

INTERNATIONAL PARENTS IN TOKYO  
AND THE EDUCATION OF THEIR  
TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN

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# Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	II
LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES .....	VII
ABBREVIATIONS .....	IX
GLOSSARY OF TERMS .....	XI
ABSTRACT .....	XVI
DECLARATION .....	XVIII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	XIX

## CHAPTER ONE

---

<b>CROSSING CULTURES .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	2
1.2 A PERSONAL NARRATIVE .....	5
1.3 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS .....	13
1.4 THE PRESENT STUDY .....	16
1.4.1 <i>Research question</i> .....	17
1.4.2 <i>Research aim</i> .....	17
1.4.3 <i>Research objectives</i> .....	18
1.5 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND DELIMITATIONS .....	19
1.5.1 <i>Assumptions</i> .....	19
1.5.2 <i>Delimitations</i> .....	20
1.6 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE .....	22
1.6.1 <i>Personal</i> .....	22
1.6.2 <i>Intellectual</i> .....	23
1.6.3 <i>Practical</i> .....	23
1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE .....	24

## CHAPTER TWO

---

<b>INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES IN TOKYO .....</b>	<b>26</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	26
2.2 COSMOPOLITAN TOKYO .....	27
2.2.1 <i>The perception of ethnic homogeneity</i> .....	28
2.2.2 <i>Accession of Japanese citizenship</i> .....	30

2.2.3	<i>Acquisition of Japanese residency</i> .....	33
2.3	INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES.....	36
2.3.1	<i>Japanese families</i> .....	43
2.3.2	<i>Japanese intercultural families</i> .....	46
2.3.3	<i>Non-Japanese families</i> .....	51
2.4	TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN.....	58
2.4.1	<i>Third Culture Kids (TCKs)</i> .....	61
2.4.2	<i>Global Nomads (GNs)</i> .....	66
2.4.3	<i>Cross Cultural Kids (CCKs)</i> .....	69
2.5	PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE .....	70
2.5.1	<i>Japanese national schools</i> .....	74
2.5.2	<i>Non-Japanese national schools</i> .....	82
2.5.3	<i>Types of ‘international’ schools</i> .....	85
2.5.4	<i>Other school options</i> .....	89
2.6	CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	92

### CHAPTER THREE

---

<b>CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>94</b>	
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	94
3.2	A HUMAN ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.....	94
3.3	ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY.....	97
3.3.1	<i>Microsystem</i> .....	100
3.3.2	<i>Mesosystem</i> .....	104
3.3.3	<i>Exosystem</i> .....	105
3.3.4	<i>Macrosystem</i> .....	105
3.3.5	<i>Chronosystem</i> .....	106
3.3.6	<i>Bronfenbrenner’s theory and transnational children</i> .....	107
3.4	OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE.....	109
3.4.1	<i>Two overlapping spheres of influence</i> .....	109
3.4.2	<i>Three overlapping spheres of influence</i> .....	113
3.4.3	<i>Scope and assumptions of Epstein’s theory</i> .....	116
3.5	A NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: CROSS CULTURAL SCENARIOS OF TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN IN THE TOKYO STUDY.....	118
3.5.1	<i>Explanation</i> .....	119
3.5.2	<i>Presentation</i> .....	120
3.5.3	<i>Reformulation of the initial research question</i> .....	124
3.6	CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	125

<b>STAGE 1 &amp; 2 RESEARCH METHODS .....</b>	<b>126</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	126
4.2 STAGE 1 QUESTIONNAIRES .....	127
4.2.1 <i>Questionnaire design</i> .....	128
4.2.2 <i>Respondent recruitment</i> .....	130
4.2.3 <i>Data analysis</i> .....	132
4.2.4 <i>Ethical considerations</i> .....	132
4.3 STAGE 2 INTERVIEWS .....	133
4.3.1 <i>Interview design</i> .....	134
4.3.2 <i>Participant recruitment</i> .....	137
4.3.3 <i>Developing rapport</i> .....	139
4.3.4 <i>Voice recordings</i> .....	143
4.3.5 <i>Interview narratives</i> .....	144
4.3.6 <i>Data analysis</i> .....	146
4.3.7 <i>Ethical considerations</i> .....	149
4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	150

