An Investigation of the Impact Cultural Identity Plays in Shaping the Teaching Philosophy of Second-Generation Immigrant Educators

By

Bomi Rebecca Park

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Abstract

This paper investigates the role(s) cultural identity(ies) of second-generation immigrant educators play in shaping their teaching philosophy. A teacher’s philosophy is never set in stone and is constantly evolving (Huggett, 1930), for the better, in relation to the changes in the education field, and the experiences they gain over the years. Thus far, the literature is focused on the identities and philosophies of immigrant educators, but this research has yet to be extended to second-generation immigrant (an individual who was born in Canada, but whose parent(s) have immigrated to Canada) (Jaya & Jurva, 2008) educators. This fact illustrates the value my research study can contribute to this growing research field. A qualitative case study approach, in compliance with the ethical review procedure of the Master of Teaching program, was employed gathering data through two (2) semi-structured interviews and promptly transcribed, coded, and analyzed. The data generated four (4) major themes: cultural identity (childhood and youth, upbringing and school experience, and search for identity), qualities of teaching and education, teaching experience (professional experience and reflection), and mentorship.

Keywords: Second-Generation Immigrant, Teacher Identity, Teaching Philosophy, Cultural Identity
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1: Introduction</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Introduction and Background to the Research Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Research Questions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Background of the Researcher</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Overview</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2: Literature Review</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Teaching Philosophy: Internal and External Influences</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Understanding an Individual’s Cultural or Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Experience (Advantages, Disadvantages, Advice to Future Generation)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Professional Identity in the Education Field in Host Country</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Gaps in Literature</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3: Research Methodology</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Procedure</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Instruments of Data Collection</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Participants</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Participant Biography</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Data Collection and Analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Ethical Review Procedures</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Research Findings ................................................................. 24
4.0 Introduction .................................................................................. 24
4.1 Cultural Identity ............................................................................ 25
  4.1.1 Childhood and Youth .............................................................. 26
  4.1.2 Upbringing and School Experience ....................................... 27
  4.1.3 Search for Identity ................................................................. 30
4.2 Qualities of Teaching/Education .................................................. 33
4.3 Teaching Experience .................................................................... 36
  4.3.1 Professional Experience ......................................................... 36
  4.3.2 Reflection .............................................................................. 41
4.4 Mentoring .................................................................................... 42
4.5 Conclusion .................................................................................... 45

Chapter 5: Implications and Recommendations ............................... 48
5.0 Introduction .................................................................................. 48
5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance .......................... 48
5.2 Implications (Broad and Narrow) .................................................. 50
5.3 Recommendations ........................................................................ 52
5.4 Areas for Further Research ......................................................... 53
5.5 Concluding Comments ............................................................... 53

References .......................................................................................... 54

Appendix A: Letter of Consent ............................................................. 56

Appendix B: Interview Protocol/Questions .......................................... 58
An Investigation of the Impact Cultural Identity Plays in Shaping the Teaching Philosophy of Second-Generation Immigrant Educators

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction and Background to the Research Study

Prospective educators are frequently told to reflect upon their experiences as teachers during practice teaching but most importantly on themselves. During self-reflection as educators, teacher candidates look back on their decisions about entering the profession and consider the positive and negative influences they have had. They are also asked to consider their roots and their emerging identity. As a teacher candidate in the Master of Teaching program, I have had many opportunities to consider the role my own identity plays in shaping my teaching philosophy.

Based on the existing literature regarding teacher identity, the authors emphasize the importance of both internal (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010) and external factors (Luk-Fong, 2013) that impact teacher philosophy. Some emphasize internal factors more than the external factors, and vice versa, while others acknowledge the reciprocity of this relationship (Gardner, 1998; Timoššuk & Ugaste, 2010). Apart from the factors that influence one’s teacher identity, other authors focused on the role immigrant educators could and should play in the education system (Beynon & Hirji, 2000). “Learning from one’s or another’s mistakes” was another theme of an article, focusing on the change in the education system across three generations (Gardner, 1998). Not one profession is ever fixed, as research is constantly being conducted and new discoveries are being made, there is always an opportunity to expand our knowledge.
Teaching must be dynamic and ever changing, teachers must reflect on what works and doesn’t work and must continually adapt to create a better education program.

Many of the articles also discussed different ways in which we can change our views on teacher identity, for the better. Teacher identity is constantly changing and evolving just as the education system is. Education cannot and should not remain the same over the years; changes must be implemented with regards to the demands of society and to accommodate to everyone. Every generation of educators will experience a certain type of hardship throughout their career (Gardner, 1998) therefore, to avoid these hardships, from transcending into the later generations; we must be able to learn from their narratives to avoid making the same mistakes as before. Educators must also look forward into what is needed in their own day and age through constant research and professional development. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers have a strong sense of their own identity, in order to tackle these issues and implement what is best for their own students (Beynon & Hirji, 2000). Though this article centered on the experiences of first-generation immigrants, the research is still viable in terms of identifying challenges and successes immigrants face in another country. There is not an abundant source of research focusing on second-generation immigrants in the education field, thus making my research necessary to explore this new group of educators.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact cultural identity plays in shaping the teaching philosophy of second-generation immigrant educators. Through this investigation I aim to identify specific aspects of cultural identity that second-generation
immigrant educators draw from to create their teaching philosophy and influence their classrooms. I was brought up with both Korean and Canadian values, beliefs, and customs, yet I was conflicted in choosing which ones to uphold, which held more value to me, or if it was possible to incorporate both. These conflicts varied depending on the situation that I was in. This conflict can be problematic for educators as we are educating the future generations and as a result we influence their socialization and how they develop (Kelly & Brooks, 2009). Therefore, if the educator is unsure of his or her own identity, how are we to become a positive role model for our students to accept their own identities?

Another conflict could arise with regards to contrasting values of our own identities and with those of the mainstream culture(s) (Giguère, Lalonde, & Lou, 2010). How would second-generation immigrant educators cope with this conflict, so that it wouldn’t harm the education of their students? Finally, what experiences do they have and what advice could they offer for future second-generation immigrant educators. Could we possibly learn from their hardships and mistakes in order to succeed? These are just a few questions, which has inspired me to pursue this topic. On a more personal note, I am intrigued by this topic of study to aid in my own development as a second-generation immigrant educator, and how this knowledge can be employed for others in a similar situation.
1.2 Research Questions

My main research question is: What role(s) does cultural identity(ies) of second-generation immigrant educators play in shaping their teaching philosophy? This question brings about some subsidiary questions to specify certain themes of interest:

a) What aspects are these educators drawing from their cultural backgrounds and integrating into their teaching philosophy?

b) How do these aspects impact on their teaching philosophy?

c) What aspects of their cultural identity(ies) align or conflict with the mainstream culture(s) of the country they currently reside in?

d) What are the experiences of second-generation immigrant educators when it comes to considering their cultural identities in the classrooms?

1.3 Background of the Researcher

I am a Canadian-Korean. My parents emigrated from South Korea to pursue their respective university careers in Canada. They brought their immediate family from Korea, and started their own family in Canada. Their decision made me a second-generation Korean, born and raised in Canada. I am a product of the Canadian Public School system: I, pursued the French Extended program from middle school to high school, attended a Canadian university for my undergraduate degree, and currently am pursuing a graduate degree in Education from second Canadian university. Although, I have grown up in a Canadian society, I have been raised with a Korean culture. Every Saturday, during my elementary school years, I attended a Korean Language and Culture
My grandparents spoke to my brother and I in Korean and we celebrated Korean holidays and festivals.

Despite my upbringing, I would always identify myself as a “Canadian-Korean” rather than a “Korean-Canadian” because I believed I was more Canadian than Korean. What brought me to think this way? How did I perceive these two identities to be different? How did this affect my decisions regarding my future? I have always admired my parents’ courage to come to a foreign country, and start, a new bright and better future. Through this courage I was inspired to go out and explore the world around me, to understand and appreciate the value of education, and to appreciate the opportunities my parents have opened up for me. From all the blessings I grew up with, I began to wonder how others around the world perceived, received, and delivered education.

1.4 Overview

Chapter 1 includes the introduction and purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as how I came to be involved in this topic and study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and procedure used in this study including information about the research participants and data collection instruments. Chapter 4 identifies the participants in the study and describes the data as it addresses the research question. Chapter 5 includes conclusions, limitations of the study, recommendations for practice, and further reading and study. References and a list of appendixes follow at the end.
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This study focuses on a specific group of individuals: second-generation immigrants, and their journey in forming their teaching philosophy. To properly define second-generation immigrants I will be expanding upon the definition of second-generation immigrants in Jaya & Jurva (2008). They defined Canadian second-generation immigrants as individuals who were born in Canada, but whose parent(s) have immigrated to Canada. This literature review will be covering a range of related topics including: looking at one’s teaching philosophy (both internal and external influences); attempting to understand an individual’s cultural/ethnic identity; the experiences of various immigrant teachers; the roles immigrant teachers play in the education system; and the gaps in the literature of second-generation immigrant educators. As the literature review is not comprehensive in terms of relating to the focus group of the current research study, these related topics will be examined within the context of second-generation immigrant educators.

