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# Conference

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# edition

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Papers drawn from the international  
Children and Childhoods Conference  
held at UCS—July 2015

# Welcome

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Richard Lister Provost, UCS

Welcome to this fifth edition of the Childhood Remixed publication, our online journal promoting the interdisciplinary study of children and childhoods.

Childhood Remixed has been brought to you by colleagues in the The Unit for the Study of Childhood and Youth, part of iSEED, the Institute for Social, Educational and Enterprise Development.

The publication follows the hugely successful international Children and Childhoods conference at UCS last year. The biennial event welcomed over 90 delegates from around the world. Prestigious key note speakers, Professor Kirsten Stalker from the University of Strathclyde and Professor Ann Phoenix from the Thomas Coram Research Unit, University of London opened each day of the conference with their talks on contextualising disabled childhoods and childhood wellbeing.

This edition of Childhood Remixed is made up of contributions from presenters who attended the Children and Childhoods conference and therefore offers a beautiful eclectic mix of interdisciplinarity.

University Campus Suffolk is at an exciting time in its development. In October 2015 we achieved Taught Degree Awarding Powers, a significant step in our journey towards independence which we hope

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## A note on referencing

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Associate Professor Subasi Baybuga, Nurse Abdulmenaf Kilinc  
and Nurse Selman Coskun  
Mugla Sitki Kocman University School of Health Sciences

## The opinions of university students related to street children

### Abstract

The study was conducted at Mugla S tk Kocman University (n:151) in April 2013. 55.6 % of the participants were aged between 22 -24. Out of the total participants, 56.3 % were females and 5.3 % were from East Anatolia Region. 78.0% of them met street children and declared that street children were shining shoes, using glue and etc. When they faced these street children, 47.3% felt pity and 4.2 % had a fearful reaction. 46.2 % of the participants had communication with street children, 53.3% thought that the society had preconceived ideas about them. They declared that street children had some core issues such as lack of housing (54.3%), lack of nutrition (3.3%) and education (10.6%). Participants reported that the street children had health problems, including communicable diseases (54.0%), chronic diseases (9.3%), and disrupted mental health (22.0%). 53.0 % of the participants expressed that providing services for this group was not sufficient, and suggested that they should be taken under the protection of the government (57.4 %), should be educated adequately (25.2 %) and given advisory support regarding vocational and career opportunities according to their abilities and skills (17.4 %), also more than half of the participants (66.2 %) wanted to get involved in activities for helping street children.

Keywords: Street Children, University students, Opinions

### Introduction

Currently, the increasing number of street children is one of the most important, social and global problems all over the world. Although the exact number of street children is not known (Sharma and Joshi, 2013, p.137), some organisations produce local estimates of the total number of street children in different regions of the world (Thaba, Ghatane and Rimal, 2009, p.273). The Asia-Pacific region is home to nearly half of the world's children, including large numbers of street children (Udin et al., 2014, p.1151). It is estimated that up to 120 or 150 million children live on

the streets all throughout the world (roughly 30 million in Africa, 30 million in Asia and 60 million in South America) (Mandalazi and Umar, 2013, p.1; Subarna, 2014, p.63). For example, India alone is home to the world's largest population of street children (Sharma and Joshi, 2013, p.137), estimated to be 18 million. Also, there are about 445,226 street children in Bangladesh at present and the number is continuously rising (Udin et al., 2014, p.1151). In Turkey, although the studies have been limited for revealing number of the street children, (Günes ve Kalayc , 2004, p.5) number of street children have increased, at least 42,000 children are estimated to be living or working on the streets. The data related to exact number of street children is not available. UNICEF (2002, p.89) defined the street children into three classifications: candidates for the street, children on the street, and children of the street. Children on the street are those with a tendency of working on the streets during the day and returning to a home at night. These are children who work and maintain fairly regular relationships with their families. Children of the street are those who live on the streets without any functional family support. They have no home to return to, and often do not have any family protection or supervision (Ennew, 2003, p.15), also the streets are where they eat, sleep, play and make friends (Njoroge et al., 2013, p.217).

Majority of street children come from poor families, hunger, running-away from home, torture by step-mother/father, unemployment, rural to urban migration, rapid urbanization, war, political instability, natural calamities, family breakdown and violence including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and also uncontrolled population increase and unequal distribution of income, deprivation from education were the main reasons that caused them to leave their families (Thaba, Ghatane and Rimal, 2009, p.273; Eme et al. 2009, p.11; Kocadas, 2011, p. 51; Gebrehiwet et al. 2014, p.11; Udin et al. 2014, p. 1151).

These factors are interrelated, affecting children's experiences of family life and their social, economic, and psychological coping strategies, both on the street and at home (Abdellah, 2015, p.820). These children are usually devoid from basic human and all sort of child rights and have inadequate access to food, clothings, accommodation, education, social facilities and services (Ra , 2012, p.194; Udin et al. 2014, p.1151; Subarna, 2014, p. 64). Mandaliza (2013, p.1). Most of the street children are living in various kinds of health risks, specially high degree of exposure to sexual abuse, suffering from victims of drug addiction, general exploitation, criminal acts, physical violence, verbal abuse, and monetary extortion by peers and adults, including parents, other relatives, police, and sex work clients (Ra , 2012, p.194; Woan, 2013, p.316). As street children have no inadequately protection and supervision by responsible adults for living on the street (UNICEF, 2002, p.89; Islam, Debroy and Sarma, 2014, p.233 ), they grow up without companionship, love and protection, having no access

to education or medical services, losing all dignity and becoming an adult before even having been a child (Mandaliza (2013, p.1).

As a result, street children are a highly vulnerable group among the risk groups in the society, and cope with various situations due to their lifestyle and stigmatization by society. They are most often viewed as delinquents, criminals, drug addicts, and simply the rubbish of society. As it is shown above situations lead to self-exclusion from society, there is no provision of services for street children.

It is known that today's children are the future of society, for creating the world of tomorrow. Therefore, all sectors of society should take the necessary steps so that we can build a better future of society. Community involvement and contribution is very important to provide services for the street children. University students constitute an important part of the society. They are participants to work and perform various activities in the society. It is thought that the present study is valuable in that it shows opinions of university students towards street children and encourages them to join in empowering street children.

#### The aim of the study

The descriptive study was carried out to research the opinions of university students related to street children.

#### Materials and methods

This study was conducted in Mugla Sıtkı Kocman University, which is located in the western part of Turkey. 151 university students participated in the study. A questionnaire form was used for collecting data and this was done in person at the university campus in April 2013. Questionnaire form included a total of 25 questions. A pilot study was conducted by the authors on 10 university students. Before data collection the subjects were informed the aim of the study and written consent was obtained from each participant. The filling of the questionnaire usually took about 10 minutes. Obtained data were evaluated by frequency and percentages by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (16.0). Demographic characteristics of participants were evaluated as independent variables, also opinions towards street children as dependent variables in the study.

#### Results

The findings showed that 29.7% were educated in Education Faculty and 25.8% in Nursing. 55.6 % were ages between 22 -24, 56.3 % were female. 99.3% were unmarried, 77.5% had nuclear family, 89.3 percent had security system, 16.6% were from South Anatolia Region (Table1). 77.5% of participants met street children, while selling something (paper, tissues, water and bag)(68.0%), shining shoes (17.0%), using glue (10.2%), respectively. Participants described street children as they had poor family



relationships (18.1 % ), non-parents (3.5 %), orphan (58.3%), living on the street (18.1%), forced to work on the street (2.0%) in the table 2. Not included in table 2, respondents stated that street children work on the street such as selling tissues, water, napkins; 57.4%, cleaning car glass during heavy traffic on the streets; 8.1%, begging; 20.9%, drug dealing; 2.7%, snatching 5.4%, and also at the same percent street children (5.4%) shoe shiners, garbage collectors, drug courier 5.4% respectively.

As shown table 2, while subjects faced street children; they felt pity (52.1%), feared (4.2%), and also communicated with street children (46.2%). Some of them (41.0%) had difficulties in communicating with street children, some reasons expressed for these difficulties: excessive anxiety and anger (45.7%), language problems (5.0%), embarrassed (16.9%), a few of them (5.0%) did not want to talk to street children.

pittowards street children.

valuable for gaining knowledge and close some gap about this topic.

In the present study, 77.5 % of participants met street children, while selling something 68.3 %, shining shoes 17.0 %, using glue 10.2% and sleeping, begging etc.).

general public disliked them, 28% mentioned they were seen as hooligans and that they should be forcefully removed from streets, while 24.9% reported that the general public was very supportive (UNICEF, 2002, p.97). 57% children on the street are victims of violence by the police and 36.7% by common citizens (Ribeiro, 2008, p.90). All of mentioned above and continuous exposure to harsh environmental conditions and the nature of their life-style threatens their mental, physical, social and spiritual health (Thaba, Ghatane and Rimal, 2009, p.272), and leads to feel aggression towards other people and has negative effects on the street children's physical and mental development.

Participants described that street children had poor family relationships (18.1%), non-parents (3.5%), and orphan (58.3%) in the study. These underlying factors can be some causes pushing children onto the streets. When children start to live on the street, they have no available protection and supervision by adults. These situations threaten children's

and to encourage the society to make a positive impact. Topics related to vulnerable groups especially street children should be put in education curriculum. Furthermore, comprehensive and analytic research on opinions of society on street children should be done on larger participation.

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Dharan municipality',

**Table 2. Participants' Opinions, Opinions About Street Children, Providing Services, Difficulties, and Health Problems**

	n	%
<b>Definition of street children (n:144)</b>		
Poorly family relationships	49	33.9
Non-parents	5	3.5
Orphan	84	58.3
Living on the street	26	18.1
Forced work on the street	2	1.4
<b>Status meeting to street children</b>		
Yes	117	77.5
No	34	22.5
<b>Place of meeting to street children (n:117)*</b>		
Selling something	80	68.3
Shining shoes	20	17.0
Using Glue	12	10.2
Other (sleeping, begging etc.)	7	5.9
<b>First feelings when meeting with street children (n:117)*</b>		
Disappointment	12	10.2
Pity	61	52.1
Worried	40	34.1
Fearful	5	4.2
Other (Curiosity, guiltiness, empathy, etc.)	11	9.4
<b>Communicated with street children (n:145)</b>		
Yes	67	46.2
No	78	53.8
<b>Communicated sometimes with street children (n:146)</b>		
Yes	59	40.4
No	87	59.6
<b>Reason of Difficulties (n:55)</b>		
Excessive anxiety and angry	27	49.1
Self-conscious	18	30.5
Shaming	10	16.9
Language problem	3	5.0
Other (fear, did not know how to talk etc.)	7	12.6
<b>Opinions on providing services for street children (n:148)</b>		
Unknown	38	25.7
Sufficient	31	21.0
Not sufficient	79	53.3
<b>Opinions on society's perceptions about street children (n:150)</b>		
Preconceived	80	53.3
No given work	40	26.7
Seen useless	28	18.7
Exclusion from society	2	1.3
<b>Suggestions about regressions about future services for street children (n:115)</b>		
It should be put under government	66	57.4
It should be educated adequately	29	25.2
It should be guided according to professional skills	20	17.4

Continued on next page...

<b>Opinions about problems of street children (n: 151)</b>		
Housing	82	54.3
Lack of nutrition	5	3.3
Lack of education	16	10.6
Lack of interest and family love	47	31.1
Other (Difficulties in relationships with peers, exposure to violence and committed crime etc.)	1	0.7
<b>Opinion about having health problems of street children (n: 150)</b>		
Communicable diseases	1	0.7
Chronic diseases	18	12.0
Growth retardation	17	11.3
Disrupted of mental health	16	10.7
Others (malnutrition, lack of hygiene etc. etc.)	105	70.3
	4	2.7
<b>Opinion about taking leisure activities for street children (n: 149)</b>		
Yes	98	66.2
No	49	32.9

\* Participants had given more answers.

