

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**

**The Effect of Ethnic Identity and Language Learning  
on Chinese Adolescents' Self-Esteem**

**by**

**Wen-Shya Lee**

**A THESIS**

**SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS**

**GRADUATE DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

**CALGARY, ALBERTA**

**April, 2001**

**© Wen-Shya Lee 2001**



**National Library  
of Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada**

**Acquisitions and  
Bibliographic Services**

**Acquisitions et  
services bibliographiques**

**395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada**

**395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada**

*Your file Votre référence*

*Our file Notre référence*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-64921-0

**Canada**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the complex issues of self-esteem development, ethnic identity formation and heritage language maintenance among Chinese adolescents. The intent was to identify some of the related factors that influenced Chinese adolescents' global, academic, and social self-esteem and their ethnic identity retention.

One hundred and ten Chinese students aged 11 to 18 from a Chinese heritage language school in Calgary were surveyed. The instruments employed included the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories, and the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. Participants' self-confidence with English and Chinese, and learning attitudes towards Chinese, were also investigated.

Results confirmed the importance of ethnic identity in minority adolescents' global self-esteem. Self-confidence with English and school achievement were significant predictors of both global and academic self-esteem. Other than English proficiency, there were no other variables in this study related to social self-esteem. Three variables, Chinese learning enjoyment, years of studying Chinese and self-confidence with English, influenced Chinese students' ethnic identity development.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. John W. Friesen, for his professional guidance in the preparation and the completion of this thesis. His student-centered supervision and whole-hearted support let me implement my research ideas and complete my M. A. program on schedule.

I would also like to thank Dr. Walter Zwirner for his friendly and insightful instruction and advice in statistical analysis during my graduate study at the University of Calgary. As well, I extend my thanks to Dr. Lauran Sandals and Dr. Tom Gougeon for their standards of excellence, critical analysis, and warm-hearted instruction in research methodology and technology. These individuals have guided me to improve the quality of my research throughout the development and writing of this study.

This study could not be realized without the assistance and cooperation of The Chinese Academy. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the students, school personnel and parents.

Finally, I would like to thank those very special people in my life who have given me the emotional pillar and understanding which makes the accomplishment of difficult things possible. First, there is my husband, Hung-Chih Lin. Without his encouragement, support, and unfailing confidence I could never have started the journey of my graduate study as a new immigrant and mother of two children. Second, I would like to thank my lovely sons, Sam and Steven, who grew to be quite independent and were patient with their Mom as she pursued her academic studies.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval Page.....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Table of Contents. ....	v
List of Tables.....	ix
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose and Importance of the Study.....	6
Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	7
Operational Definitions.....	10
Organization of the Study.....	11
 CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	12
Self-Concept.....	12
Self-Esteem.....	13
Definition.....	13
The Influence on Self-Esteem on Minority Groups.....	14
Definitions of Ethnic Identity.....	18
Conceptual Frameworks of Ethnic Identity.....	19
Ethnic Identity and Social Identity Theory.....	19

Acculturation as a Framework for Studying Ethnic Identity.....	20
Ethnic Identity Formation.....	24
Self-Esteem and Ethnic Identity.....	27
Heritage Language, Ethnic Identity, and Self-Esteem.....	31
Language Attitude.....	32
Ethnic Group Attitudes.....	33
Self-Evaluation.....	33
Language Learning among Chinese Students.....	35
Rationale of the Current Study.....	38
 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....	41
Description of Participants.....	41
Participants Profile.....	42
Age group Profiles.....	43
Demographic Discussion Between Age Groups.....	46
Measures.....	47
Procedure.....	50
Statistical Analysis.....	50
 CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY.....	52
Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis.....	54
Descriptive Results.....	56
Language Use and Language Proficiency.....	56

Self-Evaluation in Three Aspects of Self-Esteem.....	58
Ethnic Self-Identification and Ethnic Identity.....	58
Attitude Toward Chinese Language Learning.....	59
Differences on Three Aspects of Self-Esteem.....	60
The Predictors of Three Aspects of Self-Esteem.....	66
The Predictors of Development of Ethnic Identity.....	68
 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	 70
Discussion for Research Question One.....	70
Language Use and Language Confidence.....	70
Self-Evaluation in Three Aspects of Self-Esteem.....	71
Ethnic Self-Identification and Ethnic Identity.....	72
Attitude Toward Chinese Language Learning.....	73
Discussion for Research Question Two.....	75
Hypothesis 2.1.....	75
Hypothesis 2.2.....	77
Hypothesis 2.3.....	78
Hypothesis 2.4.....	79
Hypothesis 2.5.....	79
Hypothesis 2.6.....	80
Discussion for Research Question Three.....	80
Discussion for Research Question Four.....	83
Conclusions.....	85

Limitations of the Study.....	87
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	90
Summary of the Study.....	90
Recommendations and Implications.....	93
REFERENCES.....	96
APPENDICES.....	105
Appendix A Cover Letter and Consent Form.....	106
Appendix B The Student Questionnaire.....	115



## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3-1	Distribution of Participants: Gender, Birthplace, Residency, Self-Identification, GPA, Language Use at Home, Highest Education of Parents, and Years Studying Chinese by Age Group.....	44
Table 4-1	Factor Matrix Orthogonally Rotated .....	55
Table 4-2	Self-Confidence with Chinese and English.....	57
Table 4-3	Descriptive Statistics and Group Comparison by t Test for Self-Evaluation, Ethnic Identity, Self-Confidence in Language and Chinese Language Learning.....	58
Table 4-4	Chinese Learning Willingness .....	60
Table 4-5	The Summary of ANOVA on Three Aspects of Self-Esteem by Demographic Variables .....	63
Table 4-6	Comparison of Subgroup Means on Three Aspects of Self-Esteem .....	65
Table 4-7	The Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Global Self-Esteem .....	67
Table 4-8	The Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Academic Self-Esteem... ..	68
Table 4-9	The Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Social Self-Esteem .....	68
Table 4-10	The Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Development of Ethnic Identity .....	69

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Adolescence is a challenging time of physical, social, intellectual and emotional change (Gerler, 1986), and self-esteem is widely acknowledged to be one of the important factors in adolescent development. Self-esteem has been found to be positively correlated to general psychological well-being, and negatively associated with depression and hopelessness among adolescents (Harter, 1993). Niebrzydowski (1990) points out that adolescents with low self-esteem display some negative attitudes toward themselves, lack confidence in their talents and abilities, lack motivation for action, and reveal a tendency to resign from a number of tasks. This may lead to considerable limitation of their social contacts and restrict those contacts to only a small group. Owing to the psychological importance of self-esteem, a great deal of research has been devoted to understanding its sources (Rosenberg, 1986; Wylie, 1979).

Most early research on self-esteem focused on individual competence and interpersonal experiences such as academic ability, athletic competence, social acceptance, or physical appearance (Harter, 1993). Such perspectives, however, ignore the impact of group membership on self-esteem, which is considered by many researchers to be an important domain for ethnic minority youth (e. g., Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Moreover, without considering the impact of ethnic and cultural differences on the multifaceted domains of self-esteem, much of the research has resulted in controversial and inconsistent findings on self-esteem among

minority groups (e.g., Dukes & Martinex, 1994; Harper & Marshall, 1991; Mullis, Mullis, & Normandin, 1992). In order to resolve these inconsistencies by differences in theoretical frameworks and in measures of self-esteem, researchers in the U.S.A. have conducted studies employing the same framework and extending measures of self-esteem (global self-esteem and public self-esteem) to examine the impact of group identity on minority adolescents' well-being. Thus, in the recent decade, critical research issues concerning the role of ethnic identity to overall identity and human development for minority adolescents have been increasingly studied.

Research based on social identity theory illustrates that racism and discrimination have to some extent affected the self-esteem of minority youth, especially oppressed groups (e. g., Hogg, Abrams, & patel, 1987; Tajfel, 1978). However, the assumption that lower social status or negative stereotypes result in lower self-esteem for ethnic groups has been consistently refuted in some empirical studies. For instance, according to Tashakkori's study (1992), African American adolescents either did not differ, or scored higher than White adolescents on measures of global self-esteem. Similarly, Martinez and Dukes (1997) found that Latino adolescents generally showed global self-esteem scores equal to or higher than those of other ethnic groups. In contrast, other studies applying the framework of private domain traits (e.g., global self-esteem) and public domain traits (e.g., academic competence, social acceptance) to examine self-esteem among minority adolescents have suggested that "race" does not have a significant negative impact on global self-esteem, but does seem to have a negative impact on public self-esteem for male minority adolescents (Duck & Martinez, 1994; Martinez & Duck, 1997). These findings have demonstrated the natural complexities of self-concept and self-esteem,

particularly for minority groups.

In examining the private domain of self-esteem, Phinney, Cantuand and Kurtz (1997) suggest that membership in a lower status ethnic group does not account for low or high global self-esteem, and the sense of belonging to a group and the evaluation of the group appear to be the influential factors relating to global self-esteem. This leads one to conclude that a positive and strong identification with one's ethnic group may enhance global self-esteem. This assertion has been supported by several studies applying Phinney's developmental framework in investigating the relationship between ethnic identity and global self-esteem (Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997). As for the public domain of self-esteem, researchers have indicated that due to institutional racism and social comparisons, ethnic minorities seem to have lower public self-esteem (Duke & martinez, 1994). Based on empirical findings linking self-esteem and ethnic identity, it is clear that what may be needed is to examine the relationship of ethnic identity not only to global self-esteem, but also to other public domain traits such as academic self-esteem and social self-esteem.

Another problematic area in current studies of group identity and self-esteem on social and research validity still exists in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity. First, because of historical and cultural differences among ethnic groups, the types of self-beliefs underlying self-esteem differ by ethnicity (Tashakkori, 1992), and the factors underlying self-esteem differ across cultures (Diener & Diener, 1995). Second, most of the research on ethnic group identity as a factor in self-esteem has been conducted in the United States and focuses on specific ethnic groups such as African Americans and Latino Americans. There has been little research on this topic with Asian adolescents in

Canada (Lan, 1992). Third, most studies have looked for correlations between various measures of group identity and self-esteem without considering other factors that may confound the relationship. It is, therefore, not clear how much group identity contributes to self-esteem in comparison to other factors such as gender, academic performance, and language competence.

Even though a number of research findings have indicated that ethnic identity is an important influence on the well-being of ethnic minority youth (e.g., Lorenzo- Hernandez & Ouellette, 1998; Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney et al., 1997), there are still some critical issues that need to be discussed. For example, to what extent does ethnic identity influence minority students' self-esteem? Why do individuals display differing degrees of awareness and acceptance of ethnic identity? How do minority adolescents develop their ethnic identity from the unexamined stage to the achieved stage?

Social scientists have tried to explain why individuals display differing degrees of awareness and acceptance of ethnic identity and a number of contextual factors have been identified, such as frequency of encounters with members of the dominant culture (Cross, 1978), generation of immigration (Der Karabetian, 1980), and parental attitudes (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). Nevertheless, degrees of proficiency in ethnic language and literacy as potential factors in the development of ethnic identity have been ignored in models of ethnic identity development (Helms, 1990; Banks, 1994). In fact, there is evidence that heritage language learning is highly associated with ethnic identity (e.g., Imbens-Bailey, 1997) and can make a difference in students' self-esteem (e.g., Garrett, Griffiths, James & Scholfield, 1994; Wright & Taylor, 1995) for some ethnic groups. Therefore, further research perspectives focusing on the impact of ethnic language

learning on ethnic identity development should be integrated to the research field of ethnic identity and self-esteem among ethnic groups.

It is conceivable that acquisition of the ancestral language alongside a dominant societal language may provide children with greater opportunity to become involved in the life of their ethnic community. Knowledge of one's heritage language may lead to positive attitudes toward one's ethnic community (Saunders, 1988; Ferdman, 1990). This kind of involvement in one's ethnic background may protect children from lower self-esteem in terms of denigration and discrimination. However, despite the acceptance of the potential for heritage language education to have a positive impact on self-esteem, little research has attempted to explore the relationships among ethnic language education, ethnic identity development, and adolescent self-esteem of minority groups. Hence, the impact of heritage language learning on ethnic identity development should be addressed for ethnic groups who consider maintaining ethnic language to be one of the most important components of identity retention.

Finally, how minority students master mainstream English and simultaneously have good command of their ethnic language is also a significant issue, but it has been seldom considered in the literature. The decision for immigrant families to become bilingual relies ultimately on parental and individual struggles. What can immigrant families do to keep their basic communication tool within their own ethnic group without the expense of falling behind in English skills; or, on the other hand, are they able to learn English without losing their ethnic language? To language minority students, becoming bilingual is much more than owning two languages; what they do may affect the rest of their lives and the lives of their parents in the areas of ethnic/cultural identity, social-cultural

involvement, and employment options. Thus, parents in many ethnic-minority groups have to make the conscious choice to either educate their children in an English-only environment with some possible regrets later on, or maintain their ethnic language at home to a maximal extent (Lin, 1998).

In summary, ethnic identity is central to the psychological adjustment of ethnic minority groups, but research on the topic is fragmentary and inconclusive because of differences in theoretical frameworks and instrumentation. The task of understanding the relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem is complicated, since the uniqueness of each ethnic group makes it difficult to draw general conclusions (Phinney, 1990). Focusing on one specific ethnic group in exploring research issues discussed above may lead to a better understanding of ethnic identity and self-esteem.

### **Purpose and Importance of the Study**

In an effort to identify factors affecting self-esteem and ethnic identity development among minority adolescents, this study will examine the relationship between language learning, ethnic identity and self-esteem within one Chinese group. The study has four purposes:

First, one objective will be to uncover the unique phenomenon and needs in adolescents' identity formation and psychological adjustment within a segment of the Chinese community. There is little empirical research in Canada that examines the relationship between ethnic identity development and self-esteem among Chinese junior high school and senior high school students. This study will seek to rectify that shortcoming.

Second, this study applies the framework of private and public domains on minority

adolescents' self-esteem as a means of understanding the psychological development of Chinese adolescents who are studying their heritage language at a Saturday Chinese heritage language school.

Third, due to the lack of sufficient studies that examine the relationships among language learning, ethnic identity development, and adolescent well-being, this study combines three dimensions of self-esteem, ethnic identity, and language learning as a means of investigating the potential impact of ethnic identity development and language learning on Chinese adolescents' psychological adjustment. Specifically, the study will examine the roles of ethnic identity development on Chinese adolescents' self-esteem (global, academic, and social) and explore the effects of language proficiency in English and Chinese on three aspects of self-esteem among Chinese adolescents.

Finally, the study explores the role of Chinese heritage language schools in ethnic identity formation and heritage language maintenance among Chinese adolescents, and closely examines Chinese adolescents' attitudes toward the learning of their ethnic language. There have been few studies on Calgary's Chinese schools. The most recent is Lan's (1992) study of Calgary's Chinese schools, which focused on cultural identity. Compared to the amount of research conducted in the United States, it appears that Chinese heritage language schools have been a neglected object of study by university researchers and social scientists in Canada.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Based on the purposes of this study described above, there are four research questions and corresponding hypotheses:



### Question One.

What are the characteristics of Chinese adolescents studying their heritage language with respect to global, academic, and social self-esteem, ethnic identity, and heritage language learning attitudes?

### Question Two.

Is there any difference in Chinese adolescents' self-evaluation with respect to global, academic, and social self-esteem in terms of demographic characteristics, development of ethnic identity, language confidence with English and Chinese, and Chinese heritage language learning?

The hypotheses formulated for this research question were:

Hypothesis 2.1: There are significant differences on mean scores of three measures of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) among demographic variables for Chinese heritage language school students.

Hypothesis 2.2: The mean scores on three measures of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) for Chinese heritage language school students with high ethnic identity are significantly higher than those of Chinese students with low ethnic identity.

Hypothesis 2.3: The mean scores on three measures of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) for Chinese heritage language school students with high self-confidence in English are significantly higher than those of Chinese students with low self-confidence in English.

Hypothesis 2.4: The mean scores on three measures of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) for Chinese heritage language school students with high self-

confidence in Chinese are significantly higher than those of Chinese students with low self-confidence in Chinese.

Hypothesis 2.5: There are significant differences in mean scores of three measures of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) between Chinese heritage language school students with high willingness in Chinese learning and Chinese students with low willingness in Chinese learning.

Hypothesis 2.6: There are significant differences in mean scores of three measures of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) between Chinese heritage language school students with high enjoyment in Chinese learning and Chinese students with low enjoyment in Chinese learning.

### Question Three.

What are predictors of global self-esteem, academic self-esteem and social self-esteem among Chinese adolescents?

The hypothesis formulated for this research question was:

Hypothesis 3.1: There exist significant variables for predicting global self-esteem, academic self-esteem, and social self-esteem respectively among Chinese heritage language school students.

### Question Four.

What are predictors of the development of ethnic identity among Chinese adolescents?

The hypothesis formulated for this research question was:

Hypothesis 4.1: There exist significant variables for predicting the development of ethnic identity among Chinese heritage language school students.

## **Operational Definitions**

### **Ethnic Identity**

Ethnic identity pertains to an individual's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and that part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behaviour which is due to ethnic group membership. Ethnic identity includes a commitment and sense of belonging to the group, a positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in social activities of the group (Phinney, 1990).

### **Ethnic Self-Identification**

Self-identification refers to the ethnic label that one uses for oneself. For instance, an individual may identify himself/herself as Chinese, Chinese-Canadian, or Canadian.

### **Global Self-Esteem**

Global self-esteem is that aspect of self-esteem which refers to the individual's overall general perceptions of his/her worth.

### **Academic Self-Esteem**

Academic self-esteem is that aspect of self-esteem which refers to the individual's perception of his/her ability to succeed academically.

### **Social Self-Esteem**

Social self-esteem is that aspect of self-esteem which refers to the individual's perception of his/her ability to engage in interpersonal interactions.

### **Heritage Language**

Heritage language usually refers to all languages other than the Aboriginal languages of First Nations people and the official languages of Canada (English and French).

### **Heritage Language Schools**

Heritage language schools refers to ethnic schools that are operated and administered by ethno-cultural organizations with instructional classes held outside the public/separate school systems.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the statement of the problem, purposes of the study, research questions and hypotheses, and operational definitions.

Chapter two presents a review of the literature relating to theoretical writing about self-esteem and ethnic identity, and empirical research concerning the impact of ethnic identity, second language proficiency, and heritage language learning on self-esteem of minority groups.

Chapter three describes the research methodology of the current study and Chapter four presents the results of the study. Chapter five includes a discussion of the findings of the study and delineates conclusions and limitations of the research. Chapter six includes a summary of major findings and offers recommendations concerning the implications of these findings for future research and educational practices.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This literature review intends to familiarise the reader with relevant research studies and provide a background for the study. First, brief definitions of self-esteem and ethnic identity are presented. Then three broad perspectives of ethnic identity, namely, social identity theory, acculturation framework, and developmental formation, are discussed. Next, the significance of ethnic identity and ethnic language learning on minority students' self-esteem is elaborated. Finally, studies that are specifically related to the issues emerging from the impact of bilingual acquisition on Chinese students' well-being and the role that Chinese schools play in ethnic identity retention are explored.

#### **Self-Concept**

Self, self-concept, and self-esteem are overlapping terms and each refers to a particular component of a person's total personality. Hamachek (1987) has briefly defined these three components as follows: the self is that part of each individual of which we are consciously aware, or what we know about ourselves. Self-concept refers to that particular cluster of ideas and attitudes we have about our awareness at any given moment in time. Another way of looking at it is to view self-concept as the organized cognitive structure derived from experience of one's own self; that is, self-concept is what we think about ourselves. Self-esteem refers to the extent to which individuals admire or value the self, or how we feel about ourselves.

