Pre-service and in-service child care and education students using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children in Hong Kong: A study of expressed views

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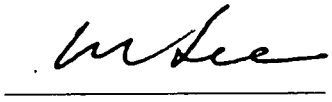
List of Acronyms

PRC	People's Republic of China
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administration Region of the People's Republic of China
ED	Education Department (Hong Kong)
EMB	Education and Manpower Bureau (HKSAR)
EDB	Education Bureau (HKSAR)
SWD	Social Welfare Department (HKSAR)
WPKG	Working Party on Kindergarten Education
QKT	Qualified Kindergarten Teacher
CCW	Child Care Worker
CE	Certificate in Early Childhood Education Course
CST	Confucian Values Storytelling Training
CSP	Confucian Values Storytelling Project
Ren (仁)	Confucian value for benevolence, and a harmonious relationship between all beings
Li (禮)	Confucian value for propriety and courteousness
Filial/ Xiao (孝)	Confucian value for filial piety, duty and compliance to parents
Yi (義)	Confucian value for righteousness and justice
Zhi (智)	Confucian value of wisdom and intelligence
VTC/LWL	Vocational Training Council/ Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Lee Wai Lee
HKPU	Hong Kong Polytechnic University
HKBU	Hong Kong Baptist University
HKIEd	Hong Kong Institute of Education
PEVS	Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme
HKCAAVQ	Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications
QF	Qualification Framework
HKCEE	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination

Candidate's Declaration

I declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.



Lai Wan Maria Lee

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Abstract

This is a report of research that sets out to find the expressed views of child care and education students using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children in Hong Kong. A total of 57 final year students of a three-year Higher Diploma in Child Care and Education course in a local tertiary institution in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) participated in the research. Of the 57 participants 28 were enrolled in a pre-service study mode and 29 in an in-service study mode. The participants also included 392 kindergarten-aged children aged 4 to 5, from 29 local kindergartens and child care centres. Non-participant observations were conducted on the children in-class.

In achieving the purpose of this study, a mixed-method approach (Blaikie, 2000; Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Creswell, 1994; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Morse, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003) was used to facilitate the synergy between the techniques to discover relationships and the generalisation of ideas and through this inter-triangulation, the validity of the research was enhanced (McMurray, Pace, & Scott, 2004, p. 262).

The study used qualitative methods predominantly, as they permitted access to individual meaning and allowed the researcher to delve in depth into processes, and to study events from the informant's perspective (Burns, 2000, p. 392). In addition, an ethnographic approach was used to enable the researcher to examine the views and responses of the student-teacher participants and the young children in their natural settings.

The view expressed by Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 166), that culture can be viewed as the things that humans learn that influenced their behaviour, was particularly relevant in this research. The culture of the Chinese people of Hong Kong, being Asian and Confucian, involved a particular view of the Confucian values in their lives and of the roles these values played in a child's learning.

Some elements of quantitative methods were used to obtain objective data by measuring the dependent variable (i.e. the views of using storytelling as a teaching tool to

understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children) over time. There were two different investigation points. The data were obtained by means of a Pre-test and a Post-test questionnaire before and after the implementation of an intervention program, which included Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST) and the Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP).

To study the changed views, if any, of the early childhood student-teacher participant in using storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children, a quasi-experimental design was adopted using two naturally formed cohorts of student-teachers as samples (Kumar, 2006, p. 83; McMurray, Pace, & Scott, 2004, p. 118; Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996, pp. 137-144). A before/after study was undertaken to study changes in their views after the implementation of CST and CSP, to understand the impact of the intervention of the independent variables, specifically that of the CST and CSP on the student-teacher participants. Both cohorts (pre-service and in-service) participated in a series of sixteen training sessions (CST) conducted by the researcher on Confucian values and storytelling and were subsequently requested to conduct a Confucian Values Story Project (CSP) based on a Chinese festival. Implementing this project was scheduled in line with the course fieldwork placement. Non-participant observation of the children in-class was conducted to observe their responses to the CSP. Children participants were encouraged to express their thoughts voluntarily, both verbally and non-verbally. Drawing was chosen as a means of collecting children's non-verbal expression – i.e., a semiotic approach (Carson et al., 2005, p. 165; Kress & Mavers, 2005, p. 172).