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## Dissertation poster

### Abstract

The purpose of this research was to discover the possible correlation between pre-school children's television programmes; the main choice of media for children (Gutnick et al. 2011), and the promotion of the ever increasing internet usage in 5 and under age group children (Ofcom, 2014 p.7) by the use of oral, visual and written means. The data collected could be used to advice policy guidance for compulsory e-safety guidance in pre-school establishments and not just limited to schools (Ofsted, 2014). A quantitative content analysis research design was implemented in order to discover the frequencies in which the internet was referred to by the means of verbal and non-verbal communication. The analysis took place on the week beginning 9th February 2015 for ve days Monday – Friday. The time was selected due to being the most popular for children to be participating in television viewing (Ofcom, 2003 p.15). The pre-school child's channel CBeebies was chosen due to its popularity in the selected age group (BARB, 2014 online).

Five main themes were discovered throughout the analysis, the main over-arching nding being that the majority of internet based references occurred in the morning time slot with a signi cantly reduced amount occurring in the evening. A reference to the internet was 3 times more likely to appear in the morning than in the evening, appearing on average every 9 minutes 40 seconds. However, if the results are split between the actual programmes shown and the presenter time results are dramatically different. An internet reference by the presenter is 2 and a half more times more likely to appear in the presenter time than in an actual programme, demonstrating that the presenter uses verbal and non-verbal communication regarding the internet every 4 minutes 26 seconds compared to every 11 minutes 48 seconds made be programmes. Although this is a small scale research project and a larger scale project would be advantageous in order to make more valid conclusions (Bell, 1999 p.58), the ndings have formed a number of useful themes and began to prove that television may have an in uence in internet usage in pre-school children and compulsory e-safety guidance in pre-school would be advantageous.



Internet usage is greatly increasing in the 5 and under age group with more than one in ten children aged 3-4 years old now owning their own internet-ready device (Ofcom, 2014 p.7). To what extent could pre-school children's television be described as promoting this increase, using verbal and non-verbal communication?

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## Anti-racist Brazilian child education: learning from children perspectives

### Abstract

On one hand, this study takes into account the historical moment of tackling racism in Brazil, translated into affirmative action policies, most notably through the Law 10.639/03; and on the other hand, it presents a methodological discussion on research with children emphasizing the assumption of children's views. The general objective is to understand how children comprehend the knowledge of African and African-Brazilian culture in school. The theoretical perspectives adopted are Cultural Studies, Postcolonial and South Epistemologies Studies, the Sociology of Childhood, and the Historical-Cultural Psychology. This work is an ethnographic case study carried out in a private school in kindergarten and elementary school in the fifth biggest city in Brazil. The corpus consisted of field diaries and video recordings of the activities performed by children as well as transcribed interviews (of families and school staff). The maintenance and dynamics of child social groups were based on previous cohabitation, gender, and presence or absence of disability. The black ethnic-racial identity was taken at first by children as a control strategy in the peer group (a black girl was discriminated), and that strategy was neutralized by the school. The significance of African and African-Brazilian history and culture is marked by heterogeneous discourses and selective invisibility, organizing itself in a performative and paradoxical way. The placements of children ranged between approximation / identification / recognition and rejection / cancellation of ethnicity / black / African race, ranked by greater identification with indigenous and European / white, reproducing interpretively the paradoxes perceived in how African culture is transmitted in school and in Brazilian society.

### Introduction

This paper summarizes the findings of Rocha's thesis (2015) that deals with the perspective of childhood cultures in the context of early childhood education, during the process of teaching African and African-Brazilian history and culture (Law 10.639/03). The guiding question was: how do contemporary children, who experience the uprooting and the obliteration of their ethnic-racial belonging, understand the knowledge of African and African-Brazilian history and culture mediated by the school? It aimed to understand, in general, how they interpret such knowledge in school. Specifically, we discussed the role of the early childhood school as a mediator of knowledge about African and African-Brazilian history and culture; we debated the flow of meanings attributed by children to ethnic-racial relations in school and discussed their ethnic-racial relations experience in the school context, from the perspective of childhood cultures. Thus, we focused on racial-ethnic identities, from the children's point of view, when inserted in affirmative pedagogical practices of African and African-Brazilian history and culture.

### Context of the Study

Education as a scene of knowledge and power legitimacy brings into play the desirable development and acceptable actors of human development, in personal and collective terms. The construction of identities, their metamorphosis and maintenance, have a privileged place at school. As it is understood in the Law 10.639/03, schools are important mediators of knowledge about African and African-Brazilian history and culture. This is a law that recognizes the racist heritage in the structure of Brazilian society and the need of a political commitment in order to educate on how to combat it. How does the school get to fulfill this role? What teaching strategies are used to cope with this task? How do children engage in these strategies?

The discursive place of blackness in Brazil is paradoxical. As race and ethnicity are social constructions, Brazilians sometimes reject identification with their black roots, especially as body aesthetics, or celebrate the presence of African culture in Brazil's history and daily life. "Brown" is widely used as a racial classification category by the Brazilian population and institutions. This is a good example of this paradox, as it reveals the deletion of the black race / ethnicity, and the impossibility of identification with the white race / ethnicity. "Brown" is a category without racial-ethnic identification, built as a result of unsuccessful efforts toward a whitening of the Brazilian people, through European immigration at the beginning of the twentieth century. The reconnection with Africa in terms of its epistemology is therefore strategic, as the Law 10.639/03 considers, by expanding the understanding that this continent, as well as an archaeological cradle of humanity, is also a source of knowledge such as music, mathematics and philosophy.

### Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework consisted of a matrix made of Sociology of childhood (Corsaro, 2011; James et al., 1998), Epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2010), Postcolonial Studies (Fanon, 2008; Quijano, 2010) and Cultural Studies (Hall, 2006). From the sociology of childhood, we have the understanding of childhood as historical and social time and children as subjects and agents (James et al., 1998), able to co-create culture in relative autonomy with the adult world (Corsaro, 2011). Adults and children are positioned by issues of class and race/ethnicity, constructed as hierarchical and unidirectional positions, in which the younger would be submitted to the older, by their vulnerability at birth. Santos's (2010) Epistemologies of the South contributed to the understanding of the construction of binary terms (black/white, north/south, culture/nature) and how they survived, even after the decline of colonial societies. Thinking like those authors made us better prepared to understand how children, even in submission situations, can produce knowledge denouncing the world's current crisis in its ways of understanding. Postcolonial studies (Quijano, 2010) provided a reflection on the colonial relations that are still part of the globalized life and educational relations. They also established efforts to break away from the living legacies of colonialism. Identity, through Cultural Studies (Hall, 2006) is perceived as a social construction that is negotiated in relation, marked by the maintenance of racism.

The broader cultural social and historical context, which comprises school, children and families, is highlighted by the dispute over the discourses about the black and African issues in Brazil. The paradoxes of this context are:

- a) the fact that Brazil, even with an extremely fluid perception of race / ethnicity and not presenting a defined "color line", also features several hierarchies based on race/ethnicity, as for example, school racial bullying, preference for white phenotype as a synonym for beauty;
- b) the abysmal social indicators of wealth, education and violence, placing white men as privileged and black women as impaired, coexisting with the racial democracy ideology—that claims the existence of equal conditions, denying prejudice;
- c) the selective visibility of Africa as an exotic ethnicity allied to positive affirmation of Brazilian identity as black, stay side by side with the continuity of a silencing about the whiteness and its privileges.

### Literature review

In Brazil, Cavalleiro (2011), in a seminal work on racism at school, breaks the silence on the situation of ethnic-racial relations in childhood education. While she herself considered her search as one more in the set of information about black people's experience in Brazil, her study has indeed become a reference for understanding the black child in kindergarten. As

a teacher of children aged between four and five years, the researcher noticed the existence of a negative identity in black children, and feelings of superiority in white children at this early age. She observed children, families and environment from three pre-school classes in a public school in São Paulo. She focused on verbal expression, nonverbal practices and pedagogical practices. The study, conducted in the mid-1990s, concluded that schools and families ignore the multi-ethnic character of the global society as well as racism in Brazilian society, remaining silent about prejudiced practices suffered in their daily life. Cavalleiro (2011, p.101) states: "It is therefore essential to draw up a work that promotes mutual respect, recognition of differences, that can talk about them without fear and without prejudice".

Gomes (2002) discussed links between the school and the black identity, based on the view that schools share values, beliefs and prejudices that are important in identity negotiation processes. The author argues that schools' approaches to contents in literature and history made ethnic-racial and gender issues invisible, contributing to the fragmentation of ethnic-racial identity of children and identifying racial difference as a disability. She highlighted the fact that the identity process is not restricted to the private sphere, and to emphasize this fact, she brings to the relational context the black identity issue at the school. This approach, in addition, brings white people to an ethnic-racial experience in a multi-ethnic culture.

Costa, Colaço and Costa (2007) tell us about the emblematic report of a teacher, challenged by a student who complains of a colleague that had referenced skin colour as a racial insult. Initially, the teacher seeks to protect the child, bringing her close and then, when the situation is repeated, encourages children to adopt an affirmative attitude, claiming that she is, indeed, black. This procedure is an example of how the child who practiced racial bullying was subtly not questioned, since the teacher only dialogued with the one that was complaining. This leads us to think about the difficulties of tackling racism, which is always the burden of the one that is, already, being harmed; in this case, the black child.

The aims and objectives of the study

The main question was: how do children, set in a culture strongly marked by rootlessness and the obliteration of the ethnic-racial belonging, interpret ethno-racial identities transmitted in the school context of an early childhood education tackling racism? As hypotheses:

- a) The meanings attributed by the children in their interpretive reproduction (Corsaro, 2011) of the African and African-Brazilian history and culture, is a reposition of the constituent interracial conflicts of Brazilian society, which also are present at the school;
- b) These meanings are constructed as paradoxes in which children articulate the ambiguities of a broader cultural experience, marked

by racism and tensioned by equality values recommended by the pedagogical school intervention and the interracial interaction with their peers, where inequalities tend to reappear.

#### Methodology

This study was a school ethnography with children (Corsaro, 2011),

seen as separate and fixed phenotypes groups, ideological forms. In this way miscegenation is seen as dissolution of the black group. So they do not transform this into another group, but simply disappear. It is also be confused the cultural, social and economic history with the biological perception of race and miscegenation. So, the denial of African descent in their historical aspects is wrongly done based on the dissolution of the black as a concept of *mestizaje*. However the same conceptual operation is not repeated with the white ones or with what is considered as European culture.

Such voices paradoxically wish to maintain white privilege as invisible along with the subordinate place of the black population while coexisting with the demand for more equal relations between whites and blacks. To this end, they denounce privileges in history but deny their maintenance. This dialogized heteroglossia (Faraco, 2011), in which the discourses on race/ethnicity appear wrapped in disagreements, constraints, controversies, ambiguities and paradoxes, is not random. As we learned from children, the black race/ethnicity is organized through Selective Invisibility.

The Selective Invisibility consists of discourses that address negative representations to black people and make invisible positive representations about them, operating in reverse compared to whites. Thus, the response of children to the pleas made by the school to transmit knowledge about African and African-Brazilian history and culture appeared subtly, marked by strangeness, silences, deletions and denials regarding the black race / ethnicity as in children's discourses below:

[...] teacher asked:—What does Africans enjoy doing ? Hugo quickly answered:—They enjoy being slaves!





