

**An analysis of views on the purpose of education held by Hong Kong
parents who chose to send their children to New Zealand schools**

Hiu Ching (Zoe) Au

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Faculty of Culture and Society

Supervisor: Dr Ruth Boyask

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Abstract

In Hong Kong, many parents are dissatisfied with the current Hong Kong mainstream education (Leung, 2013; Ng, 2012). Every year, many Hong Kong parents send their children to study in overseas schools (Leung, 2013). This research explores the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who chose to take their children to school in New Zealand. It offers explanations for why Hong Kong parents seek schools outside the mainstream, and take their children to study abroad. Data were gathered from five pairs of parents who came to New Zealand for fewer than three years to take their children to New Zealand schools. Data were analysed using a thematic analysis method.

The findings indicated that some Hong Kong parents take their children to study in New Zealand because they want their children to receive a different mode of education (such as activity-based learning, no examinations, homework, or pressure, small class teaching without ability grouping [i.e. streaming], and teaching by Western teachers). They want their children to play and have a real childhood and develop as a whole person. That is, parents want their children to develop a wide range of skills and be well-rounded individuals, rather than just being focused on academic study. The findings demonstrated that even though the Hong Kong Government has attempted to reform the curriculum and assessment structure in Hong Kong, some Hong Kong parents still believe that the education system focuses on examinations and rote learning.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to be substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature: _____

Date: 12/08/2021

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Zoe Au

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In Hong Kong, many parents are dissatisfied with the current Hong Kong mainstream education (Leung, 2013; Ng, 2012). For example, they believe that mainstream education is examination-oriented and uses traditional lecture-based methods to teach students (Che, 2002; Ng, 2012; Tsao, 2015). They also believe that mainstream education fails to develop students' proficiency in English (Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010; Ng, 2012; Tsao, 2015). As music and visual arts subjects are excluded from mainstream education in Hong Kong, parents there feel that students fail to discover and nurture their talents and develop their whole person (Tsao, 2015). Many consider mainstream education as propaganda, brainwashing students with communist beliefs and "ignoring political controversies" (Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010, p. 439). Therefore, many express resistance to mainstream education in Hong Kong by seeking education outside the mainstream for their children, for example, by sending their children to international schools (Ng, 2012).

While there is some research on Hong Kong parents sending their children to study at international schools in Hong Kong (Ng, 2012), there is little research on why they send their children to study abroad. While studies such as Leung's (2013) and Waters (2006) provide some insights into why Hong Kong parents send secondary-aged children to study overseas, there are no such studies conducted on primary-aged children. This research explored the views of Hong Kong parents who chose to take their children to school in New Zealand, and questioned why they wanted their children to be educated in New Zealand. Were their views on the purpose of education influenced by their

understanding of their children's schooling experiences and their own schooling experiences in Hong Kong? Using a qualitative approach, the research reported in this thesis helps to answer this question. Five semi-structured pair interviews were conducted, which allowed participants to express their views and opinions. Thus, Hong Kong parents who had chosen to take their children to school in New Zealand were able to provide their views on the purpose of education.

To build a foundation for this thesis, this chapter introduces the research. The first section discusses my interest in the area, the second section provides background information on the topic, and the third section explains the purpose of the research. The fourth section introduces the research questions and methodology, which are presented and discussed later in this chapter. The final and fifth section outlines the structure of this thesis.

1.2 My interest in this topic

I was born and raised in Hong Kong and completed my primary and secondary schooling there. In October 2011, I started studying as an international student in New Zealand, completing my foundation (university entrance) studies, then my bachelor's, honours, and master's degrees at the University of Auckland. Like me, my parents were also born and raised in Hong Kong, but educated during the British colonial rule. They believed that the Hong Kong education system has always been examination-oriented, giving students too much homework and pressure, and did not want me educated under such a system. However, they could not afford to send me to international schools or study abroad. In 2010, I did not perform well in the university entrance examination, the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), which meant I could not gain a place at

a university in Hong Kong. My parents understood that a university degree is like an entrance ticket to the employment market in Hong Kong, and without a degree, my life chances would be poor, with few job opportunities in Hong Kong. Thus, they tried very hard to send me to study abroad, hoping I could gain an internationally recognised degree and have better career prospects in the future. They chose New Zealand in particular, as they observed that New Zealand's time zone and climate are quite similar to those of Hong Kong, it is a safe country to live in, and most importantly, New Zealand's cost of living is cheaper than that in most English speaking countries. While studying in New Zealand, I met many peers from Hong Kong. Some came to New Zealand when they were in primary school, while others started studying in New Zealand when they were in high school. I wondered why their parents also sent them to study in New Zealand, which led to my search to determine why so many Hong Kong parents take their children to study in New Zealand.

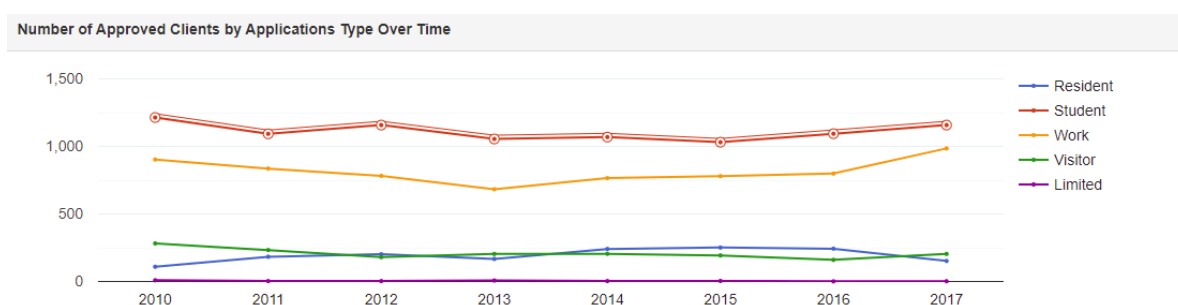
1.3 Background

Hong Kong has always had an examination-orientated, pressurised education system, and every year, thousands of Hong Kong parents send their children to study overseas (Leung, 2013). The United Kingdom (UK), Australia, the United States of America (USA), and Canada, are the top study abroad destinations for Hong Kong students (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2019). The Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2001) found that the top three reasons for Hong Kong students to study abroad, were to experience a different mode of education, enhance their

English language skills, and enjoy a better learning atmosphere outside Hong Kong. However, these reasons are vague and can be interpreted in different ways.

The research provides insights into why many Hong Kong parents send their children to study abroad (Ng, 2012). However, it does not explain why so many send their children to study in New Zealand. According to New Zealand Immigration Statistics (2018), approximately 8,880 Hong Kong students came to study in New Zealand between 2010 to 2017 (see Figure 1). Therefore, this research explored the views of Hong Kong parents who chose to take their children to school in New Zealand, and questioned why Hong Kong parents wanted their children educated in New Zealand.

Figure 1. *Hong Kong Students Studying in New Zealand Between 2010 and 2017*



Note: From New Zealand Immigration Statistics, by New Zealand Immigration Statistics, 2018. (<http://www.migrationstats.com/nz/country/Hong%20Kong>). Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International.

1.4 Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research was to determine why Hong Kong parents wanted to take their children for schooling in New Zealand. Hong Kong is one of the top performing regions in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Many policymakers in the West are trying to learn from the academic “success” of Hong Kong

by borrowing from Hong Kong's education system and practices (Adamson et al., 2017). I wondered why some Hong Kong parents wanted to send their children to study in New Zealand. Was it because their understanding of the purpose of education was different from that of achieving high scores in standardised examinations? Mobility for education is a global trend. Over the years, many students around the world have had opportunities to study overseas. The number of international students is gradually rising. The United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) are considered traditional receiving countries for international students (Waters & Brooks, 2021). According to UNESCO (2019), approximately 36,500 Hong Kong students were studying overseas in 2019. A vast majority were studying in the UK (16,580), as well as in Australia (9,186), the USA (7,508), and Canada (2,037). According to New Zealand Immigration Statistics (2018), approximately 8,880 Hong Kong students came to study in New Zealand between 2010 to 2017. I wondered why a small number of Hong Kong parents were opting for New Zealand for their children. I wondered why these parents chose New Zealand, but not other popular study destinations. While there was some research on Hong Kong parents sending their children to study at international schools in Hong Kong (Ng, 2012), there was little research on why they sent their children to study abroad. Statistics and literature such as that by UNESCO (2019), Wu (2014), Chao et al. (2017) offered some insights into the experience of Chinese students studying abroad, although most of them focused on international student mobility for tertiary or higher education. Little research had been conducted on secondary-level education (Leung, 2007; Waters, 2006) and there were no such studies conducted on primary school children. I wondered why some Hong Kong parents wanted to take their children for schooling in New Zealand.

Exploring the views of Hong Kong parents who chose to take their children to school in New Zealand may explain why Hong Kong parents seek schools outside the mainstream and send their children to study abroad, even though Hong Kong is achieving high scores in standardised examinations. It may explain why Hong Kong parents chose New Zealand for their children, rather than another country. As there is relatively little research on international student mobility for primary and secondary education, this gap also reinforces the significance of the study.

In this research, “Hong Kong parents” refers to parents born and raised in Hong Kong, and who received their education in Hong Kong, and are therefore familiar with Hong Kong’s education system. This research focused on Hong Kong parents who had been living in New Zealand for fewer than three years. Hong Kong parents who migrated to New Zealand were not included as part of the cohort.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions guided the research:

- Why do Hong Kong parents take their children to study in New Zealand?
- What do Hong Kong parents who chose to take their children to school in New Zealand, think is the purpose of education?
- Do their views differ from the official purposes of education in postcolonial Hong Kong?

These open-ended questions helped the research to provide insights based on confidential interviews with Hong Kong parents that allowed them to express their views and opinions freely.

The research took its worldview from the interpretive paradigm. It assumed a subjectivist epistemology, and social constructionism was used as a theoretical framework. The research approach is presented and discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.6.1 Recruitment and sampling

To answer the research questions, I sought Hong Kong parents who had come to New Zealand so their children could attend a New Zealand school, through the “Hong Kong New Zealander” Facebook group, and recruited five pairs of parents to participate in interviews. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. Using purposive sampling, “the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 125). Hong Kong parents who had left Hong Kong and moved to New Zealand for fewer than three years were recruited, as I considered that they would know about the current mainstream education in Hong Kong. I considered five pairs of parents a manageable number for research of this size. In this thesis, “Hong Kong parents” refers to parents born, raised, and educated in Hong Kong. The parents had to hold only a Hong Kong SAR (special administrative region) passport and/or a British National (overseas) passport to indicate they were local to Hong Kong, and they had to have children studying in New Zealand at the time of the data collection. Participants with

this background were considered to have the appropriate experience and knowledge to answer my questions.

1.6.2 Data collection

After recruiting the participants, I conducted semi-structured interviews with them in English. Before each interview, I collected signed consent forms from participants, reminded them that the interviews would be audio-recorded with a voice recorder, and that I would take notes in English, so the data could be transcribed and coded. Participants were able to choose not to answer any of the questions, or leave at any point in the interview if they experienced discomfort.

1.6.3 Data analysis

Before analysing the data, the interview recordings were fully transcribed. This research used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis guideline to identify the processes of internalisation and how Hong Kong parents' internalised purpose of education was shaped through objectivation and externalisation of their social world. Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 76). It identifies different themes, that is, patterns that are significant or interesting within the data, and uses these themes to address the research questions. It not only summarises the data, but also interprets and makes sense of them (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Finally, I used social constructionism to inform my analysis of what influenced the parents' decisions about their children's education.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis has six chapters in total. The current chapter introduced my interest in this area and background information to the research. It outlined the purpose of the research and presented the research questions. It also introduced the research paradigm and methodology. The next chapter reviews the literature. It begins with a discussion of the context of the current education system in Hong Kong and the recent phenomenon of many Hong Kong parents seeking alternatives to the current Hong Kong mainstream education. It discusses the official purposes of schooling in postcolonial Hong Kong. It also reviews the trend of Hong Kong parents taking their children to study overseas and explores why Chinese students want to study abroad in different countries such as the UK, Australia, the USA, Canada, and New Zealand. Chapter three discusses the research methodology and methods employed in the research, and explains the reasons for employing a qualitative approach and interpretive paradigm. It also describes the data collection processes, including the recruiting and sampling criteria for participants. Lastly, it describes the data analysis procedures, issues around ethics, credibility and validity issues, and the potential limitations of the research. Chapter four discusses the findings from the analysis of data using thematic analysis. The analysis identified three major themes and nine subthemes. This chapter also discusses the findings in the context of the extant literature. Chapter five focuses on the discussion of results, and Chapter six presents conclusions and recommendations. This final chapter particularly overviews why many Hong Kong parents seek schools outside the mainstream and send their children to study abroad, especially to New Zealand. It also notes the limitations of the research and provides recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion of the context of the current education system in Hong Kong, and the recent phenomenon of many Hong Kong parents seeking alternatives to current Hong Kong mainstream education, for example, by sending their children to study at international schools in Hong Kong. It discusses the official purposes of schooling in postcolonial Hong Kong, and reviews the trends and reasons for Hong Kong parents sending children to study overseas. It also offers insights into why many Chinese students wanted to study abroad in the UK, Australia, the USA, Canada, and New Zealand, over the past several decades.

2.2 The context of the current education system in Hong Kong

Currently, the Hong Kong education system has 12 years of free and compulsory schooling. It comprises six years of primary schooling, three years of junior secondary schooling, and three years of senior secondary schooling (To & Chan, 2016). There are four major types of schools within the secondary education sector: government, aided, direct subsidy scheme (DSS) and private, which includes private independent scheme (PIS) schools, international schools, and English Schools Foundation (ESF) schools (Ming & Walker, 2007; Ng, 2012). The first three types of schools are state-funded. These schools are differentiated from one another by their governance structure, management and resourcing, curricula and assessments, as well as student demographics and patterns of participation (see

Table 1. *The Four Main Types of Secondary Schools in Hong Kong, 2006/07-2015/16*

Secondary school type	Governance structure	Management and resourcing	Curricula and assessments	Demographics and participation
Government (state-funded) schools	Government	Managed and fully funded by the Government.	Local curriculum and examination, the HKDSE.	6.4% of schools in the secondary education sector; 6.3% of students.
Aided (state-funded) schools	Non-profit sponsoring bodies	Managed by non-profit sponsoring bodies and fully funded by the Government.	Local curriculum and examination, the HKDSE.	74.8% of schools in the secondary education sector; 73.8% of students.
DSS (state-funded) schools	Non-profit sponsoring bodies or private organisations	Managed by non-profit sponsoring bodies or private organisations and funded by students' families and the Government on a per student basis.	Local curriculum and examination, the HKDSE, and international curricula and examinations, e.g., the IGCSE and the IB Diploma Programme if the schools offer them.	12.6% of schools in the secondary education sector; 13.4% of students.
PIS and international schools, including ESF (private) schools	Private organisations	Managed by private organisations and self-funded by students' families, although the ESF schools are subsidised by the Government.	National curricula and examinations of countries such as the USA, Australia, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, and Singapore, and international curricula and examinations, e.g., the IB	6.2% of schools in the secondary education sector; 6.5% of students.

Note. I integrated Ng, 2012; Zhou et al., 2015; Yamato & Bray, 2002 to provide the differences among four main types of secondary schools in Hong Kong, in terms of secondary school type, governance structure, management and resourcing as well as curricula and assessments.

Demographics and participation statistics are adapted from “Statistics on students and teachers in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong during the school years from 2006/07 to 2015/16,” by 2016, Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics (<https://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B71609FB2016XXXXB0100.pdf>). Government schools are governed, managed, and fully funded by the Hong Kong SAR Government, which employs the principals, teachers, and staff, and selects the students (Poon & Wong, 2008). Local students who are entitled to universal free education can enter these schools at no cost and take the local curriculum and examination, the Hong Kong Diploma of Senior Education (HKDSE) (Zhou et al., 2015). The HKDSE is a local university entrance examination that takes place at the end of three years’ senior secondary schooling (Chong et al., 2010). In 2015 and 2016, government schools made up 6.4% of schools in the secondary education sector in Hong Kong, and had the smallest percentage of student enrolments, at 6.3% (Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics [HKMDS], 2016).

Aided schools are also governed and fully funded by the Hong Kong SAR Government, but managed by non-profit sponsoring bodies, such as charities and religious organisations. These groups employ their own principals, teachers, and staff, and manage other school policies such as developing their school missions and mottos in accordance with each group’s values and beliefs. The Government selects students for these schools

based on the students' primary academic results (Byun & Pong, 2006). Local students eligible for universal free education can enter aided schools free of charge and take the local curriculum and examination, the HKDSE (Zhou et al., 2015). In 2015 and 2016, the aided schools sector in Hong Kong consisted of 74.8% of schools in the secondary system, and had the largest population of students, at 73.8% of the total (HKMDS, 2016).

The third type of state-funded school is that of the DSS schools, that are governed and managed by non-profit sponsoring bodies or private organisations. These schools also employ their own principals, teachers, and staff, and select their own students, and manage their school policies, staffing, student admission, curricula, and mediums of instruction (Tse, 2008). These schools are not only funded by the Government on a per-pupil basis, but also by the students' families (Zhou et al., 2015). Only local students are permitted to attend these schools, and their students follow the local curriculum and examination, the HKDSE. However, they may also study international curricula such as the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) if their schools choose to incorporate them (Ng, 2012; Yamato & Bray, 2002). In 2015 and 2016, DSS schools made up 12.6% of schools in the secondary education sector in Hong Kong, but had just a small percentage of the students - 13.4% (HKMDS, 2016).

Finally, PIS schools and international schools (including ESF schools, which are partially subsidised by the Government) are private schools governed and managed by private organisations. These schools also employ their own principals, teachers, and staff, select their own students, and manage their own school policies, staffing, student admissions,

curricula, and mediums of instruction (Ng, 2012; Zhou et al., 2015). They are free to incorporate their own curricula and examinations, and predominantly offer national curricula and examinations from countries such as the USA, Australia, the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, and Singapore. Many international schools also adopt international curricula and examinations, such as the IB (Ng, 2012). In 2015 and 2016, international schools comprised the smallest number of schools in the secondary education sector in Hong Kong, at 6.2%, and had a very small proportion of Hong Kong's students, at 6.5% (HKMDS, 2016).

Table 1. *The Four Main Types of Secondary Schools in Hong Kong, 2006/07-2015/16*

Secondary school type	Governance structure	Management and resourcing	Curricula and assessments	Demographics and participation
Government (state-funded) schools	Government	Managed and fully funded by the Government.	Local curriculum and examination, the HKDSE.	6.4% of schools in the secondary education sector; 6.3% of students.
Aided (state-funded) schools	Non-profit sponsoring bodies	Managed by non-profit sponsoring bodies and fully funded by the Government.	Local curriculum and examination, the HKDSE.	74.8% of schools in the secondary education sector; 73.8% of students.
DSS (state-funded) schools	Non-profit sponsoring bodies or private organisations	Managed by non-profit sponsoring bodies or private organisations and funded by students' families and the Government on a per student basis.	Local curriculum and examination, the HKDSE, and international curricula and examinations, e.g., the IGCSE and the IB Diploma Programme if	12.6% of schools in the secondary education sector; 13.4% of students.

			the schools offer them.	
PIS and international schools, including ESF (private) schools	Private organisations	Managed by private organisations and self-funded by students' families, although the ESF schools are subsidised by the Government.	National curricula and examinations of countries such as the USA, Australia, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, and Singapore, and international curricula and examinations, e.g., the IB Diploma Programme.	6.2% of schools in the secondary education sector; 6.5% of students.

Note. I integrated Ng, 2012; Zhou et al., 2015; Yamato & Bray, 2002 to provide the differences among four main types of secondary schools in Hong Kong, in terms of secondary school type, governance structure, management and resourcing as well as curricula and assessments.

Demographics and participation statistics are adapted from “Statistics on students and teachers in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong during the school years from 2006/07 to 2015/16,” by 2016, Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics (<https://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B71609FB2016XXXXB0100.pdf>).

2.3 Many Hong Kong parents seem to be looking for alternatives to current Hong Kong mainstream education

Hong Kong is amongst the highest-performing regions for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Many Western countries wanted to learn from the successes of Hong Kong’s education policies and education approaches (Adamson et al., 2017). However, in Hong Kong, many parents have been found to consider the current Hong Kong mainstream education incapable of fulfilling the educational needs of their

children (Leung, 2013; Ng, 2012). They believed that mainstream education places a heavy emphasis on examinations and traditional lecture-based instruction methods (Che, 2002; Ng, 2012; Tsao, 2015). Many parents who value English and consider the English language an advantage for their children's future in terms of higher education and career prospects, believed that the Hong Kong mainstream education would not develop their children's English skills (Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010; Ng, 2012; Tsao, 2015). Mainstream education excludes arts subjects such as music and the visual arts, but many parents valued arts subjects and considered them important for discovering and nurturing their children's talents, believing that mainstream education would not develop the whole person (Tsao, 2015). Many parents also considered the mainstream education as propaganda, brainwashing students with communist beliefs, and "ignoring political controversies" (Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010, p. 439). Consistent with these reasons, many parents express resistance to mainstream education by seeking alternative education for their children, for example, by sending their children to study abroad. While there is some research on Hong Kong parents sending their children to study at international schools in Hong Kong (Ng, 2012; Yamato & Bray, 2002), there is little research on why they send their children to study overseas. Therefore, this research explored the views of Hong Kong parents who chose to take their children to school in New Zealand, and questioned why they wanted their children educated in New Zealand.