Some six instruments were used in the study to gather the data necessary to answer the research questions. These instruments were: 1) Questionnaire, 2) Reflective Report, 3) Non-participant Observation, 4) Focus Group Interviews, 5) Individual Interviews of selected experts, and 6) Children's Artefacts. All data collected were triangulated for a balanced analysis of the student-teacher participants' views. Among these six instruments, the researcher interviewed local experts on Confucianism and on early childhood education for their views on the Confucian values that should be developed or preserved in young children, as relatively few studies had been conducted on Confucian values for young children.

The study was situated in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), which is in a state of change, changing from a western-oriented country to one that is more

akin to the traditional societies/cultures found in present day People's Republic of China (PRC).

The results of this study firstly showed that both cohorts of pre-service and in-service student-teachers have sound prior knowledge of the Confucian values imbedded in the four Chinese festivals (namely, Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat, Chung Yeung and Mid-Autumn) and their related stories. Secondly, results between the three sources of data: 1) Early childhood and/or Confucian experts; 2) Early childhood educators; and 3) Early childhood student-teachers, showed that there is a consistency of views seen, with the values of 'Ren' (i.e. benevolence) and 'Li' (i.e. courteousness) being indicated as the two Confucian values that are expected to be preserved or developed in local child care centres and kindergartens in Hong Kong.

Thirdly, the results further showed that children's responses were mainly related to the value of 'Ren' and followed by 'Yi' (i.e. righteousness) and 'Zhi' (i.e. wisdom) , with the value of 'Li' being the least popular category. Such results indicated that children's response to the value of 'Ren' agreed with views as expressed by all three sources as a Confucian value that should be preserved. The value of 'Li' was the least noted response from children. Fourth, the result showed that the two common factors behind children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling, as expressed by student-teachers, were pedagogical and parental. The fifth result showed that the student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques improved after the implementation of CST and CSP with a significant increase in the techniques of 'Use of teaching aids' and 'Relate story to real life experiences'. The final result showed that the three common categories of the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and develop Confucian values in young children were: 1) Facilitation of in-depth learning; 2) Establishment of positive learning environment; and 3) Arousal of learning interest. After the implementation of CST and CSP, both cohorts changed their views, with a better understanding of storytelling and its effectiveness; they had more awareness of the deeper level of learning that could be obtained in young children's cognitive development, and became more aware of the linkage between stories and children's real life experiences.

The findings of this study are important because they have positively revealed the student-teachers' changed views on the effectiveness of using storytelling as a teaching method to preserve and develop Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children, after the intervention of CST and CSP, and that the children under study were capable of expressing

their understanding of Confucian values, in particular, the value of 'Ren' and 'Yi'. Based on these findings, it can be claimed that the staff development program containing CST and CSP is effective and recommends to tertiary institutions providing training in early childhood education to incorporate this program into their curriculum for early childhood teachers' training, so as to better enable the teachers in early childhood and care to foster the development of positive values and attitudes in young children in Hong Kong.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Hong Kong opened a new chapter in its eventful history at the stroke of midnight on June 30, 1997 when it rejoined Mainland China from which it had been separated for more than 150 years. Hong Kong's transformation from barren rock to a world city is a story about the human spirit. It has faced challenges and difficulties, but it rebounded stronger. People in Hong Kong call it the 'can-do' spirit' (HKSAR, 2006). This spirit was described by Donald Tsang, the Chief Executive (CE) of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in his inaugural address of 2007, as the spirit of 'getting the job done' as an innate quality of the community. He further explained that "we should never underestimate this spirit, as it has led us to overcome each and every challenge that has come our way and allowed us to continue to move forward" and that HKSAR is "more vibrant than ever!" (Tsang, 2007c, np).

As proclaimed by Tsang, in his speech at the welcome banquet in honour of the People's Republic of China's President Hu Jintao who visited HKSAR to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the HKSAR in 2007, "looking back over this past decade, we can rightly take pride in our achievements and the many unforgettable challenges we have overcome. The one that stands out the most is our success in working together to turn the great concept of 'One Country, Two Systems' into a living reality" (Tsang, 2007b, np). In his address to the Asian Financial Forum in 2007, he further explained that "this was made possible by the wholehearted commitment of Hong Kong people to make it work, and all of our core values and core strengths remain intact, as intended" (Tsang, 2007a). Looking towards the future, he stated that "we need people with integrity to manage and regulate risks; who will innovate to create. We will have to train and nourish them" (Tsang, 2007a).

It is with this spirit that this present research is based. We need to train and nourish our younger generation to incorporate our core values, develop strengths and integrity.