2.1 Teaching Philosophy: Internal and External Influences

In the Journal of Education in 1930, A.J. Huggett describes a teacher’s philosophy as “… a code of their own, either thought out or nebulous, but nevertheless forming guiding principles which will direct their activities in preparing children to live successfully in democracy” (p. 452). As a teacher begins to understand the influences, both positive and negative, associated to their identity, these same influences should
shape and form their teaching philosophy as they progress and gain more experience. One teacher’s philosophy will not fit all teacher, and Huggett (1930) contests that it should not. Therefore, it is imperative to devise our own goals in teaching and then determine the means by which we attempt to put our teaching philosophy into action (Huggett, 1930). In the literature, some scholars advocate for the importance of internal factors on the formation of one’s teaching philosophy (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010), while others argue for external factors (Luk-Fong, 2013), and others still who acknowledge the duality of both (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2014).

Some scholars (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010) stress the significance of internal factors impacting a teacher’s philosophy with the trend towards inward reflection, understanding one’s self in order to recognize who they are as a teacher. Moving further back, certain scholars (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008) insist on examining the role of our past, the paths of our ancestors, and how this shapes our identity as prospective teachers. This is to ensure we do not devalue the role our culture and history plays in our lives, and more importantly on our future students. The authors (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008) advocate for prospective teachers to put more emphasis on self-evaluation apart from just focusing on the present and learning more of the teaching profession. By understanding and valuing our identities as teachers, these internal factors will influence how we will teach and the values we will share in our classrooms (Gomez & White, 2010). Gomez & White (2010) claim that, as prospective teachers, we must also study ourselves and understand the values, beliefs, and prejudices we may have to help ensure we are not limiting our learning and the learning of our future students.
Contrary to the scholars (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010) who advocate the greater impact of internal influences on a teacher’s philosophy, there are those who say the opposite it true. Luk-Fong (2013) examines the role of society specifically the Confucian cultural heritage in education, and its impact on the teacher’s role of teaching in Hong Kong. Luk-Fong outlines the ongoing tension between the traditional education structures and the emerging trend towards a more Western tradition. The demands placed on the teachers in Hong Kong to adopt Western teaching practices when they are accustomed to their traditional Confucian influenced teaching philosophies. With this tension occurring in one country, Luk-Fong ask teachers to constantly reevaluate their identities and teaching philosophies in the context of their current education system. This study effectively outlined the importance one’s culture and traditions plays into every aspect of an individual’s life. The authors have clearly defined the type of struggles and opportunities these teachers have faced and have prescribed valuable suggestions on how to relieve this tension as best as they can.

There are scholars (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2014) who advocate for the reciprocity of the relationship between the internal and external factors on a teacher’s philosophy. From a study conducted in Estonia authors, Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2010), recommend the focus to be brought back to personal reflections as well as reflections on the different influences impacting one’s identity. Based on recent surveys, Estonia ranked relatively high in student achievement in science, reading and mathematics, which reflects the effectiveness and success of Estonian teachers yet, they still were not satisfied with the results of their work. This intrigued the authors and led them to investigate the continuous change in education, and how this change affects the
teachers. Vandeyar and colleagues (2014) begin their study by acknowledging how some immigrant teachers have a strong sense of their home culture and are less than willing to let go of their past and to accommodate to the host country’s culture; this was considered one of the major impediments towards the “reconstruction of their professional identities” (p. 4). Their longing to hold onto their former culture can be identified as an internal factor towards the influence of one’s teacher or professional identity. Yet Vandeyar and co-authors go on to contest: external factors will also impact how an immigrant teacher is treated and adjusted to their host country. They draw from another study Morris (1998) and refer back to the Apartheid era in which there was a limit towards black immigration. Therefore, we can witness how the social context is also necessary to understand how one is to adjust to another’s culture and add to an individual’s identity; whether an individual is easily accepted into the society or not, even if they have been introduced to the host country for quite some time. Understanding the influences, both external and internal, upon a teacher’s philosophy is vital to my own research since I will be investigating the role cultural identity(ies) plays on a second-generation immigrant educators teaching philosophy. Although the research (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010; Luk-Fong, 2013; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2014) does not relate to second-generation immigrants, the findings are still relative since each individual, regardless of their identity, will experience these influences sometime in their lives.

2.2 Understanding an Individual’s Cultural or Ethnic Identity

A teacher’s philosophy is not the only crucial aspect to my research; a teacher’s identity, more importantly their cultural or ethnic identity, needs to be considered too. In
the case of second-generation immigrants, biculturalism (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008) needs to be investigated. Biculturalism is “the ability of a person to function effectively in more than one culture and also to switch roles back and forth as the situation changes” (Sodhi, 2008, p. 187). This definition encompasses the experiences of second-generation immigrants. It is common among many second-generation immigrants to having been raised with certain traditions, religions, and values at home, yet find themselves living in a society in which they live and experience another culture. In Canada, with an ever-increasing diverse population, we cannot maintain a monoculture mindset. Psychologists have been required to incorporate a more multicultural, diverse, practice (Syalikas & Gavaki, 1995; Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). If this were the case for psychologists, why wouldn’t the same be true for teachers? Syalikas and Gavaki (1995) continue to summarize their findings in which “ethnic identity is considered a crucial part of personal identity and is related to better overall functioning and higher self-esteem” (p. 3). With a positive and high regard for one’s self, and the appreciation and acceptance of their own identity(ies); some studies like that of Syalikas & Gavaki have found that “the higher the self-esteem, the higher was the grade-point-average and academic aspirations” (p. 6). This statement illustrates, first hand, the impact of a positive sense of identity on a second-generation immigrant’s life. On the other hand, all second-generation immigrants will not experience this sense of high self-esteem. Within the concept of biculturalism, these individuals will constantly acknowledge the interaction between their different cultural identities and will either recognize the compatibility or contradiction among them (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008). These findings (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008; Syalikas & Gavaki, 1995) are not directly linked to my own research
question but it is nonetheless vital to the context of my study. By understanding the experiences of second-generation immigrant children, we can try to understand how their experiences as adults will differ or remain the same. Syalikas & Gavaki (1995) consolidated their findings by saying:

“Ethnic pride has a positive effect on self-esteem and that it may be related to the development of a sounder, integrated identity. This is not to say that these children will not develop a Canadian identity; rather, it seems that part of healthy identity development is the integration of the ethnic ‘me’” (p. 7).

Certain individuals of second-generation immigrants will become our next generation of teachers and must therefore, have a strong sense of their who they are, understand how their multiple cultural identities could and would influence their teaching philosophy, and shape their identities as teachers in Canada.

2.3 Experience (Advantages, Disadvantages, Advice to Future Generation)

Based on the articles (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010; Luk-Fong, 2013; Timoššuk & Ugaste, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2014; Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008; Syalikas & Gavaki, 1995) referenced above, we can determine the benefit of learning from one’s influences, thus experiences. We can learn a lot from one’s progress, obstacles, and should take into consideration any advice they have provided for future generations.

Timoššuk and Ugaste’s (2010) Estonian study highlights the importance of the lived experiences teachers have and will have, and opportunities to implement and shape their teaching identities and philosophies. Gardner (1998) goes on to state that every generation of educators will experience a certain type of hardship throughout their career.
Therefore, to avoid these hardships from transcending into the later generations; we must be able to learn from their narratives to avoid making the same mistakes as before. Gardner seeks to examine the role of educators from the years 1876 to 1966, in the context of their socio-economic and political environment. He compares differences in the role of educators between the different generations, with a great interest in the change throughout the years. Gardner states that the previous generations of educators has left behind a legacy in which the new generation can learn from; both the mistakes and successes and evolve their philosophy of education as they see fit in their ever-changing setting. Second-generation immigrant educators will succeed the generation of first-generation immigrant educators; therefore second-generation immigrant educators can learn from the experiences of the previous generation of educators when forming their current teaching identity and philosophy.