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## Promoting mental wellbeing in the move from primary to secondary education

The research reported on here was concerned with children considered to be at risk of disengaging with education on transition to secondary school. The research was commissioned by the Cambridgeshire Children's Trust to try and understand the underlying issues for these children. Mental wellbeing is increasingly being seen as the business of schools with programmes that emphasise wellbeing and competence rather than illness (Weare and Markham, 2005).

The concept of 'wellbeing' encompasses both physical and mental health. We can think of 'mental fitness' in a similar way to 'physical fitness', both contributing to wellbeing. Health promotion specialists are increasingly aware that health related behaviours are shaped and constrained by a range of social and community contexts, and that the ways in which individuals relate to wider social networks and communities have important effects on health and well-being. Neighbourhoods where people know each other and trust each other and where they have a say in the way the community is run can be a powerful support in coping with the day to day stresses of life which affect health (Morrow, 1999).

The case for promoting mental fitness

- Promotion of child mental wellbeing has been especially important in UK policy. There is specific concern about children who are at risk or who are disadvantaged and whether promotion of wellbeing at a young age could change and improve their trajectories to achieve better outcomes at later points in their lives. A key part of children's social networks and communities is their school. The transition from primary to secondary school is a time when children can become disengaged from education and there is recognition that vulnerable young people may benefit from transitional programmes to support the move to the new school environment. Educational success enhances life opportunities and we already know that educational disadvantage becomes entrenched by age 11.
- early education is not just about literacy and numeracy but also about developing children's social and emotional skills.

Continued on next page...

- the intergenerational cycle of poverty condemns children to a life without the chance to succeed.  
(Allen and Smith, 2009) not sure how the 3 different affects link or are relevant to the move from primary to secondary ed?

Wellbeing may be one of the mediators for successful outcomes. Allen and Smith (2009) focus on the need to intervene as early as possible in a child's life to break the circle of disadvantage and underachievement to help each child achieve their full potential. Their report emphasizes the importance of working with parents and families to address the cultural and material elements of a child's home life which impact upon later attainment. The evidence points to the possibility that remedial action at 11 years of age is often too late to make a substantial difference to the child in question, whereas intervention far earlier in childhood will be the most effective. We also know that poor mental health at 16 is a significant determinant for poor mental health outcomes into adulthood (Case Fertig & Paxson, 2005).

The case for promoting mental health can be developed, but how do we know which children and young people need such interventions and what would be the best interventions? Early intervention is a difficult concept since if it is universally offered, it is expensive and includes many people who do not need it, but it is unpopular to target early interventions for children.

The rationale for intervention in terms of mental health would include that:

- Children with poorer health have lower educational attainment, poorer health and lower social status as adults;
- Physical health is not as strongly associated with poor outcomes as mental health

The concept of intervention suggests that something needs to change. For example, if a child is behaving badly in school then an intervention could help by working with the child to develop better coping skills to help the child understand why the behaviour is not allowed, helping the child to change their current behaviour.

#### Designing interventions

Poor educational achievement is highlighted in the literature as a risk factor for becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) as adults. Factors which can be linked to poor educational attainment include negative experiences at school, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem, and persistent truancy. The community of school seems a promising area for intervening to promote mental wellbeing although it is hard to separate out the contribution of mental wellbeing to educational outcomes. Should a public health approach be taken (as in vaccination programmes) where

all children are offered school based interventions? This is an appealing approach as it does not label children in the way that a more targeted or focussed intervention would. Merry and Spence (2007) found no evidence that universal interventions worked as a promising prevention in schools to reduce depression. This finding is disappointing as using schools as a way to promote mental wellbeing is a promising model and cost effective model.

The transition to secondary school is a moment when poor engagement in education can be consolidated. It is often commented on that teachers can identify children who may have difficulty, and this study was designed to examine the mental wellbeing of children about whom teachers were concerned. These children were offered a summer activity programme to help their move to secondary school.

While popular, there are mixed findings concerning the effectiveness of activity projects:

- It is very difficult to evidence effectiveness for activity programmes on the emotional and social wellbeing of 'at risk' youth ;
- It is also very hard to show that early intervention of any sort improves outcomes for students and young people.

(Lubans, Plotnikoff, and Lubans, 2012)

Targeted interventions focus on children identified to be 'at risk'. A child who has more than one characteristic which can be argued to be risky becomes more likely to suffer harm and the risk of potential harm becomes greater (Bynner, 2001).

Interventions to prepare children for secondary school

Several summer school projects have aimed to help children transition between primary and secondary school, but while the results are promising the research suffers from being small in scale with fairly minimal outcomes. Rock Up, an Australia project was very small in scale with no control group, but does show how work can be done with children 'at risk' to improve their transition (Carmen et al, 2011). The project worked with 13 children, age ten years, and identified by teachers as being at risk of disengaging from formal education as they started secondary school. The children either had individual time with a support worker or group activities to facilitate the transition and promote wellbeing for the children. The support workers also worked with parents to help them learn skills to support their child with the transition. Whilst the sample is small, the results are interesting. The students reported feeling more confident and less worried about the transition. Parents also said that their children seemed to get a lot out of the intervention and that they enjoyed it. The qualitative data collected showed that there was improvement from pre-intervention

to post-intervention. The reported benefits were not sustained on follow up. However, sustainability is a common problem in early intervention programs and the benefits the children felt and the findings should not be dismissed due to lack of sustainability. It could be argued that self-report about confidence and concerns about the transition is a biased measure and this is why in the study described below we have used a standardised measure of wellbeing.

Martin et al. (2013) surveyed 21,065 students who went to summer schools or who were in comparison schools. The majority of the data collected centred on whether the children enjoyed the summer school and whether they felt more prepared for their secondary school. The vast majority of schools and children considered the summer school a success and found them enjoyable. Students did say they felt more prepared for the transition and less worried about attending, but it is unclear whether the children actually had a smoother transition because of the summer school, even though the children thought they would. The study found that, of those invited, more girls than boys took part in the summer school, also that those from an Asian background were less likely to attend if invited. Whilst 83% of those who were invited did attend the summer school it is important to remember that some children who were identified as being from disadvantaged backgrounds did not attend. The children who do not attend universal programmes may well be those who could potentially benefit most.

Another summer school aimed to make sure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds did not experience a reduction of numeracy and literacy skills over the summer. The summer school consisted of numeracy and literacy classes in the morning and activities in the afternoon. There were no significant differences between the intervention group and control data and both groups experienced a loss in skills in numeracy and literacy over the summer (Siddiqui et al, 2014). Whilst 'summer loss' is common for children, the results are disappointing. This study is a good example of how early interventions aren't guaranteed positive results simply because the funding and execution was implemented. It is very hard to design a universal programme that is likely to articulate with the participants needs.

#### A Transitions Project for Children Identified by Teachers

The project was concerned with children considered to be at risk of disengaging with education on transition to secondary school. The children were identified by teachers and the research was designed to look at their mental wellbeing (age 10–11 years), just prior to a summer transitions project and their transition to secondary school, and then again at the end of their first year at secondary school. The project examined whether the children identified had mental health vulnerability and whether the summer

transition project and first year in secondary school impacted on this.

10 primary schools were involved in the study, feeding into 2 comprehensive secondary schools. For each child that the teachers were concerned about (n=48), the teachers completed a Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) and identified the reasons for their concern. The SDQ is a validated instrument measuring mental wellbeing. Following this the students were offered transition projects over the school summer holidays and then repeat SDQ's were completed by the students/tutors at the end of their first year at secondary school. Ethical approval was granted by Anglia Ruskin Ethics Committee and consent was sought from all parents whose children were identified as in need of additional support in the transition. For a full report on the project see Akister, 2014.

### Findings

At the beginning of the project, the SDQ scores indicate mental health problems for 48% of the children about whom the teachers were concerned. Additionally, there were significant correlations between the teachers' reasons for concern and the subscales of the SDQ: high SDQ scores for emotional distress correlated with teachers' concerns about anxiety, behaviour and attendance; high SDQ scores for behavioural difficulties and Hyperactivity correlated with teacher concerns about behaviour (Fishers Exact Test,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Akister, 2014).

The change in the overall stress scores (from 48% to 13%) and emotional distress scores (from 40% to 15%) pre- and post-summer activity project suggest effectiveness for the project, especially in the domain of self-confidence and self-esteem known to be important for educational attainment.

For some of the children, behavioural difficulties and hyperactivity are the major reasons for concern. There was little change in the subscales of the SDQ relating to behaviour: hyperactivity (from 42% to 41%); behavioural difficulties (from 23% to 18%).

These results indicate that teachers are accurately identifying children who are vulnerable in the transition to secondary school. This project supports the approach of targeting activity projects on specific needs, as the wellbeing of those children with emotional distress is greatly improved, and maintained over a 12 month period, whereas for those children with behavioural difficulties, no significant improvement is sustained. It is interesting that the measure of wellbeing gives such a clear indication for the success of the project and this suggests that the design of the project which aimed at improving self-confidence and peer relationships is effective. That such a project is not successful at improving behaviour means that we should not place all the children who are of concern in the same project. A project aimed at helping with transition will have mixed results if those with mental health problems are included with those with

behavioural problems. Specific projects targeted at behaviour are needed in addition to those promoting self-confidence.

## Conclusion

### Overall

- The SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) scores for Overall Stress suggests improved wellbeing for 35% of the students in the study one year after they began secondary school;
- Teachers are accurate in their concerns for vulnerable children approaching the transition to secondary school. There is good correlation between teachers concerns about self-esteem and anxiety with the SDQ scores for emotional symptoms.

### Emotional Symptoms—Internalising Behaviour

- The transitional Project had a positive impact on student's emotional distress and self-confidence;
- The subscale where there is most improvement in the high category is Emotional Distress (35%).

### Behavioural Symptoms—Externalising behaviour

- There is no change in SDQ scores for behavioural difficulties;
- There is no change in hyperactivity.

The mental wellbeing of young people is a major factor in the educational outcomes they are able to achieve and in their life opportunities. Early intervention projects are very attractive as we can identify children with difficulties quite early in the educational process, but the evidence to support universal 'one-size-fits-all' interventions is very mixed. Our research suggests that teachers are accurate in identifying young people with poor mental wellbeing and that this includes two main groups: those with emotional distress (internalising) and those with behavioural difficulties (externalising). If targeted 'early intervention' approaches are taken focussing either on internalising or externalising expressions of distress, we suggest that the outcomes will be much more positive than in those projects where everyone is offered the same universal early intervention.

## Acknowledgements

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## Mixed age grouping and the emotional development of two-year-olds

### Abstract

This action research project investigates the impact of mixed age grouping on the emotional development of two-year-olds, in light of the UK government initiative to create more funded places for two-year-olds in Early Years settings. Children's emotional development, as indicated through observations related to Laever's scales of wellbeing and involvement, was studied in relation to changes made in the emotional environment of a preschool setting. It was found that children's strong relationships and high quality interactions with staff were the most significant factors in supporting their emotional development. This finding builds on the existing research literature which has highlighted that mixed age grouping benefits younger children cognitively, but there is a risk that it may impact negatively on children's emotional development. It shows ways in which young children's emotional development can be supported to make mixed age grouping a positive and beneficial experience for them.