1.2. Importance of This Study

1.2.1. The Aims

The major aim of this research was to identify the views of student-teachers on teaching the Confucian values to young children in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). To give a balanced perception of the views of practicing teachers and those preparing to be teachers, the views of the in-service student-teachers and the pre-service student-teachers were obtained and examined. Teaching Confucian values involves understanding the thoughts and perceptions of the student-teachers themselves. They were asked, as a teaching intervention, to implement a series of activities with the children in their care and analyse the outcome in relation to their own understanding of Confucian values. When analysing their views on enhancing Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children in HKSAR, special emphasis was placed on using storytelling as the medium in relation to the cultural festivals celebrated in HKSAR throughout the year.

1.2.2. The Need for This Study

Confucian values emphasize the "development of the individual as a member of the family and of society at large, and learning the rules of social relationships", which are considered essential steps "towards becoming a mature and responsible person" (Zhou, 1996, p. 32). These values have spread their roots deeply in most Asian countries, such as China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Malaysia (Chen & Chung, 1993; Wang, Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005). Hong Kong, as similar to most surrounding regions, has Confucian values long embedded as part of the local cultures. During the period when HKSAR was a colony under British rule, such values and Chinese culture were not the main emphasis in the government. However, these values have once again been brought to the public attention particularly after 1 July 1997, when this Eastern region changed from a Western oriented one to one that is more akin to the traditional societies and cultures found in present day People's Republic of China (PRC). In addition, these values were emphasized by the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR who, in1997 (Tung, 1997), encouraged local

people to learn and practice Confucianism as a foundation for lifelong values. In order to respond to these cultural, social and political changes in HKSAR, there is a need to re-visit the content of Confucianism within a 21st Century milieu and to investigate the possible implementations of these values in a modern early childhood educational context in HKSAR.

Confucianism has long been a standing global topic in research on education and researchers have examined the linkages between Confucianism and education in different contexts throughout the world. For example, this occurred in the United States (Robertson & Hoffman, 2000), Europe (Davis, 1983; Hsia, 2003; Rowbotham, 1945), Taiwan (Hwang, 2001; Jin & Dan, 2004), Japan (Ohta, 1986), Vietnam (Rydstrom, 2001) and Korea (Seth, 2002). In Hong Kong, research has been done focusing on the relationship between Confucianism and different local educational contexts. For instance research has been conducted on Confucianism and moral education (Cheng, 2004; Luk-Fong, 2001), mathematics (Leung, 2001) and music (Brand & Ho, 1999). However, the majority of these local studies focused on education from primary level and /or higher. There has been some research conducted which focused on the possible links between Confucianism and early childhood education (Hadley, 2003; Kwon, 2004; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). These research studies, however, have not been culturally sensitive to the educational needs and contexts, particularly in HKSAR.

The study presented here differs from the majority of past research studies in this area in three important ways. First, it focused on the views of early childhood teachers in training (pre-service and in-service), as their views will be important when they teach young children in local early childhood settings. Entwistle et al., (2001) and Spodek (1988) suggested that early childhood educators are influenced by personal, practical knowledge rather than understanding founded in child development theory. Isenberg (1990, p. 325) believed that teachers' thinking may be guided by a personally held system of beliefs, values and principles and do not consistently use the teaching behaviours that had been recommended in their training. Studies also revealed that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning were commonly shaped by their life experiences, their upbringing and the socialisation processes in their own childhood and schooling (Lally, 1998; Raths, 2001).

As young children are in what may be termed the preconventional stage of their moral development (Kohlberg, 1969), they learn their values and appropriate behaviour from people who are significant to them and also from observing models (Bandura, 1977).

Teachers become children's significant role models, second to their parents (Glazer, 2000 , p. 229) and their beliefs may henceforth affect their teaching behaviour. Such roles of the parents and teachers are emphasized in Confucian thinking which believes that children should be socialized to respect the authority of parents and teachers (Ho, 1994b, p. 351). Accepting the impact that teachers' own beliefs may have on their teaching, the researcher requested the student-teachers as part of a quasi-experimental study to complete a pre-test and post-test questionnaire to obtain their views on the Confucian values before and after their implementation of a curriculum intervention which focused on story projects.

Second, in the intervention this research focused on ways to effectively teach young children Confucian values, using storytelling and celebrations of the cultural festivals as means wherein children have direct experiences. It was proposed that telling stories or reading aloud may have the effect of extending the child's awareness of the world and developing the child's intellectual and social growth (Lukens, 2007). Student-teachers told historical stories related to the cultural festivals and helped children extend this understanding to their daily lives and behaviour and as Lukens described it, "their growth can be almost infinite" (Lukens, 2007, p. xxv). During the intervention, in a series of activities, the children expressed through discussions and drawings their views and understanding of the story content or the Confucian values presented.

