

**Research Project: Educational Provision for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong:
Meeting the Challenges of the Proposed Racial Discrimination Bill (HKIEd8001-PPR-2)**

REPORT ON RESEARCH FINDINGS

Comparing Hong Kong Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for Teaching Chinese and Non-Chinese Students*

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Background

- The Racial Discrimination Bill was approved by Executive Council in November 2006 and introduced to the Legislative Council in December.
- One outcome of the development of such a Bill has been an increased focus on educational provision for ethnic minority students. The Legislative Council Panel on Education has met on many occasions to consider the Bill's provisions and advocates of ethnic minority groups have been vocal in their support for increased and better provision of education for ethnic minority students.

The Research

- It is against this background that the Public Policy Research Project: "Educational Provision for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong: Meeting the Challenges of the Proposed Racial Discrimination Bill" was funded by Research Grants Council.

Objectives of the Research

- This research project contains 4 major objectives, they are as following:
 1. To outline the system level policy context in which education is provided for ethnic minority students
 2. To explore the way in which schools develop policy and adapt practice to meet the needs of ethnic minority students.
 3. To appreciate the aspirations that ethnic minority parents and students have for education and the barriers they perceive to be operating at different levels.
 4. To assess the extent to which the Hong Kong SAR government may be exposed to possible litigation under the proposed Racial Discrimination Bill and suggest new policy directions for policy and practice to meet this challenge

The Issues to be addressed in this report:

- The following issues would be addressed in this report:
 1. Policy issues associated with educational provision for ethnic minority students
 2. Teachers' sense of efficacy in responding to the needs of ethnic minority students
 3. Ethnic minority parents/students' attitudes to educational provision

Policy Issues

1. The Adequacy of the Bill

The Ethnic Minority Bill, since its introduction, has attracted much criticism on its adequacy in protecting the rights of ethnic minorities. Peterson's (2007, p.17) has commented that "the Hong Kong government has taken a step backward and proposed that Hong Kong's ethnic minorities should be content with a far weaker definition of discrimination than the definition enacted in 1995 in the SDO and the DDO" Chan (2005, p.605) has also been critical of the proposed legislation but from the perspective of its exclusion of Mainland Chinese from the provisions of the proposed Ordinance. Loper (2007) has argued that the provisions of Section 58, referring to exemptions in terms of language, are too onerous given the significance of language to successful educational achievement. Section 58 means that while schools cannot discriminate against ethnic minority students in terms of admission, they are not required to do anything once students entered the school to support their particular learning needs.

2. Adequacy of the Policy Context

In addition to the limited area the bill covers, the absence of elements such as multiculturalism in the policy context has also undermined the effectiveness of the bill. Joppke (2004, p. 451) has pointed out that liberal democratic states support opposing responses to cultural diversity:

Abolish it by means of 'antidiscrimination' policy, and protect or promote it

by means of 'multiculturalism' policy. In other words, liberal-democratic norms require the simultaneous rendering invisible *and* visible of ethnic diversity.

This formulation raises interesting questions about the relationship between the two kinds of policies and the extent of their dependence on each other. The distinction is particularly relevant to the current context in Hong Kong as it grapples to put into effect its first Racial Discrimination Ordinance. It is Joppke's 'antidiscrimination' element that characterizes the Bill. Yet without "celebrating" diversity (multiculturalism) what values underlie attempts to ensure discrimination free education provision?

3. Provision: Sufficient or Equitable?

Apart from the area covered by the bill and the policy context, the justice behind the bill could be another concern. As Chan (2001) pointed out, "When it comes to matters about people's well being, material welfare and life chances, Confucian justice seeks to promote sufficiency for all and not equality between individuals". This concept of social justice is expressed through the idea of impartiality (Chan, 2001):

Political rule should be impartial or fair (公 *gong* in Chinese) to everyone – by that it means political rule should promote the good of everyone without prejudice or favoritism. In other words, it would be a violation of fairness or justice (公 *gong*) if the ruler were selectively concerned about some people only.

Teachers and Ethnic Minority Students - Survey

- In order to understand schools' support to the ethnic minority students, survey instrument – a Chinese version of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (C-TSE) had been developed and delivered to teachers of 14 participant schools. The objective of the survey is to consult and compare teachers' sense of efficacy in supporting the learning different needs of Chinese and non-Chinese students. The survey instrument contains 12 items about various aspects of teacher efficacy, including: Classroom management, instructional strategies and student engagement etc. In the end, a sample size (n) of 269

had been achieved, which includes 2 sets of responses from the same group, namely: 1) sense of efficacy for teaching Chinese students; 2) Teachers sense of efficacy for teaching Non-Chinese Students.

