcome) to attempt to explain every Indian child or TCK in China who is experiencing disappointing education outcomes as being because he is not Chinese. However, as Delpit (2006) puts it, we might ask how cultural interpretation of a situation may be useful to help a child whose education outcomes are below normal expectation. This study offers the suggestion that if a minority child is underachieving in a Chinese-dominated school, then it may be helpful to understand that: a) the child is probably experiencing daily difficulties concerning the majority host children such as being teased for ethnic differences, being excluded socially, or not having a friend in class; b) there may be a conflict of teaching and learning preferences resulting in difficulties learning with a host teacher and a strong preference for a Western teacher; c) the child’s parents probably would like to have more influence on school policy, and this is combined with a student perception of favoritism by host staff towards host children which may leave the

minority children and parents feeling slightly helpless, frustrated or at a disadvantage. Understanding this experience in cultural terms from the minority point of view may be an important first step in helping the child to reach his or her educational potential.

6.1 Implications of the findings

Finally, we should ask how such findings may influence school policy in order to promote the education outcomes of the minority. It is suggested that a) the school might accommodate the minority children more in terms of teaching styles, training host staff or perhaps even to the point of differentiation in class allowing the non-Chinese children more opportunity to discuss and more freedom of creativity; and b) the school might listen to and involve the minority parents in school decisions, such as by forming a PTSA which is represented by a range of nationalities. To the parents, the findings tentatively suggest that they may be underestimating the significance of the social difficulty at school on their child's education outcomes. The school may wish to examine the very structure of the school and consider ways in which school policy inadvertently favours host students.

One further implication of the findings is the importance of minority being able to get along socially with each other. Observation and interviews strongly suggests that there are frequent difficulties between the minority children and I theorise that the cause of this is a small pool of friends from which to choose because of the small number of non-Chinese children and the barriers to becoming friends with the Chinese children caused by racial stereotypes, the perceived behaviour of the Chinese children and the reluctance of the Chinese children to risk becoming outsiders themselves. One Indian child described her father's point of view like this: "My dad says that when Chinese have a problem they stick together but when Indians have a problem they fight each other." My observation suggests that this is also generally true of the non-Chinese minority and awareness of this by the children, teachers and parents may go some way towards ensuring that the non-Chinese children find ways to support each other.

6.2 Recommendations for further research

Of the two categories which emerged as having an effect on education outcomes, the effect of pedagogical differences appears to have the most potential for further research. One of things I considered doing during this project but chose not to because I didn't want to offend the host teachers and I was unlikely to get permission, was to conduct a study of Chinese teaching techniques and make a comparison with the Western teachers. In this way perhaps a clearer link between teaching styles and education outcomes could be established. It may equally be useful to compare learning styles or approaches to learning, such as culturally different ways of defining a successful student

The theory of cultural capital seemed attractive as a potential umbrella theory, but in fact it now appears to have more limited scope than I had hoped and is probably not the best avenue to explore. The TCK experience, on the other hand, I believe is still

under-studied and a more subtle rephrasing of the questionnaire may produce greater insight into how that experience may affect a child's education outcomes, in particular the social difficulties of making friends and not being treated as equal.

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Appendix 1 – Permission letter to parents

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Dear parents,

I am writing to you to inform you of a research project I am undertaking and to ask for your cooperation and consent.

I am currently undertaking a Masters in International Education at the University of Bath, UK. For my final dissertation, I am conducting a qualitative study which examines the experience of the Indian children at #name of school#.

Having already spoken to a number of Indian parents and observed the children whom I teach and at play, there appears to be a common theme that many Indian children at #name of school# experience social difficulties at school to some degree. It is my hope that my research will help everyone at the school to better understand the experiences of the Indian children and to provide better support. I have the permission and full backing of the Senior Leadership at #name of school# for this project. However, **please note**, that my research is independent and *I do not represent the leadership of the school* and that my findings and suggestions will not necessarily affect school policy.

You are receiving this letter because I have selected your child to be a ‘key informant’ in this project. The children selected, from Year 3-6, were chosen because these are the children I know already or because they are children who form part of a friendship group of children I already know and whom I felt would be most comfortable taking part in this project. I have **not** chosen your child because I feel your child has any particular issue. My intention is **not** to investigate any individual children but to look for commonalities in the experience of all Indian children. Interviews will be conducted in pairs or groups and it is my primary intention to make this an enjoyable and interesting experience for the children.