Third, this research focused on a series of training sessions and reflections with the student-teachers about children's literature, storytelling, and the understanding of the cultural festivals and of the Confucian values. Student-teachers (both pre-service and in-service) were asked to plan and implement a series of storytelling activities in accordance with the cultural festivals in HKSAR with the children in their care and analyse the outcome in relation to their own understanding of Confucian values.

1.3. Context of Study

1.3.1. Introduction

This part of the thesis examines the context of Hong Kong (HKSAR) after its sovereignty was returned to the People's Republic of China (PRC) after 1997 and its influence on the cultural and moral education of HKSAR, in particular the preschool education teachers training in HKSAR.

1.3.2. *Demographical Context of HKSAR*

HKSAR is in a state of change, moving from a western-oriented country to one that is more akin to the traditional societies/ cultures found in present day People's Republic of China (PRC). HKSAR was a colony under the United Kingdom until it was handed back to PRC in 1997. The Basic Laws, which functions as the HKSAR constitution, guarantees that the territory will retain its distinctive economic and political systems for fifty years and this is widely referred to as "one country, two systems"(HKSAR, 1997).

The HKSAR Government is headed by a Chief Executive, who is assisted in policy making by an Executive Council and supported by a 60-member Legislative Council constituted by elections. HKSAR is one of the major world centres for finance, business, trade and communications. In 2007, its GDP was HK$ 1,616,215 with the economy continuing to increase in 2008 by 4% to 5% in real terms (HKSAR, 2008b). HKSAR is located at the south-eastern part of China with a total area of approximately 1,100 square kilometers, consisting of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, the New Territories and the Outlying Islands, with a population of approximately 6.9 million, with 18.5% residing on Hong Kong Island, 29.4% in Kowloon, 51.9% in the New Territories and 0.2% in the Outlying Islands (HKSAR, 2008a). Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the Map of HKSAR which shows the geographic regions mentioned here.

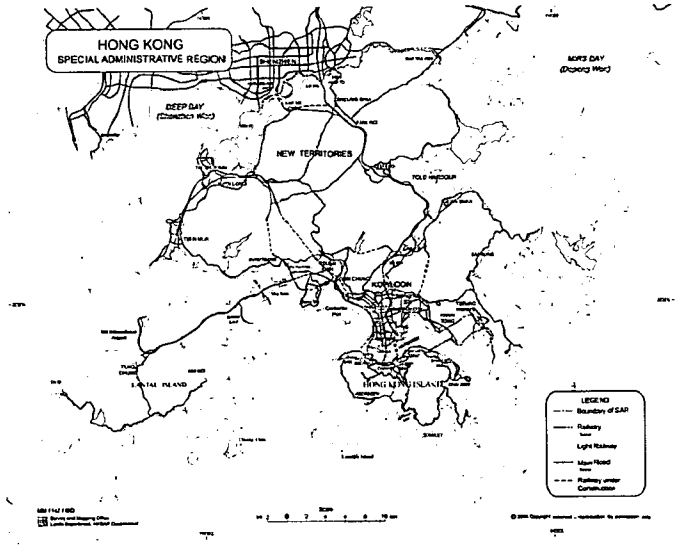


Figure 1.1. Map of HKSAR
(source: http://www.info.gov.hk/info/hkbrief/eng/sarmap.htm)

In 1971, legislation was enacted to provide free and universal primary and secondary education from age 6 to 14 years to all children attending public sector schools, excluding early childhood education. In 2008, there were 986 kindergartens and nursery schools with 138,393 students enrolled; 631 Primary schools with 385,949 students enrolled and 527 Secondary schools with 482,414 students enrolled and 61 Special schools with 7,818 students enrolled (EDB, 2008a). The Education Department, a government department which governs the administration and policy for education in Hong Kong, underwent a series of transformations and amalgamations after 1997. It became the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) with the Education Reorganization Bill in 2002, and this same bureau was further reorganized in 2007 as the Education Bureau (EDB). As to broader educational objectives and policies and schedule implementation priorities, the HKSAR Government is advised by an established Education Commission, which is composed of representatives from the HKSAR Government and educational professionals from the tertiary, secondary, primary and early childhood sectors. The Education Commission proposes policies and procedures which, when implemented, influence progress in all education sectors and promotes access for all strata of society

1.3.3. Cultural and Moral Contexts of HKSAR

Having increased linkages with PRC, the HKSAR is in the process of becoming more like a modern China than a modern western society. After 150 years of British colonial rule, there is an urgent need to cultivate in the younger generation a sense of belonging to the HKSAR as well as the PRC. Chinese cultures were taught, and Chinese values and cultural identity were stressed in the 1993-1995 Biannual Report (Committee on the Promotion of Civil Education, 1996) and in the Guidelines on Civic Education (Curriculum Development Council, 1996).