<b>STAGE 1 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS .....</b>	<b>151</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	151
5.2 INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PROFILES.....	151
5.2.1 <i>Age</i> .....	152
5.3 FACTORS IN INTERNATIONALISATION .....	153
5.3.1 <i>Birth country</i> .....	153
5.3.2 <i>Citizenship</i> .....	155
5.3.3 <i>Passport ownership</i> .....	157
5.4 LOCATION OF HOME .....	161
5.4.1 <i>Status of residence and anticipated duration in Japan</i> .....	161
5.4.2 <i>Number of international relocations</i> .....	163
5.4.3 <i>Location of majority of family</i> .....	164
5.4.4 <i>Where the family considers 'home'</i> .....	165
5.5 LANGUAGE SOCIALISATION .....	168
5.5.1 <i>Language(s) proficiency</i> .....	168
5.5.2 <i>Language(s) spoken at home</i> .....	174
5.6 STAGE 1 FAMILIES AND THEIR CHILD'S CULTURAL ECOLOGY .....	177
5.7 PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE .....	177

5.7.1	<i>Parents' highest educational level and the educational aspirations for their children</i> .....	177
5.7.2	<i>Parents' current occupation and the professional aspirations for their children</i> .....	180
5.7.3	<i>Parental choice of children's schooling</i> .....	183
5.8	CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	186

## CHAPTER SIX

---

<b>STAGE 2 INTERVIEW RESULTS</b> .....	<b>187</b>	
6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	187
6.2	INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PROFILES.....	187
6.2.1	<i>Japanese parents</i> .....	188
6.2.2	<i>Japanese intercultural parents</i> .....	190
6.2.3	<i>Non-Japanese parents</i> .....	194
6.3	FACTORS IN INTERNATIONALISATION .....	198
6.4	LOCATION OF HOME .....	212
6.5	LANGUAGE SOCIALISATION .....	218
6.6	STAGE 2 FAMILIES AND THEIR CHILD'S CULTURAL ECOLOGY .....	233
6.7	PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE .....	233
6.8	CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	248

## CHAPTER SEVEN

---

<b>FINDINGS &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>250</b>	
7.1	INTRODUCTION: THESIS OVERVIEW .....	250
7.2	SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS .....	252
7.2.1	<i>Correlating family ecology and parental school choice</i> .....	252
7.2.2	<i>The cross cultural scenarios of the transnational children</i> .....	258
7.3	IMPLICATIONS .....	267
7.4	LIMITATIONS .....	269
7.5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	271
7.6	A FINAL REFLECTION .....	273

## APPENDICES

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<b>APPENDIX A - STAGE 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE</b> .....	<b>276</b>
<b>APPENDIX B - STATEMENT OF ETHICS CLEARANCE</b> .....	<b>285</b>
<b>APPENDIX C - STAGE 1: THE FOUR CULTURAL DIMENSIONS FOR EACH TRANSNATIONAL CHILD IN THE TOKYO STUDY</b> .....	<b>286</b>

<b>APPENDIX D - STAGE 2: THE FOUR CULTURAL DIMENSIONS FOR EACH TRANSNATIONAL CHILD IN THE TOKYO STUDY .....</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>APPENDIX E - STAGE 1 &amp; STAGE 2: SUMMARY OF THE CROSS CULTURAL SCENARIOS FOR ALL TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN IN THE TOKYO STUDY .....</b>	<b>289</b>
<b>APPENDIX F - STAGE 1: FREQUENCY OF THE CROSS CULTURAL SCENARIOS AMONG TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN IN THE TOKYO STUDY .....</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>APPENDIX G - STAGE 2: FREQUENCY OF THE CROSS CULTURAL SCENARIOS AMONG TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN IN THE TOKYO STUDY .....</b>	<b>294</b>
<b>APPENDIX H - STAGE 1 &amp; STAGE 2: FREQUENCY OF THE CROSS CULTURAL SCENARIOS AMONG TRANSNATIONAL CHILDREN IN THE TOKYO STUDY .....</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>APPENDIX I - STAGE 2: THREE INTERVIEW NARRATIVES .....</b>	<b>296</b>
<i>Group One: Japanese family.....</i>	<i>296</i>
<i>Group Two: Japanese intercultural family .....</i>	<i>303</i>
<i>Group Three: Non-Japanese family.....</i>	<i>308</i>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>315</b>