2.4 The official purposes of schooling in postcolonial Hong Kong

After the handover in 1997, the Hong Kong SAR Government implemented a series of education reforms in mainstream education. This section discusses the different aspects of postcolonial education system in Hong Kong and overviews the official purposes of

schooling in postcolonial Hong Kong. In 1998, soon after the handover, the Hong Kong SAR Government addressed the need to develop Hong Kong students' sense of national identity. The Government believed that strengthening Hong Kong students' national identity through education was its top priority and assumed that with an increased knowledge of China, Hong Kong students' sense of national identity would be improved (Matthews et al., 2008). The first Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Tung Chee-Hwa, stated that with a deeper knowledge of China, Hong Kong students "would have national pride as Chinese and be willing at all times to contribute to the well-being not just of Hong Kong but also the entire Chinese nation" (Matthews et al., 2008, p. 83).

For example, civic education, mother tongue policy, general history, and Chinese history, were introduced into mainstream education. Civic education included topics such as identity, rights and responsibilities, democracy, rules of law, elections, voting, participating in extra-curricular activities, and doing voluntary work (Chong, 2013, p. 243). The subject aimed to teach students the local system of government and promote civic awareness and responsibility (Morris & Morris, 2002). The medium of instruction in state-funded schools shifted from English to the Hong Kong people's mother tongue, Cantonese. The official language in Mainland China, Putonghua (Mandarin) was also introduced as a new subject (Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010, pp. 442-443). The Hong Kong SAR Government aimed to use the mother tongue policy to develop a new sense of citizenship, foster national identity, and integrate with Mainland China (Lai & Byram, 2003). History became a separate subject that included the colonial history of Hong Kong. Chinese history also became a separate subject that covered ancient Chinese history and contemporary China, as well as the history of colonial Hong Kong (Kuah-Pearce & Fong,

2010; Morris & Vickers, 2015). These two history subjects aimed to teach students the ancient cultural aspects of the Chinese, including their heritage, customs, and traditions (Hui et al., 2004; Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010).

The primary purpose of schooling in Hong Kong has always been the transmission of knowledge. Furthermore, ever since Hong Kong has had an education system, it has been considered examination-oriented, teaching by rote learning and spoon-feeding, highly competitive, with large classes and an excessive amount of homework (Hon-Keung et al., 2012; Yuen-Yee & Watkins, 1994). *Spoon-feeding* is a term commonly used to describe Hong Kong's education, and means feeding students with facts and knowledge. According to McKay and Kember (1997, p. 56), spoon-feeding is defined as "instruction based upon an information trans-mission conception of teaching."

In 2000, in order to downplay examinations and memorisation in mainstream education, the Hong Kong Education Commission declared its consensus that the overall purpose of schooling in Hong Kong should be:

To enable every person to attain all-round development according to his/her own attributes in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of his/her society, and contribute to the future and well-being of the nation and the world at large. Our priority should be to enable our students to enjoy learning, enhance their effectiveness in communication and develop their creativity and sense of commitment. (Education Commission, 1999c, p. 15)

This new purpose of education set the scene for the implementation of the new academic structure (NAS) in postcolonial Hong Kong. The NAS shifted from the British 3+2+2 model to a new 3+3+4 model. That is, three years of junior secondary education, two years of senior secondary education, two years of matriculation course, followed by three years for a university degree, to three years of junior secondary education, three years of secondary education, followed by four years of a university programme (Lam, 2010). In response to the NAS, the new senior secondary (NSS) curriculum offered a wide and balanced curriculum to build students' diverse talents and raise their potential. The curriculum was designed to widen students' knowledge base, widen their horizons, improve their literacy and numeracy skills, encourage flexibility, creativity, independent thinking, interpersonal skills, and life-long learning capabilities, as well as positive values and attitudes and whole-person development. Students were required to take four core subjects: Chinese language, English language, mathematics, and liberal studies. Liberal studies was an NSS core subject that builds on what students learned in primary and junior secondary. It was intended to widen students' knowledge base, increase their social, national, and international awareness, and nurture their multi-perspective and critical thinking skills. Apart from these core subjects, students were also required to take two to three of 20 elective subjects. These included subjects such as science, history, geography, music, visual arts, health management, and social care (Kwok-Wah, 2011).

After colonial rule, Hong Kong's education continued to use the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) that were introduced during colonial rule as public examinations in mainstream education. These examinations were for the purpose of entry-level employment or

entering sixth form and university entrance respectively (Coniam, 2014; Qian, 2008). In response to the NSS curriculum, in 2011, these two public examinations were replaced by the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). The HKDSE was primarily a university-entrance examination that took place at the end of secondary education (Chong et al., 2010). The Hong Kong SAR Government believed that combining the HKCEE and HKAEL into one examination, could reduce students' examination pressure (Carless & Harfitt, 2013). However, as the Government also believed that not all skills can be effectively assessed by the HKDSE, school-based assessment (SBA) was introduced in 2012. School-based assessments were administered in schools and evaluated by teachers, and the results moderated by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA). The Hong Kong Government believed that SBA were beneficial to students, enhancing the validity and reliability of assessments, reducing examination pressure, and providing students with positive motivation (Berry, 2011; Kwok-Wah, 2011).

2.5 The trend and reasons for Hong Kong parents taking children to study overseas

According to UNESCO (2019), approximately 36,500 Hong Kong students were studying abroad in 2019. A vast majority were studying in the UK (16,580), as well as in Australia (9,186), the USA (7,508), and Canada (2,037). According to New Zealand Immigration Statistics (2018), approximately 8,880 Hong Kong students came to study in New Zealand between 2010 to 2017. In 2001, the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department conducted a one-off survey on the topic of "Hong Kong students studying outside Hong Kong." The survey found a number of reasons for students to study overseas (see **Error!**

Reference source not found.). For example, students wanted a different mode of education, to improve their English, and have a better learning atmosphere overseas. They wanted to experience studying abroad, and to be independent. Some could not gain places in good schools in Hong Kong and they were not happy with the quality of graduates from Hong Kong. They wanted a new start in a new educational and social environment, and thought it would be easier to get a job if they had overseas education experience; they wanted to prepare to work overseas in the future. They also thought that the Hong Kong education involved too much pressure and assignments. Some had family members living abroad. They were not happy with the education system in Hong Kong and thought it was cheaper to study abroad than in Hong Kong, as some had a scholarship or funding to study abroad (Census and Statistics Department, 2002, as cited in Leung, 2013).

Building on the survey results (Census and Statistics Department, 2002, as cited in Leung, 2013), Leung (2013) identified nine major reasons for Hong Kong parents to send their children to study abroad at secondary education level (see Table 2). Firstly, the parents believed that the mainstream education marginalised art subjects at senior secondary level, and failed to develop students' whole person, and discover and nurture their talents. Secondly, parents wanted an English-medium education. They believed that the introduction of mother tongue education undermined students' English proficiency. Thirdly, they wanted small class teaching, and believed that the class sizes in Hong Kong were too large. Small classes can encourage student engagement, interaction between students and teachers, and allow more time for instruction, instead of discipline. Fourthly, they wanted a balanced education. They believed that the Hong Kong education was examination-oriented and did not develop students' whole person. Students were

considered to have inadequate time and space to develop in areas other than academic topics. Also, they wanted their children to acquire self-care and independence skills by sending them overseas. They believed that their children were over-protected and over-indulged in Hong Kong. In addition, they believed that studying abroad provided a good environment to develop students' social skills, especially in boarding schools. They also believed that studying abroad would offer their children a wider worldview than would be available in Hong Kong; they could be exposed to different cultures, which would enhance their competitiveness in the global environment. Furthermore, they believed that there were insufficient places in government-funded first-degree places in Hong Kong. Studying in overseas universities provided better opportunities for being admitting into universities. Finally, they believed that studying abroad was a stepping stone for emigrating to their preferred country. Many parents who had witnessed the Cultural Revolution and the June 4th incident at Tiananmen Square, believed that gaining an overseas passport was important (Leung, 2013). While studies such as Leung's (2013) provide some insights into why Hong Kong parents send their secondary-aged children to study abroad, there are no such studies conducted on primary-aged children. Leung's (2013) work guided this research on the kinds of topics Hong Kong parents might discuss when talking about why they brought their children to study in New Zealand.

Table 2. *Reasons for Studying Outside Hong Kong*

Reasons for studying outside Hong Kong (multiple answers were allowed)	No. of persons	% of no. of persons
To receive a different mode of education	34,900	47.1
To improve English proficiency	28,800	38.8
Better learning atmosphere outside Hong Kong	18,800	25.3

Reasons for studying outside Hong Kong (multiple answers were allowed)	No. of persons	% of no. of persons
To gain experience of studying overseas	13,200	17.7
To learn to be independent	10,600	14.3
Unable to get a place in good schools in Hong Kong	10,300	13.9
Dissatisfied with the quality of Hong Kong graduates	8,100	10.9
To have a fresh start in a new educational and social environment	8,000	10.8
Easier to get jobs in the future	6,600	8.9
To prepare for working outside Hong Kong in the future	5,600	7.6
Too much pressure / too many assignments	5,500	7.4
To live with family members elsewhere	3,400	4.6
Dissatisfied with the education system in Hong Kong	2,200	3.0
Lower school fees outside Hong Kong	1,800	2.4
Entitled to overseas education allowance	1,200	1.6
Other reasons	2,400	3.2
Overall	74,100	

Note: Reprinted from *Reasons for Hong Kong parents sending their children abroad for secondary education* (p. 3) by Leung, 2013, University of Technology Sydney (<https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/21857/2/02Whole.pdf>).

Table 3 *Nine Major Reasons for Hong Kong Students to Study Outside Hong Kong*

Nine major reasons for studying outside Hong Kong	
Reason 1	The policy on curriculum and academic structure marginalises arts subjects at the senior secondary level.
Reason 2	The policy regarding the medium of instruction at secondary schools does not satisfy parents' desire for an English-medium education.
Reason 3	The policy on class size at secondary school level does not satisfy parents' desire for small class teaching.
Reason 4	The examination-oriented culture compromises the all-round development of students.
Reason 5	Parents are aware that their over-protection and over-indulgence compromises their children's learning self-care and independence skills. They consider that overseas schooling is a better environment for developing these skills.
Reason 6	Some parents regard an overseas education as a good environment for imparting social skills to their children, particularly those in boarding schools.
Reason 7	The parents consider that overseas schooling can expose their children to different cultures, which may strengthen their competitiveness in the context of globalisation.

Nine major reasons for studying outside Hong Kong	
Reason 8	The number of government-funded first-degree places is not adequate to satisfy high school students' strong desire for a higher education.
Reason 9	Some parents use overseas schooling as a vehicle for emigrating to their preferred country.

Note: Adapted from *Thematic household survey report no. 9*, by Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, Government of the Hong Kong SAR, 2002 (<http://www.statistics.gov.hk/publication>).

As noted earlier, there is some research on Hong Kong parents sending children to international schools in Hong Kong (Ng, 2012; Yamato & Bray, 2002). However, there is limited research on why Hong Kong parents send their children overseas, and no relevant research in a New Zealand context, which leads to a discussion about Hong Kong parents' views on the purpose of education.

2.6 Hong Kong parents' views on the purpose of education

Some authors (i.e., Lam, 1999; Lee, 2010) have found that Hong Kong parents have different views on the purpose of education today. To date, there has been little research on this topic. Only two studies on Hong Kong parents' views can be found (Lam, 1999; Lee, 2010). Although Lam's study (1999) is quite old, this study offered Hong Kong parents' views on the purpose of education, as this research also aimed to provide. Firstly, many Hong Kong parents believed that language skills and social skills outweigh academic skills. They believed that enhancing children's overall development, developing a positive attitude towards learning, cultivating self-care and interpersonal skills, and building up children's confidence, were much more important than enhancing their reading, writing, and arithmetic skills (Lam, 1999). Secondly, many Hong Kong parents believed that learning should be fun and enjoyable. They did not want their

children to be under excessive pressure. Thirdly, many Hong Kong parents believed that it was important for children to be motivated to learn and have an enjoyable learning experience. For example, they believed that children should learn through different kinds of play, or discover knowledge and information through activities. Fourthly, many Hong Kong parents believed that it was important to develop children's curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. They wanted their children to be curious, explore and question things, and be able to solve problems on their own. They believed that these skills could make learning more memorable (Lee, 2010). Fifthly, many Hong Kong parents believed that proficiency in English was important. They believed that a better mastery of English would enhance one's chances of succeeding in a globalised world. Sixthly, many Hong Kong parents believed that instead of working individually in class and being forced to memorise information, it was important for children to develop critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. They believed that it was necessary for children to interact and work with their classmates, and that they should seek answers and make meanings by themselves. Finally, many Hong Kong parents believed that there was a lack of appreciation of art and beauty in Hong Kong's education. They believed that children should have more artistic activities and have more natural and outdoor spaces to explore (Lee, 2010). These differences in views on the purpose of education could lead many Hong Kong parents to seek alternative educations for their children, and may have driven them to send their children to study abroad. However, there is limited research on why Hong Kong parents send their children overseas, and no relevant research in a New Zealand context. It is therefore helpful to discuss the trend of Chinese students studying abroad in the UK, Australia, the USA, Canada, and New

Zealand. Chinese students and these countries are examined in this literature review because Chinese students include those from Hong Kong, and as mentioned earlier, these countries are the top study abroad destinations for Hong Kongers (UNESCO, 2019). Research on students generally is presented, rather than just on those at school, which is the topic of this research, because there is no literature on school students. However, research on students generally, such as that on tertiary students, suggests Chinese students value an overseas education. While statistics and literature such as that by UNESCO (2019), Wu (2014), Chao et al. (2017) offer some insights into the experience of Chinese students studying overseas, most focuses on international student mobility for higher education. These statistics and literature guided me towards the kinds of topics Hong Kong parents might talk about when considering the purpose of education.

2.7 The trend of Chinese students studying abroad

Mobility for education is a global trend. Over the past 30 years, international education has been a major growing industry worldwide (Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Over the years, many students around the world have had the opportunity to study overseas. (Waters & Brooks, 2021). *International education* denotes “any international activity that occurs at any level of education (K-12, undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate) and encompasses the knowledge and skills resulting from conducting a portion of one's education in another country” (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011, as cited in Jackson, 2018, p. 4). From 1995 to 2005, the total number of international students almost doubled, up to 2.7 million internationally by 2005 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2006; Australian Education International [AEI], 2005, as cited in Yang, 2007).

From 2000 to 2004, the number of international students increased by 41%, and it is estimated that by 2025, numbers will increase to 7.2 million (International Development Program [IDP], 2006 as cited in Yang, 2007; Boehm et al., 2002, as cited in Yang, 2007). In 2017, there was an explosion in international student mobility for higher education. The number of international students grew from 0.8 million in the late 1970s to 4.6 million in 2015 to 5.6 million in 2018 (Waters & Brooks, 2021). The UK, Australia, the USA, Canada, and New Zealand, are currently the top study abroad destinations for international students, and Chinese students make up the largest group of international students in these countries. According to the UNESCO (2014), it was estimated that 694,400 Chinese students were studying outside China.

2.7.1 Chinese students studying in the United Kingdom

In 2014, approximately 93,500 Chinese students studied in the UK. The major reason Chinese students chose to be educated in the UK, was the UK's reputation for prestigious educational institutes and a world class education (Cebolla-Boado et al., 2018). This is a different characteristic from that of education in New Zealand. For example, the long-standing Russell Group universities and the UK universities are ranked in the top 10 in the Times Higher Education world university rankings (Counsell, 2011). Many students believed that earning a qualification in the UK gave them a higher quality education and greater career prospects than did a qualification from China (Counsell, 2011). Another major reason students study in the UK is that the UK master's programme had a shorter duration than those of many other countries (Wu, 2014).

2.7.2 Chinese students studying in Australia

In 2005, around 81,800 Chinese university students studied in Australia. Scholars (i.e. Wang & Shan, 2006; Yang, 2007) found that most Chinese students chose to study in Australia because this provided them with the chance of immigrating to Australia after they graduated, and because they believed that the education in Australia was high quality, with competitive low costs of living and tuition. Other reasons for Chinese students choosing Australia included enhancing their English speaking skills, world-class education system, climate, lifestyle, good reputation, gaining a qualification recognised in China, the easy and quick visa application process, ease of getting a job, and the low level of crime and discrimination rates. Some scholars (e.g. Wang & Shan, 2006) have pointed out that some Chinese students chose to study in Australia because it was easier to gain a place in university there, compared to in China, and it was easier to change majors in Australia than it was in China.

2.7.3 Chinese students studying in the United States of America

In 2008, approximately 98,500 Chinese students studied in the USA. Some scholars (e.g. Yan & Berliner, 2009) found that most Chinese students chose the USA as their study abroad destination as they were attracted by the American culture, education, and technology. The students believed that American qualifications were prestigious, and compared to China, the USA offered better incomes, higher living standards, and more professional opportunities for them. Chao et al. (2017) found that Chinese students chose to study in the USA mainly because they wanted to have a new perspective on China, and because they considered the education system was better in the USA. These students

believed that tertiary education in China lacked innovation, and instead of looking for new ways of doing things, they needed only to memorise doctrines in China. They believed that education in the USA gave them a broader view of the world and encouraged them to innovate. Some less important reasons that drove them to study in the USA included that they wanted to go to a better school than they had access to in China, as they did not complete or perform well in the China National College Entry Exam. Therefore, they chose to go to a school in the USA. They found it cheaper to study abroad there than in China, and had friends studying abroad. Many just wanted to be away from China. Foreign schools offered more fields of studies, and they had more freedom in the USA. They wanted a better living environment, such as better housing, and clean water and air (Chao et al., 2017).

2.7.4 Chinese students studying in Canada

In 2004, around 65,600 Chinese students studied abroad in Canada. There are various reasons for Chinese students to study in Canada. Some scholars (e.g. Rideout & Tabrizi, 2018) suggested that first, Canada gave students the opportunity not only to learn English, but also French. Secondly, Canada had the lowest cost of living for international students, and thirdly, Canada charged the lowest tuition fees for international students. Fourthly, the education in Canada was considered prestigious and of high quality, and finally, Canada was seen as a safe country with a Western culture, liberty, and freedom (Rideout & Tabrizi, 2018). Li et al. (2012) found that Chinese students preferred studying in Canada as Canada was considered safer than the USA, which is known in China as a target of extremists. Some Chinese students considered the USA an arrogant country that

interferes in the internal affairs of other countries, such as those of China. They believed that it was wrong for the USA to invade Iraq, and when compared to the UK and Australia, Canada had a better academic reputation. Some also considered that Australia and the UK were aggressive in their recruitment of international students, and that it was easy to gain a place in Australian and British universities. Although many Australian and British universities have campuses in China, they felt too many Chinese students were already studying there. These countries were perceived by students as just wanting to make money out of them. Lastly, the cost of study in Canada was considered lower than that of other developed countries (Li et al., 2012). Waters (2006) also found that many Hong Kong students chose to study in Canada because they believed that studying in Canada provided them a way out of the highly competitive mainstream education in Hong Kong. They believed that studying in Canada was a way to avoid academic failure in Hong Kong and a guaranteed pathway to university. These students also believed that an overseas degree might open more doors to good jobs. Many employers in Hong Kong preferred hiring people that had graduated overseas. These employers assumed that people with an overseas degree would have better English skills, be able to communicate well with people in the West, and generate trade with other companies. Many Hong Kong students considered Canadian education as more creative, innovative, open, and encouraged students to speak up and express themselves (Waters, 2006).

2.7.5 Chinese students studying in New Zealand

In 2003, around 53,000 Chinese students studied in New Zealand (Tan & Simpson, 2008). Most Chinese students chose to study in New Zealand because of the easy application

process. That is, many Chinese students' visa applications were rejected in Australia, Canada, or the UK, before they came to New Zealand. They chose to study in New Zealand because it is an English speaking country with a Western education system, and they believed they could improve their English and have a valuable qualification from New Zealand. They were attracted to study in New Zealand because of the low cost of living. Some Chinese students also considered studying in New Zealand as an immigration opportunity, and others considered New Zealand a beautiful country with good weather (Ho et al., 2007; Yang, 2007).