My research is being undertaken in accordance with strict academic ethical standards, as follows:

- i) All information collected and used will be done so with full anonymity.
- ii) The children and parents involved will have complete right to refusal at any time.
- iii) All tasks requested of the children will be conducted in non-class time and regular study will not be disrupted in any way.
- iv) The findings of my study will be available to all participants.

My research will be conducted through informal and in-depth interviewing of children and parents, questionnaire/survey, and optional written tasks which I will request of the children.

Thank you for your support in this project. If you consent for your child to take part in this research, please complete the form on the next page and return it to me at the earliest possible time.

Yours faithfully,

Gary Ilines (4A Class Teacher)

gary@#name of school#

CONSENT FORM

Name of child: _____

Parent contact name: _____

Parent contact email: _____

I hereby consent for my child to take part in the research project conducted by Gary Ilines at Green Oasis School.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent for my child to be interviewed *

I consent to be contacted by email *

I consent to be interviewed *

I consent to receive and complete questionnaires/surveys *

I reserve the right to withdraw my consent at any time.

Signed: _____ Date:

Appendix 2 - Pre-prepared questions for student interviews

Discussion topics for the Indian children

1) friendships with other Indian children

why do you think most of your friends at school are Indian?
what common problems do you think the Indian children have with each other?
think about your best Indian friend: why are you such good friends?
think about an Indian child you don't get along with: why do you think that is?
do you find that there are any differences between you and the other Indian children? If so, what are those differences?

2) friendships with Chinese children

do you have any Chinese friends at school?
why do you think some Chinese children can be friends with you; how are they different?
describe a Chinese child you really like/don't like.
what do you think are the main differences between the Indian children and the Chinese children?

3) the experience of being Indian

how do you think the other non-Indian children think about you?
how do they treat you?
how does that make you feel?
how do you think you are different to the non-Chinese children?
is there anything about the Chinese children which you admire or that you think they are better at than the Indian children?
in what ways do you think the Indian children are better than the Chinese children
do you think the Chinese children don't want to be friends with you because you are Indian or because you are not Chinese?
discuss agency – are there things you would like to do or change but feel that you cannot?

4) your relationship with your parents

what do your parents tell you about how to behave in school?
when you talk to your parents about your problems at school, what advice do they give you?

5) academic achievement

how do you rate yourself as a student?

how do you compare yourself as a student to the Chinese children?

Appendix 3 – Complete data from Likert questionnaires

Student questionnaire

Section 1

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	3,2,2,4,2,1,3	2.43	1	4
b	2,5,5,4,2,5,4	3.57	5	2
c	4,3,2,2,1,3,2	2.43	1	4
d	3,2,4,4,4,4,4	3.57	5	1
e	1,1,3,1,2,5,4	2.43	2	4
f	2,2,3,4,2,4,2	2.71	2	4
g	3,3,4,5,1,4,3	3.29	3	1
h	3,3,1,4,2,3,4	2.86	2	2

Section 2

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	5,5,5,4,5,4,5	4.71	7	0
b	4,5,1,4,1,5,3	3.29	4	2
c	2,1,1,3,1,1,1	1.43	1	6
d	2,3,3,2,2,3,4	2.17	1	3
e	2,1,4,5,4,4,5	3.57	5	2
f	3,3,4,5,2,5,4	3.71	4	1

Section 3

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	4,5,5,5,4,4,4	4.43	7	0
b	5,5,4,5,5,3,4	4.43	6	0
c	2,1,2,3,3,2,3	2.29	0	4
d	4,2,1,4,3,2,4	2.86	3	3
e	2,2,3,4,5,5,5	3.71	4	2
f	2,5,4,4,1,1,5	3.14	4	3
g	2,1,1,2,1,4,2	1.86	1	6

Parent questionnaire

Section 1

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	4,4,2,4,3,3,4	3.43	4	1

b	3,4,3,2,2,4,4	3.14	3	2
c	4,4,2,2,3,1,2	2.43	2	5
d	2,4,2,3,2,2,2	2.43	1	5
e	3,3,4,4,2,4,2	3.14	3	2

