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Learner-Centred Education in International Perspective

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Abstract: *This article provides an overview of Learner-Centred Education (LCE) as a travelling policy and outlines some of the arguments and pathways that have been used to fuel its travel. Despite the rich promises it offers and its proliferation as a global phenomenon and national policy, there is evidence that implementation and changes to classroom practice have proved to be problematic in many contexts. This seems particularly true in developing countries, and the article explores some of the reasons behind these perennial gaps. It concludes by arguing for the importance of both a 'bird's-eye view' and local understandings in researching and operationalising LCE, and suggests ways that the local and the global might be reconciled so that the promise of LCE is not lost in translation.*

Introduction

Learner-Centred Education (LCE) is a 'travelling policy' (Ozga & Jones, 2006) which has been endorsed by international agencies, national governments, and local innovators. Promoters of this pedagogical tradition refer to theories and evidence from cognitive psychology, claiming that all learners can benefit from it in improved processes and outcomes. Beyond the benefits to the individual, however, lies a set of assumptions about learner-centred education as a foundation for the building of democratic citizens and societies, and the development of a skilled population ready for the knowledge economies of the future. These promises have been questioned by critics who doubt that it is appropriate in all cultural and resource contexts, and there is considerable evidence in the global South of perennial problems of implementation (Schweisfurth, 2011).

This article outlines some of these debates. It will consider LCE as a global phenomenon, LCE in lower and middle-income countries, and what a culturally- and contextually-sensitive approach to LCE might entail. It concludes with reflections on the value of an international perspective in the study of travelling policies and global orthodoxies like LCE. Many of the ideas presented here are developed further in an imminently forthcoming book on this subject: Learner-centred Education in International Perspective: whose pedagogy for whose development? (Schweisfurth, 2013). The approach here will be broad-brush comparative rather than exploring in detail particular case studies, although selective international examples will illustrate the overall patterns. This 'bird's-eye view' is valuable for observing travelling policies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2011).

Learner-Centred Education as a Concept, a Narrative, and a Travelling Policy

Learner-centred education (LCE) has historical roots that extend back to the time of Socrates (400 B.C.) but it was the influence of continental philosophers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who questioned the nature of childhood and how children should be educated who helped to spread its influence in North America and the UK. Another major influential thinker and writer on the subject in the early 20th century was American philosopher and educationist John Dewey (1916) , who linked 'progressive' pedagogy to the development of democratic skills and dispositions in learners. In the more recent past, the Brazilian Paulo Freire (1972) helped to shape the international landscape of

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adult education in particular with his notion of conscientisation. He linked this to pedagogies for literacy which promoted questioning of the status quo as an antidote to the prevailing 'banking' model of education based on the depositing of knowledge from teacher to student. Also contributing to the rich foundation literature for LCE are writers such as Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1966) who have understood learning in a constructivist paradigm – i.e. knowledge as co-constructed by learners and teachers, with teachers playing a social, interpersonal and facilitative rather than whole-class instructive role.

With these varying roots in romantic notions of childhood, visions of a more democratic society through schooling, emancipatory ambitions for oppressed adults, and teachers as facilitators of individual learning, it is not surprising that the concept of LCE is rather loose. If we add to the mix the fact that is has manifestations within many different cultural, political and resource realities, then it becomes even less easy to pin down and define with universal clarity.   In many ways, therefore, LCE as a concept is best studied phenomenologically, allowing for different definitions and interpretations across different contexts. However, for the purposes of this article, LCE will be defined as one end of a continuum of pedagogical practices. Compared to, for example, lecturing, drilling or other methods driven by a fixed curriculum and rote learning, LCE: '…gives learners, and demands from them, a relatively high level of active control over the contents and processes of learning. What is learnt, and how, are therefore shaped by learners' needs, capacities and interests' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p.20).

From this apparently simple definition however, flow a number of justificatory narratives which have been used by theorists, policymakers and international agencies in promoting LCE. One of these is the *cognitive narrative*. Learner control over the content and process of learning is supported by evidence from cognitive psychology (summarised well by Ginnis, 2002) suggesting that this control helps learners to build up from existing knowledge neural connections and meaningful patterns which lead to more effective and sustainable learning. The intrinsic motivation that comes from learning something of significance and importance to them additionally helps to focus students on learning and this engagement is crucial to the process. This narrative also references Vygotsky and Bruner's constructivist understandings of learning. A second narrative, *emancipation*, echoes Freire and Dewey's emphasis on education's potential both to undermine and serve the freedoms of individuals, and how pedagogy can help learners to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours which over time can transform society. Again, the emphasis on learner control is central, but made more radical with the introduction of the notion of critical pedagogy, in which learners not only have more control over what they learn and the process of learning, but are encouraged to question critically canons of received knowledge and the unequal structures of society which they support. A third narrative has considerable policy relevance and has been invoked in many contexts: the *preparation narrative.* Knowledge economies which trade in information and services rather than manufactured goods are widely considered the norm in OECD countries and the direction of future development (OECD, 1996). The skills developed through inquiry-based self-regulated learning such as flexibility, critical independent thought and entrepreneurship are believed to support the development and sustaining of an effective knowledge economy.

These are appealing narratives in any context, but in developing countries the promise of their link to various understandings of development gives them particular salience. Evidence (not uncontested but widely-cited) points to the power of education to develop human capital and thereby contribute to economic growth. It is also linked, for example, to improved health outcomes, including in the children of educated mothers (Colclough, 2012). It follows that if learning is more effective, as the cognitive narrative promises from LCE, then these outcomes will be amplified. Some understandings of development place rights, freedoms and democracy at its centre (see Sen, 1999) in line with the emancipatory narrative. And while most higher-income countries are functioning as knowledge economies already, most middle-income countries aspire to this; developing countries

naturally do not want to be left behind. Education policies in a number of countries, including China, Russia, India and South Africa all reference this narrative.

Given this broad appeal, LCE's status as a travelling policy is not surprising; governments seeking to resolve a range of national concerns from economic growth to democratisation to conflict resolution to modernisation of the labour market will find these narratives attractive. But also key to this status is the role of international organisations that promote LCE within a rights framework or make LCE a part of their definitions of quality education. UN agencies are particularly active in this regard, UNESCO and UNICEF both building LCE into their visions for improved schooling. UNESCO's Associated Schools Project Network, for example, which includes some 8500 schools internationally, promotes the following 'essential dimensions' of quality education:

1. Improving the content of education by making it more relevant and pertinent
2. Enhancing the learning process whereby students are the main actors and teachers the facilitators
3. Developing life skills and competences which enable children and young people to succeed in a fast changing world of challenges and opportunities
4. Emphasising creativity and imagination and well as developing the many talents to be found in each learner
5. Introducing cross-curricular and interdisciplinary approaches as well as team teaching and hence fostering a holistic approach to education
6. Improving the climate of the school
7. Reinforcing democratic principles (UNESCO, 2008, p.7).

There are also examples among individual aid and non-governmental agencies, and networks which combine the efforts of a range of donors, such as the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). The INEE endorses LCE as one of its 'minimum standards' for education in emergency and post-emergency situations:

> For people to learn effectively, participatory teaching and learning techniques, including learner-centred methodologies, are essential. Child-centred methods should address the needs of the whole person, teaching skills necessary for survival, individual development, social interaction, and academic study (INEE, 2004, p.54)

So, impetus for moving towards LCE comes from a number of directions, from local, national and global actors and agents. However, despite these almost universal endorsements, LCE has not proved to be a straightforward policy to implement and its global prescriptions have very different local variants. It is in this context that: '...the comparative perspective comes into its own, both as a correction to broad-brush, decontextualised statements, and as a way of triangulating multiple sets of findings to aid in the quest to sift the local from the global' (Schweisfurth, 2013, p.36).

Implementing LCE in New Contexts: Lower and Middle Income Countries

As a globally travelling policy and practice, prescriptions and innovations regarding LCE are often found in contexts where it is culturally new and where the realities of educational governance and resources for schools have not historically accommodated it. In a recent analysis of the research on LCE implementation reported in a (or perhaps 'the') international journal on education and development (Schweisfurth, 2011), it was evident that '...the history of the implementation of LCE in different contexts is riddled with stories of failures grand and small' (Schweisfurth, 2011, p.425). Across a wide range of developing country contexts, the reports of 'tissue rejection' (Harley et al., 2000) as teachers and learners struggle to make the 'paradigm shift' (Nakabugo and Siebörger, 2001; Tabulawa, 2003) far outnumbered the stories of successful transitions from the pedagogies in place towards LCE.

What do these pedagogies in place look like? In a survey of 102 video-recorded lessons in Kenya, as a baseline data set to an LCE-oriented intervention, Hardman et al. (2009) describe pedagogical norms which are fairly typical of much of Sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the developing world: lessons dominated by lecturing, with occasional question-and-answer, copying, and individual written exercises; mainly closed questions being asked (98%); pupil questioning rare; boys twice as likely to be asked a question by the teacher as girls; more than 33% choral answers; only 3% of lessons including pair or group work; and a traditional, desks-in-rows classroom layout in 96% of lessons. If there is truth to the benefits of LCE as laid out in the narratives above, then most learners in poorer parts of the world are not experiencing it and introducing LCE through policy reform does not seem readily able to change that.

Policy sociology notes that whatever the policy, the predicted and wished-for straight line from policy intention to classroom practice is often problematic. I will here explore four broad areas which research has indicated can be barriers to effective implementation of LCE specifically. Firstly, the policy process itself can be a barrier, as policy messages can be difficult for teachers to understand, can be contradictory, or the process may not be supported in different parts of the system (teacher education and inspection, for example, can work against LCE if they are not 'on message'). A classic and recurrent policy contradiction is to promote LCE pedagogy in situations where high-stakes examinations which test fixed knowledge drive teacher, student and parent motivation. As a student, if your future education and career depend on examination results, the open-ended exploration of content not likely to be tested will seem like a luxury, and teachers will teach to examinations to meet students' needs and to protect their own reputations. This has been shown to be the case in a wide range of contexts where policy has pointed both to LCE and to tight assessment frameworks, South Africa and China being prevalent examples. Furthermore, in contexts of fragility, the policy process is complicated by a range of factors from poor infrastructure to corruption to prioritisation of survival needs, all of which make the reach of government initiatives problematic.

Secondly, material resource shortages are often cited by teachers as a major issue in terms of their ability to meet policy demands or other encouragements in LCE directions. They note the physical environment, class size and teaching materials as impediments to the adoption of LCE pedagogical approaches. While not belittling such concerns, it is noteworthy that in placing these at the forefront of their barriers, teachers place the problem outside of themselves; however, they also stress the importance of recognition in and appreciation in motivating them to try new pedagogical approaches (VSO, 2002). Human resources have been shown to be a significant part of the equation and of course motivation is an important dimension of this. Teacher motivation is problematic across much of the developing world, where working conditions and salaries do not make teaching a first choice profession, and where respect from the government, the press and local communities cannot be taken for granted. In the poorest countries, and in the poorest and most remote parts of middle and low income countries, teachers are often untrained or undereducated. Many teachers are expected to work in a language of instruction – usually a colonial language and usually English – in which they are not comfortably fluent. This has been shown to make them more cautious in classroom dialogue and they tend to ask closed questions and use drills as strategies for ensuring that the discussion does not slip beyond their comprehension or comfort zone (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottier, 2004 on Tanzania and South Africa). As an additional important dimension of the human resource base, teacher professional identity is a highly context-specific phenomenon, but in many parts of the developing world the reflective and autonomous practitioner embedded in developed forms of LCE is not nurtured.

Culture shapes all of these phenomena, and interacts profoundly with teacher-learner relationships and classroom behavioural norms. Two of Hofstede's (2003) cultural continua create a helpful language here. Some cultures have greater 'power distance' between those with less and more power in a society, such as teachers and students: it is alien in such countries to have a close and familiar relationship with a teacher or to question his or her wisdom. In collectivist cultures,

the integration of people into a strong, cohesive in-group is the norm, and so the individualising of curricula rather than a focus on the class collective may seem inappropriate. Both of these have major implications for LCE as it is widely conceived. Sternberg (2007) notes that one of the universal lessons of learning is that being taught in culturally-appropriate ways raises achievement, raising an interesting conundrum for those seeking to introduce LCE into high power distance and collectivist societies.

There are of course many rich contextual details which illustrate, nuance or correct these generalisations, and the book (Schweisfurth, 2013) develops five case studies which explore these. There are also positive stories of LCE implementation, usually where there has been joined-up thinking across the whole education sector, from pre-service training through school management through supervision, inspection and support regimes through in-service professional development. These all demand, however, a policy and practice context which is coherent in itself, well-resourced on the human front, and in which there is a critical mass of actors already deeply familiar with the demands, joys and practices of LCE, rather than rhetorical prescriptions. They also raise substantial questions about the extent to which LCE as moves in its travelling manifestations is a desirable and feasible policy and practice in all contexts, and some writers have concluded that it is not appropriate for some environments (e.g. Guthrie, 2011) where investment in improving tried-and-tested formal pedagogies offers a more promising return on investment.

Towards Contextualised Learner-Centred Pedagogies

There are a number of ways of conceptualising this problematic uptake of LCE in developing country contexts.

One way, as Guthrie has done, is to argue that LCE is fundamentally unsuited culturally and in terms of the resource context in many parts of the developing world. However, there are a number of pieces of evidence and rights-based arguments that put question marks against that conclusion. We do see success stories, and teacher and pupil enthusiasm for LCE when the implementation is well-managed (e.g. Khamis & Sammons, 2007; Hardman et al., 2009). Human rights arguments rise above these questions of evidence; if LCE is the approach that respects learners' rights, as UNESCO and other agencies would have it, then the effort to implement it must go on. Context matters, but context isn't everything.