### Introduction

Since Field (2010) and Allen (2011), there has been a strong focus on early intervention. New government initiatives supporting early intervention, supported by Field (2010: 38-40), highlighted how vitally important the early years are to children's future life chances, and that an individual's life chances begin to be determined as early as pregnancy. Field also pointed out the economic benefits of early intervention, as investing in disadvantaged young children at an early age would improve their outcomes and cause them to require less investment later in life. Allen (2011: xii-xiv) builds on this, stating that an absence of appropriate support for children in their earliest years is causing many of the costly and damaging social problems in our society, and that intervening at a later stage is often more costly and less effective. One element of the UK government's response to these reports has been to create a new entitlement to free early education for two-year-olds, building on

Continued on next page...

the existing entitlement for three- and four-year-olds. As a result, from September 2013, around 130,000 new funded places were created for the most economically disadvantaged two-year-olds, deemed as those who qualify for free school meals or who are looked after children, from the term following their second birthday (Children and Young Persons England, 2012). Local authorities also had the ability to offer places to children not meeting these criteria at their own discretion (DfE, 2012). From September 2014 the number of places available was extended to around 260,000. Although this is not a stipulation of the policy, many of these places for two-year-olds were expected to be made available in preschool settings, creating more mixed age grouping in settings that have previously catered primarily for three- and four-year-olds.

Mixed age grouping has already been occurring to an extent in Early Years settings in the UK, however Nutbrown and Page (2008: 91-92) draw attention to a situation where many settings which in the past operated as preschools or playgroups have lowered the age group to admit children from two years old in order to make their setting more sustainable and remain financially viable, as many children in England start school the term after their fourth birthday, even though the statutory age to start school is the term after their fifth birthday. They suggest that in some of these settings not enough thought has been given to the differentiation of organization, curriculum and environment necessary for these younger children. This raises questions as to the impact of such mixed age grouping on the cognitive and emotional development of these younger children, in particular their emotional development, and the potential dangers of widening such mixed age grouping without due care being given to the needs of the youngest children. It is for this reason that this research project aimed to investigate the impact of mixed age grouping (namely having toddlers and pre-school age children in the same Early Years setting) on the emotional development of two-year-olds.

#### Theoretical framework

In order to be able to discuss the emotional development of the children in the setting, Laever's model of Experiential Education (Laever, 1994) and its focus on indicators of emotional security in terms of wellbeing and involvement will be employed as a theoretical framework. This model is used as a way of measuring children's emotional development through observation of how at ease they are (wellbeing) and how involved they are (involvement) in a setting at any given time. The scale consists of five levels with level 1, low wellbeing and involvement and level 5, high wellbeing and involvement. 'Wellbeing' refers to the level to which children "feel at ease, act spontaneously, show vitality and self-confidence" (Laevers, 2011: 1). 'Involvement' is indicated by concentration, focus, interest and fascination. It is limited in that that observation can only tell us so much—we can never

truly know how the children are feeling, however Laever's model and its

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### Planning for the emotional environment

Bradford (2012), in her discussion of environments for children under three, suggests that we need a more holistic understanding of what constitutes an appropriate environment for these children. This requires us to look at the child's wider environment, both within and beyond the early years setting, and also to view developmentally appropriate care as constituting part of the environment. It is important to acknowledge that babies and children under three are not the same as their older peers – they have unique characteristics, behave in particular ways, and have specialised needs. In particular, babies and children under three thrive on consistency. Bearing this in mind, they should also be given regularity, predictability and constancy of relationships, and this is where the key person approach is invaluable. This is particularly important because 'quality' of the environment should include not only the physical environment, but also the emotional environment in which children are brought up (Bradford, 2012: 15). This includes creating sound partnerships between parents and practitioners, and giving careful consideration to the transition from home to school.

Jarman's Communication Friendly Spaces Approach (Jarman, 2009) highlights the importance of quiet, calm, reflective space, and opportunities to snuggle in as key features of an appropriate environment for under-threes. In particular, bright over-stimulating rooms and too much artificial light are discouraged. Lindon (2012: 9) also highlights that settings that are full of movement and sound can be overwhelming for very young children. This has implications for settings extending their pre-school provision to include two-year-olds, as they may need to change how they have previously approached the noise levels within their setting. However this realisation could also have a positive impact for older children, as reducing unnecessary noise levels can have a positive impact on attention and listening across the age range. This in turn would help to support all children's language development.

### Conclusion

Key messages arising from the literature are that younger children need an environment that is secure and stable, with strong attachments. The overarching idea is that mixed age grouping benefits younger children cognitively, but there is the risk that it may impact negatively on children's emotional development. Further work needs to be done on how to prevent this negative impact, and this is the purpose of this study.

### Methodology

This research project was based in a community playgroup that is situated in the middle of an area of economic disadvantage in south east England, which caters for children aged 2-4 on a part time basis (term time mornings



### Findings and Discussion

The observations carried out indicated that the two-year-olds did not make use of the additional opportunities provided to support their emotional environment through containment and smaller spaces (the play house and dog baskets) in the way that the literature suggested that they would. In fact it was often the older children that used these spaces, either to carry out activities that they did not want the adults to see, or to meet the needs of individual insecurities that some of those children had. This is in line with Lindon's (2012: 10) research, which indicates that two-year-olds do not need a different set of resources from older children, but rather they benefit from having access to the same resources as older children and are able to learn to use them simply and in slightly different ways.

Interestingly, although the two-year-olds did not make much use of the provisions made through the research to support their emotional environment, their wellbeing and involvement scores did still improve over the time period studied. This can be seen in the following thematic representation of the observations, along with the wellbeing and involvement scores which were drawn from these observations.

The key themes that arose from the observations were: the two-year-old children's interactions with other children, their interactions with adults, and their interactions with the environment. The data gathered can be represented as follows:







How do the two-year-olds access the environment compared to their older peers?

The findings of this study found that the two-year-olds accessed the environment in a very similar way to their older peers. The findings also indicate that the small spaces and containment are indeed useful for providing a secure space for less secure children, but that contrary to expectations the less secure children in the setting were not the younger ones. The question that arises from this is what is the setting providing for these children that enables them to feel so secure? As confirmed by the ITERS-R survey carried out in the setting, a key feature of the provision in this setting is the interactions. The manager has made a conscious decision to operate with consistently low ratios of adults to children (usually 1:3 even for the older children) so that staff are more able to interact with the children. This is in line with the idea put forward by Bronfenbrenner (1979: 202) that such low ratios are significant as they enable the high quality interactions that are so crucial to the positive development of young children, and without which children in daycare settings may in fact regress. In terms of the progress shown in the two-year-olds' wellbeing and involvement across the project, it could be that they benefited indirectly from the way in which the changes to the environment supported the less secure older children.

How well do the two-year-olds integrate and settle into the environment?

Overall the two-year-olds appeared to settle very quickly into the setting. Child 1 took the longest to settle, and displayed a significant degree of clinginess to adults for much of the study, however by the end of the research project she also appeared significantly more settled and confident in the environment. It must be taken into account here that most two-year-olds in the setting in which the action research was carried out have a family member in the setting with them, whether that be a sibling, a cousin or a parent. This was indicated in the findings, where the two-year-olds who were most confident seemed to also be those who had more siblings in the setting. However, the findings also indicated cases where two-year-olds who were less secure did still have family members in the setting, suggesting that the correlation between the presence of siblings and an increased wellbeing in the environment may not be so direct. It must also be acknowledged that this setting is part time, which children only attend for three hours in the morning each day. Goddard Blythe (2008: 224) suggests that the amount of time spent in day care can have a significant impact on children's emotional development, and so these shorter sessions must be taken into account here.

### How does mixed age grouping impact on two-year-olds' emotional development?

Children in our setting appeared very confident and settled, and in most cases not intimidated by the older children. Those children who did score slightly lower on their wellbeing and involvement in the indications of emotional stability observations at the beginning of the study made progress across the course of the project. This was found to be primarily the result of high levels of adult input and interactions which facilitated these children's social development. In contrast with Montessori's idea of the environment as the third teacher (Montessori, 1912), it would appear that here we have the teacher as the third environment, as it is the interactions with adults, facilitated by the importance given by management to maintaining low staff:child ratios, that provide the secure environment that enables the children to thrive, and more significantly that enables those with lower emotional development to make such good progress.

### Conclusion

In terms of the impact of mixed age grouping on the emotional development of two-year-olds, the overwhelming conclusion of this research project points to the importance of secure and positive interactions between adults and children. Despite the warnings in the literature about the potential risk that mixed age grouping could pose to younger children's emotional development, the children in the setting at which the action research was carried out all displayed secure emotional development, as indicated through their wellbeing and involvement, with those who had been less secure at the start making strong progress over the time period in which they were studied. Contrary to the expectations I had at the beginning of the project, the factor that enabled such positive development came primarily from the children's strong relationships and interactions with staff, rather than from factors in the physical environment. The findings of this study suggest that it is in fact low child:adult ratios and high quality practitioner-child interactions that support young children's emotional development, and that are therefore the key to enabling two-year-olds to develop to their full potential in a mixed age setting. It must be taken into account that these findings are specific to the setting in which the research was carried out, and may not be transferable to other settings, although early indications suggest that other settings who responded to the questionnaires were also finding the ratio of adults to children and the quality of interactions to be significant factors. Further research is needed to investigate this.

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### Abstract

This paper examines some of the types of relationships particular young women of Bangladeshi Muslim heritage have with their immigrant parents, to whom I refer to as the first generation, the languages spoken with them and the meanings and emotions associated with this. It looks at how language is understood by young women from educated family backgrounds, and how language might also have the potential for these young women to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and identities.

### Keywords

British-Bangladeshi, Dialogue, Intergeneration, Language, Parents

### Understanding Speaking Voices

In describing both the perception of and potential for intergenerational conflicts among British Asians, Brah writes that

the argument is presented along the lines that young Asians growing up in Britain internalise 'Western' values which are at variance with the 'traditional' world of their parents, youth comes into conflict with the parental generation. Undoubtedly, the potential for conflict may well be there, especially when the early years of parents and their children are separated not only in time, but also by country, so that the two age groups are exposed to differing cultural and political influences during their formative years. (1996:42)

However, as Seidler (2000) has explored, if parents harbour troubled or painful histories, though such histories may be silenced and unspoken, children can often 'feel' these histories through tensions within the family. The complex feelings that came out of moving from one place, and leaving

behind one's life to settle in another for our parents of first generation (I have used the term first generation to refer to immigrant parents who have settled in London in order to make their lives; they are parents to the second generation, some of whose voices are heard in this paper) can be felt in our own generation.

Through the establishment of dialogue, differences and potential tensions between generations and different communities have the possibility to be resolved. Moreover, it could be, as Brah has argued, that dialogue between generations within the family helps 'the psychic investments in emotionally charged bonds with family and relations' (1996:43).

Dialogue through movement becomes crucial. Movement between cultural historical spaces is continuous, as is the language interchange as people travel between such spaces constantly. This opens up a space for adaptation, where people can, for example, alter behaviour in order to fit in

Bangladeshi migrant parents. I have employed a 'narratological' method to understand the interviews. As Plummer argues, 'narrative structures enable

and the experiences of belonging is pertinent here. She writes that 'social place has resonances with stability of the self, or with feelings of being part of a larger whole and with the emotional and social bonds that are tied to such places' (2006:21). It is difficult, as Sujata emphasizes, if there are further restrictions imposed. Now that she is older, however, and looks back in hindsight, she explains that her friends were going out to meet boys, something that she did not want to do. This changed the status of the friendships she had with her 'white' friends.



- Shamea: ...so why do you speak to your parents in Bengali and... who do you speak English with?
- Sujata: ...yeah... I speak to my brother in English... solely in English and my parents in Bengali if it's a serious conversation... if it's a serious, serious conversation
- Shamea: How do you do ne a serious conversation?
- Sujata: ...if we talk about something, a topic or something that I really want them to understand... then... obviously they're very well spoken in both languages, but my parents as most Bengali parents... Bangla... I can really get my point across to them... if I was saying the same thing in English, I don't know how much of what I was saying would be absorbed... but if I was speaking in Bengali, I know that I have got their attention one hundred per cent and I realise that that's the best way to speak with my parents or any Bengali parent... I would speak in Bengali

It emerges that Sujata has been very influenced by her parents in establishing a sense of self. Language can be viewed as a means of navigating between these cultures—it becomes a form of 'cultural adaptive transformation' (Liu, 2010:129). For instance, Bengali is used to get her point across to parents of first generation; it is a means of getting attention from a generation who have transferred their histories onto the next generation. At the same time, it connotes a sense of 'power' by translating certain views across to a generation who might not listen if the language does not belong to their histories. Indeed, this might be important as Sujata points out interestingly that she speaks to her brother only in English.