Section 2

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	4,3,3,2,2,4,2	2.86	2	3
b	4,2,4,2,2,2,2	2.57	2	5
c	4,2,4,2,2,3,2	2.71	2	4
d	4,2,4,3,2,4,2	3.00	3	3
e	5,4,4,4,4,1,5	3.86	6	1

Section 3

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	3,3,2,2,2,5,2	2.71	1	4
b	2,2,3,2,2,4,2	2.43	1	5
c	2,2,2,3,2,1,2	2.00	0	6
d	3,2,4,3,2,1,2	2.43	1	4
e	2,3,3,1,2,4,4	2.71	2	3
f	1,2,2,1,2,1,2	1.57	0	7

Class teacher questionnaire

Section 1

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	5,2,3,4,3,3,5,4,2,2,4	3.36	5	3
b	3,4,2,5,4,4,4,4,2,2,4	3.45	7	3
c	4,4,3,4,3,3,3,4,2,2,3	3.18	4	2
d	2,2,2,5,2,4,4,4,2,5,5	2.80	3	6
e	5,5,2,5,2,4,4,4,2,5,5	3.91	8	3

Section 2

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	4,2,3,5,4,4,5,4,4,4,2	3.73	8	2
b	2,2,4,3,2,4,4,2,4,3,1	2.80	4	5
c	5,4,4,4,2,4,5,3,4,2,2	3.54	7	3
d	3,2,2,3,2,4,4,3,2,2,2	2.63	2	6
e	4,4,3,4,3,4,3,4,3,2,2	3.27	5	2

Section 3

Statement	Likert values	Mean	Agreed	Disagreed
a	5,3,3,5,4,2,5,5,4,3,4	3.90	7	1
b	5,4,3,3,2,3,4,4,3,3,2	3.27	4	2
c	2,2,2,1,3,3,5,3,3,2,2	2.54	1	6
d	3,2,2,5,2,5,5,3,5,4,4	3.63	6	3

e	5,4,2,5,2,3,2,2,3,3,3	3.09	3	3
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Appendix 4 – Class teacher questionnaire

Questionnaire to class teachers

For each of the following statements, please circle one answer:

SECTION 1

a) Non-East Asian children (Indians, Europeans, Americans, South-Americans, Africans) generally receive less outside academic support than their East Asian counterparts.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) East Asian children generally have a more positive approach to school than non-East Asian children.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) East Asian children generally produce better quality homework than non-East Asian children.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) East Asian parents are generally more involved in their child's education than non-East Asian parents.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) Chinese parents have a greater influence on school policy than non-Chinese parents.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

SECTION 2

a) Since working at this school, you have adapted your teaching style to accommodate the learning preferences of the majority East Asian children.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) The policy of the school is pushing me as a teacher towards a greater focus on test preparation than I would prefer..

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) Management decisions at this school pertaining to teaching styles are often influenced by pressures from majority Chinese parents.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) The overall educational ethos of the school favours the learning styles of the East Asian

children. strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) Non-East Asian children perform better with Western teachers than with host staff.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

SECTION 3

a) Non-East Asian children have greater difficulty making friends than their East Asian counterparts.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) Non-East Asian children at this school suffer from lower self-esteem than their East-Asian counterparts.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) Non-East Asian children are more demanding on my time than their East Asian counterparts.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) Non-East Asian children are more responsive to me as a teacher during non-lesson time (such as lining up, tidying up) than their East Asian counterparts.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) Chinese children tend to view non-Chinese children as academically inferior to them.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

Appendix 5 – Parent questionnaire

Questionnaire to Indian parents

For each of the following statements, please circle one answer:

SECTION 1

a) I feel that being in a foreign country limits how much my child can benefit from life outside of school compared to being in our home country.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) I wish my child had a more positive outlook on school life.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) My child is lonely outside of school.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) My child sees very little of external family members and this negatively affects his or her development.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) I feel that I do not have as much influence on school policy as I would like because I am not Chinese.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

SECTION 2

a) My child would perform better academically if he or she was taught by teachers trained in my country.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) The teaching style of most teachers at the school is adapted to the benefit of the majority (Chinese) culture.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) Management decisions at the school which affect teaching are significantly influenced by Chinese parents.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) The overall educational ethos of the school favours the learning styles of the East Asian children.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) My child performs better with Western teachers than with host staff.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