Another way of thinking about the problem is to see it as a problem of governance and management. If the aim is to introduce LCE, then the best way forward is to try to fix the broken cycles of implementation which are proven barriers, whether it is the policy process, the support for teachers at each stage of their professional development, or the contradictions such as high–stakes examinations which work against LCE. This is a big demand in contexts where resources and capacity are stretched, and where there are very few people working within the implementation structures who have personal experience of LCE.

I would argue that the only way through the impasse is to think of LCE as a series of continua, rather than seeing it as a single absolute that has only one international configuration. This means that some aspects of the pedagogical practice can be emphasised more strongly than others, to fit the cultural context. So, in collectivist societies, it may be a case of a communal understanding of the needs of a class rather than the needs of each individual in it. This perspective is not uniquely needed in developing countries and historical studies have pointed to different interpretations of LCE across time and space in the US and the UK (Brehony, 2001; Chung & Walsh, 2001; Cunningham, 2001). They have also pointed to more rhetoric than consistent reality even during times when learner-centredness is in vogue both in terms of policy and teacher discourse, such as the 'Plowden Era' in the 60s and 70s in the UK (Alexander, 2000). So it seems only reasonable to expect that in developing countries where the challenges are deeper and the cultural roots of LCE are less resonant, there will be local variants in terms of the degree and nature of LCE uptake. There are a number

of authors who have called for contextualised understandings of LCE, and for the de-polarisation of LCE pedagogy from those approaches which have traditionally been seen as its opposites, in order to create a more inclusive LCE which reflects and respects local realities (e.g. Croft, 2002; Barrett, 2007; Alexander 2008; Sriprakash, 2009; Vavrus, 2009).

The risk with this approach is that anyone can call anything LCE, without due attention to its potential for cognitive development, respect for rights and goals of emancipation, and possibilities for future-oriented skills development. The way forward might be to agree a set of minimum standards which must be upheld within contexts where there is a consensus on the need for LCE. In the book (Schweisfurth, 2013, p.146) I set out such a set of minimum standards for LCE, to provoke further discussion on what is local and what must be seen as globally applicable. All of these need to work together to meet LCE minimum standards in this vision of this pedagogy. The seven standards set out are:

1. Lessons are engaging to pupils, motivating them to learn (bearing in mind that different approaches might work in different contexts).
2. Atmosphere and conduct reflect mutual respect between teachers and pupils. Conduct such as punishment and the nature of relationships do not violate rights (bearing in mind that relationships might still be relatively formal and distant).
3. Learning challenges build on learners' existing knowledge (bearing in mind that this existing knowledge might be seen collectively rather than individualistically).
4. Dialogue (not only transmission) is used in teaching and learning (bearing in mind that the tone of dialogue and who it is between may vary).
5. Curriculum is relevant to learners' lives and perceived future needs, in a language accessible to them (mother tongue except where practically impossible) (bearing in mind that there will be tensions between global, national and local understandings of relevance).
6. Curriculum is based on skills and attitude outcomes as well as content. These should include skills of critical and creative thinking (bearing in mind that culture-based communication conventions are likely to make the 'flavour' of this very different in different places).
7. Assessment follows up these principles by testing skills and by allowing for individual differences. It is not purely content-driven or success based only on rote learning (bearing in mind that the demand for common examinations is unlikely to be overcome).

In conclusion, I would look towards a more hopeful and holistic version of LCE which builds on existing pedagogical practices rather than attempting (fruitlessly) to usurp them. But the learner needs contextualising not just in their own classroom but in wider national development needs and in an increasingly important global context. In this, a globalised, bird's-eye view is certainly of value but it needs to be offset with local understandings.

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Comparative Education And The Geographical Factor

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ABSTRACT: *All the sub-disciplines of education, known as the foundations, have a need of a more sophisticated treatment of the essentially spatial nature of educational processes and their outcome; that is to say, the geographical factor. This is especially true of comparative and international education where the range of spatial scales is potentially greatest. Yet the geographical factor, in the form of a geography of education has yet to establish itself. In this article the essential affinity of geographical and educational studies is illustrated, as well as the symbiotic relationship between geography and history in relation to the issue of space-time. The fundamental issue of scale, both spatial and temporal is also discussed and the emergence of a geography of education reviewed through a selection of the literature. It is argued in conclusion that comparative education needs to catch up with the advances in what the geographers call 'geographic information science' and develop a more sophisticated understanding of the geographical factor.*

Introduction

The title of this article is the same as that of one of the writer's earlier contributions to the then barely emergent sub-discipline, 'The Geography of Education' (Brock, 1984). Despite geography being a more widely established discipline than comparative education by the mid-twentieth century, its exponents had paid little or no attention to the phenomenon of education in terms of spatial analysis of its distribution or performance. Meantime the pioneers of comparative education as a sub-discipline of educational studies at university level, notably Kandel (1933), Hans(1949), Mallinson (1957), King (1958), Bereday (1964) and Holmes (1965) operated almost exclusively at the national scale of observation and discourse. This, it would appear, was the scale at which they perceived the phenomenon of education to be operating. They presumed, it may be inferred, that policies and systems of education constituted educational reality. Curiously, when researching for his doctoral thesis *The Case for a Geography of Education* (Brock, 1992), the writer found that university geographers had not interested themselves in spatial disparities in educational provision because they assumed that what was decreed in national policies on educational provision actually translated on the ground without moderation or disparity. So both geographers and comparative educationists exhibited the same degree of misperception that, somewhat paradoxically, served to keep them apart. Meantime other foundations of educational study such as the history, philosophy, sociology and economics of education had established themselves, and formed part of the academic dimension of the training of teachers and in educational research at graduate level. More has happened in academic geography concerning theory and analysis of education phenomena (Taylor, 2011), but hardly any recognition in comparative education of the geographical factor, although a special edition of the journal *Comparative Education* is on the way this year (Brock & Symaco, 2013) addressing this.

In this article one will proceed to discuss the substantially similar identities of geography and education as disciplines; the essential symbiosis of geography and history; the common issue of scale; then identify the emergence of the sub-discipline 'the geography of education', and conclude with a comment on its prospects.

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Education and Geography Compared

The 'education' one is referring to here is 'education the discipline', also known more helpfully as educational studies. 'Education the phenomenon', that is to say the acquisition of knowledge and skills through learning and teaching, is what is actually happening on the ground through its three forms: formal, non-formal and informal.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate both the composite nature of geography and of education, and what the writer has proposed as the 'essence' of each.
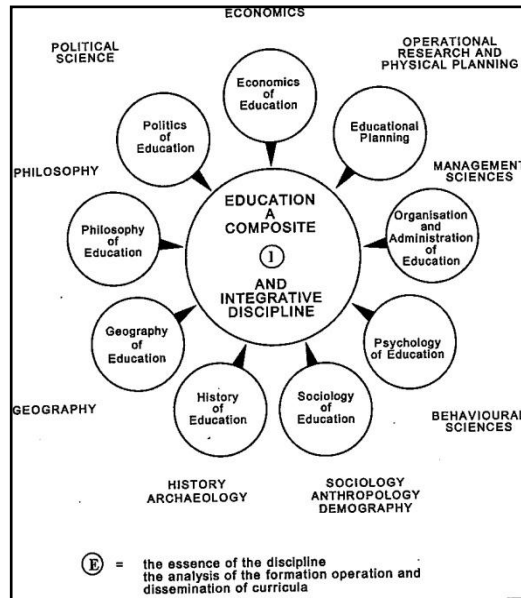

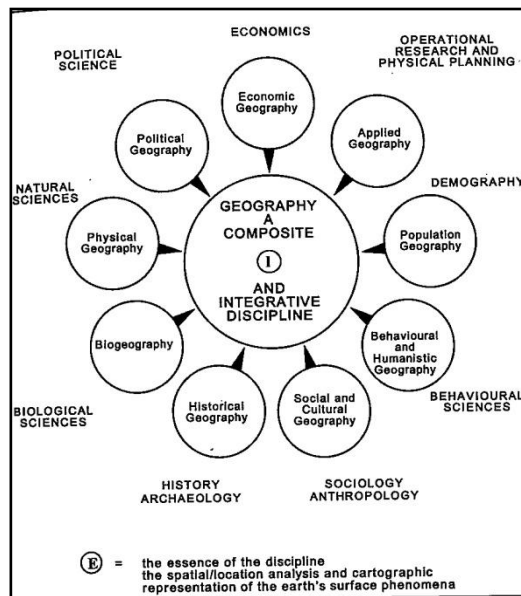*Figure 1 Education: a composite and integrative discipline*

Figure 2 Geography: a composite and integrative discipline

The two figures indicate a considerable degree of synergy between geography and education, not just because they are both integrative composite disciplines, but also because of the close relationship in terms of their essence. The key word in the definition offered by the writer in respect of the essence of education is 'dissemination'. The key word in the essence of geography is 'spatial'. The acquisition of knowledge and skills necessarily involves a spatial dimension in the form of dissemination, whether it happens: a) between the learner and the read or heard informal source; b) or in a one to one tutorial; c) or in a classroom; d) or through a televised lecture; e) or via the internet. These are simply differences of scale, and the scale at which phenomena are observed is a) fundamental to the efficiency of analysis, and b) to the effectiveness of any policies or actions that may follow. As Spencer and Thomas (1969) observed many decades ago, education systems are space adjusting techniques. This comment was related to national systems of formal education provision and one of their prime functions, social and political control. For non-formal education, such as apprentice training, this may also apply, but not - despite the presence of Orwellian 'thought police' in some countries – to the form of education responsible for most of our learning, the informal. Informal learning operates from the womb until death, which brings us to the issues of space-time and the temporal scale.

Space-Time: Geography and History

To paraphrase another of our literary greats, Philip Larkin: everything happens somewhere, sometime. The temporal scale in comparative education has been almost as marginalized as has the spatial. The space-time relationship is fundamental, as made clear by physicists for generations, and was recognised in the theory of geography by Parkes and Thrift (1980) and Norton (1984). Norton indicated that, with regard to geography: 'Temporal interests include cultural geography, innovation diffusion studies, time geography, arguments favouring a process-form approach and historical geography' (p.17). Education is culturally based and, in its formal and non-formal modes, politically delivered. The writer, in his *Case for a Geography of Education* (1992) concluded that its home within the composite discipline would best be cultural geography. But as Norton argues above, that is but one of several possibilities. George Bereday (1964) opted for political geography as a 'foster parent' for the nascent comparative education. The problem is that many of the sub-disciplines informing both geography and education are themselves composite. Because of the space-time issue one would argue here for the symbiotic geography-history relationship to be potentially the most fruitful combination from which to begin, bearing in mind the cultural and political dimensions of both when examining and comparing educational themes.

Phillips (1994 and 2000) raised an important issue with regard to the temporal dimension, when comparing educational themes, that of periodization. Somewhat in the same way that, in comparative education, the national spatial scale employed has been dominant, on the temporal front crude scales such as 'centuries' have often been used. The turn of a century, or even more so a millennium, is rarely of particular significance. Phillips argues instead for what he terms 'determining periods' in education when undertaking comparisons. Table 1 indicates his determining periods for post-war Germany and England and Wales respectively (Phillips, 1994).

Table 1 Determining Periods for a Comparison between Germany and England & Wales

Post-War Germany (p.266)	Post-War England & Wales (pp.269/70)
1. The Allies and Education in Germany 1945-49.	1. Reconstruction and Secondary Education for All 1944-59.
2. Two Decades of Non-Reform 1946-66.	2. Growth and Consolidation 1959-65.
3. The Great Coalition 1966-69.	3. Radical Reorganisation (comprehensivation) 1965-76.
4. The SDP years and *Bildungs-Boom* 1969-82.	4. Reform Debate and Concerted Action 1976-88.
5. Neo-conservatism: The 1980s	5. The Education Reform Act & its Aftermath 1988 onwards
6. Education in the New Germany 1990 onwards.	

Phillips noted that his 'determining periods' were based on observation of the two systems as a whole, and mainly in terms of the sector of compulsory schooling. If disaggregated into components or stages of education the periods might have to be different; again a question of scale. Nonetheless: 'The broad periods which seem to emerge when the post-war educational development of the two countries with which I am concerned is analysed, provide points of illuminating comparison as well as some interesting contrasts'(p.270). He proposes the periods for direct comparison as follows:

1.   Reconstruction, 1944/5 -59.
2.   Consolidation, 1959-65.
3.   Expansion, 1965 to the mid 1970s.
4.   Reform Initiatives, mid 1970s – late 1980s
5.   Neo-conservative authority, late 1980s onwards.

Clearly the factors affecting education in Fig. 1 and the sub-themes of geography in Fig. 2 are potentially relevant for any educational comparison. Of these sub-disciplines/ factors, Brock and Alexiadou (2013) portray the geographical and historical as setting the scene, or clarifying the context, for as Crossley (2012) rightly argues, context is key to a sound comparison. But geography, because of its composite nature also informs the other factors set out in Fig. 2 as affecting education in a range of potential situations susceptible of comparative and/or international study where spatial disparity is relevant. Table 2 provides examples of the geographical factor at work , often implicit, moving clockwise as it were from '12 noon' on Fig. 2.