The Chief Executive of HKSAR in a 1997 Policy Address indicated that "in the school curriculum, we need to develop teaching about Chinese history and culture" (Tung, 1997) and he called upon the people of HKSAR to learn and practise the Confucian lifelong values, highlighting the necessity to bring children and families face-to-face, once again, with Confucian values, albeit in a manner appropriate to this modern age. As HKSAR continues to emerge as a Chinese society and as a result of little reference to Confucian values being made during the earlier colonial period, these factors have created

a need now for the people of HKSAR to revisit those Confucian values and evaluate them in their own ways. It can be claimed that this re-focusing of the HKSAR people on their traditional cultures is a priority of PRC. Vicker and Kan (2003, p. 401) stated that,

> the new regime is engaged in a long-term campaign to re-socialize Hongkongers as uncritical patriots who identify first and foremost not with Hong Kong, but with the Chinese motherland. In its campaign to promote a homogenous, totalizing sense of "Chineseness," the post-1997 regime has focused principally not on adults, but on children.

In the 2000 Policy Address, the Chief Executive of the HKSAR again reiterated the close linkage with China, and stated that

> Hong Kong's history is intertwined with that of China which is a vast treasure house of culture, traditions and customs. Our young students have much to learn about the history of our country...We can make the best of our own creativity and enrich our culture in the new era by building on the foundation of an integration of the best of Chinese and foreign cultures (Tung, 2000, np).

As suggested by Vicker et al. (2003), there is a curious affinity between HKSAR's post-1997 Confucian patriarchy and Britain's colonialist paternalism. Both British- and Chinese-sponsored local regimes chose to downplay the significance of any distinctive sense of local identity. The vision of HKSAR at the time of the political hand-over (1997) was that of a harmonious, apolitical, capitalist utopia, bound together by 'Chinese values' and presided over by a benevolent Confucian patriarch in the person of its Chief Executive. However, even with the stated Confucian values of the current HKSAR administration, the re-education of the people of HKSAR has become more difficult to achieve than to state. The HKSAR government has proposed a series of educational reforms, and there is a calling for educators to 'revisit' the Confucian values and to study ways to enable young children in kindergartens to learn, understand and accept these values. In addition, the importance attached by the present administration to the socialization of young people as Chinese patriots has been noted in the Education Reform Policy promulgated in 1998. Pearson (1997, np) reported that,

> in 1985 the Hong Kong government began to adopt a more active role in promoting civic education and published the *Guidelines on*

> *Civic Education in Schools.* However, civic education was fragmented and diffused. In 1993, the official *School Education in Hong Kong: a Statement of Aims* declared promotion of social, political, and civic awareness to be a central aim of school education.

HKSAR's substantial middle classes appear firmly wedded to a set of distinctly liberal-democratic values, including the rule of law and civil liberties such as freedom of expression. These values, as well as an explicit rejection of communism, constitute an important component of the sense of difference that distinguishes the Hong Kong Chinese from their mainland (Vicker & Kan, 2003). There is, in addition, a widespread sense of pride in HKSAR's status as an international city. This status, along with most other aspects of the society, is also experiencing change as more and more reliance is being placed on PRC for the economic development of HKSAR. In the 2000 Policy Address, the Chief Executive stated that,

> Hong Kong's residents are mostly Chinese, who take pride in their nation... Since the reunification, we have had more opportunities to get to know and understand our country... this enhanced understanding is affirming the identification of Hong Kong people with our cultural and historical roots (Tung, 2000, np).

In 2001, a consultation document produced by the government-appointed Culture and Heritage Commission, reported that commission members had reached a "consensus" to the effect that,

> Our mission is to encourage Hong Kong people, in particular the young generation, to appreciate and participate in the arts; to enrich their lives with a greater emphasis on culture; to strengthen social cohesion and shared values; and to build up the confidence and pride of Hong Kong people in their country and society (Cultural Heritage Commission, 2001, p. 8).