2.8 Summary

An increasing number of Hong Kong parents seek alternative education opportunities for their children. Research has found that many Hong Kong parents are dissatisfied with the current mainstream education in Hong Kong, and send their children to international schools in Hong Kong (Ng, 2012; Yamato & Bray, 2002). Research has suggested reasons for Hong Kong students to study abroad (e.g. Leung, 2013), but there is no research explaining why parents send their children to study in New Zealand; it is recognition of this gap in the literature that inspired this research. The UK, Australia, the USA, Canada, and New Zealand, are currently the top study abroad destinations for international students, and Chinese students make up the largest group of international students in these countries. In general, the major reasons for Chinese students to choose to study abroad, are to improve English proficiency, earn a valuable qualification, and have good study and career prospects. The purpose of this research was to determine why Hong Kong

parents wanted their children educated in New Zealand. The next chapter outlines the methodology and methods used to answer this question.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology and methods used in this research. This qualitative research explored the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who chose to take their children to school in New Zealand. It adopted an interpretive paradigm. Five pairs of Hong Kong parents who came to New Zealand for fewer than three years to take their children to study in New Zealand were recruited. Visual elicitation was used in semi-structured interviews to collect the data. This chapter outlines the research paradigm, theoretical framework, method of data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity and credibility issues, and the limitations of the research.

3.2 Research paradigm and methodology

3.2.1 Qualitative approach

Five Hong Kong couples were interviewed as parents, to gain a rich and in-depth understanding of their views relating to the purpose of education. As this research was concerned with parents' points of view, it was important to gather rich and in-depth descriptive data on people's perspectives in their natural settings, rather than using statistical procedures. The data needed to be in the form of words rather than in numbers. Therefore, a qualitative research design was more appropriate than a quantitative research design. Magilvy and Thomas (2009) observed that qualitative research explores people's in-depth lived experiences within the world, and aims "to produce a rich description and

in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of interest, the cultural or lived experience of people in natural settings” (Magilvy, 2003, p. 123). This research followed an inductive approach “directed at providing in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives, and histories” (see Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 3).

3.2.2 Interpretive paradigm

This research took its worldview from the interpretive paradigm. The *interpretive paradigm* is derived from “the philosophical doctrines of idealism and humanism” (Walliman, 2006, p. 20). It uncovers “socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman, 2000, p. 71). Interpretivists view the multiple realities constructed by individuals, shaped by their own experiences and social interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Instead of a single reality, interpretivists believe that reality varies from case to case, depending on the different participants and their interactions with the researcher. Therefore, instead of using quantification and measurement, interpretivists attempt to use methods that describe and explain how individuals feel, and their lived experiences (Terre Blanche & Durheim, 1999). The interpretive paradigm focuses mainly on “individual motivations and intentions, values, and free will” (Corbetta, 2003, p. 24). Using an interpretive paradigm, researchers can understand and explain social reality clearly and easily, from different participants’ perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007).

This research aimed to explore perspectives on the purpose of education, of Hong Kong parents who decided to take their children to study in New Zealand. The interpretive paradigm was the most appropriate for this research, because I was interested in the experiences and interpretations of the participants. I believe that participants construct their social reality through the process of social interactions with other people. The interpretive paradigm offers an interactive process that helps to understand how participants understand the world differently and construct their own reality. I interviewed five pairs of Hong Kong parents, aiming to understand their interpretations of the purpose of education. The data generated through talking with the participants, helped me construct theories about the purpose of education and allowed me to understand different participants' views and their constructed social realities. Their produced meanings helped me to understand why Hong Kong parents send their children to study abroad, and especially, to New Zealand.

3.2.3 Subjectivist epistemology

This research assumed a subjectivist epistemology, which asserts that constructed knowledge is subjective, relies on the minds of humans, and can only be created if researchers locate themselves in the phenomenon and connect with the subjects being studied (Creswell, 2013; Yilmaz, 2013). The research sought to explore the purpose of education in the views of Hong Kong parents who had chosen to take their children to study abroad in New Zealand. It was expected that each parent would have a different view on the purpose of education. Participants make sense of the world and interpret it through their subjective interpretations and interactions with other people (Creswell,

2013; Yilmaz, 2013). Therefore, the research findings would be able to interpret subjective perspectives on the purpose of education of Hong Kong parents who had sent their children for schooling in New Zealand, but these might not be a true reflection of other parents' perspectives.

3.2.4 Social constructionism as a theoretical framework

Social constructionism was used as a theoretical framework. Many scholars (e.g. Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Burr, 2015; Crotty, 1998; Garfinkelm, 1967; Jary & Jary, 1996; Ricoeur 1981; Schutz et al., 1967) have theorised from a social constructionist perspective, arguing that the social world influences the thoughts or actions of individuals. Shared realities do not exist inherently or naturally, but are created and maintained by particular social groups or society itself. For example, according to Jary and Jary (1996, p. 605), social constructionism focuses on “the way in which social institutions or social life generally is socially produced rather than naturally given or determined.” Similarly, Crotty (1998, p. 42) defined *social constructionism* as “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.” The term “social constructionism” is derived from Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) work on social institutions. They described social constructionism as the process in which people continuously create a shared reality that is experienced as objectively factual and subjectively meaningful through their activities and social interactions. They believed that institutions that are considered as objective nature and facts in the social world, are

actually socially constructed. Instead of being natural, or simply given, they are shaped by a certain social group or by a specific social context. Social constructionism challenges assumed understandings of knowledge. Like Berger and Luckmann (1967), scholars Garfinkel (1967), Ricoeur (1981), and Schutz (1967), all argued that meaning is socially constructed. These scholars (i.e. Garfinkel, 1967; Ricoeur, 1981; Schutz et al., 1967) also emphasised the cognitive processes underlying social constructions. They believed that information is not objective, but inextricably entwined with the social settings in which it is encountered. Schutz et al. (1967) believed that people have different points of view depending on their biographies and positions in the social setting.

Social constructionism was an appropriate lens for this research, as it shows that the social world has influenced the thoughts or actions of individuals. It explores social realities through a critical lens, in this case, perspectives on the purpose of education held by Hong Kong parents who chose to take their children to school in New Zealand. In this research, social constructionism was able to highlight how these parents' perspectives were created, changed, and reproduced through social processes, even though they may seem taken for granted and experienced as given (see Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Burr, 2015). This helps us to understand that these parents' perspectives were not natural or fixed, but products of human definition and interpretations shaped by social practices. I used social constructionism to make sense of, or frame, how these parents developed their views. It was expected that each parent would have a different perspective on the purpose of education. Their views were not only constructed through social interactions with others, but also by the social settings in which they were encountered. From a social constructionist perspective, these parents' views were related to other people's

perspectives on the purpose of education, which had been institutionalised. Although Hong Kong parents' perspectives of the purpose of education may seem very individual, their perspectives, to a large extent, were socially constructed.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Kahn and Cannel (1957, p. 149), an *interview* is a “purposeful discussion between two or more people.” There are three major types of interview: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. An interview is a useful way to understand people's views; using interviews, researchers can pursue in-depth data around an issue and ask follow-up questions in response to the participants' answers (McNamara, 1999). In this research, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. There were two major reasons for conducting semi-structured interviews. Firstly, Cousin (2009) asserted that semi-structured interviews “allow researchers to develop in-depth accounts of experiences and perceptions with individuals” (p. 71). They are suitable for open-ended questions and allowing participants to talk in some depth, choosing their own words. They helped me develop a real sense of participants' understanding of the issue or problem (see Ryan et al., 2009). Secondly, semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity to probe for a deeper understanding, ask for clarification, and allow participants to steer the direction of the interviews (Barriball & While, 1994). Moreover, interviewing parents as couples rather than as lone parents, helped me fully understand why both parents made the decision to take their children to study in New Zealand. I decided that if only one parent wished to participate in the interview, or if one parent decided to withdraw their

approval at some point during the interview/transcription/analysis process, I would interview other potential participants who could be interviewed as a couple. This was because I wanted to understand why both parents wanted to take their children to study in New Zealand.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participants were able to choose between having face-to-face interviews or an interview online. When participants chose to meet in person, I asked them their preferred meeting place, and suggested the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) City Campus. However, as all the parents had small children, they considered it too difficult to meet in the central city. Therefore, I tried to give them flexibility, by meeting them at their nearest playground or at their homes, and also gave them the option to have their interview online. If they had wanted to meet online, I planned to use Google Meet, a video-conferencing platform, because from my own experience, most Hong Kongers are comfortable using it. However, none of the parents chose to meet online; most chose to be interviewed at their own homes, and one couple chose to be interviewed at their nearest playground. As I interviewed participants at their own homes, I was aware that there might be possible risks to my personal safety, so I notified my friends and family where I was going, before and after interviews, so that they knew when I arrived and left participants' homes. I advised them that if they did not hear from me within an hour, they should telephone me. I also ensured that I had an emergency number on speed dial on my mobile phone.

3.3.2 Before the interviews

Five semi-structured interviews were conducted between mid-December 2020 and early February 2021 to collect data from five pairs of Hong Kong parents who had sent their children to study in New Zealand. To familiarise myself with the participants before the interviews, I asked them to fill in a Google form by email, answering the following questions.

- Which schools did the two of you attend in Hong Kong?
- Which school did your child go to in Hong Kong?
- Which school does your child go to in New Zealand?
- Which year is your child in?

Two days prior to the interviews, participants were also given a copy of the Interview Schedule for Participants (see Appendix B.e) by email, so that they could start thinking about the questions. Each interview was intended to last for up to an hour. However, the actual length of each interview depended on how much the participants were willing to discuss.

3.3.3 Recruitment and sampling

Participants were expected to share their views on the purpose of education. Hong Kong parents who had chosen to take their children to school in New Zealand were the target group. I sought potential participants through the “Hong Kong New Zealander” Facebook page. I sent a Facebook message to the page’s administrator, in which I briefly introduced myself, stated my research purpose, nature of the research, its aims and methods, and

asked for permission to post a recruitment advertisement (see Appendix B.d) on the page. Once permission was granted by the administrator, I posted the recruitment advertisement. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. Using *purposive sampling*, “the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 125). I recruited five pairs of parents who had brought their families to New Zealand so they could send their children to New Zealand schools. Five pairs was a manageable number for a study of this size. Potential participants contacted me by telephone or email as provided for in the recruitment advertisement, and were selected on a first come, first served basis.

Parents were recruited based on the following criteria; they must:

- have left Hong Kong and moved to New Zealand for fewer than three years;
- both have been born, raised, and educated in Hong Kong;
- have held an HKSAR passport and/or a British National (Overseas) passport to indicate they were local to Hong Kong; and
- have had children who were currently studying in New Zealand.

I considered participants with this background would have the experience and knowledge to answer my questions. That is, they would have a good understanding of the education system in Hong Kong and New Zealand.

Participation was voluntary. Mutch (2013) argued that informed consent is crucial in research, noting that “participants in your research should be fully informed about the purposes, conduct and possible dissemination of your research and should give consent

to be involved” (p. 78). Therefore, before they participated in this research, participants were asked to read the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix B.b) carefully, which described what the research was about, and sign the Consent Form (see Appendix B.c). My contact details (i.e., telephone and email) were provided on the information sheet and consent form. When participants approached me by telephone or email, I ensured that they met all the aforementioned criteria before sending them participant information and consent forms, and arranging a time for an interview. To ensure their privacy was respected, rather than checking their legal documents, participants were recruited based on trust. Their identities were kept confidential, so instead of addressing participants by their names, I deidentified them by giving them pseudonyms or random initials. That is, the five pairs of parents were referred to as Albert and Bianca, Craig and Dianna, Edward and Fiona, George and Helena, and Ian and Jacqueline, which were fictitious names. Although I collected information such as the school their children had attended in Hong Kong, the school their children were currently attending in New Zealand, and the school they had attended in Hong Kong, I do not disclose their real names in this thesis. Their privacy was protected, and their information remains confidential. Issues related to ethical considerations are discussed in depth in the ethical considerations section (Section 3.5).

3.3.4 Profile of participants

Five pairs of Hong Kong parents were recruited for this research through the “Hong Kong New Zealander” Facebook page. All contacted me by telephone, so I was able to briefly explain the purpose of the research to them. As all agreed to participate in the research, I sent them information sheets and consent forms by email after the telephone calls. As all

of their children were in primary schools, it was not easy for them to meet at the AUT City Campus, so I interviewed four pairs at their houses, and one pair at a playground near their house. Table 4 provides the profile of participants by gender, and years they were in New Zealand, and

Table 5 provides the profile of participants' children by gender and school years. School year was not a selection criterion in this research. However, all who participated in this research had children in primary schools. Although Hong Kong parents also send their children to study in secondary schools and tertiary institutions in New Zealand, no such parents volunteered for this research. I assumed that was because most Hong Kong students studying in secondary schools or universities came to New Zealand alone, and were either in boarding schools or old enough to take care of themselves.

Table 4. *Profile of Participants by Gender and Years in New Zealand*

Participants	Gender	Years in New Zealand
Albert	Male	Almost 3 years
Bianca	Female	Almost 3 years
Craig	Male	About 2 years
Diana	Female	About 2 years
Edward	Male	About 1 year
Fiona	Female	About 1 year
George	Male	2½ years
Helena	Female	2½ years
Ian	Male	2 years
Jacqueline	Female	2 years

Table 5. *Profile of Participants' Children*

Participants	Gender	School Year
Albert and Bianca	2 boys	Year 1 and Year 2
Craig and Diana	2 girls	Year 2 and Year 5
Edward and Fiona	2 boys	Year 4 and Year 6
George and Helena	2 boys	Year 2 and Year 5
Ian and Jacqueline	1 girl	Year 6

3.3.5 Procedure

As a researcher who went to school in Hong Kong and was living in New Zealand, I shared the culture of the participants as a Hong Konger. As Cantonese is the mother tongue of Hong Kongers, before each interview, I asked participants whether they preferred talking in Cantonese or English. While English might have been helpful to me, considering that I am writing this in English, I recognised that they might be more comfortable speaking in Cantonese. However, all interviews were conducted in English. I believe that this occurred because English is a commonly spoken language in Hong Kong, so many Hong Kongers are comfortable speaking and expressing themselves in English. Before each face-to-face interview, I collected the signed consent forms from participants, reminded them that the interviews would be audio-recorded on my iPhone 11, and that I would take notes in Chinese or English, so the data could be transcribed and coded. I asked them if they had questions or queries about the interview, and if they wanted me to explain any unclear points. At the beginning of the interview, I also reminded participants that they could choose not to answer any of the questions, or leave at any point of the interview if they experienced discomfort.

3.3.6 Eliciting tacit knowledge using visual elicitation in interviews

Tacit knowledge is “implicit and operates below the level of conscious awareness” (Gredler, 2009, p. 198). As mentioned earlier, an interview is a helpful way to understand people’s views. However, the use of traditional research techniques such as interviewing, is restricted in terms of eliciting tacit knowledge. That is, it may be too abstract to ask participants a formal interview question, such as “what do you think is the purpose of education?” This question addresses a topic that is rarely talked about, and participants might have difficulty in expressing or even accessing their understandings. Therefore, it was important to adopt elicitation techniques that helped participants express their tacit knowledge. The technique of using elicitation in interviews was designed by the psychologist, Pierre Vermersch (see Hogan et al., 2015). It aims to help participants reflect on their subjective experiences, and extends beyond their behaviours, judgements, and observations. It stresses a specific experience, for example, by reading and interpreting some data. Compared to traditional research techniques, elicitation stresses iterative questioning. This means that participants are asked to give descriptions of their experiences frequently at increasingly fine levels of granularity. For example, they might be asked about a physical context along with the sensation of an experience. During the interviews, the present tense was used to facilitate participants’ imaginary re-enactment of their experiences. Elicitation techniques help to investigate participants’ real lived experiences and the process of how they generated their insights, and reduce potential bias (Hogan et al., 2015). It is common for researchers to use external stimuli visually, verbally, or in written documents when eliciting in interviews, such as photo elicitation, drawings, or videos. The use of these stimuli can help participants break down

complicated ideas and foster deep conversations (van Braak et al., 2018). The five semi-structured interviews in this research involved the use of stimuli such as images and written documents, along with open-ended questions. For each interview, I printed four coloured images and six written documents on A4 paper, to stimulate discussion with participants about the purpose of education. I used these in my interviews because I wanted the parents to compare their views of their school with these representations of the school. First, I extracted the educational objectives from the websites of New Zealand's Ministry of Education, Hong Kong's Education Bureau and Education Department. This helped parents think about whether they agreed or disagreed with the official statements, and give their own views based on these statements and their own experiences.

As stated on the New Zealand's Ministry of Education (2020) website, the current New Zealand Government's objectives were to:

- strengthen New Zealander's national and cultural identity;
- inspire New Zealanders and their children to achieve more;
- give New Zealanders the choice and opportunity to be the best they can be;
- encourage New Zealanders to be active participants and citizen in creating a strong civil society; and
- make New Zealanders productive, valued and competitive in the world.

As stated on Hong Kong's Education Bureau (2020) website, the current Hong Kong Government's objectives were to:

- provide 12 years' free primary and secondary education to all children through public sector schools. In addition, the Government provides full subvention for full-time courses run by the Vocational Training Council for Secondary 3 leavers to offer an alternative free avenue for senior secondary students outside mainstream education;
- provide a balanced and diversified school education that suits the different needs of students to help them construct knowledge, develop generic skills, and foster positive values and attitudes with a view to laying a firm foundation for further studies or work, to facilitate their healthy growth and whole-person development, as well as to nurture their lifelong learning capabilities;
- enhance students' proficiency in biliterate and trilingual communication;
- enhance teaching quality and effectiveness in learning;
- improve the learning and teaching environment;
- provide students having special educational needs (SEN) with education services to develop their potential to the full;
- help newly arrived children (including newly-arrived children from the Mainland, non-Chinese speaking children and returnee children) integrate into the local community and overcome learning difficulties; and
- enhance the quality, flexibility, and accountability of school administration.

As stated in the Ministry of Education's (1981) annual report, one of the British colonial government's objectives was:

...to develop a moral sensibility, to promote character formation and training, to encourage correct attitudes towards life, schools and community. (Ministry of Education, 1981, as cited in Morris & Sweeting, 1991)

After that, based on the information provided by participants (see Tables 1 & 2), I extracted school visions and mottos from the schools' websites, for schools that participants' children had attended in Hong Kong, those their children were currently attending in New Zealand, and those the participants had attended in Hong Kong. Next, I extracted the curriculum or subjects offered from these schools' websites, and finally, I found two images on-line, of students taking classes in Hong Kong and in New Zealand. I also searched for two old images of the schools and for the school hymns that participants would have sung at their schools during British colonial rule.

Cappello (2005), Clark (1999), and Horstman and Bradding (2002) encouraged researchers to make use of stimuli in interviews. It is believed that by using stimuli, researchers can evoke participants' discussions, playing with content and process. Stimuli not only trigger participants' memories, and elicit longer and more comprehensive interviews, but also help create a comfortable environment for discussion and help participants access and express their views. According to Banks (2001), integrating stimuli in interviews helps "invoke comments, memory and discussion in the course of a semi-structured interview" (p. 87). Banks (2001) pointed out that researchers should select stimuli that help participants explore their social world, because the stimuli not only show what is shown in the stimulus, but also tell a message. Open ended questions designed to capture participants' views on the current education systems in New Zealand and Hong Kong, as well as their historical experiences of education, were also asked (see Appendix B.a).

3.3.7 Carrying out the interviews

Before each interview, I collected the signed consent forms from participants, and explained the purpose of the research. I asked participants if they had any questions or queries about the research and reminded them of their rights to withdraw from the research, and that their personal information would be kept confidential. They did not have to answer any questions if they felt uncomfortable answering them, and I assured them that there were no right or wrong answers. To help participants feel relaxed and comfortable, I tried to chat informally with them before their interview, asking questions such as “how long have your family been living in New Zealand?” and “are you enjoying your experience here so far?” Once I felt participants were relaxed and comfortable, I started asking interview questions relevant to my research. While I listened to their answers, I made notes and tried to remain neutral. I tried not to give any responses or comments to their answers, as I wanted them to give their views and opinions without any hesitation or bias. I found the visual elicitation materials that I had prepared for the interviews very useful, and most participants were excited and enthusiastic on seeing their old school photographs and school hymns. These helped encourage participants to talk and offer more in-depth information. Before the interviews finished, I always remembered to ask, “is there anything else the two of you think would be useful for me know?” so that I would not miss any important points.

3.3.8 After the interviews

After the completion of data collection, I sent the transcripts to those participants who opted to review their transcript to ensure accuracy of the data, so they could remove any

sensitive or controversial comments. As compensation for their contribution of time, I gave each pair of participants a supermarket gift card worth NZ\$20. A summary of the research findings was also given to those who requested it after the research was completed. The interview process is recorded in depth in the *Interview Schedule for Researcher* (see Appendix B.e).

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Thematic analysis: procedure

Before analysing the data, the responses were transcribed from the recordings to written English to produce data that would allow me to generate themes. This research used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process to identify how parents' perspectives on the purpose of education were influenced by the social world. *Thematic analysis* is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 76). It identifies different themes, that is, patterns that are significant or interesting within the data, and uses these themes to address the research questions. It not only summarises the data, but also interprets and makes sense of them (Clarke & Braun, 2013). There are two different approaches to thematic analysis: inductive and deductive. The inductive approach allows themes to emerge from the data, rather than from using a pre-determined theoretical framework, while the deductive approach involves fitting data into pre-set codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inductive thematic analysis was chosen for this research because I wanted to stay close to the perspectives of participants. I wanted to make sure that the themes identified really reflected what participants discussed in the interviews.