While there has been some debate over whether the self should be considered a uni-dimensional concept or a multi-dimensional concept, the majority of research favours the latter conceptualisation (cited in Tanner, 1996). Shavelson et al (1976) have argued that

self-concept may be divided into a number of components, including social, emotional, and physical aspects. L'Ecuyer (1981) asserted that the self is a complex concept, and consists of some fundamental structures. These may be identified as (a) the Material Self, which includes physical traits and conditions, possession of objects; (b) the Personal Self, which is comprised of self-image and self-identity; (c) The Adaptive Self, which incorporates self-esteem and self-activity; (d) the Social Self, comprised of preoccupations, social activities, and sexual relationships; and, (e) Self-Non-Self, which involves reference to others, and others' opinions on self.

Since the 1950s, the academic community has increasingly produced research in the area of self-concept, with 90% of the research focusing on the dimension of self-esteem (cited in Tanner, 1996).

### **Self-Esteem**

#### **Definition**

Researchers offer an abundance of information addressing the issue of self-esteem. Hamachek (1987) distinguished self-esteem as being the evaluative component of self-concept: "....a way to understand self-esteem is to view it as the affective dimension of self-perception" (p. 14). Rosenberg (1965) viewed self-esteem as a positive or negative attitude toward the self and an enduring personality trait. Steffenhagen and Steffenhagen (1985) defined self-esteem as a compound of the individual's self-perceptions, self-concept, self-image, and social-concept. Reasoner (1986) proposed five components of self-esteem: a sense of security, a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose and a sense of personal competence. Battle (1981) stated, "self-esteem refers to the perception the individual possesses of his own worth.... An individual's perception of

self develops gradually and becomes more differentiated as he matures and interacts with significant others” (p. 14). Battle (1993) asserted that self-esteem is a subjective evaluative phenomenon, multi-faceted, and stable over time. With a multi-dimensional construct, Battle has proposed that self-esteem is composed of general, social, and personal aspects. In general, there is broad agreement that self-esteem is the product of evaluative attitudes towards the self and it is multi-faceted. It is an evaluative component of self-concept by which individuals engage in cognitive and affective assessments of the objective self (Scott, 2000). Coopersmith (1967) elaborated self-esteem as follows:

It expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself (pp. 4-5).

#### The Influence on Self-Esteem of minority groups

Mead (1934) pointed out that social evaluation plays a major role in determining an individual's self-esteem. In contrast, Rosenberg (1965) argued that social class is only partially related to self-esteem and is influenced by the amount of attention and concern an individual has received from his/her parents, which vary depending on parents' social class, religion, and ethnic group. Thus, Rosenberg has suggested that it is the interpersonal environment, particularly one's family of origin, which largely determines self-esteem, rather than general social evaluation. The debate becomes more controversial and complicated as the influencing factors on the self-esteem issues of minority groups are examined.

Coopersmith (1967) has indicated that four major factors contribute to the

development of self-esteem. First is the amount of respectful, accepting, and concerned treatment an individual receives from significant others. The second factor is the history of successes and status achieved by an individual, which are measured by material possessions and social approval. Third is the extent to which an individual is able to achieve the personal aspirations that he/she views as significant. The final factor is the way in which individuals respond to devaluation. Coopersmith's model focuses more on the individual level and does not pay attention to the impact of group status. If the impact of minority status on adolescent self-esteem is studied, Rosenberg's (1986) model could shed new light on the issue.

Rosenberg has suggested that there are four principles for self-concept formation: reflected appraisals, social comparisons, self-attribution, and psychological centrality. Reflected appraisal refers to people who are deeply influenced by the attitudes of others toward the self and, in the course of time, come to view themselves as they are viewed by others. As for the principle of social comparison, people judge and evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to certain individuals, groups, or social categories (referent individuals and referent groups standards). Rosenberg also concluded that the conversion of society's attitude toward one's group into the individual's attitude toward the self is logically compelling only if contained assumptions are sound. The first assumption is that the individual knows how the broader society feels about his/her group (the assumption of awareness). The second is that he/she accepts the societal view of his/her group (the assumption of agreement). The third is that the individual believes the societal view of the group's characteristics applied to the self (the assumption of personal relevance). The fourth and last assumption is that he/her is critically concerned with the majority attitude



(the assumption of significance).

Rosenberg's (1986) model has indicated that minority group members might have lower self-esteem because (1) they are looked down upon by others; (2) they look down on themselves by virtue of internalizing the negative attitudes of society toward their group; or, (3) they compare unfavorably in important evaluated respects with the prestigious majority. Rosenberg was also aware that these principles might generate erroneous conclusions regarding minority status and self-esteem.

Much recent empirical research on the self-esteem of minority groups examines factors such as gender (Martinez & Dukes, 1997), ethnicity (Phinney, et al., 1997), physical appearance/peer social acceptance (Harter, 1990), parental influences (Luster & Mcadoo, 1995), school or family life transitions (Vega & Rumbaut, 1991), academic achievement (Markstrom—Adams & Adams, 1995), and acculturation (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 1994). Portes et al (1999) studied 1600 eighth and ninth graders from various Asian nationalities in the U.S.A. They found that discrimination, prior frame of reference, length of stay in the U. S. and familism were "ethnicity related" factors that predicted these adolescents' global self-esteem.

Heiss and Owens (1972) found a pattern of interactions among race, class and self-evaluations, and Turner and Turner (1982) used this trait framework to distinguish between two general categories of traits of self-esteem. One is that private-domain traits refer to "Domestic-supportive characteristics relevant to intimate interactions," which are the global concept of one's worth as a person, such as self-satisfaction. This concept is linked more closely to intimate interaction wherein cultural standards other than those of the dominant group are used as the basic frame of reference for self-evaluations. The

other is public-domain traits which refer to “characteristics especially operative in the public-productive sphere, including those pertinent to occupational competence and success”, such as scholastic competence, social acceptance, physical appearance, and behavioural conduct. This is tied to dominant institutions like school and work in which institutional racism results in lower self-esteem (Martinez & Dukes, 1991).

Some research applied race and gender variables within the framework of private-domain and public-domain components in order to examine minority student self-esteem. Dukes and Martinez (1994) found that Black and Hispanic males had the highest levels of global self-esteem, while Asian and Native American females had the lowest. White and Black males had the highest scores on public-domain components, and Asian and Native American females had the lowest. The results were consistent with some previous research findings (Heiss & Owens, 1972; Turner & Turner, 1982). These findings indicate that race does not have a significant negative impact on the global self-esteem of racial minority males, but seems to have a negative impact on public domain components of self-esteem.

After viewing the literature on self-esteem related to private-domain and public-domain traits, further questions worth investigating arise: What are the effects of internal and external factors upon different aspects of self-esteem for minority groups? What kind of factors might cause the assumption that discriminated against groups have lower self-esteem for the principles of reflected appraisals and social comparisons to be violated? The next sections examine studies of ethnic identity and language learning to explore the issues.

### **Definitions of Ethnic Identity**

Ethnic identity is variously defined in the literature. A number of authors have defined ethnic identity as the ethnic component of social identity. Tajfel (1981), for example, stated that ethnic identity is: “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 255). Some writers emphasised feelings of belonging and commitment (Ting-Toomey, 1981), the sense of shared values and attitudes (White & Burke, 1987), or attitudes toward one’s group (e.g., Parham & Helms, 1981). Driedger (1989) provided the following definition: “Ethnic identity is a positive personal attitude and attachment to a group with whom the individual believes he has a common ancestry based on shared characteristics and shared social-cultural experiences” (p. 162). In contrast to the focus on attitudes and feelings, some definitions emphasise the cultural aspects of ethnic identity; for example, language, behaviour, values, and knowledge of ethnic group history (e.g., Rogler, Cooney, & Ortiz, 1980). A broader definition is supplied by Isajiw (1975), who defined ethnic identity as a “commitment to a social grouping of common ancestry, existing within a larger society of different ancestral origins, and characterized by sharing of some common values, behavioural patterns or symbols different from those of the larger society” (p. 129). Kalin and Berry’s (1994) distinction between behavioural and symbolic ethnic identity may give us a clearer sense on the definitions mentioned above. These authors stated:

Behavioural ethnic identity consists of outward expressions, such as being able to speak a heritage language and use it frequently, choosing best friends primarily from one’s own group, practicing endogamy, and belonging to ethnic and/or religious

organizations of one's group....Symbolic ethnic identity consists of knowledge of and pride in one's ethnic origin. This may or may not be accompanied by behavioural expression of this identity. (p. 306)

In summary, researchers appear to share a broad general understanding of ethnic identity, the specific aspects of which are variously elaborated. These differences relate to the diversity in how researchers have conceptualized ethnic identity and in the questions they have sought to answer.

### **Conceptual Frameworks of Ethnic Identity**

Phinney (1990) reviewed 70 journal articles regarding studies of ethnic identity and determined that most studies in ethnic identity are based on one of three broad perspectives. The first is social identity theory presented by social psychologists. The second is acculturation and culture conflict as studied by social psychologists, sociologists, or anthropologists. The last is ethnic identity formation drawn from psychoanalytic views and from developmental and counseling psychology. These three approaches provide a good background for understanding the empirical research on the ethnic identity.

#### **Ethnic Identity and Social Identity Theory**

Considerable research on ethnic identity has been conducted within the framework of social identity elaborated by social psychologists. Lewin (1948) asserted that individuals need a firm sense of group identification in order to maintain a sense of well-being. According to the social identity theory, simply being a member of a group provides individuals with a sense of belonging that contributes to a positive self-concept (Tajfel & Turner 1986). These authors have suggested that group members differentiate

their own group from other groups and evaluate their own group more favourably as a means of enhancing their self-image. Tajfel (1978) has argued that if the dominant group in a society holds the traits or characteristics of an ethnic group in low esteem, then ethnic group members potentially bear a negative social identity. Identifying with a low-status group might result in low self-regard (Hogg, Abrams, & Patel, 1987).

Some studies have showed that members of low-status groups seek to improve their status in various ways. Individuals might seek to leave the group by "passing" as members of the dominant group, but this solution might have negative psychological consequences (Tajfe, 1978). Alternative solutions are to develop pride in one's group (Cross, 1978) to reinterpret characteristics deemed "inferior" so they do not appear inferior (Bourhis, Giles, & Tajfel, 1973) and to stress the distinctiveness of one's own group (Hutnik, 1985).

Social identity theory also addresses the issue of potential problems resulting from participation in two cultures. Identification with two different groups could be problematic for identity formation of ethnic group members due to the conflicts in attitudes, values, and behaviours between their own and the majority group (Tajfe, 1978). The issue in this case is whether individuals must choose between two conflicting identities or are able to establish a bicultural ethnic identity.

#### Acculturation as a Framework for Studying Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is meaningful only in situations where two or more ethnic groups are in contact over a considerable period of time. The broad area of research that has dealt with groups in contact is known as acculturation literature (Phinney, 1990).

The concept of acculturation deals with changes in cultural attitudes, values, and

behaviours that result from contact between two distinct cultures (Berry, 1987). The level of concern generally targets the group rather than the individual, and the focus is on how minority or immigrant groups relate to dominant society. Within the acculturation framework for studying ethnic identity, a central question is whether ethnic identity is directly related to degree of acculturation or whether it is independent of it. Several studies suggest that the two are independent; that is, one could have a strong ethnic identification and also have a strong tie to the dominant culture (e.g., Driedger, 1976; Hutnik, 1986; Ting-Toomey, 1981).

In the acculturation framework, the most popular model has been developed by Berry (1987). The model posits four possible forms of identification with both one's own ethnic group and the majority group. Although it is generally agreed that the dominant group has the greater influence on members of the weaker group, Berry (1980) has argued that as one acquires more and more of the language and customs of a new culture, one does not necessarily lose the language and customs of one's original culture. Berry's (1987) cross-cultural model of acculturation suggests that there are at least four possible ways of dealing with ethnic group membership in a diverse society: assimilation, integration, separation (or segregation), and marginalization. Assimilation occurs when a group surrenders its cultural identity and is absorbed into the large society. Integration results when the group maintains its culture but also interacts with other groups. When intergroup contact is unwelcome and cultural integrity is maintained, the outcome would be either segregation (if the group is a weak minority) or separation (if the group is more powerful). The final possibility, marginalization, results when the traditional culture is lost and there is little contact with the larger society (Berry, 1987). Berry's model allows

researchers to analyse acculturation processes at different levels, namely, at society, group, and individual level.

Although some researchers concerned with second language acquisition have argued that in spite of some exceptions, as minority group members acquire the language of the majority they also tend to lose some of their own culture and language (e.g., Giles & Byrne, 1982; Schumann, 1978), Berry's model seems appropriate for conceptualizing the interface of acculturation and second language learning. It seems reasonable to assume that only individuals adopting "rejection" modes would restrict their contacts primarily to their traditional culture, whereas individuals adopting one of the three other modes might be expected to attain different levels of second language proficiency (Young & Gardner, 1990). Similarly, Lambert (1974) proposed that the acquisition of a second language influences one's self-identity and vice versa. He suggested that when proficiency develops to a high level, it results in either additive or subtractive bilingualism. Additive bilingualism occurs when the acquisition of a second language does not involve any loss in the first language or any loss in ethnic identity, which appears to be similar to the concept of integration. Nevertheless, subtractive bilingualism occurs when an individual loses proficiency in his/her first language in the process of learning the dominant language because of national policies or pressures to become part of the majority language community. This is similar to the concept of assimilation.

Another significant empirical issue has been to question the extent to which ethnic identity is maintained over time when a minority ethnic group comes in contact with a dominant majority group (DeVos & Romanucci-Ross, 1982) and the impact of the acculturative process on psychological adjustment (Berry, Kirn, Minde, & Mok, 1987).

Isajiw (1999) has proposed a comprehensively conceptual framework that distinguishes between the external and internal aspects of ethnic identity. The former includes “knowledge of ethnic mother tongue, knowledge of ethnic language if mother tongue is English, ability to read the ethnic language, ability to write the ethnic language, frequency of use of the ethnic language, speaking the ethnic language to parents, speaking the ethnic language to one’s children, retention of ethnic friends, frequency of participation in ethnic functions, use of ethnic recreational facilities, reading ethnic newspapers, listening to ethnic radio or television programs, eating own ethnic group’s food on calendar holidays, eating own ethnic group’s food at other times, practicing ethnic customs and possession of ethnic ornamental and artistic articles” (p. 189). The indicators of the internal aspects of ethnic identity include “feelings regarding importance or significance of one’s ethnic background, feelings of closeness of ties with the ethnic community, subjective identification as being either ethnic, ethnic-Canadian, or Canadian, and six kinds of feelings of obligation to have a job that would benefit one’s group, to hire other members of one’s group if one is in a position to do so, to help other members of one’s group to find a job, to marry within the group, to support one’s group causes and needs, and to teach one’s children one’s ethnic language” (p. 189).

An intensive investigation of ethnic identity retention was a Toronto study of nine ethnic groups surveyed in 1979 (Breton, Issajiw, Kalbach & Reitz, 1990). Researchers found that a number of aspects were most retained by third generation immigrants. They were ethnic food consumption, possession of ethnic objects of art, feeling of obligation to help other members of one’s group to find a job if in a position to do so, some knowledge of ethnic language by those whose mother tongue was English, feeling of an obligation to



support the needs and causes of one's group, the feeling of obligation to teach children the group's language, and having close friends of one's own ethnic background. Based on this Toronto study, Issajiw (1999) suggested that at least five foci of identity retention may be distinguished: "(1) an identity focusing on the ethnic language; (2) an identity focusing on the retention of symbolic objects, including ethnic food and ethnic artistic articles; (3) an identity focusing on having friends of the same ethnicity and marrying within the group; (4) an identity focusing on community participation and on practicing some of the ethnic customs, such as holiday celebrations; and, (5) an identity focusing on giving support to the group's causes and needs and helping the group's members" (p. 192). According to Issajiw (1999), there is a substantial variation in ethnic identity retention between different ethnic groups and different generations within each ethnic group.

The key concerns of ethnic identity retention are the culture conflict between two distinct groups and the psychological consequences of such conflicts for individuals. How such conflicts are dealt with at the individual level is part of the process of ethnic identity formation.

### Ethnic Identity Formation

Both social identity and acculturation frameworks acknowledge that ethnic identity is dynamic, and changes over time and context. However, studies based on the social identity or acculturation frameworks in general have not examined ethnic identity at the level of individual change, at least not developmentally.

A developmental framework has been provided by Erikson's (1968) theory of ego identity formation. According to Erikson, an achieved identity may be the result of a

period of exploration and experimentation that typically takes place during adolescence and that leads to a decision or a commitment in various areas, such as occupation, religion, and political orientation. The process of identity achievement involves an exploration of one's ability, interests, and options, leading to a commitment to a personal identity that serves as a guide to future action. Those who fail to achieve a secure identity are faced with identity confusion, which constitutes a lack of clarity about who they are and what their role is in life.

Based on Erikson's theory, Marcia (1980) identified four possible ego-identity statuses, depending on the presence or absence of exploration of identity issues and commitment to a personal identity. Adolescents who have neither experienced a crisis nor made a commitment are said to be in identity diffusion, indicating a lack of focus. Those who have not explored but have made a premature commitment based on the opinions and attitudes of others are in identity foreclosure. Adolescents who are currently in the process of exploring identity options but have not made a commitment are in moratorium, and those who have explored in depth and arrived at a secure sense of self to which they are committed are termed identity-achieved. These four statuses are not necessarily seen as representing a developmental continuum. However, diffusion and foreclosure are generally seen as less mature forms of identity, and an achieved identity is considered the optimum outcome of the identity process (Waterman, 1984).

Phinney (1993) examined commonalities across various developmental models of ethnic identity and proposed a three-stage progression from an unexamined ethnic identity through a period of exploration to an achieved or committed ethnic identity. Phinney suggested that ethnic identity includes a commitment and sense of belonging to

the group, positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in social activities of the group. According to Phinney's framework, three stages in ethnic identity development may be proposed:

The first stage is unexamined ethnic identity. Young people who have not examined (or explored) their ethnic identity are referred to as unexamined. Young people might simply not be interested in ethnicity or have absorbed positive ethnic attitudes from parents or other adults although they have not thought through the issues for themselves (Phinney, 1989).

The second stage is termed ethnic identity search and is characterized by an exploration of one's own ethnicity. This might take place as the result of a significant experience that forces awareness of one's ethnicity. It involves an often-intense process of immersion in one's own culture through activities such as reading, talking to people, going to ethnic museums, and participating actively in cultural events. For some people it might involve rejecting the values of the dominant culture.

The third stage is ethnic identity achievement. Individuals who have completed the search come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of their ethnicity. This culmination might require resolutions with two fundamental problems for ethnic minorities: (a) cultural differences between their own group and the dominant group and (b) the lower or disparaged status of their group in society (Phinney, Lochner, & Murphy, 1990). Parham (1989) suggested that the process does not necessarily end with ethnic identity achievement but might continue in cycles that involve further exploration or rethinking of the role or meaning of one's ethnicity. Moreover, the meaning of ethnic identity achievement is possibly different for different individuals and groups because of

their different historical and personal experiences (Phinney, 1990).

Phinney's model focuses on the way in which individuals come to understand the implications of their ethnicity and make decisions about its role in their lives regardless of the extent of their ethnic involvement. Recently, research studying issues of ethnic groups has been employing Phinney's three-stage model to examine minority adolescents' psychological development, since the model can be applied across ethnic groups and may provide a possible solution to conflicting findings in the self-esteem and adjustment of minority group members. (Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997).

In summary, even though there is great variation in the extent to which the relevant framework is applied to the research, the content of ethnic identity studies among these three theoretical approaches overlaps considerably.