## List of Tables & Figures

### TABLES

---

Table 2.1	Major cities of Japan and their approximate populations (Japanese National Tourism Organization, 2009)	28
Table 2.2	Legal foreigners who entered Japan in 2007 by ‘work’ visa status of residence (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2009)	35
Table 2.3	Metaphors for transnational children found in the literature	60
Table 2.4	Examples of neutral metaphors for transnational children	67
Table 2.5a	Yearly standard lesson hours fixed by MEXT for Japanese national elementary schools (Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, 2007)	75
Table 2.5b	Yearly standard lesson hours fixed by MEXT for Japanese national junior high schools (Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, 2007)	75
Table 3.1	Variations of cross cultural scenarios experienced by transnational children of international parents in Tokyo	122
Table 4.1	Stage 2: Overview of interview schedule	148
Table 5.1	Stage 1: Cultural background of parent respondents in Tokyo	152
Table 5.2	Stage 1: Transnational children’s ages	153
Table 5.3	Stage 1: International parents’ birth country	154
Table 5.4	Stage 1: Transnational children’s birth country	155
Table 5.5	Stage 1: International parents’ citizenship	156
Table 5.6	Stage 1: International parents’ amended citizenship and passport ownership	158
Table 5.7	Stage 1: Transnational children’s passport ownership	160
Table 5.8	Stage 1: International parents’ most proficient language	169
Table 5.9	Stage 1: Transnational children’s most proficient language	172
Table 5.10	Stage 1: Cultural ecology of respondents’ only or eldest child	175
Table 5.11	Stage 1: International parents’ highest educational qualification	178
Table 5.12	Stage 1: International parents’ school choice for their transnational children	183
Table 5.13	Stage 1: International parents’ school choice criteria	184
Table 6.1	Stage 2: Cultural ecology of participants’ only or eldest child	232
Table 7.1	Stage 1 & Stage 2: Pattern of ecology for three family groupings	252

Table 7.2	Stage 1 & Stage 2: Correlating the family's cultural ecology with parental school choice	257
Table 7.3a	Stage 1 & Stage 2: Cross cultural scenarios of transnational children in Japanese families in Tokyo	263
Table 7.3b	Stage 1 & Stage 2: Cross cultural scenarios of transnational children in Japanese intercultural families in Tokyo	263
Table 7.3c	Stage 1 & Stage 2: Cross cultural scenarios of transnational children in non-Japanese families in Tokyo	265

## FIGURES

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Figure 2.1	Traditional Third Culture Kid model (Adapted from Van Reken & Bethel, 2007)	62
Figure 2.2	Multiple cultural influences on Global Nomads (Adapted from Van Reken & Bethel, 2007)	68
Figure 2.3	Cross Cultural Kid model (Adapted from Van Reken & Bethel, 2007)	70
Figure 2.4	Typology of schools in an international context (Hill, 2006: 10)	73
Figure 3.1	Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model	100
Figure 3.2	The fluctuating amount of overlap between two spheres in a Venn diagram: Family and school environments (Adapted from McBride & Lin, 1996: 352)	110
Figure 3.3	Model of two overlapping spheres of influence: Separate, shared and sequentially-related philosophies and practices between family and school environments (Adapted from Epstein, 1987: 127)	113
Figure 3.4	Model of three overlapping spheres of influence: Separate, shared and sequentially-related philosophies and practices among family, school and community environments (Adapted from Epstein, 1987: 127)	115
Figure 3.5	Model of four overlapping spheres of influence: Separate, shared and sequentially-related philosophies and practices among mother, father, school and community environments (Adapted from Epstein, 1987: 127)	123