Language can prove a strong factor in moving between differing cultures. Sometimes, language can lead to a merging between cultures. Indeed, one such interviewee has named this new hybrid language 'Benglish'. Lamia is, at the time of this interview, twenty-three years old, the only daughter, indeed, the only child and lives with her parents in Wood Green. Her family originate from the district of Rajshahi in Bangladesh.

- Lamia:
- Shamea: ...can you speak Bengali?
- Lamia: Well I can actually speak Bengali fluently... um... I did a G.C.S.E. in Bengali as well... and um... when I'm at home I speak in Bengali... occasionally with my dad... I sometimes speak in what I call Benglish... [laughs]
- Shamea: Benglish? What's that?
- Lamia: ...it's like a bit of Bengali and a bit of English here and there... [laughs]... but yeah... I speak almost always I speak in Bengali with my parents but if there are certain words in Bengali that I might not know in Bengali and then I might use the English

and then I say do you understand... and they're like... yeah, we get that... [laughs]... when I say I'm uent, I am uent but there are obviously certain words, certain complex words which I probably don't know as well or maybe I can't pronounce well enough so I don't want to try 'coz I'm too scared...

Shamea: ...you're too scared? Why are you scared?

Lamia: yeah, I'm too scared to pronounce it in front of my parents 'coz they might say oh you're so silly, you don't even know what that is or something like that... but...

Shamea: ...but they've taught you this Bengali culture in the first place... so why would they make fun of you if that's the case...?

Lamia: ...I dunno! I just have this feeling that they would just be like, s thuld j and they're like... yeah, we

for instance. Perhaps as a result, many children with whom this happened, grew up communicating in English, where Bengali became secondary. For many parents it was taken for granted that the children would learn Bengali at some point anyway, although this was not always the case for all families. Indeed, citing the work of Hoffman, Treacher argues,

language... evokes and produces membranes of connections and associations which bind one person to another and to the community... to lose a language which evokes attachments is also a loss of a living connection; it is not that the new language is empty but it does not have the same resonances and it requires effort to connect the sounds to interiority and to relationships with others. (2000: 98)

I argue that being able to speak both Bengali and English is what 'bridges' both cultural histories—through certain second generation young woman. It is a way of linking and understanding histories. This can be seen through particular relationships the young woman has, for example, with her parents.

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could be perceived as non-existent. There is also the issue of crossover literature, where the readership either changes over time from the originally intended one, or where literature is marketed as accessible to all ages (Beckett, 2009). The representation of child characters in purportedly adult literature has been explored very little, which can be seen as a reflection of their subordinate status within society, but rather than being sidelined, they merit analysis just as any other literary character, 'both as a formal construct, made out of words and images and having a fully textual existence, and as a set of effects which are modelled on the form of the human person' (Frow, 2014, p. vi) that is constructed and manipulated according to the agenda of the author. Therefore, the choice of representing a child deliberately evokes certain themes that should be explored to attain a fuller understanding of attempts to represent the 'voiceless'.

Within fiction written for adults, children are predominantly portrayed as secondary or marginal characters, a fact which is telling in and of itself, but there are some examples of child protagonists, which will be examined here. This may be because of the perceived necessity that the reader should be able to empathise to some extent with the protagonist, and the assumption that children are not sophisticated enough to feel an affinity with, as they have different life experiences<sup>2</sup>. Childhood is a stage of life that adult readers believe that they have moved on from, an inferior developmental phase, and so child characters can be perceived as simplistic with little knowledge of the world, or as Kincaid states, 'the child' in Victorian literature was 'everything the sophisticated adult was not, everything the rational man of the Enlightenment was not' (Kincaid, 1994, p. 15). The popularity of some notable examples of child protagonists speaks to the possibilities that representations of children could have within literature. One of the most canonical authors to represent children in this role is Charles Dickens, whose novels *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist* have child characters as the protagonist. Obviously, there is a plethora of criticism on Dickens' work, and there are several ways of perceiving how childhood and children are represented in the novels. Bodenheimer argues that:

So far I have spoken of Dickensian children primarily as victims of adult exploitation, and it is easy enough to draw a general conclusion that they function in the novels as means to reveal and condemn

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<sup>2</sup> [A] condition for empathy is that the phenomenological quality of experience is the same for the empathizer and the protagonist. It is important for any analysis of empathy that it be able to account for this similarity of experience. Though it is not sufficient for empathy that the empathizer and protagonist have similar experiences, it is commonly thought that some similarity of experience is necessary for empathy [...] That is, the phenomenology of the experience is supposed to be at least somewhat similar, and the more similar the experience, the greater the empathy. (Feagin, 1996, pp. 100-101)

adult power, viciousness, sadism or indifference. In the service of that accusation, children are designed to evoke in the reader a heady mixture of identification, sympathy, nostalgia, humour, pathos, fear and outrage [...] For Dickens, however, the experience of childhood is something more complicated than simple victimhood, something that readers over the years have expressed in terms of discomfort like “uncanny,” “perverse,” “gnomish” or “monstrous.” That

beginnings, particularly in postcolonial fiction, where '[t]he child becomes the image of disempowerment, as also the means of seeking restitution of power in conjunction with the idea of the nation' (Bharat, 2003, p. 9). This demonstrates an important shift from the associations made with previous child characters, who were predominantly portrayed in children's literature until later in the twentieth century, when they became 'the "realistic" modern child who is psychologically interesting and thus capable of being subjected to the consideration of the literary artist' (Bharat, 2003, p. 4). The innocence of pre- and early twentieth century representations was imbued with justification for the continuation and dominance of colonialism: 'Childhood is as the place where an older form of culture is preserved (nature or oral tradition), but the effect of this in turn is that the same form of culture is infantilised. At this level, children's fiction has a set of long established links with the colonialism which identified the new world with the infantile state of man' (Rose, 1984, p. 50). This rational approach is emblematic of the perception that children were impressionable, and in need of teaching and discipline in order to develop into successful members of society (clearly mirrored in the attitude of the colonisers towards native peoples in many instances). As attitudes have changed throughout the twentieth century, both in regards to attitudes towards children and the postcolonial turn within theoretical analysis, the emergence can be seen of representations of children as rational entities. Literary representations of children from the twentieth century and into the new one have reflected this, as widespread global recognition of the child's experience as an individual has begun to be acknowledged. However, it does appear that children do often have a specific role to play, particularly in postcolonial narratives, as '[t]he fiction writer, who deploys childhood, is enlisting the agency of the child in making an untainted, unbiased inquiry into the contemporary situation' (Bharat, 2003, p. 12). Child characters are thus utilised in an attempt by the author to apparently critique the construction of society, and subsequently national identity, without overt bias, perhaps in order to reinforce their message (if even a supposedly neutral child can see it, it must be true). There was a proliferation of literature about children and Bildungsromane around the time that many former colonies achieved independence, reflecting a new hope for the construction of a national identity. Within contemporary Western literature, the child character does not have this resonance or association with national identity but is used to critique, again apparently without bias, the flawed world of the adult problems within contemporary society in order to 'to make a statement about how, as the individual matures, the innocent and fabulous world of childhood slowly changes and becomes corrupted [and] to give the reader a perspective on the adult world seen through the child-narrator's eyes' (Tatum, 1973, p. 188). Within contemporary representations there is more recognition and allowance for the individuality of children than in the



colonial period:

The space of childhood is a space of hybridity, possibility and, most importantly, resistance. The precarious passage from childhood to adulthood figures as a hybrid interstice, what Bhabha terms as “the inter - the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space - that carries the burden of a culture”. In this hybrid space, the child, figured as not yet a (civilized) adult, becomes initiated to relations of power, social discourse and their embodied practices. However, in many ways the child is constantly negotiating, questioning or even resisting these cultural constructions, even by virtue of its own constructedness. As David Rudd explains, “[T]he constructed child, as tabula rasa - an empty being on which society attempts to inscribe a particular identity - becomes in that very process, the constructive child and sameness is disruptive”. (Hron, 2008)

Although Hron above raises the possibility of the ‘agency’ of the child, thereby implying that it can have a voice to some extent, this can be over-emphasised, particularly when it the actual language of children is considered. The representation of a child, and the intention of giving it a ‘voice’, raises numerous problems for an author. The first of these is linguistic; in literature aimed at adults, the reproduction of the exact speech of a child may seem oversimplified and ‘childish’. There are examples of this in literature, but very few, and Jacqueline Rose uses an example

singular method for representing the voice of the child, although there are some linguistic features that can be used to indicate this voice, including kin names, specifically child-oriented lexis and idioms (grownup, to do a picture) and the breathless, run-on quality of sentences, all of which form a 'baby-talk' that does not reflect children's actual language but how adults believe they speak (McHale, 1994). This myriad of variables means that in the majority of cases of literary representations of children, and in particular as narrators, authors resort to using an adult narrator reflecting on their

there's nothing but action', stating that '[t]wo series of representation are being run together: representation as 'speaking for', as in politics, and representation as 're-presentation', as in art or philosophy' (Spivak, 1994, p. 70). By 'translating' the voice of the child it appears that they are not 'speaking for' them, merely 're-presenting', which could be perceived as continuing form of colonisation in Rose's terminology, and so, although the portrayal of child characters certainly makes them more visible, it continues to be through the dominant perspective of the adult.

There is no doubt that the child is a subaltern subject, as '[t]he border between the child and the adult is necessarily controlled by the latter, but not necessarily in the interest of that other self whom the adult has effaced or transcended' (Goodenough, et al., 1994, p. 2). However, its under-representation may be due to the fact that children are not considered to be 'different' or 'Other', compared to other subjects traditionally considered subaltern based on gender, race or ethnicity, as all adults have developed from children themselves. Therefore, one natural possibility to consider is that perhaps every author feels that they have the authority and ability to represent children as they have all experienced childhood, in spite of the fact they have now finished with this transitional phase and are now in the dominant status of adulthood. Although since the 1970s social attitudes towards children (in the Western world at least) have shifted towards 'an emphasis on the development of the individual and on the sacredness of her or his experience' (Cunningham, 2012, p. 224), in literature children remain a homogenous entity, that are represented either through the voice of an adult or using a generalised, stereotypical 'baby-talk', and it will only be with the formulation of appropriate methods to represent the individuality of children that their subaltern status within literature will change. Spivak's words are perhaps particularly applicable in this case; as childhood is a universal experience, the barriers may be able to be overcome:

Outside (though not completely so) the circuit of the international division of labor, there are people whose consciousness we cannot grasp if we close off our benevolence by constructing a homogenous Other referring only to our own place in the seat of the Same or the Self... To confront them is not to represent (vertreten) them but to learn to represent (darstellen) ourselves. (Spivak, 1994, p. 84)

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## Abstract

The latest UK parental leave reform introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 could have an unintended impact on breastfeeding outcomes. The revised provision of up to 50 weeks shared leave was introduced in April 2015, with a view to encouraging parents to share infant care responsibilities more equally. This paper explores issues with definitions, policy shifts leading to the incremental change in entitlement and the potential for cascading policy failure.