In order to gain insight into the education field we must be able to look and learn from all possible outlets. Valenciana and colleagues (2006) focus on the experiences of Latina paraeducators (individuals with instructional responsibilities under the supervision of a teacher) (p. 83) rather than the traditional schoolteacher. The authors, Valenciana and associates, study their transition to become certified teachers, highlighting the challenges as well as the types of support systems available on their pursuit of a teaching certificate. This study advocates for a need to transform the inequalities in the institutional structures and advocates for more support during their studies. Cruickshank (2004) also highlights the lack of diversity in these programs and the education system in general in specific countries. It is interesting to learn how the teacher education program was the main hindrance for these individuals. This fact opened my sights to examine how these
programs could progress or hinder a prospective teacher to pursue this profession. On another note, Newberry (2014) took an interesting approach in investigating a teacher educator’s identity. She focused her study on the identity of a nontraditional teacher educator, outlining the difficulties these nontraditional teacher educators face in comparison to the traditional teacher educators. Newberry states that individuals will experience their own success and difficulties even though they are all placed in the same context. Valenciana and her colleagues (2006) and Newberry (2014) focus on the experiences of the non-traditional teacher and although the connection to second-generation immigrant educators may be vague, the experiences of these individuals cannot be disregarded. From their experiences, we can learn how to, better, accommodate to immigrant educators and, now, for second-generation immigrant educators. We can understand the support systems and structures initial teacher education programs should undertake in order to accommodate to all who pursue the journey to become an educator in Canada.

2.4 Professional Identity in the Education Field in the Host Country

Immigrant educators can provide a unique skillset and promote a positive change to the current education system. Cruickshank (2004) states that teachers with bilingual and bicultural skills are rare but will benefit the education system. More specifically, Beynon and Hirji (2000) examined what teachers of Punjabi Sikh ancestry perceived their roles were in the British Colombia public education system. They found a variety of roles that these teachers believed they played: bridge between the Punjabi Sikh community and the education system, translators, cultural informants, and role models. Beynon & Hirji
encouraged a move from the perceptions that teachers, from visible minority groups, are not just “professional ethnics” but educators who can offer a variety of skills varied from those of their colleagues. These roles could easily be applied to second-generation immigrant educators. In fact, more fluidly as these individuals have access to both cultures.

Another role in which second-generation immigrant educators could play in the education system is that of mentors. Many immigrant educators were complaining of the lack of support, and important information (i.e. of programs, workshops and additional qualifications) they experienced from their pre-service teacher education program and throughout their employment, in their host country (Cruickshank, 2004; Jane & Peeler, 2005). Therefore, a case was made in Cruickshank (2004) for the implementation of a mentorship program readily available in all stages of a teacher’s profession career. These articles (Cruickshank, 2004; Jane & Peeler, 2005) advocated for immigrant educators but these mentorship programs can be provided and implemented by second-generation immigrants as well. As mentioned above, scholars (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008; Syalikas & Gavaki, 1995) advocated for second-generation immigrants who encounter, much different and more ambiguous, challenges compared to those of first-generation immigrants. If mentorship programs are to be provided for first-generation immigrants, they should also be available for second-generation immigrant educators as well. Jane and Peeler (2005) state:

“Mentoring relationships can be a means of bridging the gap between the newcomers’ former ways of knowing and current practice, thereby mobilizing their capacity to operate effectively as a teacher in their new contexts and develop a positive professional identity” (p. 325).
In the case of first-generation immigrant educators, these programs will ease their transition into the mainstream culture and education system. Although second-generation educators will not require the same services, they will nevertheless require and can provide a support group in which they can discuss, provide feedback, encourage one another, etc. among colleagues who share the same cultural or ethnic identity.

2.5 Gaps in the Literature

The contributions to this literature review rely mainly on the research conducted with first-generation immigrants as their participants. In terms of the research on teacher philosophy (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010; Luk-Fong, 2013; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2014) the focus is placed on how their teaching philosophy is influenced from all variations. The emphasis is not placed solely on those of second-generation or even first-generation immigrant educators. Nevertheless, since the literature review focused on how a teacher’s identity and philosophy, in general, is formed, this knowledge is valuable to all educators.

In the next section, on teacher identity (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008; Syalikas & Gavaki, 1995) experiences of second-generation immigrants are examined but their definitions of second-generation immigrants are not universal. When examining the value of teacher’s experiences, the research (Timoštšuk and Ugaste, 2010; Gardner, 1998; Valenciana et al. 2006; Newberry, 2014) is drawn from many different genres of teachers. In general, all of the research drawn from the studies mentioned (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010; Luk-Fong, 2013; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2014; Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008; Syalikas & Gavaki,
Cultural Identity and Teaching Philosophy for 2nd Generation Immigrant Educators

1995; Gardner, 1998; Valenciana et al. 2006; Newberry, 2014) do not explicitly relate to the group of individuals I will be investigating for my research. I plan to examine the role cultural identity(ies) plays in the formation of second-generation immigrant educator’s teaching philosophy. Yet, the literature reviewed thus far hasn’t provided me with explicit research discussing this particular question in relation to the particular group of individuals, which presents a challenge as the researcher for the current study. However, the findings of these authors should not be easily disregarded as they provided interesting perspectives towards the journey to becoming educators, which are pursued by numerous unique individuals, including second-generation immigrants.

It was interesting to learn of the role second-generation immigrant educators and immigrant educators could play in the education system but the research (Cruickshank, 2004; Beynon & Hirji, 2000; Jane & Peeler, 2005) is not as comprehensive as expected. The research in this field can provide a lot of insight for future second-generation immigrant educators but it is not available, nor has it been conducted yet. Nevertheless, the research, already conducted, is still viable in terms of identifying challenges and successes immigrants face in another country, which in turn could be extended to second-generation immigrants. This gap in the literature is proof of the fact that more research must be conducted in this field thereby, illustrating the importance placed on my own research, extending the literature to the identities and experiences of second-generation immigrant educators.
Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Procedure

For this study, *An Investigation of the Impact Cultural Identity Plays in Shaping the Teaching Philosophy of Second-Generation Immigrant Educators*, I took a qualitative research approach, more specifically, a case study qualitative research approach. This method allows the researcher the means to compare and contrast between the experiences of one or more participants (Creswell, 2013); in order to investigate the impact(s) of cultural identity(ies) on one’s teaching philosophy. A case study also allows the researcher “a means for understanding complex phenomena” (Compton et al., 2014). I am interested in the personal experiences of second-generation immigrant educators therefore; I intend to interview more than one teacher to gain insight into their experiences. My research will take an inductive research approach, meaning that I, the researcher, will depend highly on the data in order to identify key themes (Creswell, 2013). Previous studies on this research topic are not readily available therefore, a lot of the findings, from this study, will add to the existing literature. Similar topics were explored in the literature review in the previous chapter.

The knowledge gained, from the literature review, was then used to create common themes/subjects that would then be used to inform the interview questions. Semi-structured interview questions as well as prompts were created in order to promote an open discourse between the researcher and participant(s) (Creswell, 2013). Interviews needed to be structured in this manner because I was looking for any similarities as well as differences (Houghton et al., 2013) in second-generation immigrant educators’ experiences in the field of education. This structure allowed some flexibility; since each
participant will not have the exact same experience as the other, the interview questions need to be asked in a way in which they accommodated to each participant. By asking similar questions to each participant, I was able to identify common themes that arose aiding in my data analysis.

Participants were then specifically selected based upon a set criterion and contacted for a 45-60 minute face-to-face interview. The data from the interviews was then transcribed and promptly sent to the corresponding participants for a final review and the opportunity to retract their involvement, if they wished to do so. Once the data was confirmed it was coded into four (4) central themes, which are then outlined in Chapter 4. The results were analyzed and discussed in Chapter 5.

3.1 Instruments of Data Collection:

As previously stated, the interviews were semi-structured, which promoted leeway to change, add, or remove aspects of questions, comments, and/or prompts throughout the interview. Although majority of the questions remained the same, having the ability to alter the questions ensured understanding and allowed for clarity. I began with questions regarding the participants’ background: their upbringing, their interaction with the mainstream culture, and their decision and course of action to become a teacher. I then moved on to ask questions regarding their understanding of the concept of second-generation immigrants and teacher’s identity. Next, we discussed the benefits their identity brought to their professions as well as any possible challenges. Finally, I asked the participants to identify any strategies or tips they had for future second-generation
immigrant educators and whether or not they had anything else to add or questions before the end of the interview. The list of interview questions is included in Appendix B.

3.2 Participants

I sought out 2 participants who satisfied two specific criteria, for my research. The criteria are as follows:

a) Second-generation immigrant: (born in Canada but parents born in another country).

b) Ontario certified teacher, currently teaching in an Ontario Public School.

In terms of their place of employment, the specific boards did not make too much of a difference since I was looking at the experiences of second-generation immigrant educators integrated in the mainstream culture rather than in the culture of specific school boards and schools. The same reasoning was applied to the grade level they were teaching.

Regarding further research, it might be interesting to investigate the experiences between second-generation educators in the primary level and in the junior level and research the impact it has on their teaching philosophy. This study could also be conducted horizontally taking school boards into consideration, and whether this impacts their teaching philosophy with relation to their cultural identity.

The number of years they have been teaching does affect my study in the sense that the more experienced an educator is, the more time he or she had to adapt to the cultural differences, if any existed and/or adapt to the mainstream culture. On the other hand, those who are newly entering the field may experience more of a dissonance in cultural
identity. By considering both perspectives, we can understand the experiences of both and consider the progression of creating a teaching identity and philosophy. Since this study is more investigative, rather than assuming that all second-generation immigrant educators will experience a dissonance between their cultural identity(ies) and the mainstream culture, I will seek to understand the experiences they have encountered and how they have formed their own teaching philosophy as a new group of individuals.