### **Self-Esteem and Ethnic Identity**

A key issue in conceptual writing about ethnic identity has been the role of group identity in self-concept. Specifically, the question may be put, does a strong identification with one's ethnic group promote a positive self-esteem? Or, conversely, is identification with an ethnic group that is held in low regard by the dominant group likely to lower one's self-esteem? Furthermore, is it possible to hold negative views about one's own group and yet feel good about one's self? This section reviews relevant empirical studies that provide a better understanding of the relationship between ethnic identity and adolescents' well-being among ethnic groups.

Three reviewed studies suggested positive effects of ethnic identity, although the measures used were different in each case. Among Black early adolescents (ages 13-14)

of low socioeconomic status, "acceptance of racial identity" as measured by six items was found to be significantly related to self-concept as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale in Paul & Fischer's (1980) study. Grossman et al's (1985) study surveying Anglo-American and Mexican-American junior high school students revealed a positive relationship between self-esteem assessed by Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, and ethnic esteem measured by adjective ratings of one's own group. Among Israeli high school students in Tzuriel & Klein's (1977) study, ego identity was found to be higher among those with high ethnic group identification than among those with low identification, especially among the Oriental Jews, who are a minority group in Israel .

Some studies have examined self-esteem in relation to the stage model of ethnic identity. The developmental model predicted higher self-esteem in subjects with an achieved ethnic identity. This prediction was supported in a study with 10th-grade Black, Asian-American, and Mexican-American adolescents, in which subjects at higher stages of ethnic identity were found to have significantly higher scores on all four subscales of a measure of psychological adjustment (self-evaluation, sense of mastery, family relations, and social relations), as well as on an independent measure of ego development (Phinney, 1989). A similar relationship between ethnic identity search and commitment and self-esteem was found among college students from four ethnic groups (Asian American, Black, Mexican American, and White); the relationship was stronger among minority group students than among their White peers (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990). These studies suggest that a positive self-concept might be related to the process of identity formation; that is, to the extent to which people have come to an understanding and acceptance of their ethnicity.

The findings of two recent studies (Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997) using Phinney's three-stage model of ethnic identity not only confirm the important role of ethnic identity on adolescents' well-being, but also suggest examining other predictors of self-esteem on minority adolescents.

Phinney et al (1997) surveyed American-born high school students (372 Latinos, 232 African Americans, and 65 Whites) to examine ethnic and American identity as predictors of global self-esteem among adolescents. Results showed that for all groups ethnic identity was a significant predictor of self-esteem. For the White students only, American identity was a strong predictor of self-esteem and was highly correlated with ethnic identity. However, White participants in this study were a small minority in a predominantly non-White setting. These results suggest that the importance of ethnic identity to self-esteem for White adolescents might result in part from being in a minority situation and therefore feeling the need for group solidarity (Phinney et al, 1997). Although ethnic identity was a significant predictor of self-esteem for African American students and Latino American students in the Phinney et al's (1997) study, it accounted for a relatively small proportion of the variance. Other factors influenced the development of global self-esteem. Researchers stated that for African American students, global self-esteem was based on reflected appraisals of parents, friends, and teachers (Rosenberg, 1986). For the Latinos, in spite of the fact that four variables predicted global self-esteem: ethnic identity, gender, grade point average, and other-group attitudes, many other factors remained to be explored with this group (Phinney et al, 1997). Phinney et al suggested that family relationships might be an important contributor to global self-esteem among Latino American students. In addition, factors

associated with acculturation, such as language proficiency, educational level, and perceived discrimination might have an impact on global self-esteem of this group (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 1994; Portes, Ziady, & Phalachandra, 1999). In Phinney et al's study, grade point average was an important predictor of self-esteem for the African American and Latino adolescents. For minority youth, good school performance might be seen as an indicator of personal efficacy.

Martinez & Dukes (1997) employed Phinney's three-stage model of ethnic identity to examine the impact of ethnic identity, ethnicity, and gender on different aspects of well-being among adolescents. Analyses of data collected from 12,386 adolescents including Asian, Black, Hispanic, Mixed, Native, and White groups showed that the development of an achieved ethnic identity was strongly related to positive levels of global self-esteem, purpose in life, and academic self-confidence. In addition, for members of ethnic minority groups, ethnic identity was more salient than for members of the dominant group. Contrary to the implications of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), the fact that other people viewed one's group negatively did not necessarily lead to negative self-evaluations. Martinez & Dukes (1997) inferred that a stronger ethnic identity lessened the impact of negative stereotypes and social denigration on the individual by providing a broader frame of reference for the self. Other notable findings from this study (Martinez & Dukes, 1997) implied that families and schools could raise adolescent well-being by increasing ethnic identity, whereas forced assimilation in the context of institutionalised racism might deprive ethnic minority students of the possibility of developing achieved ethnic identities.

In addition, the findings of Martinez & Dukes' (1997) study revealed that there was

a statistically significant difference in that males scored more highly than females on global self-esteem. However, females had higher scores on purpose in life, and academic self-confidence than males, but the difference was not statistically significant.

In general, an increase in ethnic identity is predicted to result in an increase in social-psychological well-being (Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney et al, 1997). Furthermore, since ethnic groups differ in their history, cultural background, and current situation, the importance of ethnic identity is predicted to vary with ethnicity and gender (Martinez & Dukes, 1991). Also, because the formation of ethnic identity takes time, ethnic identity is predicted to increase with age (Phinney, 1993).

### **Heritage Language, Ethnic Identity, and Self-Esteem**

The previous discussion supports the claim that the process of ethnic identity formation is positively associated with adolescents' well-being. However, Phinney's model does not depict why individuals display different degrees of awareness and acceptance of their ethnicity, and how the young people develop their ethnic identity. Specifically, how does the individual's ethnic identity move from the unexamined stage to the achieved stage? It is, therefore, necessary to integrate Phinney's model with another concept of the acculturation framework, such as the issue of heritage language maintenance, to explore other predictors of ethnic identity development. Based on the social cognitive model of the development of ethnic identity and behaviours, Knight et al (1993) have suggested that if children are in a setting where they are required to speak their ethnic language, this language use might activate their ethnic schema. In addition, the ethnic identity of children may be aroused when they are involved in an ethnic-related organization or attend a class related to their ethnicity. This assumption supplies a



psychological rationale that ethnic language plays a prominent role in ethnic identity formation, and thus might enhance self-evaluation among minority children. A number of research findings have supported this hypothesis. The following examines the issue via three categories: heritage language attitudes, ethnic group attitudes, and self-evaluation.

### Language Attitude

Researchers have suggested that heritage language (HL) contact might have a dramatic impact on minority students' attitudes toward the language, and their appreciation of and confidence in using the language. Xidis (1993) compared the language attitudes of two groups of grade 7 and grade 8 Greek Americans, some who had exposure to HL programs and others who had not. Xidis found that the students attending Greek schools had higher academic achievement and higher levels of Greek proficiency than those who did not. The subjects attending Greek schools, nearly all of whom (90%) had had Greek instruction for more than seven years, appeared to have retained positive attitudes toward the language and culture despite the strong forces of language shift, and had developed high levels of proficiency in the language at no expense to general academic performance.

Positive attitudes toward studying academic subjects in the ethnic language are found in the following studies. Feuerverger (1989) compared ethnic minority children in terms of the amount of exposure to the ethnic language, although all of the students in the study had had some amount of instruction in the ethnic language. Significant differences were found between the school with an integrated Italian HL program within the regular school day and the school offering Italian classes on Saturday morning in terms of how students rated the language's status and those students own language ability. Feuerverger

suggested that less exposure to the language and the lower degree of priority given to it in the school resulted in greater apathy toward the ethnic language among Italian Canadian students. Lambert and Cazabon (1994) surveyed fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students in a Massachusetts school. They found that these students developed confidence in both their native and second language, and had generally positive attitudes toward dual language learning.

### Ethnic Group Attitudes

Some studies have examined the relationship between heritage language program participation and subjects' views of their own ethnic group. Lambert, Giles, and Picard (1975) suggested that exposure to an HL program promoted closer identification with one's own ethnic group. Similar findings were discovered in a study by Landry and Allard (1991) who surveyed 725 Grade 12 French native speakers in eight Canadian schools. Researchers found that higher levels of educational support and greater amount of ethnic language contact were associated with ethnic language and second language ability. Students with greater access to the ethnic language had significantly closer identification with their own ethnic group

### Self-Evaluation

Heritage language education may have a positive effect on children's self-esteem. Wright and Taylor (1995) noted the importance of heritage language education for minority language students. At the personal level, minority language children would be spared the frustration of not understanding much of what went on in the (majority language) classroom, which could lead to poorer performance and an associated lower self-evaluation. In addition, heritage language education spared children from the

negative self-evaluation that was likely to result from social comparison with majority language speakers. Finally, when language was associated with cultural differences, minority students might be distanced from the activities and interpersonal interactions in the majority language classroom, and psychological isolation could contribute to a negative self-image.

Several of the studies looking at self-evaluation compared the attitudes and behaviours of students in heritage language programs with those without ethnic language exposure. Fisher's (1974) investigation collected pre- and post-treatment self-concepts of students in a seven-month bilingual education project, and compared them to those of a group who received no instruction in heritage language. Fisher found that Latino girls in the experimental group showed significant improvements in their self-concept ratings, although no differences were found for boys. The Latino children in the control group reported not feeling like important members of the class. They were out of school ill more often and were involved in more fights. Wright & Taylor (1995) investigated Inuit, White, and mixed-heritage (Inuit-White) children living in a subarctic community and examined the impact of heritage language education versus second language education on personal and collective self-esteem. They concluded that early heritage language education could have a positive effect on the personal and collective self-esteem of minority language students—a benefit not provided by second language instruction. Feuerverger's (1994) study also showed that a relatively modest intervention could make a difference in students' self-esteem. Heritage language books were added to the school library and use of these books was encouraged by the librarian and teachers in one Toronto elementary school. Feuerverger found that some of the minority students she

interviewed appeared to have developed tremendous pride in their ethnic language, in their own language ability, and in their cultural heritage. In another limited intervention study, Garrett et al. (1994) tested the effectiveness of a 12-week, one hour per week intervention on Welsh and Punjabi children's self-evaluation. The researchers found that there were significant increases in the students' ratings of themselves, while the attitudes of the students receiving no heritage language instruction remained the same or grew more negative. These studies suggest that even limited heritage language interventions—both in time and scope—can affect some significant and positive attitudinal changes.

### **Language Learning Among Chinese Students**

This section focuses on the research findings of second language acquisition and ethnic language learning among Chinese students.

Based on the study of a French-Canadian group, Cle'ment et al (1980) found that self-confidence with the majority language on the part of minority group members could be indicative of assimilation into the language group of the majority. Young & Gardner (1990) investigated 124 members of the Chinese community in London and Ontario to examine affective variables in second language acquisition and on acculturation. They found that the individuals who were high on the integration scale and low on the assimilation scale were interested in maintaining their Chinese culture and language, while at the same time participating fully in mainstream Canadian culture. However, those Chinese who were proficient in English experienced a loss of (at least perceived) proficiency in Chinese. They also demonstrated that while proficiency in the second language was closely linked with sense of identity, identification with the second language community did not necessarily imply assimilation.

Pak, Dion, & Dion's (1985) study surveying 174 undergraduate Chinese students of the University of Toronto found that self-confidence with English was positively related to linguistic assimilation (i.e., they were more confident and self-assured of their English language skills than their Chinese counterparts). However, Chinese students who reported being self-confident with English showed less evidence of cultural assimilation, except for indicating less intention of giving their future children Chinese names or having them learn Chinese. Pat et al suggested that linguistic assimilation might not necessarily mean cultural assimilation for Chinese students. These researchers argued that perhaps like other groups for whom spoken language was not a key dimension of ethnic identity, such as Franco-Americans in Maine, the Irish, or the Scots, a person of Chinese ancestry might still be a member in good standing in the Chinese community of Toronto without being able to read or write Chinese or speak one or more of the Chinese dialects fluently. Pat et al inferred that Chinese individuals with good English language skills might participate more fully in a predominantly English-speaking context and might take advantage of greater educational and career opportunities available to a fluent speaker of English. Another important finding from this study was that self-confidence with English among Chinese students in Toronto was positively related to self-esteem, perceived control over one's life, and satisfaction with life in Toronto.

Verkuyten & Lay (1998) examined the psychological significance of ethnic minority identity among 98 youth of Chinese origin living in the Netherlands. They found that the evaluation of ethnic group membership and the individuals' beliefs of how others evaluated the person's ethnic group were related to personal self-esteem, life satisfaction and current mood.

The findings of Lin's (1998) study showed a strong sense of identity behind the drive to be bilingual and persistence in parental practices to raise their children to be bilingual. Lin interviewed 12 American-born ethnic Chinese 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and their parents in the largest Chinese language school located in Seattle. Six students were identified as balanced bilinguals who were rated linguistically at grade level in both English and Chinese by students' teachers, both in the regular classroom and the Chinese language school. Six other students were identified as pseudo-bilinguals who were rated at least two grades below grade level in either of the languages, but not in both, by their teachers. The study found that parents of balanced bilingual students emphasised strongly ethnic identity and family communication, a sense of pride and the gift of being bilingual. On the other hand, students did not have as strong differences as their parents did in reasons for wanting to be educated bilingually, nor did balanced bilingual students reveal any higher integrative motivation in being bilingual than pseudo-bilingual students.

As for how Chinese parents tend to provide more opportunities for their children in language input and in a linguistic learning environment, a consistently and systematically educational approach may be to establish Chinese schools which are a model of what the community and parents envisage when they pool their resources. In addition, Isajiw & Markabe (1982) have pointed out that positive identification with the group is often fostered through institutional and informal organisations. Chinese heritage language schools were established at different time periods across North America as the Chinese communities developed (Lan, 1993). These are usually Saturday or Sunday schools designed to teach children Chinese language, traditions and customs.

Some research related to ethnic issues in the Chinese community supports the Isajiw

& Markabe's assertion. Reitz' (1980) study stated that the Chinese might be the most cohesive ethnic group in Canada. Friesen (1988) suggested that the Chinese in Calgary had effectively utilized purposive and non-purposive techniques in preserving their culture, and Chinese schools were cited as an effective purposive technique used to promote cultural identity. Lan's study (1993), which surveyed 555 Chinese students from six Chinese heritage language schools of Calgary, suggested that the Chinese schools played an important role in the maintenance of the Chinese culture and cultural identity. In another study of language maintenance in the Chinese community of Winnipeg, which applied a survey and participant observation to investigate individual language use among members of a number of Chinese organizations, Hong (1998) found that family and friendship networks were important to the maintenance of ethnic mother tongues. Hong stated that even though language learning inside the Chinese language schools was less effective in language maintenance, these schools contributed to cultural and group maintenance and clearly demonstrated the community's effort in maintaining their ethnic mother tongues.

### **Rationale of the Current Study**

After reviewing the literature, several key points should be emphasised.

First, there is a large body of research on the well-being issues of minority adolescents. In spite of controversial findings of self-esteem among minority groups based on diverse theoretical frameworks and utilizing a variety of instruments, studying the impact of group identity on minority adolescents' self-concept has drawn much attention. However, most studies focus on differences in global self-esteem across ethnic groups, and little research explores different aspects of self-esteem within an ethnic group

and the impact of language proficiency of first and second language on minority adolescents' well-being.

Second, ethnic identity is currently a topic of great interest in the field of social science. Nevertheless, the task of understanding ethnic identity is complicated by the fact that the uniqueness which distinguishes each group and setting makes it difficult to draw general conclusions across groups. There have been many studies addressing the stated research questions, such as the role of ethnic identity in self-esteem, its relationship to acculturation, and its place in the development of personal identity. Nevertheless, researchers can offer few clearer answers to these questions because of widely differing approaches to the study of ethnic identity, including lack of agreement on what constitutes its essential components, varying theoretical orientations, and measures that are unique to each group.

Third, based on research findings in heritage language education, heritage language programs can help an individual feel positively about the ethnic group in which he or she is a member, have positive attitudes toward the language, and ultimately feel that these associations result in an overall satisfactory self-evaluation. However, the most positive attitudes seem to be with those students who are in programs sanctioned by their day school and which are integrated into the regular school curriculum. It is not clear whether or not community ethnic language programs are able to promote the same high levels of interest and positive attitudes that day school programs produce. In addition, the majority of studies have placed focus on elementary school students, with only a few examining junior high school, high school, and college-aged students. It is unknown whether or not interventions work differently with students of different ages.



Because of the complicated nature of the concepts in ethnic identity and self-esteem, and the lack of sufficient studies in examining the relationships among three domains for the Chinese group: language learning, ethnic identity development and adolescents' self-esteem, the present study sought to explore Chinese adolescents' perceptions of ethnic identity and self-esteem. This exploratory study employs the frameworks of private-domain and public-domain self-esteem, acculturation, and ethnic identity development to examine the effects of language proficiency with English and Chinese, and ethnic identity on self-esteem within the Chinese group. The predictors of different aspects of self-esteem and ethnic identity are also investigated.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study described in this thesis took place in a weekend Chinese heritage language school in Calgary. This school is the only heritage language school in Calgary that works in partnership with three senior high schools (Sir John Diefenbaker, Sir Winston Churchill and Henry Wise Wood) to offer the Chinese International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The school offers three different kinds of programs: Cantonese, Mandarin, and Chinese as A Second Language (CSL). The classes are held 3 hours a week on Saturday mornings or afternoons. The students' parents mostly come from Hong Kong, Taiwan, China or the Pacific islands. The population of the school, therefore, probably represents the most diverse regional characteristics of Chinese immigrants in Calgary. At the time of the study the school had a student population of over 1,300 and offered 86 classes from preschool to grade 12.

#### **Description of Participants**

The student sample consisted of students of Chinese ancestry aged 11 to 18 at the Chinese heritage language school. One hundred and six students were randomly selected as a sample from grade 7 to grade 12 classes by picking student numbers systematically from the student list of each class. On invitation by the researcher and their teachers, ninety-six students (90.6%) returned the parental consent forms with positive responses and seventeen other students showed interest in participating in the questionnaire survey. Out of the one hundred and thirteen students who participated in the survey, three student questionnaires were discarded because they did not meet the criteria of age or Chinese ancestry of either father or mother. Therefore, a total of one hundred and ten

questionnaires were submitted for data analyses. The following sample information begins with (1) a description of all respondents who participated in the present study. This is followed by profile information regarding (2) age groups (11-14 years old and 15-18 years old). Finally, (3) there is a brief discussion regarding demographic similarities and differences between the 11-14 age group and the 15-18 age group.

### Participants Profile

One hundred and ten participants represented 35% of the population of grade 7 to grade 12 classes in this Chinese heritage language school. The student sample was composed of 45 (40.9%) males and 65 (59.1%) females. Participants ranged in age from 11 to 18 and the mean age was 14. Participants' birthplaces included Canada (44.5%), Hong Kong (36.4%), Taiwan (8.2%), China (4.5%), and other (6.4%). Forty percent of the sample had lived in Canada all their lives; 31.9% of the students had lived in Canada for more than six years; and 28.2% had lived here less than six years. As for self-identification, of one hundred and ten subjects, fifty (45.5%) and thirty-three (30%) of the students identified themselves as Chinese-Canadian and Canadian-Chinese respectively while only eighteen (16.4%), five (4.5%) and four (3.6%) of the students identified themselves as Chinese, Canadian and other respectively.

Fifty-four (49.1%) of the students reported that their grade point averages (GPA) were 80-89%. Twenty-four (21.8%) and twenty-four (21.8%) of the students reported a GPA of 70-79% and 90-99% respectively, while only six (5.5%) students reported their GPA as 60-69%. Two (1.8%) students did not answer this question.

The highest educational levels of either father or mother of participants were reported as follows: high school or lower (30.9%), some college (13.6%), college or

university degree (25.5%), and graduate or professional school (21.8%). Nine students (8.2%) offered no response because they did not know their parents' educational background.