## Introduction

This paper considers how and why recent UK parental leave reform may be negative in the context of breastfeeding. It does not presume to explain the complex impact that parental leave reform may have on parents or infants. Indeed, ongoing research by the author looking at the to exnotpant care ng outcochoic

to clearly and coherently defining the key topics under discussion. Noel-Weiss et al. (2012) highlight somewhat fluid definitions and persistent calls within the literature for consistent application of the term breastfeeding. The debate surrounding breastfeeding definitions is detailed in articles by Labbok, Belsey and Coffin (1997), Renfrew et al. (2007), Thulier (2010), Hector (2011), Labbok and Starling (2012), as well as Noel-Weiss et al. (2012). Jurisdictional variance in definitions and provision of parental leave is well documented by Moss (2015) in the annual *International Review of Leave Policies and Research*. Nevertheless, research frequently treats parental leave as a homogeneous term and rarely offers explanation of the definitions used. Consequently, how both terms can be defined and understood will be explored further in the following sections.

### Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is complex in that it can be described and classified in relation to substance exclusivity (what an infant is being fed) and/or mode of feeding (how an infant is fed). Two of the most frequently used (notably substance based) definitions diverge. The Interagency Group for Action on Breastfeeding (IAGB) schema definitions suggests that exclusive breastfeeding should be limited to infants where “no other liquid or solid is given” (Labbok & Krasovec, 1990, p. 227). However, the World Health Organization (WHO) (1991) indicator definitions permit medicine, vitamin drops/syrups and more recently Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) (World Health Organization, 2008) within the exclusive breastfeeding classification.

Both the IAGB and WHO definitions were developed in the context of measuring breastfeeding (Labbok and Krasovec, 1990; World Health Organization, 1991). This is significant as it has led to additional complexity with regards to infants fed breast milk by modes other than nursing directly (Hector, 2011). Researchers are tasked with interpreting the IAGB (Labbok and Krasovec, 1990) and/or WHO (World Health Organization, 1991) definitions by making assumptions and determining how infants fed expressed breast milk via a bottle, cup, spoon, syringe or other aid/supportive feeding device (e.g. nasogastric tube) are accounted for. Applying the WHO (1991) definitions for example, if no other substances are fed infants may be legitimately counted in both the exclusive breastfed and bottle fed categories.

Studies such as the UK Infant Feeding Survey (McAndrew et al., 2012b) reporting using the WHO (1991) substance based definitions,

Not all studies purporting to use the IAGB (Labbok and Krasovec, 1990) and/or WHO (1991; 2008) definitions explicitly document which category infants fed expressed breast milk fall into (see for example Haider et al., 2010). Moreover, where studies do outline definitions the application in practice is not necessarily consistent. Contrast for example, Jessri et al. (2013, p. 7) and Ogbo, Agho and Page (2015, p. 2) both citing the World Health Organization (2008) indicators as the source of the definitions utilised. The interpretations are valid in the context of the WHO (2008) indicators but do not facilitate cross study comparison, particularly if examining infants fed

The latest UK led reform of parental leave in the form of the Children and Families Act 2014, moved away from gender based (maternity and paternity) provision for the parents of newborn infants to more gender neutral flexible shared leave. The act which came into force in April 2015 is a departure from the historic position of the “law prescribing roles for



2006). Shared parental leave could see mothers in the future returning to work much earlier, particularly in families where they are the higher earner or in a more secure position in the current austere economic climate. The discourse has not yet considered the policy shift, nor has research examined whether it will limit breastfeeding.

#### Breastfeeding outcomes

Policy can shape behaviour over both the short and long term. For example, McAndrew et al. (2012b) highlight that an increase in the length of UK statutory maternity pay to 39 weeks, as a result of the Statutory Maternity Pay, Social Security (Maternity Allowance) and Social Security (Overlapping Benefits) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, meant that “mothers returned to work later in 2010 than in 2005” (p. 154). Whilst the government suggest that initial take up of shared parental leave could be as little as 2 to 8%, this fails to recognise longer term attitudinal shifts along the lines of those noted above (BIS, 2013, p. 4). Moreover, O’Brien, Koslowski and Daly (2015) highlight that there are no official contemporary statistics as the government do not record or systematically report upon leave take up. Additionally, whilst data on infant feeding outcomes has historically been recorded as part of the quinquennial Infant Feeding Survey series, the government has withdrawn support for the ninth survey due to take place during 2015 (La Leche League GB, 2015). Thus determining the impact of the parental leave reform on breastfeeding will be difficult to evidence.

Whilst there are limitations (as discussed previously) to the way the Infant Feeding Survey series records breastfeeding based upon the WHO (1991) indicator definitions, it is nevertheless the most robust data available. Unfortunately no detail is available from the series on the prevalence of breastfeeding (infants who nurse directly) as the infants are grouped with those who are expressed breast milk fed. Within the study the exclusively breast milk fed infants are referred to as ‘exclusively breastfed’ and breast milk fed infants as ‘expressed breast milk fed’ (BIS, 2013, p. 4). The Lealt to evidence.

the government policy recommends that breast milk “should continue to be an important part of babies’ diet for the first year of life” (Department of Health, 2003, p. 2).

#### Breastfeeding post leave

The likelihood of continuing breastfeeding upon return to an occupation outside of the home/away from the infant is in part contingent upon the age at which leave is curtailed. Older infants who breastfeed less frequently and are well underway with the transition to solid foodstuffs can more readily adapt (Angeletti, 2009). However, few mothers in the UK find work and breastfeeding compatible despite the right to request facilities to support breastfeeding and/or breast milk feeding. The Infant Feeding Survey in 2010 reported that only 8% of working mothers indicated that they were provided with facilities to breastfeed at work (McAndrew et al., 2012b, p. 156). Nevertheless, 19% stated that that return to work had affected how their infant was fed, with 56% of these mothers suggesting that they had stopped or limited breastfeeding (McAndrew et al., 2012b, p. 156-157).

Bryder (2009) and Kramer (2010) highlight that Infant feeding practices have an impact on both infant morbidity and mortality, particularly where sanitation is limited. A UNICEF evidence review led by Mary Renfrew in 2012 highlighted that “over £17 million could be gained annually by avoiding the costs of healthcare associated with four acute diseases” typically associated with non-breastfed infants (Renfrew et al., 2012, p. 11). Moreover, three cases of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome annually could be avoided by an increase in infants being exclusively breastfed (Renfrew et al., 2012, p. 12). Whilst short duration maternity leave is only one of the numerous barriers to successful breastfeeding (including practical difficulties, health issues, poor and conflicting advice) the impact of leave provision should not be undervalued.

The flexible format of shared parental leave does offer scope for both parents to take leave (albeit low paid) at the same time (BIS, 2011). This may limit the effect of the policy reform on breastfeeding initiation as fathers have the opportunity to be present to support the establishment of breastfeeding (Sherriff, Hall and Panton, 2014). However, at the other end of spectrum the more leave fathers/partners take the less remains to maintain breastfeeding post six months and as noted above, duration rates in the UK are modest.

If more mothers are returning to an occupation outside of the home and increasingly sustain breastfeeding through nursing breaks or prolong breast milk feeding via expressing breast milk during the hours away from their infant, this will eventually normalise these practices. Yet, despite moves to increase workplace facilities for example, for many mothers continuing breastfeeding for any more than a short period post leave remains unattainable (Kosmala-Anderson and Wallace, 2006). Clearly there

will always be workplaces where it is not possible support breastfeeding due to the work environment. Furthermore, the UK does not have a culture where infants at work or regular, frequent and (for some) lengthy breaks are accepted (Brown, 2015).

### Conclusion

Thus in the present climate, the recent UK parental leave reform introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 could have an unintended impact on breastfeeding outcomes. In short, shared parental leave may be bad for breastfeeding. In particular, the consequence of the reform exerting further pressure upon mothers to curtail their maternity leave warrants further attention.

Ideally, to reduce the likelihood of cascading policy failure and support breastfeeding, encourage active parent-infant bonding whilst promoting appropriate child development, equal provision of twelve months paid leave dedicated to each parent in the form of maternity, paternity or adoption leave can be envisaged as optimal. The term parental leave could then be reserved for the unpaid leave (currently 18 weeks) available to parents throughout childhood (Parental Leave (EU Directive) Regulations SI 2013 No. 283).

Whilst this represents an enhancement of provision, simplified rules and standardised entitlement may reduce administrative and potentially recruitment overheads for business and give parents much needed clarity in the terminology used. Nevertheless, the risk of any parity of leave (even in its current form) is that gender based discrimination and the gender pay gap may simply evolve into discrimination against those of child bearing age and a family pay gap where both parents and therefore their children suffer financially in the long term.

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## Abstract

This study was aimed to determine the teachers' attitudes and behaviours related to child abuse and neglect and to increase their awareness. Questionnaires prepared by researchers were used to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions to determine teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward child abuse. The research was conducted with 173 teachers working in primary schools up to Directorate of National Education in Mugla province in Turkey.

As a result, it was determined that 19.7% of teachers encountered child abuse. It was stated that 70.5 % of them had knowledge about International Child Rights Convention and 89% of them would report to the relevant authorities if they presented with child abuse. It was determined that 100% of them had a protective attitude and behaviour toward children and 87.3 % of them said beating should not be used as an educational tool. 79.85% of teachers understood that whilst it is a legal requirement to report the child abuse and neglect, 87.9% of them stated that the most important profession to protect children exposed to child abuse was Social Services Expertise.

Key Words Abuse, neglect, child, teacher

## 1. Introduction

Progress and development of a society can only be possible with physically, spiritually and socially healthy development of children who are the future of societies. In this context, when examining the definition of child abuse and neglect the World Health Organization (WHO) defined child abuse as "Behaviors unwittingly or intentionally made by an adult and negatively affect the child's health, his physical development and psychological development". Child neglect is defined as physical, emotional, moral and social inhibition of child's development and are the result of neglecting basic needs of a child like nutrition, clothing, sheltering, education, health

and love by particularly by parents, dependents and other adults (1). There are four main categories of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect (2). As mentioned in the definition above, abuse and neglect is a major social problem that negatively affect the child's whole development. Protection from "all forms of physical and mental violence" of children while in the care of their parents or others is taken part in Convention on Child Rights of which our country is part (3).

Although the concept of child abuse and neglect can be found in various resources since the beginning of written history, our attention could be drawn to the subject in last century (4). According to the figures from 29 countries in the world, the approximate average rate of child abuse is 16.3/1000. WHO reports that each year 31000 children under age of 15 lost their lives because of this and child abuse incidences globally 40/1,000 (5,6).

25% of children aged 7-18 living in Turkey are exposed to child neglect, 43% of them are exposed to physical abuse, 51% of them are exposed to emotional abuse and 3% of them are exposed to sexual abuse (7). According to another study, emotional abuse scores the highest with 78% of rate has the first place in Turkey (6). Even though some research is being carried out regarding sexual abuse in Turkey, ofcial figures do not reflect this. In the achieved study, it was determined that girls' rate exposure to sexual abuse was 85% and boys' rate was 15%. According to 2010 data, lawsuits related to Crimes against Sexual Immunity; it was noteworthy that 1052 boys and 48 girls aged 12-15, 2129 boys and 71 girls aged 15-18 were defendant (8).

When the subject is viewed from another dimension; it is often located in written and visual media news that teachers apply physical punishment styles against students in schools (9). In addition, girls aged 7-14 are mostly exposed to physical abuse by their mother, father, teacher, friend and big sisters/brothers. Boys had suffered from physical abuse respectively by their friend, teacher, father, big sister/brother and unfamiliar person (7). Besides emotional abuse forms that teachers expose students to are; yelling to students, giving names, not to give right to speak, putting some students continually in the back row, ignoring some students, standing students on one foot labelling students with negative expressions like "lazy, etc." (9). Girls aged 7-14 stated that they were mostly exposed to emotional abuse by their friend, teacher, father and mother. Boys at this age stated that they were mostly exposed to emotional abuse respectively by their teachers, friends and fathers (7). Students that are exposed to these behaviors develop negative attitudes to school and lesson, suffer psychologically and physically (9).