Table 2   Aspects of Geography Implicit and Explicit in Selected Educational Themes

Aspect	Theme/Author(s) (see References)	Scale
Economic	Financing Education: Russia and China (Bray & Borevskaya, 2001)	Cross-National
Applied	Forms of Decentralization of Education (Lauglo, 1995)	Sub-National
Demographic	Education and Migration in East Africa (Bell, 1980)	Regional
Behavioural	Mental Maps (Gould & White, 1974)	Individual
Socio-Cultural	Indigenous Education (King & Scheilman, 2004)	Community
Historical	England: School Provision Disparities 1750s-1950s (Brock, 2013)	Sub-National
Biogeographical	Education and Environmental Well-Being (Orr, 1994)	Global
Physical	Natural Hazard Awareness in India (Bangay, 2013)	National
Political	Political Geography and Suburban Schooling: USA (Johnston, 1981)	Local

The Issue of Scale

The column 'Scale' in Table 2 brings us to a fundamental issue common to both geographical and educational studies, and especially comparative education. It has already been 'flagged up' in relation to the preponderance of national scale presentations in comparative education and the need to consider periodization with regard to temporal scale. The examples selected for inclusion in Table 2 illustrate a range of scales from global to individual through regional, national, sub-national, community/local to individual. They are self-evidently geographical, but, despite the seminal paper on the potential value of multi-level analysis to comparative education by Bray and Thomas (1995), are often overlooked.

Spatial scales are not mutually exclusive nor are they necessarily discrete. They interact in relation to educational phenomena, as for example in Griffin's (2001) comparative study of the mediation, at local level, of school choice policies in three countries, England, Ireland and the USA. Furthermore, there is a scale additional to those in Table 2, that of cyberspace, that has become extremely important in relation to education (Dodge & Kitchin, 2001). The educational geography of cyberspace is especially significant in linking the global and local scales, largely bi-passing the politically powerful national scale. Indeed it connects the global with the individual unless, as is the case in some countries, governments succeed in blocking the information flow.

Information flow is, in effect, the coming together of education and geography. Utilisation of cyberspace is just the latest phase in the process of globalisation that has been proceeding for centuries. As Spencer and Thomas (1969) observed several decades ago: 'The world's peoples have been tied into a single interlocking communications system of shipping routes, postal services, telegraph cables, telephone lines, railroad lines, newspaper and magazine publications, airline routes, radio and television networks and communication satellites' (p.282). The numerous small states of the world, those with populations of less than 3 million, may be taken to illustrate some aspects of this incremental succession of space-saving innovations. A demographic threshold is necessarily the most appropriate criterion when considering education, but a minority of the 90 or so small states and territories listed by Bray and Martin (2011) are large in land area. Nonetheless the majority are small island states and territories in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, South Atlantic and South Pacific regions. The fact that most are now independent states arises in part from their strategic locations in colonial times, especially the maritime British Empire, but also to the relatively long standing development of their educational provision. Many were coaling stations in the days of civil and military steamships. Their significance led to their being connected later by telegraph, telephone and now international communications technology. At the same time their mostly small scale land areas and populations engendered ease of acquisition of universal primary education within highly idiosyncratic and often multi-cultural populations (Brock, 1980). Now, in the early twenty-first century, the communications revolution that is globalisation is enabling many of these small states to play a significant role in international educational research and innovation (Crossley, Bray & Packer, 2011). Such innovations involve multilateral projects in: neighbouring islands (van Wyk, 2011); regional cooperation as with the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC); and global internet services such as from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). Not only is what is gained from these developments benefitting the small developing states, but they are producing ideas and techniques that can inform larger nations with archipelagos such as much of the Philippines and the Western Isles of Scotland.

An Emergent Geography of Education

This youngest of the family of sub-disciplines of education has emerged from the work of both geographers and educationists, some who are in both camps, and a few others from related social science disciplines. As far as publications in English are concerned there would appear to have been a nascent interest in the spatial dimensions of education within the 'golden era' of social science expansion in the 1960s and 70s. This was an era of relative affluence, and liberal attitudes to educational expansion and research. Both the humanities and the social sciences not only received greater funding than ever before, but also became subject to new modes of analysis. As far as the social sciences were concerned these included: a) establishing a more accurate and quantified database; b) the construction of nomothetic models; c) engaging in an issue-based approach; and d) recognising a behavioural dimension. When applying geographical approaches to educational issues these translated, for example into: a) school mapping, b) the identification of generalised educational surfaces; c) spatial implications of alternative policies of educational provision; d) mental maps.

Possibly the first to publicise the term 'geography of education' was Ryba (1968) coming from an education background, and a member of the recently formed Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE) within which a British Section had been established. The publication in 1969 by sociologists Taylor and Ayres *Born and Bred Unequal* gained a wide readership, highlighting as it did the clearly unequal chances of educational and social advancement as between different social classes and locations in England. The first specialist geographers to explicitly target educational disparity, at least in the UK, were likely Coates and Rawston (1971), in their chapter on 'Aspects of the Geography of Education' (pp.243-280). They examined a number of examples of disparity in education in what they referred to as 'Britain', though in fact only covered England and Wales – then a single education system covering two countries. Coates and Rawston investigated several themes:

disparities a) in the incidence of different forms of private schooling; b) in respect of articulation between secondary and further education; c) the differential take up of higher education across the local education authority areas. The discourse is liberally illustrated by maps, cartographic representation being a fundamental feature of geography.

Whether any of these publications had anything to do with a remarkable output in terms of the geography of education in 1972 is not clear. In that year the University of Toronto hosted a meeting of the International Geographical Union (IGU). It included a publication edited by Adams and Helleiner (1972) that contained a brief statement by Ryba on the geography of education and educational planning, and a contribution by Gerry Hones on 'Problems in the Application of Central Place Theory to Educational Planning with Special Reference to the Bath Area of the UK. This was a summary of his doctoral thesis that itself was an example of the aforementioned application of nomothetic theory in the social sciences. Hones and Ryba presented a paper to that 1972 meeting of the IGU asking: 'Why Not a Geography of Education'? As a result a Geography of Education Working party was set up within the Commission on Geographical Education, under their responsibility. It went on to produce five (5) Bulletins between 1973 and 1981. That this happened within the geographical community rather than that of education was probably the reason why the momentum was not sustained sufficiently despite contemporary inputs from other countries such as Debesse (1972) in France, Maxfield (1972) and Lowry (1973) in the USA and Thomas –Hope (1975) in Jamaica.

In so far as there was a significant take-up in the following decades, it was increasingly connected with the self-evidently spatial issue of school-choice, the most potent initial outcome of the onset of neo-liberal policies associated with the near contemporaneous regimes of President Regan in the USA and Prime Minister Thatcher in the UK. While the intellectual impetus came from the USA, the fact that Mrs Thatcher wielded more power over a unified national system (England and Wales) than did President Regan, (due to the Constitution of the USA defaulting power to the individual states and school districts), meant that much more happened initially in England. Thatcher's key Education Reform Act of 1988 emasculated the Local Authorities and inevitably invited a spatial revolution. Burdett (1988) was quick to recognise the revolutionary potential for the 'geography of school choice'. This also attracted the interest of social scientists such as Ball (1993and Ball et al., 1997), and even a Special Edition of *Comparative Education* (Vol. 34:2). Clearly anything with strong spatial dimensions qualified as implicitly geographical; a category of publications that would reward more attention, as inferred in the content of Table 2 above. The Edinburgh geographer Liz Bondi (1988) had begun to revive a more explicitly geographical contribution to the study of education by co-editing and contributing to the first book to have the 'geography of education' in its title and containing a wider range of issues: from school reorganisation; to parental choice in two Scottish cities compared; to catchment and neighbourhood issues and disparities in attainment within cities. Bradford (1990), the Manchester geographer, also published on school choice, while Bondi (1991) presented a comparative study of the effects of aspects of school choice in the UK and USA, as did Edwards and Whitty (1992).

From the turn of the millennium there has been some return to spatial analysis of educational issues in the geographical community. Gibson and Asthana (2000) examined local markets and the polarisation of public sector schools in England and Wales, and Taylor (2002) made a substantial contribution with a book on *The Geography of the 'New' Education Market*. In 2007 the Journal *Urban Studies* devoted its 44:7 edition to 'The Geography of Education', one of the few times this term has been used. The edition was edited by Butler and Hamnett of King's College, London and, while being about fifty per cent British in terms of content, it also contained articles on Berlin, Copenhagen, California , Sydney and New Zealand. The work of Hamnett and Butler, taken further with their study of the role of distance in educational inequality in East London (2011), is one of two key growth points in the geography of education in British universities. The other is at the University of Loughborough where, under the leadership of Sarah Holloway, a real critical mass of research and publications has been created over the past few years. The publications to date under the collective heading of 'geographies of education' number over twenty (20) already, and there have also been

two international conferences on this theme at Loughborough: in 2010 and 2012, with a third in the planning. Holloway and Jons (2012) begin to explain this flowering as follows: 'In the twenty-first century Anglophone geographers have exhibited a growing interest in education and learning (Holloway et al., 2010). Geographies of education and learning consider the importance of spatiality in the production, consumption and implications of formal education systems from pre-school to tertiary education and of informal learning environments in homes, neighbourhoods, community organisations and workspaces' (p.482).

Conclusion

Will the geography of education become a sub-discipline? As can be seen above there is plenty of evidence for its voracity and indeed something of a momentum in its critical mass of literature. However this is presently coming almost entirely from the geographical community. Clearly the earlier lack of perception as to the wealth of spatial disparity of educational policies arising both from their formulation and their mediation on the ground has been rectified. The educational community, including comparative education, has not made the same advance though there is some evidence of the value of concepts such as space, location and scale. Still the so-called cultural turn in geography is well in advance of the so-called spatial turn in education that remains largely at the level of semantics. At least the geography of education figures in a recent publication aimed at reviving the potential significance of the disciplines of education (Furlong & Lawn, 2011) where Taylor contributes a chapter to that effect, though his title 'Towards a Geography of Education' indicates in itself that the status of sub-discipline is not yet secured. What is preventing it?

Evidence as to where the problem lies can be found in the title of the first article in the edition of the *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers New Series* in which the aforementioned article by Holloway and Jons (2012) is published. It is 'Geographic Information Science: Tribe, Badge and Sub-Discipline'(Haklay, 2012) and is the first of three articles in the issue constituting a sub-section 'Boundary Crossings', a term which alludes to interdisciplinary enquiry. The key word is 'tribe', which takes us back to Becher's eminently pertinent classic *Academic Tribes and Territories* (1989) where the analysis shows how academics establish tribal identities by creating membership societies and specialist journals. Career advancement is through publication in these specialist journals which are read largely by tribal members, and hardly ever by other tribes or outsiders such as policy makers and administrators. The feature 'boundary crossings' in the journal mentioned above is a rare move to recognise the imperative of interdisciplinary enquiry that has already been grasped by research funding agencies. So the geographers are on the way to Haklay's sub discipline 'geographic information science'. It is now up to educationists, and especially those in comparative education, to embrace the geographical factor and engage in a more sophisticated discourse on the spatial dimension of educational activity, especially the issue of scale.

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Benefits and Tensions of Shadow Education: Comparative Perspectives on the Roles and Impact of Private Supplementary Tutoring in the Lives of Hong Kong Students

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Abstract: *Over half of Hong Kong's secondary students receive private supplementary tutoring, and in the last grade of secondary schooling the proportion exceeds 70%. Such tutoring is widely called shadow education because it mimics the regular system – as the curriculum in the schools changes, so it changes in the shadow; and as the regular school system expands, so does the shadow. The scale of private tutoring has grown significantly in the last two decades, and has become a standard feature of the lives of many families. Some tutoring is provided one-to-one by professionals, semi-professionals or amateurs; other tutoring is provided in small groups; and yet other tutoring is provided in lecture formats. Such tutoring demands significant financial investment by households, and also consumes substantial amounts of students' time. Some tutoring has benefits in helping slow learners to keep up with their peers and in stretching further the learning of high achievers. Parents may also prefer to pay other people to manage homework and related stresses. However, tutoring can also increase pressures on young people, and is not always effective. This paper presents Hong Kong data within a framework that compares local patterns with those in other parts of the world. It raises questions about the implications of patterns and about appropriate responses for families, educators and policy makers.*

Introduction

Among major preoccupations for all youth and their families are the structures and processes of schooling. Hong Kong, like most economically-advanced societies, has an extended period of compulsory education and high enrolment rates in the post-compulsory period. Education is compulsory up to the end of Secondary Form 3 (Grade 9), which for most students means the age of 15; and reforms launched in 2009 expanded provision so that the vast majority would proceed to Secondary Form 6 (Grade 12) with fee-free education (Hong Kong, Information Services Department, 201, p.144). All youth and families are strongly aware that performance in the education system shapes future life opportunities. Young people who perform well are likely to have access to desirable university courses and to subsequent well-remunerated employment, while their counterparts who perform less well have more limited economic prospects. Awareness of this fact can create major stresses for youths and their families (Leung et al., 1986; Huan et al., 2008; Davies & Guppy, 2010; Dunne et al., 2010).

Partly because of the stratified nature of the school system and post-school opportunities, alongside the regular school system has developed a shadow system of private supplementary tutoring. It is called a shadow system because it mimics the regular system. When new subjects and other curriculum changes are introduced in the regular system, before long they appear in the shadow; and as the regular system grows, so does the shadow. A major question is whether the shadow education reduces or increases stress for youths and their families.

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To address this question, the paper presents data from Hong Kong collected in 2011/12. The data indicate the scale and nature of shadow education, and perceptions by the recipients of the costs and benefits. To provide a wider lens through which to view the Hong Kong data, the paper commences by outlining features of shadow education around the world and particularly in Asia. The paper then turns to the Hong Kong data, explaining how the data were collected and what they say. The paper concludes by returning to the wider context.