In order to find the participants for this study I reached out to colleagues who were second-generation immigrant educators and requested their participation in my research study.

3.2.1 Participant Biography

Sophie is second-generation Korean immigrant and is an Ontario certified teacher. She began her teaching career in a private Christian school, teaching there for a year before making the move to the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). Since the transition to the public board, she has been teaching at TDSB for fifteen (15) years. Throughout her professional career, she continued to maintain her responsibilities at her church. Now, she is currently on leave, with the board, taking supply-teaching jobs occasionally as she is implementing a new Sunday school program at her church.

Elizabeth is also a second-generation Korean immigrant and an Ontario certified teacher. Upon completion of her Bachelors of Education from Australia, she began her teaching career with the Peel District School Board (PDSB). She has been with the PDSB for six (6) years with experience teaching in various grade levels as well as several years teaching French.
3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected through the use of multiple audio recorders, such as the Audacity application and the Voice Memo application on the IPhone. In addition to these recordings, I made notes, as the researcher throughout the interview. It was then safely stored on my personal computer and backed up using an external hard-drive, password–protected. The audio recordings, of the interviews, were then transcribed, word for word, and reviewed to begin the analysis process. Upon review of the data, different coloured highlighters, and underlining were used to identity important insights, key words, and quotes, which was then used to create the codes. A table, using Microsoft Excel, was created to list all of the identified codes, which was then narrowed down to the related categories. Finally, the table was sorted by categories to facilitate identification of major recurring themes. Common patterns and themes were sought and constantly related back to the main research question and subsidiary questions as well as the literature review conducted in Chapter 2. Regular correspondences with the participants were kept to ensure that the data was not skewed from personal biases or assumptions, and to maintain an accurate representation of each and every participant.

3.4 Ethical Review Procedures

This study followed the ethical review procedures set out by the Master of Teaching program. During the recruitment of research participants, I provided each of them with a consent form to read, review, and sign, as per the Master of Teaching ethical review procedures. They were given a copy of the form and another copy kept, by the researcher, for the purposes of this study. All of the participants were also thoroughly
informed and reinsured of the purpose of the study as well as how the information would be accessed, used and stored. Great efforts and precautions were taken to ensure all interviews were conducted in a safe and comfortable space. If ever the participant felt uncomfortable answering a particular question(s), they were encouraged to pass and move on. They were also provided with the opportunity to change, revise, or even retract their comments and/or interview throughout the entire process. To ensure confidentiality of each participant and institution they were provided with a pseudonym. All data was kept safe, through a password-protected computer and external hard-drive and only disclosed to my research supervisor and myself; the participants were all notified of these procedures before, during and after the interview. All participants were, once again, provided with the opportunity to withdraw from the research study at any stage of the process. A copy of the consent form is provided near the end of this research project (Appendix A).

3.5 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

As previously mentioned, the subject of this study is relatively new since many have not taken the time to investigate second-generation immigrant educators. With more second-generation immigrants entering the Canadian workforce, it is imperative that this group of professions be explored based on their experiences in their professional careers. Many of “teacher identity, immigrant professional, and teaching philosophy,” based studies focused mainly on first-generation immigrants and or immigrant children. This study is purely exploratory and does not seek nor has the capacity to provide clear outlines on how, if needed, second-generation immigrant educators could adjust to
mainstream cultures; rather it is to understand how they find their place in the education workforce and how they form, shape, and/or adjust their teaching philosophy. The definition I used for a second-generation immigrant, for this study, could also add to the limitations of this study but nonetheless it will definitely add to the existing literature on teacher and professional identity.

In terms of participant selection, it is unclear if the criteria were different whether it would affect the data; for example: if participants were selected from exactly the same criteria rather than from varying ones. Although this may seem like a limitation to this particular study, it is an opportunity to take this research further and expanding it to include many different variables. Nevertheless, with the parameters set out in this study, valuable evidence was gathered regarding the impact cultural identity plays in shaping the teaching philosophy of second-generation immigrant educators. The data and analysis is established in the next chapter.
Chapter 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

Through this study, I aspire to investigate the role cultural identity(ies) of second-generation immigrant educators may play in shaping their teaching philosophy. This chapter will focus on the results yielded from the data taken from the interviews of two participants: Sophie and Elizabeth. The participants were given pseudonyms in compliance with the ethical review of this study.

Through the research, I was able to identify key information to help answer my research question, of the role cultural identity(ies), of second-generation immigrant educators, plays in shaping their teaching philosophy. Firstly, the importance one’s past experiences plays into shaping our current and future identities. All of the experiences that we have faced has shaped our identity to what it is today. Any future experiences will continue to shape and mold our identity in relation to the situations we find ourselves in. Secondly, our upbringing shapes our perceptions of the education system and in what programs we find more effective than others. In addition to this, how one’s teaching experience starts off in one direction but may end up veering in another direction later on.

The data generated four (4) themes with various sub-themes. The first theme discusses cultural identity. Within this theme several sub-themes arise: childhood and youth, upbringing and school experience, and search for identity. The second theme discusses the qualities of teaching and education. The third theme examines teaching experience, focusing on professional experience, and reflection. Finally, the last theme explored is the concept of mentoring. Expectantly, by the end of this chapter, we can identify the factors, based on one’s cultural identity(ies), that influences a second-
4.1 Cultural Identity

In the case of my two research participants, both came from similar cultural backgrounds with the same ethnicity and similar religious beliefs, etc. They were both raised by Korean parents and grew up with predominately Korean upbringings. One participant, Sophie, stated that she felt her Korean identity was a “different part of my life.” She felt as if she had to switch between the two identities, Korean on the weekends and Canadian during the week. Even in terms of language, as soon as she started school in the Canadian education system, she maintained a minimal knowledge of the Korean language. In general, Elizabeth grew up similarly to that of Sophie’s childhood. But compared to Sophie, Elizabeth indicated that she “never felt like it was a big issue in terms of finding my identity.” She only experienced the differences when she compared the two cultures and realized that certain things were unfair. The concept of Biculturalism will be explored. As described by Sodhi (2008), biculturalism is “the ability of a person to function effectively in more than one culture and also to switch roles back and forth as the situation changes” (p. 187). This is a vital concept that must be investigated when describing the experiences of second-generation immigrants. As second-generation immigrants, we are inevitably exposed to two cultures from birth. How these two cultures interact within an individual is essential to this study. Through this theme, I will describe each participant’s childhood and youth, their upbringing and school experience, and their search for identity.
Childhood and Youth

As a child, Sophie spent more time in school. It would only be after school and on the weekends that she would experience and participate in her Korean identity. One way she put it was “navigating between cultures,” which reflects the definition of biculturalism by Sodhi (2008), mentioned above. Church and religion was another very important aspect of Sophie’s identity. Her weekends comprised of spending most of her time at church with her Korean friends but she found that they all embraced the English language; they had developed a familiarity to the English language. As she grew older, her church was in need of Sunday school teachers so she added that role into her identity. She was tasked to start a kindergarten Sunday school group and went as far as becoming the director of education at the church.

For Elizabeth, she began to speak English as soon as she started day care and continued on throughout her education in the public school system. Unlike the immigrant teachers who found it difficult to accommodate to the host country’s culture (Vandeyar et al., 2014) second-generation immigrants are born into their dual-identity, thus encouraged to embrace both host and home cultures. She also felt that her parents encouraged her and her siblings to embrace and be “integrated within the western culture but still maintain Korean values.” These values would include: family, saving face, collective decisions etc. Elizabeth also attended Korean school to ensure that she maintains a basic knowledge of the Korean language but that became harder to maintain as she became more involved in Canadian schools. She and her family would continue to celebrate Korean festivals and celebrations but her family would integrate them with the western culture. For example, celebrating New Year’s on January 1st rather than
following the lunar calendar. Therefore, Elizabeth understood that her parents instilled Korean-Asian values while recognizing that their children “would still be brought up in a western culture.”

**Upbringing and School Experience**

Sophie grew up with a rote learning style: paper to pencil, memorization etc. and her parents made sure to instill their home culture to their children. It was very much Korean at home, attending Saturday morning classes and having strict rules to speak Korean, especially at home. So there was that rote and oral Korean language speaking at home. Of course, her parents would have different standards for their children and they were stricter. As she grew up, she saw that her parents became more open and they were able to develop more of a trust relationship. Sophie reflected on her experiences in relation to her parents. She recognizes that it was so much “harder for them … coming to a country without the language and navigating between cultures.” She also acknowledges that her parents did the best that they could and that it definitely took time and experience, as it does with anything. Sophie understands the situation in which she was brought into and the decisions her parents had to make. This allowed her to understand more of how the learned experiences of her parents have shaped our own identity (Gardner, 1998). Her parents were raised in one way and they came to a new country to start a life. As a result, she grew up with a different upbringing than others.