SECTION 3

a) My child has difficulty making friends at school.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) My child suffers from low self-esteem because of social difficulties at the school.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) My child suffers from a sense of loss because of living in a foreign country.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) My child often feels confused about experiences at school.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) Chinese children tend to view non-Chinese children as academically inferior to them.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

f) My child does not expect to do well at school.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

Appendix 6 – Student questionnaire

Questionnaire to Indian students

For each of the following statements, please circle one answer:

SECTION 1

a) I don't have much to do outside of school. I am often bored at the weekend.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) When I was living in India, we did more things together as a family.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) I don't have many friends outside of school.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) I often feel confused by the way Chinese children play with each other.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) GOS is a school designed for what Chinese people want.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

f) Chinese children do better at school because of the help they get outside of school.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

g) I have more interesting things to do when I am in India.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

h) The Chinese children at GOS have more interesting lives outside of school than foreigners.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

SECTION 2

a) I prefer lessons like Art or PE with non-Chinese teachers than with Chinese teachers.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) Teachers seem to make more effort to teach the Chinese children than the non-Chinese children.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) It is harder for Indian students to be successful at GOS than for Chinese students.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) The way most teachers teach at GOS works better with Chinese children than with non-Chinese children.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) I wish Chinese teachers would allow me to be more creative.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

f) I wish Chinese teachers would talk less during class time and give me more time to work by myself.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

SECTION 3

a) I am a successful student at school.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

b) I am happy to go to GOS.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

c) I wish I lived and went to school in India.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

d) Most of my good friends are in India and I miss them.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

e) Chinese children treat Indian children like they are less intelligent.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

f) The way Chinese children treat me makes me feel bad about myself.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

g) The way Chinese teachers treat me makes me feel bad about myself.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

Appendix 7– Explanation letter to parents

Tuesday, January 07, 2014

RE: MA Research Project by Gary Ilines

Dear Parents and Students,

First of all, may I thank you very much for your cooperation last year. The interviews I conducted with the Indian children and some of the parents were very interesting and I learned a great deal about your views and experiences at #name of school#

I believe that #name of school# is a good school for our children, but like anywhere there are challenges connected with being a minority in amongst a dominant majority culture, such as being non-Chinese or non-East Asian at #name of school#. This is the subject of my thesis, and the experiences of the Indian children at the school – socially, emotionally and academically – are not exclusive to the Indian students but I believe affect many, perhaps most or all, of the non-Chinese children at the school. The objective of my paper is to attempt to understand the dynamic of this experience, look at possible reasons why certain children may be having certain experiences, and to hopefully offer suggestions as to how parents, teachers, students and management at the school may be able to better support the minority children.

To help me complete my research, I have constructed questionnaires which are enclosed. One of the questionnaires is for the parent(s) to complete and one is for the children to complete. If your child requires assistance to complete the form, please feel free to discuss the questions with your child, but it is important to me that the answers come from the child's heart. Also, I would please request that you do not discuss your answers with other parents prior to completing the form. If there is a consensus on certain questions, which I expect there will be, I want to be sure that the consensus was achieved unilaterally.

Once again, thank you for your kind and generous support in this project. I would be very grateful if completed questionnaires could be returned to me before the CNY holiday.

Kind regards,

Gary Ilines

#name of school# Year 4 Class Teacher

Appendix 8 – Sample interview transcript

Transcript of Interview with three Year 6 Indian girls – 10th May 2013

Interviewer Gary Ilines

Names have been changed. Some parts of the interview are summarized or missing because they were unclear and some parts are paraphrased.

47 min 16 sec

[Interviewer introduces the interview to the children and explains why he is doing it and what he hopes to get from the children.]

Interviewer: Why do you think that most of your best friends are Indian?

I think it's because the Chinese people don't want to be friends with us.

They say that our country is dirty and disgusting and we don't communicate that much, so they think that it's better not to be friends with us.

Maybe some people think that we are having wars with these people and if we are having wars with them why should we be friends with them?

And I have a friend who is Chinese in my building and one time last year he said that India is disgusting and told me full of pollution and really not good.