Shadow Education Around the World

The history of private supplementary tutoring is probably as old as the history of formal schooling. The notion of seeking extra help for children and youths to help them to keep up with peers and/or to stretch their learning further is thus longstanding. However, in earlier decades and centuries supplementary tutoring was modest in scale, chiefly confined to relatively prosperous households. In the contemporary era, shadow education reaches a much wider spectrum of income groups and has become a major phenomenon around the world.

The literature on shadow education has particularly highlighted its significance in East Asia (e.g. Zeng, 1999; Dawson, 2010). South Korea has been well known for its *hagwons*, Japan for its counterpart *juku*, and Taiwan for its *buxiban* (see e.g. Seth, 2002; Roesgaard, 2006; Liu, 2012). These terms are sometimes translated as 'cram schools', though that description only addresses one dimension of the work of the institutions and tends to focus on the senior secondary level. These institutions in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan have been prominent for many decades. More recently, tutoring institutions have emerged in significant scale in Vietnam and Mainland China (see e.g. Dang, 2008; Xue & Ding, 2009; Zhang, 2011). Some indicators of the scale of tutoring received both from institutions and less formal arrangements are evident from the following statistics:

- *China:* A 2010 survey of junior middle school students in Jinan city, Shandong Province, found that 28.8% were receiving tutoring in mathematics, 29.3% in English, and 11.6% in Chinese (Zhang, 2011, p.124).
- *Japan:* A 2007 national survey found that *juku* served 15.9% of Primary 1 children, that this proportion rose steadily in later grades, and that it reached 65.2% in Junior Secondary 3. In addition, 6.8% of Junior Secondary 3 pupils received tutoring at home, and 15.0% followed correspondence courses (Japan, 2008, p.13).
- *South Korea:* In 2008, 87.9% of elementary school pupils were estimated to be receiving tutoring. In middle school the proportion was 72.5%; and in general high school it was 60.5% (Kim, 2010, p.302).
- *Taiwan:* The 2001 Taiwan Education Panel Survey indicated that 72.9% of Grade 7 students were receiving tutoring for an average of 6.5 hours per week (Liu, 2012, p.49).
- *Vietnam:* Dang (2011) reviewed 2006 household survey data. He found that 32.0% of primary students were receiving tutoring. At lower and upper secondary levels, respective proportions were 46.0% and 63.0%.

Shadow education is also extensive in much of South Asia (Pallegedara, 2011; Sujatha & Rani, 2011; Bray & Lykins, 2012), Southern Europe (Bray, 2011; Kassotakis & Verdis, 2013), and parts of North Africa (Akkari, 2010; Sobhy, 2012). Percentages of students receiving shadow education are lower in Sub-Saharan Africa, North America, South America and Western Europe, but the phenomenon is growing in those regions (Bray, 2009, 2011; Burch, 2009; Lee et al., 2009). It is partly driven by the pressures of competition with the intensification of globalisation, and facilitated by the increasing acceptability of marketisation in the education sector. In some locations, including Mainland China but not Hong Kong, Japan or South Korea, teachers are permitted to gain extra incomes from providing private tutoring to the students for whom those teachers are already responsible in regular classes.

One driver of demand for tutoring, particularly where enrolment rates are high, is the fear by students and families that they might lose out in competition if they do not invest in tutoring. This situation creates emotional stresses and financial burdens. Mauritius is among the countries in which successive governments have sought to address the problem. A 2001 policy document, evocatively entitled *Ending the Rat Race in Primary Education*, stated that private tutoring was "exerting immense psychological pressure on both students and their parents and perverting the very function of the school within society" (Mauritius, 2001, p.3). The government embarked on various measures to dampen demand, though with limited success (Bray, 2009, p.61-64). A 2006 review of the education system (Bah-lalya, 2006, p.75) stated that interviewees felt that their children would lose out on essential parts of the curriculum if they did not participate in private tutoring; and subsequent parliamentary debate observed that "children spend an average of 9 hours a day in regular and additional tutoring while adults have a 7-hour standard working day" (Mauritius, 2011a, p.3). At the time of the debate, the government already prohibited the provision (and receipt) of supplementary tutoring during the first three grades of primary school, and the authorities then extended this prohibition to the fourth grade (Mauritius, 2011b). However, the prohibition was not universally respected, and in any case it only applied to the first four grades. Although academic dimensions of schooling were dominant and pupils felt unable to engage in more balanced after-school activities, families felt trapped by the system. Similar remarks have been made in many other contexts (see e.g. Dawson, 2010; Silova, 2010; Barrow & Lochan, 2012; Bray et al., 2013).

However, such emphasis on possible negative sides of supplementary tutoring must be balanced by possible positive sides. Most obviously, effective tutoring can help slow learners to keep up with their peers, and in this way can support children's self-esteem and sense of achievement. In France, for example, Oller and Glasman (2013, p.7) have pointed out that tutoring support programmes:

> act as 'intermediary spaces' in which children and adolescents have the chance to admit gaps in their knowledge without being punished at school or harassed by impatient parents. Students can thus do and redo tasks they did not perform well and, ultimately, take charge of their own learning.

Equally, tutoring can stretch the learning of high achievers, giving them satisfaction that they might not otherwise feel when moving at the pace of the majority in their classes. For the parents, investment in tutoring may give a feeling that they are doing what they can for their children at crucial stages in their children's lives; and effective tutoring arguably enhances overall levels of human capital for society.

Shadow Education in Hong Kong

Data Collection and Description

The data reported below were collected from students through both questionnaires and interviews. The survey was conducted in 16 secondary schools, representing 3.0 per cent of the total number in Hong Kong. Among these schools was a range of ability bands. The Hong Kong authorities group government and aided institutions into three bands according to the achievement scores of their student intakes during the last two years of primary schooling. Band One has the high achievers, Band Two has the middle achievers, and Band Three has the low achievers.

For the research, within each school two classes of each grade were randomly selected; and 1,646 student questionnaires were administered among which 1,624 usable responses (98.7%) were received. Among them 59.5% were from Form 3, and 40.5% were from Form 6. In order to secure data about tutoring not only during term-time but also during vacations, students were asked about tutoring received within the previous 12 months (i.e. including a period of Form 2 for Form 3 students, and Form 5 for Form 6 students). Options on the types of tutoring included one-to-one, small group, lecture style, online, and others. Data were also collected on numerous other

dimensions, estimated family incomes, the time spent on tutoring, and students' perceptions of the impact on their leisure activities.

In addition to the questionnaire component, 105 students were randomly selected for individual interview. In both Form 3 and Form 6, efforts were made to interview both students who received tutoring and who did not receive tutoring. The text that follows draws on both the quantitative findings and insights from the interview data.

Scale, Intensity and Financial Burden

Overall, 53.8 per cent of sampled Form 3 students and 71.8 per cent of Form 6 students reported that they had received private supplementary tutoring during the previous 12 months. These figures are comparable with those reported above from South Korea and Taiwan, and are considerably higher than in most other societies (Bray, 2009, 2011).

It is commonly assumed by laypeople that more tutoring is received by lower achievers (who are arguably more in need of it) than by high achievers. The data showed in fact that students in the higher-band schools were more likely to receive tutoring than their counterparts in lower-band schools. Thus, 74.2% of students in the sampled Band One schools received tutoring, compared with 61.7% of students in Band Two schools and 48.6% of students in Band Three schools.

However, students compare themselves not with the total population of students in Hong Kong but with their peers in the same schools. The questionnaire asked respondents to assess their performance relative to peers in the same grades in their schools. The students who rated themselves as good were more likely to receive tutoring than those who rated themselves as excellent, perhaps because the good students wished to reach the top ranks and those who considered themselves to be excellent were already confident of their performance. The students who described themselves as fair were the least likely to receive tutoring, while those who described their performance as poor or very poor were the most likely to receive tutoring.

Table 1 shows the intensity of tutoring. English, mathematics and Chinese were the most popular subjects, in which many students received one to two hours of tutoring per week during the ordinary and holiday seasons, and more during the examination season. Many students received tutoring in more than one subject. Form 3 students reported an average of 5.44 hours per week in tutoring during the examination season, while their counterparts on Form 6 reported an average of 4.76 hours (Table 2). Since in addition students needed time for travel, preparation and follow-up, this was a significant overall commitment.

Table 1: Time spent on private tutoring by Hong Kong secondary school students, by subject and season (hours per week)

	% of all students#	Ordinary season			Examination season			Holiday season		
		N	Mean	Range	N	Mean	Range	N	Mean	Range
English	71.7%	654	2.19	0.25-50.00	583	2.50	0.50-50.00	509	2.00	0.50-14.00
Mathematics	58.0%	530	2.19	0.50-25.00	499	2.85	0.50-51.00	398	2.09	0.50-42.00
Chinese	38.8%	325	1.88	0.25-48.00	318	2.33	0.50-50.00	244	1.70	0.50-12.00
Liberal Studies	13.4%	98	1.92	0.25-18.00	110	2.44	0.50-24.00	75	1.95	0.50-1.95
Science*	29.9%	262	2.23	.025-24.00	257	2.55	0.50-34.00	205	2.37	0.30-42.00
Business**	11.1%	92	2.02	0.50-14.00	92	2.57	0.50-25.00	71	2.25	0.30-15.00
Humanities***	8.8%	63	1.83	0.50-7.50	77	2.54	0.50-20.00	40	1.91	0.50-8.00
Other subjects	3.4%	28	2.27	1.00-10.00	31	3.35	1.00-20.00	25	2.28	1.00-8.00
Number of cases	995									

* Science is a combination of biology, chemistry and physics
** Business is a combination of economics, accounting and business
*** Humanities covers humanities subjects other than English and Chinese, including history and geography
\# All students who spend time on tutoring in a subject during ordinary season, examination season and/or holiday season are included in the percentage

Table 2: Time spent on private tutoring in all subjects, by grade and season (hours per week)

	Mean	S.D.	No. of cases
Form 3 students			
During ordinary time	3.92	6.10	517
During examination time	5.44	11.44	517
During holiday time	2.52	3.42	517
Form 6 students			
During ordinary time	4.70	6.44	471
During examination time	4.76	8.32	471
During holiday time	3.98	6.71	471

Table 3 indicates the responses to the question whether the costs of tutoring were a burden to the students' families. One third (34.1%) of respondents stated that these costs were a burden, and a further 17.3% strongly felt that they were a burden. Among households with estimated monthly incomes above HK$15,000, the costs of tutoring per student were estimated to consume between 2.3% and 8.8% of the incomes. This burden might seem manageable, though the proportions would have to be multiplied for households with more than one child at school. The estimated burden of tutoring costs per child reached between 20.3% and 30.5% for households with estimated incomes between HK$4,000 and HK$5,999. The burden was greater still for households with incomes below that level – though the number of cases in the sample was small, presumably because most households in this group felt that they could not afford tutoring.

Table 3: Extent to which respondents felt that private tutoring was a financial burden

What is your view on the statement that "Private tutoring is a financial burden to you and your family"?	Cost of Private Tutoring (HK$/month)		No. of cases	
	Mean	SD	N	%
strongly disagree	1,287	1,293	84	8.8%
disagree	1,239	1,031	256	26.7%
agree	1,676	2,727	327	34.1%
strongly agree	1,860	2,584	166	17.3%
no opinion	1,782	3,834	127	13.2%
Total	1,571	2,469	960	100.0%

Perceptions of Benefits

On the other side of the equation were the perceived benefits. Students generally felt that tutoring improved their examination grades, confidence in examinations, revision skills, and learning strategies (Table 4). These are clearly important domains. The questionnaire also asked about the effects of tutoring on students' relationships with their school teachers. Respondents were more neutral in this domain, and the interviews suggested that it was not a major consideration for the students.

Examples of how the students perceived the benefits were provided by the interviews. One focus was on academic achievement. For instance:

Interviewer: Is [tutoring] effective?
Student: Yes.
Interviewer: How?
Student: I don't have to do homework at home.
Interviewer: Do you think it helps your homework?
Student: Yes. If there is something I do not know, I can ask the tutor.

Table 4: Students' perceptions of effectiveness of private tutoring

Private tutoring has improved my …	Percentage %					Mean*
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	No opinion (2.5)	
Examination grades	0.9	5.9	62.4	25.9	5.0	3.16
Relationship with school teachers	8.9	38.3	21.9	4.5	26.6	2.35
Confidence in examinations	1.7	10.5	55.4	25.8	6.6	3.09
Revision skills	1.2	11.0	56.5	24.3	7.0	3.07
Confidence in school performance	2.6	20.1	50.1	15.4	11.8	2.84
Learning strategies	1.4	11.9	53.0	24.8	8.9	3.06

N=992.
* In the questionnaire, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree; 4 = strongly disagree; 2.5 = no opinion. Thus, "mean > 2.50" implies that students in general agreed with the statement, and "mean < 2.50" implies that students in general disagreed with the statement.

> *Interviewer:* Do you think your performance improved after receiving tutoring?
> *Student:* Yes.
> (transcript code: S3-M-Yes)
>
> *Interviewer:* Were your academic results better in the past?
> *Student:* I got very low mark before. I usually got 20 to 30 marks in the past, but I improved after receiving tutoring and nearly passed. Sometimes I pass while sometimes I get a few marks less than the passing line.
> (transcript code: S3-F-Yes)

Another student elaborated by contrasting school lessons with tutorial lessons:

> *Student:* I think tutoring is very helpful. It definitely improves my subject....
> *Interviewer:* Why do you think it's effective? In what way do you think it's effective?
> *Student:* If I do not understand something in class, I can get through with [the tutor] and he can go more in depth with me.... He explains in a way that is easier for me to understand. Because I think I have a different learning style than most students. What the teacher does in school may not be suitable for me....
> *Interviewer:* So you think the tutor makes the subject easier for you?
> *Student:* Yes
> *Interviewer:* How do you think he makes it easier for you? What is the difference between school teachers and tutor?
> *Student:* The school teacher has to teach the whole group and in a way that everyone can learn; but for me sometimes it is not good because I might not understand, so the tutor just clarifies for me.
> *Interviewer:* So the tutor offers quite a different way of teaching to you?
> *Student:* Yes
> (transcript code: S6-M-Yes)

A related question concerns relationships with peers. Some interviewees, especially ones in Form 6, indicated that their decisions to seek tutoring were influenced by recommendations from friends and classmates. However, few said that receipt or non-receipt of tutoring significantly affected their friendship patterns and peer relationships.