Growing up in the Canadian school system, Sophie still had to attend ESL classes. Although she was born Canadian, since she was exposed to the Korean language and it was instilled in her throughout her childhood, she needed that extra support. As she was
recounting her school experience, she described this fact as “funny.” She had people not understanding why she had to go to ESL classes even though she was born in Canada. Of these classes, she remembers a blonde lady coming to her classroom, pointing at her and escorting her to a small room. In there, she was flashed flash cards. Although this was many years ago, Sophie vividly remembers these experiences in school. She still felt like she was different and felt the segregation being one of the only Koreans in the whole school. By not having the language, she found it even harder to simply “fit in.” ESL support has come a long way over the years, but it was difficult for Sophie as she was growing up because even then, people didn’t really understand what ESL was “back then.” She still went through the system and got that language support she needed. Of course she found it hard, and reflects that she “just kind of followed the example/norm.” She remembers her mother telling her that “if everyone is getting up and lining up: that probably means that you need to get up and line up.” As she reflects back on her school experience, she describes as having “gone through a lot.” There was too much that was unknown; “never any prediction of what was going to happen.” In addition to these difficulties, Sophie’s family moved around a lot so she frequently had to change schools and hence, make new friends. All in all, she explains “everything was just that much more of an obstacle, when I didn’t have the language.” Syalikas & Gavaki (1995) illustrated the importance of a high self-esteem, especially with regards to ethnic identity, and the relationship it has with the “grade-point-average and academic aspirations” (p. 6). As Sophie had to constantly renew her identity in each new school and learning a new language, she found her lived experiences challenging, during those first few years in the Canadian education system.
In Elizabeth’s case, she acknowledges that her parents left Korea with the mentality of “we want to give you the best; we want to provide our kids with something better than what we’ve had and Canada would provide that avenue for us.” With this in mind, Elizabeth remembers having an extra-curricular activity every single night such as: skating, swimming, Kumon, piano, art etc. Even as a child, she felt it was difficult to juggle everything, especially when she sees her friends simply playing. Even when it came to decisions on choosing an extra-curricular, her friends had the choice of choosing what they wanted to participate in whereas with Elizabeth, her parents simply enrolled her in anything and everything. This didn’t cause any resentment, especially when she can see all of the opportunities she was exposed to but as a child, she remembers how overwhelmed she felt. No matter how different the cultures were and the differences in what Elizabeth’s parents were exposed to and what was available to Elizabeth; her parents never limited the access to resources that could benefit her and her siblings in their education. Her parents wanted to ensure that Elizabeth and her siblings were either on par with their classmates or ahead of them. Elizabeth also noticed a difference in grades, in terms of the pressures she felt to excel in every subject. Even at a young age, she remembers feeling the pressure to bring home all “A”s whereas she noticed her classmates didn’t feel the same pressures from their homes. This was because of the high value that is placed in education in Asian cultures, and these expectations transcended generations no matter the culture their children were growing up in.
Search for Identity

As Sophie was growing up, she understood her identity as having to navigate between the two identities. She found that she needed the time to find her identity. Throughout her childhood, she had to “try and acquire and learn on her own, whether it may be her identity, navigating through the school culture, maintaining her ethnic identity etc. Due to this time of searching for her own identity, she found that she “totally adapted; without a choice.” She had to deal with expectations from both the schools; the western culture and from home; her parents and her culture. She found that she was constantly accommodating for the two identities and trying to do what was culturally acceptable for both sides of her identity. As she described her identity, she called it a “double identity.” She didn’t have a preference to either one and she just knew when she would show her Korean identity and when she would identify with her Canadian identity. As she continued and got accustomed to doing this and switching back and forth between identities, she found that she became more comfortable doing this, just as described by Sodhi (2008) regarding biculturalism.

Elizabeth remembers her search for identity as wanting to be accepted in the school, especially since the school she attended was majority Caucasian. Like Sophie, Elizabeth remembers that her and her sister were probably the only Asians in the entire school, and this remained a fact throughout middle school and high school. The only way Elizabeth remembers maintaining her Korean culture was through Korean dramas. It was an avenue for her to stay “in the loop in terms of Korean cultures,” but even she wasn’t necessarily learning about the culture. As she grew older she began to identify more with western culture: celebrities, music, and clothes. She remembers even going as far as to
identifying Koreans as “fob’s, meaning fresh off the boat.” When she visited Korea in grade 10, she found herself going through a phase of immersing herself in Korean music and even with friends; she gained friends she could identify with. Friends who were Korean, living in Canada and sharing the same faith, which caused her to stray from her friends at school because she became comfortable with her church friends who had a lot more in common with her; she “gravitated more towards them.” Even in university and when she went to Australia for teachers college, she still had a mix of friends, in terms of ethnicities but they were still predominately Asian. Although they were second-generation, they were westernized. While Elizabeth went back and forth embracing different cultures as her identity, as she was reflecting, she didn’t feel as if it was difficult to find her identity. She only saw the differences when she compared her life to her friends, in the situations mentioned before, in the case of her upbringing. She needed time to understand my question asking her how she accommodated the two (or more) cultures into her identity. When prompted if she ever felt her identity was challenged, Elizabeth states that if she had been born in Korea and then came to Canada, she would have had a more difficult time than how she grew up. Elizabeth describes that she never felt as if she was “pushed or pulled.” It was simply the fact that both cultures were a part of her growing up; that both parts made up who she was in total. Syalikas & Gavaki (1995) determined that:

“Ethnic pride has a positive effect on self-esteem and that it may be related to the development of a sounder, integrated identity. This is not to say that these children will not develop a Canadian identity; rather, it seems that part of healthy identity development is the integration of the ethnic ‘me’” (p. 7).

Elizabeth embraced both sides to her identity. She sees many similarities in the two cultures she grew up with such as: the importance of family. The only tension she could
think of was with her parents trying to understand how she made decisions. As her parents spent more time in the Canadian culture, she could see that they were being exposed to different perspectives and eventually she and her parents were able to “meet in the middle, for the most part.”

All of these factors (childhood and youth, upbringing and school experience, and their search for identity) can be contributed to one’s cultural identity. Taking the time to reflect on one’s upbringing and the choices made by their parents and themselves, as individuals, can help a teacher understand how their teaching identity and philosophy came to be. This can be validated through Florio-Ruane & Williams (2008) as they advocate for the importance of inward reflection so that we do not devalue any factors that contribute to developing our identities as teachers. Furthermore, Gomez & White (2010) assert that identifying and understanding internal factors will influence our teaching practice and values, beliefs, prejudices we bring into our classroom. This is a skill that can be passed down to future teachers, whether they are second-generation immigrants or not. Of course, it isn’t simply internal factors we need to be conscious of. Other authors state that there is a complementing relationship between internal and external factors when influencing a teacher’s philosophy (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2014). Each participant’s identity was influenced through internal and external factors. Both participants were influenced by their parent’s hopes for the best for their children; the education system they were brought up in; extra-curricular activities they participated in and the community they grew up in. All of these factors found a way to impact each participant’s identity as well as their teaching identity. By reflecting on their past experiences, the participants were able to understand who they are and why
they made the decisions they made to get to where they are today. Doing this, the participants understood more about biculturalism. One study found that “the higher the self-esteem, the higher the grade-point-average and academic aspirations” (Syalikas & Gavaki, 1995, p. 6). I believe this is due to the fact that these individuals were able to understand themselves more as individuals, which allowed them to perform better in whatever they were tasked to doing. At the same time, this high level of performance is not indicative to all second-generation immigrants. Others may find contradictions to their various identities thus having the reverse effects than those who find their identities complementary (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008). Therefore, by taking the time to reflect and to understand how we, as individuals, came to be and are then the better we will be equipped to integrate our identities in whatever settings we are put in.

4.2 Qualities of Teaching/Education

Sophie found multiple qualities of education. She believed that there was much to learn from both the western way of teaching and the eastern way of teaching. She believes that we need to see how some practices work in the western way and try to understand what works in the eastern teaching philosophy. When considering the two teaching philosophies, she recognizes the importance of certain trends such as inquiry skills and hands-on learning as well as the implementation of technology in the classroom. But at the same time, Sophie finds that the western teaching philosophy “has gone too far.” In terms of the new Full Day Kindergarten structure, “everything is play-based.” She noticed that although there are benefits to these types of programs, if they aren’t taking to time to go through the fundamental skills needed to succeed throughout a
child’s academic career, then it is “almost too late.” As Sophie puts it, “it’s just little basic things but it really is so important.” For example, if they don’t know how to hold a pencil properly, writing is all over the place, or even as students are going up in grades their knowledge and reading skills are “getting less and less.” Because of the lack of fundamental skills our students are going into each grade, they can’t read to learn therefore are “already so many steps behind and Sophie noticed, “every gap is so much more wider.” We are constantly asking our students to “be a critical thinker and critical leader in order to apply themselves.” Therefore, Sophie states “K-3 are the most important years.” Knowing this, Sophie tries to incorporate the best practices of both the eastern and western ways of teaching; “that’s where the way I was taught … that’s the way I’m going to teach.” Of course, it isn’t just one way of teaching but it is a lot of individualizing; having different centers for different needs, “setting an environment where you are doing it part of your play,” and “not doing it everyday and pressuring them.” We as educators must “appreciate the best of the both.” Cruickshank (2004) states that teachers with bilingual and bicultural skills are rare but will benefit the education system. This is exactly the skillset second-generation immigrant educators can bring to the Canadian education system.