## Abbreviations

ADTP	Australasian Digital Theses Program
AICE	Advanced International Certificate of Education
ANZCCJ	Australia and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan
ASIJ	American School in Japan
ATCK	Adult Third Culture Kid
BAB	Being-A-Broad
BAT	British American Tobacco
BST	British School in Tokyo
CCK	Cross Cultural Kid
CCKs	Cross Cultural Kids
CIE	Cambridge International Examination
CLPD	Centre for Learning and Professional Development
CM	Code-Mixing
CS	Code-Switching
DoDDS	(US) Department of Defence Dependents School
DS	Down Syndrome
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EIB	English for International Business
ESEA	(US) Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESL	English as a Second Language
EU	European Union
FEW	Foreign Executive Women
FLE	(Japanese) Fundamental Law of Education
GCSE	(UK) General Certificate of Secondary Education
GN	Global Nomad
GNs	Global Nomads
HOT	Hands On Tokyo
HR	Human Resources
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBDP	International Baccalaureate Diploma Program
IBMYP	International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program

## Abbreviations *continued...*

IBO	International Baccalaureate Organisation
IBPYP	International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program
ID	Identification
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
LFJT	Lycée Franco-Japonais de Tokyo
MEXT	(Japanese) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology
MF	Mother and Father (combined frequency counts)
MHLW	(Japanese) Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare
MK	Missionary Kid
MKs	Missionary Kids
MYP	(IB) Middle Years Program
NCLB	(US) No Child Left Behind
NESB	Non-English-Speaking Background
NZ	New Zealand
OOV	Out-Of-Vocabulary
OPOL	One-Person-One-Language
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PR	Permanent Residency
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PYP	(IB) Primary Years Program
TA	Teaching Assistant
TAC	Tokyo America Club
TCK	Third Culture Kid
TCKs	Third Culture Kids
TIS	Tokyo International School
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USB	Universal Serial Bus
USD	United States Dollar
WMA	Windows Media Audio

## Glossary of Terms

Chronosystem	[Ecological Systems Theory] The chronosystem encompasses change or consistency over time, not only in the characteristics of a person, but also of the environment in which that person lives. Changes include those over the life course of the individual in family structure, socio-economic status and employment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 40).
Cross Cultural Kid	[CCK] A child who has lived in, or meaningfully interacted with, two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during their developmental years (Van Reken & Bethel, 2007, 2009).
Ecology	Ecology comes from the Greek root <i>oikos</i> meaning 'home'. With reference to human growth, an ecological perspective focuses attention on development as a function of interaction between the developing organism and the environments or contexts in which it [sic] lives out its life (Bronfenbrenner, 1975: 439).
Exosystem	[Ecological Systems Theory] The linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but where events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 40).
Expatriates	These employees are temporarily transferred out of their home base into some foreign operations. Some firms simply call such persons 'expats' or 'international assignees', while others use different terminologies such as inpatriates, transpatriates, and repatriates according the direction of personnel transfer. The present study will use 'expatriate(s)' to take account of all categories of international personnel (Yang, 2007: 2-3).
<i>Gaijin</i>	[Japanese] In Japan, non-Japanese persons are called <i>gaijin</i> , which literally means 'people from outside'. While the term itself has no derogatory meaning, it emphasises the exclusiveness of the Japanese attitude and has therefore picked up pejorative connotations that many Westerners resent. In general, Japanese people treat foreign visitors politely, but always as outsiders (Itoh, 1996: 236).

## Glossary of Terms *continued...*

- Global Nomad [GN] A person who has lived abroad as a child because of a parent's career choice. As a result of their internationally-mobile upbringing, they may feel simultaneously part-of and apart-from all the countries they have lived. GNs often have a great sense of the wholeness of common culture with others who share their global nomad heritage (McCaig, 2001).
- Haafu* [Japanese] The most commonly used social descriptor given to multi-ethnic people in Japan. In mainstream Japanese society, the word *haafu* enjoys some positive nuances, inferring on its recipients cosmopolitan qualities of internationalism, elite bilingualism and worldly experience. However, many parents of Japanese intercultural children oppose this term for its negative connotations in English i.e., half-breed or half-caste, and for its nuance of incompleteness (Greer, 2005: 959).
- Hiragana* [Japanese] Considered the first Japanese alphabet, *Hiragana* is a set of phonetic symbols, each of which stands for a single syllable that has no meaning by itself but joins others to form words. The number of basic symbols is 46. With the 46 symbols, plus other marks that give additional phonetic values, 71 letters can be used to write any word or any sentence in the Japanese language. In its most natural form, *Kanji* and *Hiragana* are intermixed in the Japanese language, with the *Hiragana* syllables used for parts of words that cannot be written in *Kanji* e.g., adjectives, adverbs, inflected endings of verbs, interjections, particles, and pronouns (Sakamoto, 1975: 241-243).
- Hoikuen* [Japanese] A day-care facility where acceptance is determined by the degree to which the child is defined as 'in need of care' by a set of categories used nationwide, as well as by the availability of places. Single parents, children of working mothers, and disabled or seriously ill parents are given priority. Fees are determined by family income and the amount of tax parents or guardians pay. Operational hours are long and all licensed public or private *hoikuen*, receive Japanese Government subsidies (Boocock, 1989: 43-46).