Opportunity Costs

Alongside the questions about the scale of tutoring were questions about what the students had to sacrifice when they received extra lessons. Focusing on after-school activities, Table 5 compares the responses of students who did and did not receive tutoring. Those without tutoring indicated that they had more time for sports, shopping, computer games and friends, though the differences between the two groups were not major. Interestingly, students with private tutoring spent more time playing musical instruments, perhaps indicating that their families considered both academic work and music to be important. The two groups had similar amounts of time to read for enjoyment.

Table 5: Differences in frequency of after-school activities between students with and without tutoring

Activities after school		Frequency (%)				No. of cases	F (χ^2 test)
		Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Every day or almost every day		
Reading for enjoyment	With tutoring	15.7%	40.0%	26.7%	17.6%	978	1.920
	Without tutoring	18.4%	38.4%	26.0%	17.3%	620	
Playing sports	With tutoring	15.8%	32.0%	40.4%	11.8%	985	7.842**
	Without tutoring	15.8%	26.4%	42.6%	15.2%	625	
Playing musical instrument	With tutoring	46.6%	18.6%	24.2%	10.6%	976	31.490***
	Without tutoring	60.0%	16.0%	14.7%	9.2%	617	
(Window) shopping	With tutoring	13.8%	45.7%	36.0%	4.5%	976	6.584*
	Without tutoring	14.4%	42.9%	35.3%	7.4%	617	
Playing computer games	With tutoring	14.1%	18.7%	32.0%	35.1%	983	38.374***
	Without tutoring	9.5%	12.3%	28.4%	49.8%	624	
Spending time with friends	With tutoring	4.3%	23.6%	29.0%	43.1%	985	18.290***
	Without tutoring	5.4%	15.7%	27.7%	51.2%	625	

*: $p < 0.10$; **: $p < 0.05$; ***: $p < 0.01$.

Table 6 is related to Table 5 with a focus on family activities. Compared to those without tutoring, students with tutoring spent more time with their families (parents or/and grandparents) in discussing school life, eating dinner together, discussing social issues or news, and watching television together. Again, however, this may reflect family background more than the opportunity costs of tutoring: parents who pushed their children to tutoring may have been more likely also to stress the importance of family activities.

Table 6: Differences in frequency of family activities between students with and without tutoring

Student's family activities (with parents and grandparents)		Frequency (%)				No. of cases	F (χ^2 test)
		Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Everyday or almost everyday		
Discuss school life	With tutoring	19.4%	26.1%	31.0%	23.5%	988	21.918***
	Without tutoring	28.0%	27.7%	27.2%	17.1%	625	
Help with homework	With tutoring	63.6%	19.9%	12.7%	3.9%	987	3.258
	Without tutoring	67.7%	16.9%	12.2%	3.2%	622	
Eat dinner together	With tutoring	2.5%	4.5%	11.6%	81.5%	987	7.422*
	Without tutoring	4.8%	5.6%	11.3%	78.3%	622	
Discuss social issues or news	With tutoring	14.2%	23.4%	39.6%	22.8%	987	29.643***
	Without tutoring	23.7%	25.6%	31.3%	19.4%	624	
Watch TV together	With tutoring	8.5%	8.9%	25.2%	57.3%	987	5.570
	Without tutoring	11.2%	10.3%	21.8%	56.7%	624	

*: $p < 0.10$; **: $p < 0.05$; ***: $p < 0.01$.

Sources of Pressure

The following dialogue with a Form 6 student receiving tutoring reflected the pressure for grades, self-expectations and the roles of parents and teachers.

> *Interviewer:* Do you feel pressure?
> *Student:* Yes, a lot.
> *Interviewer:* Where does it come from?
> *Student:* Come from myself.
> *Interviewer:* Do your parents give you pressure?
> *Student:* My father looks at my results. I am much poorer than before. I am not performing well now. I have a high expectation on myself, but I have no time to reach a good level within a short period. I want to give up sometimes so became poorer recently. I can keep my level with my language subjects. My elective subjects give me a lot of pressure.
> *Interviewer:* Do teachers give you pressure?
>
> *Student:* Yes. Some of them do.
>
> (transcript code: S6-F-Yes)

The question then is whether the tutoring reduces or increases the pressure. This particular student did not express a clear answer on this matter, but another student in a similar situation indicated that the tutoring increased the pressure.

> *Interviewer:* Do school teachers give you pressure?
> *Student:* Yes. Sometimes they encourage us to do better if they think we are capable. However, such an encouragement is also a pressure. Tutors give even greater pressure.
> *Interviewer:* How do your tutors give you pressure?
> *Student:* They may not put [direct] pressure. They may praise some outstanding students in front of the whole class that make you embarrassed.
>
> (transcript code: S6-F-Yes)

This student also received pressure from her parents. Her case resembled another who indicated that his parents would scold him if his results were poor, and would ask him to reduce his sports. However, these students did not necessarily resent the pressure since they felt that it could indeed push them to greater heights for their own benefit.

In contrast were students who felt that tutoring was ineffective. For example:

> *Interviewer:* Do you feel it effective?
> *Student:* No, I found it might not be effective for lower forms. That's why I stopped tutoring.
> *Interviewer:* I see.
> *Student:* Maybe the tutor did not teach well…. I had tried Putonghua [Chinese] tutoring. During the tutoring lesson, the tutor just read the story to us. I thought she wanted us to listen to more Putonghua.
>
> (transcript code: S6-F-No)

Another student expressed the view that tutoring could overload students without benefit.

> *Student:* When I was in secondary school, I could not follow up some subjects, mathematics. My parents advised me to have tutoring. But I thought that it was tiring to have tutoring after school and meanwhile the tutoring content was just repeated.
> *Interviewer:* So you think that it is useless?
> *Student:* I would not think that it is useless, but I think it may lead to an opposite result since tutoring to some extent is just endless drilling. My friends have tutoring and they have much homework to do. In some cases they even have to do the tutoring homework in school lessons…. I think that this is excessive and would lead to the opposite results since they were not able to

catch what should be learned in school lessons. They do not pay attention in the lesson but keep doing the tutoring homework.

(transcript code: S3-F-No)

Much also depends on the approaches of the tutors. One student who felt that he was scolded frequently during school hours by the teachers was then scolded again after school hours by the tutor. Under such circumstances, it is perhaps unsurprising that this student was performing poorly and did not consider the tutoring to help.

Further diversity was revealed by other cases. Some students did not receive tutoring because they were confident and did not feel a need. Others felt that the absence of tutoring was itself a pressure: they would have liked to have tutoring, but their families could not afford it. Yet others felt that their lives were better without tutoring. One Form 6 student who used to receive tutoring reported that she felt more relaxed without it:

I know a classmate who has Economics tutoring. But her recent exam result is poorer than mine. I think no tutoring is better than with tutoring. Sometimes … it would be very late if they attend tutoring after school. So everything shifted late, including bath, dinner and sleep. So people may feel tired the next day.

(transcript code: S6-F-No)

Pedagogical Approaches

Some of the comments above may be linked to pedagogical approaches. One-to-one tutoring is obviously different from lecture-style tutoring delivered by 'star' tutors, and may even be different from small group tutoring. At first sight, one-to-one tutoring might seem to be the most desirable since content and style of instruction can be tailored to the single students. Certainly the respondents themselves indicated that this was the preferred form of tutoring. However, some students highlighted the benefits of small group tutoring, chiefly that they could learn from classmates and perhaps had less pressure because the tutors focused on classmates as well as on them. This dimension was also evident in some responses concerning lecture-style tutoring: some students actively preferred the anonymity of the large classes.

Implications

The above remarks underline the complexity of processes and relationships. The learning approaches imposed by the education system and/or chosen by the students themselves are strongly influenced by structural traditions in schooling, the motivations and personalities of the students, their family circumstances, and their relationships with teachers and peers. Equally, in the domain of private tutoring much depends on the motivations, personalities, pedagogical skills and marketing approaches of the tutors.

The question then, for a conference devoted to youth counselling, concerns the implications for the youth and for the adults who support and interact with them. Certainly tutoring is not a universal remedy for reducing stress, since it can also increase it; but more positively the right types of tutoring can certainly help students to keep up with their peers and cope with the pressures of the education system.

At the same time, this paper may raise some fundamental questions about the education system within which the youth have to operate. The high-sounding goals of the Hong Kong government's education reform include construction of "a learning environment that will induce students to be curious, to question and to explore", and that "will give students the opportunity to exhibit their abilities in independent thinking and creativity, and thus nurture more creative talents" (Hong Kong, Education Commission, 2000, p.34). The ultimate objective, the document declared is "to enable every student to achieve all-round development according to his/her own attributes" (p.36). Yet

not all students and families feel that the system achieves these attributes. Although the reform document stressed a "no loser" principle (p.36), many students and families fear becoming losers, partly because they know that the competitive reality has to produce losers as well as winners. They invest in private tutoring as a form of protection against losing.

Some of the underlying forces may be illustrated by experiences linked to Liberal Studies. This subject was introduced in the reform, and had its first public examinations in 2012. It permitted and required considerable flexibility, with an issue-enquiry approach that aimed to "develop independent learning capabilities and cross-curricular thinking" (Hong Kong, Curriculum Development Council, 2007, p.2). Yet Table 1 above shows that 13.4% of the sampled students in 2011/12 were receiving tutoring in Liberal Studies. The percentage was much lower than in English, Mathematics, Chinese and Science; but it is noteworthy, given the orientation and design of the subject, that it was on the list at all. Among Form 6 students sampled, 16.6% were receiving tutoring in Liberal Studies – and much of this tutoring was of the large-lecture examination-oriented type that was the antithesis of the goals of the official curriculum (Chan, 2012). One major driving force was anxiety by parents and families who faced new structures and felt unwilling to take risks. Again the stresses caused by the curriculum reform were evident; and for at least some students the tutoring techniques and the demands of time and finance may have increased rather than reduced those stresses.

Conclusions

In some parts of the world, private supplementary tutoring has become so common that it is perceived as a natural element of the lives of students and their families. With reference to Egypt, for example, Hartmann (2013, p.59) observed that:

> Rather than a remedial measure for weak students, private and group tutoring have become a 'normal' and seemingly indispensable part of the education process…, and prevail across social classes and educational stages.

Similar remarks have been made in Turkey (Gök, 2010), Sri Lanka (Suraweera, 2011) and Greece (Kassotakis & Verdis, 2013). Hong Kong does not currently have shadow education enrolment rates at quite the levels of these countries, but it is not far behind. In particular, when 71.8% of Form 6 students receive forms of shadow education, the 28.2% who do not are the exception rather than the norm.

From a systemic perspective, the fact that so many Hong Kong students and their families seem to consider private supplementary tutoring to be a necessary investment sends a message about the mainstream school system as well as about the shadow. It also raises a warning signal about wider social implications. While many families can easily afford shadow education, for some it is a financial burden and for others it is out of reach. In these circumstances, shadow education is a stratifying force behind the façade that stresses equality of opportunity through fee-free education.

The scale, nature and intensity of the shadow sector send some warnings about psychological well-being. The demands of education systems create major pressures for young people and their families, particularly at the time of end-of-secondary watershed examinations but also in lower grades. Students in parts of East Asia may experience heavier academic burdens and greater stress than their counterparts in other cultures (Huan et al., 2009; Dunne et al., 2010; Ahn & Baek, 2013). Certain types of tutoring can help certain types of student, though it is obvious that low-income households cannot afford the same sorts of support as can high-income households – and some students whose families do invest in tutoring might be better off without it. Alongside the anticipated outcomes, shadow education may have unintended consequences for youths and their families.

In Hong Kong, as elsewhere, it would be unwise to make blanket recommendations on what sorts and volumes of tutoring are appropriate and inappropriate for what types of youth. This is because individual circumstances must be taken into account, with attention not only to the available

finances and opportunity costs for the students but also to the availability of tutors with personalities and pedagogical approaches that can match the learning styles of the learners. At the same time, the counselling profession might note the extent to which the scale of shadow education has grown.

Finally, just as the shadow on a sundial tells the observer about the changing time of day, the shadow of an education system can tell the observer about the changing pressures in society. The Hong Kong government's education reform documents barely recognised the existence of the shadow sector, and inadequate attention is given in the counterpart documents of other countries. Arguably shadow education should be a much more central component of professional discussion not only in Hong Kong but also internationally.