When I asked Elizabeth the same question, she brought up similar insights. She focused on the concept of inquiry-based learning. She says that “in an ideal world, it sounds so amazing but it does not work.” She finds there is a time and a place for rote and memorization but our teachings should not depend solely on these techniques. Therefore for her own teaching practices, Elizabeth takes from both sides of the spectrum. So she would teach them what they need to know and then guide them into
inquiry, especially when reporting to parents is a priority in our Canadian education system. Just like Sophie mentioned, Elizabeth talks about how too much rote will put some students into “certain mannerisms of thinking,” which doesn’t leave room for creativity. On the other hand, too much inquiry and the student’s won’t learn the fundamentals. She makes a good argument of how combining the two practices will be more beneficial for the students.

A.J. Huggett (1930) defined the term “teacher’s philosophy” effectively. He described it as “… a code of their own, either thought out or nebulous, but nevertheless forming guiding principles which will direct their activities in preparing children to live successfully in democracy” (p. 452). Each participant had their own point of view regarding various teaching practices of both the Western and Eastern systems. They were both strong advocates for a balance between the two practices, which was illustrated through their own teaching philosophies. In terms of the balance, both participants found that the eastern way of teaching was vital when it came to teaching the fundamentals such as reading, and writing. But the western way of teaching promoted creativity and critical thinking, which is another vital skill necessary in our Canadian culture today. Both Sophie and Elizabeth came to their own teaching philosophies on their own, after being immersed in the teaching profession and learning what they believe works best for their students. Although, they came to similar conclusions, with further research, contradictions may arise since one teaching philosophy does not fit all teachers across the world (Huggett, 1930).
4.3 Teaching Experience

Through this theme, I hope to portray my participant’s professional experience going through their history from teachers college to where they are today. I also discuss their identity in the professional community and their teaching practices. I then will end by examining each participant’s reflection on his or her own identities and philosophies.

Professional Experience

Growing up, Sophie learned that her mother always wanted to become a teacher. Because of this, her mother would constantly instill in her the idea that “teaching is the best job or a woman.” Being immersed in this thought and growing up with this point of view, she remembers that she would lay up her stuffed animals and playing teacher. Being exposed to these teaching experiences, more and more, Sophie realized that teaching was for her. Her mother’s aspirations and influences, throughout Sophie’s upbringings, brought her to where she is today, just as illustrated by Florio-Ruane & Williams (2008) regarding the paths of ancestors.

She had the teaching profession at the back of her mind even though she tried different career paths and deciding what she wanted to pursue for her undergraduate degree, just to make sure teaching was really for her. Teaching was confirmed for Sophie when she took a year off after university. She went to go visit her foster child in Mindanao, Philippines and even taught in an orphanage while she was there. She didn’t want to go into teaching just “because it was a good job for a woman … female… mother.” She wanted a confirmation, especially spiritually speaking, ensuring that it was God’s “confirmation of why he created her.” After her time abroad, she got her
confirmation and knew that she “wanted to pursue teachers college.” Sophie called it her “calling.”

Elizabeth never thought that she was going to become a teacher. She knew what her passions were but couldn’t think of a career she could pursue with them. She had passions for music, signing but that was not a career she was willing to pursue. She also had passions for languages but it wasn’t something she was willing to pursue as a career option either. Elizabeth knew that she “loved music, languages, being with people especially kids, but teaching never crossed her mind. Similar to Sophie, Elizabeth’s mom wanted her to become a teacher as well. When Elizabeth needed volunteer hours, her mom suggested that she try volunteering in a classroom. She did not enjoy this experience at all. When it came to her fourth year in university, she met Sophie when she started attending the same church. They started talking about future career prospects and Sophie suggested that Elizabeth come and observe her class. This was when Elizabeth saw herself being a teacher. She believes it was because she identified a lot of her personality to Sophie. Since these two experiences, in the classroom, were completely different, Elizabeth was able to visualize herself in the teaching profession and thus was encouraged to pursue the career. Elizabeth went to Australia for teachers college for a year. When Elizabeth came back from Australia, she felt that the process of finding a job was “very hard to get into.” Therefore, she took a year to volunteer in classrooms while she was applying to boards. When she was applying, it was at a point where it was job market was very competitive and reflecting back, Elizabeth says she was very lucky and that the opportunities for her were “God-given.”

As previously mentioned, inward reflections are vital to help us to understand
how our identities were formed (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010). As second-generation immigrants, we notice our multiple identities from the very beginning. We notice similarities but more importantly the differences in our identities and cultures. Taking the time to reflect upon the factors influencing who we are, we allow ourselves to solidify our personal identities as individuals and educators. One major factor for both of my participants was their religion. Sophie and Elizabeth grew up in the church and thus they wanted to ensure that their decision into the teaching career was part of God’s plan as well. They didn’t want to join the profession simply because it was the “best job for a women,” nor that it was the only option for them, based on the education they pursued.

When I asked how Sophie perceived herself in the professional community and her identity as a professional, she says that “at the beginning, I was excited,” especially because she had a job. She wanted to give a good first impression, since she was the “new girl on staff.” She saw herself putting in the extra effort, going out of her way to start anything in the school and to take initiative. Reflecting back, Sophie stated that she “came to a realization … why a lot of teachers get burnt out.” Especially thinking back and realizing that “we see ourselves as who we were when we started … and who we are after … years.” Particularly when female teachers make the transition from being single to becoming married and starting her own family; she has to start trying to balance everything, which is a lot of work. As Sophie was talking she said, “I don’t even have words to say…” At the same time, no matter how hard and tiring things may get, Sophie recognizes that it is still such a rewarding experience. Due to Sophie’s increasing number of responsibilities, she tended to “rely on the single teachers: those fresh out of teachers
In Elizabeth’s case, she describes herself as an “eager beaver.” At the beginning of her career, she “felt so much pressure to perform and to make sure that everything was perfect. When a lesson she planned didn’t go as planned, she felt as if it was “the end of the world” and was disappointed in herself, but as she grew as a teacher she learned to “roll with the punches.” She describes teaching as a “career where you have to be really flexible, open minded, and able to continually grow.” She describes three ways she has grown as a teacher. First being, classroom management, the second was time management, and finally collaborating with colleagues. When Elizabeth saw herself in the professional community, she said, “I found it really intimidating.” Since she was the “new kid on the block/little fish in the pond,” she wanted to do a good job, the fit in, and “wouldn’t mind a couple of friends” as well.” She wanted to show that she had something to show to both the community and her students. Due to this desire to perform Elizabeth realized how exhausted she became. She realized that she couldn’t do everything but wasn’t discouraged because she had a very supportive administrative team. The principal she was working with counseled her saying that she has a family and a life to consider. Therefore, advised Elizabeth to choose one or two activities to concentrate on and fully devote her time to them. Because she was solidified in her identity as a teacher: knowing that she is a good teacher and that she loves her kids, she was at ease with these revelations.

Due to Sophie’s personal experience growing up in the Canadian education system, she felt that she could relate to the ESL students. Beyon & Hirji (2000) outlined a variety of roles immigrant teachers can perform in the education system, which Sophie
has come to identify herself. In the first school she worked in, she had a few Korean students. With the school knowing of her ethnicity, the office would call her to translate. Being culturally aware and appreciative, Sophie would partake in multicultural months and make sure to promote and share cultural differences. She also found that she could empathize with these students and “meet them where they are at.” Her connection with these students allows her to “understand the emotional, psychological, mental, all the physical changes that they go through.” As part of Sophie’s professional identity, she knows that she has done her job “if that child can leave my classroom with a smile on their face; at least put a fingerprint on their hearts; to say that I’ve taught something and made a difference in that child’s life.” All of these things, and pursuits always brings Sophie back to her love for teaching.