The Survey Instrument: C-TSE

- The survey instrument is composed of 3 categories of questions, each interviewee was asked to provide scores for each of the question statements, on their sense of efficiency in teaching Chinese and non-Chinese students respectively. The question statements are as shown in table 1:

Table 1: 3 categories of questions under the C-TSE

Efficacy in student Engagement Qs 2, 3, 4, 11	Efficacy in Instructional Strategies Qs 5, 9, 10, 12	Efficacy in Classroom Management Qs 1, 6, 7, 8
2 Motivate students who show low interest in school work	5 Craft good questions for your students	1 Control disruptive behavior in the classroom
3 Get students to believe they can do well at school work	9 Use a variety of assessment strategies	6 Get students to follow classroom rules
4 Help your students value learning	10 Provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused	7 Calm a student who is disruptive or noisy
11 Assist families in helping their children do well in school	12 Implement alternative strategies in your classroom	8 Establish a classroom management system with each group of students

Quantitative Responses

- The following tables Compare the scores between Hong Kong Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for teaching Chinese and Non-Chinese Students in Hong Kong Classrooms

Table 2: Comparison of Hong Kong Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for teaching Chinese and Non-Chinese Students in Hong Kong Classrooms (9-pt scale; 9=most confident; 1=least confident)

Items	Chinese Students	Non-Chinese Students
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Q1	5.16 (1.565)	5.77 (1.671)
Q2	6.21 (1.382)	6.39 (1.405)
Q3	6.21 (1.433)	6.41(1.418)
Q4	6.37 (1.430)	6.65 (1.362)
Q5	6.31 (1.325)	6.40 (1.361)
Q6	6.46 (1.511)	6.78 (1.506)
Q7	5.77 (1.728)	6.30 (1.697)
Q8	5.68 (1.623)	6.12 (1.673)
Q9	5.69 (1.428)	5.98 (1.541)
Q10	6.50 (1.464)	6.74 (1.409)
Q11	5.68 (1.754)	5.79 (1.882)
Q12	5.93 (1.474)	6.27 (1.508)

Table 3: Paired-Samples T- test Results (Chinese – Non-Chinese; 9=most confident; 1=least confident)

Chinese – Non-Chinese	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q1	-.611	-4.809	243	.000
Q2	-.178	-1.642	241	.102
Q3	-.198	-1.920	242	.056
Q4	-.280	-2.604	242	.010
Q5	-.095	-1.002	241	.317
Q6	-.324	-2.865	243	.005
Q7	-.523	-4.320	242	.000
Q8	-.446	-4.281	241	.000
Q9	-.282	-2.845	240	.005
Q10	-.239	-2.391	242	.018
Q11	-.112	-.944	240	.346
Q12	-.342	-4.048	242	.000

Table 4: Efficacy in student Engagement (Chinese – Non-Chinese Students; 9=most confident; 1=least confident))

Efficacy in student Engagement				
Chinese – Non-Chinese	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q2	-.178	-1.642	241	.102
Q3	-.198	-1.920	242	.056
Q4	-.280	-2.604	242	.010
Q11	-.112	-.944	240	.346

Remark: No significant difference in most items

Table 5: Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (Chinese – Non-Chinese Students; 9=most confident; 1=least confident)

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies				
Chinese – Non-Chinese	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q5	-.095	-1.002	241	.317
Q9	-.282	-2.845	240	.005
Q10	-.239	-2.391	242	.018
Q12	-.342	-4.048	242	.000

Remark: Has significant differences in most items

Table 6: Efficacy in Classroom Management (Chinese – Non-Chinese Students; 9=most confident; 1=least confident)

Efficacy in Classroom Management				
Chinese – Non-Chinese	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q1	-.611	-4.809	243	.000
Q6	-.324	-2.865	243	.005
Q7	-.523	-4.320	242	.000
Q8	-.446	-4.281	241	.000