Following Braun and Clarke (2006), I conducted the thematic analysis in six steps. Firstly, I familiarised myself with the data by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and secondary data. I tried to highlight sections, make notes, and write down my first impressions. Then I generated codes by identifying the key features of the data that may be relevant to answering my research questions. I coded all the data, then selected and grouped relevant data for later stages of analysis using the qualitative data management software package, NVivo. The third step was to generate initial themes. I examined the codes and then selected and grouped data to identify parents' views on the purpose of education. I grouped data that were relevant to parents' views on their children's experiences of schooling and their own experiences of schooling. I used social constructionism (see Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Burr, 2015; Crotty, 1998; Garfinkelm, 1967; Jary & Jary, 1996; Ricoeur 1981; Schutz et al., 1967) to inform my analysis of what influenced the decisions the participants had made for their children.

Finally, I wrote up the findings by intertwining the analytic narrative, data extracts, and contextualising the analysis in relation to the extant literature (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis aligned with my methodological position; it is highly flexible and maintains richness in data. It allows insights that are not anticipated by the researcher and offers a flexible way of analysing qualitative data from the perspective of theory or from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, thematic analysis challenges subjectivity. Researchers must use their judgement to find themes, as it does not have a philosophical standpoint. As Willig (2013, p. 65) observed, "the result is a shopping list of themes which do not represent anything in particular, and which often reflect the topics included in the

researcher's interview agenda." Thematic analysis is limited to description or exploration, with little interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.5 Ethical considerations

As this research involved human participants, it was important to take ethics into account. According to Orb et al. (2001), researchers should be aware of ethical principles, particularly those of autonomy, beneficence, and justice. Firstly, in terms of autonomy, researchers have a responsibility to protect participants' human rights. Capron (1980) argued that showing respect to people is an acknowledgement of participants' human rights. For example, participants should have the right to decide whether or not they want to take part in the research. They should also have the right to leave the research at any point without penalty (Orb et al., 2001). Autonomy is also honoured by informed consent. *Consent* refers to "a negotiation of trust, and it requires continuous renegotiation" (Orb et al., 2001, p. 95). It is important to inform participants what data will be collected and how they are used. Researchers have a responsibility to fully inform participants of the different aspects involved in the research (Sanjari et al., 2014). The informed consent process is regarded as a contract between the researcher and the participants. According to Fleming and Zegwaard (2018, p. 210), the following aspects should be included in the consent process:

- who the researcher(s) are
- what the intent of the research is
- what data will be collected from participants
- how the data will be collected from participants

- what level of commitment is required from participants
- how these data will be used and reported
- what the potential risks are, of taking part in the research
- an opt in approach rather than opt out (i.e., active rather than passive consent – the latter of which, is highly contentious)
- information on the right to withdraw at any time without reason (including withdrawing data already provided)
- assurances that participants' identities will be kept confidential
- clarity of ownership of the data (participants own their raw data, and researchers own the analysed data)
- their right to access their data
- their right to ask for more information
- information about the complaint process (contact details of the researcher along with those of a line manager, or the chair of the ethics committee)

Secondly, in terms of beneficence, research should be beneficial to others and prevent participants from any potential risk and harm. This could be achieved by giving participants confidentiality or anonymity. *Confidentiality* means that “no personal information is to be revealed except in certain situations” (Sanjari et al., 2014, p. 3). Researchers must attempt to reduce the likelihood of encroaching on the autonomy of their participants. They should state clearly which persons may have access to the data and how the data will be used (Sanjari et al., 2014), and be aware of the potential consequences of revealing participants' identities; the use of pseudonyms is therefore recommended. Lastly, *justification* refers to “equal share and fairness” (Orb et al., 2001,

p. 95). Researchers should ensure that participants are not exploited or abused in any way, and be aware of the potential vulnerability of the participants and their contributions to the research.

This research was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 11th December, 2020. It not only involved autonomy, beneficence, and justice, but also the four main considerations of 1) communicating the justification of this research with my participants; 2) protecting participants' human rights and autonomy; 3) obtaining informed consent; and 4) protecting participants' confidentiality and privacy. All participants participated in this research voluntarily and were fully informed of the purpose and significance of the research as well as the contributions and potential risks of their participation and involvement, both verbally and in written documents. According to some scholars (e.g. Sanjari et al., 2014; Orb et al., 2001) and the AUTEC principles, the confidentiality of participants should be carefully protected throughout the research, and they should not be exposed to any danger or discomfort. Prior to data collection, AUTEC's Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms were provided to participants, explaining the details and voluntary nature of participating in this research. They read the Information Sheet and signed the Consent Form before being interviewed. Participants and I abided by what was set out in the Information Sheet and Consent Form, and participants' identities were kept confidential. As mentioned earlier, due to confidentiality, participants were therefore not identified by their real names; instead, I deidentified them with pseudonyms or random initials. Their personal information, such as the school they attended, and were attending, was not disclosed. Data in this research are stored securely in storage provided by the School of Education at AUT, where they

are kept for a minimum of six years after completion of the analysis. The data collected were used only for the purpose of this research, and no third parties have access to the information.

Participants had the right not to answer any of the questions and/or leave the interviews at any time if they experienced discomfort, which was carefully explained on the information sheets. The participants were asked to keep a copy of the Participant Information Sheets so they could contact me by telephone or email if they had any queries or problems; I reminded participants of this at the beginning of their interviews. I ensured that my participants understood that this research focused on the issue of the purpose of education.

3.6 Credibility and validity

Credibility refers to “the extent to which a research account is believable and appropriate, with particular reference to the level of agreement between participants and the researcher” (Mills et al., 2010, p. 242). Participants who opted to review the transcript and/or summary of findings received an email with the transcript and/or summary of findings attached. They were asked to comment on them within three weeks of receiving the email. This gave them the opportunity to rethink what they had said during the interviews, ensure the data were transcribed and translated correctly, and any sensitive or controversial data were removed. This ensured that the findings were consistent with the participants’ views.

According to Payne and Payne (2004), *validity* refers to “the capacity of research techniques to encapsulate the characteristics of the concepts being studied, and so

properly to measure what the methods were intended to measure” (p. 233). The validity of the method, data analysis, and interpretations of the findings were all checked. For example, before each interview, I checked to ensure that my iPhone and the video memos were working properly, and I took notes throughout the interviews. This is important, as Patton (2002) argued that notes taken during interviews can be used as a backup in case the technology does not work. It is also a good way to highlight important words, quotes, and information for later use. Immediately after each interview, I checked to ensure that the interview was properly recorded, and took time to write down some of my reflections on the interview. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis technique was a valid and reliable way to analyse the data into themes; indeed, many researchers have used their recommended six steps in their research.

3.7 Limitations

Most of the limitations to this research were caused by the research design. Firstly, as this research was conducted with a very small sample, the findings should not be generalised, as they represent the perspectives of only these participants. Secondly, by conducting pair interviews rather than individual interviews, it was possible that one partner could dominate the other. Lastly, as I recruited parents as couples rather than lone parents who had come to New Zealand for their children’s education, all participants in this research had children in primary schools; none of the parents who volunteered for this research had children in secondary or tertiary education. Therefore, this research explored only why Hong Kong parents send their children to primary schools in New Zealand, and does

not explain why Hong Kong parents send their children to secondary or tertiary education in New Zealand.

3.8 Summary

This chapter presented the methodology used in this research. It outlined the interpretive paradigm, social constructionism as the theoretical framework, interviews as the data collection method, the thematic data analysis process, ethical considerations, validity and credibility issues, as well as the limitations of the research. The research utilised a qualitative research design to collect data on the purpose of education from the perspectives of Hong Kong parents who had chosen to take their children to New Zealand to be educated. It drew on visual elicitation in semi-structured interviews, which were analysed using thematic analysis. The next chapter discusses the findings of the research in the context of the extant literature.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

Three themes and nine subthemes emerged from the interview data (see Table 6). This chapter starts with an overview of participants and their children, then presents the key findings that emerged from the research, which are discussed in detail in conjunction with the relevant literature. The findings provide insights into the views of the participating Hong Kong parents who took their children to New Zealand for schooling. Their views not only include their children's experiences of schooling, but also the parents' experiences.

Table 6. *Themes and Subthemes that Emerged from the Interviews*

Themes	Subthemes
1. New Zealand as compared to other countries	Language Time zone Visa application process
2. Different mode of education	Teaching approach Examination and homework Class size and grouping Teachers' role and behaviours
3. Children's growth and development	Childhood Whole-person development

4.2 Overview of the participants and their children

Five pairs of Hong Kong parents (five fathers and five mothers) were interviewed. Participants and their former and current schools were given pseudonyms, to protect participants' privacy. Tables 7, 8 and 9 present the profiles of participants and of their

children. All were born, raised, and educated in Hong Kong, and had been living in New Zealand for fewer than three years. Three pairs had two boys, one pair had two girls, and one had just one girl. All the children were studying in primary schools in New Zealand at the time of the research. All the children had attended schools in Hong Kong before coming to New Zealand, except for Albert's and Bianca's children, who had been in New Zealand for almost three years and were in Year 1 and Year 2.

Table 7. *Profile of Interview Participants*

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Years in New Zealand	Schools attended in Hong Kong (Pseudonyms)
Albert and Bianca	Almost three years	Mission Boys' School St Matthew School
Craig and Diana	About two years	Ting Hu Primary School Baptist School
Edward and Fiona	About one year	Tai Bay Public School St Solomon School
George and Helena	Two and a half years	Hong Kong Market School Wong Sau Wan Memorial School
Ian and Jacqueline	Two years	New Way School Doncaster Primary School

Table 8. *Profile of Interview Participants' Children*

Participants (pseudonyms)	Participants' children	School attended in Hong Kong (pseudonyms, if any)	Current school in New Zealand (pseudonyms)	Current school year of children
Albert and Bianca	2 boys	Not applicable	Saint Patrick College	Year 1 and Year 2
Craig and Diana	2 girls	Ting Hu Primary School	Haddington Primary School	Year 2 and Year 5
Edward and Fiona	2 boys	Presbyterian Church Primary School	Maidenhead School	Year 4 and Year 6

George and Helena	2 boys	Trinity Academy	Knight Hill School	Year 2 and Year 5
Ian and Jacqueline	1 girl	Saint Anna School	Exeter Primary School	Year 6

4.3 Theme 1: New Zealand compared to other countries

Theme 1 relates to the reasons these Hong Kong parents chose to take their children to study in New Zealand, rather than to other countries. This theme comprises three subthemes: language, time zone, and the visa application process. These subthemes are discussed in detail in the following sections.

4.3.1 Language

When the participants were asked why they took their children to study abroad, and why to New Zealand rather than elsewhere, four of the ten participants responded that they selected New Zealand, as they preferred their children to be educated in an English speaking country. English speaking countries use English as one of their official languages. It was clear from the responses, that some Hong Kong parents chose New Zealand as their children's study abroad destination because it is an English speaking country, as the following quotes show.

I think it is the language! We prefer English speaking countries. (Albert)

For English speaking countries, the options are just Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand. (Craig)

Jacqueline and her family had been living in New Zealand for two years. In Jacqueline's opinion, an English speaking country was particularly important, as this made it easier for their family to live in New Zealand, and others had similar views.

Edward also expressed his views on the importance of an English speaking country, and considered Hong Kong as a British colony; the education system in Hong Kong at that time was substantially similar to those of other English speaking countries. Besides, although Hong Kong state funded schools used Cantonese as the main medium of instruction, they also taught in English. The similarity of education system and language made it easier for Edward's children to settle into school in New Zealand.

4.3.2 Time zone

Another major reason for participants to choose New Zealand as their children's study abroad destination was the time zone. The time difference between Hong Kong and New Zealand is four hours (or five hours during daylight saving periods). Similar time zones made it easier for participants to connect with their families in Hong Kong. This was a reason two of the participants gave. Their responses were as follows:

Time zone wise. Yeah, it is not too bad. Five hours away from Hong Kong.
(Albert)

We have parents who are still in Hong Kong. We want to stay in the same time zone or similar time zone so that we can always keep in touch, and the only option is just Asia-Pacific. (Craig)

This finding was somewhat unexpected, as this reason was not evident in the literature.

4.3.3 Visa application process

The findings indicated that some Hong Kong parents selected New Zealand in preference to other countries, because it was relatively easy and quick for them to acquire a visa to stay in New Zealand. This again suggested that they came to New Zealand for the purpose of immigration, rather than just education. Two participants' responses addressed this subtheme. Albert and Bianca preferred their children to go to an English speaking country, so Bianca applied for several English speaking countries, including Australia, the UK, and Canada. Eventually, she chose New Zealand for her sons, because it was the quickest to process her application. Craig's family also wanted an English speaking country with a similar time zone to that of Hong Kong, so their only options were Australia and New Zealand. Therefore, Craig chose New Zealand for his daughters. As he commented:

Most Hong Kong people think that Australia and New Zealand are the same country! As it seems that it is easier to come to New Zealand, we picked New Zealand.

To conclude, the findings revealed three main reasons for Hong Kong parents to take their children to study in New Zealand, rather than elsewhere. First, New Zealand is an English speaking country. Second, New Zealand's time zone is similar to that of Hong Kong, so it was relatively easy for participants to connect with their families in Hong Kong while they were in New Zealand. Lastly, New Zealand had a relatively easy and quick visa application process compared to processes used by other English speaking countries. This attracted some parents to take their children to New Zealand for their education.

4.4 Theme 2: Different mode of education

Theme 2 provides the reasons some of the participants wanted their children to study in New Zealand; they wanted them to receive a “different mode of education.” The findings showed that a different mode of education includes the teaching approach, examinations and homework, class size and grouping, as well as teachers' roles and behaviours. These are subthemes under Theme 2, as discussed next.

4.4.1 Teaching approach

The findings showed that some Hong Kong parents wanted a different teaching approach. A *teaching approach* is “the mode or manner of teaching, which can be shaped as a lecture, tutorial, or laboratory work” (Akimenko, 2016, p. 2). The approach contributed to the participants' decision to choose New Zealand schooling for their children. Of the ten participants, six discussed this influence on their decision. Albert pointed out the major difference between Hong Kong and New Zealand's teaching approach. In his opinion, Hong Kong's education focused on teaching students knowledge, whereas New Zealand's education focused on teaching students how to learn. Hong Kong's teaching approach gave students advantages, as students there were exposed to a lot of knowledge at a very young age. However, many students did not know why they needed the knowledge, but just that it was important. Furthermore, in Hong Kong, they did not develop any skills other than academic ones. As Albert explained:

In Hong Kong, they [schools] teach you to a wide range of knowledge, so, you get the advantage of learning a lot of knowledge. Hence, when you go to

university, or you start working, you have a really good foundation of knowledge. It is an advantage. But in New Zealand, they teach you how to learn, rather than teaching you knowledge.....Yes, in New Zealand, they teach the ability to learn, but in Hong Kong, they teach you the idea.

Among the six participants who discussed points relating to this subtheme, three explained that they were dissatisfied with mainstream education in Hong Kong. These participants highlighted that Hong Kong's education heavily emphasised "feeding" knowledge to students. Indeed, "knowledge" was frequently mentioned when discussing Hong Kong's education.

Craig believed that Hong Kong's education focused on teaching students knowledge, and that Hong Kong students acquired much more knowledge than did New Zealand students. He believed that gaining more knowledge when students were young did not mean that they would be knowledgeable when they grew up. Craig expressed his views on acquiring knowledge:

They [schools in Hong Kong] tried to put more things in your brain. It seems you [Hong Kong students] know more things than the same age of students in New Zealand. But I really wonder, even if you are more knowledgeable at the very beginning, are you still knowledgeable at the end of the day?

George and Jacqueline had similar views to those of Craig, on acquiring knowledge, and believed that Hong Kong's education system over-emphasised this. They considered that such a teaching approach failed to develop students' soft skills, such as their imagination, creativity, problem-solving, team work, and interpersonal skills. They explained this as follows:

The knowledge you gained from the [Hong Kong] education system is sound,

and you can maybe just have a really good foundation of the hard core knowledge. But whether they [Hong Kong's schools] develop your interpersonal skills or other kinds of soft skills is questionable. So the knowledge you get from textbooks is very strong, because the schools want you to know and get the knowledge. (George)

They [Hong Kong's teachers] feed students with pre-defined knowledge, rather than letting students use their imagination and creativity to discuss a problem or do some team work. That is why I prefer my daughter to study in New Zealand. (Jacqueline)

Helena exemplified the idea of feeding knowledge by recalling her schooling in Hong Kong. She pointed out that she took a lot of notes at school. Her teacher asked the students to memorise everything in their notes for the sake of examination. Therefore, her study experience was not very pleasant:

I wrote lots of notes at school. My teacher asked us to memorise all the notes for exams. I could not remember any pleasant experience.

Jacqueline also illustrated the idea of feeding knowledge to students by recalling her own study in Hong Kong. She pointed out that she memorised knowledge for the sake of examinations without really understanding it, and found that the knowledge she had acquired was useless in later life:

I recalled learning a term "carbon dioxide" and " H^2O " in science class. At that time, I did not know what carbon dioxide or H^2O is. I just tried very hard to remember this term "carbon dioxide" and " H^2O " and wrote down the pronunciation in Cantonese. I learned it without any understanding, no idea what they were, so, I don't think the education in Hong Kong is effective. They just forced you to memorise things and be successful in exam. Even [though] we learned quite a lot in school in primary and secondary schools, I felt like we forgot everything now and they have no use in our life.

Instead of what one participant called the "spoon-feeding" education system in Hong Kong, six participants preferred New Zealand's education system, which used activity-based teaching. In *activity-based learning*, "students physically and mentally explore a subject by simulation of the work environment, manipulation of tools and materials associated with the world of work, or performance of a real work task" (Oribhabor, 2020, p. 80). In other words, activity-based learning is student-centred; students learn by becoming involved in different activities related to the topic being taught. In this approach, the teacher only acts as a facilitator in the process (Hayat et al., 2017). Thus, it was not surprising that six participants preferred the activity-based teaching used in New Zealand. They appreciated that children could learn much more than books could offer, and through different types of activities. They felt that engaging in different kinds of activities encouraged children to learn. Examples of their responses are:

I do think they learn a lot not in the books, but outside of the books in New Zealand. They learn through different types of activities. (Edward)

We expectsome activities-based teaching. (George)

I think this is one of the best cultures in school, that encourages students to do their best and emphasises on activities outside the classroom. (Fiona)

Recalling his school days in Hong Kong, George commented that Hong Kong's teaching approach was not ideal for students' learning, with a teacher sitting in front of a large group of students; in this approach, students face the blackboard and listen to the teacher's lecture. He believed that students could learn much more through activity-based learning in New Zealand. Fiona had the same view as George, and also

recalled her study in Hong Kong. She explained that in Hong Kong, she focused only on academic subjects, and did not have the opportunity to explore a wide range of activities. This was why she wanted her children to study in New Zealand, where they would have the opportunity to explore different kinds of activities, subjects, and languages at school. She believed that activity-based learning is crucial, giving students a broader spectrum of knowledge than what she referred to as “spoon-feeding.” She was impressed with activity-based learning in New Zealand, and commented that children in New Zealand can gain a lot of knowledge and widen their horizons through the day-to-day activities they participate in at school. She considered that was a good way to learn. Ian compared his own schooling in Hong Kong with his daughter’s schooling in New Zealand. He pointed out that when he was at school, there were no activities, such as sports days or swimming galas, and students had no social life. The schools just wanted students to focus on their studies. On the contrary, his daughter’s school in New Zealand had created an environment for students to have social life, and even had disco nights at school.