Two probe questions were used with regard to language use at home: one question pertained to language use with parents and the other with regard to siblings. For language spoken at home with parents, seventy-two (65.5%) of the students indicated that they spoke Chinese with parents. Twenty-five (22.7%) of the students spoke both Chinese and English with parents while only thirteen (11.8%) spoke English with parents. However, there was a noticeable difference for students' language use with their siblings. Only thirty (27.3%) of the students spoke Chinese with their siblings while fifty-two (47.3%) spoke English with siblings. Twenty (18.2%) of the students spoke Chinese and English with their siblings and eight (7.3%) students did not have siblings.

For the variable that studying Chinese in Canada or in countries where the official language is not Chinese, 8.2% of the students had studied Chinese for a year or less. Half (55.4%) of the students studied between 2-7 years of Chinese while 36.4% studied Chinese for 8-12 years. As for experiences of studying Chinese outside Canada, half (49.1%) of the students had received no Chinese education from countries where the official language is Chinese. Two-fifths (40%) received between 1 to 7 years (ECS to elementary grades) of Chinese education and 10.9% received 8 to 12 years (secondary grades) of Chinese education in Chinese speaking countries.

### Age group profiles

In order to analyse the differences in personal characteristics, self-esteem, ethnic identity and language learning between early adolescence and late adolescence, further

examination of data was based on two age groups—11-14 years and 15-18 years.

Table 3-1

Distribution of Participants: Gender, Birthplace, Residency, Self-Identification, GPA, Language Use at Home, Highest Education of Parents, and Years Studying Chinese by Age Groups.

Variables	11-14 age group		15-18 age group		Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	
Gender					
Male	21	35.6	24	47.1	45
Female	38	65.4	27	52.9	65
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110
Birthplace					
Canada	29	49.2	20	39.2	49
Hong Kong	18	30.5	22	43.1	40
China	0	0.0	5	9.8	5
Taiwan	7	11.9	2	3.9	9
Other	5	8.5	2	3.9	7
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110
Residency in Canada					
All of life	27	45.8	17	33.3	44
>= 6 years	13	22.0	22	43.1	35
< 6 years	19	32.2	12	23.5	31
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110
Self-Identification					
Canadian	4	6.8	1	2.0	5
Canadian-Chinese	20	33.9	13	25.5	33
Chinese-Canadian	7	11.9	11	21.6	18
Chinese	27	45.8	23	45.1	50
Other	1	1.7	3	5.9	4
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110
Grade Point Average (GPA)					
90-99%	17	28.8	7	13.7	24
80-89%	27	45.8	27	52.9	54
70-79%	11	18.6	13	25.5	24
60-69%	2	3.4	4	7.8	6
Missing	2	3.4	0	0.0	2
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110

Table 3-1 (Continuous)

Distribution of Participants: Gender, Birthplace, Residency, Self-Identification, GPA, Highest Education of parents, Language Use at Home, and Years Studying Chinese by Age Group.

Variables	<u>11-14 age group</u>		<u>15-18 age group</u>		Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Education of Parents</u>					
High School or Lower	14	23.7	20	39.2	34
Some College	7	11.9	8	15.7	15
College or University	14	23.7	14	27.5	28
Graduate or Professional School	18	30.5	6	11.8	24
Do Not Know	6	10.2	3	5.9	9
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110
<u>Language Use at Home</u>					
<u>With Parents</u>					
Chinese	38	64.4	34	66.7	72
Chinese & English	15	25.4	10	19.6	25
English	6	10.2	7	13.7	13
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110
<u>With Siblings</u>					
Chinese	20	33.9	10	19.6	30
Chinese & English	10	16.9	10	19.6	20
English	25	42.4	27	52.9	52
Not Applicable	4	6.8	4	6.8	8
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110
<u>Years of Studying Chinese</u>					
<u>Non Chinese-Speaking</u>					
1 year or less	3	5.1	6	11.8	9
2-7 years	35	59.3	26	50.9	61
8-12 years	21	35.6	19	37.3	40
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110
<u>Chinese-Speaking</u>					
0 year	30	50.8	24	47.1	54
1-7 years	26	44.1	18	35.3	44
8-12 years	3	5.1	9	17.6	12
Total	59	100.0	51	100.0	110

Based on a total sample of one hundred and ten, there were fifty-nine (53.6%) participants in the group who belonged in the 11-14 age group and fifty-one (46.4%) participants who were in the 15-18 age group. Demographic information including gender, birthplace, residence in Canada, self-identity, academic average, education of parents, language use at home, and years studying Chinese is presented in Table 3-1.

#### Demographic Discussion Between Age Groups

There are several obvious demographic differences between the 11-14 age group and the 15-18 age group. Firstly, the 11-14 age group consisted of 64.4% female students while the 15-18 age group consisted of 52.9% female students. Secondly, 49.2% of the students in the 11-14 age group were born in Canada while in the 15-18 age group 39.2% of the students were Canadian born. Thirdly, more students in the 11-14 age group identified themselves as Canadian or Canadian-Chinese (6.8%+ 33.9%) than in the 15-18 age group (2.0%+25.5%). As for GPA, 74.6% of the students from the 11-14 age group reported their grades of last school year above 80 while only 66.6% of the students from the 15-18 age group did.

Furthermore, 54.2% of the students from the 11-14 age group reported that their parents had attained a college/university degree or more. This number was higher than that of the 15-18 age group (39.3%). Finally, more students in the 11-14 age group (33.9%) spoke Chinese with siblings at home than students in the 15-18 age group (19.6%). However, with regard to speaking Chinese with parents, there was no noticeable difference between the two age groups.

As for years spent studying Chinese, the majority of students in both age groups indicated that they had studied Chinese in non Chinese-speaking countries for 1-7 years

(64.4% and 62.7%). Those who had never studied Chinese in Chinese-speaking countries or had done so as the elementary level in the two age groups are represented as 94.9% and 82.4% respectively.

### **Measures**

The survey instrument consisted of sixty-one items adapted and revised from several well-developed measures on self-esteem and ethnic identity development. An informal pilot test of the questionnaire (8 Chinese students) was conducted to examine whether or not it was necessary to revise the instrument. Responses, questions and suggestions from the subjects were utilized to clarify questions and to eliminate ambiguities. The revised questionnaire with sixty items was field tested in the target Chinese Heritage Language school in June, 2000. Thirty grade 12 students participated in the pilot study. Based on students' feedback and the descriptive analysis of pilot data, some ambiguous questions regarding demographics were again revised and one item was added under the subscale of Chinese Language Learning. Each item, (except the questions of demographics and self-confidence with English), used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (scored as 1) to "strongly agree" (scored as 5). Negatively worded items were reverse-scored. The final questionnaire with 61 items included the following measures (see Appendix B):

- **Demographics:** Participants were asked to supply information concerning their gender; age in years; birthplace; Residency in Canada; grade point average (GPA); ethnic self-identification; parents' education; their parents' ethnicity; language use at home; and, years studying Chinese language.
- **Global self-esteem:** 10 items were derived from the Rosenberg (1986) global



self-esteem scale. It included both positively and negatively worded items. For instance, “I feel that I have a number of good qualities” and “I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.” A global self-esteem score was derived by reversing negative items, summing across 10 items and obtaining a mean. Thus, scores could range from 1 to 5, indicating low to high global self-esteem, respectively. This scale has been widely used in other search studies and found to be highly reliable and valid (e.g., Martine & Dukes, 1997; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997).

- **Academic self-esteem:** 8 items were adapted and revised from the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories (Battle, 1992). This scale included both positively and negatively worded items such as “I am proud of my school work” and “I am a failure at school.” An academic self-esteem score was derived by reversing negative items, summing across 8 items and obtaining a mean. A high score indicates a positive evaluation regarding school work.
- **Social self-esteem:** 7 items were adapted and revised from the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories (Battle, 1992). This scale also included both positively and negatively worded items such as “Boys or girls like to play with me” and “Other boys and girls are mean to me.” A social self-esteem score was derived by reversing negative items, summing across items and obtaining a mean. A high score indicates a positive perception of the quality of an individual’s relationship with peers. Both scales of academic and social self-esteem have demonstrated reliability and validity (e.g. Battle, 1992)
- **Ethnic identity:** 12 items were adapted and revised from the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). This instrument measured three aspects of

ethnic identity: (1) ethnic identity achievement; (2) a sense of belonging to and attitudes toward one's ethnic group; and (3) ethnic behaviours and customs. An ethnic identity score was derived by summing across 12 items and obtaining a mean. Scores could range from 1 to 5, indicating low to high ethnic identity, respectively. This measure has demonstrated high reliability in previous studies (e.g., Phinney, 1992; Martinez & Dukes, 1997).

- **Chinese Language learning:** 9 items were used to measure learning attitude towards Chinese, such as reasons for attending the Chinese school, how enjoyable participants found Chinese learning to be, and so on. Based on the results of a factor analysis (see chapter Four), willingness of Chinese learning and enjoyment in Chinese learning were identified as different components under the Chinese Language Learning Scale. The score of willingness of Chinese learning was derived by summing across six items and obtaining a mean, and the score of enjoyment in Chinese learning was derived by summing across three items and obtaining a mean.
- **Self-confidence with Chinese:** The scale contained four items. Respondents were asked to rate their proficiency in Chinese in terms of understanding, speaking, reading, and writing, respectively. The score of self-confidence with Chinese was derived by summing across 4 items and obtaining a mean. A high score on this scale indicates a high perception of language ability in Chinese.
- **Self-confidence with English:** The final question asked participants to rate their proficiency in English by understanding, speaking, reading, and writing, respectively. Sub-items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from "Excellent"

to “Very poor.” The score of self-confidence with English was derived by summing across 4 sub-items and obtaining a mean. A high score indicates a high perception of language ability in English.

### **Procedure**

Before recruiting participants, meetings with teachers and sending them letters to explain the purpose of the study and administering procedure, helped the researcher gain rapport and support for conducting the survey. Consent forms and cover letters written in both English and Chinese were sent to parents to explain the rationale and the importance of the study and to request their permission for student participation (see Appendix A). Parental consent forms were collected with teachers’ assistance in September, 2000. The student survey was conducted in October, 2000 at the Chinese heritage language school during the following three Saturdays, either in the mornings or in the afternoons.

All survey sections were administered in English by the researcher during students’ class time. Only one female student needed a translation to Mandarin into order for her to be able to answer the questions. No time limit to complete the questionnaire was imposed on participants. The average time taken was approximately twenty-five to thirty minutes.

### **Statistical Analysis**

All of the analyses were run using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 8.0 for Windows. The level of significance was set at .05. A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was applied to identify underlying factor structures of language learning. Alpha reliability analyses were carried out to examine the reliability of the instrument. Analyses of variance were used to explore the effects of demographic variables on global, academic, and social self-esteem. Independent-samples t-tests to

investigate differences were applied on three measures of self-esteem by development of ethnic identity, language confidence, and heritage language learning. Multiple stepwise regressions were employed to explore the predictors of three aspects of self-esteem and development of ethnic identity. The results of these analyses are presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS**

This chapter probes the results of the study according to the research questions posed in Chapter one. The purposes of this study were to investigate the personal and psychological characteristics of Chinese adolescents who studied their heritage language at a Chinese heritage language school, to examine the group differences of language proficiency, ethnic identity and heritage language learning on Chinese students' self-evaluation, and to explore the potential predictors of self-esteem and ethnic identity among the Chinese students. Various statistical procedures were carried out on the data via SPSS including: factor analysis, reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, independent-samples t-test, analysis of variance and multiple regression analysis. However, while statistical analyses were applied to study results, caution should be exercised in making any kind of generalisations to other populations. The sample population from the Chinese heritage language school may not at all be represented of the total Chinese population in Calgary. Next, the results are presented in the following manner.

The first section of this chapter presents the results of the factor analysis and reliability analyses of the instrument. The second section contains descriptive analyses regarding three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic and social), ethnic identity, self-confidence in Chinese and English, Chinese learning enjoyment, and Chinese learning willingness. Comparisons between the 11-14 age group and the 15-18 age group follow. The descriptive data present the personal and psychological characteristics of Chinese adolescents studying their heritage languages in the Chinese school. This is guided by research question one: "What are the characteristics of Chinese adolescents studying their

heritage languages with respect to global, academic, and social self-esteem, ethnic identity, and heritage language learning attitudes?"

The differences on the scores of the three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic and social) in terms of demographics, the development of ethnic identity, self-confidence with Chinese and English, Chinese learning enjoyment, and Chinese learning willingness were investigated with group comparison methods. The third section presents the results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent-samples t-test. This section is guided by research question Two: "Is there any difference in Chinese adolescents' self-evaluation with respect to global, academic, and social self-esteem in terms of demographic characteristics, the development of ethnic identity, language confidence with English and Chinese, and Chinese heritage language learning?"

The fourth section explores potential predictors of global self-esteem, academic self-esteem and social self-esteem. Multiple stepwise regression analyses were carried out by using the following variables as predictors of the three measures of self-esteem: demographic variables, ethnic identity, self-confidence with Chinese and English, Chinese learning enjoyment, and Chinese learning willingness. This section is guided by research question Three: "What are predictors of global self-esteem, academic self-esteem and social self-esteem among Chinese adolescents?"

In the fifth section, a multiple stepwise regression analysis was applied to explore potential predictors of Chinese adolescents' development of ethnic identity. Thus, the fifth section is guided by research question Four: "What are predictors of the development of ethnic identity among Chinese adolescents?"

A limitation of applying independent-samples t-tests and ANOVAs in the study

should be mentioned. Because of having numerous comparisons, the region of rejection of the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level could not be guaranteed. However, the purpose of the exploratory data analyses was to better understand the three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic and social) among Chinese adolescents who are studying their heritage languages. The analyses of t-tests and ANOVAs are appropriate for this exploratory study.

### **Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis**

Scale properties of three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic and social), ethnic identity, self-confidence with language, and Chinese language learning were investigated using either reliability analysis or both factor analysis and reliability analysis. Since the three measures of self-esteem and the measure of ethnic identity employed in this study were adapted from several widely-used instruments, and designed on conceptually independent ground, only reliability analysis was applied to examine the internal consistency of these scales. In the present study, the reliability analysis revealed the Cronbach's alphas of global self-esteem (10 items) to be .77, academic self-esteem (8 items) to be .75, social self-esteem (7 items) to be .67, and ethnic identity (12 items) to be .85. However, one item of the social self-esteem scale, which stated, "I like to play with children younger than I am." was dropped from further analyses because it caused a difficulty for respondents to determine what "younger" could mean. The deletion increased Cronbach's alpha of social self-esteem scale (6 items) to be .73.

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the rest of the 17 variables regarding language learning. Using a principal component extraction and an orthogonal varimax rotation, a four factor solution emerged which accounted for 67% of the variance

(Refer to Table 4-1 for the rotated factor matrix). Four variables in Factor I (Eigenvalue = 4.08; 24% variance explained) were related to self-confidence with English. When the four variables were subjected to reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha was .91. Six items in Factor II (Eigenvalue = 3.80; 22% variance explained) were related to the reasons for attending Chinese school, continuity of learning Chinese, and the priority on the weekend schedule. Consequently, this factor was labeled willingness of Chinese learning. When the six items were subjected to reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha was .78. Four items in Factor III (Eigenvalue = 2.20; 13% variance explained) appeared to be self-confidence with Chinese. Cronbach's alpha for these four items was .83. Three items in Factor IV (Eigenvalue = 1.35; 8% variance explained) seemed to be related to the enjoyment in learning Chinese. Cronbach's alpha for the three items was .77.

Table 4-1

Factor Matrix Orthogonally Rotated

Items	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV
48	-.056	.010	.811	-.020
49	-.357	-.032	.742	.292
50	-.224	.036	.746	.166
51	.071	-.020	.859	.058
52	.016	.480	.142	.706
53	.101	.333	.091	.742
54	.228	.555	-.068	-.561
55	-.023	.775	-.135	.111
56	-.059	.816	-.041	.110
57	.137	.568	.069	.173
58	.312	.608	.150	.010
59	-.091	.742	-.004	.222
60	.066	.167	.134	.710
61A	.892	-.005	-.139	-.035
61B	.865	.059	-.161	.008
61C	.872	.036	-.113	.102
61D	.875	.107	-.008	.019
Percentage of variance				
Accounted for	23.99	22.36	12.92	7.93



## **Descriptive Results**

In order to start to understand the characteristics and the psychological development of junior high school and senior high school students, descriptive analysis was carried out by age groups. A review of Table 3-1, Table 4-2 and the group comparison (Table 4-3) revealed the following major findings about language use and language proficiency, self-evaluation in global, academic and social self-esteem, ethnic identity, and heritage language learning among Chinese heritage language school students.

### **Language Use and Language Proficiency**

The majority of the individuals in the 11-14 age group (64.4%) and the 15-18 age group (66.7%) spoke Chinese only with parents, while the percentage of participants speaking both English and Chinese with parents were 25.4% and 19.6%, respectively (Table 3-1). Thus, it is not surprising that the majority of students in both age groups perceived themselves as speaking and understanding Chinese well. These percent rates were 74.6% and 81.4% for the 11-14 age group, and 78.5% and 82.3% for the 15-18 age group (Table 4-2). Nevertheless, merely 42.3% and 40.6% of participants in the 11-14 age group and 45.1% and 33.3% of participants in the 15-18 age group perceived themselves as reading well and writing well, respectively.

The two age groups had a similar pattern for language use at home with parents and with siblings. As may be seen from Table 3-1, 89.8% of participants from the 11-14 age group and 87.3% of participants from the 15-18 age group spoke either Chinese only or both Chinese and English with their parents. However, the percentages dropped to 50.8% and 39.2%, respectively, for participants speaking Chinese with siblings.

Table 4-2

Self-Confidence with Chinese and English

Chinese	Strongly Agree + Agree	Uncertain	Disagree+ Strongly Disagree	Total
11-14 age group				
Speaking Well	44 (74.6%)	11 (18.6%)	4 (6.8%)	59 (100%)
Reading Well	25 (42.3%)	14 (23.7%)	20 (33.9%)	59 (100%)
Writing Well	24 (40.6%)	18 (30.5%)	17 (28.8%)	59 (100%)
Understanding Well	48 (81.4%)	11 (18.6%)	0 (0.0%)	59 (100%)
15-18 age group				
Speaking Well	40 (78.5%)	7 (13.7%)	4 (7.8%)	51 (100%)
Reading Well	23 (45.1%)	14 (27.5%)	14 (27.4%)	51 (100%)
Writing Well	17 (33.3%)	13 (25.5%)	21 (41.2%)	51 (100%)
Understanding Well	42 (82.3%)	7 (13.7%)	2 (3.9%)	51 (100%)
English	Excellent + Good	Average	Poor + Very Poor	Total
11-14 age group				
Understanding	52 (88.1%)	7 (11.9%)	0 (0.0%)	59 (100%)
Speaking	53 (89.9%)	5 (8.5%)	1 (1.7%)	59 (100%)
Reading	48 (81.3%)	9 (15.3%)	2 (3.4%)	59 (100%)
Writing	43 (72.9%)	14 (23.7%)	2 (3.4%)	59 (100%)
15-18 age group				
Understanding	38 (74.5%)	12 (23.5%)	1 (2.0%)	51 (100%)
Speaking	36 (70.6%)	11 (21.6%)	4 (7.8%)	51 (100%)
Reading	32 (62.7%)	15 (29.4%)	4 (7.8%)	51 (100%)
Writing	28 (54.9%)	14 (27.5%)	9 (17.7%)	51 (100%)

As for English language proficiency measured by self-reported confidence in English, participants of the 11-14 age group had higher self-confidence in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing, than participants of the 15-18 age group (Table 4-2). However, there is no significant group difference on the whole score of self-confidence with English scale (Table 4-3).