Most local educators believe that students should have a more comprehensive understanding of China's history and development. On the one hand, through teaching to gain an understanding of the process and factors that created a successful place, teachers can help students appreciate the efforts of their predecessors and value their achievements, cultivating a sense of identity and responsibility towards the territory. On the other hand, when students realize the close linkage between HKSAR and PRC throughout history, they may strengthen their sense of identity with their mother country, nation and culture. More

conscious efforts by the students should be made towards understanding and experiencing the Chinese culture as it was in the past and also in relation to their present daily living. Tung (1997) stated on several public occasions that the education system must be firmly rooted in the needs of the people and contribute to the development of the country. It should be diversified, drawing on the strengths of the East and West, having an international outlook and inspiring commitment to excellence. Education is the key to the future of HKSAR.

1.3.4. Characteristics of Chinese Children

The population of HKSAR being predominantly Chinese (95%) is strongly influenced by the Chinese culture and Confucian values. Studies of Chinese families (Ho, 1986; Wu, 1985; Young, 1972) show that most mothers aim to provide an extremely nurturing environment attending to the needs of their children in their early years. Significant others in the children's environment especially parents, grandparents and teachers, are responsible for early training by exposing them to examples of proper behaviour and restricting exposure to examples of undesirable behaviours. Intentions for imposing such standards are to assure the familial and societal goals of harmonious relations with others and the integrity of the family unit (Lau & Cheung, 1987). It follows that children are brought up to learn and appreciate harmony which is often emphasized in the Confucian values of 'Ren'. Studies by Chao (1995) show that Chinese children's behavior is seen as guided by their obligation to the family and especially to filial piety. 'Filial' is another important Confucian value and is exemplified by obedience to parents and submitting to their demands. Chinese children are said to subordinate their personal values and individualistic goals to the larger group and to place social and moral values over individual needs and desires (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1996). Chinese cultural and family lives have been described as prototypically collectivist (Markus, Mullally, & Kitayama, 1997). They are strongly influenced by Confucian values (Chao, 1994, 1995) which included an emphasis on affiliation, cooperation and harmony in interpersonal relationships.

Besides the use of significant others as models for behavior and early exposure at a young age, studies showed that Chinese parents in Taiwan (Miller, Wiley, Fung, & Liang, 1997) used storybooks to convey moral and social rules to children. Studies by Rao et al.

(2000) confirmed that parents in Beijing, PRC, also used storybook readings for the same purpose whereas parents in HKSAR used storybooks for entertainment purposes instead. Studies by Smetana and Yau (2003) however revealed a strong influence of Confucian values in Chinese family life in HKSAR. Their studies indicated that Chinese children in HKSAR are disciplined to obey adults, particularly parents and teachers, and attempt to negotiate and coordinate values of interpersonal harmony. These children were found to be considerate, responsible and had high respect for authority.

As suggested by Chao (1995) parents, in the main, have high aspirations for their children and expect them to achieve in school and to ultimately meet the societal and familial expectations for success. A study by Lau (1997) of children's social competence in HKSAR showed that they were expected by adults to learn a variety of social behaviors and skills. The children were found to be receptive to learning new social skills when they are in the company of people they trust and like and when they know that their mistakes would be tolerated. However, in the context of learning such social behavior, children were most often told by teachers what to do, and were rarely assisted to find their own solutions

1.3.5. Educational Contexts of HKSAR

Overall context

The Education Commission, from 1984 to 1997, published seven reports which outlined the philosophy and proposed strategies for education reforms. Appreciating the significance and values of quality education for the future of HKSAR, Tung (1997) in his Policy Address introduced an important blueprint for the educational development of HKSAR. He supported measures proposed by the Education Commission Report No. 7 (1997), showing his determination to review and reform different levels and aspects of the school system to face up to challenges and competition in the new century. From 1999 to 2000, the Education Commission conducted a thorough review of the structure of pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary education, as well as the school curriculum and examination system (Cheng, Mok, & Tsui, 2002). A blueprint for the development of education in the twenty-first century was proposed, aiming at providing all-round and balanced learning opportunities, and to laying the foundation for life-long learning (Chan & Chan, 2003, p. 8), irrespective of their social, political or economic backgrounds.

The HKSAR Education Commission Report No. 7 (Education Commission, 1997) stated in its objectives that schools should inculcate a quality culture that will help to contribute to the personal growth of students and their pursuit of excellence. One outcome of this policy was an urge towards the implementation of more interesting curricula and guidance programmes such as civic education, sex education and moral education. A reform framework for early childhood education was proposed in the Consultation Document for Framework for Education Reform in 1999 and recommended:

> To let children experience enjoyable and active group life and a variety of learning activities. This helps them cultivate a positive attitude towards learning and good living habits (Education Commission, 1999a, np).