Like George, Fiona, and Ian, Bianca and Diana appreciated the activity-based teaching method in New Zealand schools. They appreciated that New Zealand schools gave students opportunities to find out about a subject themselves, rather than being taught according to a set of teaching materials. For example, New Zealand schools gave children opportunities to go on field trips and the library to learn about a subject. They also gave children opportunities to do projects, designing and approaching the topic in their own way. They believed that their children were much

more engaged through activity-based learning, and recounted what their children had recently done at school:

I think in New Zealand they give their children a bit more room to kind of find out about the subject, whereas in Hong Kong you're usually given set material. Like I recall that they have recently done a project on Earth and space and they were given nothing! So, they actually have to go to the library, go online, and do the research, and I've never seen that way of kind of teaching, at least for primary kids in Hong Kong. Like usually they are given a book and they've got a set or structure of what they need to learn. I mean they get to choose ...they weren't specific about what parts of Earth and space they're supposed to research on. So broad! And then they had like a field trip to go to Stardome [observatory in Auckland] to learn more about it. And I find that that way of learning ...my kids are much more engaged than just kind of reading up from the books and looking up online and ...yeah, I think it's a different experience. (Bianca)

My elder daughter, she has lot of projects. They can design what they would like. For example, recently, she had a project on sustainability. Then she and her team mate decide to pick up rubbish in the community. They can design what they want to do, and they can think different ideas how to approach it. (Diana)

Some parents thought it was important for children to interact and work with their peers, and that they should seek answers and make meanings by themselves. Bianca and Diana also had a positive view of activity-based learning. Bianca thought her son was more engaged in class, and Diana observed that her daughter had learned to collaborate with her team mates and develop her confidence by presenting her ideas in front of the class. Like Bianca and Diana, Edward and Jacqueline also stressed that their children learned more soft skills and social skills through activity-based learning. They believed that their children developed self-confidence and learned a

great deal beyond the classrooms and textbooks. They believed that activities developed their social skills and prepared them to tackle challenges they may face in the future. Their views were as follows:

Just like my elder son, he quite often goes out to do some outdoor activities. On one hand, these also built up their self-confidence and also, they can really learn outside of the classroom. So that is what I really like, because [they are] learning lots, not just through the books and the teaching from the teachers, but they can learn in all kind of ways. (Edward)

They have lots of activities with their classmates. It helped to develop their sense of belonging. Rather than focusing on academic achievement, it developed your social skills like getting along with others and facing the challenges students may encounter in the future. (Jacqueline)

To conclude, some Hong Kong parents, such as Craig, George, and Jacqueline, criticised the Hong Kong education system as a spoon-feeding method of education. They believed this teaching approach failed to develop students' soft skills, such as self-confidence and social skills. Some parents (i.e., Bianca, Diana, Edward, and Jacqueline) felt that students were more engaged and could learn more soft skills and social skills through activity-based learning. As the education in Hong Kong did not offer them or their children this kind of learning approach, these parents took their children to New Zealand for their education.

4.4.2 Examination and homework

The findings also demonstrated that some Hong Kong parents wanted their children to have fewer examinations and less homework. This contributed to their choosing a New Zealand education for their children. Participants highlighted that in Hong

Kong, students were required to take many examinations and complete a great deal of homework, but in New Zealand, their children did not have any examinations or homework. This distinction was mentioned by seven of the ten participants.

Bianca, Jacqueline, and Craig, pointed out that in Hong Kong, students had a lot of dictation, quizzes, tests, and examinations. School life there was very intense, and students needed to spend a lot of time preparing for assessments. Their comments in relation to this supported the findings:

Thinking back, they used to have dictation every week and every month, so it's very intense. (Bianca)

They have regular dictation to check their spelling. They also have quizzes, tests, and exams all the time. so children need to spend a lot of time to prepare for different kinds of assessments. (Jacqueline)

In Hong Kong, we've...examinations, dictation, quiz. (Craig)

With such an excessive number of assessments, students in Hong Kong needed to spend a lot of time, not just on revision, but also on finishing their homework. Many children needed to spend their weekends completing homework. Craig related students' experiences of studying in Hong Kong:

I met a lot of kids in Hong Kong. They hate weekends because they are given lots of homework on Friday and they need to complete them over the weekend.

Craig was not alone in this regard. Fiona recalled the time when her sons were studying in Hong Kong, and had a lot of assignments, which they could not finish until late at night:

They have at least six to seven types of assignment every day, and sometimes they need to do their assignments until 10pm or even 11pm.

Diana also explained what she and her daughter had to do when studying in Hong Kong:

When we were in Hong Kong, we need to help our kids with their homework after work because they have a lot of homework. They have dictation every week and tests every month. We need to check their homework and help them to revise for dictation and tests.

Diana explained that when her daughter was studying in Hong Kong, she had a lot of homework, dictation, and tests. As a parent, she needed to help her children with their homework and help them prepare for dictation, and tests. Diana considered that the excessive emphasis on examinations and homework put her and her daughters under a great deal of pressure. After taking her children to New Zealand, she found they did not need to stay up late for examination and homework revision any more, and did not need to spend her weekends helping children with their studies. She wanted her daughters to study in New Zealand because she did not want her daughters and her undergoing the kind of life they had experienced in Hong Kong any more. She continued her story:

Like my elder daughter, before we came, she just finished Year 2 in Hong Kong. We thought that if this is just one to two years of our lives, it is okay, we can accept that, but it seems like a long-life process, and we have another daughter coming up. Would it be the life we aspire to? Definitely not! That is why we tried to look for other ways out and wanted to send our daughters to study somewhere else.

Similarly, George recalled the time his son was studying in Hong Kong:

Our elder son, he went to Primary 1 for a year before we moved to New Zealand. I think it is too hard for him. I saw him working very hard, revising to prepare for tests and exams and it is not just for him, but also for the parents as well. We needed to spend time with him to help him to revise.

George explained that Hong Kong's education system gave children a lot of tests and examinations, and that children there needed to work hard and prepare for them. Parents also needed to spend time helping children with their revision. He acknowledged that a lot of examinations and tests resulted in pressure on both the parents and their children, emphasising academic results and neglecting other development aspects of children's development.

Too much pressure, too many exams, tests, academic-oriented and maybe limiting other development of the kids. So, too focused on academic results.

Helena also acknowledged the pressure that students faced in Hong Kong, and mentioned that Hong Kong children spend a great deal of time on homework. They were also given more homework before a holiday, which effectively resulted in no holiday:

Children have study pressure. When they have holiday, they have doubled or tripled amount of homework than usual days. No holiday.

Apart from recalling their children's experiences studying in Hong Kong, participants also recalled their own school experiences. Helena said that the only thing she remembered from when she was at school was that there was so much homework:

I just remembered that I've a lot of homework, probably more than 10 exercise books to do every day.

Edward also talked about his schooling in Hong Kong and highlighted that it was also examination oriented and he had even more homework than did his children:

Actually, in our time, it's also the same. It's also exam oriented. I do remember in our time; the homework is even more than our two sons.

Like Helena and Edward, George believed there were too many tests and examinations when he was studying in Hong Kong. It was highly competitive; students always compared their grades with one another, and he did not enjoy this kind of learning atmosphere. Therefore, he did not want his children to grow up and study in Hong Kong:

I don't like tests and exam, so I don't want my children to grow up and study in such environment. People are very competitive. They always compare with one another. Students compare with one another...I don't like such learning atmosphere.

Participants collectively appreciated that New Zealand primary schools did not have any examinations, homework, or pressure. The phrases "no homework" and "no pressure" were frequently used when discussing New Zealand's education system. They believed that New Zealand's education system was more relaxed than was Hong Kong's. In New Zealand, their children went to school not for academic achievements or to be examined, but to enjoy their school life and play all day. Their responses included the following examples:

There is no homework! I think they're more relaxed. In New Zealand, they're not as competitive ... like I feel like they don't go to school to achieve a score. (Bianca)

They [New Zealand] do not have any homework. (Craig)

*In New Zealand, they don't have much homework ...very very few homework.
(Diana)*

*Comparing with the system in Hong Kong ...here [there is] no homework and
also no pressure. (Edward)*

*In New Zealand, kids can learn all this without being examined or always
need to study or have the tests regularly. (Fiona)*

*They enjoy the school life here. No homework, no examination. Just playing
and playing all day. (Helena)*

I think the students can enjoy learning without much pressure. (Jacqueline)

Although participants appreciated that New Zealand did not have any examinations, homework, or pressure, Bianca highlighted that she was still trying to grasp the concept of having fun and learning at the same time. She mentioned that having no examinations, homework, or pressure, bothered her sometimes, but considered that this was because of how she was brought up in Hong Kong:

*Sometimes I'm worried that they're having so much fun...you know...I guess
it's the way that I was brought up...you kind of can't link fun and learning
together. But...I mean I'm still trying to grasp that concept that you can have
fun and learn at the same time.*

To conclude, parents preferred their children to have fewer examinations and less homework than they and their children had in Hong Kong, believing that the schools there placed too much emphasis on this type of learning. Students there needed to spend a great deal of time on their work, which created pressure for them. As Hong Kong has an examination-oriented culture, the parents discussed in this section chose to take their children to New Zealand for their education.

4.4.3 Class size and grouping

The findings showed that Hong Kong parents wanted their children to be taught in a small class and not be grouped by ability, which was one of the reasons they took their children to study in New Zealand. Of the ten participants, four discussed issues related to this subtheme. George, Jacqueline, and Ian expressed their views on class size. They thought that the student to teacher ratio was very high in Hong Kong, and it was very crowded there. They explained that students sit in the classroom for long periods of time, whereas class sizes are much smaller in New Zealand and there is more space for children to play.

[In Hong Kong, the] student to teacher ratio is very high. (George)

Too crowded in the classroom [in Hong Kong]. Forty plus students in a classroom. (Ian)

In Hong Kong, they [the students] just sit in a classroom to study for quite a long time, but in New Zealand, they have lots of space to play. The class size is small comparing to Hong Kong, around 20 to 30 students. (Jacqueline)

Jacqueline recalled her time studying in Hong Kong. She pointed out there were more than 40 students in a class, and the students were squeezed into the classroom:

In my class, there are 47 students.....just squeezed in the classroom.

Further to disliking large classes, some participants did not want their children to be grouped by ability. George and Jacqueline expressed their views on ability grouping, saying that Hong Kong's education system tended to rank and group students based

on their academic results. However, New Zealand's education did not tend to rank and group students based on academic results:

Unlike Hong Kong, which groups students into different classes based on their academic achievement, all students are put in the same class here. (George)

Schools in New Zealand will not rank students based on their academic results. (Jacqueline)

Craig elaborated on ability grouping in Hong Kong. He pointed out that Hong Kong's education system ranked and grouped students based on their academic results. They put more resources into classes that performed well academically, and ignored students with poor academic performance:

They [Hong Kong schools] tried to rank people based on academic result. Like we've 200 people in the same year, so if you're top 40, you studied at class A, if you're 41 to 80, class B, and yeah, so if you are in class E, you don't need to study. The teachers simply ignore them. So that's why in public exams, they don't need to come and study. They just put all the resources in class A and B.

Craig did not like the class grouping method used in Hong Kong, and talked about his own study in Hong Kong. As he did not perform well in primary school, he was not only placed in a Band 3 (low decile) secondary school in Hong Kong, but was also assigned to a class with low achieving students. He explained out that in Hong Kong, schools tried to put all their resources into high achieving classes, and low achieving classes were effectively ignored. Craig considered this an unfair system, saying that teachers should not ignore students who do not perform well academically. He commented further:

I don't like that if you are not well performing ones in terms of academics, they basically or simply ignore you. You just give up yourself or they will just give up on you.

Like Craig, Bianca also did not like the class grouping method used in Hong Kong. She believed that she went to school to achieve a score, and for getting into university, rather than to learn. She believed that it was important for her children to enjoy learning. She recalled her schooling in Hong Kong:

I think what I don't like is I go to school not to learn, but to get that ranking, to get that score, to get that mark, to put me into uni and I actually don't know why I did those subjects... I really want them to learn in a way that they get to choose what they enjoyed because I think the best learning is...[when] you're enjoying it.

In summary, parents preferred their children to be taught in a small class and not to be grouped by ability, because they considered these approaches disadvantaged them and their children. However, the classes were large in Hong Kong, often consisting of more than 40 students in one class, with students grouped according to their academic achievements. Since New Zealand schools had smaller class sizes than did those in Hong Kong, and did not group students by ability, the parents discussed in this section brought their children to New Zealand for their educations.

4.4.1 Teachers' roles and behaviours

The findings indicated that some Hong Kong parents favoured teachers and the type of teaching in New Zealand over those in Hong Kong, which influenced their decisions to take their children to study in New Zealand. This subtheme was evident in the data of seven participants. Both Bianca and Helena were aware that Hong Kong

employed subject teachers, whereas in New Zealand, home-room teachers were more common at primary level. That is, in Hong Kong, different teachers taught different subjects, whereas in New Zealand, one teacher takes all the subjects. Participants' comments on this topic were as follows:

What I find interesting was in Hong Kong usually you have kind of like a subject matter expert. So, for each subject, you have a different teacher. But then I find that the kids would have like a class teacher here who does more than one subject, which is a bit different. (Bianca)

In Hong Kong, we've a different teacher for different subjects, but in New Zealand, in primary school, they only have one teacher to teach all the things and more subjects. It's quite surprising. (Helena)

Both Bianca and Helena believed that home-room teachers in New Zealand seemed to be better than the subject teachers in Hong Kong, because the teachers came to know more about the children, and thus had a better connection with them.

Participants pointed out that in Hong Kong, teachers seemed to be stricter and discouraged students. Edward, Craig, Diana, and Jacqueline, described their children's teachers in Hong Kong as "rigid," putting many restrictions on students. For example, the Hong Kong teachers marked assignments based on marking schemes and did not allow students to have alternative answers. They also did not allow students to play freely, so the children did not enjoy school.

In Hong Kong, my sons, they do not really like going back to school. They think they cannot play, and the teachers always said, "you cannot do this, you cannot do that" every day. (Edward)

The teachers will mark the assessments based on suggested answers and

marking schemes. Sometimes teachers are so rigid. They do not allow other alternative answers. This narrows students' thinking. (Jacqueline)

George also recounted his time as a student in Hong Kong. The teacher wanted to threaten and punish him, as he did not behave as the teacher wanted him to:

I remember one time, I just spoke loudly in class. There was a teacher walking along the corridor carrying a metre long ruler. Because I was not behaving as she wanted, I was sent out to the corridor and stood there to be punished by the teacher.

In contrast, the New Zealand teachers seemed to be more loving, caring, and encouraging, giving children more opportunity for open discussion, with little interference. Helena, George, Jacqueline, Craig, and Diana described their children's teachers in New Zealand:

The teachers in [Knight Hill] School are very loving and caring. I heard that the teacher always says “darling” and “honey” to the children. (Helena)

There was one occasion when my kid encountered something not very good, like some kind of conflict in class, and the teacher explained what she did to my kid and ... I can see that the teacher really loves the kid. (George)

The teachers let students discuss things openly and give little interference. They only give a little advice and assist students to achieve something. (Jacqueline)

Craig and Diana believed that teachers in New Zealand respected students' learning and were very encouraging. In New Zealand, the teachers allowed children to make mistakes and kept encouraging them. However, in Hong Kong, teachers did not allow children to make mistakes, asking them to make corrections. Craig and Diana pointed

out the distinction between the teachers in Hong Kong and New Zealand by telling a story:

In Hong Kong ...teachers do not allow students to make mistakes for their homework. She [my daughter] hated writing. She hated everything about writing a journal. Even if you write a sentence, they [the teachers] will say your sentence structure is not correct ...your spelling is not correct ...and the teacher will even ask you to correct it. This is very discouraging!

Craig and Diana continued their story:

But here [in New Zealand], the teachers just respect students' learning style and experience ...the teacher will not correct all her spellings and she will just encourage her and say something very encouraging about her idea. That's why she writes a lot now. This is very important.

Edward believed that the teachers in New Zealand made an effort to bring out the potential of the children. He also told a story that explained the differences between teachers in Hong Kong and those in New Zealand. He thought that in New Zealand, teachers guided and taught his son to draw, step by step. However, in Hong Kong, teachers just asked students to draw on their own, and hand in their work without guidance and teaching.

One example, is their school has an art exhibition and they spend two whole weeks preparing for the art exhibition. Every student does their visual artwork and displays and presents in the art exhibition. They do not only finish the work and that's it. But what impressed me is that my son's teacher really teaches him the technique and helped him to make his work to a satisfactory level or standard, and she helped him to really try to learn how to make a drawing in a right way. In Hong Kong, the teacher asks you to draw maybe a flower, then the students draw by themselves and submit their assignment. But here, the teacher teaches you every step. Maybe there are five steps to finish

the drawing, and she really teaches him step by step how to make it in a right way.

In conclusion, the participants discussed in this section were concerned about teachers' roles and behaviours because of their children and their prior experiences of studying in Hong Kong. Some parents (i.e., Bianca and Helena) believed that a homeroom teacher was better than a subject teacher, as a homeroom teacher could have a better connection with the students. Some parents emphasised that teachers in Hong Kong seemed to be stricter and actually discouraged the students, whereas teachers in New Zealand seemed to be more loving, caring, and encouraging towards students. These findings are supported by the literature. As Jiang et al. (2021) explained, teachers in the West are less strict and motivate the students more. Cultural differences contribute to this difference in teachers' behaviours. Parents in this research believed that New Zealand teachers respected students' learning and brought out their potential, which is why the parents brought their children to New Zealand for their educations.

4.5 Theme 3: Children's growth and development

Theme 3 focuses on children's growth and development. Some Hong Kong parents brought their children for schooling in New Zealand because they wanted their children to have a real childhood and experience whole-person development. They believed that these could be acquired in New Zealand, but not in Hong Kong.

4.5.1 Childhood

“Childhood” and “play” were mentioned frequently in discussions about New Zealand’s education. Bianca pointed out that in Hong Kong, her sons’ schedule was full to capacity with school, homework, and extra-curricular activities, and explained that “they never have time to play, like just play.” Four participants mentioned that their children had more time to play and enjoy their childhood in New Zealand, and were able to spend more time with their friends.

Examples of their responses included:

The children can have the real childhood here to grow up. (Helena)

Time to play, to enjoy staying with their friends. (George)

The students can have a lot of time to play comparing to Hong Kong. (Jacqueline)

Bianca explained how students did not have time to play and enjoy their childhood in Hong Kong by recalling her own schooling. She not only needed to perform well academically, but also needed to learn the piano, drawing, and other extra-curricular activities when she was in high school. She found it very stressful:

Like I think my high school years were stressful for me. Like I have to make sure that I stay in not just academically, I need to learn the piano, I need to learn drawing, I need to learn all the other things.

Fiona also believed that in Hong Kong, students were too busy. They had a lot of dictation, quizzes, tests, and examinations, which resulted in stress. Many children cannot manage all these activities within a short period of time and at a young age.

School rules were also very strict in Hong Kong. For example, Fiona's sons could not do anything during recess time, except walk in the playground. Even after school, children needed to take part in extra-curricular activities and had no spare time. She commented that she preferred her children to play in the park and enjoy their leisure time, rather than have it taken up with extra-curricular activities. She believed that both children and adults need leisure time and space to grow, explaining that in her view, a packed and busy schedule is unhealthy for children.

For me, as a parent, I always cut the extra-curricular activities for my sons because I don't want them to be so busy. I always say, "just let them to have some leisure time, do whatever they want." Even if they play at the park, it's much better than to take up all these extra-curricular activities in the school. Because even as adults, we need to have some leisure time and you've space to grow ...you've space to learn something new, rather than going to a classroom to study different things.

Fiona went further, by explaining that not only did she want her children to have time to play and enjoy their childhood, but she also argued that play is part of the normal development of a child. She believed that in New Zealand, schools encouraged students to do whatever they wanted, such as climbing a tree, or running in a field. She believed that children could learn through playing happily.

Here [in New Zealand], the school will encourage the students to do whatever you want. Climb the tree, run in the field ...this is the normal development of a kid. They need to play; they need to be full of happiness to learn something new.

Fiona also highlighted that play is part of the nature of childhood, and children can learn while playing. She mentioned that she did not have much time to play when she

was a child studying in Hong Kong. She believed that like New Zealand, Hong Kong should adapt playing as a part of learning.

I did not have much playing time in primary school. I think playing is a nature of children. They born to play. They really feel happy and learn in playing. I think in Hong Kong, they should adapt that playing as a kind of learning.

4.5.2 Whole-person development

Three participants mentioned that they brought their children to study in New Zealand because New Zealand emphasised whole-person development. In contrast, Hong Kong emphasised academic development. New Zealand's education provided children with more motivation to learn.

Their comments were as follows:

New Zealand is more focused on building the person whereas this [Hong Kong education] is more focused on the academic. (Bianca)

Here [in New Zealand], we focus on the whole-person development, not just the academic...they [New Zealand schools] focus more on whole-person development and more about whether they have motivation to learn. (Craig)

Edward explained that when his son was studying in Hong Kong, he did not have an opportunity to learn visual arts, and only realised his artistic potential after studying in New Zealand. He believed that unlike Hong Kong's education, New Zealand's education was more all-round, and helped bring out the potential of children. He told a story about his:

I would say that they try to explore their potential. Not only the academic, but also be all-round. Like my son in Hong Kong, actually, is quite ...not open

himself to attend different types of activities. But in [Meadowbank] School, he can have what I think [are] some amazing visual arts. Because in Hong Kong, he didn't like doing visual arts things, but here, the teachers pay a lot of effort to bring out the potential of the children.

Not only his son was affected by the emphasis on academic achievement in Hong Kong, but Edward also felt he did not have opportunities to take part in activities other than academic classes when he was at school:

I just want to mention that in our time, normally our school really do not have much class or activities outside your normal class i.e. extra-curricular. Normally our schedule is all different type of subject: maths, Chinese, English maybe geography or physics, chemistry, biology. Our school life is just attend different class.

Fiona also recounted her school days in Hong Kong. She did not have many opportunities to take part in different extra-curricular activities; it was all about academic studies. Therefore, she wanted her children to have opportunities to explore different kinds of activities, subjects, and languages, rather than just focusing on academic achievements. She wanted them to have a broader spectrum of knowledge.

For my secondary school, we didn't have too much extra-curricular activities, mainly focus on academic studies.