Table 4-3

**Descriptive Statistics and Group Comparison by t Test for Self-Evaluation.**  
**Ethnic Identity, Self-Confidence in Language and Chinese Language Learning**

Scale	Age Group				t	p
	11-14 (N=59)		15-18 (N=51)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Global Self-Esteem	3.85	.52	3.69	.55	1.54	n.s.
Academic Self-Esteem	4.02	.61	3.69	.57	2.88	<.01
Social Self-Esteem	3.86	.60	3.78	.69	0.63	n.s.
Ethnic Identity	3.61	.59	3.64	.57	-0.26	n.s.
Self-Confidence with English	4.27	.71	3.96	.96	1.93	n.s.
Self-Confidence with Chinese	3.68	.87	3.60	.83	0.46	n.s.
Chinese Learning Enjoyment	3.14	1.12	3.25	.86	-0.56	n.s.
Chinese Learning Willingness	3.75	.66	3.39	.80	2.61	<.01

**Note.** Scale scores were derived by summing across all items of each scale and obtaining a mean for the scale. Scores can range from 1 to 5, indicating very low to very high, respectively. SD = Standard Deviation; n.s. = No significant difference.

**Self-Evaluation in Three Aspects of Self-Esteem**

Mean scores of global, academic and social self-esteem for the 11-14 age group were 3.85, 4.02 and 3.86, respectively, while mean scores of the three aspects of self-esteem for the 15-18 age group were 3.69, 3.69 and 3.78, respectively (Table 4-3). Students in the 11-14 age group had higher mean scores on all self-esteem scales than students in the 15-18 age group, but only the mean score of academic self-esteem was significantly different.

**Ethnic Self-Identification and Ethnic Identity**

Reviewing Table 3-1 the majority of participants from both groups perceived their ethnic identification as hyphenated, which was either Canadian-Chinese or Chinese-Canadian (79.7% for the 11-14 age group and 70.6% for the 15-18 age group). It is interesting that the participants in the 11-14 age group had a slightly higher number of

self-identifying as Canadian and a slightly less number of self-identifying as Chinese than the participants in the 15-18 age group. There was no significant age group difference in the score of ethnic identity scale measuring a sense of belonging to and attitudes toward the Chinese group, ethnic behaviours and customs, and ethnic identity achievement (Table 4-3).

#### Attitudes Toward Chinese Language Learning

Students in the 11-14 age group had significantly higher willingness to attend the Chinese school than students in the 15-18 age group; however, the two age groups did not differ in their enjoyment of learning Chinese language (Table 4-3). Reviewing each item on the Chinese learning willingness subscale revealed the following (Table 4-4):

- For integrative purposes of attending Chinese schools, “important to parents” and “for future career” were the most important reasons. Nevertheless, participants in the 11-14 age group showed higher agreement on these two statements than participants in the 15-18 age group (84.8% vs. 60.8% for “important to parents” and 81.3% vs. 72.6% for “for future career”).
- There was little difference in the purposes of “understanding Chinese background” (59.4% vs. 58.8%) and “meeting Chinese friends” (40.7% vs. 39.2%) between the two age groups. In addition, “meeting Chinese friends” was the only purpose for attending Chinese schools which did not receive over 50% agreement of respondents.
- Students in the 11-14 age group (79.7%) showed greater willingness in continuing Chinese learning than students in the 15-18 age group (51.0%). The number in agreement with the statement “Learning Chinese is the priority on my

weekend schedule” for the 11-14 age group (44.0%) was slightly higher than that of the 15-18 age group (37.3%). Moreover, the percentages of agreement on the statement for both age groups were under 50%.

Table 4-4

**Chinese Learning Willingness**

Variables	Strongly Agree + Agree	Uncertain	Disagree + Strongly Disagree	Total
<b>Purpose of attending Chinese schools</b>				
Important to parents				
11-14 age group	50 (84.8%)	7 (11.9%)	2 (3.4%)	59 (100%)
15-18 age group	31 (60.8%)	10 (19.6%)	10 (19.6%)	51 (100%)
Meeting Chinese friends				
11-14 age group	24 (40.7%)	21 (35.6%)	14 (23.7%)	59 (100%)
15-18 age group	20 (39.2%)	14 (27.5%)	17 (33.4%)	51 (100%)
Understanding Chinese background				
11-14 age group	35 (59.4%)	14 (23.7%)	10 (17.0%)	59 (100%)
15-18 age group	30 (58.8%)	10 (19.6%)	11 (21.6%)	51 (100%)
For future career				
11-14 age group	48 (81.3%)	5 (8.5%)	6 (10.2%)	59 (100%)
15-18 age group	37 (72.6%)	10 (19.6%)	4 (7.8%)	51 (100%)
<b>Continuing Chinese learning</b>				
11-14 age group	47 (79.7%)	10 (16.9%)	2 (2.4%)	59 (100%)
15-18 age group	26 (51.0%)	14 (27.5%)	11 (21.6%)	51 (100%)
<b>Priority in Chinese learning</b>				
11-14 age group	26 (44.0%)	23 (39.0%)	10 (17.0%)	59 (100%)
15-18 age group	19 (37.3%)	15 (29.4%)	17 (33.4%)	51 (100%)

**Differences on Three Aspects of Self-Esteem**

This section presents the differences of three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic and social) in terms of demographics, the development of ethnic identity, self-confidence in language and attitudes toward Chinese language learning. Since the study did not intend to examine the interaction among variables, the one-way ANOVA was

applied to explore what kind of variables would affect students' self-evaluation in the three aspects of self-esteem.

For personal characteristics, the findings were (see Table 4-5):

- There were no group differences on three aspects of self-esteem in terms of gender, birthplace, and education of parents. In other words, male students and female students had the same mean scores on global self-esteem, academic self-esteem and social self-esteem. The mean scores of three measures of self-esteem for Canadian-born students and for foreign-born students were similar. The mean scores of three measures of self-esteem for students whose parents had higher education were the same as those for students whose parents had less education.
- Students of the 11-14 age group had a higher mean score on academic self-esteem than students of the 15-18 age group. There were no group differences on mean scores of global self-esteem and social self-esteem.
- Students who had lived in Canada for all of their lives had a higher mean score on social self-esteem than students who lived in Canada less than six years. There were no group differences in mean scores of global self-esteem and academic self-esteem.
- As for self-identification as Canadian, Canadian-Chinese, Chinese-Canadian, Chinese, or other, students identifying themselves as Chinese had a lower mean score of social self-esteem than the other three. However, there were no group differences on mean scores of global self-esteem and academic self-esteem.
- Students whose self-reported GPAs of last school year were 90-99 had a higher

mean score of global self-esteem than students whose GPAs were 80-89 and 70-79. In addition, these students had a higher mean score of academic self-esteem than students whose GPAs were 70-79 and 60-69. There was no group difference in the mean score of social self-esteem.

- Students speaking both Chinese and English with parents had a higher mean score of social self-esteem than students speaking only Chinese with parents. Students speaking Chinese only with siblings had a lower mean score of social self-esteem than students speaking English only and students speaking both Chinese and English with siblings. There were no group differences in the mean scores on global self-esteem and academic self-esteem.
- Students who had studied Chinese language in non Chinese-speaking countries for 8-12 years had a higher mean score of social self-esteem than students who had studied Chinese language for 2-7 years. There were no group differences in the mean scores of global self-esteem and academic self-esteem.

In order to investigate the effects of development of ethnic identity, self-confidence with language, and Chinese language learning on the three aspects of self-esteem, measures of these independent variables were collapsed into two categories: high score group (above mean) and low score group (below mean). Then, independent-samples t-tests were carried out to compare group differences.

Table 4-5

The Summary of ANOVA on Three Aspects of Self-Esteem by Demographic Variables

Self-Esteem	Source of Variance	SS	df	F	Post Hoc
<b>Gender</b>					
Global	Between groups	.18	1	.60	
	Within groups	31.45	108		
Academic	Between groups	.59	1	1.60	
	Within groups	40.06	108		
Social	Between groups	.04	1	.92	
	Within groups	44.87	108		
<b>Age Groups</b>					
Global	Between groups	.68	1	2.38	
	Within groups	30.94	108		
Academic	Between groups	2.90	1	8.31**	11-14 year>15-18 year
	Within groups	37.74	108		
Social	Between groups	.16	1	.39	
	Within groups	44.75	108		
<b>Birthplace (Canadian-born &amp; Foreign-born)</b>					
Global	Between groups	.37	1	1.29	
	Within groups	31.25	108		
Academic	Between groups	.65	1	1.75	
	Within groups	40.00	108		
Social	Between groups	1.13	1	2.78	
	Within groups	43.78	108		
<b>Residency in Canada</b>					
Global	Between groups	1.61	2	2.87	
	Within groups	30.01	107		
Academic	Between groups	.36	2	.48	
	Within groups	40.29	107		
Social	Between groups	2.62	2	3.31*	All of life>less than 6 yrs
	Within groups	42.29	107		
<b>Self-Identification</b>					
Global	Between groups	2.29	4	2.05	
	Within groups	29.33	105		
Academic	Between groups	2.50	4	1.72	
	Within groups	38.15	105		
Social	Between groups	8.15	4	5.82*	Canadian>Chinese
	Within groups	36.76	105		Canadian-Chinese>Chinese Chinese-Canadian>Chinese



Table 4-5 (Continued)

**The Summary of ANOVA on Three Aspects of Self-Esteem by Demographic Variables**

Self-Esteem	Source of Variance	SS	df	F	Post Hoc
Grade Point Average					
Global	Between groups	5.04	3	6.67***	90-99>80-89
	Within groups	26.21	104		90-99>70-79
Academic	Between groups	6.87	3	7.25***	90-99>70-79
	Within groups	32.84	104		90-99>60-69
Social	Between groups	1.70	3	1.38	
	Within groups	42.52	104		
Education of Parents					
Global	Between groups	2.15	4	1.91	
	Within groups	29.48	105		
Academic	Between groups	2.65	4	1.83	
	Within groups	38.00	105		
Social	Between groups	3.57	4	2.27	
	Within groups	41.34	105		
Language use at Home					
With Parents					
Global	Between groups	.24	2	.42	
	Within groups	31.08	107		
Academic	Between groups	1.17	2	1.58	
	Within groups	39.48	107		
Social	Between groups	2.63	2	3.33*	Chinese&English>Chinese
	Within groups	42.28	107		
With Sibling					
Global	Between groups	.44	2	.80	
	Within groups	27.00	99		
Academic	Between groups	.38	2	.50	
	Within groups	38.10	99		
Social	Between groups	8.20	2	13.35***	English>Chinese
	Within groups	30.42	99		Chinese&English>Chinese
Years studying Chinese (non Chinese-Speaking)					
Global	Between groups	1.59	2	2.83	
	Within groups	30.03	107		
Academic	Between groups	1.56	2	2.13	
	Within groups	39.09	107		
Social	Between groups	3.08	2	3.94*	8-12 years >2-7 years
	Within groups	41.83	107		

Note. SS = Sum of Squares; df = Degree of Freedom

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 4-6  
Comparison of Subgroup Means on Three Aspects of Self-Esteem

		Descriptive			t-test (2-tailed)	
Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t
By Ethnic Identity						
Global	Low	56	3.63	.50	108	-2.99**
	High	54	3.92	.54		
Academic	Low	56	3.74	.55	108	-2.18**
	High	54	3.99	.65		
Social	Low	56	3.84	.65	108	.27
	High	54	3.81	.64		
By Self-Confidence with English						
Global	Low	48	3.51	.47	108	-4.95***
	High	62	3.98	.50		
Academic	Low	48	3.63	.58	108	-3.82***
	High	62	4.05	.58		
Social	Low	48	3.46	.49	108	-6.02***
	High	62	4.11	.60		
By Self-Confidence with Chinese						
Global	Low	56	3.77	.55	108	-.05
	High	54	3.78	.53		
Academic	Low	56	3.80	.60	108	-1.17
	High	54	3.93	.62		
Social	Low	56	3.88	.58	108	.92
	High	54	3.77	.70		
By Chinese Learning Enjoyment						
Global	Low	54	3.63	.50	108	-2.99**
	High	56	3.92	.54		
Academic	Low	54	3.65	.57	108	-3.91**
	High	56	4.08	.58		
Social	Low	54	3.72	.68	108	-1.78
	High	56	3.93	.59		
By Chinese Learning Willingness						
Global	Low	50	3.70	.52	108	-1.44
	High	60	3.84	.55		
Academic	Low	50	3.74	.60	108	-1.96
	High	60	3.97	.60		
Social	Low	50	3.73	.63	108	-1.44
	High	60	3.90	.65		

Note: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Reviewing Table 4-6, the findings are:

- Students who revealed a higher development of ethnic identity had higher mean scores on global self-esteem and academic self-esteem than students who revealed a lower development of ethnic identity. There was no group difference on the mean score of social self-esteem.
- Students having higher self-confidence with the English language had higher mean scores on all three measures of self-esteem than students having less self-confidence with English.
- Variables of self-confidence with Chinese and Chinese learning willingness did not affect three measure scores of self-esteem among Chinese students. Nevertheless, the mean scores of students who claimed greater enjoyment in Chinese learning on global self-esteem and academic self-esteem were higher than those of students who enjoyed Chinese learning less.

### **The Predictors of Three Aspects of Self-Esteem**

The next step in analysis was to examine the strength of the relationships between the three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic and social) and those variables that had different mean scores of previous group comparisons on global, academic and social self-esteem. Stepwise regression analyses were carried out to determine which of ten variables that had been validated in research question two contributed most to the ability to predict three aspects of self-esteem: (1) self-confidence with English, (2) Chinese learning enjoyment, (3) ethnic identity, (4) age, (5) GPA, (6) self-identification, (7) residency in Canada, (8) language use with parents, (9) language use with siblings, and, (10) years studying Chinese.

Of the ten variables mentioned above, three variables were identified as having significant predicting ability for global self-esteem. The computer selected self-confidence with English ( $F=33.76$ ,  $p<.001$ ), ethnic identity ( $F=25.38$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and GPA ( $F=21.04$ ,  $p<.001$ ) in the regression equation. The combination of scores on the three variables accounted for 40% of the variance in the global self-esteem score (see Table 4-7). Based on SPSS results, the Rs of other variables were too low to change  $R^2$  and their F values were not significant. Therefore, they were not important variables for predicting global self-esteem.

Table 4-7

The Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Global Self-Esteem

Step	Variable	R	$R^2$	Beta	F of R
1	Self-confidence with English	.51	.26	.43***	33.76***
2	Ethnic Identity	.59	.34	.27**	25.38***
3	GPA	.63	.40	.24*	21.04***

\*:  $p<.05$ ; \*\*:  $p<.01$ ; \*\*\* :  $p<.001$

In Table 4-8, four variables were identified as having significant predicting ability for academic self-esteem. The computer selected GPA ( $F=21.56$ ,  $p<.001$ ), self-confidence with English ( $F=17.55$ ,  $p<.001$ ), Chinese learning enjoyment ( $F=16.78$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and age ( $F=15.37$ ,  $p<.001$ ) in the regression equation. The combination of scores on the four variables accounted for 39% of the variance in the academic self-esteem score. Based on SPSS results, the Rs of other variables were too low to change  $R^2$  and their F values were not significant. Therefore, they were not important variables for predicting academic self-esteem.

Table 4-8

The Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Academic Self-Esteem

Step	Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	F of R
1	GPA	.43	.18	.23*	21.56***
2	Self-confidence with English	.52	.27	.26**	17.55***
3	Chinese Learning Enjoyment	.59	.34	.31***	16.78***
4	Age	.63	.39	-.24**	15.37***

\*:  $p < .05$ ; \*\*:  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* :  $p < .001$

As for social self-esteem, two variables had significant predicting ability. The computer selected self-confidence with English ( $F=39.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and language with siblings ( $F=22.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in the regression equation. The combination of scores on the two variables accounted for 32% of the variance in the social self-esteem score (see Table 4-7). Based on SPSS results, the Rs of other variables were too low to change  $R^2$  and their F values were not significant. Therefore, they were not important variables for predicting social self-esteem.

Table 4-9

The Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Social Self-Esteem

Step	Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	F of R
1	Self-Confidence with English	.54	.29	.45***	39.72***
2	Language with Siblings	.57	.32	.20*	22.72***

\*:  $p < .05$ ; \*\*:  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* :  $p < .001$

**The Predictors of Development of Ethnic Identity**

The final section explores which variables contributed most to the ability to predict ethnic identity. A stepwise regression analysis was applied by using the following variables as predictors: all demographic variables, self-confidence with English, self-confidence with Chinese, Chinese learning enjoyment and Chinese learning willingness.

Three variables were identified as having significant predicting ability for ethnic identity. The computer selected Chinese learning enjoyment ( $F=32.89$ ,  $p<.001$ ), total years of studying Chinese ( $F=21.22$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and self-confidence with English ( $F=16.50$ ,  $p<.001$ ) in the regression equation. The combination of scores on the three variables accounted for 34% of the variance in the ethnic identity score (see Table 4-10). Based on SPSS results, the Rs of other variables were too low to change  $R^2$  and their F values were not significant. Therefore, they were not important variables for predicting development of ethnic identity.

Table 4-10

The Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Development of Ethnic Identity

Step	Variable	R	$R^2$	Beta	F of R
1	Chinese Learning Enjoyment	.50	.25	.53***	32.89***
2	Total Years of Studying Chinese	.55	.30	.30**	21.22***
3	Self-Confidence with English	.58	.34	.20*	16.50***

\*:  $p<.05$ ; \*\*:  $p<.01$ ; \*\*\* :  $p<.001$

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter discusses the significant findings in the order of the research questions and hypotheses. In addition, a conclusion and the limitations of this investigation are discussed.

#### **Discussion for Research Question One**

The first research question probed the phenomenon of Chinese adolescents who studied their mother tongue at a weekend heritage school in relation to the three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic and social), ethnic identity development and language learning. In this section the focus of discussion centers on the identifying differences between the 11-14 age group and 15-18 age group in terms of language use and language confidence, self-evaluation in the three aspects of self-esteem, self-identification and ethnic identity, and attitudes toward Chinese language learning.

##### **Language Use and Language Confidence**

The majority of participants in the 11-14 age group (89.8%) and the 15-18 age group (87.3%) spoke either Chinese only or both Chinese and English with their parents. The majority of students perceived themselves as speaking well in Chinese (74.6% for the 11-14 age group and 78.5% for the 15-18 age group). However, the percentage of rating on reading well and writing well dropped dramatically to 42.3% and 40.6% respectively for the 11-14 age group, and 45.1% and 33.3% respectively for the 15-18 age group. These findings suggest that speaking Chinese with parents at home may gave students oral/aural experiences everyday which help them to master their mother tongue in speaking and understanding. The results of this study also support Isajiw's (1985) suggestion that the

most important factor in ethnic language retention is the frequency with which parents speak the language to their children while they are growing up. However, because of the lack of opportunities to apply Chinese to the English learning environment and the limited number of contact hours in the Chinese language school for practicing reading and writing skills in Chinese, it appears difficult for students to cultivate the competence of their heritage language in reading and writing. As for English proficiency, there are no noticeable differences among four skills of understanding, speaking, reading, and writing within the age groups.

A difference between language use “with parents” and “with siblings” is also observable. The percentages of speaking only Chinese or combining Chinese and English with parents were 89.8% for the 11-14 age group and 87.3% for the 15-18 age group, whereas those speaking Chinese with siblings dropped to 50.8% and 39.2%, respectively (Table 3-1). These results support the findings of Breton et al’s (1990) study that ethnic language use is strongly related to generation; that is, while the first generation retains it to a very high degree, the second and third generations lose it rather quickly. Chinese adolescents in this study appear to have reduced opportunities to use Chinese language in their homes and with their parents.