As a result, everyone who is responsible for child care and training has an important role in supporting children to grow up as a healthy person. Accordingly, it is thought that either to prevent child abuse and neglect or in terms of intervention to the situation in early period with



interdisciplinary cooperation raising awareness of teachers regarding evaluating of their and their colleagues' attitudes and behaviours is important.

## 2. Method

This descriptive study was carried out in Mugla province, Turkey between February- April 2014 to measure knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of the teachers' about child abuse and neglect. The research population consisted of teachers working in 40 primary schools in Mugla province. 173 teachers from 16 schools were included in the research by using strati cation random sampling method in sample selection. "Questionnaire on Determination Attitudes and Behaviours of Teachers Working in Primary Schools toward Child Abuse" generated by scanning the literature by researchers was used to collect data. This form consists of 21 questions. Data obtained in the research was evaluated applying number and percentage test in SPSS 21.0 software.

Written permission was taken from Mugla Provincial Directorate of National Education before research; verbal consents were taken by explaining the purpose of the study to the teachers before applying the questionnaire; the research was conducted in the frame of ethical rules.

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### 3. Results

55.5% of teachers were in the 24–45 age range and 53.8% of them were women. 83.2% of the teachers were married and 83.2% of them had children. The majority of teachers had worked in the profession for between 16–30 years. 96.5% of the teachers participated in the research reported that they loved their profession.

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It was stated that all teachers were in attitude of protective toward their students, 89% were democratic, 79,8% were full of love, 71,7% were strict, 63% were unconcerned; 60,1% were like a friend with their students.

80.3% of teachers had not met with any kind of child abuse.

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80.9% of teachers stated that they would believe the child who said s/he was abused by family members. 19.7% of teachers thought that sexual abuse cases were generally performed by elderly, foreign men and street punks.

87.3% of teachers thought that beating should not be used as an educational tool. 12.7% of them thought it was necessary; 4.6% of these teachers thought that beating was necessary for the child to understand who has control, 8.1% of them thought that some children deserved to be beaten.

70.5% of teachers stated that they have knowledge about International Children's Rights Convention.

The majority of teachers (87.9%) thought Social Services had the best occupation and expertise to deal with child abuse, this was followed by teachers (68.8%) with 61.8% being the police, 52.6% judiciary, 34.7% doctors and the lowest expertise of child abuse expertise (21,4%) being in the nursing occupation .



The main causes for child abuse were cited as follows: 100% agreed that child pornography was the main cause; 99.4% being prostitution, 98.3% sexual touching; 97.1% begging children on the streets; 95.4% carrying out scientific experiments on children; 94.8% watching child secretly while dressing; 92.5% of them girls taken out of the school or never sent to



Accordingly, the recommendations are as follows

1. Training programs and seminars about the causes and concerns relating to child abuse should be compulsory to increase awareness of teachers. Recording and reporting processes and upholding children's rights against abuse and neglect, understanding signs and symptoms of abuse, domestic abuse (incest), general characteristics of abusers, disciplinary methods and the evaluation of risks posed should be given a place in these trainings.
2. Active use of interdisciplinary collaboration in the prevention of child abuse and neglect,
3. Further comprehensive and analytical studies on a larger sample on this subject are recommended

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## Abstract

The purpose of this content analysis study was to examine whether acknowledgement of China (as adoptees' birth country) was evident in children's picture storybooks. Acknowledgement matters because it can be salient to children's binational/bicultural identity. The authors identified 38 books (containing 40 stories) that portrayed Chinese girls adopted by US families. Across the books, the results revealed an acknowledgement process that linked China to adoptees' personal identification. This theme had some consistencies with psychological research on actual adoptive families. Suggestions for potential value/utilization of such books are offered.

## Acknowledgement of birth country in picture storybooks about Chinese girls adopted by US families

According to US Office of Immigration Statistics (USOIS, 2011), US families most frequently adopt children from China. Indeed, nearly one third of all children internationally adopted in 2010 were from China. Approximately 75% of the Chinese adoptees were girls (USOIS, 2011). Given the prevalence of Chinese-US adoptive families, it seems worthwhile to consider elements of biracial/binational identity. As noted by Yuval-Davis (2012), individuals' daily experiences are influenced by factors such as gender, ethnicity, and lifecycle stage. Given the racial/ethnic differences between US adoptive parents (who are typically Caucasian/Euro-American) and their daughters, it is likely that all family members will face social inquiries/reactions (Docan-Morgan, 2011; Kubo, 2010; Louie, 2009).

identities (Evans, 2008; Gill, 2012; Louie, 2009). According to Song (2004), books are one of the most common resources on which parents rely to provide a cultural education for their adopted children. In this context, this study addressed the following research question: Are acknowledgements of China (as birth country) evident in US children's picture storybooks about adoption?

The Early storybooks might be particularly salient for children who (a) lack memories of their pre-adoption lives and (b) don't have access to biographical records (e.g., birthparents' information). These conditions are common for Chinese-born girls adopted by US families. According to the US Department of State (2014), most of these girls are younger than two years at the time of adoption. Interviews with pre-teen/adolescent adoptees revealed that they have little memory of their experiences in China (Fuchs, 2014). Given governmental restrictions (e.g., one-child policy), birthparents aren't safe to openly place their children for adoption (Grice, 2005; Johnson, Banghan, & Liyao, 1998). Thus, their children often enter the child welfare system anonymously (Andrew, 2007) and little/no information about birthfamilies (including their sense of Chinese identity) is known.

In the absence of birthfamily/country memories, adoptive families can turn to children's literature as a resource. Similar to other media (Magalhaes & Rossie, 2014), children can be exposed to stories and claim them as part of their identities/experiences (Jue-Steuck, 2011). For example, a customer reviewer wrote (in reference to Vanita Wasson's 1939 book *The Chosen Baby*), that she "was adopted 60 years ago. I remember this book. I would recommend it to anyone with an adopted child under the age of 5 or 6; it's a primitive reader, with lots of pictures. My mother recently died, and among her effects was this book - which she wanted to go to my sister, who is also adopted" (Customer Review, 2014). This comment is consistent with prior research, which has shown that stories are important to adopted children (Kranstuber & Kellas, 2011; Ponte, Wang & Fan, 2010).

According to Yuval-Davis (2012), a sense of belongingness (as part of identity) is developed via daily or routine practices. These practices can occur in the home among family members and help individuals to understand their social location (e.g., awareness of status tied to race/ethnicity, sex, social class). It is possible that children's literature might be a means of helping Chinese-born adopted girls to understand their social location (e.g., Grice, 2005). Indeed, Jue-Steuck (2011) stated that adoptees (a) can remember the adoptive stories read to them in early childhood and (b) carry these stories into adulthood as part of their identities. Given this potential impact on early identity, it seems worthwhile to examine the issues/themes represented within such books (Fitzpatrick & Kostina-Ritchey, 2013).

#### Book selection/critical analysis process

In order to be included in this study, each book had to meet several criteria. More specifically, each book (a) had to specify the birth country as China, (b) published after 1995, (c) printed in English and (d) had to be written for a preschool-kindergarten audience. [This criterion did not focus on children's reading level, but rather the age-appropriateness of a book which parents can read with children.] A sample of 38 books was identified. Two books had dual stories, so the sample contained a total of 40 stories (see Table 1).

The authors utilized a directional coding approach. In contrast to a grounded theory approach, directional coding entails a content analysis in which researcher search for pre-determined thematic topics/messages (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The topics are identified from sources such as

was best articulated in Jean MacLeod's *At Home in this World—A China Adoption Story*: "Sometimes my friends will ask me questions about things I can't answer: I don't remember anything clearly about my first year on the other side of the ocean—all I have are memories of many different feelings, and sometimes what I feel I can't explain." (n.p.).

This lack of recall is not limited to adopted infants/toddlers. Many children have few clear memories from their earliest years. However, this does create a situation in which adoptive parents have greater responsibility for explaining a child's (a) pre-adoptive life in China and (b) arrival in the US (Gill, 2012; Kranstuber & Kellas, 2011). Prior research has indicated that some adoptive parents have difficulty addressing topics such as birthparents, biethnic/binational identity and children's sense of belongingness (Docan-Morgan, 2011; Kubo, 2010; Louie, 2009; Song, 2004). In this context, books might be a valuable resource to begin conversations or elucidate issues for children (e.g., Beck, 2009; Kokkola, 2011).

For example, the books provide models of phrases that young children can learn and use in interactions with others such as peers and teachers. The phrases are short, but informative (e.g., "I lived in China until I was adopted"). Given the brevity of some conversations among



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#### Table 1: International Adoption Children's Book List

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## Abstract

Research, child death enquiries and serious case reviews (SCR) routinely identify the recurring failures of interprofessional collaboration in the safeguarding of children and young people. The key consideration, notwithstanding the existing knowledge and understanding and the progress made in safeguarding children, is that it is not always clear what influences the success or failure of a collaborative approach. Whilst the need for systemic understanding of collaboration is acknowledged, there is still a lack of conceptual clarity about what constitutes successful collaboration and why it appears so difficult to achieve. Because of the diverse composition of those involved in the collaboration; ranging from children and young people, their parents or carers to different professionals, it is important to explore the diverse perspectives regarding what influences contribute to the success or failure of this approach. Given the social workers' lead role, in particular, their perceptions and insights into this process are critical to contributing, not only to practitioner knowledge, but also to effective collaboration as a whole.

Key words service user, collaboration, safeguarding, children and young people

## Introduction

One of the most enduring debates in the UK over the last few decades concerns how and why vulnerable children have continued to suffer neglect and abuse, in some cases with fatal consequences, despite the perceived big strides that have been made to safeguard them (McLaughlin, 2013; Munro and Hubbard, 2011). From the deaths of Dennis O'Neill in 1945, and Maria Colwell in 1973 all cases of child death or serious neglect or abuse, have attracted more or less similar criticism, concerning the



### Methodology and Samples

The study drew from a systemic conceptual proposition that there is systemic relationship between the various influences that social workers consider to be key successful interprofessional collaboration in safeguarding children and young people (see Figure 1). A constructivist interpretive research design was adopted using semi-structured interviews with 16 social workers, who had case holding responsibilities for child protection, while 20 safeguarding meetings were directly observed using qualitative non-participant observation. The observation guide, adopted for the qualitative observations, was a hybrid combination of the multiagency health check survey toolkit (Huxham and Vangen, 2005) and Wilder Foundation collaboration influences inventory (Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey, 2001). The choice of the methodology was determined in order

Throughout the study, from conception to completion, I was constantly aware of the subjectivity that I could bring with me as an experienced practitioner, social work academic and passionate former child protection chairperson. Being mindful of how these various attributes could shape the study and its outcomes formed the basis of my reflections and reflexivity throughout the study. As Peshkin (1988, p.17) admonished in his seminal work, “subjectivity is inevitable... researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is actively in progress”. Likewise, Savage (2007, p.193) described paying particular attention to your subjectivity as being “meaningfully attentive” while Bradbury-Jones (2007, p.1) underscored the need to explore your subjectivity in order to enhance “rigour” and “trustworthiness” about your study. In order to explore, pay attention to, and systematically seek out, my subjectivity in this study I therefore reflected on myself mainly, from three angles as the Experienced practitioner I, the Social work academic I, as well as the Passionate former child protection chairperson I, in line with Peshkin’s model of reflection (Peshkin, 1988).