I just think during my study in Hong Kong, I did not explore to a wide range of activities, other than academic subjects. So here, I'd prefer my kids to have more chance to explore different kinds of activities, different kinds of subjects, new language...learn something new from the general studies...from all kinds of school activities, so that they can have a broader spectrum of knowledge and also to know a lot of different things, instead of focusing on academic subjects.

Participants believed that in New Zealand, their children developed a wide range of skills through whole-person development, such as team building, decision-making, creativity, confidence, and critical thinking. Jacqueline commented that Hong Kong's education "forgot to develop students' different kinds of skills." For example, Bianca explained that in Hong Kong, there was an emphasis on individual effort; if students played their own part, they were considered good. However, in New Zealand, her son learned about team work, and had opportunities to collaborate on projects with team mates, and share their successes and failures. This not only focused on academic achievement, but also brought out the potential in children. She commented:

I would say they try to explore their potentials. Not only the academic, but also... I mean he's in primary and he's doing projects in teams, so, you've got to admire how they do that. Like having the kids share their success and also when they fail. Like they're doing things together.

Apart from team building, Bianca believed that her sons developed decision-making skills after studying in New Zealand. In Hong Kong, Bianca forced her children to take different extra-curricular activities. However, after they started study in New Zealand, her children told her what they wanted to take as extra-curricular activities. She continued:

Our kids let us know what extra-curricular activities they want or not want to do....like we used to have to force them to go, but now they tell us we don't want to do this, but we want to do that. So, I think they're picking up an ability to decide ...they actually know what they enjoy.

Another parent, George, thought that New Zealand created an atmosphere that allowed children to develop their creativity. When his children were in Hong Kong,

they were afraid to speak up in front of people. However, through public speeches in New Zealand, they had started to build up their confidence. He explained:

I see that both [my kids] do very well. They are not afraid to speak in front of strangers. It builds up their confidence. They are encouraged to try different things.

Similarly, Helena commented that Western countries give children more room for creativity, to express themselves, and develop their own critical thinking:

[Education in a] foreign country allows creativity and to express themselves, their personal idea and views, and have their own and independent critical thinking.

In conclusion, some Hong Kong parents' reflections on their schooling in Hong Kong, and on their children's schooling experiences, showed that they believed Hong Kong's education system would not develop their children's whole person. Therefore, they took their children to New Zealand to study, because they felt that New Zealand's education helped children develop a wide range of skills, such as team building, decision-making, creativity, confidence, and critical thinking.

4.6 Summary

This chapter outlined and discussed the purpose of education, from the perspectives of Hong Kong parents who had chosen to take their children to New Zealand schools. Three themes and nine subthemes emerged from the interviews. Theme 1 was entitled "New Zealand as compared to other countries," and contained three subthemes: "language," "time zone," and "the visa application process." The analysis showed that some Hong Kong parents chose New Zealand for their children's education,

because it is an English speaking country, the time zone is similar to that of Hong Kong, and it was relatively easy and quick to obtain a visa. Theme 2 was entitled “different mode of education,” and contained four subthemes: “teaching approach,” “examinations and homework,” “class size and groupings,” and “teachers' roles and behaviours.”

The analysis of participant data showed that some Hong Kong parents preferred activity-based learning, less time on examinations and homework, small class teaching, and no ability grouping, as well as class teachers who were loving, caring, and encouraging. Theme 3 was entitled “children's growth and development,” under which two subthemes were identified: “childhood,” and “whole-person development.” The analysis showed that some Hong Kong parents were concerned about their children's growth and development. Overall, the findings in this chapter indicated that some Hong Kong parents took their children to study in New Zealand because they were dissatisfied with the current mainstream education and their schooling in Hong Kong. The next chapter discusses these findings in more depth.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This section outlines four major reasons for Hong Kong parents to take their children to study in New Zealand, and answers the first research question. These major reasons were:

- to receive a different mode of education (including activity-based learning, no examinations, homework, or pressure, small class teaching without ability grouping [i.e. streaming], and Western teachers)
- to play and have a real childhood
- to develop the whole person

In this research, participants talked not only about their children's education in Hong Kong, but also about their own experiences of studying in Hong Kong. From their responses, it was evident that the current mainstream education in Hong Kong and parents' past experiences of studying in Hong Kong contributed to their decisions to take their children to study in New Zealand.

5.2 A different mode of education

As mentioned in Section 1.3, the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (Census and Statistics Department, 2002, as cited in Leung, 2013) pointed out that the top three reasons for Hong Kong students to study abroad were: "to earn a distinct mode of education," "to enhance English language skills," and to enjoy a "better learning atmosphere outside Hong Kong." However, these reasons were brief and broad, and the stated reasons for making the change were vague and uninformative. For example, "to

receive a different mode of education,” and have a “better learning atmosphere outside Hong Kong” are vague, as “mode” and “better” can be interpreted in a number of ways; a clear definition was not given. These reasons did not address parents’ views and opinions on Hong Kong’s education (Ng, 2013). Therefore, the meaning of a "different mode of education" is addressed in this research.

The literature reviewed in Section 2.5 indicated that “to receive a different mode of education” was one of the major reasons many Hong Kong students chose to study outside Hong Kong. The findings in Section 4.4 elaborated on this reason. I found that many Hong Kong parents took their children to study in New Zealand because they preferred New Zealand’s education to that of Hong Kong. According to the parents, the differences between Hong Kong’s and New Zealand’s mode of education included the teaching approach, examination and homework, class size and grouping, as well as the teachers’ roles and behaviours. The parents wanted their children to enjoy activity-based learning, to have no examinations, homework or pressure, to enjoy small class teaching without ability grouping, and be taught by Western teachers. In this section, I discuss why these parents preferred New Zealand’s education to Hong Kong’s education, and therefore took their children to New Zealand for their education.

5.2.1 Activity-based learning

As discussed in Sections 2.3 and 2.4, as long as Hong Kong has had an education system, the primary purpose of education at school level, has been the transfer of knowledge. Many Hong Kong parents thought that mainstream education in Hong Kong over-emphasises factual knowledge, and students in this system merely

memorised facts about a topic or area of study without thinking critically. This kind of passive learning undermines students' interests and desire to learn (Che, 2002; Ng, 2012; Tsao, 2015). I found that Hong Kong parents took their children to study in New Zealand because they preferred activity-based learning over knowledge-based education. As discussed in Section 2.3, Lam (1999) and Lee (2010) found that many Hong Kong parents believed that children should acquire knowledge and information through activities. As also discussed in Section 2.6, Lam (1999) and Lee (2010) found that many Hong Kong parents believed that activity-based learning developed their children's curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which could make learning more memorable. Some authors (e.g. Anwer, 2019; Choo, 2007; Churchill, 2003) have shown that activity-based learning rather than lecture-based education, can help students learn different skills. Therefore, many Hong Kong parents want activity-based learning for their children. Churchill (2003) advised that activity-based learning helps children with their intellectual level, and encourages reasoning, which improves their abilities. This can be achieved by (for example) solving a problem virtually, and transferring the learned knowledge and skills to practice. Choo (2007) also advised that through activity-based learning, students can learn planning, information literacy, and knowledge application skills, as well as learn more independently, and work confidently with peers. In addition, Anwer (2019) advised that activity-based learning is a basis for creative and critical thinking skills enhancement. Such a learning approach helps students develop self-direction and boost critical thinking skills for problem solving. The spoon-feeding method however, works in reverse; it prepares students to pass examinations and accumulate a large amount of factual knowledge within a short period of time. Spoon-fed

students know that all they need to do is to take notes and memorise material in order to pass an examination with a reasonable grade (Dehler & Welsh, 2014). However, they are likely to forget what they have learned after their examination. This kind of education may cause students to lose their sense of creativity, and their understanding of the knowledge learned can be very superficial (Wang, 2014).

In Chapter 4 (see Section 4.4.1), I indicated that most participants believed that activity-based learning was beneficial for their children. Instead of pushing or forcing children, activity-based learning gives children choices and opportunities to discover something about a subject depending on their interest and motivation to learn. Children can learn at their own pace; they can look for answers and find meanings by themselves, and interact and work together with their classmates. For example, one participant mentioned that her son went on a field trip to the Stardome observatory to learn about the Earth and space. Another participant mentioned that her daughter had learned about sustainability and had started to pick up rubbish in the community. Many participants saw that their children were more engaged and active in class than they had been in Hong Kong. They had developed soft skills beyond books and classrooms, such as team building, presentation skills, and independent and critical thinking skills. They believed that their children's knowledge and vision was broadened through activity-based learning.

The literature review in Section 2.5 indicated that many Hong Kong parents were dissatisfied with the mainstream education in Hong Kong as it was examination-oriented; the findings in Section 4.4.1 support this view. In this research, all the participants were dissatisfied with Hong Kong's teaching approach (see Section 4.4.1). Indeed, it is

commonly believed that state-funded schools in Hong Kong are likely to spoon-feed children. Parents there tend to believe that Hong Kong's education has a set syllabus and materials to give children a wide range of knowledge, but does not give students many opportunities to explore and experience themselves. Although one participant believed that acquiring knowledge was an advantage for building a foundation for other learning, this teaching approach was not appreciated by other participants. One described this approach as "boring, very boring" repeatedly throughout the interview, and another believed that knowledge-based learning failed to develop students' soft skills, such as interpersonal skills. Some participants questioned whether it was necessary to feed students knowledge in the 21st century, because so much information can be found online, so it is not necessary to memorise facts. Many had already forgotten most of the knowledge they had learned at school, and found that the knowledge they had gained was useless after graduation. Participants considered this teaching approach limited students' learning and "feeds students with pre-defined knowledge." They felt the Hong Kong education system tried to "fit students in a mould," and did not develop skills for beyond the classroom. They also felt that the Hong Kong education system provided students with a wide range of knowledge and made sure they memorised facts to pass examinations (see Section 4.4.1).

As discussed in Section 4.4.1, one participant recalled that when she was at school in Hong Kong, she took a lot of notes, and her teacher asked her to memorise all the notes for her examination. She believed that Hong Kong's education spoon-fed students and she found her experience unpleasant. This showed how her construction of reality was shaped by her prior schooling in Hong Kong. Another participant recounted that when

she was studying in Hong Kong, she had learned different terms in her science class, such as “carbon dioxide” and “H₂O,” and tried hard to memorise these terms so she could be successful in her examination. However, she did not know the meanings of these terms. She believed that Hong Kong’s education forced students to memorise facts and be successful in examinations, but many students just remembered the facts for the sake of the examination. Her experiences may have shaped and informed her decisions about her children’s schooling. Another participant mentioned that his schooling was “boring, very boring”; there were no activities, such as sports days or swimming galas when he was at school. Students in Hong Kong had no social life. This indicated how his construction of reality was created by his prior education in Hong Kong. Participants’ dissatisfaction with Hong Kong’s education played a role in why they preferred the activity-based learning in New Zealand over the spoon-feeding method of education in Hong Kong (see Section 4.4.1).

5.2.2 No examinations, homework, or pressure

As mentioned in Section 2.3, since Hong Kong’s formal education system had started in 1978, mainstream education had placed a heavy emphasis on examinations and traditional lecture-based instruction methods. At the time of this research, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) was an integral part of mainstream education in Hong Kong (Chong et al., 2010; Hon-Keung et al., 2012; Yuen-Yee & Watkins, 1994). The Hong Kong SAR Government stated in 2011 that:

Assessment is an integral part of the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment cycle. It involves collecting evidence about student learning, interpreting information and making judgements about students’ performance with a view to providing

feedback to students, teachers, schools, parents, other stakeholders and to the education system. (Berry, 2011, p. 206)

To enhance students' academic performance, homework is often used as a tool for intensive drilling and practice (Tam & Chan, 2011). *Homework* consists of “written and non-written tasks assigned by school-teachers that are intended to be carried out outside the school” (Tam & Chan, 2011, p. 569). Many Chinese students spend a great deal of time on their homework each day (Tam, 2009), and the heavy load of examinations and homework creates a lot of pressure for them (Tam & Chan, 2010). Ng (2012) found that many Hong Kong parents believed that mainstream education placed a heavy emphasis on examinations. The *Thematic household survey report no. 9* (Census and Statistics Department, 2002, as cited in Leung, 2013) also showed that many Hong Kong parents send their children to schools outside Hong Kong because they consider there is “too much pressure/ too many assignments” there. Hence, it was not surprising to find a similar finding in this research. However, as the wording around this issue has generally been vague and uninformative in the literature, it is clarified here.

I found that some Hong Kong parents took their children to study in New Zealand because they wanted stressless education, that is, one that does not require examinations or homework (see Section 4.4.2). In Hong Kong, examinations are a crucial part of education and have the role of assessing “student learning, interpreting information and making judgements about students' performance” (Berry, 2011, p. 199). Hong Kong's education system is regarded as examination-oriented with an over emphasis on academic learning. The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) is an integral part of

mainstream education (Chong et al., 2010; Hon-Keung et al., 2012; Yuen-Yee & Watkins, 1994). Even though the Hong Kong Government claimed to implement a series of education reforms to minimise the importance of examinations and memorisation, my research shows that some Hong Kong parents express criticism of this, believing that the Hong Kong Government was either lying or failing to turn their words into actions. Instead of having examinations and memorisation minimised, most participants perceived these were dominating Hong Kong's education system. They believed that Hong Kong's education gave students excessive amounts of quizzes, tests, and examinations, and as students were required to give exact answers to questions, they were perceived as being trained for examination, with no creativity, independent and critical thinking, or the opportunity to express themselves. One participant mentioned that in Hong Kong, students were encouraged to "memorise and recite," transferring what is written in a textbook to their examination scripts. They did not need to have any understanding of the knowledge, but just needed to memorise, write the model answer, and pass their examinations, in order to be a good student. Many Chinese students spend a great deal of time on their homework each day (Tam, 2009), and the heavy load of examinations and homework creates a great deal of pressure for them (Tam & Chan, 2010). This is consistent with studies (e.g. Census and Statistics Department, 2002, as cited in Leung, 2013) that claim many Hong Kong parents send their children to study abroad because they consider there is "too much pressure/ too many assignments" in Hong Kong (p. 17). The findings in Section 4.4.2 indicated that most participants believed that Hong Kong's education required students to take many examinations and undertake a great deal of homework.

Some participants perceived that students had a lot of homework in Hong Kong, and most could not complete it until late at night. They also needed to spend their weekends completing homework, so participants needed to spend time after work and in the weekends, helping their children with their studies. Apart from examinations, students had regular dictation to check their spelling, as well as quizzes and tests, so they needed to work hard and spend time preparing for assessments. Participants were concerned that examinations and homework put them and their children under a lot of pressure. One participant pointed out that this pressure reduced children's interest in learning and studying, and many participants explained that their children did not enjoy going to school in Hong Kong. Therefore, as the participants did not want this kind of life for them or their children, many considered taking their children to study in New Zealand as a solution (see Section 4.4.2). As a Hong Konger educated in Hong Kong, I know how stressful it is studying in Hong Kong with the excessive homework and examinations, which is one of the reasons I decided to study in New Zealand. My experience is consistent with the findings of the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2018), that suggested that Hong Kong students face a lot of pressure because of their heavy homework burden. Such pressure can lead to mental illnesses, such as depression. In 2012 and 2013, suicides among Hong Kong students accounted for a quarter of unnatural deaths, and one in three Hong Kong primary school students consider committing suicide (UNICEF, 2018).

Excessive amounts of homework and examinations were familiar to participants. During the interviews, some recounted their school days in Hong Kong, and the only thing one participant remembered was that when she was at school, she was given a lot of

homework. Another participant mentioned that he had even more homework than did his children, when they were in Hong Kong. Another explained that he took his children to New Zealand to study, because he did not want his children to grow up and study in Hong Kong with so much homework and the emphasis on examinations. Their responses indicated how their constructions of reality were shaped by their prior experiences of studying in Hong Kong (see Section 4.4.2).

According to the parents I interviewed, the situation in New Zealand is entirely different. Almost all participants said there was “no examinations,” “no homework,” and “no pressure” in New Zealand. They believed that New Zealand’s education was much more relaxed and not as competitive as that in Hong Kong. They believed that without homework and examinations, students could learn happily and enjoy learning without pressure. Many participants pointed out that their children loved going to school in New Zealand and that they could enjoy more quality time with their children there (see Section 4.4.2).

As discussed in Section 2.7, Berry (2011) explained that unlike Hong Kong, New Zealand schools tended to use assessments for learning (Afl) rather than external high stakes examinations to assess students. *Assessments for learning* are “assessments undertaken by teachers throughout instruction in order to diagnose students’ problems, plan next steps in teaching, and provide them with feedback to improve the learning process” (Nasr et al., 2019, p. 3). In New Zealand schools, there is a universal set of standards for literacy and numeracy skills. However, instead of using a national examination to assess students, teachers are expected to make judgements on students’ performances based on multiple

sources of evidence collected within the context of classroom learning and assessment. Teachers are required to gather and use evidence using a wide range of formal and informal measures. For example, they may ask students to prepare portfolios or projects, undertake role plays, or make demonstrations or presentations (Yu, 2009). Although some might argue that students might not take learning seriously without an examination, Afl gives students less pressure anxiety, tension, and stress, than do examinations, so students engage more actively in their learning (Yu, 2009).

Even though almost all participants appreciated New Zealand's education for having "no examinations," "no homework," and "no pressure," one participant tried to give her children supplementary exercises, as she did not want them to forget their Chinese or fall behind in mathematics. Another participant mentioned that she was still trying to grasp the concept of having fun and learning at the same time. She believed that having no examinations, homework, or pressure, bothered her sometimes, but considered that this was because of the way she was brought up in Hong Kong. This showed how her construction of reality was shaped by her prior experiences in Hong Kong. She was trying to change her mindset, but most participants appreciated New Zealand's education system because there were no examinations or homework. Most importantly, according to this participant, the New Zealand approach released participants and their children from pressure.

5.2.3 Small class teaching without ability grouping

As Leung (2013) found that many parents who had chosen overseas schooling for their children wanted small class teaching, it was not surprising to find this as a

subtheme in the analysis. However, ability grouping was not mentioned in previous research. *Small-class teaching* refers to a system in which schools

reduce the unit numbers of classes, that is reducing class size, increasing the proportion of teachers and students, which makes the teacher put more effort for each student, thereby effectively improving the quality of education and student achievement. (Tang & Wu, 2013, p. 473)

In Hong Kong, small class teaching was introduced in 2010 as a way “to enhance the quality of teaching and learning” (Tsang, 2007, para. 9). A member of the Hong Kong SAR Government stated:

I have pledged to implement small class teaching in my Election Platform. Starting from the 2009-10 school year, small class teaching will be implemented in Primary One of suitable public primary schools by phases. By the 2014-2015 school year, this initiative will be extended to all classes from Primary One to Primary Six. (Tsang, 2007, para. 9)

According to Leung (2013), with the implementation of small class teaching, the average class size reduced from 35.2 students and 36.9 students in 2004, to 29.8 students and 35.2 students in 2009, in primary and secondary schools respectively (see

Table 9). Despite the reductions in class sizes however, the class sizes in Hong Kong schools were still large in comparison to those in New Zealand. In New Zealand, most students are in a class size of 26 to 30 (54%) or 21 to 25 (31%) (Caygill & Sok, 2008) (see Table 10).

Table 9. *Average Class Size in Hong Kong Public Primary and Secondary Schools from 2004 to 2009*

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Public primary schools	35.5	32.4	32.2	31.7	30.9	29.8
Public secondary schools	36.9	36.8	36.7	36.6	36.0	35.2

Source: Leung (2013)

Table 10. *Proportion of Students in Each Class Size Band in New Zealand*

Proportion of students in schools with an average class size of:					
15 or less	16 to 20	21 to 25	26 to 30	31 to 35	36 or more
2	7	31	54	2	0

Source: Caygill and Sok (2008)

This research found that some participants were dissatisfied with the large class sizes in Hong Kong, resonating with the research by Leung (2013) discussed earlier. Leung (2013) found that many parents preferred small classes because they believed that these could encourage student engagement, interaction between students and teachers, and enable more time for instruction and less on discipline. Large classes however, made it difficult for students to engage and interact with teachers and their classmates. Small class teaching and no ability groupings were two reasons some Hong Kong parents took their children to study abroad. Both the literature reviews in Section 2.5, and the findings in Section 4.1.1, indicated that many Hong Kong parents preferred their children to be taught in a small class and not to be grouped by ability, because they considered large class sizes and ability groupings disadvantaged students.