#### Self-Evaluation in Three Aspects of Self-Esteem

The mean scores of global, academic, and social self-esteem for the 11-14 age groups are probably close to “4” (3.85, 4.02 and 3.86, respectively), whereas those for the 15-18 age group are likely to close to “3.5” (3.69, 3.69 and 3.78, respectively). In addition, there is a significant difference on academic self-esteem between the two age groups. These findings indicate that Chinese students in the 11-14 age group studying



their mother tongue at the Chinese heritage language school have higher perceptions of their ability to succeed academically than those in the 15-18 age group. Yaniv (1983) administered the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories (Battle, 1992) to 716 junior high school students and found that self-esteem was significantly associated with academic achievement, with the highest correlations occurring with academic self-esteem. Yaniv's findings may help to explain in part the significant difference in academic self-esteem between the two age groups. In the present study, 74.6% of subjects from the 11-14 age group reported their GPAs of over 80%, while only 66.6% of participants from 15-18 age group did (see Table 3-1). Chinese students in the younger age group appear to have higher academic performances than those of the older age group. This likely relates to the difference in academic self-esteem between the two age groups. Further research is needed to investigate the interaction between age, academic achievement and academic self-esteem for the Chinese group. Further studies could also probe whether or not differences in academic performance between age groups are related to the nature of junior high school and senior high school curricula, or to other cultural factors such as independence from parents' supervision in schoolwork, the extent of demand for critical thinking in learning preferred by western culture, and a change in value attitudes toward educational achievement.

#### Ethnic Self-Identification and Ethnic Identity

With respect to ethnic identification, the majority of participants regarded themselves as either Chinese-Canadian or Canadian-Chinese (79.7% for the 11-14 age group and 70.6% for the 15-18 age group), while very few students identified themselves as Canadian (6.8% for the 11-14 age group and 2% for the 15-18 age group). Considering

49.2% of the subjects in the 11-14 age group and 39.2% of the subjects in the 15-18 age group were born in Canada, these results imply that heritage language school students have stronger identification not only with mainstream society but also with their ethnicity.

The present results support Lan's (1992) suggestion that Chinese language school students in Calgary have strong ethnic self-identification, a finding that correlates with heritage language retention within the Chinese community.

#### Attitudes Toward Chinese Language Learning

Lan's (1992) study surveyed 511 Chinese students across six Chinese heritage language schools in Calgary, and found that students seemed to lose interest in heritage language schools as they grew older. The primary reasons stated for attending Chinese schools was "parents' wish", followed by "economic advantage". "To socialize" was not viewed as an important reason for attending Chinese schools. Similar patterns on purposes for attending Chinese schools were found in the present study.

"Important to parents" and "for future career" were the two most stated reasons in this study for attending Chinese schools, while "meeting Chinese friends" showed least agreement from the two age groups (see Table 4-4). These findings suggest that students at the Chinese heritage language school perceive that learning Chinese in order to be bilingual would be beneficial to their future careers, and that maintaining the ability to communicate in Chinese is meaningful to their parents. Moreover, the data imply that the Chinese heritage language school is not a major social source for Chinese adolescents. This may be attributed to the limited number of contact hours spent each weekend in the Chinese heritage language school.

Another noteworthy difference between the two age groups is that students in the 11-14 age group were more highly motivated to attend the Chinese language school and revealed a higher degree of willingness to continue Chinese learning. This is consistent with previous findings of research studying Chinese heritage language schools (e.g., Lan, 1992; Wang, 1996), which indicate that as students grow up, their resentment of parental pressure to learn Chinese increases, while their motivation declines.

Several explanations seem reasonable to account for the lack of interest in attending Chinese language schools for older students. First, students have to give up Saturday mornings to go to Chinese language school; such study becomes an additional load outside their regular day school program. Second, students basically attend the Chinese language school only once a week, and the contact time is only three hours per week. Teachers have a lot of material to cover within such a short time frame. They must review common errors on completed assignments, teach a new lesson, emphasize any points that deserve special attention, and usually give students a test to ensure that students have studied. Under these circumstances, classroom activities easily fall into the pattern where the teacher is merely informing the students what to do (Wang, 1996).

The program of Chinese Language High School Credit Classes focuses more on reading and writing skills, requiring many hours of memorization and practice to master the two skills. The homework and tests of the Chinese language school likely become extra burdens for high school students who already struggle with a heavy school workload and a busy extracurricular schedule. Finally, the contents of the textbooks are often unrelated to students' daily life and experiences (Wang, 1996). Unless parents insist on speaking Chinese with their children, it is almost impossible for students to

communicate in Chinese with other people outside the classroom. This likely discourages students who work hard, and may contribute to reducing their interest in learning Chinese.

### **Discussion for Research Question Two**

The second research question concerned possible differences in global, academic and social self-esteem among Chinese adolescents. It was hypothesized that there would be significant differences in terms of demographics (i.e., gender, GPA), the development of ethnic identity, self-confidence in language and attitudes toward Chinese language learning. Comparisons of the results in this research question with those reported in prior investigations are somewhat restricted, since there is little research focusing on the issues related to multi-dimensional self-esteem of Chinese adolescents.

#### **Hypothesis 2.1**

Hypothesis 2.1 that there would be significant differences on mean scores of three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) among demographic variables for Chinese students was confirmed only for some demographic variables. Of the ten demographic variables, the data showed that GPA had significant effects on global and academic self-esteem; age group had a significant effect on academic self-esteem; and there were significant differences in social self-esteem by residency in Canada, self-identification, language use at home, and years studying Chinese in non-Chinese speaking countries. Gender, birthplace, and parents' educational background did not have significant effects on global, academic and social self-esteem.

The significant findings of the effect of GPA on global and academic self-esteem are similar to Abu-Saad's (1999) study where Arab students with positive perceptions of

their individual scholastic levels and their school's overall academic levels scored higher on the global self-esteem scales. The effect of academic performance on Chinese adolescents' self-esteem will be discussed further in the following section pertaining to research question three.

Social self-esteem differences seem to relate to the length of time in Canada and the degree of acculturation. Participants who had lived all their lives in Canada had higher perceptions of interpersonal relationships than students living in Canada less than six years. It is reasonable to assume that new immigrant students have less opportunity to make friends with Canadian students because of the barriers of language and culture. They may not feel at ease with extending their social activities to the mainstream environment. Thus, they probably have lower perceptions of the quality of their relationships with peers. As for subjects identifying themselves as Chinese or claiming to speak Chinese only with parents and siblings, they appear to have less confidence in their relationships with peers. This study's data are probably not able to show directly that speaking Chinese only at home may be related to students' English ability, limiting their social access to mainstream society, nor that ethnic identification as Chinese may influence students' preference for choosing friends within the Chinese group. Nevertheless, the significant differences in Chinese adolescents' social self-esteem in terms of language use at home and ethnic self-identification reveal some insights regarding the degree of acculturation and social self-esteem among Chinese adolescents. Further research is needed to investigate the relationships among the variables discussed above.

Contrary to previous research findings that Asian females had lower levels of both

global and public domain self-esteem than Asian males (e.g. Martinez & Dukes, 1991, 1997), this study found no significant differences in global, academic and social self-esteem between Chinese male and female students. The difference between this study and previous studies may be accounted for by the sample attribute. The ethnicity category for Asian, in reality, includes an array of more than 40 disparate cultural groups. Since each Asian national group has its own distinctive cultural background, unique historical experiences, and reasons for immigration, examining all Asian groups together may lead to spurious conclusions (Takaki, 1989). However, the gender issue for the Chinese group should be investigated again in the future because this study's sample was biased and small.

### Hypothesis 2.2

Results of the present study partly confirmed Hypothesis 2.2 that the mean scores on three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) for Chinese adolescents with high ethnic identity would be significantly higher than those of Chinese adolescents with low ethnic identity. That is, students with high ethnic identity had higher mean scores on global and academic self-esteem than students with low ethnic identity, whereas there was no difference on social self-esteem.

This study's finding that ethnic identity affects Chinese students' global self-esteem is consistent with much previous self-esteem research concerned with minority adolescents (e.g., Bornman, 1999, Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney et al, 1997). This finding suggests that Chinese adolescents with positive feelings about their Chinese membership, knowledge about Chinese culture, and a clear sense of their Chinese background, tend to have a higher sense of self-worth than

whose who do not.

Another discovery is that Chinese adolescents with higher ethnic identity show higher perceptions of their ability to succeed academically. A possible reason for this might be that traditional Chinese culture stresses the value of educational achievement and its importance for guaranteeing success in the work force. Recognizing the cultural value of academic achievement may motivate Chinese students to pay more attention to their schoolwork in order to have commendable academic performance. However, the interpretation of the correlation between ethnic identity and academic self-esteem among Chinese adolescent needs additional research to confirm it.

### Hypothesis 2.3

Data of the study validated Hypothesis 2.3 that the mean scores on three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) for Chinese adolescents with high self-confidence with English would be significantly higher than those of Chinese adolescents with low self-confidence with English. These findings strongly support Pak et al's (1985) assertion that self-confidence with English correlates to one's psychological adjustment and satisfaction with self.

As members of a minority group in Canada, Chinese adolescents may regard English proficiency as critical because mastering a vital cultural tool influences success in schooling and affords access to greater educational opportunities that are pertinent to the validation of self. Thus it is not surprising that Chinese adolescents with high confidence in English showed a sense of competence in academic ability, peer relationships, and pride in themselves.

#### **Hypothesis 2.4**

Results of the study did not support Hypothesis 2.4 that mean scores on three measures of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) for Chinese adolescents with high self-confidence in Chinese would be significantly higher than those of Chinese adolescents with lower self-confidence in Chinese. These findings differ from some previous research suggestions that heritage language learning can enhance minority students' self-esteem (e.g., Feuerverger's 1994; Fisher's 1974; Garrett et al. 1994; Wright & Taylor 1995).

Sampling may account for differences in results between this study and previous research. First, the samples of most empirical studies are in programs sanctioned by day schools and integrated into the regular school curriculum; the sample of the present study is obtained from community ethnic language programs. Second, the majority of previous studies focused on elementary school students, while the present study examined both junior and senior high school students. Another possible reason for no significant effect of self-confidence with Chinese on self-esteem is that the present study did not examine the effects of bilingualism. In other words, this study did not look for differences of self-esteem between participants who had fluent literate skills in two languages and those who had literate skills in only one language or oral fluency in two languages. Thus, the role played by Chinese language proficiency on Chinese adolescents' self-esteem may have been underestimated.

#### **Hypothesis 2.5**

Data did not confirm Hypothesis 2.5 that there would be significant differences on mean scores of three aspects of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) between



Chinese adolescents with high willingness to learn Chinese and Chinese adolescents with low willingness to learn Chinese. It was anticipated that this might occur, since the willingness to learn Chinese is not related to self-concept and self-evaluation.

### **Hypothesis 2.6**

Surprisingly, the results of the current study partly supported Hypothesis 2.6 that there would be significant differences on mean scores of three measures of self-esteem (global, academic, and social) between Chinese adolescents with high enjoyment in Chinese learning and Chinese adolescents with low enjoyment in Chinese learning. In fact, students with high enjoyment in Chinese learning showed higher global and academic self-esteem than their counterparts.

These findings may reflect some underlying characteristics of bilingual students. The student who enjoys learning his/her heritage language and likes to attend the Chinese school on weekends is likely to have a positive attitude towards studying as well as a positive perception of his/her linguistic competence. Thus, the individual may generally feel good about himself/herself and have confidence in his/her academic ability.

### **Discussion for Research Question Three**

The third research question concerned predictors of global, academic and social self-esteem among Chinese adolescents. It was hypothesized that certain variables could predict global, academic and social self-esteem. The ten significant independent variables examined in research question two were selected into the stepwise regression analyses to examine the predictors of global, academic and social self-esteem, respectively. Comparisons between the results of this research question and those reported by previous investigations are limited, however, because few prior studies focused on Chinese

adolescents' academic and social self-esteem.

Analyses of research question three revealed that self-confidence with English, ethnic identity and GPA were three significant predictors of global self-esteem. GPA, self-confidence with English, Chinese learning enjoyment, and age were four significant predictors of academic self-esteem. Self-confidence with English and language use with siblings were two significant predictors of social self-esteem. These results are consistent in part with the findings of other researchers who examined the issues of minority adolescents' global self-esteem (e.g., Bornman, 1999, Harter, 1993; Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney et al, 1997). Phinney et al's (1997) study concluded that ethnic identity and academic achievement <sup>were</sup> ~~are~~ significant predictors of global self-esteem for African American and Latino adolescents. For Chinese adolescents of this study, ethnic identity and GPA were also important variables of predicting global self-esteem. The importance of ethnic identity to global self-esteem may have resulted from being in a minority situation and feeling the need for group solidarity. As for school performance, Harter (1993) suggested that academic achievement can make a contribution to self-esteem when it is seen as an important domain. Apparently, school performance is important enough to the Chinese adolescents in this study to affect their global and academic self-esteem.

It appears that English proficiency is a very important predictor of global, academic and social self-esteem for Chinese adolescents at the Chinese Heritage language school, especially social self-esteem. This finding supports Pak et al's (1985) study in which self-confidence in English correlated with psychological adjustment and satisfaction with self for Chinese University students in Toronto. Another study (Gil et al, 1994) showed that

difficulty communicating in English contributed to low self-esteem and acculturative stress and was related to lower global self-esteem among American-born Hispanic boys. It is reasonable to assume that less acculturated minority adolescents in North America may have insufficient English language skills, greater difficulty in communicating outside their own group, and fewer friendships with other group members (Phinney et al, 1997). This assumption may help to explain the importance of self-confidence with English for predicting global, academic and social self-esteem among Chinese adolescents. For members of an ethnolinguistic minority, confidence with the majority group's language should be accompanied by greater feelings of personal efficacy. Mastering the dominant language may provide them with a tool to achieve educational success, and to better communicate with majority members. However, this study did not assess acculturation among Chinese students and its relationship to language proficiency. Acculturation should be explicitly assessed in future research in order to examine relationships between English proficiency, levels of acculturation, and global, academic and social self-esteem.

Chinese learning enjoyment and age play significant roles in predicting Chinese adolescents' academic self-esteem. As discussed in hypothesis 2.6, students who enjoyed learning Chinese might have positive attitudes toward their regular studying and their linguistic competence. Positive attitudes may have contributed to the enhancement of their academic self-esteem. As for the variable of age, further research is needed to examine clearly which factors may affect academic self-esteem differences between younger Chinese students and older Chinese students.

For Chinese adolescents' social self-esteem, it was found that students who were

confident in their English proficiency or students who often spoke English with their siblings had higher social self-esteem. It seems that mastering the dominant language is related to Chinese students' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their peers. Owing to the lack of research regarding social self-esteem among minority adolescents, many other factors remain to be explored with the Chinese population in the future.

#### **Discussion for Research Question Four**

The fourth research question dealt with the predictors of ethnic identity development among Chinese adolescents. It was hypothesized that certain variables could predict the ethnic identity development of Chinese adolescents. All demographic variables, self-confidence with English, self-confidence with Chinese, Chinese learning enjoyment and willingness to learn Chinese were entered into the stepwise regression analysis to investigate the predictors of ethnic identity development.

The data showed that Chinese learning enjoyment, total years of studying Chinese, and self-confidence with English were three significant factors in predicting ethnic identity development. Except for years of studying Chinese on ethnic identity, demographic variables had no effect. The finding on age does not support Phinney's (1993) assertion that an individual's ethnic identity generally progresses to higher stages with increasing age. Instead, this study found that the more years students spent learning Chinese, the higher their ethnic identity development. The result regarding Chinese learning enjoyment as a significant predictor of ethnic identity development is somewhat consistent with Tse's (1996) findings that as more positive attitudes and interest in ethnic heritage develop, more interest develops to learn ethnic language. Even though Tse's

research employed a different direction to examine the role of heritage language in ethnic identity formation, her study and the present study confirmed the positive relationship between ethnic identity development and attitudes towards heritage language. Possibly, a high interest in learning Chinese and expressed enjoyment in attending Chinese schools may involve Chinese adolescents in a regular intense process of immersion in their own culture through educational activities, developing a clear sense of belonging to the Chinese group, and gaining a positive attitude toward their Chinese background.

Surprisingly, self-confidence with English was a predictor of ethnic identity development, whereas self-confidence with Chinese had no effect on ethnic identity development among Chinese adolescents. These findings have several possible explanations. First, Pak et al (1985) noted that Chinese university students in Toronto who reported being self-confident with English showed less evidence of cultural assimilation. The researchers suggested that linguistic assimilation may not necessarily mean cultural assimilation. Similarly, Chinese adolescents in this study who were confident in their English abilities revealed higher ethnic identity development. In fact, as a member of a visible minority in Canada which has outstanding cultural practices such as food, arts and customs, it is probably harder for Chinese individuals to lose their distinctive cultural identity as a result of learning the dominant language.

As well, Chinese adolescents studying in Chinese heritage language schools may focus more on English than Chinese language because there are greater educational and career opportunities available to those who speak fluent English. This may help to explain why Chinese students at the Chinese heritage language school expressed greater confidence with English, rather than Chinese. The previous discussions, however, do not

explain explicitly why self-confidence with English development had an effect on ethnic identity among Chinese adolescents in the Chinese heritage language school. A possible explanation could be related to the methodology issue. Based on the exploratory purposes of this study, data analyses focused on finding potentially useful variables for understanding Chinese adolescents' self-esteem and ethnic identity development. Thus, the researcher did not pay attention to the issues of interrelationships and the direction of effects. In fact, previous research has suggested that the effects of self-esteem and ethnic identity development are interactive (Phinney & Chavira, 1992). The finding that self-confidence with English was a predictor of ethnic identity development among Chinese students seems to support this assertion. Possibly, Chinese adolescents with high confidence in their English abilities have a more positive self-evaluation, and this may encourage them to explore the meaning of their Chinese background in their lives, or to question negative stereotypes or the disparaged status of their group in society. Clearly, further longitudinal studies are needed to explore how ethnic identity develops over time and the complex interrelationships.

### **Conclusions**

This study's findings confirm the importance of ethnic identity development on minority students' global self-esteem, and extend research concerns to the role of language proficiency in the weekend heritage language school. Eleven salient conclusions are drawn from the results and discussions of this study.

1. The majority of Chinese adolescents at the Chinese heritage language school speak Chinese with their parents and have confidence in their listening and speaking skills in Chinese. As well, the majority of participants have confidence

in four skills (understanding, speaking, reading, and writing) of English.

2. Chinese adolescents enrolled in the Chinese heritage language school at the junior high school age level have higher perceptions of their ability to succeed academically than do senior high school aged Chinese students. In addition, the former group show higher motivation and greater willingness to learn their heritage language than the latter group.
3. Chinese heritage language school students have strong self-identification, not only with mainstream society but also with their ethnicity; that is, the majority of Chinese students consider themselves Chinese-Canadian or Canadian-Chinese.
4. Gender, birthplace, and parents' educational background do not significantly impact global, academic and social self-esteem among Chinese heritage language school students. Academic achievement is positively related to global and academic self-esteem of students.
5. Chinese heritage language school students with high ethnic identity development reveal higher global and academic self-esteem than do those having low ethnic identity development. However, ethnic identity development is not related to those Chinese students' social self-esteem.
6. The current investigation strongly supports the impact of self-confidence in English on global, academic and social self-esteem among Chinese adolescents. Study participants reveal positive perceptions of their self-worth, academic ability, and peer relationships.
7. The more enjoyment the study participants have in learning Chinese, the higher their global and academic self-esteem. Chinese learning enjoyment has no effect

on Chinese adolescents' social self-esteem.

8. Self-confidence in English, ethnic identity development, and GPA are three significant predictors of global self-esteem among the Chinese heritage language school students.
9. GPA, self-confidence in English, Chinese learning enjoyment, and age are four significant predictors of academic self-esteem among Chinese adolescents in the study.
10. Study participants who are confident in English proficiency and who often speak English with their siblings have higher social self-esteem than their counterparts.
11. Chinese learning enjoyment, total years of studying Chinese, and self-confidence with English are three significant predictors of ethnic identity development among Chinese heritage language school students.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The conclusions of this study are tempered by a number of limitations, primarily due to the nature of the survey and the sample investigated.