## Glossary of Terms *continued...*

- Juku* [Japanese] An after-school tutoring establishment, otherwise referred to as a ‘cram’ school. The term *juku* is quite inclusive and embraces academic subjects, as well as hobbies, sports and some arts (Rohlen, 1980: 207-210).
- Kanji* [Japanese] *Kanji* characters originally came from China, but today are typically Japanese. *Kanji* are read differently and even the significance of some characters is unique from that of the same characters for Chinese speakers. The learning of *Kanji* is more difficult than the learning of *Hiragana*, not only because they are more numerous, but unlike *Hiragana*, each *Kanji* usually has several alternative readings that range from monosyllabic to quadrisyllabic sounds (Sakamoto, 1975: 242-243). In Japan, there are a total of 1,945 basic *Kanji* characters in common use (Morton, Sosanuma, Patterson, & Sakuma, 1992: 517; Tamaoka, Kirsner, Yanase, Miyaoka, & Kawakami, 2002: 260).
- Katakana* [Japanese] Often referred to as the second Japanese alphabet, the *Katakana* script is conventionally used to represent foreign loan words that have been imported into Japanese. Words written in this script—proper names in particular—constitute the single biggest source of Out-Of-Vocabulary (OOV) words in modern Japanese (Brill, Kacmarcik, & Brockett, 2001).
- Kikokushijo* [Japanese] These children have accompanied their parents on overseas work assignments and subsequently returned to Japan. In other words, the approaches to education for these children assumed a handicap. That is, overseas experiences were not regarded positively and their apparently low academic performance was considered in need of special remedial attention (Fry, 2007: 131).
- Kokusai kekkon* [Japanese] Literally, ‘international marriage’ is the Japanese cultural category commonly used to designate any marriage pairing Japanese and non-Japanese nationals (Nitta, 1988: 207).
- Ku* [Japanese] This is the suffix meaning ‘ward’. The Tokyo prefecture or metropolis includes 23 special wards in addition to cities, towns and villages (Fukuda, Nakamura, & Takano, 2004: 2437).

## Glossary of Terms *continued...*

<i>Kumon</i>	[Japanese] The most widely used supplemental system for studying mathematics in Japan. The <i>kumon</i> curriculum has been expanded to over 5,000 timed worksheets, taking the learner sequentially and incrementally from pre-writing skills and dot-counting exercises to college-level physics problems (Ukai, 1994: 88).
<i>Kyoiku mama</i>	[Japanese] <i>Kyoiku</i> ‘education’ is combined with English ‘mama’ to refer to a Japanese mother who devotes considerable time and energy to her children’s education. Aware of the importance of education, these mothers seek to promote their children’s interest and involvement in school, and they strive to create a home environment that is comfortable and conducive to study (Hogan, 2003: 45; H. W. Stevenson, 1991: 116).
Macrosystem	[Ecological Systems Theory] The overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exo- systems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with particular reference to the opportunity structures, material resources, lifestyles, hazards, customs, bodies of knowledge, belief systems, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 40).
Mesosystem	[Ecological Systems Theory] The linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person. A prime example includes the relationship between home and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 40).
Microsystem	[Ecological Systems Theory] The pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social and symbolic features that invite, permit or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 39).
Municipality	The municipality is the basic unit for Japanese administrative services including public health and preventive health services (Fukuda et al., 2004: 2437).