Remark: Has significant differences in ALL items

Some Observations

Teachers were more confident in teaching non-Chinese students

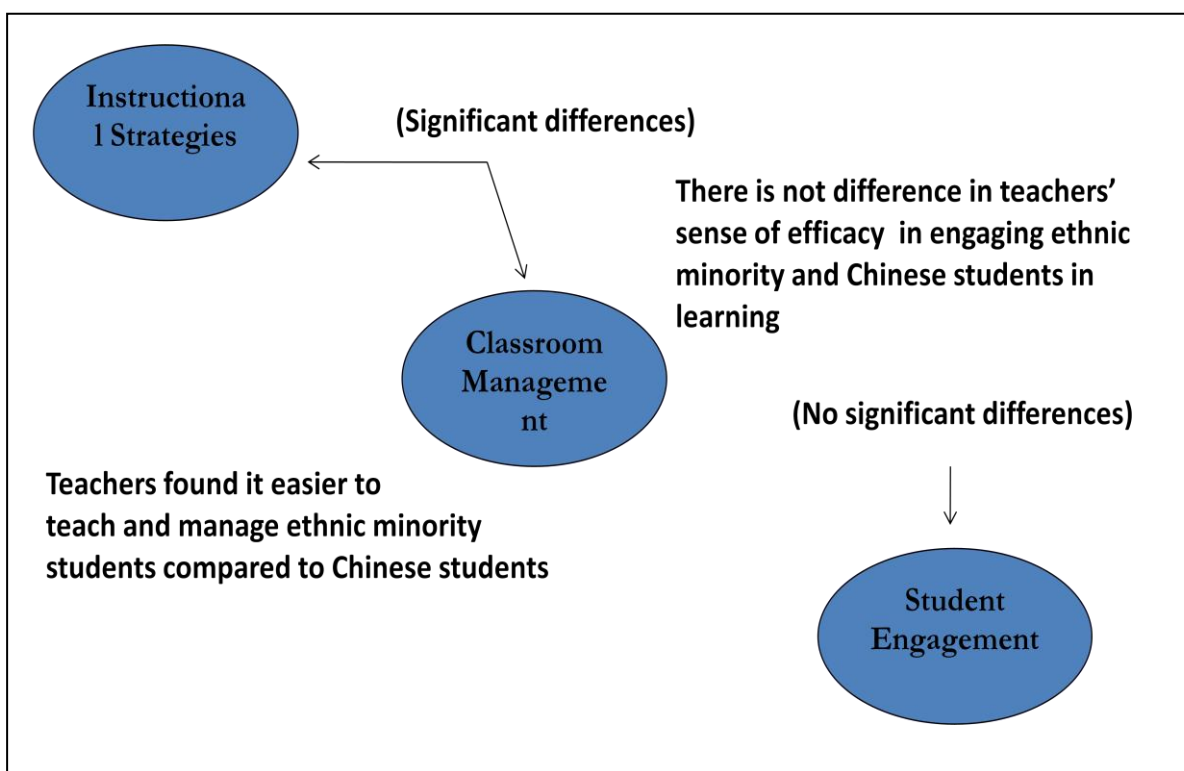
- In general, teachers reported that they had a higher level of sense of efficacy in teaching non-Chinese students than teaching Chinese students. In particular, there are significant differences in

- 1) All items in Classroom Management
- 2) Most items in Instructional Strategies
- 3) Only one item in Student Engagement

Scores for all items concerning ethnic minority (non-Chinese) students under the categories *Classroom Management* (1) and *Instructional Strategies* (2) are significantly higher than that of Chinese students. This reflects that teachers may find it easier to teach and manage ethnic minority students than Chinese students.

At the same time, no significant difference was found under the category of *Student Engagement*. This may imply that when coming to engaging students in learning, teachers may find it much the same working with ethnic minority students (non-Chinese students) or with Chinese students.

Figure 1: Summary of survey findings



- Questions (amended according to the presentation video – recorded during the presentation to teachers)
- 1) Why do teachers feel so confident about teaching ethnic minority students?
 - 2) Do teachers have the same expectations of ethnic minority students and Chinese students?
 - 3) Should teachers know about the specific needs of ethnic minority students?