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The Best Practices of Human Rights (ATHAM) Programme in Selected Secondary Schools in Malaysia

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Abstract: *The World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005 – ongoing), set up by United Nations General Assembly and coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to promote a common understanding of basic principles and methodologies of human rights education, to provide a realistic framework for action, and to strengthen partnerships and cooperation from international to grass-root levels. Aligned with the World Programme for Human Rights Education, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) in partnership with the Ministry of Education Malaysia implemented the first phase of the Best Practices of Human Rights programme, known as the ATHAM programme in five selected secondary schools in Malaysia. A research study using mixed method sequential exploratory design was conducted to examine the schools' experiences with the ATHAM programme in terms of participation, implementation and challenges. The respondents consisted of school administrators, teachers and pupils; in total, 103 respondents were interviewed and 798 respondents answered the questionnaires. Drawing from these schools' experiences, this article discusses the best practices of human rights or ATHAM programme in selected secondary schools in Malaysia.*

Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) clearly stipulated that human rights education (HRE) is an integral part of the right to education and that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Article 26.2). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) expressed that HRE should "contribute to the development of individuals who possess the skills to interact in a society … providing students with the abilities to accompany and produce societal changes … as a way to empower people, improve their quality of life … participate in decision making processes leading to social cultural and economic policies" (UNHCR, 2009).

HRE in schools is important for democratic citizenship, and the education for mutual respect and understanding as it promotes equality, empowerment and participation, as well as conflict prevention and resolution. It entails conveying ideas and information to students on the importance of human rights, and nurturing the values and attitudes that lead to the support of these rights and the way they live. HRE will help to develop a society where the human rights of all are respected, protected and fulfilled (cf. OSCE, 2009).

In Malaysia, HRE in schools is seen to be important as there is a growing concern on some school practices that contradict the UNDHR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). For instance, the Education Act 1996 states that caning is allowed but to male students only. In

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using caning as a disciplinary measure, schools are to adhere to the disciplinary procedures set by the Ministry of Education. Whilst disciplinary measures are deemed to be justifiable in Malaysian schools, there were some parents and the general public who voiced their concern on the use of caning as effective measure and their fear of abuse of power (SUHAKAM, 2006). A research study on knowledge and practice of human rights in secondary schools was conducted by SUHAKAM in 2003. It was a survey of which 5,754 secondary students, 2,132 teachers and 142 administrators from 40 urban and rural schools answered the questionnaires. The results showed that majority of the students, school administrators, and teachers favoured caning of male students. In addition, more than 60% of the students and 50% of the teachers stated that discrimination was practised in their schools. Discrimination was often based on gender, race, religion, social standing and economic status. For the students, discrimination based on academic ability was common (SUHAKAM, 2006).

It was often reported in the local media of the students' delinquent behaviour that reflect violations of human rights. Gang fights, extortion, bullying, vandalism and molestation in schools are some incidences of students' misbehaviour and disciplinary problems. There were also reported cases of teachers and school administrators who deprived the students of their rights such as teachers who humiliated and disallowed students to express their ideas and views freely (SUHAKAM, 2006). In addition there were reported incidences in school of sexual and physical abuses of the children by the adults. Such incidences in the school threaten the students' security and well-being to learn in a safe environment. Perhaps through HRE, incidences on violations of the children's rights could be lowered. All teachers and students would also be more aware of their rights and the rights of others and subsequently they can become more understanding, responsible, and respectful and accept each other's differences as individuals with rights. This is particularly important in a multi-racial and religious society in Malaysia.

On 10 December 2004, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education (HRE) to advance the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors (UNESCO, 2006). The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provides global coordination of the World Programme. Building on the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), the World Programme for HRE seeks to promote a common understanding of basic principles and methodologies of HRE, provide a concrete framework for action and strengthen partnerships and cooperation from the international level down to the grass roots. It states that,

> Human rights education should not only be theoretical but should also provide opportunities for young people to develop and practice the skills to respect human rights and citizenship through "school life", i.e. all aspects of school as a living, social environment with its collective rules, interpersonal conflicts, time and opportunities for co-operation, and through opportunities for spontaneous initiatives by the pupils outside the actual teaching activities. (UNESCO, Human rights education, n.d.)

Unlike the specific time frame of the UN Decade for HRE, the World Programme for HRE is structured in consecutive phase so as to further focus national HRE efforts on specific sectors/issues. The first phase (2005-2009) focused on HRE in the primary and secondary school systems. The second phase (2010-2015) focuses on HRE for higher education and on human rights training programmes for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel. The First Phase of the Plan of Action of the World Programme for HRE (2005-2007) was adopted by all Member States of the United Nations General Assembly on 14th July 2005. The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia widely known by its acronym SUHAKAM (*Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia*) states that Malaysia, being a UN Member State, has the responsibility to implement the Action Plan of the World Programme for HRE (SUHAKAM, 2009). Hence under the Human Rights Education in School committee of the Education Working Group, SUHAKAM undertook a holistic programme on Best Practices of Human Rights (*Amalam Terbaik Hak Asasi Manusia*) in schools, known as ATHAM programme (SUHAKAM, 2009).

The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) was established in 1999 by an Act of Parliament, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Act (Act 597). Under the Act, SUHAKAM is assigned among others, "to promote awareness of and provide education in relation to human rights" (Section 4(1)). On this basis, education on human rights is considered as a fundamental responsibility of SUHAKAM. One of the working committees of SUHAKAM is the Human Rights Education and Promotion Working Group (EWG). It was set up to promote among others HRE for all members of society and collaborate with government agencies, non-governmental organisations and civil society in the implementation of HRE programmes (SUHAKAM, Education and Promotion Working Group, n.d.).

SUHAKAM has produced several reports and research relevant to HRE, such as the Report on Access to Education in Malaysia (n.d.), the Report of the Roundtable Discussion Convention on the Rights of the Child (2005), Human Rights Lesson Plan for Southeast Asian schools (n.d.), the Human Rights Approach on the Millennium Development Goal - Goals 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education (2006), and the Research on Knowledge and Practice of Human Rights in Secondary Schools (2006). In addition SUHAKAM has also conducted in collaboration with various government agencies, including the Ministry of Education many HRE seminars and workshops on UNDHR and CRC for the various sectors of the society *inter alia* school students, university students, teachers, lecturers, education officers, orang asli (indigenous) groups, police, and other government enforcement staff (SUHAKAM Education and Promotion Working Group). One of the recent education programmes implemented by SUHAKAM in 2009 is the ATHAM programme which is the focus of this research study.

The Best Practices of Human Rights (ATHAM) Programme

The main aim of the best practices of human rights or ATHAM programme is to "create and practice a culture of human rights in school responsibly for continual social harmony and living". The objectives of the programme are to: (i) encourage students and all school stakeholders to give emphasis to and take action towards the practice of human rights; (ii) inculcate mutual respect and responsibility towards human rights and its practices in daily lives; (iii) increase understanding and the practice of human rights towards harmony for all; (iv) encourage pupils and teachers to give emphasis to aspects of human rights in the planning and implementation of school activities; (v) share experiences on human rights practices in school with the local community; and (vi) strengthen the relationships and interactions among students regardless of race, religion or gender. (SUHAKAM, 2009. Unofficial translation by the researchers).

In the first phase of the ATHAM programme, five secondary schools in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka were selected. The five schools were nominated by the various states' department of education and they gave their consent to participate in the programme. SUHAKAM provided the schools with a guideline on the ATHAM programme as well as documents on CRC and UNDHR. The ATHAM programme guideline consisted of suggestions on the whole-school approach in the implementation of the programme in school. The suggestions included forming an ATHAM implementation committee; and selection of any areas of the whole-school approach on HRE either in the curriculum, co-curriculum, school management or students' affair. In the guideline, schools were also requested to determine the articles in the CRC and UNDHR that the school would like focus on when implementing the ATHAM programme. SUHAKAM with the collaboration of the Ministry of Education conducted a workshop to facilitate the five participating schools to outline their action plans on the ATHAM programme.

It is to be noted that prior to the ATHAM programme, HRE is integrated into the curriculum and co-curriculum in Malaysian schools. It is integrated into the school curriculum through the Moral Education (ME), Islamic Education (IE), and Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) subjects. The ME subject is a compulsory core subject for all non-Muslim students whilst the Muslim students are required to take the IE subject. The core of the ME syllabus is the 36 values that were drawn from various religions, culture and traditions of Malaysian society. The 36 values are categorised

into seven major learning areas of study. These are values related to self-development, family, environment, patriotism, human rights, peace and harmony. By learning all these values, the Ministry of Education aims to develop responsible individuals who are equipped with values that are acceptable to Malaysian society and aligned to universal values. The CCE subject is a compulsory subject for all students. The core of CCE is to educate students on their rights with responsibilities, multiculturalism, and harmonious living in Malaysia's plural society.

Co-curricular activities are compulsory at upper primary (Year 4 to Year 6) and at all secondary (Form 1 to Form 5) levels. All students must participate in at least two activities, of which one must be sports-related. Co-curricular activities are categorised as uniformed groups, performing arts, clubs and societies, and sports and games. These activities provide opportunities for students to develop their interest, talent and aptitude outside the classroom. Students are generally given the right to choose the types of clubs, societies or games that they would like join. Competitions, special projects and programmes are also organised by schools such as Sports Day, Co-curriculum Day, Quran Reading Competition, Career Day, National Day and Anti-Smoking Campaigns.

However, SUHAKAM anticipated that with the ATHAM programme, schools would adopt best practices of human rights by implementing the whole-school approach in HRE as envisaged in the World Programme for HRE. In other words, the practices of human rights should not be reduced to merely learning of human rights content in the classrooms but should also include opportunities for students to develop and practise human rights in their daily interactions with others, both inside and outside the classroom, within the school environment. It is in this context that the best practices of human rights programme or ATHAM programme is considered to be a HRE programme and the terms the best practices of human rights programme and the ATHAM programme are used interchangeably. This article draws on the study conducted on the selected five secondary schools' experiences with the best practices of human rights programme in Malaysia. The study was funded by SUHAKAM to a team of researchers from Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia.

Research Methodology

The main purpose of the study was to explore the five selected secondary schools' experiences with the SUHAKAM's Best Practices in Human Rights (ATHAM) programme. It focussed on the participation, challenges, implementation, benefits, and future plans of the schools with the ATHAM programme. The study used mixed method sequential exploratory design (Creswell, 2008) to examine the schools' experiences with the ATHAM programme. The first phase was the collection and analysis of qualitative data using both in-depth and focus group interviews, as well as document analysis. This was then sequentially followed by the collection and analysis of quantitative data using questionnaires that were constructed from the qualitative data. Both the qualitative and quantitative data were then consolidated by using strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis to draw conclusions on the study on the best practices of human rights programme in Malaysian secondary schools. As the HRE activities on the ATHAM programme were conducted outside the classroom, and time constraint in conducting this research study, no classroom observations were made. Hence the findings in this study on the best practices of human rights programme did not include human rights practices in the classroom environment.

Respondents

The respondents consisted of school administrators, teachers and pupils from the five selected secondary schools. A total of 103 respondents were interviewed and 798 respondents answered the questionnaires. The 103 respondents who participated in the interviews were five school principals, four senior assistants, five ATHAM coordinators, 21 teachers involved in the planning and implementation of ATHAM programme, 18 teachers not involved, 28 pupils involved, and 22 pupils not involved in the planning and implementation of the ATHAM programme. The five ATHAM coorinators were appointed by the school principals and they were also the schools' counsellors.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the school principles, senior assistants and the ATHAM coordinators whilst focus group interviews were conducted with the other teachers and the pupils. Out of a total of 798 respondents who participated in the survey 148 of them were teachers and the other 650 were students from the five participating schools. About 75% of the students who were interviewed and answered the questionnaires were between the ages of 16 to 18 years old and at upper secondary school level (Forms 4 to Form Six). They were randomly selected and consisted of those who were involved and those who were not involved in the planning and implementation of the HRE activities organised under the ATHAM programme.

Instruments

As this is a mixed method research design, qualitative and quantitative instruments were used to answer the research questions. The qualitative instruments consisted of a common interview protocol, guidelines on observations, and guidelines on documents. These standard protocols were used by all researchers so as to provide consistency in the data collection procedures at the five different sites. The interview protocol consisted of semi-structured questions for soliciting the experiences of the school principals, senior assistants, the ATHAM programme coordinator, the teachers and pupils who were involved and not involved in the planning and implementation of the ATHAM programme. The main interview questions focussed on seven areas, namely the respondents' involvement in the ATHAM programme, the conditions in their school they would like to improve human rights practices, and the challenges they faced in the ATHAM programme, the ways to overcome the challenges, the implementation, the benefits, and the future plans of the ATHAM programme in their school.

Two sets of questionnaires were then constructed to gather quantitative data. The first set of questionnaires was for the teachers, including the school administrators (principals and senior assistants), whilst the second set of questionnaires was for the pupils. All items in both sets of the questionnaires were similar except for the first section of the questionnaires which was on the background of the respondents, either as teacher or pupil. The items in the questionnaires were constructed based on the objectives of the ATHAM programme and identified themes and sub-themes derived from qualitative data in this research study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis involved three stages. The first stage was the analysis of the qualitative data derived from the interviews, the observational notes and the documents obtained from the five schools. All taped interviews were fully transcribed. The qualitative data from the different groups of respondents (the school administrators, teachers and students) were then content analysed, using inductive and deductive analysis. Open and axial coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) were conducted to identify common themes and sub-themes. The second stage of data analysis entailed analysing the quantitative data obtained from the teachers' and students' questionnaires. Descriptive analyses were conducted using SPSS version 17.0 software. The final stage was the consolidation of the qualitative and quantitative data using strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis to identify the best practices of human rights or ATHAM programme among these five participating secondary schools.

Findings and Discussion

The best practices on human rights schools (ATHAM) programme in Malaysian secondary schools were drawn from the qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the five participating schools on the programme. It is acknowledged that the findings on the best human rights practices programme is limited to the experiences of the teachers (including the school principals or other school administrators) and students in these five secondary schools that participated in the ATHAM

programme. However, the findings from this research study could provide some guidance to other schools in promoting human right practices programme in Malaysian schools.