The specific interest of the investigator in heritage language education led to a sampling bias toward Chinese adolescents involved in the maintenance of their heritage language. Thus, the sample comprised a very special group of individuals who were continuing to study Chinese. These individuals were more likely to accept the value of maintaining Chinese culture in accordance with their parents' wishes. Thus, the results may represent a more conventional and less problematic group of individuals. Since this study was a case study of Chinese adolescents in a Calgary Chinese heritage language school, the generalisations of the study cannot be extended to Chinese students receiving



Chinese language instruction in other Chinese heritage language schools or at publically funded bilingual day schools. Further research with random sampling and/or with a comparison group of Chinese adolescents not studying their mother tongue is needed to determine the generalisability of the results in a more representative sample.

The questionnaire employed was a self-reporting instrument in nature. Its format could have comprised a source of measurement error (Weiten, 1992): (1) Participants might have deliberately tried to fake or distort answers; (2) Even without realizing it, some persons could have consistently responded to questions in ways that made themselves look good; and, (3) some people seemed to respond in a systematically negative or positive way to items in the questionnaire regardless of the item content. These forms of measurement error could have influenced the results of the survey type research. Although several subscales of the questionnaire used in the present study have been shown to be valid and reliable in other research, it was difficult to guarantee that the limitations of the self-reporting measures did not attenuate the results. As well, students' language proficiency in Chinese and English used self-reporting information rather than independent language assessments. This could have caused inconsistency with their real language abilities to some extent because of individual differences in self-concept and self-expectation. This limitation could have overestimated or underestimated the effects of language proficiency on adolescents' self-esteem.

This study lacked information about parental influences on self-esteem and heritage language learning, such as students' relationships with their parents and parents' support and attitudes toward language learning. It could have left out some important variables for predicting self-esteem and ethnic identity development. For example, students'

relationships with parents was not considered when designing the questionnaire; this could have been a differentiating strength factor in determining global, academic and social self-esteem.

Since the study was essentially exploratory in nature, certain constraints may have limited the validity of the findings. Because of having numerous comparisons analysed by t-tests and ANOVAs, the region of rejection of the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level could not be guaranteed. Given the number of analysed tests, results should be interpreted with caution.

Despite these shortcomings, however, this study provides a modest beginning in exploring multi-faceted self-esteem, ethnic identity development, and the role of language learning on psychological adjustment among Chinese adolescents enrolled in a heritage language school.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the current study. In addition, several recommendations are offered, and the implications of the findings for future research and school practice are noted.

#### **Summary of the Study**

The present investigation was built on a body of conceptual and empirical work regarding the complex issues of self-esteem development, ethnic identity formation and heritage language maintenance among ethnic minority groups. As well, it was the hope of this study that its research results would contribute to educational intervention and research community for the psychological development of Chinese youth, which has been an ignored subject in Canadian studies. To this end, the data analyses were specifically designed in an exploratory manner to identify the related factors that influenced Chinese adolescents' global, academic, and social self-esteem and their ethnic identity retention.

This study was conducted at a Saturday Chinese heritage language school in Calgary, which has a large student enrollment and a partnership with three senior high schools in Calgary offering the Chinese International Baccalaureate program. Survey data were collected concerning the multi-faceted self-esteem and ethnic identity development of one hundred and ten Chinese adolescents studying their heritage language at this Chinese heritage language school. Approximately thirty-seven survey questions were drawn from the Global Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1986), the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories (Battle, 1992), and the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). Participants' demographic information, self-confidence with English and Chinese,

and learning attitudes toward Chinese (twenty-four questions) were also examined. These items were used to create ten independent variables for global, academic and social self-esteem and fourteen independent variables for ethnic identity development in stepwise multiple regressions. The findings suggest that English proficiency plays a critical role with respect to global, academic and social self-esteem and ethnic identity development among Chinese heritage language school students. A summary of the main findings of this study is presented below.

In general, Chinese adolescents studying their heritage languages at the Chinese heritage language school exhibited moderately positive self-evaluations in overall self-worth, academic ability and peer relationships, and revealed fairly assertive attitudes toward their Chinese membership. In addition, the students showed moderate confidence in their English and Chinese proficiency, particularly in the official language of Canada. The majority of Chinese adolescents at the Chinese heritage language school appeared to be aware that learning their mother tongue could benefit their future careers and has significant meaning for their parents. However, older Chinese students showed less motivation in studying their heritage language than younger Chinese students.

The current study provides support for the importance of ethnic identity development in global self-esteem of ethnic minority adolescents, even when a number of other variables are taken into consideration. For adolescents of the Chinese heritage language school, high global self-esteem was associated with high ethnic identity development assessed as a broad construct including sense of belonging, positive attitudes, commitment, and involvement with the Chinese group. Self-confidence with English and school achievement were two other important predictors of Chinese

adolescents' global self-esteem. This suggests that personal competence and efficacy influence the general sense of self for Chinese heritage language school students.

GPA, self-confidence with English, Chinese learning enjoyment, and age were four important predictors of academic self-esteem among student participants. The results of the stepwise multiple regression demonstrate the critical roles of English proficiency and school achievement on Chinese students' perceptions of their academic ability. As for age, younger Chinese students tended to have higher academic self-esteem than older Chinese students.

This study revealed that students who were confident in their English proficiency or students who often spoke English with their siblings were apt to have higher social self-esteem. Other than English proficiency and frequency of English use, there were no other variables in this study related to social self-esteem of the Chinese heritage language school students.

This study extended research concerns to seeking contributors of ethnic identity development among the Chinese group. Results indicated that the more enjoyment the students found in studying their mother tongue, the higher their ethnic identity development. Furthermore, the more years the Chinese students spent in learning their heritage language, the higher ethnic identity they developed. Surprisingly, adolescents of the Chinese heritage language school who felt confidence in their English proficiency tended to have higher ethnic identity development. However, knowledge of the heritage language and frequency of mother tongue use were not associated with ethnic identity development for Chinese adolescents in this study.

### **Recommendations and Implications**

Today in immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada, the educational and psychological adjustment issues of minority or immigrant students become pressing because of increasing diversity in the school system. How to help minority youth develop a positive sense of self and to enjoy more satisfying lives during adolescence is worthy of examination. Based on the findings of this study concerning multi-faceted self-esteem and ethnic identity development of Chinese adolescents, it seems clear that personal competence or a sense of mastery is positively associated with both self-esteem and ethnic identity. In considering interventions for young ethnic group members, it would therefore make sense not only to encourage ethnic pride as a basis for self-esteem, but also to attempt to enhance personal efficacy (Harter, 1993). For example, academic support for immigrant students, such as ESL programs, may help improve their school performance, and providing all students with educational experiences that enhance their ability to communicate, make effective decisions, and function well interpersonally, is important for students' social acceptance.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research emphasising the importance of ethnic identity in the development of minority youth (e.g., Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney et al, 1997; Phinney & Chavira, 1992). Research findings also suggest that ethnic identity development and personal self-esteem are interactive. That is, a strong ethnic identity probably lessens the impact of negative stereotypes and social denigration on minority individuals, and at the same time, high global self-esteem may provide the basis for them to explore their own cultural background and to develop a secure, positive view of themselves as minority group members. (Phinney & Chavira,

1992). Thus, it would appear to have compounding effects on adolescents' well-being if schools could facilitate and enhance healthy psychological development of youth in all ethnic groups via academic activities that explore ethnic diversity and intergroup relationships.

Even though no evidence supports the role of Chinese heritage language schools on the maintenance of ethnic identity (this is beyond the scope of the present investigation), results of this study in participants' confidence with Chinese still confirm the importance of Chinese heritage schools on ethnic language retention. These findings are also consistent with Lan's (1992) study. If there is some language socialization at home, the heritage language school is significant in supporting ethnic language maintenance. As discussed previously, the school is more important than the home in learning to read and write in the ethnic language. Further research should explore whether Chinese heritage language schools promote Chinese adolescents' consciousness of their ethnic identity and positive attitudes toward their bilingual competence. In addition, in order to understand accurately the relationship among heritage language education, self-esteem and ethnic identity development, it would be beneficial to replicate this study with participants from diverse educational settings. For instance, future studies could include Chinese individuals who do not have language knowledge about Chinese or those who study Chinese in day school programs for investigating the role played by heritage language maintenance on Chinese adolescents' self-esteem and ethnic identity development.

Family relationships and parental influences on Chinese adolescents' ethnic identity retention and self-esteem remain to be explored in further research because they may contribute to better psychological adjustment in terms of the importance of the family in

Chinese culture. Further, the findings of this study indicate that English proficiency plays a critical role in global, academic, and social self-esteem, as well as ethnic identity development among Chinese adolescents. It is recommended that further research take into account the role of actual English proficiency when trying to understand psychological adjustment among members of ethno-linguistic minorities in Canada. As well, it might be valuable for resolving controversial findings pertaining to community heritage language programs to investigate the differences in self-esteem development and ethnic identity formation between individuals who have fluent literate skills in two languages and those who have literate skills in only one language.

In summary, in a multicultural society valuing personal competence and efficacy, there is an urgent need for researchers and educators to implement educational programs to help minority adolescents in the following areas: (1) coping with their acculturative stresses such as language difficulty and culture conflicts; (2) having confidence in their academic learning; (3) feeling pride in their ethnic background; and, (4) enhancing their ability to communicate and function well with their peers. This may lead minority youth to enjoy happier and more satisfying lives in Canadian society.



## REFERENCES

- Abu-Saad, I., (1999). Self-esteem among Arab adolescents in Israel. Journal of Social Psychology, 139(4), 479-486.
- Banks, J. A. (1994). Multiethnic education: Theory and practice. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.
- Battle, J. (1981). Culture-free self-esteem inventories for children and adults. Seattle: Special Child Publications.
- Battle, J. (1993). Misconceptions regarding self-esteem. New York: Basic Books.
- Berry, J. W. (1980 ). Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. In A.M. Padilla (Ed.), Acculturation: Theory, models and some new findings. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Berry, J. W. (1987). Finding identity: Separation, integration, assimilation, or marginality. In L. Driedger (Ed.), Ethnic Canada: Identities and inequalities. Toronto: Copp-Clark-Pitman.
- Berry, J., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). Comparative studies of acculturative stress. International Migration Review, 21, 491-511.
- Bornman, E. (1999). Self-image and ethnic identification in South Africa. The Journal of Social Psychology, 139(4), 411-425.
- Bourhis, R., Giles, H., & Tajfel, H. (1973). Language as a determinant of Welsh identity. European Journal of Social Psychology, 3, 447-460.
- Breton, R., Isajiw, W. W., Kalbach, W. E., & Reitz, J. G. (1990). Ethnic identity and equality: Varieties of experience in a Canadian city. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Cle'ment, R., Gardner, R. C., & Smythe, P. C. (1980). Social and individual factors in second acquisition. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 12, 293-302.
- Coopersmith, S. (1967). The antecedents of self-esteem. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.
- Cross, W. (1978). The Thomas and Cross models of psychological nigreseeence: A literature review. Journal of Black Psychology, 4, 13-31.
- Der Karabetian, A. (1980). Relation of two cultural identities of Armenian-Americans. Psychological Reports, 47, 123-128.

- DeVos, G., & Romanucci-Ross, L. (1982). Ethnic identity: Cultural continuities and change. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Diener, E., & Diener, M. (1995). Cross-cultural correlates of life satisfaction and self-esteem. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68, 653-663.
- Driedger, L. (1976). Ethnic self-identity: A comparison of ingroup evaluations. Sociometry, 39, 131-141.
- Driedger, L. (1989). The ethnic factor: Identity in diversity. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Dukes, R. L., & Martinez, R. (1994). The impact of ethnicity on self-esteem among adolescents. Adolescence, 29(113), 105-115.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). Identity: Youth and crisis. New York: Norton.
- Ferdman, B. M., (1990). Literacy and cultural identity. Harvard Educational Review, 60, 181-204.
- Feuerverger, G. (1989). Ethnolinguistic vitality of Italo-Canadian students in integrated and non-integrated heritage language programs in Toronto. The Canadian Modern Language Review, 46, 50-72.
- Feuerverger, G. (1994). A multicultural literacy intervention for minority language students. Language and Education, 8(3), 123-146.
- Fisher, R. I., (1974). A study of non-intellectual attributes of children in first grade bilingual-bicultural program. The Journal of Education Research, 67(7), 323-328.
- Friesen, B. K. (1988). The maintenance of culture among Calgary's Chinese. Multicultural Education Journal, 6(1), 4-20.
- Garrett, P., Griffiths, Y., James, C., & Scholfield, P. (1994). Use of the mother-tongue in second language classrooms: An experimental investigation of effects on the attitudes and writing performance of bilingual UK school-children. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 15, 371-383.
- Gerler, E. R. (1986). Skills for adolescence: A new program for young teenagers. Phi Delta Kappan, 67, 436-442.
- Gil, A., Vega, W., & Dimas, J. (1994). Acculturative stress and personal adjustment among Hispanic adolescent boys. Journal of Community Psychology, 22, 43-54.

Giles, H., & Byrne, J. L. (1982). An intergroup approach to second language acquisition. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 1, 17-40.

Grossman, B., Wirt, R., & Davids, A. (1985). Self-esteem, ethnic identity, and behavioural adjustment among Anglo and Chicano adolescents in West Texas. Journal of Adolescence, 8, 57-68.

Hamachek, D. E. (1987). Encounters with self. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Harper, J. F. & Marshall, E. (1991). Adolescents' problems and their relationship to self-esteem. Adolescence, 26, 799-807.

Harter, S. (1990). Self and identity development. In S. S. Feldman & G. R. Elliot (Eds.), At the threshold: The developing adolescent. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Harter, S. (1993). Causes and consequences of low self-esteem in children and adolescents. In R. Baumeister. (ed.), Self-Esteem: The Puzzle of Low Self-Regard. Plenum, New York.

Heiss, J., & Owens, S. (1972). Self-evaluations of blacks and whites. American Journal of Sociology, 78, 360-370.

Helms, J.E. (1990). Black and White racial identity: Theory, research and practice. Westport, CT: Greenwood press.

Hogg, M., Abrams, D., & Patel, Y. (1987). Ethnic identity, self-esteem, and occupational aspirations of Indian and Anglo-Saxon British adolescents. Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs, 113, 487-508.

Hong, X. (1998). Chinese language maintenance in Winnipeg. Canadian Ethnic Studies, 30 (1), 87-96.

Hutnik, N. (1985). Aspects of identity in a multi-ethnic society. New Community, 12, 298-309.

Hutnik, N. (1986). Patterns of ethnic minority identification and modes of social adaptation. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 9, 150-167.

Imbens-Bailey, A.L., (1997). Oral proficiency and literacy skills in an ancestral language: Implications for ethnic identity. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Washington, D.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 412579)

Isajiw, W. W., (1975). The process of maintenance of ethnic identity: The Canadian context. In M.M Paul (Ed.), Sounds Canadian: Language and Cultures in Multi-ethnic Society (pp.128-138). Toronto: Peter Martin Associate Limited.

Isajiw, W. W., (1985). Learning and use of ethnic language at home and school: Sociological issues and findings. In M.R. Lupul (Ed.). Osvita: Ukrainian Bilingual Education. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta.

Isajiw, W. W. (1999). Understanding diversity: Ethnicity and race in the Canadian context. Toronto: Thompson Education Publishing.

Isajiw, W. W., & Makabe, T. (1982). Socialization as a factor in ethnic retention. Research paper No. 134. Toronto: University of Toronto.

Kalin, R. & Berry, J. W. (1994). Ethnic and multicultural attitudes. In J. W. Berry & J. A. Laponce (Eds.) Ethnicity and culture in Canada: The research landscape. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Knight, G. P., Bernal, M.E., Garza, C.A., and Cota, M.K. (1993). A social cognitive model of the development of ethnic identity and ethnically based behaviors. In M.E Bernal, & G.P. Knight (Eds), Ethnic identity: Formation and transmission among Hispanics and other minorities (pp.213-234). Albany: State University of New York press.

Lambert, W. E. (1974). Culture and language as factors in learning and education. In F. E. Aboud, & R. D. Meade (Eds.), Cultural factors in learning and education. Bellingham, WA: Fifth Washington Symposium on Learning.

Lambert, W. E., & Cazabon, M. (1994). Students' views of the Amigos Program (Report No. 11). Santa Cruz, CA: National Centre for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.

Lambert, W. E., Giles, H., & Picard, O. (1975). Language attitudes in a French-American community. Linguistics, 158, 127-152.

Lan, K. S. K, (1992). Cultural identity: A case study of the Chinese heritage schools in Calgary. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Lan, K. S. K, (1993). The Chinese in Calgary: Schooling for cultural identity. In J. W. Friesen, (Ed.), When Cultures Clash: Case Studies in Multiculturalism. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 167-188.

Landry, R., & Allard, R. (1991). Can schools promote additive bilingualism in minority group children? In L. Malave & G. Duquette (Eds.), Language, culture, and cognition: A collection of studies in first and second language acquisition (pp.198-231). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

L'Ecuyer, R. (1981). The development of the self-concept through the life span. In M. D., Lynch, A. A., Norem-Hebeisen, & K. J., Gergen (Eds.), Self-concept: Advances in theory and research. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company.

Lewin, K. (1948). Resolving social conflicts. New York: Harper.

Lin, L. (1998). A comparison of how balanced bilingual and pseudo-bilingual students, who are second-generation Chinese-Americans, develop and maintain the native language while learning English. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association (San Diego, CA. April 13-17, 1998) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 422722)

Lorenzo-Hernandez, J., & Ouellette, S. C. (1998). Ethnic identity, self-esteem, and values in Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 28(21), 2007-2024.

Luster, T., & McAdoo, H., (1995). Factors related to self-esteem among African American youths: A secondary analysis of the High/Scope Perry preschool data. Journal of Research Adolescence, 5, 451-467.

Marcia, J. (1980). Identity in Adolescence. In J. Adelson (Ed.), Handbook of adolescent psychology, 159-187. New York: Wiley.

Markstrom-Adams, C. & Adams, G. R. (1995). Gender, ethnic group, and grade differences in psychological functioning during middle adolescence. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 24, 397-417.

Martinez, R., & Dukes R. L. (1991). Ethnic and gender differences in self-esteem. Youth & Society, 22(3), 318-338.

Martinez, R., & Dukes, R. L. (1997). The effects of ethnic identity, ethnicity, and gender on adolescent well being. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 26(5), 503-516.

Mead, G. H. (1934). Mind, self, and society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mullis, A. K., Mullis, R. L., & Normandin, D. (1992). Cross-sectional and longitudinal comparisons of adolescent self-esteem. Adolescence, 27, 51-61.

Niebrzydowski, L. (1990). Self-esteem and nature of interpersonal relationships in developing youth. Paper presented at the International Conference on Self-Esteem, Asker, Norway. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service NO. ED 346373)

Pak, A. W. P, Dion, K., & Dion, K. K. (1985). Correlates of self-confidence with English among Chinese students in Toronto. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 17(4), 368-378.

Parham, T. (1989). Cycles of psychological nigrescence. The Counseling Psychologist, 17, 187-226.

Parham, T., & Helms, J. (1981). The influence of Black student's racial identity attitudes on preferences for counselor's race. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 28, 250-257.

Paul, M., & Fischer, J. (1980). Correlates of self-concept among Black early adolescents. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 9, 163-173.

Phinney, J. S. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity development in minority group adolescents. Journal of Early Adolescence, 9, 34-49.

Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. Psychology Bulletin, 108, 499-514.

Phinney, J. S. (1992). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. Journal of adolescent Research, 7, 156-176.