They talk about us in Chinese and make fun of us in Chinese so we don't understand but we do understand but we just don't tell them.

And it's fun sometimes when they say things about us in Chinese but I'm good at it so I can understand. So I'm like, "no, you are this."

Interviewer: Do you ever say these things back to the Chinese children?

Sometimes, when they say bad things about India and we get angry then we stand up to them. But normal things we don't really say it that much.

I'm friends with some of the Chinese people because I speak Chinese but I don't play with them because they speak Chinese all the time and I don't know every single word.

There's one girl who is half Chinese and half Indian so the Chinese children play with her because she is half Chinese but because we are all Indian they don't play with us.

I remember when I was in year 3 and they made fun of my food...it was red beans and they said it looked like poop. And they say we are disgusting because we eat with our hands. They also care about our skin colour when skin colour technically doesn't matter at all. They use make-up, they get pimples so why should we care?

Interviewer: So how often do you have these kinds of discussions?

Every day life.

Not often.

For her it's not often but for me it's almost every day.

Interviewer: So you are more willing to have these discussions than the other girls?

No, it's because they are jealous of me because I have more things than them...because my family gives me more things.

She is very rich.

And sometimes we have fights, like back in Year 4 we had loads of fights.

Interviewer: So the Indian girls have fights? What kinds of problems do you have with each other?

Back in year 4 we were all friendly then a new girl came and I found out that they were writing bad stuff about me so I told the teacher...and this stopped in year 5 but it started again in year six, like jealousy, like some Indian girls will be together and I will be talking to another friend, an Indian, and they will come and take them.

We don't take them...

Sometimes there is a miscommunication between us and it can start fights, like small things become big things.

Yes.

But normal fights will be okay for us...

...because that's daily life.

Yep.

But sometimes when I am with your group...sometimes I really feel out of it.

Interviewer: When you are in the group?

Yes.

I feel like I don't fit into the group because they are all playing and no one is talking so I just left. So I feel left out.

Interviewer: What do you think is different about you and the others?

I don't know.

Interviewer: What do you think are the major differences between the Indian girls in Year 6?

There is not a big problem, it's just that they get too much excited and they think that I am not important and all of the others are really important than me. So I get left out.

And some things, like really little things, like a girl in 6B if you just touch her she shouts "Stop it!"

So why are you friends with her?

Interviewer: What do you think?

I think a big difference between me and the other girls is that I am from the north and north and south it doesn't really make a big difference.

Interviewer: It doesn't make a difference to you or it doesn't make a difference?

It doesn't make a difference. Like I was really good friends with Kaamil and then It was after a long holiday and these two girls became really close and in Science time, and I got really left out.

But you got left out because you were being annoying and always you are saying that you will go and tell your mum and if you don't play with me I will go and sit with my mum and she will get really angry...

I never said that.

Yes you did...Kaamil told me.

And one time you went and told you mum, and you were like 'mum, they won't play with me' and then your mums comes and you try to get us into trouble.

And one time you lied about your age...

I never said that.

Interviewer: A lot of these things seems like normal problems that any girls have in

school and probably the Chinese girls have similar problems. But are there any things which you think are special about the problems that the Indian children have? For example, language? You speak different languages, right?

Yes there was one time in PE when we were playing all the foreigners together and we were playing dodgeball and we were shouting things in Hindi.

Interviewer: Think about one Indian girl you really get along with who you think is your best friend...can you describe that one person?

I have two.

I have none.

I like one girl who is really polite and there are other girls who are like snack stealers. And two girls didn't want to sit with me at lunch because I was being rude to me and this girl said she would sit with me.

I have two good friends. One thing is the language but the main thing is we help each other in small matters and try not to make small matters into big problems. If we get hurt then we help each other and we play nicely and have fun. Like that.

I have one. We both don't like arguments....and we help each other... and we try not to create problems and we both commonly have the same kind of language and handwriting and stuff like that.

We play nicely and we have fun.

Interviewer: Do you have any Chinese friends?

Yes.

Yes.

Yes, I have many.

Interviewer: But I don't see you with them at school.

She has one.

That is in my society.

Interviewer: At the start of this interview I asked you why your friends at school are Indian and why Chinese children don't want to be friends with you. Now it seems that there are Chinese children who do want to be friends with you. Why do you think some of the Chinese will and some won't be friends with you?