The Education Commission's Revised Draft Proposal on the Aims of Education (as of 22.9.99) included the following specific aims for early childhood education:

> To foster in children appreciation of their own culture and other cultures. To nurture in children a sense of responsibility, civic-mindedness, a rule-abiding spirit, and acceptance of basic social values and norms (Education Commission, 1999b, p. 16).

In response to the Commission Report (1999), cultural background, civic-mindedness, and the acceptance of social values and norms have hence been introduced into the curricula for kindergarten aged children in HKSAR. Dr. Rosanna Wong, the chairman of the Education Commission of HKSAR, reported that in various surveys conducted by the Education and Manpower Bureau between March, 2003, and April, 2004, to gauge the views of various key stakeholders and the public on the Education Reform measures:

> The education sector and the community in general were supportive of the principles behind and measures of the Education Reform. They also affirmed that with the implementation of the Reform in the past three years, Hong Kong's education had been progressing steadily (Education Commission, 2004b, np).

However, Dr. Wong reported that the findings of the surveys indicated that there was a need to enhance students' creativity and sense of national identity. Wong further indicated that the Education and Manpower Bureau would encourage schools:

> To enhance students' sense of national identity through learning activities, produce various learning and teaching resources, enrich the web-based materials on civic and moral education and launch roving exhibitions on national education (Education Commission, 2004a, np).

Furthermore, she reported that the Education and Manpower Bureau would include 'Recognition of National Identity and Chinese Culture' in the newly revised curriculum guide for General Studies to be implemented in all primary schools in September of 2004 (Education Commission, 2004a, np).

Early Childhood Educational Context – Policy and Practice

Early childhood education formerly comes under the jurisdiction of two departments of HKSAR. Kindergartens, registered with the Education Department (ED) provide services for children from three to six years old. Child care centres, registered with the Social Welfare Department (SWD), cater for children aged from birth to three years old. There are different kinds of early childhood programmes. There are crèches, kindergartens, day nurseries, playgroups, mixed child care centres and kindergartens, residential child care centres and special child care centres. The government achieved the harmonization of the early childhood centres in 2005/06 when they placed the governance of the day nursery and kindergartens under a joint office staffed by EMB and SWD and managed by EMB. In the light of government policies in response to societal demands, a Working Party on Harmonization of Pre-primary Services was formed by SWD and EMB in 2002. They recommended the harmonizing of the services of day nurseries and kindergartens, i.e. all services for children aged 3 and above to be classified as kindergartens and to be registered under the same ordinance and regulated by the same Government Department. The legislation of such was completed in mid 2005. Henceforth, SWD regulates child care services for children from new born to below 3 years under the Child Care Services Ordinance; and EMB regulates kindergartens which provide services for children aged 3 and above under the Education Ordinance setting a new milestone for achieving harmonization and unification of early childhood education and services for HKSAR (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2006b).

At present, most of the kindergartens operate on a half-day basis, with some operating full-day kindergarten classes, whereas most of the child care centres provide full-day services. They are all privately run and can be categorized as non-profit making kindergartens/child care centres and private enterprises. However, early childhood education is still excluded from the compulsory education system and does not enjoy the same benefits as primary education, as staff and administrative costs have to be covered by the income generated by school fees (Rao, 2002). The teaching programme and curriculum in most HKSAR kindergartens/ child care centres are perceived to be educationally oriented with an emphasis on academic skills, and tend to place undue emphasis on reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills. Though the EDB calls for a more child-centred and developmental practice in the curriculum, most kindergartens/child care centres choose a mixed mode of teacher-directed methods with less structured child-directed activities such as physical and outdoor activities. The focus on cognitive development of the children is a sign of the strong influence of the Confucian values on child rearing practices in Chinese societies, which emphasize academic achievement, effort and perseverance. Most parents want their children to follow the most judicious path from preschool, primary, onto secondary and university (Ho, 1994a). Early childhood education in HKSAR is often perceived as a preparatory stage for formal schooling (Mellor & Chan, 2002; Opper, 1992, 1996, 1999).