## Glossary of Terms *continued...*

Prefecture	Prefectures are Japanese Governmental bodies larger than cities, towns and villages. The prefectures of Japan are the country's 47 sub-national jurisdictions (Fukuda et al., 2004: 2437).
Setting	[Ecological Systems Theory] A place with particular physical features in which participants engage in particular activities in particular roles. Thus, the factors of time, place, physical features, activity, participant and role, constitute the elements of a setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1977: 514).
Third Culture Kid	[TCK] A child who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside their parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any particular one. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into their life experience, their sense of belonging is in relationship to other children of similar background (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001: 19).
Transnational	Transnational persons take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two (or more) nation states. It is the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. They develop and maintain multiple relationships—familial, social, economic, organisational, religious and political—that cross geographic and cultural borders. They tend to use 'home' for their society of origin, even when they have made a home in their country of settlement. The country of settlement is usually the 'host' but such a term often carries unwarranted connotations that the person is both 'welcome' and a 'visitor' (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994: 7).
<i>Youchien</i>	[Japanese] A predominantly 'private' kindergarten facility that runs for four hours a day, though some have extended hours in response to the demands of working mothers. There is considerable variation in fees with some elite <i>youchien</i> costing more than private universities (Boocock, 1989: 43-46).

## **Abstract**

This thesis is a qualitative investigation of sixty-one international parents living in Tokyo in relation to their family's cultural background and their choice of schooling for their children. The context of cosmopolitan Tokyo is discussed as the city of residence for three groups of participants: Japanese-born internationally-oriented families; Japanese intercultural families; and non-Japanese internationally-mobile families with origins in other countries. Research on so-called 'Third Culture' or 'Cross Cultural Kids' is reviewed in order to understand children's experiences of growing up in more than one cultural context because of parental career or lifestyle decisions. In addition, the range and nature of Japanese and non-Japanese national and international schools available to international parents in Tokyo is described.

The conceptual framework adopted is based on Bronfenbrenner's human ecology model, in which the various contexts of children's lives—family, school and community—need to be seen holistically and as interacting influences in children's social and educational development. This approach was extended by Epstein who described the possible partnerships among these three contexts in terms of overlapping spheres of influence. Based on these two models, the research developed a new conceptual framework of fourteen cross cultural scenarios designed to take account of the experiences of transnational children who find themselves negotiating unfamiliar cultural settings, either at school or in society. Four spheres of cultural influence on the social and educational developmental ecology of transnational children in Tokyo were identified and specified as mother's cultural background (M), father's cultural background (F), school cultural background (S), all sited within the Japanese residential country culture (R).



For this exploratory study, research data concerning the families' cultural backgrounds and choice of schools for their only or eldest child in Tokyo were collected in two distinct stages. First, a four-page questionnaire, distributed throughout the 23 wards of Tokyo, but predominantly the high foreign population areas in and around *Minato*-ward during 14 November – 20 December 2007, was completed by 55 parent respondents (43 mothers and 12 fathers). Their responses were summarised in frequency tables. Second, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 parents (10 mothers and 7 fathers), with nine parents participating in both stages. Participants were again recruited predominantly throughout the *Minato*-ward of central Tokyo during the period 26 June – 29 August 2008. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed as narratives, used to develop family profile summaries, and discussed in relation to four key themes that emerged: international orientation; location of home; language socialisation; and school choice.

An analysis of the research data, in terms of the spheres of cultural influence, revealed that ten of the fourteen cross cultural scenarios were represented. Correlating each family's cultural background with the choice of schooling for their only or eldest child in Tokyo, revealed a definite pattern of relationships. It also demonstrated the usefulness of the cross cultural scenario framework for identifying the extent of cultural overlap in each child's ecology. Such understanding is important for parents, schools and community services dealing with transnational children in Tokyo, as well as providing insights for those in other international education contexts.

## Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Donna Marie Velliariis and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the library catalogue, the Australasian Digital Theses Program (ADTP) and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

Name: Donna Marie Velliariis

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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*One thousand days to learn;  
Ten thousand days to refine.  
- Japanese Proverb -*

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