Although the Hong Kong SAR Government tried to reduce class sizes and increase the proportion of teachers to students in Hong Kong, class sizes in Hong Kong have still been reported as being large in comparison to those in New Zealand (Leung, 2013). Participants reported that classrooms were crowded in Hong Kong, with about 40 students in a class. The teacher to student ratio there was very high (see Section 4.4.3). One participant recalled that there were about 47 students in a class when she was in school (see Section 4.4.3), demonstrating how her construction of reality was influenced by her prior schooling. The disadvantages of large class sizes were mentioned in a study by Ayeni and Olowe (2016), that focused on the negative impacts of large class size on effective teaching and learning. In terms of teaching, large classes can cause “poor classroom management, ineffective students’ control, poor planning and assessment and increase strain on teachers” (Ayeni & Olowe, 2016, p. 68). A large class can also encourage disruptive behaviour amongst students, frustrating teachers and affecting their health. In terms of learning, large class sizes can negatively affect students’ academic achievement, and when a disruptive student interferes with the class, the whole class is affected. Moreover, some students may not be motivated to attend school in a large class. Although participants did not mention the benefits of small class teaching, its benefits seemed to be in their minds. Deutsch (2003, p. 35) reported that small class teaching “promotes student engagement, enriched curricula, positive teacher-student interaction, increased time on instruction.” Small classes help teachers cater to the learning differences of students in a classroom. And it is believed that student achievement can be fostered through small class teaching (Lam, 2016).

Apart from small class sizes, participants also appreciated that New Zealand schools did not group students according to their ability. *Ability grouping* refers to “the practice by schools, teachers, or education authorities of purposely grouping students into classes and schools on the basis of their ability” (Cheung & Rudowicz, 2003, p. 241). Interestingly, this topic has not been discussed in the literature. In Hong Kong, the Government allocates students from the same school zone to different secondary schools within the district, based on the students’ Primary 6 results through the Central Allocation System (CAS) (Poon & Wong, 2008). Schools also group students with similar academic results together, and assign the best teachers to high achieving students (Ming & Walker, 2007). New Zealand is not as competitive as is Hong Kong. Participants reported that in Hong Kong, students were allocated classes based on their academic results. Many schools put their best resources into the high achieving classes and ignored students in low achieving classes. Participants believed that ability grouping discouraged children from learning and was unfair. They pointed out that Hong Kong’s education catered only to talented students or those who performed well academically, ignoring students who did not fit the system. They believed that schools should not give up on students who were not performing well academically (see Section 4.1.1). Some participants recounted their experience under the education system in Hong Kong. One participant pointed out that he did not perform well in primary school, and was placed in a low decile secondary school in Hong Kong. He was also assigned to a class with low achieving students. He explained that his school put all the resources in high achieving classes and simply ignored his class. He found the system unfair and disadvantaged students. Another participant also believed that she went to school to achieve a score or mark, and to be

ranked. She did not go to school to learn. She wanted her sons to study in New Zealand because she wanted them to enjoy learning. Participants' responses indicated how their constructions of reality were shaped by their past experiences of studying in Hong Kong (see Section 4.1.1).

The disadvantages of ability grouping on students were emphasised by Braddock and Slavin (1992). Firstly, in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies, low achieving students grouped by ability were found to perform significantly less well, than did low achieving students who were not grouped by ability. High achieving and average students did not benefit from ability grouping. Secondly, low achieving students grouped by ability were less likely to progress to university than were low achieving students not grouped by ability. Thirdly, low achieving students grouped by ability had lower self-esteem than had low achieving students not grouped by ability. This study found no positive effects of ability grouping on high achieving or average students. According to my participants, small class teaching and no ability grouping drove the Hong Kong parents' desires to send their children to New Zealand (see Braddock & Slavin, 1992).

5.2.4 Teaching by Western teachers

Some Hong Kong parents took their children to New Zealand to study because they preferred the teachers in New Zealand over those in Hong Kong. The responses of participants in Section 4.4.4 identified a number of differences between the two education approaches, such as the teachers' roles and behaviours. Two participants reported that Hong Kong usually had subject teachers, whereby a different teacher was used for each subject, whereas New Zealand usually had home-room teachers who taught more than

one subject. Two participants preferred home-room teachers over subject teachers because home-room teachers knew more about their children, and thus bonded better with them. Popper-Giveon and Shayshon (2017) identified the two main types of teachers: subject teachers and home-room teachers. The main responsibility of a subject teacher is to teach a specific subject, whereas a home-room teacher is in charge of organisational, educational, social, and administrative duties in relation to the students in the class. Popper-Giveon and Shaysdon (2017) reported that subject teachers tended to be demotivated and disheartened. Their study showed that they focused mainly on teaching and did not have much opportunity to establish meaningful relationships with their students. In contrast, home-room teachers usually had a stronger bond with their students, as they spent more time with the students and addressed all aspects of their education. In Section 4.4.4, it was noted that about half of the participants considered that Hong Kong teachers were strict and discouraged students, while in New Zealand, teachers appeared to be more loving, caring, and encouraging. One participant described Hong Kong teachers as “rigid,” and participants thought that Hong Kong teachers had a set of rules for children to follow. Teachers there were perceived as focusing mainly on disciplining students and training them to be obedient, using instructions such as “you cannot do this, you cannot do that.” (see Section 4.4.4).

The teachers in Hong Kong also had a set of answers for assessments. They marked examination papers and homework according to suggested answers and marking schemes and did not allow alternative answers. Participants believed that this limited children’s development and could destroy their creativity and desire to learn. One participant reported that his Hong Kong teacher threatened him with a metre long ruler for speaking

loudly in class, while two described New Zealand teachers as “loving and caring.” The participants’ experiences may have shaped and informed their decisions about their children’s schooling. Two participants reported that New Zealand teachers respected their children’s learning pace and style and were very encouraging, and one also mentioned that there was less of a hierarchical relationship between teachers and students in New Zealand; students were allowed to call teachers by their names, and teachers used endearments with their students, such as “darling” and “honey.” Teachers in New Zealand also allowed children to make mistakes and did not correct these, to encourage them to continue learning. They allowed open discussion and gave little interference. In addition, New Zealand teachers put a lot of effort into bringing the potential out of children (see Section 4.4.4).

The differences between teachers in the East and West were mentioned in a study by Jiang et al. (2021), that focused on teachers' behaviours and motivational beliefs. When giving students feedback, teachers in the East tended to focus more on the perceived usefulness of learning for students' future studies and career, but teachers in the West tended to provide more feedback on the extent to which students performed well in a task. Moreover, it was found that Asian teachers were stricter than Western teachers. This difference in strictness could be caused by social and cultural differences in interpreting teachers' roles and expectations. That is, Eastern societies value obedience to people with power and authority, and compliance with group interests, whereas there is less power and hierarchy in Western societies. Consequently, individual thinking, interests, and differences are often valued and appreciated more in the West. Jiang et al. (2021) found that in Asian cultures, teachers were expected to be a role model for students to help them

realise their good natures and emulate their teachers. A good teacher is expected to influence and strictly control students' learning, and good students are expected to respect and obey their teachers. In contrast, in Western cultures, a good teacher should not just pass on knowledge to students, but rather investigate and explore topics with them, and good students should have their own thoughts and ideas, and express their points of view. Teachers can adjust their views through discussion, but a good teacher should treat each student as a unique individual, and value autonomy, freedom, and choice. Because of the difference between Eastern and Western cultures, Western education tends to be more student-centred, whereas Eastern education tends to be teacher-directed (Jiang et al., 2021). As participants in this research favoured teachers in the West over those in the East, this was considered a motivation for sending children to New Zealand for their education.

5.3 Play, and a real childhood

As some scholars (e.g. Leung, 2013; Ng, 2012) have focused their research on secondary and tertiary education, the importance of research on childhood is often ignored. *Childhood* refers to "the whole span of life from birth to adolescence" (Bowlby, 1960, p. 12). During childhood, children should have no financial or moral responsibilities, and instead of working, they should be playing (Wyness, 2019). As mentioned in Section 2.6, many Hong Kong parents believed that learning should be fun and enjoyable, and children should learn through different kinds of play (Lam, 1999; Lee, 2010). Some Hong Kong parents take their children to study in New Zealand because they want their children to play and have a real childhood. In this research, there were five pairs of Hong Kong

parents who took their children to study in New Zealand. All their children were in primary school at the time of the research. The findings in Section 4.5.1 showed that participants wanted their children to play and have what they called a “real childhood.” They believed that this was possible in New Zealand, but not in Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, children were very busy with examination preparation and homework, as well as extra-curricular activities. They had a full schedule, not only on week days, but also on weekends, with no spare time, or time to play. One participant described Hong Kong students as “busy fools” in a “rat race,” who constantly keep doing things without really knowing why they are doing them. Another pointed out that Hong Kong was densely populated, so the schools there were not as spacious as those in New Zealand. In Hong Kong, students sat in the classroom for most of their time at school, and had little space for play. Some participants talked about their school days in Hong Kong. One participant mentioned that her high school years were very stressful. She needed to balance her time between academic studies and extra-curricular activities, such as piano and drawing classes. She did not have any time to play and enjoy her childhood. Another mentioned that when she was at school, she did not have much time to play. She stressed that having time to play and enjoy childhood is crucial for children’s development. She believed that playing was part of the “normal development of a child” and in the “nature of children.” These two participants’ experiences showed how their constructions of reality were affected by their former education in Hong Kong.

Playing is a part of learning, and children can learn happily while playing. The importance of play in children’s development has been emphasised by many researchers (e.g.

Anderson-McNamee & Bailey, 2010; Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2008; Smith, 2013). Smith (2013) argued that being able to play is a right of children, and a key part of their physical, intellectual, and social development. There are various benefits of playing. First, play helps children to learn and build the skills that lay the foundation for developing literacy and numeracy skills. Second, play gives children opportunities to socialise with their peers and learn to understand, communicate, and negotiate with them. Third, play encourages children to learn, use their imagination, categorise, and solve problems, and finally, play offers children the chance to express themselves, including their problems (e.g. stress, trauma, family conflicts, and other dilemmas) (Smith, 2013). Similarly, Anderson-McNamee and Bailey (2010) argued that play is crucial for children's development. When playing, children can learn to socialise, think, solve problems, and mature (Anderson-McNamee & Bailey, 2010). Play allows children to imitate adult behaviours, practise motor skills, process emotional events, and learn about the world around them (Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2008). According to my participants, parents who valued playing as a part of children's development wanted to take their children to study in New Zealand, so that they could play and enjoy a real childhood.

5.4 Whole-person development

Whole-person development refers to the development of "the entire person, psychologically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually" (Carter, 2019, p. 155). As discussed in Section 2.4, in 2000, the Hong Kong SAR Government reversed major educational reforms, with the expressed aim of enhancing students' all-round

development with whole-person education, and lifelong and life-wide learning. The Hong Kong SAR Government stated:

The school curriculum should provide all students with essential life-long learning experiences for whole-person development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physical development, social skills and aesthetics, according to individual potential, so that all students can become active, responsible and contributing members of society, the nation and the world. (Curriculum Development Council, 2001, p. 2)

This reform aimed at the academic, personal, social, and emotional development of students. For example, school subjects were not compartmentalised any more, but categorised into eight key learning areas: Chinese language, English language, mathematics, personal, social, and humanities subjects, science, technology, art, and physical education. Schools were asked to develop students' generic skills, such as communication, critical thinking, collaboration, information technology, numeracy, problem solving, self-management, and study skills. However, academic knowledge was still the primary focus of education in Hong Kong (Sivan & Po Kwan Siu, 2018).

The literature shows that many Hong Kong parents send their children to study overseas because they believe that a foreign education can develop a student's whole person, as arts subjects are largely marginalised in Hong Kong schools. For example, Chinese language, English language, mathematics, and liberal studies, are the four compulsory subjects in the HKDSE, and even though music and visual arts were included in the list of elective subjects, they were not offered by most schools in Hong Kong (Leung, 2013). Tsao (2015) and Leung (2013) found that many Hong Kong parents sent their children to study overseas, believing that Hong Kong's education was failing to develop the students'

whole person. Their participants believed that students did not have the time or space to develop in areas other than in academic subjects, and that aesthetic development was crucial for their children. They also wanted children to have the opportunity to study arts subjects, so their talents could be discovered and nurtured. Hence, the findings in this research were not surprising, and particularly revealed the wide range of skills that students were able to develop in New Zealand.

Many Hong Kong parents' decisions to take their children to study in New Zealand were affected by their views on the purpose of education. The findings in Section 4.5.2 showed that participants believed that the purpose of education was to develop the whole person. Participants tended to believe that Hong Kong's education put a heavy emphasis on academic knowledge, and that students were fed with a wide range of knowledge and trained for examination. Students were seen as bounded by a set of rules and model answers, with no room for critical thinking, imagination, or creativity, which discouraged them from learning.

Some parents recounted their former education in Hong Kong. For example, one participant pointed out that he did not have opportunities to participate in activities other than taking academic classes, such as maths, Chinese, English, geography, physics, chemistry, and biology. Another participant pointed out that she did not have many extra-curricular activities when she was at school, as her school focused mainly on academic studies. These parents' responses showed how their constructions of reality were impacted by their education.

Some participants perceived activity-based learning as an essential component of

developing the whole person. Consistent with the research by Lee (2010), participants in this research believed that children should have artistic activities and natural and outdoor spaces to explore. Instead of just focusing on academic knowledge, and sitting in a classroom for long periods every day, they should be able to get involved in different kinds of activities. Different activities would develop children with a wide range of skills, such as team building, decision-making, creativity, confidence, and critical thinking. Children should not be forced to do certain things in certain ways. By taking part in different kinds of activities, they can learn a variety of things and have a broad range of knowledge. Children should be able to explore and identify their own interests and strengths, and by not being corrected, they are more able to learn from their mistakes. Learning at their own pace enables students to reach their potential. Two participants pointed out that it was important for schools and teachers to understand students as individuals and accept differences among them, so they could develop each child as a whole person. They believed that not all students were academic, but had different learning paths. Some students learned quickly, while others needed more time; some were good at one thing, whereas others excelled in different areas. They considered it was important for schools and teachers to give students space to learn, explore, and reach their potential, so that they could become well-rounded individuals. For example, one participant mentioned that his son did not have any exposure to different activities when he was studying in Hong Kong, but developed artistic interests and abilities after studying in New Zealand.

The findings on the purpose of education in Section 4.5.2 supported Patterson's

(2014) standpoint that whole-person development is crucial for students. Students should develop a range of skills at school, such as "social development skills, awareness of self and others, flexibility and creativity, communication and cooperation skills, skills in meeting deadlines, balancing academic and personal lives, and forming and maintaining friendships" (Patterson, 2014, pp. 6-7). These social and emotional skills are key to children's future success, as they not only enhance their ability to learn, but can also improve their academic performance. Many teachers in New Zealand believed that whole-person development was the educational priority of the 21st century. They wanted students to have life skills that prepared them for the future, and emphasised social and emotional support. They believed that schools should expose students to a range of challenges, and prepare students "not only to pass the test at school but to pass the tests of life" (Patterson, 2014, p. 60).

Although the Hong Kong SAR Government tried to enhance students' holistic development with whole-person education, and lifelong, life-wide learning through a series of education reforms, many participants appeared to believe that Hong Kong's education system failed to develop the whole person (see Section 4.2.2). This problem was also mentioned by Lam (1999) and Lee (2010), who examined Hong Kong parents' views on the purpose of education. Many Hong Kong parents sent their children to study overseas, believing that Hong Kong's education was failing to develop the student's whole person. They considered that students lacked the time and space to develop in areas other than in academic subjects, and believed that aesthetic development was crucial. They also believed that students should be

able to study arts subjects, so their talents could be discovered and nurtured (Leung, 2013; Tsao, 2015). In the current research, participants tended to believe that students did not have the opportunities to be exposed to different activities in Hong Kong, and believed that Hong Kong's education did not allow for differences among students, but tried to fit all students to a mould. One participant explained that it was difficult for the Hong Kong Government to promote whole-person development, as society in Hong Kong valued and emphasised academic knowledge. Another participant pointed out that in Hong Kong, if students did not perform well academically and earn a qualification, their job opportunities were limited. Many people who did not perform well academically, worked in poorly paid jobs or could not find work. Therefore, participants believed that Hong Kong's education system trained students for examinations and prepared them for their future employment, rather than motivating them to learn about what interests them or discover their potential (see Section 4.2.2).

5.5 Summary

This chapter responded to the research questions in this study by comparing the findings from the previous chapter with those in the literature. Many Hong Kong parents chose to take their children to New Zealand to study because they wanted a different mode of education with activity-based learning, no examinations, homework, or pressure, small class teaching without ability grouping (i.e. streaming), and Western teachers. They wanted their children to play and have what they termed "a real childhood." They wanted to develop their children's whole person. As some parents talked not only about their

children's schooling in Hong Kong, but also about their past experiences of studying in Hong Kong, this indicated how their constructions of reality were shaped by their children's and their own schooling in Hong Kong. Although the Hong Kong Government tried to develop students' whole person through a series of education reforms, some parents believed that spoon-feeding was still the main focus of Hong Kong's education system. Unlike the Hong Kong Government, Hong Kong parents in this research seemed to have no interest in increasing their knowledge of China and strengthening their sense of national identity. However, both the Government and parents tended to believe that it was important to minimise the importance of examinations and memorisation in education. They also tended to believe that it was important to develop a wide and balanced curriculum to build students' diverse talents and discover their potential. Although the Hong Kong Government tried to implement policies reflecting these views, it seems it is very difficult to change. The final chapter synthesises the findings, reviews the research objectives and research questions, explains the significance and implications of this research, and considers possibilities for future research on Hong Kong parents who send their children to study in New Zealand.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations arising from this research. First, the reasons many Hong Kong parents seek schools outside the mainstream and send their children to overseas schools, especially those in New Zealand, are presented. Then, the significance of the research and its limitations are discussed. Lastly, recommendations for future research are offered. The research findings had three themes and nine subthemes, which were discussed in Chapter 5. Theme 1 focused on New Zealand as compared to other countries, and identified the following subthemes: language, time zone, and visa application process. Theme 2 focused on different modes of education and identified the following subthemes: teaching approach, examination and homework, class size and grouping, and teachers' role and behaviours. Theme 3 focused on children's growth and development and identified the following subthemes: childhood and whole-person development.

6.2 Answering the research questions

There were four major reasons informing Hong Kong parents' decisions to take their children to study in New Zealand. First, it was to receive a different mode of education (including activity-based learning, no examinations, homework, or pressure, small class teaching without ability grouping [i.e. streaming], and Western teachers). Second, it was so their children could play and have a real childhood. Lastly, they wanted to develop their children's whole person. That is, they wanted their children to develop a wide range of skills and be all-rounded, rather than just focusing on academic achievements. Even

though the Hong Kong Government had tried to develop students' whole person through a series of education reforms, parents believed that the transfer of knowledge was still the focus of Hong Kong's education system. Unlike the Hong Kong Government, Hong Kong parents seemed to have no interest in increasing their knowledge of China and strengthening their sense of national identity. However, both the Government and parents tended to believe that it was important to minimise the importance of examinations and memorisation in education. They also tended to believe that it was important to develop a wide and balanced curriculum to build students' diverse talents and discover their potential. Although the Hong Kong Government had tried to implement policies reflecting these views, it seems it is very difficult to change.

6.3 Significance of the research

This research found three major reasons for Hong Kong parents to decide to take their children to New Zealand for schooling. Social constructionism helped to make sense of, or frame, how the Hong Kong parents developed their views. This study found that the parents' understanding of their children's experiences and their own schooling experience may influence decisions they make for their children. According to social constructionism, the social world influences the thoughts or actions of individuals. Shared realities do not exist inherently or naturally, but are created and maintained by particular social groups or society. I found that the Hong Kong parents' views were socially constructed. Their views were constructed not only through social interactions with others, but also by the social settings in which they encountered others. Parents interviewed for this study on the purposes of education were not only influenced by their

children's experiences of studying in mainstream schools in Hong Kong, but also by their own past experiences of studying in mainstream schools in Hong Kong. During the interviews, many parents recalled their children's and their own experiences in Hong Kong. These parents did not want their children to suffer under Hong Kong's education approach as they had suffered, so took their children to study in New Zealand as a solution.

This research identified three reasons that contributed to Hong Kong parents taking their children to study in New Zealand. First, parents wanted their children to receive a different mode of education (such as activity-based learning, no examinations, homework, or pressure, small class teaching without ability grouping [i.e. streaming], and teaching by Western teachers). Second, they wanted their children to play and have a real childhood, and third, they wanted to develop their children's whole person. That is, they wanted them to develop different skills and be well rounded individuals, rather than just focused on academic achievement. These findings offer explanations for why Hong Kong parents seek schools outside the mainstream, and send their children to study abroad. After colonial rule, many Hong Kong parents sought education opportunities outside the mainstream education system for their children. The phenomenon of Hong Kong parents sending their children to New Zealand schools, suggests that these parents are dissatisfied with the current mainstream education in Hong Kong. This research analysed data from a small sample of parents who gave their perspectives on why they took their children to New Zealand to study, and identified some influences on the parents' decisions to do this. The findings showed that although the Hong Kong Government tried to reform the curriculum and assessment structure in Hong Kong, some Hong Kong parents still

believed that the education system heavily emphasised examinations and rote learning. This research sought to build on previous research (see Leung, 2013; Census and Statistics Department, 2002, as cited in Leung, 2013) to provide more in-depth findings and insights into why Hong Kong parents want to send their children to study abroad, especially to New Zealand. It also sought to investigate the reasons Hong Kong parents send their primary-aged children to study abroad in New Zealand, as this context had not been studied previously. It also clarified what is meant by “different mode of education” and a “better learning atmosphere outside Hong Kong.”