The Objectives of the ATHAM Programme

Among the six objectives of the ATHAM programme (see page 5), the respondents, namely the school administrators, teachers and students in this research study indicated that the most important objective on the ATHAM programme was to strengthen relationships and interactions among the students, teachers and school administrators regardless of race, religion or gender (mean = 4.65). This was followed by the objective to inculcate mutual respect towards human rights practices among the students, teachers and school administrators (mean = 4.64) and the objective to increase understanding and the practices of human rights towards harmony for all (mean = 4.42).

The perceptions of the teachers and students on strengthening relationships, mutual respect and understanding among students, teachers and school administrators from diverse background in human rights practices seemed to be aligned to the two main thrusts in Malaysia's educational goals of developing human capital development and national unity (Siow & Chang, 2010). Furthermore, living in peace and harmony is important as Malaysia is a plural society, particularly in terms of race and religion. The 2010 population census showed that out of a total population of 28.3 million, 67.4 per cent were Bumiputera (consisting of 63.1 per cent Malay and other indigenous groups), 24.6 per cent Chinese, 7.3 per cent Indians and 0.7 percent others (such as Eurasians). Although Islam is the official religion and the most widely professed religion (61.3 per cent), 19.8 percent of the Malaysian citizens embraced Buddhism, 9.2 per cent Christianity and 6.3 per cent Hinduism (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012).

Participation in the ATHAM Programme

A culture of human rights practices in schools would imply that all pupils and teachers would need information on HRE. As ATHAM is a new HRE programme that is being introduced to encourage all students and teachers to practise human rights in their schools, it is important that information on human rights, particularly on UDHR and CRC be known to all. This is evident as the results of the study indicated that although schools participated in the programme as requested by their respective state department of education, there were some gaps in the dissemination of information on the programme to schools, teachers and students.

The teachers who attended the workshop on the ATHAM programme were not informed of the reasons for their participation. They attended the workshop as they were directed to do so by the school principals. In addition, it was mentioned that prior to their participation at the workshop they lacked knowledge on the UDHR and CRC. It is of interest to note that the school administrators said that they informed all teachers and students of the ATHAM programme at staff meetings and school assemblies. However, teachers and students who were not involved in the planning and implementation of the programme mentioned that they did not get the information on ATHAM from their schools. The quantitative findings showed that the main source of information on human rights and the ATHAM programme to the teachers was the local media and internet (mean = 3.83), but to the students their main source of information was their teachers (mean = 3.57). However the teachers and students who were involved in the planning and implementation of the ATHAM programme claimed that they knew more about UDHR and CRC as a result of their participation in the programme.

It was observed by the researchers during the school visits that all the five schools did attempt to disseminate information about UDHR and CRC as well as the ATHAM programme in the school bulletin boards, along the school corridors or in specially assigned locations within the school compound. Based on the observations, interviews and responses on the questionnaires, it can be implied that there is a need to encourage more active participation of all teachers and students in the school's

ATHAM programme. Wider dissemination of the human rights practices in schools through the local media and the internet would benefit the teachers and subsequently the students as the teachers are an important source of information. Furthermore as emphasised by the teachers and students during the interviews as well as observations of the researchers, leadership role of the principals, specifically in terms of commitment, support and being a role model of human rights practices, is crucially important. This is to ensure that the human rights practices or the ATHAM programme in the school are carried out by the teachers and students.

Improving Human Rights Practices in School

The teachers and students indicated that human rights practices in their schools could be further improved. The qualitative findings showed that there were four areas that the respondents wanted their schools to improve on human rights practices, namely on the education and learning system, the students' discipline and developing them to become better individuals, the school environment, and knowledge on human rights. In terms of improving the education and learning system, a teacher said that all children have a right to learn and that schools have no right to stop them from schooling. However, it was "the parents who did not want their children to attend school". A discipline teacher said that if students "have made mistakes, they should know the disciplinary process". A school principal said that through the ATHAM programme, she hoped that the teachers and students could improve themselves to become "role models" for other students and that it would make them "better individuals". In terms of improving knowledge on human rights, the school principal and the ATHAM coordinator from one school said that through the ATHAM programme, the students would know their right to quality education and their right to participate in co-curriculum activities. Another ATHAM coordinator voiced out that "there seemed to be not much connection between knowledge and human rights practices as it is not formal curriculum."

The quantitative findings indicated that the teachers perceived that the improvement of human rights practices in their schools should be in the students' behaviour (mean = 4.34) and the school environment (mean = 4.27). This was followed by increasing the level of awareness on the human rights (mean = 4.20) and including the human rights practices in the teaching and learning processes (mean = 4.11). On the other hand, the students perceived that the improvement of human rights practices in their schools should be on increasing the level of awareness on the human rights (mean = 4.18), followed by including human rights practices in the teaching and learning processes and in students' behaviour (each with mean = 4.14), and finally changes in school environment (mean = 4.03) . Surprisingly, some teachers were either neutral (35.6%) or agreed (26%) that they believed human rights conditions in their schools cannot be changed (mean = 2.81).

The results clearly indicated that whilst the teachers and school administrators seemed to focus on human rights practices in terms of students' behaviour, particularly in the school discipline, the students wanted to improve their knowledge on human rights. The teachers said that respecting the rights of others and obeying the school rules were clear indications of good human rights practices by the students. During the interviews, there was a general concern among the teachers on the implementation of human rights in school regarding a "balance between being realistic and idealistic" and that teachers "cannot give full freedom" to the students. Concerns were raised that if the students were to know of their rights it could lead to some "difficulties or undesirable behaviour".

Implementing the ATHAM Programme

All the five schools said that the SUHAKAM's officers, High Commissioners, and members of the SUHAKAM Human Rights Education in School committee visited their schools to assist them in planning, executing and monitoring the ATHAM programme. The study found that that the ATHAM programme was implemented in all the schools through special activities, co-curriculum and the school management particularly on students' discipline as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Schools' Action Plans on the ATHAM Programme

Name of School	Action Plan Theme	Objective	Examples of ATHAM Activities
School A	*Ambang Kemerdekaan: Cintai Negara Kita* (Emergence of Independence: Love our Country)	1. To uphold and practise human rights principles in respecting the right of every person to protect the wellbeing and welfare of all in the school, community and nation 2. To create solidarity among each other.	Speeches by students during school assemblies Open discussions or Dialogues between school principal and students. 4. Organisation of Prefects' Day and Convention by the students. 5. Display of information on UDHR and CRC as well as issues on human rights in "Laluan (Pathway) ATHAM" and bulletin boards.
School B	*Pemantapan Disiplin* (Improving Discipline)	1. To give awareness to students their responsibilities towards the school and each other. 2. To give awareness to the students that their actions are limited by the school rules. 3. To respect the freedom among teachers and students in promoting peace and general well-being of all.	1. A five-minutes slot on ATHAM programme in school radio 2. Information on UDHR and CRC articles as well as current issues on human rights in bulletin boards 3. Students' suggestion box 4. Participation of students in running the election of prefects
School C	*Program Jom Ke Sekolah* (Come to School programme)	1. To improving students' attendance to school 2. To have zero truancy	1. Quizzes and essay competitions on HRE 2. Mural painting on UDHR and CRC articles on walls along the school corridors
School D	*ATHAM "Laluan Hak Asasi Manusia"* (ATHAM's Pathway to Human Rights)	1. To increase understanding on human rights among the school citizens.	1. Quizzes and essay competitions on HRE 2. Co-curriculum carnival 3. Display of UDHR and CRC articles as well as current issues on human rights in the "Pondok (Hut) ATHAM" 4. A five-minutes slot on the ATHAM programme in school radio
School E	Headcount *Barakah* (Acclaiming Headcount)	To develop students' mental capability, personality, talent and physical ability to their highest potentials.	1. Participation of students in running the election of prefects 2. Information on UDHR and CRC articles as well as current issues on human rights in bulletin boards

The activities organised under the ATHAM programme were found to be aligned to several articles in UDHR and CRC. For instance, UDHR Article 19 and CRC Article 13 (freedom of expression) were articulated in quizzes, speeches by students, open discussions between the school principal and students, and the students' participation in the running of elections of prefects; CRC Article 15 (freedom of association) and Article 31 (right to leisure, recreation and cultural activities) were articulated in co-curriculum carnival, facilities for musical and cultural activities, and Prefects' Dinner

and Convention organised by the prefects themselves; UDHR Article 3 (right to live in the freedom and safety from harm) and CRC Article 28 (the right to an education which prepares him/her for an active, responsible life as an adult in a free society which respect others and the environment) were articulated in the enforcement of discipline as stipulated in the Ministry of Education Guidelines on School Discipline; CRC Article 17 (right to information) was disseminated through school radio, setting up of *Pondok* (Hut) ATHAM, *Laluan* (Pathway) ATHAM, and bulletin boards in open and accessible areas to all.

In sharing the experiences on the ATHAM programme, the ATHAM coordinators from two schools said that they slotted in the ATHAM programme in the school radio system every morning. The students would read an article in the UDHR or CRC of approximately five minutes and by doing so, the information on human rights would reach the whole school population and hence saved them time in disseminating the information. In elaborating the students' active participation in the prefects' election campaign such as acting as watchdog and setting up special human rights banners, the ATHAM coordinator from School E said that, " SUHAKAM told us that, if possible involve the students in decision-making. . . Election is not done by the teachers, but run by students and supported by form six teachers. Teachers are not involved, they only vote." The students in School A voiced their experiences and said that they distributed SUHAKAM's pamphlets on CRC and UDHR and promoted human rights to others. It was observed during the school visits that all the schools had adequate learning infrastructure and services such as counselling services, canteen, library, computer room, landscaped garden, rest areas, and bulletin boards that promoted and enhanced quality of learning in the school.

In the questionnaires, the teachers and students were asked on their views concerning the ways of implementing the ATHAM programme. The quantitative findings indicated that the teachers agreed that the ATHAM programme be implemented in special activities (mean = 4.22), followed by co-curriculum activities, the school environment (each with mean = 4.18) and lastly in the school curriculum (mean = 4.01). The students also mostly agreed that the ATHAM programme were implemented in special activities (mean = 3.94). This was followed by implementing the ATHAM programme in the school environment (mean = 3.93), and in the co-curriculum (mean = 3.79). Both teachers (mean = 4.01) and students (mean = 3.36) least agreed that the ATHAM programme be implemented in the curriculum. The students (mean = 3.15) were less agreeable than the teachers (mean = 3.68) that their school had succeeded in implementing the ATHAM programme.

Both the qualitative and quantitative findings in this study indicated that the implementation of the best practices of human rights programme seemed to be more towards informal than formal curriculum. In other words, the teachers and students were of the view that the programme be implemented through specific organised ATHAM activities, co-curriculum and the school environment rather than in the school subjects. This could be the case as the ATHAM programme is not a programme by the Ministry of Education but a programme introduced by the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) and hence schools are not compelled to include the programme in the school curriculum. However, as expressed by one teacher that all ATHAM activities outside the classroom needed to be linked to teaching and learning because, "if we want to punish a student, the student may consider this be an abuse . . . (so) we can include some topics on human rights in the Civic and Citizenship subject.

Benefits of the ATHAM Programme

The qualitative findings indicated that the teachers and students benefitted from the ATHAM programme in terms of increasing knowledge about human rights, the awareness of human rights practices, and the responsibilities of human rights practices. At the interview sessions with the students, the students in all five schools said that they received information on human rights from the school radio, bulletin boards, mural paintings and specially assigned areas such as the *Pondok* ATHAM and the *Laluan* ATHAM for as said by one student, "Now I know what UDHR and CRC are".

A teacher commented that the ATHAM programme increased the students' knowledge on human rights which they learnt in Civic and Citizenship Education subject because "when they relate what they had learnt in the class with the (ATHAM) programme they will remember better. The quantitative results supported the qualitative data as the teachers (mean = 4.18) and students (mean = 4.00) indicated that the ATHAM programme had increased their knowledge on human rights.

Both teachers and students revealed that they were more aware of their rights, such as right to speak, right to choose their student leaders (election of prefects) as well as human rights practices in the school discipline process. For instance, a student mentioned that through the ATHAM programme, she learnt that SUHAKAM is a "department that protects human rights especially children's rights", while another student said that "we are children, we as persons have the right to speak". A teacher commented that the students were well aware that they have the right to get education for as commented, "generally when we go to class and say that if you are lazy to study, it is better that you go home and stop schooling. Then the student will say, "teacher, we have the right to learn" . . . so looks like they know their right to education." One ATHAM coordinator commented that sometimes the teachers had to work over the weekends and after school hours till night time. He expressed that as employees, they have the right to rest and they have families too. The quantitative results supported the qualitative data as the teachers (mean = 4.16) and students (mean = 4.01) indicated that the ATHAM programme had increased their awareness of human rights practices.

The teachers were of the opinion that the ATHAM programme had benefitted the students as it had increased the students' awareness of their responsibilities, provided space for students to be creative and master leadership skills. For example, as said by a teacher that "every individual has a responsibility to teach human rights, to respect human rights". Two school administrators said that the events organised by the students such as the prefects' election programme and the prefects' day and convention provided opportunities for the students to lead. Another school administrator commented that if students were noisy in the classroom, the students should accept the punishment as they had violated the rights of other students. A teacher said that "every individual has a responsibility to teach human rights, to respect human rights". The quantitative results supported the qualitative findings as the teachers (mean = 4.07) and students (mean = 3.90) indicated that the ATHAM programme had increased their awareness on their rights with responsibilities towards self and others.