### Findings

From a descriptive interpretive thematic analysis (Bazeley, 2013, p.195) of the qualitative interviews four key themes emerged:

- relationships in unences;
- organisational in unences;
- external in unences;
- decision-making prioritisation in unences.

Within these four themes, the relationship in unences were associated with the majority of subthemes that were identified, which suggests a central role for relationships in collaborative work. There are also overlaps or recurrence of the in unences within broad themes. These overlapping in unences support the systemic nature of these in unences. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003) following the discovery of themes and subthemes, the researchers should build hierarchies of themes and link themes with theoretical models. Relationship in unences are composed of three main elements, namely, interprofessional relationships, the lead social worker relationships and service user relationships. On the other hand, organisational in unences include the same elements at the organisational level: interprofessional organisational in unences, lead social worker organisational in unences and service user organisational in unences. The remaining two superordinate themes relate to the external environmental in unences and decision-making prioritisation in unences. Noteworthy too, a number of sub-themes emerged from the main themes which recurred within and across the main and superordinate themes. For example, while

strong working relationships between professionals, lead social worker and service users were cited as enablers to interprofessional collaboration, different perspectives to risk thresholds and eligibility criteria alongside mistrust, undermining each other and power differentials were described as a barriers to these relationships. As one particular participant (SW16) observed 'other professionals have their own thresholds' which can make good relationships difficult to achieve.

Further evidence from interviews also showed that communication and information sharing in interprofessional relationship can be enabled by honesty, transparency, continuous dialogue, valuing each other's perspectives, use of appropriate language, task focus and timeliness, while on the other hand, attitudes, lack of information and communication breakdown, language barriers can be barriers to communication and information sharing. In the words of the participants what is important is, 'being open and honest' (SW15) or 'working together in an open and in a transparent manner' (SW15).

Similarly, the importance of having a clear and shared vision in interprofessional relationships was affirmed during interviews, with research participants citing barriers such as lack of knowledge, joint training and understanding and ignorance about safeguarding as well as collusion and focus on self instead of child. One participant (SW06) described the absence of a clear and shared vision due to, 'not seeing the bigger picture', while another participant (SW09) attributed it to, 'professionals who don't

differentials, lack of task focus and commitment by other professionals which can be barriers to the lead social worker role. As participants observed about other professionals, 'they feel maybe they have got a greater power' (SW04) or they may, 'have different perspectives and see things differently' (SW06).

As with other professionals the barriers to the lead social workers' role clarity include lack of shared responsibility, training, experience, unclear expectations, role conflict and avoidance. Participant SW02 felt that lead social workers spend, 'a lot of time doing the mundane chores', while Participant SW15 felt sometimes lead social workers are, 'just thrown in the deep end of the pool'. To enable lead social worker' role clarity participants suggested joint training, closer working, and treating lead social worker as a motivator, overseer, gatekeeper and coordinative role.

Communication and information sharing for the lead social worker with other professionals, according to research participants can be inhibited by communication breakdown, lack of timely information sharing, responses, inadequate and incomplete information as well as misinformation by service users. For such communication between lead social worker with other professionals to improve participants felt there that there is a need for openness and transparency, availability of information as well as 'sharing of information in a timely manner' as Participant SW08 put it.

Unsurprisingly perhaps was that participants also identified frequent changes to the lead social worker as a barrier to interprofessional relationships, alongside service user aversion and information gaps. Participant SW13 for example described experiences where changes to lead social workers happened so quickly even before service users 'had enough information from that worker'.

Participants also observed that on other occasions, difficulties in interprofessional relationships are due to service user aggression, different agenda, confidentiality, collusion and non-engagement with 'aggressive people coming to the meeting' (SW02) or the relationships between professionals and service users, 'sometimes it can feel a bit collusive' (SW06). Direct work, inclusive dialogue, listening to service users or as participant SW13 put it 'paying attention to what they're saying' could improve these relationships with service users. While some participants felt that some professionals can have a fear of antagonising relationships with service users, one participant (SW10) in particular argued, 'I think there is sometimes an emotional resistance to some element of a case'.

According to participants service user relationships with professionals can be inhibited by a number of barriers such as perceived intrusion, professionals' enmeshment and collusive behaviour with service users. Participant SW02 observed that, 'some professionals are over friendly, they become too involved'. Other barriers may include

professionals' fear of antagonising relationships with service users, language barriers as well as values and cultural differences. Too much focus on mothers at the exclusion of fathers can also be a factor. Negative media portrayal of professionals was also cited as another factor, alongside unfulfilled promises and unrealistic expectations, disguised compliance, manipulative behaviour and institutionalised involvement with social care. To overcome barriers to service user relationships with professionals, participants felt that there is a need to challenge service users openly, involve service users in decision-making, and empower service users by giving them a sense of ownership of the whole process as well as appropriate use of professional power.

As with professionals, service user communication and information sharing can be inhibited by use of jargon, communication failures by agencies, professionals not returning calls and using inappropriate communication skills. To overcome these barriers to service user communication and information sharing participants felt that service users should be prevented from playing professionals off each other and information should be shared freely. In order to engender good service user communication and information sharing in interprofessional relationships, professionals also need to acquire relevant training in knowledge, skills and experience for professionals.

Service user relationships like professionals and lead social worker relationships are also influenced by role clarity. They need knowledge and understanding of their roles, goals and expectations in relation to their engagement and participation according to participants. However, specific barriers for service users knowledge and understanding of their role may range from their lack of motivation to change, learning disabilities and low literacy levels, lack of acknowledgement, complexity of issues, social stigma, misconceptions and negative image due to media portrayal, experience of social care, personality clashes, service users' different circumstances, mistrust, habituation, despondency and dependence, to loyalty to family. Role clarity for service users cannot be achieved, according to Participant SW07, 'if they can't acknowledge what the concerns are', yet in other instances, 'obviously there's stigma with social services', as Participant SW03 put it. Service user role clarity, together with a clear vision, goals and expectations, good service user communication and information sharing as well as shared focus and ownership of the safeguarding process, as in lead social worker and professional relationship influences are therefore key to collaborative working.

The aim of the direct non participant observations was to complement and enrich the interview findings. During direct observations there was clear evidence of collaboration in influence mainly in the following interprofessional, lead social workers and service user areas:



- Clear vision, shared focus and compatible aims
- Open communication, sharing of information
- Role clarity
- Ability to stay focussed
- Evidence of trust and respect for each other and appropriate use of professional power and status
- Evidence of the service user voice but mainly mothers and not fathers
- Lead social worker's leadership style
- Impact of external environmental factors (e.g. economic austerity measures).
- Evidence of collaborative advantage (i.e., evidence that good outcomes are due to collaboration).

On the other hand, there was limited evidence of the influence of the following factors:

- Evidence of non-judgemental attitude during meetings
- Evidence of non-use of professional jargon and inappropriate language
- Clarity of decision-making prioritisation criteria

The findings from observations thematic findings from the interview data were triangulated with using the triangulation protocol with a convergence coding scheme in order to examine any agreement, partial agreement, silence, or dissonance between the interview and observation findings. The direct observations showed convergence, hence complementarity to the interview findings concerning the systemic nature of the relationship between these influences in line with the proposed conceptual framework of this study. The observed influences on collaboration and the themes which emerged from participant interviews support the concept of a systemic relationship between collaboration influences that were identified and explored in this study.

An emerging conceptual model for collaboration

The systemic relationship between these collaboration influences can be expressed through a visual conceptual model. A conceptual model helps integrate, illustrate and communicate the relationships and interactions between the main elements of the systems and influences that constitute collaboration for safeguarding vulnerable children, making it easier to understand the phenomenon being investigated (Dawson, 2004).

Relationship influences are predominant and central to collaboration and can be located at three different levels, namely; interprofessional relationship influences, lead social worker relationship influences and service user relationships influences. Within these levels are a large number of elements which act as barriers and enablers to collaborative working including: interprofessional organisational influences, lead social worker

organisational influences and service user organisational influences. The proposed conceptual model for collaboration emerging from this study's findings is characterised by a systemic relationship (see Figure 3).

### Discussion

There are a number of limitations to this study that need to be considered. Firstly, this is a small scale study which means the findings from the study, despite offering in-depth insights, cannot be generalised. However failure to generalise findings does not render such results less important but means further research will be needed to confirm the proposed conceptual model (see Figure 3).

Secondly, as already alluded to above in this chapter, participants in this study were qualified social workers with case holding responsibilities for child protection cases. Crucially, perceptual views held by these practitioners may not necessarily always be in line with reality yet, they may still have far reaching influences on how the perceiver may go about with their involvement during collaboration. While views from and perceptions by social work professionals are obviously important in terms of contribution to the improvement of collaboration, the perspectives from non-social work professionals, as well as service users could have enriched the study.

As illustrated in the conceptual model of collaboration (Figure 3) while the systemic relationship between the various collaboration influences is the thesis advanced and supported by evidence from this study there is need for the synthesis between systematic identification of collaboration influences and understanding of their systemic relationships. Often when these two concepts are used to describe interprofessional collaboration they are made to appear as if they mean the same thing or are the antithesis of each other, yet as evidence in this study has shown, they can be complementary.

The findings from observations may have been influenced by observer subjectivity because they relied exclusively on the researcher's observations and judgement. Nevertheless, the complementary value of the observation findings is valuable and supports the proposed model of collaboration. The adoption of Peshkins model for reflection as the Experienced practitioner I, the Social work academic I, the Passionate former child protection chairperson I, throughout the study contributed immensely to the reduction of subjectivity, while adding to rigour, trustworthiness and credibility to research design and findings of this study.

### Conclusions

It is critical to have clear knowledge and understanding of what factors social workers perceive as key influences are involved when professionals and service users try to work collaboratively. There are differing perspectives regarding the effectiveness of collaboration in safeguarding children. These vary from those who believe the approach is a panacea, to those who argue that the approach has failed to keep children safe. The key finding from this study is that there are four key influences to collaborative

working between professionals and families, namely, relationship in uences; organisational in uences; external in uences; and decision-making prioritisation criteria in uences. The relationship in uences operate through three different axis: the interprofessional relationship, the lead social worker relationship and the service user relationships in uences. Within these axis there are speci c in uences which act as barriers and enablers to collaborative working, further reinforcing the location of relationship in uences at the heart of collaboration. The emerging systemic conceptual model which based on the systematic identi cation of collaboration in uences this study tries to improve conceptual clarity concerning the theoretical basis for collaborative working. The key argument emanating from this new evidence is that contrary to the recurrent ndings by serious case reviews and child death inquiries, the tendency to cite only one or two in uences as the reason for failure for the collaborative effort may be tenuous and misleading.

Key recommendations for policy, practice, training and further research:

1. Develop and nurture positive relationship between professionals, lead social workers and service users,
2. Analyse, identify and manage internal organisational in uences that impact on collaboration between professionals.
3. Analyse, identify and manage external environmental (ecological) in uences.
4. Allow professionals to use some reasonable degree of discretion based on intuition and professional judgement and other pragmatic considerations.
5. Use the conceptual model to identify collaboration in uences and understand their systemic relationships.
6. Further research is recommended in the following areas:
  - Explore the views of non-social work professionals as well as service users regarding the same question.
  - Explore the application of decision prioritisation tools in decision making during collaboration.

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Pere Ayling (chapter contribution)  
Editors: Claire Maxwell and Peter Aggleton  
Elite Education—International Perspectives  
Routledge, ISBN: 978-1138799615

Emma Bond  
Childhood, Mobile Technologies and Everyday Experiences: Changing  
Technologies = Changing Childhoods? (Studies in Childhood and Youth)  
Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN: 978-1137292520

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