Teachers and Ethnic Minority Students - Qualitative Responses

- In addition to the survey reported in the previous part, interviews were conducted respectively in two of the project schools. Interviewees included 24 school teachers and 24 ethnic minority students from India, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Indonesia and Thailand, and also 15 parents of the ethnic minority students. The interviews were unstructured and conducted in either English or Cantonese. Below highlights some of the findings from the interviewees' responses:

1. Understanding of cultural difference

Teachers interviewed commonly addressed the importance of understanding the cultural difference between Chinese and non-Chinese students in the classroom and suggested the following ways in dealing with cultural diversity in classrooms:

1. Understand students' background, habits and character in terms of the origin of their culture.
2. Respect to the cultural difference of students
3. Build up a ground for all kinds of schooling activities, such as devising teaching strategies, facilitating students' learning, curriculum adaptation, school guidance and discipline.

Below contains some of the views of the teachers:

“Learning a foreign culture helps me to understand how they think and then teach them the values they should bear.” (Teacher A)

“When Chinese kids fight with each other, I stopped them that and tell them it is wrong to do that. However, I once stopped a Pakistan kid fighting. He told me that’s what his father taught him; and he needs to fight back whenever being bullied by others.” (Teacher B)

2. Differences of the learning behavior between Chinese and non-Chinese students

Interviews with teachers reflects the difference in learning behavior between Chinese and non-Chinese students, as many teachers have pointed

1. Difference of learning behavior exists in terms of different learning needs, learning motivation, new patterns of classroom behavior, adjustment of classroom management strategies, adaptation of subject contents.
2. Teachers generally find it difficult to deal with such differences.

For example, one of the interviewees had pointed out:

“NCSS (are) more active & talkative; (they need) more motivation on their concentration span in lesson. CSS (are) quiet but serious in school work; (they need) more motivation on their participation in lesson.”

Another teacher had noticed that:

“Non-Chinese students are more concentrated in handling visual arts, singing and playing, they are easier to express themselves.”

3. Promoting interpersonal relationship between Chinese and non-Chinese school practitioners

Interpersonal relationship between Chinese and non-Chinese students was another area of concern among the interviewees, 3 issues were highlighted below:

1. There is need to find out more ways to communicate with non-Chinese practitioners, compared to Chinese ones.
2. Teachers need to put more effort in building a partnership with non-Chinese participants.
3. It is important to understand the cultural practices of different cultural groups of students and what taboo they have.

As one of the teachers interviewed had pointed out:

It is easier to communicate with Chinese students, and to grasp effectively their degree of understanding to learning the target. It takes longer period to build up the trust between non-Chinese students and teachers; much time is needed for matching up the cultural differences."

4. Different levels of English language ability

The responses from interviews have also reflected the problems caused by the differences in English language ability in a multi-cultural classroom; the followings are some of the findings:

1. A wide range of English language ability exist in a multi-cultural classroom
2. Language divides people.
3. Language makes classroom management difficult.
4. Take more time to translate the teaching contents
5. Make the communication between school participants difficult
6. NET teachers found hard to communicate with Chinese students.

One of the students interviewed reflected that the difference in English language ability has significant impact to students' learning:

Although our teachers can use international language to teach, the English standard of most of the non-Chinese students is not high, there is sometimes problems in communication. Moreover, they may not understand what the teacher is teaching."

Such view is shared by the teachers, as one of the teachers interviewed pointed out:

“on issues of classroom management, when there are students using different languages in the same classroom there will be great communication problem, this may hinder progress of teaching.”

5. A core question to be answered

Having understood the significant impact of cultural difference to the Hong Kong classroom, the research team would like to raise the following questions:

- What does culture?
 1. What are Chinese and non-Chinese cultures?
 2. What does multi-culture mean for school practitioners in Hong Kong context?
 3. To what extent can different cultures be merged into one at theoretical and practical levels?
- What are the views of Chinese and non-Chinese school practitioners upon “culture”?

Is there a culture called non-Chinese? What do they behave like? Where is non-China? If you are ethnically Chinese but lived in South Africa, what is your culture? We have “Chinese Students like this. What about ethnic Pakistanis that behave Chinese? Focus on the individual and less on the group. I have seen Filipinos behave like Chinese and Chinese behave like Pakistanis.”

Discussion

- A complex and contested policy
- Survey responses seem to indicate teachers have some confidence in their efficacy for teaching ethnic minority students. Perhaps teachers’ sense of efficacy is a unitary construct irrespective of group?
- Qualitative responses point to teachers’ sensitivity to cultural issues.
- Next steps – further interviews with teachers and students and parents.

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