Although the ATHAM programme had benefitted the students, there were few voices of concern on implementing the ATHAM programme on human rights practices. A discipline teacher mentioned that human rights practices could be "abused by students to either lengthen or complicate the discipline process". A school administrator said that the ATHAM programme should be a "win-win situation" in which teachers give more rights to the students in terms of participation and practising "two-way communication" but at the same time the students should become more responsible and engage less in anti-social behaviours like bullying, vandalism and other problematic behaviours. Nonetheless, the teachers confirmed that the ATHAM programme had benefitted the students and teachers as "there is no discrimination between races; between excellent and weak students . . . everyone has their own abilities. ATHAM can give them more confidence".

Challenges and Constraints in Implementing the ATHAM Programme

The teachers and students expressed that the ATHAM programme was important to their schools. However, they encountered several challenges and constraints when implementing the programme. One of the challenges the teachers faced was the lack of knowledge and misunderstanding of human rights particularly among the students. For instance, a teacher commented that when he discussed with the students in the class on what were right and wrong actions of the students, "they feel that they are always right. So, they still don't understand about human rights. Sometimes, they cannot accept why a teacher took action and punished them". This view was similarly expressed by another teacher when he said that "the students would not admit that what they did was wrong even though

they were really wrong. The discipline teacher had to prove that they violated a school rule. So he had to work harder on that and sometimes he missed his class because of that".

The other challenges faced by the teachers and students were the heavy work load and the constraint of time in implementing the ATHAM programme. The teachers in all five schools who were involved in the planning and implementation of the ATHAM programme said that they felt "stressful" and that the programme was an "extra burden" as they had many other teaching and non-teaching duties and responsibilities that they had to do. The students in all five schools mentioned that apart from the classes and co-curricular activities, there were many other school activities that they had to participate and hence had limited time for the activities of the ATHAM programme. In addition, the teachers and school adminstrators faced difficulty in getting the support and cooperation from parents and students. In one of the schools, the teacher said that the ATHAM programme did not involve the parents and that "the school seems to have no idea how to involve the parents or address problems related to family background, which can be very serious." A school administrator from another school said that it was difficult to get the support from the students themselves as the students seemed to have an "attitude of not wanting to be involved" in the ATHAM programme and they did not give their cooperation. However, the school administrators, teachers and students who were involved in the planning and implementation of the ATHAM programme stated that with the support and active participation from SUHAKAM they were able to overcome the challenges in implementing the activities under the ATHAM programme.

The quantitative findings indicated that both the teachers (mean = 3.69) and students (mean = 3.52) perceived that time factor was the foremost challenge in implementing the ATHAM programme. As for the other challenges, the teachers perceived in descending order of the mean value were lack of human rights knowledge (mean = 3.34), inadequate skills in promoting ATHAM programme (mean = 3.26) and finally the lack of support from the community (mean = 3.20). On the other hand, the perceptions of the students on the other challenges were different from the teachers as indicated in descending order of the mean value to be lack of support from the community (mean = 3.40), stakeholders' inadequate skills in promoting ATHAM programme (mean = 3.36), and finally the lack of knowledge on human rights (mean = 3.29). More teachers (mean = 3.56) than students (mean = 3.23) indicated that their school experienced no difficulties in implementing ATHAM programme.

On the whole, the findings on the challenges and constraints faced by the school administrators, teachers and students indicated that time factor was the foremost challenge faced by them. This could be the case as teachers are burdened with both academic and non-academic duties and responsibilities. In fact, the stress and heavy work burden of teachers in Malaysia was also acknowledged by the Deputy Minister of Education who announced that a working committee was established to study how teachers' workload could be reduced (The Borneo Post Online, 17 May 2012). Furthermore as an additional and relatively new programme not directly organised by the Ministry of Education, the other challenges faced by the teachers and students such as lack of human rights knowledge, skills in promoting human rights and support from other students needed to be recognised by the main organiser of the ATHAM programme, namely SUHAKAM.

Overcoming the Challenges of the ATHAM Programme

The teachers proposed that to overcome the challenges in implementing the ATHAM programme, it was important to establish a common practice for all schools such as setting up a special ATHAM unit by the state education department or district education office. They felt that it was important for schools to share their experiences and understanding on human rights which should be practised in all aspects, not only academically but also in students' behaviour and discipline. They suggested that such a special ATHAM unit would be able to provide support to all schools in creating a culture of human rights practices on a sustainable and long-term basis. In addition it was suggested that SUHAKAM should continue to be an active partner by going to the schools to assist them with the planning and implementation of the ATHAM programme. One teacher suggested

that "SUHAKAM should inform all teachers the types of activities they want the school to help out". Another teacher voiced his concern on the sustainability of the programme which could "end up only in name".

In the questionnaires, the respondents were asked to indicate ways in overcoming the challenges of the ATHAM programme. Both teachers (mean = 4.40) and students (mean = 4.27) stated that the most agreeable way is that all school administrators, teachers and students in the school should practise human rights. While the teachers chose in descending mean value, the integration of human rights practices in the school discipline (mean = 4.37) followed by cooperation among the school administrators, teachers and students in implementing the ATHAM programme, the students' perceived otherwise. The students were more in agreement on cooperation among the school administrators, teachers and students (mean = 4.21) than integration of human right practices in school discipline (mean = 4.09). As to SUHAKAM's direct involvement in the ATHAM programme in school, more teachers (mean = 4.08) than students (mean = 3.90) were in agreement to the statement. What is perhaps interesting to note is that more students (mean = 2.98) than teachers (mean = 3.14) indicated that no special programme needed to be organised in promoting human rights in their schools.

The overall results on ways to overcome the challenges in implementing the human rights practices programme in schools clearly indicated that all school administrators, teachers and students should implement the programme as part of their school life. The teachers perceived that the human rights practices should be incorporated in school's disciplinary actions was similarly expressed in their earlier response that the improvement of human rights practices in their schools should be in the students' behaviour. Furthermore as earlier discussed in this article, the local media highlighted delinquent behaviour of the students that violated human rights practices. In addition, the teachers indicated that SUHAKAM should be actively involved in implementing the programme in the schools as they expressed concern over their heavy work load in academic and non-academic duties.

Conclusions

The research study on the best practices of human rights or the ATHAM programme in Malaysian schools seemed to support the goals and methodology of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, that is adopting a whole-school approach to improve several aspects of the students' school life. In the case of Malaysian schools, human rights practices programme would be best implemented in the informal curriculum, that is in co-curriculum and the school management, particularly in the school discipline as well as creating a school environment that support quality education rather than in the school formal curriculum. This is because the formal curriculum is a centrally-planned curriculum by the Ministry of Education and schools do not have the flexibility to change the formal curriculum.

Whilst it is acknowledged that prior to the implementation of the ATHAM programme HRE were included in the school system, this research study found that the human rights practices particularly that related to the articles in the UDHR and CRC were not explicitly promoted and developed as part of the students' school life. It is with the implementation of the ATHAM programme that the teachers and students had greater awareness of their rights and the rights of others. In sum, as expressed by a teacher, "the learning of human rights lies with an individual for it entails honest self-examination, coming to understand and acknowledge the personal biases that everyone holds" and a student, "when I grow up, I want to be a lawyer and fight for human rights".

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Book Review

Comparative Education: The Construction of a Field,
by Maria Manzon (2011), 395pp. ISBN: 978-988-1785-26-8,
Hong Kong: Springer and the Comparative Education Research Centre,
The University of Hong Kong.

The book under review is not for the faint-hearted nor for someone looking for a clear introduction to comparative education, what it is and what its parameters are. The expectation is that readers are already familiar with much of the existing literature and many of the arguments that have bedevilled the subject almost since its inception, but certainly from the 1960s onwards. Readers must also be able to decipher and understand certain sociological and philosophical styles of language and jargon, especially those of Foucault and Bourdieu. However those comments are in no way meant to disparage what is both an original and a valuable addition to the literature on comparative education.

The book is based on Dr Manzon's PhD thesis, for which she was awarded the Li Ka Shing Prize at the University of Hong Kong. The prize is not only awarded for an excellent thesis but it is also only awarded to the best of the elite students. The result is, therefore, as to be expected, a thorough, logical and analytical study of where the author thinks comparative education has come from and where it is going but, more importantly, where she thinks it fits into the social sciences. The author seeks to establish whether comparative education is an academic discipline, a methodology, a field or a sub-field of educational studies. To do this Dr Manzon looks at the history/histories of comparative education, the growth of different comparative education societies, the intellectual and academic debates surrounding the subject, some of the books and academic journals, as well as courses in university departments. Also, over several years, she has interviewed key figures in the field to sound out their views and opinions. Inevitably there is much that has had to be omitted.

Comparative education is today, as it has been since the end of World War II, a contested topic with limited agreement as to what it is, what legitimate topics it should cover, and what its parameters are. To help understand these issues Dr Manzon tries to answer the following questions:

> '1) Why is comparative education institutionalised as a distinct field [though at page 2 she is not certain whether or not it is a field or a discipline!] when its intellectual distinctiveness seems to be blurred?
>
> and 2) What is comparative education?'

While building on the past this book seeks to move the debate forward. It needs to be stressed that Dr Manzon is largely concerned with comparative education as an academic and theoretical subject. As a result she dismisses international education, global education, multi-cultural education and development education as parts of comparative education although there are many academics in the USA and the UK who would see these as legitimate aspects of comparative education research. She does so on the grounds that the latter components are more to do with practical application and policy and less to do with academia. The result is that she draws very heavily on a few of the more theoretical authors in the field – Cowen, Epstein, Garrida, Halls and Paulston, among others. In so doing she ignores a substantial number of authors from both Europe and the United States who would take issue with her narrow approach. Moreover she relies heavily on the writings and frameworks of Bourdieu and Foucault to help her in her argument of deconstructing comparative

education and of then looking through specific lenses to reach her conclusions. A background in the social sciences/ sociology is essential to get the most out of the book and its arguments.

The book is not just one more overview of the development of comparative education, though this is clearly there, albeit not in the depth of several recent works. Instead it is a detailed and thorough analysis of comparative education through the prism of Foucault and Bourdieu. Herein is part of its originality. Nor does it take a linear approach to the subject. Because it gradually builds up a detailed and highly logical argument there is a degree of repetition. This is regrettable, but inevitable, given the style in which it is written.

In looking at what the author calls 'The Empirical Substance and Mass that Constitute the Field of Comparative Education' she looks at the institutional growth of courses and university departments, the growth of academic journals and academic societies. She draws on other surveys for part of this though her analysis of power structures and ideology make for interesting reading. She argues that the growth of the subject in academic institutions has very much depended on the power structures and hierarchy within those institutions and the influence of key academics. In many instances when those academics have retired a department has often closed down. Her discussion of the development of comparative education journals could have been more detailed and critical but her analysis of national, regional and international comparative education societies makes for fascinating reading and a study of the very helpful appendices elaborates on her findings. She has been in a unique position regarding comparative education societies since she has been a part of different teams examining the histories of these societies in recent years. Interestingly her findings reveal a high level of amorphousness, a lack of clarity and commonality and fluidity in the boundaries of many societies.

In addressing the 'Intellectual Histories of Comparative Education' and the 'Intellectual Discourse of Comparative Education' the author shows how different and changing academic currents within the social sciences- modernism, postmodernism, Marxist conflict theory, dependency theory and structural functionalism – have all helped to shape the thinking behind comparative education. She does so not in any linear way but through examining different currents of thought and showing how these influenced the social sciences. There are at least two other areas of originality within all of this. The first comes from her examination of different cultural and linguistic alternative approaches to comparative education, what Cowen has called 'comparative educations'. She discusses how some of these have arisen as a result of shifts in political ideology and changing power relationships. Thus there are discussions about developments in China, Eastern Europe, Spain and Latin America as well as Africa and other parts of Asia. This makes a refreshing change from discussions about comparative education being dominated by British, Australian and American authors. The second comes from her analysis of what constitutes a discipline [theoretical/ philosophical] and her examination of different areas of comparative studies [eg. law, politics, literature, sociology etc].

While this is a useful and thoughtful addition to the literature on comparative education one cannot but think that the author had already made up her mind that comparative education is a field within educational studies before she embarked upon writing the book. Although Dr Manzon explores the rationale of a discipline she dismisses comparative education as being one. Many hints give the reader the impression from early on in the book that she has regarded the subject as a field, or even a sub-field, of educational studies. Towards the end of the book the author says that 'Comparative education, strictly speaking, refers to the academic *sub-field* of education studies, which analyses in comparative perspective educational systems and processes in two or more national or cultural contexts, and their interaction with their social environments....' [p. 204]. A little further on develops this further: 'Comparative education is strictly speaking an interdisciplinary *sub-field* of education studies that systematically examines the similarities and differences between education systems in two or more national or cultural contexts, and their interactions with their intra-and extra-educational environments,' [p. 215]. Apart from the fact that these statements incorporate aspects of what many comparativists have said over the years there would be many who would question the narrowness of comparative education as only being concerned with 'education systems.' Education consists of

far more than school systems or university systems. The administration frameworks, the underlying political philosophies, the religious and ethnic mixture of societies, the approach to teacher education and the role of teachers in different societies are all key aspects of education systems. The place of the private sector, policies on language or gender also have crucial parts to play and all are subject to useful, nay valuable, comparative insights. But then Dr Manzon would argue that these were peripheral to the 'pure' aspects of comparative education and would more legitimately fit under the umbrella of 'international education.' Many, however, especially in international organisations like the World Bank and the OECD would argue that there is no place for comparative education unless its findings can be usefully used for reform within one or more societies. This was the view of many of the early writers like Bereday, Hans, Mallinson, Holmes and King. There is clearly much in this book that could lead to some interesting and stimulating debates in the future. Let us hope that Dr Manzon's writings will prove to be an inspiration for this to happen.

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