I know that two girls can be friends with me because they have lived in Canada.

And some Chinese, if they have Chinese friends in school and one of them becomes our friend then their friends will go against them and ask why are you playing with this person? So we need to find a friend who doesn't have a friend.

Interviewer: Do you have a Chinese friend?

Interviewer: In my building, yes, but not in school. On time I had a Chinese friend, but then all her friends starting turning against me and then she had to stop being friends with me.

My Chinese friend has friends but she is really mean and she makes rumours about other people.

And some Chinese people are kind and some are rude and there was two girls who were friends with me and then her friends turned against her and then she stopped being friends with me.

But she is still my friend.

But that's only in maths class – because you are in Mr. Berry's class.

Yeah, I just talk to her when we are going up and coming down.

That's just 'communication friends'.

Interviewer: Do you have Chinese friends?

Only in my society, not at school. Well, I have Chinese friends at school but I only play with them sometimes.

Interviewer: So it seems to me that there are some Chinese who want to be friends with you but they can't because their friends won't let them.

Yes

Yes

Yes

Interviewer: So you can be friends between classes?

Yes, but not in the playground because the other Chinese can see them and will turn against them so they pretend not to be our friends.

Erica's not like that.

Yes she is.

She's not like that to me.

You don't know her.

She's not like that to me.

I used to have a lot of friends in year one that I played with them but suddenly I got in a big fight.

We try to get along because we live in the same building and we travel in the same car to school. But sometimes there is a communication problem and someone says something and 'boom' there is a big problem. But then we can communicate and solve the problem.

Interviewer: Is this anything to do with language, because you all speak different Indian dialects?

It's not differences in language because it is just English.

Interviewer: So what is the difference?

Well for example, if the first time we say the truth and the second time we say something different, they will say 'Did you lie the first time?' And then something goes wrong.

Interviewer: What do you think is the main difference between the Chinese children and the Indian children?

Language.

Sometimes they show off.

Personality.

And one thing happened in class today. In assembly. And we are supposed to sit quietly and then we get housepoints. And we sitting boy-girl-boy-girl so we don't talk. And she was sitting next to Rajesh and she stepped on his foot and is said 'ouch' and then later in class when she asked who didn't talk in class and Rajesh raised his hand and Erica said 'No you didn't' like that.

Interviewer: So are you saying that the Indian children are better behaved?

Well...

It's like the Chinese children don't even respect elders. They make fun of them. Like suppose the teacher shows them something and they say 'this sucks' and they use the middle finger word.

They say every single bad word they know.

And Bassino is rude to the teachers .

One time my hand was on Bassino's table and he shouted 'Get off!' so loudly.

Chinese boys and Korean boys especially don't like to say 'sorry'.

And today I was walking and this boy Jim kicked the ball and it went on my face and he didn't say sorry.

It's like a tradition not to say sorry.

Like we don't need to say sorry because it's not our fault...you were standing there.

The secondary students are better.

I don't think so...one time I saw a student deliberately pour a bottle of milk on the floor so the cleaning lady had to clean it up.

Interviewer: You have given me some very interesting descriptions about Chinese children. I would now like to ask you, what do you think they think about you?

Disgusting country. Skin.

There's one girl and I come early and she talks to me and she says things to me that I wouldn't want to say in front of her because it would make her sad.

Tell me what she says about me.

She says that her face is creepy and head is so fat.

It's just because my hair is so curly. My skull is not big bit I have a lot of curly hair.

[A heated discussion about telling teachers and being friends.]

Interviewer: So you are saying that when the Chinese children look at you they are seeing the physical features, they way you look?

Yes

Yes

One time I was walking and there was water on the floor and I slipped and fell on my leg, I fell on my fractured leg and they laughed. And the teacher didn't tell them anything. Because this is China and it is a government school and that is why they put the Chinese in the lead because if they don't put them in the lead then they might close the school.

Interviewer: Who makes this decision to put the Chinese in the lead?

The government.

Interviewer: But who in the school makes these decisions.

The teachers. The Chinese teachers.

Like if they are setting out a play it is always the Chinese children who take the lead. role.

They are the popular people in this place.

And they can't even speak proper English. Yet they still get the lead role because...