This research found that the parents interviewed about their views on the purposes of education gave responses that were similar to those in previous research. That is, they sent their children to study abroad because they valued arts subjects, desired an English-medium education, small class teaching, and whole-person development. However, a significant aspect of this research was that parents highlighted that they wanted their children to study in New Zealand so that they could enjoy a “real childhood.” They believed that Hong Kong’s education put too much emphasis on homework and examinations, which they considered unhealthy for their children’s development. They believed that children should have opportunities to play and grow at their own pace. Another significant aspect of this research was that the parents highlighted that they did not want their children to be grouped by ability. They believed that ability grouping was an unfair system and discouraged students from learning. These research findings will be useful for future studies. As noted earlier, most research has focused on international student mobility for tertiary education. As there is little research on international student mobility for primary and secondary education (Leung, 2007; Waters, 2006), this research

is significant in terms of adding to the knowledge of international student mobility beyond the case of Hong Kong students studying in New Zealand.

6.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

This research has three limitations. Firstly, the sample was very small. Only five pairs of Hong Kong parents who took their children to study in New Zealand were included. However, this is a common limitation of qualitative studies. Many scholars conduct qualitative research because it enables them to explore people's in-depth lived experience within the world, and gives "a rich description and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of interest, the cultural or lived experience of people in natural settings" (Magilvy, 2003, p. 123).

Secondly, as the interviews were conducted in pairs, rather than individually, one partner sometimes dominated the other. In my interviews, the fathers usually offered more views and opinions than did the mothers. This suggested that they may have influenced decisions they made for their children. Thirdly, as this research recruited parents as pairs rather than lone parents who had come to New Zealand so that their children could enjoy New Zealand's education, all parents who participated in this research had children in primary schools; none had children in secondary or tertiary education. As only Hong Kong parents with children studying in primary schools in New Zealand were involved, this research might not adequately reflect the reasons for Hong Kong parents to send their children to secondary schools and tertiary education institutes in New Zealand.

In light of the findings, conclusions, and limitations discussed in this section, recommendations can be made for future studies. This research involved interviews with

a small number of parents, who might not have represented the views of other parents. Hence, it is recommended that future qualitative research should include more participants. Hong Kong parents who send their children to study at different educational levels could also be included, such as those with children at primary, secondary, and tertiary education institutes. Moreover, this research did not interview participants' children, and thus was unable to gather their views. It is recommended that future research could:

1. Include the views of Hong Kong students who come to study in New Zealand, because children's views might influence the parents' decisions to send them to study in New Zealand.
2. Explore more deeply, the parents' choice to migrate rather than send their children to international schools in Hong Kong. Is it possible for children to access a different mode of education, enjoy opportunities to play, and develop their whole-person by attending international schools in Hong Kong?
3. As noted in the literature review (e.g., Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010), many Hong Kong parents consider mainstream education as propaganda, brainwashing students with communist beliefs and "ignoring political controversies" (Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010, p. 439). Future research could pay more attention to the recent political developments in Hong Kong society and education. Do Hong Kong parents take their children to study in New Zealand because of their concerns over the mainstream education in Hong Kong?

In summary, this research identified four major reasons for Hong Kong parents to take their children to study in New Zealand.

1. Hong Kong parents wanted their children to study in New Zealand because they wanted their children to receive a different mode of education (including activity-based learning, no examinations, homework, or pressure, small class teaching without ability grouping [i.e. streaming], and Western teachers).
2. They wanted their children to play and have a real childhood.
3. They wanted an education that would develop their children's whole person.
4. They wanted an opportunity to migrate to New Zealand.

These reasons were influenced not only by parents' views on their children's schooling, but also by their past experiences of studying in Hong Kong. These reasons show that although the Hong Kong Government tried to reform the curriculum and assessment structure in Hong Kong, some Hong Kong parents still think that the education system focuses on examinations and rote learning.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics approval



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology

D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ

T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316

E: ethics@aut.ac.nz

www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

11 December 2020

Ruth Boyask

Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Ruth

Re: Ethics Application: **20/333 An analysis of the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand**

Thank you for your responses to the conditions for the amendments to your ethics application.

The amendments to the recruitment and data collection protocols has been approved.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Addition of a final step in the escalation plan that includes alerting the police if your close contacts cannot find you.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

I remind you of the **Standard Conditions of Approval**.

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

AUTC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted. When the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all ethical, legal, and locality obligations or requirements for those jurisdictions.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: hiuchingzoeeee@gmail.com

Appendix B: Research tools

Appendix B.a Questions

Interview Schedule for Participants

Project Title: An analysis of the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand

Project Supervisor: Ruth Boyask

Researcher: Hiu Ching (Zoe) Au

Interview Time: TBC

Interview Venue: AUT City Campus (see map)

A. Opening

Introduction, explain the purpose of this research, remind participants of the potential risks and how their privacy is well protected, format of the interview.

B. Basic Information

1. How long have your family been living in New Zealand?
2. Do your family enjoy your experience so far?
3. Why do you send your children to study abroad especially in New Zealand?
4. Why don't you choose other countries?

C. Current education in New Zealand

1. Before you came, what did you expect from New Zealand's education?

2. So your son/ daughter is currently attending _____ (School Name) in New Zealand?

3. Why did you choose this school?

4. How do you find about the education in New Zealand?

Let me show the two of you the school vision/ motto, the curriculum or subjects offered at _____ (School Name) and a photo of New Zealand students taking their classes in a classroom.

Let me show the two of you the New Zealand government's objectives stated in the New Zealand Ministry of Education's website.

5. What do you think about these objectives? Do you agree or disagree with these objectives?

6. What do you like about the education in New Zealand?

7. What do you dislike about the education in New Zealand?

D. Current education in Hong Kong

1. So, your son/ daughter studied at _____ (School Name) in Hong Kong?

2. Why did you choose this school?

3. How do you find about the education in Hong Kong?

Let me show the two of you the school vision/ motto, the curriculum or subject offered at _____ (School Name) and a photo of Hong Kong students taking their classes in a classroom.

Let me show the two of you the Hong Kong government's objectives stated in the Hong Kong Education Bureau's website.

4. What do you think about these objectives? Do you agree or disagree with these objectives?
5. What do you like about the education in Hong Kong?
6. What do you dislike about the education in Hong Kong?
7. From your experience, what are the differences between the education in Hong Kong and New Zealand?

E. Historical experiences of education

1. So the two of you attended _____ (School Name) and _____ (School Name) in Hong Kong?
2. How was education like when the two of you were at school?

Let me show the two of you some old photos of your schools in Hong Kong. Let me show the two of you the British colonial government's objectives stated in the Education Department's annual reports.

3. What do you like about your education in Hong Kong?
4. What do you dislike about your education in Hong Kong?

F. Hong Kong parent sending their children to study in New Zealand

1. Do you think your education in Hong Kong influenced your children's education?

2. Do you think the current education in Hong Kong influenced your children's education?
3. Are you happy with your decision?
4. Do you have any future plan for your children?

G. Closing

Thank you participants, debrief and provide gift.



Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced: 26 November 2020

Project Title

An analysis of the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand

An Invitation

Hi, my name is Hiu Ching. I am a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) student in the School of Education, Faculty of Culture and Society at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. I am writing to invite you and your partner to participate in this study on 'An analysis of the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand'. Participation in this research is voluntary and the both of you have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage prior to the completion of the data collection. I would like to assure you and your partner that participation or non-participation will neither advantage nor disadvantage the both of you in any way and that participation in the study will be completely confidential.

What is the purpose of this research?

This study explores the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand. It may give explanations why Hong Kong parents are seeking for schools outside the mainstream and sending their children to study abroad. It does not anticipate politically sensitive and controversial issues.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You and your partner are identified and invited to participate in this research because you are a pair of Hong Kong parents who have come to New Zealand to send your child

to school in New Zealand. The both of you may have seen the recruitment advertisement on the “Hong Kong New Zealander” Facebook page, have heard about my research through my personal network at the Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church, or from participants who participated in my research. I only wish to interview the both of you. If one of you withdraws from the research at some point during the interview/transcription/ analysis process, I will interview other potential participants who can interview as couple. I believe that by interviewing both of you, I can fully understand why the both of you decided to send your children to study in New Zealand.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Completing the Consent Form will indicate you and your partner have consented to participate. Both of your participation in this research is voluntary (it is you and your partner’s choice) and whether or not you and your partner choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. The both of you are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you and your partner choose to withdraw from the study, then you and your partner will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you and your partner’s removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of both of your data may not be possible. If you and your partner choose to participate in the interview online, a Consent Form and Information Sheet will be sent to you via email. Please sign, scan or photograph them, and return to the researcher.

What will happen in this research?

You and your partner will take part in an interview. You and your partner can choose between meeting in person or virtually. If the both of you choose to meet in person, we will meet at a booked room at AUT City Campus. If you preferred being interviewed elsewhere, please let me know and I am happy to make appropriate arrangement. If the both of you choose to meet online, we will meet on google meet. The interview will be conducted in Cantonese or English. Notes will be taken during the interview and the interviews will also be audio-taped and transcribed. You and your partner have the right to leave or choose not to answer any of the questions if any of you find discomfort or embarrassment at some point of the interview. I will make sure that the confidentiality is well protected, and the both of you will not be exposed to any danger and discomfort. You and your partner will also be advised that your identities and

information provided will remain confidential and no third parties will have the access to the information.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There is no significant discomfort or risks for participating in this research. As I am conducting research on Hong Kong parents' views of the purpose of education, these views may be affected by governance change and government policy in Hong Kong. While the aim of this study is not to anticipate politically sensitive and controversial conversations, participants might bring up topics that are considered controversial. Thus, this study might involve politically sensitive and controversial topics for Hong Kongers. However, you and your partner have the right to leave or choose not to answer any of the questions if the both of you find discomfort or embarrassment at some point of the interview.

What are the benefits?

This research has a number of potential benefits to the participants, the researcher and the wider society. The participants: Hong Kong parents who take part in this research may be able to have a voice in the purpose of education and may contribute to understanding the phenomenon of the increasing number of Hong Kong parents looking for alternative to current Hong Kong mainstream education. The researcher: Will have a better understanding of the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand, gain practical experience of carrying out qualitative study and earn a master qualification. Wider community: This research may provide significant value to the broader community especially the Hong Kong New Zealander community. It may give explanations why Hong Kong parents are seeking for schools outside the mainstream and sending their children to study abroad.

How will my privacy be protected?

You and your partner are participating in an interview. I will be deidentifying the two of you by giving each of you pseudonyms (or random initials) to ensure confidentiality. Only the primary researcher and project supervisor will have the access to both of your response. None of the information on the participants will be obtained from third parties. All the response will be securely stored and then destroyed after six years.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The only cost to you and your partner is your time. It is estimated that the interview would be approximately an hour long. You and your partner will not be forced to answer the questions within a time limit. For those participants who opt to see their transcript, it will be an addition 20 minutes. In return, each pair of participants will be rewarded with a NZ\$20 supermarket gift card after the completion of the interview.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

The information sheet and consent form will be given to you and your partner before your participation. Both of you may consider the invitation for up to two weeks after receiving the invitation to decide whether or not the both of you wish to take up my invitation. You and your partner can accept this invitation by contacting the researcher.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You and your partner have the option to review the transcript after the interview.

A summary of the research findings also be available to you after the completion of this research.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Ruth Boyask, ruth.boyask@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext. 7569.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Hiu Ching Au
cwn9776@aut.ac.nz
AR109 School of Education
Faculty of Culture and Society

Auckland University of Technology

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Ruth Boyask, Director of Postgraduate Programmes; Senior Lecturer

ruth.boyask@aut.ac.nz

+64 9 921 9999 ext. 7569

Auckland University of Technology

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 11 December 2020,

AUTEC Reference number 20/333



Participant Consent Form

*Project title: **An analysis of the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand***

*Project Supervisor: **Ruth Boyask***

*Researcher: **Hiu Ching Au***

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 10 September 2020.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interview and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.

I prefer meeting

- ☐ in-person
- ☐ online

I want to have a summary of the research findings after the completion of this research. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I want to review the interview transcript ☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 11 December 2020
was granted AUTECH Reference number 20/333***

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

for

Confidential Research Study on

**‘an analysis of the purpose of education from the views
of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their
children to school in New Zealand’.**

**I want to hear from Hong Kong parents who have come
to New Zealand to send their children to school in New
Zealand.**

Hi, I am Hiu Ching. I am from Hong Kong. I am a Master of Philosophy student studying at AUT University. I am researching the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand. It may give explanations why Hong Kong parents are seeking for schools outside the mainstream and sending their children to study abroad.

As part of this research I am seeking a pair of Hong Kong parents who:

- ☐ Have left Hong Kong and moved to New Zealand for fewer than 3 years;
- ☐ Are both born, raised and educated in Hong Kong;
- ☐ Hold only an HKSAR passport and/or a British National (Overseas) passport.

The research interview will take an hour. It will be an addition 20 minutes if you opt to review your transcript. In return of you and your partner's time, a supermarket gift card worth \$20 will be given to you.

If you and your partner would like to find out more please contact Hiu Ching at cwn9776@aut.ac.nz

The research is being undertaken as part of a Master of Philosophy qualification.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 11 December 2020

AUTEC Reference number 20/333

Appendix B.e Interview guide

Interview Schedule for Researcher

Two weeks before the interview

- Ask each pair of participants some background information of their children, including the school they attended in Hong Kong, the school they are currently attending in New Zealand and their current school year by email/phone;
- Ask each pair of participants their background information, including the schools they attended in Hong Kong by email/phone;
- Remind each pair of participants that their information will be deidentified by giving them pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality;
- Prepare visual stimuli for each pair of participants based on the information provided;
- Book AUT rooms for interviews.

A week before the interview

- Remind each pair of participants the time and venue for the interview by email/ phone;
- Send each pair of participants AUT City Campus's map and parking area by email/ phone;
- Send the *Interview Schedule for Participants* (see Appendix D) to each pair of participants.

Before each interview

- Arrive to the venue 30 minutes before the scheduled interview time;
- Check to ensure that my iPhone and the video memos are working properly;
- Check to ensure that I have brought all the appropriate visual elicitation stimuli;
- Check to ensure that I have brought the \$20 supermarket gift card for each pair of participants as a reward of their time;

- Check to ensure that I have brought my notebook to take notes during the interview and write down my thoughts immediately after the interview.

A. Opening

1. (Introduction) Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Zoe Au. I am a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) student in the School of Education, Faculty of Culture and Society at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Thank you the two of you for taking your time to participate in this research.
2. (Explain the purpose of this research) This study explores the purpose of education from the views of Hong Kong parents who have chosen to send their children to school in New Zealand. It may give explanations why Hong Kong parents are seeking for schools outside the mainstream and sending their children to study abroad. It does not anticipate politically sensitive and controversial issues. I am interested in understanding the two of your point of views on the purpose of education. There is no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.
3. (Remind participants of the potential risks) There is no significant discomfort or risks for participating in this research. As I am conducting research on Hong Kong parents' views of the purpose of education, these views may be affected by governance change and government policy in Hong Kong. While the aim of this study is not to anticipate politically sensitive and controversial conversations, participants might bring up topics that are considered controversial. Thus, this study might involve politically sensitive and controversial topics for Hong Kongers. However, you and your partner have the right to leave or choose not to answer any of the questions if the both of you find discomfort or embarrassment at some point of the interview.
4. (Remind participants how their privacy is well protected) Participation in this research is voluntary and the both of you have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage prior to the completion of the data collection. I would like

to assure you and your partner that participation or non-participation will neither advantage nor disadvantage the both of you in any way and that participation in the study will be completely confidential. This means that I will deidentify the two of you by giving each of you pseudonyms (or random initials) to ensure confidentiality. Only the primary researcher and project supervisor will have the access to both of your response. None of the information on the participants will be obtained from third parties. This interview would be approximately an hour long. However, the actual length of the interview depends on the participants. It depends on how much information the two of you would like to share. With the permission from the two of you, I would like to record the interview, so that I won't miss any of the information. Have you read and signed your Consent Form? If yes, please give them to me now. (Read and make sure they are signed)

5. (Format of the interview) In this interview, I am going to ask the two of you some questions while showing the two of you some visuals. Are there any questions about what I have just explained? Do you prefer interviewing in English or Cantonese? Can I turn the video memo in my iPhone now?

B. Body 1 (Basic Information)

(Transition: Before we start, it would be great if the two of you could tell me about your family.)

5. (Warm up) How long have your family been living in New Zealand?
6. Do your family enjoy your experience so far?
7. Why do you send your children to study abroad especially in New Zealand?

Prompts: Is it because of the culture? Is it because of the language? Is it because of the weather?

8. Why don't you choose other countries?

Prompts: If it is the language, why don't you choose other English speaking countries? If it is the weather, why don't you choose Australia?

C. Body 2 (Current education in New Zealand)

8. Before you came, what did you expect from New Zealand's education?

Prompts: What did you expect from the school environment? What did you expect from the teaching style? What did you expect from the teachers? What did you expect from the curriculum?

9. So your son/ daughter is currently attending _____ (School Name) in New Zealand?

10. Why did you choose this school?

Prompts: Is it because of the location? Is it because of the school decile? Is it because of the reputation? Is it because of the school environment? Is it because of the teaching style? Is it because of the teachers experiences and/or qualifications? Is it because of the curriculum? Is it because of the extra-curricular activities?

11. How do you find about the education in New Zealand?

Prompts: Let me show the two of you the school vision/ motto, the curriculum or subjects offered at _____ (School Name) and a photo of New Zealand students taking their classes in a classroom.

Prompts: Let me show the two of you the New Zealand government's objectives stated in the New Zealand Ministry of Education's website.

12. What do you think about these objectives? Do you agree or disagree with these objectives?

13. What do you like about the education in New Zealand?

Prompts: For example, the school environment, teaching style, teachers, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities.

14. What do you dislike about the education in New Zealand?

Prompts: For example, the school environment, teaching style, teachers, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities.

D. Body 3 (Current education in Hong Kong)

(Transition: Now let's move on to education in Hong Kong.)

8. So, your son/ daughter studied at _____ (School Name) in Hong Kong?
9. Why did you choose this school?

Prompts: Is it because of the location? Is it because of the school banding? Is it because of the reputation? Is it because of the medium of instruction? Is it because of the school environment? Is it because of the teachers experiences and/or qualifications? Is it because of the curriculum? Is it because of the extra-curricular activities?

10. How do you find about the education in Hong Kong?

Prompts: Let me show the two of you the school vision/ motto, the curriculum or subject offered at _____ (School Name) and a photo of Hong Kong students taking their classes in a classroom.

Prompts: Let me show the two of you the Hong Kong government's objectives stated in the Hong Kong Education Bureau's website.

11. What do you think about these objectives? Do you agree or disagree with these objectives?
12. What do you like about the education in Hong Kong?

Prompts: For example, the school environment, teaching style, teachers, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities.

13. What do you dislike about the education in Hong Kong?

Prompts: For example, the school environment, teaching style, teachers, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities.

14. From your experience, what are the differences between the education in Hong Kong and New Zealand?

Prompts: For example, the school environment, teaching style, teachers, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities.

E. Body 4 (Historical experiences of education)

5. So the two of you attended _____ (School Name) and _____ (School Name) in Hong Kong?
6. How was education like when the two of you were at school?

Prompts: Let me show the two of you some old photos of your schools in Hong Kong. Let me show the two of you the British colonial government's objectives stated in the Education Department's annual reports.

7. What do you like about your education in Hong Kong?

Prompts: For example, the school environment, teaching style, teachers, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities.

8. What do you dislike about your education in Hong Kong?

Prompts: For example, the school environment, teaching style, teachers, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities.

F. Body 5 (Hong Kong parent sending their children to study in New Zealand)

5. Do you think your education in Hong Kong influenced your children's education?
6. Do you think the current education in Hong Kong influenced your children's education?
7. Are you happy with your decision?

Prompts: How many out of 10 are you happy with your decision? Why?

8. Do you have any future plan for your children?

Prompts: Do you plan to send your children to other countries for secondary/tertiary education? (If they are in primary/secondary schooling) What do you want your children to do in the future?

(Transition: It has been a pleasure learning about the two of your views on the purpose of education. Let me do a little summary on the information that I have gathered from the two of you during the interview.)

G. Closing

1. (Summarise) The both of you believed that the purpose of education is _____. The both of you have chosen to send your children to study in New Zealand because _____.
2. This is pretty much the end of the interview. Is there anything else the two of you think would be helpful for me to know?
3. (Remind about the next step) I should have all the information I need. I will send the two of you the interview transcript to review via email (if they requested on the Consent Form). I will send the two of you a summary of the research findings after the completion of this research via email (if they requested on the Consent Form).
4. (Say thank you) I really appreciate the time and information the two of you provided for this interview. Here is a \$20 supermarket gift card as a reward of your time today. Thank you again. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

H. Immediately after the interview

1. Ensure that the interview is recorded properly.
2. Write down any thoughts I had during the interview.