Similarly, Elizabeth saw the same connections between herself and immigrant families. “The area that I teach, the students are almost all second-generation. Almost all of their parents are first generation parents and have come for the same reason my parents came.” She believes that with her identity as a second-generation immigrant, she is able to embrace both cultures but also as an educator, she is able to understand her community a little more. Teaching in Brampton, Ontario, a heavily immigrant community, when parents come to her, she sees her own parents. She “sees the struggles and the care they have for their kids.” She is amused to see how her experiences become so relevant when she gets to know her students. On this level, Elizabeth feels she is able to better understand the student’s parent’s point of view, coming from an immigrant background, and having gone through similar circumstances as her students. This eases the conversation with parents because they too can understand that Elizabeth has gone
through everything they are going through. Since Elizabeth is able to see everything in the immigrant parent’s perspective, thinking back to the experiences of her parents, she knows that she is more empathetic and able to help her students grow as whole individuals.

Not only did Sophie and Elizabeth need to cognize their own professional identity, they needed to recognize it within the professional community as well. This means in relation to their colleagues as well as in the community they work in. Cruickshank (2004) acknowledges the advantages of bilingual and bicultural educators within the education system. First and second-generation immigrant educators can also benefit the education system apart from simply being translators. They can be effective liaisons between the school and the community since they have the experience and the knowledge of understanding both perspectives; roles such as cultural informants and role models as outlined by Beynon & Hirji (2000). Schools and communities in Canada should be proud to have such a diverse team of educators and should take advantage of all the skillsets these first and especially second-generation immigrant educators can bring to the system.

Reflection

Throughout this interview, Sophie demonstrated wonderful reflection from her personal and professional identities. One reflection that came up often was that she went “full circle;” having started her career through the church, working with TDSB and now going back to the church with her own Sunday school program. She sees her work and her career as rewarding and realizing that “we are blessed.” Although this was her first
time reflecting on her teaching career, she came to insightful conclusions. Through her personal experience, she understands and stands for the importance of integrating ESL students.

One key reflection Elizabeth came to was how much every one of her experiences, every gift, every talent plays a role in her teachings. She recounted a story of a student in her class. A Vietnamese boy whose story reminded Elizabeth so much about herself, growing up in the Canadian education system. He was an Asian student, who only knew French since he was in French immersion, in Montreal, before coming into her class. She reflected how improbable a student could have or go through similar experiences as herself, yet here she is in her sixth year of teacher, with a student who is going through almost exactly what she went through. Because of this, Elizabeth feels like she is more understanding and has more patience when it comes to the students but with their parents as well. The key learning she got from this was to embrace everything that life throws at you because you will never know when these experiences will help you or become relevant again in our lives.

Throughout this study, we have explored the importance reflections play into shaping our identities. More specifically, to understand who we are and why we make certain decisions. The research indicating the necessity of reflections (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Gomez & White, 2010; Luk-Fong, 2013; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2014) may not directly relate to the experiences of second-generation immigrants but nonetheless, reflection is a tool that is not exclusively available to just one group of individuals. It is a tool that anyone can access, use and benefit from.
4.4 Mentoring

Sophie is a strong believer of mentoring, being both a mentor and a mentee. She enjoys the process of training someone under your wing and yearns to keep investing and giving to whomever. She describes it as being appreciative and appreciated. When thinking of first-generation immigrant educators, she recognizes the challenges that they may go through, shifting from one culture to another and adapting the Canadian education system. At the same time, she believes that they have a vast amount of knowledge that they can share with all, especially for us as Canadian teachers; there could be much to learn from different methods and standards of teaching. If the first-generation immigrant teachers do not see this as an opportunity to share and become insular, then many others may perceive them to by disconnected from all. She believes that the concept of partnership should be vital, especially in the profession of teaching.

Having this mentorship and partnership mindset she realizes that it is “nice to partner with somebody who is trying things out.” Teaching is a profession that is constantly evolving, therefore as teachers and educators, we need to stay current with the language, the methods, the strategies, anything that will improve our teaching practices and evolve our teaching philosophy and identity. She also views mentorship as an avenue to providing opportunities. As teachers, our jobs are to “raise leaders and teachers in the school system.” All in all, we must think of mentorship as a “give-give relationship since both parties take away so much.” Jane and Peeler (2005) also touches upon the values of mentorships stating:

“Mentoring relationships can be a means of bridging the gap between the newcomers’ former ways of knowing and current practice, thereby mobilizing their capacity to operate effectively as a teacher in their new contexts and develop a positive professional identity” (p. 325).
The concept of mentorship goes hand in hand with the quality of being a life-long learner. Sophie acknowledges that learning is ongoing, that it is “always evolving” and it can happen cross-culturally. Due to her constantly changing circumstances and an increase in responsibilities, from her church planting, Sophie feels like she needs to stay current, especially as she continues to teach occasionally. To stay current, she constantly reads up on articles, and is willing to hear and learn of the best practices of teaching from everyone. She sees all of these learning avenues as opportunities, to take the time to embrace the learning, just “like we do as children; like a sponge,” and to “experience teaching in different facets.”

Going along with the second interview, I asked Elizabeth if she feels she could make more of an impact if she was teaching in a community that was predominately Korean. She answered by saying that “Asian kids tend to just be drawn to me.” She recognizes that “one nice thing would be that she could related to them and interviews wouldn’t be as difficult because the language wouldn’t be such a big barrier.” With Elizabeth, I believe her role, as a mentor will be a relationship between herself and the community. By having an understanding mindset of the circumstances her students come to her and understanding the challenges their parents may be going through, Elizabeth can act as a liaison between the school and the community. Although she may not be culturally or ethnically similar that the community she lives and teaches in, she can still identify with them.

Becoming a teacher does not mean that one has to stop being a learner. This goes hand in hand with the concept of mentorship. As teachers, we must embrace the culture of life-long learning. Willing to learn from anyone and also taking to time to teach others.
Some immigrant teachers are integrated into the Canadian education system with a strong sense of their own teaching philosophy. By not willing to accommodate to the host country’s culture and holding onto their past, these educators are limiting themselves in their careers and their identity within the professional community (Vandeyar et al., 2014). Therefore, with the role of mentorships, these immigrant educators can take the time to learn from their national colleagues and have the opportunity to share their knowledge with them as well. In another aspect, mentorships can benefit second-generation immigrant educators as well. Scholars (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Sodhi, 2008; Syalikas & Gavaki, 1995) made the case that second-generation immigrants will encounter different and more ambiguous challenges compared to those of first-generation immigrants. Through the mentorship programs, second-generation immigrant educators will be able to be exposed to more teaching styles and philosophies to aid them in shaping their own teaching philosophy. This is essential for emerging second-generation immigrant educators.

4.5 Conclusion

This study endeavors to identify aspects in which our cultural identity(ies) impact(s) the teaching philosophies of second-generation immigrant educators. Various themes arose during the data collection and data analysis phases of the research. The themes are as follows: cultural identity (childhood and youth, upbringing and school experience, and search for identity), qualities of teaching and education, teaching experience (professional experience and reflection), and mentorship.

In our first theme, participants’ past history was examined; aspects such as their
childhood, upbringing, discipline, school experience, and extra-curricular activities. Both participants had similar past experiences but the way they perceived their identity was a little different. Sophie described her identity as having to “navigate between the two identities.” Whereas, Elizabeth didn’t find a challenge or a conflict in identifying with the two identities: Korean and Canadian. She felt as if they both made up who she was and did this with ease. The literature encourages self (inward)-reflection, because it allows us as individuals, and educators to understand our values, beliefs, essentially our identities better.

The second theme discussed what each participant perceived to be qualities of teaching and education. Once again, both participants came up with similar viewpoints suggesting that a balance is best. As second-generation immigrants, they felt they were able to understand the values of both the eastern and western practices of teaching and thus able to effectively incorporate the best of both into their own teachings. The literature supports this balance suggesting that there is no single perfect teaching philosophy that can transcend all cultures and education systems. Teaching philosophies should be developed individually and relative to the students they receive each year.

The third theme explored the participants’ teaching experience describing their professional identity, their growth as an educator, their identity within the professional community and their reflective practices. They both recognized their eagerness to perform and invest everything into their jobs, but understood the reason why a lot of teachers become burnt-out. They described their search for a balance in their lives and how their passions and experiences inevitably aid them in their careers. In the literature, scholars continue to emphasize the importance of reflection and its power on our identities.
Finally, the notion of mentorship was studied. Sophie talked a lot about the importance of being a life-long learner: the importance of being open to new theories and practices and willing to learn from anyone, anywhere. Apart from mentorship, another role discussed was a liaison between the school and the community. Being a second-generation immigrant educator allows us to understand from the two perspectives, having been exposed to both cultures growing up. This allows us to understand from where our student’s are coming to us, and the points of view of the schools we work in. With this concept in mind, we, as second-generation immigrant educators, can play various roles to benefit the school and the community we work in.