Phinney, J. S. (1993). A three-stage model of ethnic identity development in adolescence. In M. E Bernal, & G. P. Knight (Eds.), Ethnic Identity: Formation and Transmission Among Hispanics and Other Minorities. New York: Albany.

Phinney, J. S. & Alipuria, L. (1990). Ethnic identity in college students from four ethnic groups. Journey of Adolescence, 13, 171-184.

Phinney, J. S., Cantu, C. L., & Kurtz, D. A. (1997). Ethnic and American identity as predictors of self-esteem among African American, Latino, and White adolescents. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 26(2), 165-185.

Phinney, J. S. & Chavira (1992). Ethnic identity and self-esteem: An exploratory longitudinal study. Journal of Adolescence, 15, 271-281.

Phinney, J., Lochner, B., & Murphy, R. (1990). Ethnic identity development and psychological adjustment in adolescence. In A. Stiffman & L. Davis (Eds.), Ethnic issues in adolescent mental health. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Portes, P. R., Ziady, M. F. & Phalachandra, B. (1999). Cultural differences in self-esteem: Ethnic variations in the adaptation of recent immigrant Asian adolescents. In D. S. Sandhu (Ed.) Asian and Pacific Islander Americans: Issues and concerns for counseling and psychotherapy. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Reasoner, R. (1986). Building self-esteem. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psycholog.

Reitz, J. G. (1980). The survival of ethnic groups. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Rogler, L., Cooney, R., & Ortize, V. (1980). Intergenerational change in ethnic identity in the Puerto Rican family. International Migration Review, 14, 193-214.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rosenberg, M. (1986). Conceiving the self. New York: Basic Books.

Saunders, G. (1988). Bilingual children from birth to teens. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Schumann, J. H. (1978). Social psychological factors in second language acquisition. In J. C. Richards (Ed.), Understanding second and foreign language learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Scott, R. H. (2000). Attributional style, self-esteem, and depression: The role of liability of self-esteem. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Shavelson, R. J., Hubner, J. J., & Stanton, G. C. (1976). Self-concept: Validation of construct interpretations. Review of Educational Research, 46, 407-441.

Steffenhagen, L. A. & Steffenhagen, R. A. (1985). Self-esteem and primary demographics characteristics of alcoholics in a rural State. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 30, 51-59.

Tajfel, H. (1978). The Social Psychology of Minorities. New York: Minority Rights Group.

Tajfel, H. (1981). Human groups and social categories. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. . In S. Worchel and W. Austin (Eds.), Psychology of Intergroup Relations. Nelson-Hall, Chicago.

Takaki, R. (1989). Strangers from a different shore: A history of Asian Americans. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Co.

Tanner, G. R. (1996). Self-esteem and alcohol use in adult children of alcoholics and adult children of non-alcoholics. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Tashakkori, A. (1992). Gender, ethnicity, and the structure of self-esteem: An attitudes theory approach. Journal of Social Psychology, 133, 479-488.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1981). Ethnic identity and close friendship in Chinese-American college students. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 5, 383-406.

Tse, L., (1996). The effects of ethnic identity formation on attitudes toward ethnic language development. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED394344)

Turner, C. B. & Turner, B. T. (1982). Gender, race, social class, and self evaluations among college students. The sociological Quarterly, 23, 491-507.

Tzuriel, D., & Klein, M. M. (1977). Ego identity: Effects of ethnocentrism, ethnic identification, and cognitive complexity in Israeli, Oriental, and Western ethnic groups. Psychological Reports, 40, 1099-1110.

Vega, W. A. & Rumbaut, R. G. (1991). Ethnic minorities and mental health. Annual Review of Sociology, 17, 351-383.

Verkuyten, M., Lay, C. (1998). Ethnic minority identity and psychological well-being: The mediating role of collective self-esteem. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 28(21), 1969-1986.

Wang, X. (1996). A view from within: A case study of Chinese heritage community language schools in the United States. Washington, DC: The National Foreign Language Centre.

Waterman, A. (1984). The psychology of individualism. New York: Praeger.

White, C, & Burke, P. (1987) Ethnic role identity among Black and White college students: A interactionist approach. Sociological Perspectives, 30, 310-331.

Wright, S. C., & Taylor, D. M. (1995). Identity and language of the classroom: Investigating the impact of heritage versus second language instruction on personal and collective self-esteem. Journal of Educational Psychology, 87(2), 241-252.



Wylie, R. (1979). The self concept (Vol. 2). University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

Xidis, A. S. (1993). The impact of Greek bilingual programs on the academic performance, language preservation, and ethnicity of Greek-American students: A case study in Chicago (Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1993). Dissertation Abstracts International, 54, 416.

Yaniw, L. (1983). The relationship between three affective variables and student achievement. Unpublished masters thesis. University of Alberta, Alberta, Canada.

Young, M. Y. & Gardner, R. C. (1990). Modes of acculturation and second language proficiency. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 22(1), 59-71.

## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A****Cover Letter and Consent Form****(In both English and Chinese)**

September 2000

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am a graduate student in the Graduate Division of Educational Research at the University of Calgary. I am currently conducting a research on the factors influencing ethnic identity development and the self-esteem of adolescent students in the Chinese Academy School. The study is a part of my degree requirement under the supervision of Dr. John Friesen. The purpose of this letter is to seek permission for your child to participate in the study that is entitled "The effect of Ethnic Identity and Language Learning on Chinese Students' Self-Esteem".

As a teacher in a Chinese heritage language school, I am especially interested in the role played by the Chinese language schools in the development of ethnic identity and self-esteem of Chinese students within a Canadian setting. This study will concentrate on looking into the student's developmental stage of ethnic identity via Chinese language learning, the student's feelings about himself/herself in global, academic, and social self-esteem, and his/her attitudes towards Chinese language learning. The views of the students on these issues are important in illuminating the crucial role of Chinese heritage language education in the ethnic identity retention and the enhancement of minority students' self-evaluation. The study will be carried out during a regularly scheduled class. It will require a maximum of 40 minutes to complete a questionnaire and then the researcher will observe several classes in terms of the results of student survey. In addition, 12-20 students who would be interested in sharing their lived experiences of learning Chinese will be invited to participate in the in-depth interview. Possible risk factors from your child's participation are no greater than his/her normal school activity.

All data provided by the participants will be treated with strict confidentiality. The anonymity of the identities of students will be maintained. As participation in this project is entirely voluntary, students may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

The study results will help educators of heritage language education to understand the developmental process of ethnic identity and the factors of self-esteem among minority adolescents. Your cooperation is vital in improving Chinese heritage language education and in the continuation of a vibrant Chinese culture in Canada. A summary of the results of this project will be available to all participants upon request.

Please kindly fill in the following consent form and return it to the Chinese school. If you have any further questions, you may call me at 220-8094, or contact my advisor, Professor John Friesen, at 220-5675. Any ethical concerns regarding this study may be directed to the Research Service Office of University of Calgary at 220-3782 and ask for Mrs. Patricia Evans.

Sincerely,

Jennifer, Wen-Shya Lee

親愛的家長／監護人：

我是卡加利大學教育研究所碩士班的學生，現正在亞省中文學校進行一項有關影響青少年學生族裔認同發展及自我評價的因素調查，此調查是我完成碩士學位的必要條件之一。這封信的目的是徵求您同意您的孩子參加一項研究，名為「族裔認同和族裔語言學習對華裔學生自信心的影響—卡加利亞省中文學校個案研究」。

身為一位中文學校的語文教師，我對在加拿大教育環境下中文學校對華裔學生族裔認同和自信心的發展所扮演的角色特別感到關切和興趣。這項研究將著重探討在族裔語言學習下學生族裔認同的階段發展，學生對自己在總體、學業及社交的自我信心看法以及其學習族裔語言的態度。學生們在這些議題的觀點將能幫助闡明中文族裔語言教育在族裔認同感的保持和少數民族學生自我信心的增強所扮演的重要角色。這研究將在一般上課時間進行，問卷調查需要四十分鐘完成，而後根據問卷結果，研究者將選擇數個班級進行課堂觀察。另外，將邀請 12-20 位有興趣分享其學習中文經驗的學生參加個別訪談。學生參加所有研究活動可能發生的危險不會大於其日常的學校活動。

學生所提供的一切資料將絕對保密。所有參與這項調查的學生均屬自願性，您的孩子可在將來任何時間選擇退出此研究，而不會影響其在中文學校學習所擁有的權利。

這項研究結果將可幫助族裔語言教育者了解青少年的族裔認同發展階段和自信心的影響因素。您的協力合作對促進加拿大中文族裔語言教育和中華文化的延續是很重要的。此研究完成之後，研究結果摘要將提供給所有索取資料的參與者。

請您填妥下面的同意書回條，並儘快的交回學校，以便這項研究能早日順利進行。若您對此研究有進一步的問題，歡迎您與我聯絡（電話：220-8094）或向我的指導教授 John Friesen 博士垂詢（電話：220-5675）。若您關切這項調查中的研究倫理問題，可與卡加利大學研究服務辦公室 Patricia Evans 聯繫（電話：220-3782）。

李紋霞（Jennifer, Wen-Shya Lee）謹上

## **PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

**Research Project Title:** The Effect of Ethnic Identity and Language Learning on Chinese Adolescents' Self-Esteem

**Investigator:** Jennifer, Wen-Shya Lee

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your child's participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, please take the time to read this information form carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I/We understand that the purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between Chinese language learning and ethnic identity development on self-esteem among Chinese adolescents.

I/We understand that such consent allows the release of information pertaining to my child's birthplace, current grade point average of his/her English school, parents' education level, and parents' ethnicity which would be obtained from my child's self-reporting.

I/We understand that my /our child will be completing a student questionnaire, during a regularly scheduled class, which will take approximately forty minutes to complete. The investigator will, as appropriate, explain to my/our child the research and his/her involvement, and will seek his/her ongoing cooperation throughout the project.

I/We understand that the classroom of my/our child may be observed several times by the researcher. This observation will not disturb my/our child's learning activities in the class. I/We understand my/our child may be invited to participate in interviewing if necessary. Each interview will last approximately one hour.

I/We understand that participation in this study may be terminated at any time by my/our request or by the investigators. Participating in this project and/or withdrawal from this project will not affect my/our request or receipt of services from the school board.

I/We understand that this study will not involve any greater risk than those ordinarily occurring in daily school life.

I/We understand that the name of my/our child will not be required on the questionnaire and participant anonymity is guaranteed.

I/We understand that no personally identifying information will be released to teachers or used to report the data in any published reports.

**I/We understand that all data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the home of the researcher and destroyed three years after publication of the study results.**

Your signature and that of your child on this form indicates that you and your child have understood the information regarding his/her participation in the research project and that you agree or disagree to have your child participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. Your child is free to withdraw at any time. His or her continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your child's participation. If you should have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact:

Jennifer, Wen-Shya Lee	220-8094
Dr. John Friesen	220-5675

If you have any questions concerning the ethics review of this project, or the way you have been treated, you may also contact the Research Services Office at 220-3782 and ask for Mrs. Patricia Evans.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.**

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records.

**The Effect of Ethnic Identity and Language Learning on  
Chinese Adolescents' Self-Esteem**

**PERMISSION SLIP**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class of the Chinese Academy: \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for my child to participate in this study.

I do not give permission for my child to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PLEASE RETURN THIS PERMISSION SLIP TO THE SCHOOL**



## 家長同意書

研究題目：族裔認同和語言學習對華裔學生自信心的影響

研究者：李紋霞

您手上的這份同意書，是一項告知中文學校及研究單位，您同意參加本研究的程序。此份資料應該提供您有關研究計劃的基本內容，以及您的孩子將會參與哪些研究活動。請您務必花些時間，小心地閱讀這份資料並加以瞭解以下的每一項訊息。

我／我們瞭解這項研究的目的，是探索中文學習和族裔認同發展的關係對中國青少年自我信心的影響。

我／我們瞭解這項同意，允許我的孩子告知有關他／她的出生地；英文學校的成績；父母的教育程度和族裔背景。

我／我們瞭解我孩子將會在一般上課時間填寫一份問卷，而填寫問卷所花的時間大約四十分鐘。研究者會在適當情況下，向他／她解釋將參與的活動，以及本研究在進行時所需要的配合作法。

我／我們瞭解在我孩子上課的班級，研究者可能會進行幾次的課堂觀察，但此觀察，將不會打擾我孩子的課堂學習活動。我／我們瞭解如果需要的話，我的孩子可能會被邀請參與一至二次個別訪談，每次訪談時間將不會超過一個小時。

我／我們瞭解此項研究的參與經由我／我們或研究者的要求將可在任何時間終止。參與和／或退出這項研究計劃將不會影響我／我們要求或接受中文學校提供服務的權利。

我／我們瞭解我的孩子參加所有研究活動，可能會發生的危險不會大於其日常的學校活動。

我／我們瞭解我的孩子將不會被要求在問卷上填寫他／她的姓名，並且參與其他研究活動是以匿名方式進行。

我／我們瞭解任何識別個別身份的資訊將不會被告知給學校老師，或者被拿來使用在任何出版的報告當中。

我／我們瞭解所有研究資料將被保管在研究者家中上鎖的資料櫃內，並在發表研究結果三年後被銷毀。

您和您的孩子在同意單回條上的簽名，表示您和孩子瞭解有關他／她參與此研究的各種訊息，以及您同意或不同意讓其參加。您的同意，決不是代表放棄您的權利或是免除研究者和中文學校應有的法律上和專業上的義務。您的孩子可以在任何時間退出研究，而且若他／她有其他持續的參與時，您會被告知。所以在您孩子參與研究的過程中，您可以隨時要求澄清、或是詢問新的資訊。如果您有進一步有關研究計劃的問題，請連絡：

李紋霞	220-8094
John Friesen 博士	220-5675

若您關切這項調查中有關的研究倫理問題，可與卡加利大學研究服務辦公室 Patricia Evans 聯繫（電話：220-3782）。

非常感謝您願意花時間考慮參加這項研究計劃！

這份同意書是給您保留作為紀錄參考之用。此為中文翻譯的同意書，若有文意不盡之處，一切請以英文版為準。

族裔認同和語言學習對華裔學生自信心的影響

同意書回條

學生姓名：\_\_\_\_\_ 中文學校班級：

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ 我允許我的孩子參加這項研究計劃。

☐ 我不允許我的孩子參加這項研究計劃。

學生簽名：\_\_\_\_\_

日期：\_\_\_\_\_

家長／監護人簽名：\_\_\_\_\_

日期：\_\_\_\_\_

**請將回條交回中文學校，謝謝！**

**APPENDIX B****The Student Questionnaire**

## SELF-CONCEPT AND ETHNIC IDENTITY QUESTIONNAIRE

**Directions:** Please attempt to answer all questions as accurately as possible. However, you may omit any question that you do not feel comfortable with.

Please answer the following questions by circling the number that best describes your answer to the question, or by placing a check mark in the brackets, or by filling in the blank in the question (in either English or Chinese).

1. What is your age? Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years old
2. What is your gender?      ( ) Male      ( ) Female
3. In what country were you born?  
     ( ) Canada      ( ) Hong Kong      ( ) Mainland China      ( ) Taiwan  
     ( ) Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How long have you been living in Canada?  
     I have been living in Canada for \_\_\_\_\_ years.
5. What is your average grade in your regular school last school year?  
     ( ) under 60    ( ) 60-69    ( ) 70-79    ( ) 80-89    ( ) 90-99
6. I usually consider myself a: (Please check one only)  
     ( ) Canadian      ( ) Canadian-Chinese (Canadian first, Chinese second)  
     ( ) Chinese      ( ) Chinese-Canadian (Chinese first, Canadian second)  
     ( ) Other Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
7. Parents' education
  - a. What is the highest educational level attained by your father?  
     1 = high school or lower      2 = some college  
     3 = college or university graduate      4 = graduate or professional school
  - b. What is the highest educational level attained by your mother?  
     1 = high school or lower      2 = some college  
     3 = college or university graduate      4 = graduate or professional school
8. What is your parents' ethnicity? (e.g. Chinese, Vietnamese, Canadian, American...)  
     My father's ethnicity is \_\_\_\_\_      My mother's ethnicity is \_\_\_\_\_
9. Which language do you speak most at home?  
     With parents: ( ) Chinese    ( ) English    ( ) other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
     With sibling:    ( ) Chinese    ( ) English    ( ) other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many years have you been studying Chinese in school?  
     In Canada or in countries where the official language is not Chinese?  
     1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12+ if less than 1 year, please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
     In countries where the official language or one of the official languages is Chinese?  
     1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12+ if less than 1 year, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Uncertain	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
11. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	5	4	3	2	1
12. At times I think I am no good at all.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I certainly feel useless at times.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I feel that I am a person of worth.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	5	4	3	2	1
19. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	5	4	3	2	1
21. I am satisfied with my school work.	5	4	3	2	1
22. I usually quit when my school work is too hard.	5	4	3	2	1
23. I often feel like quitting school.	5	4	3	2	1
24. I am doing the best school work that I can.	5	4	3	2	1
25. I am proud of my school work.	5	4	3	2	1
26. I am a failure at school.	5	4	3	2	1
27. I like to be called on by my teacher to answer questions.	5	4	3	2	1
28. My teacher feels that I am not good enough.	5	4	3	2	1
29. Boys or girls like to play with me.	5	4	3	2	1
30. I have only a few friends.	5	4	3	2	1
31. Most boys and girls play games better than I do.	5	4	3	2	1
32. I have many friends about my own age.	5	4	3	2	1
33. I like to play with children younger than I am.	5	4	3	2	1

	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Uncertain	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
34. Other boys and girls are mean to me.	5	4	3	2	1
35. I need more friends.	5	4	3	2	1
36. I have a clear sense of what my Chinese background means for me.	5	4	3	2	1
37. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my Chinese group membership.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I am happy that I am a member of the Chinese group I belong to.	5	4	3	2	1
39. I am not very clear about the role of my Chinese ethnicity in my life.	5	4	3	2	1
40. I really have spent much time trying to learn more about the culture of Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
41. I have a strong sense of belonging to my Chinese group.	5	4	3	2	1
42. I understand pretty well what my Chinese group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my Chinese group and other groups.	5	4	3	2	1
43. In order to learn more about my Chinese background, I have often talked to other people about my Chinese group.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I have a lot of pride in my Chinese group and its accomplishments	5	4	3	2	1
45. I participate in the cultural practices of my Chinese group, such as food, music, or customs.	5	4	3	2	1
46. I feel a strong attachment towards my own Chinese group.	5	4	3	2	1
47. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.	5	4	3	2	1
48. I feel that I can speak Chinese well.	5	4	3	2	1
49. I feel that I can read Chinese well.	5	4	3	2	1
50. I feel that I can write Chinese well.	5	4	3	2	1

	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Uncertain	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
51. I feel that I can understand Chinese well.					5 4 3 2 1
52. I like attending the Chinese school.					5 4 3 2 1
53. I attend the Chinese school because of my interest in learning the Chinese language.					5 4 3 2 1
54. I attend the Chinese school because it is important to my parents.					5 4 3 2 1
55. I attend the Chinese school because I can have a change to meet my Chinese friends.					5 4 3 2 1
56. I attend the Chinese school because it can help me better understand my Chinese background.					5 4 3 2 1
57. I attend the Chinese school because I need the ability of Chinese language for my future career.					5 4 3 2 1
58. I will continue my Chinese learning next year.					5 4 3 2 1
59. Learning Chinese is the priority on my weekend schedule.					5 4 3 2 1
60. I often feel like quitting the learning in Chinese language.					5 4 3 2 1
61. How do you feel about your English ability?					

Understanding	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Average	2 Poor	1 Very poor
Speaking	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Average	2 Poor	1 Very poor
Reading	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Average	2 Poor	1 Very poor
Writing	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Average	2 Poor	1 Very poor

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME. PLEASE HAND IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE PERSON IN CHARGE.