Interviewer: Do you mean the class teachers as well?

No

Some

Interviewer: Because I noticed that a lot of Indian children get leading roles in these things.

Oh that's only because they [can't understand]

I'm not talking about math or student of the semester I'm talking about plays and making a speech.

[Describes a game on Hong Kong trip] The Chinese girls caught me and helped me down. They were really nice to me. They are nice when you play together.

One time I was captain in PE and you had to pick players and I picked Rajesh because no one ever picks him and then all the Chinese were talking about that I fancy him of something. They just make rumours because they think that we like someone.

Interviewer: It seems interesting that they are saying you picked him because you like him and not because he is Indian.

My dad always says that the Chinese when there is a problem they always go together and but when we have a problem the Indians always turn against each other. He says, they are all a community Chinese people and why aren't we. We are always fighting with each other.

But are still Indians. We still all do the same language.

Rihan has no problem when he comes to play football...the Chinese don't care who they play football with.

Indians can't even stand each other for too long.

In year three no one played with Rihan or any of the boys.

I used to be told to play with Rihan.

Then in year 4 he got some Indian friends.

[a discussion and disagreement over which children were in the year group]

Interviewer: When you are at school and when you with other children who are not Indian, is there anything about yourself that you try to change?

My accent. If see foreigners, they feel my accent is really weird so I try to...

Interviewer: So you are trying to make yourself sound less Indian?

No.

No.

I am trying to help them understand what I am saying.

Some of the foreigners think that we do not have nice accents. My mum says I have a nice accent for everything, but I do manage to get the foreigners to understand me.

Today in assembly when she said 'yes' when we got the housepoints and she had just been speaking to Rajesh and she said 'yes' with strong Indian accent and the two Chinese girls in front of her said 'how ugly and horrible she sounds!'

I say that if you want to be friends with me then this is how I am and I am not going to change. If you want to be comfortable with me then you have to change. I was born this way. I am just saying that if you want to be my friend then I don't mind the way you are and this is the way I am.

But you tried to make your hair straight and not curly so one will think that you have a big head.

No one thinks you have a big head.

You don't have a big head.

But for me it's not funny.

Interviewer: We are running out of time and I would like to ask you about your relationship with your parents...

Awesome

Awesome

Awesome

Interviewer: But with regards to the school...when you talk to your parents about the school, what kinds of things to your parents tell you, what advice do they give you?

One time I misunderstood something last year, like Bhumija's money was stolen and she said

that maybe, 'maybe' she took it and then I went home and my mum called her mum because I didn't want to be blamed for something I didn't do...

Not blaming...

[Argument about what happened]

Interviewer: I mean what advice do you parents give you about problems with Chinese children at the school?

They say just make you own choices and don't worry about other people. Don't take other people's advices if they are not good for you.

My mum didn't tell it to me but to my sister when her friends were not good to her, my mum said that if they are good friends they will come to you and just ignore her.

Interviewer: Do your parents want you to have Chinese friends?

I already have Chinese friends outside school so my mum says that if I don't have any friends in school then it doesn't matter.

I don't go downstairs much in my society but my mum's says to go and make Chinese friends.

That is to learn better Chinese but actually I don't need to because I can learn Chinese myself, they have tutors but I can learn it by myself. Like I hear Chinese and I ask what does it mean and then I get to know and now...

And I gave her a book and she improved her Chinese.

I rarely go downstairs because I am shy to play with the Chinese children but Kaamil I know a lot and I'm not shy.

Interviewer: Last question: how do you see yourself as a student. Comparing the Chinese and Indian children, who do you think is better?

Indian.

Indian definitely.

Because they don't have manners.

Interviewer: I mean academically, in class.

It depends.

Still Indians.

Because sometimes they are so mean to the teacher. And if the teacher shouts at them they say [Chinese phrase]

Interviewer: You are talking about behaviour but what about in tests?

I think Chinese.

In English tests they probably get low marks because...

No, they get the really high marks.

Interviewer: Do Indian children do well in tests?

I do. I am level five.

Interviewer: In maths?

I am in the top top [sic] group.

I am in low.

Low.

Before I was in top set English and then I fractured my leg and the teacher didn't know my result so that's why she moved me to the middle set. I already asked her and she said that is the reason and she said I will get back soon.