In summary, although there is a gap in literature in terms of second-generation immigrants, this study endeavors to shed light to this new group of educators and understanding their journey to develop their teaching philosophy and identity. The data retrieved and analyzed in this study will be discussed in the following chapter regarding the implications and recommendations that arise from the findings mentioned above.
Chapter 5: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this final chapter, the key findings and their significance to the research of teacher identity and philosophy of second-generation immigrant educators will be outlined. Implications of this study to the education community and to emerging educators will be defined, leading to recommendations on further steps to take. Limitations in the literature will be discussed and areas for further research will be suggested.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance

Upon the analysis of the data from the interviews of two participants, four main themes were derived. These themes were: cultural identity (childhood and youth, upbringing and school experience, and search for identity); qualities of teaching and education; teaching experience (professional experience and reflection); and mentorship.

The first theme of cultural identity touched upon the participants’ past lived experiences. This consisted of their childhood, upbringing, as well as school experiences. As children of immigrant families, they grew up with some parts of their culture aligning but also creating a dissonance, in some sense, with the mainstream culture of Canada. Throughout these events, the participants’ were on a journey to search for their own identity.

The second theme touched upon the qualities of teaching and education. More specifically, what each participant perceived of the Canadian teaching and education practices and how they implemented these practices, as educators in Canada. As the
participants reflected upon their development of their own teaching philosophies, they acknowledged the benefits of both the eastern and western teaching practices, from personal experience, and how they were able to find a balance between the two.

The third theme related to the participants’ teaching experience meaning their professional experience and reflection upon their practice. They reflected upon their journey as educators and how much they have grown personally and professionally, especially noticing a growth from their early years to who they are as educators today. This reflection also touched upon their role and identity within the community they worked in.

The last theme was mentorship. Most of the data echoes the identities of each of the participants, whereas in this theme there is a shift towards how these identities translates into the work that they do and the relationships that they develop. Mentorship, in this study, interprets into the qualities of being a lifelong learner: being willing to learn from anyone and to take every moment as a learning opportunity. Mentorship is also related to the mentorship of their students. How they saw that they were able to relate to their students, especially first or second-generation immigrants, due their ability to understand the similar circumstances these students are studying in. To take this further, the ability to relate to the parents of these students and to create a more understanding and deeper relationship with them.

All of these themes were carefully analyzed and thus was able to provide a careful insight into the teaching philosophies of second-generation immigrant educators. Of course this is a very limited comprehension to how our cultural identity(ies) impact(s) the teaching philosophy of second-generation immigrant educators; important implications,
recommendations, and suggestions for further research are defined.

5.2 Implications (Broad and Narrow)

During a review of the data and the themes derived from the study, important implications arose in both the broad (educational research community) and narrow (professional identity and practice) context. These implications, which will be discussed in detail below, include the value and importance of reflection, the need for balance, and the significance of mentorship.

One important implication was the importance and value of reflection. The study explored the influence inward and outward reflection impacted the formation of a teacher’s identity and teaching philosophy. By understanding the internal and external factors influencing an educator, we have a better understanding of who we are and who we can become in the future. Each individual educator needs to participate in some form of reflection, on his or her own, since everyone will experience a certain situation/event differently. Just as my two participants grew up in similar contexts they voiced different opinions in their identities.

A second implication that can be drawn from this study is the need for balance. Balance in terms of understanding both eastern and western teaching philosophies. Although both of my participants, Elizabeth and Sophie, were born in Canada they still grew up with eastern traditions, values, including teaching values. As they pursued teachers college and through experience, they both found that the trends in education were towards inquiry and play-based instruction. Rather than complying with these trends and practices, Sophie and Elizabeth found value in implementing both teaching practices;
effectively incorporating the best of both. They acknowledge the advantages and disadvantages of both the eastern and western teaching practices, and the need to find a balance when forming their own teaching practice. As second-generation immigrant educators, we can speak from personal experience on what works and doesn’t in education. While everyone’s experiences are not equal, we can bring valuable insight into the conversation.

Finally, this study brings forth the significance of mentorship. With a new generation, of second-generation immigrant educators, we need to pay extra consideration to the benefits of mentoring. As second-generation immigrants, as illustrated by the participants of the study, they searched for their individual identities within the mainstream culture and the culture they were brought up with from home. As with this, a community in which they can grow and thrive in their identity as second-generation immigrant educators is vital. A community to learn from one another and to eventually become mentors themselves to the ever-growing new population of second-generation immigrant educators. This generation of educators also plays a vital role to become positive role models, mentors, for their students as well. A second-generation immigrant educator has the advantage of being able to understand both the perspectives of the students, and their parents, as well as those of the schools. Thus they can serve as a liaison between the schools and the community in which they serve.

These are a few of the implications that were drawn from the present study, each of which leads to respective recommendations, as outlined in the section below.
5.3 Recommendations

As the data has been analyzed and implications have been stated, the present study points to three recommendations:

- Pre-service education programs must continue the great practice of reflection. By learning and developing the skill of inward and outward reflection, emerging educators are given the opportunity to understand more about themselves and how their lived and future experiences shaped and will shape their identity as teachers. This will inevitably influence their teaching philosophies.

- The role of second-generation immigrant educators has been under focus in this study, and as illustrated throughout, they can play various roles apart from simply a teacher. Second-generation immigrant educators have an advantage in playing the role of liaison and mentor to both the community and school they serve. Therefore, positive support must be given to these educators. They will promote better facilitation of discussions and cooperation between schools, teachers, students and families. They must be given the opportunities to be mentored, to become mentors, and belong to a community in which their identities as second-generation immigrant educators will be valued.

- As the current body of literature regarding second-generation immigrant educators is limited, further endeavors to research more on this topic are vital. We must conduct more research into the beneficial roles second-generation immigrant educators will play in education.
5.4 Areas for Further Research

The investigation into the identities of second-generation immigrants is lacking in the present literature. This is equally the case in the field of education. This study aimed to contribute to the narrow scope of the literature. Therefore, it is proposed that the data sample be expanded to incorporate more voices of those who identity as second-generation immigrant educators. The research could also broaden to incorporate the voices of first-generation immigrant educators and to compare and contrast between the identities of the two generations. It would be useful to see how the two generations could interact and provide for a relationship in which they can learn from one another. By widening the data range we can draw more conclusions from the research and understand better the roles of second-generation immigrant educators in education.

5.5 Concluding Comments

Canada prides itself in being a diverse and multicultural country, meaning our population is very diverse with citizens coming to us from all around the world. Today, we have a new generation to consider: second-generation immigrants. This generation has a unique place to develop their identity and to bring their unique experiences into their teaching practice. Thus it is important to investigate and understand their place in the education community and how their experiences can contribute to the betterment of all; school board, schools, principals, teachers, students, and families. This study has come from a very special place in my own journey as an educator, and will influence how I will conduct myself as an educator as well.
References


Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Date:

Dear ________________________________,

My Name is Bomi Rebecca Park and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on the teacher’s identity and philosophy of second-generation immigrant educators. I am interested in interviewing teachers who are second-generation immigrants (born in Canada but their parents born from another country) and are OCT certified, teaching in an Ontario Public School. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor Dr. Ken McNeilly. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Bomi Rebecca Park
Phone: 647-462-0454
Email: becca.park@mail.utoronto.ca
Course Instructor’s Name: Dr. Ken McNeilly
Contact Info: kenneth.mcneilly@utoronto.ca

Consent Form
I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Bomi Rebecca Park and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ________________________________

Name: (printed) ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol/Questions

Background information of interviewee
1. As a second-generation immigrant, did you grow up with a different cultural upbringing at home?
2. As a second-generation immigrant, have you ever encountered any differences between the mainstream culture vs. that of your upbringing?
3. Did you find/catch yourself assimilating/adapting to the mainstream culture?
4. How did you accommodate the two (or more) cultures into your identity?
5. Can you tell me how you decided to pursue a teaching profession? Was it your primary goal to become a teacher? If so, what kind?
6. Can you tell me a little about your history as an educator?

Interviewee’s understanding of the topic
7. What does second-generation immigrant mean to you, as an individual?
8. Do you believe that your identity as a second-generation immigrant impacted your role as an educator? If so, how?
9. How would you describe your personal and professional teacher identity at the beginning of your education and career? What about now?
10. What accounts for these changes, or developments?
11. How did you perceive yourself within the professional community at the beginning? And now?
12. Do you feel conflicted in any way?
   • Within your identities
   • Your vision as a teacher

Benefits
13. In what ways have you seen some advantages or benefits arising thanks/accredited to your cultural identity?
14. In your opinion, what are some benefits of being a second-generation immigrant educator in Canada?

Challenges
15. What are some challenges second-generation immigrant educators may face in the education workforce compared to those of first-generation immigrant educators?
16. Do you believe there are challenges to being a second-generation immigrant? If so, what kind?
17. Could the struggles of first-generation immigrants relate to second-generation immigrants? If so, what kind and how?

Advice and closing questions
18. Any suggestions for new second-generation immigrant educators?
19. Any further comments you would like to add to any of the questions covered?
20. Do you have any questions for me before you end?

Thank you for your participation in this research study.