I am high set too.

Interviewer: How do rate yourself as a student?

I think really good because Miss Patricia always says look at Ravleen she is so good.

Miss Patricia is always like that every day.

She just loves Indian girls.

Chinese women always hugging me and touching my hair, oh why was I born with curly hair!

Miss Patricia and Miss Nicola really love Indian culture and food.

Always with the Chinese TPs good communication and good talkative.

Miss Patricia used to dance with us and it was so cool.

[A discussion about TPs and dancing and Korean boy in ICT class]

Interviewer: Thank you

Appendix 9

Notes from an interview with an Indian parent

Tuesday, June 18, 2013

I spoke with Saachi one-to-one, unrecorded, for 45 minutes in my classroom today.

Even after much thought, I was still very unsure how to begin the interview. I expressed this and then attempted to explain what I was trying to do and what I had so far done. I also read out my description of the 'Imaginary Indian Child' and then asked for her reaction to this.

When Saachi first spoke, there was a focus on ethnicity: body features (body hair) and skin colour. She expressed clear concern that the Indian children at the school were subjected to racially prejudiced comments which affected their confidence. She mentioned her own reception daughter and presented an example of this happening at a very young age, with her daughter asking why she was black. Saachi raised the question of where are the children learning this? Presumably from home. I offered the possibility that they may have not heard it from their own parents but from other children but ultimately at some point it must have come from a parent.

I presented my case that the main dynamic may be communication difficulties which may be related to gender issues. Saachi was at first taken aback by this suggestion and I expected something like this. I believe that by the end of the interview she was considering this theory but was strongly skeptical. She offered alternative perspectives which were extremely interesting. One observation she made was the greater influence of grand-parents in Chinese society, where the parents are both away and working. In that sense she could conceive that there could be greater maternal influence with the Indian children because the Indian mothers are home-makers and spend more time with their children.

Saachi offered a further perspective whereby the main difference between the Chinese and Indians is that Indians are 'god-fearing' and feel guilt but could not conceive of this difference in terms of gender.

I asked Saachi if she considered that the gender gap was relatively narrow in Chinese society. She was able to describe Chinese society as more 'chauvinistic' and that Chinese women can be more chauvinistic in attitude – such as pretending to be better than they are.

We agreed that Chinese children were pushed more and that Chinese society was more aggressively pursuing success, whereas for the Indian parents academic success was sufficient.

I showed Saachi my hypotheses. She agreed strongly that adaptation is key to integration. She disagreed that girls are more adaptive and that in fact boys are more adaptive – based on observations of the Indian boys in GOS secondary. She agreed that communication was a key issue, but was skeptical with the gender paradigm.

Appendix 10 – Comparison of academic attainment

A) Comparison of maths sets

Year Group	Proportion of Non East Asians in whole year group	Proportion of Non East Asians in Low Ability Maths Group	Proportion of Non East Asians in High Ability Maths Group
Year 3	26.4%	50%	7.7%
Year 4	27.1%	57.9%	7%
Year 5	21.1%	30%	12.5%
Year 6	14.5%	5%	4.2%
Year 7	17.2%	40%	8.7%

East Asian is defined as from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea or Taiwan. Percentages are rounded to one-decimal place.

B) Writing Grade Point Average for non-East Asian children

YEAR GROUP	GPA
3	1.79
4	2.82
5	2.60
6	2.44

A =4 B=3 C=2 D=1 E=0

A grade of B (3) or above indicates a student who is writing at the expected level for a child of that age. Data is taken from Semester 1, 2013-14 reports.

C) Comparison of reports grades in PE between Chinese and Western teachers

Year Group	Mean GPA of non-East Asian students with Chinese teacher (effort)	Mean GPA of non-East Asian students with Chinese teacher (attainment)	Mean GPA of non-East Asian students with Western teacher (effort)	Mean GPA of non-East Asian students with Western teacher (attainment)
3	3.55	2.64	2.86	2.29
4	3.00	2.71	3.07	2.47
5	3.50	2.70	3.40	2.80

A comparison of the mean GPA in PE of non-East Asian with a Chinese PE teacher or with a Western PE teacher yields no quantitative evidence that non-East Asian children perform worse with Chinese teachers.