Another initiative was introduced by the HKSAR Government in 2007/08 with the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) which is expected to benefit 90% of children aged three to six and more than 80% of the early childhood institutions. As proclaimed by Tsang (2006), the HKSAR Chief Executive, the policies aim to help reduce parents' financial burden and support professional upgrading of staff and improves educational quality. The Legislative Council of the HKSAR Government approved HK$2 billion to subsidize early childhood education with a subsidy scheme wherein parents whose children study in kindergartens registered under PEVS will get an education voucher of HK$13,000 per student per year for the 2007-08 school year, provided the tuition fees do not exceed HK$24,000 per year for half-day kindergartens or HK$48,000 for whole-day kindergartens. Furthermore, the PEVS will subsidize and financially support early childhood teachers' and principals' development and professional upgrading (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2007a). This development should assist in equalizing early childhood access to services by all families.

Early Childhood Educational Context – Curriculum on Moral Education

The Curriculum Development Council (2001) advised that values constitute the foundation of one's attitudes and beliefs and will influence one's behaviour and way of life. They may be referred to as qualities and important principles for conduct that an individual or society considers as important and intrinsically worthwhile. Values are also fundamental to the formation of attitudes, which will affect the acquisition and application of those values. In 2004 EMB introduced a statement that moral and civic education should be one of the key tasks of an early childhood centre's curriculum to help develop the child as a whole person. The first goal listed was to help students face future challenges by understanding an individual's role and responsibility to the family, the community and the country. The second goal listed was for them to understand their cultural and national identity and be ready to contribute to society. It is also recommended that five basic values and behaviours, namely that of perseverance, respect for others, responsibility, national and cultural identity and commitment should be developed through practical and realistic approaches to daily life (Education Commission, 2004b).

The concern to foster in kindergarten-aged children all-round development including physical, intellectual, language, aesthetic, social and emotional aspects was stated in *The Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum* compiled by the Education Department and the Social Welfare Department in 1996. It suggested that the early childhood curriculum should include activities for forming and training of habits that cover personal health, hygiene, grooming, eating and resting (Education Department, 1996).

A revised *Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum* issued in 2006 further stated that early childhood institutions should "design appropriate learning activities in different learning areas to develop children's basic skills and foster the development of positive values and attitudes" (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2006a, p. 13). The curriculum goals should be to "nurture children to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics and to develop good habits, so as to prepare them for life". Furthermore, children should learn "to accept basic social values and behaviour norms, to foster positive attitudes towards people and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the family, society and country" (Education and

Manpower Bureau, 2006a, pp. 18-20). In the affective and social development domain, the curriculum goals should be

> to help children develop a positive self-concept and build up self-esteem, self-confidence, a sense of achievement and an optimistic attitude... They should establish good interpersonal relationships through negotiation and cooperation and to accept basic social values and behavioural norms. They should also cultivate a care for society, respect to environment and respect for different cultures (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2006a, pp. 19-20).

Early Childhood Educational Context – Teachers' Training

History

In the 1980s, over 80% of kindergarten teachers were untrained. Among the 5,300 kindergarten teachers working then, only one in seven had received some sort of teacher training. A Working Party on Kindergarten Education (WPKG) was formed in December 1989 to study the various teacher training provisions. The party agreed on a pathway leading to unification of child care and kindergarten sectors. The Board of Education, after a careful review of the situation, recommended in May 1994 that the unification of pre-primary services should be a long term goal. Consequently, steps were taken to develop a common curriculum for use in kindergartens and child care centres, and to design common teacher training courses mutually recognised by the Education Department and the Social Welfare Department to equalise as closely as possible the standards of kindergartens and child care centres.

As at September 1994, about 85% of children in Hong Kong in the age range of 3-5 years were enrolled in kindergartens (registered with the Education Department), while 10% attended child care centres (registered with the Social Welfare Department) and the rest were cared for at home (Education Department, 1995).

Before 1994/95, the basic in-service training courses for kindergarten teachers were provided by the Education Department. Since 1994/95, the training courses for kindergarten teachers were principally organised by the then various Colleges of Education that were later to amalgamate to become the Hong Kong Institute of Education. The basic in-service training courses for child care workers were principally organised by the

Vocational Training Council (VTC). However the training courses provided were not reciprocally recognized by either government sector for licensing and employment purpose. The in-service nature of training also created considerable strain on the staff that had to accommodate study demands (Ebbeck & Ebbeck, 1994).

The Government was committed to moving forward quickly to enhance the quality of kindergarten education by improving kindergarten teacher training and by introducing other appropriate measures. WPKG was reconstituted in January 1995 and decided that a framework of common core of studies should be drawn up applicable to the basic training courses for kindergarten teachers and child care workers. An Expert Group on Harmonised Training was formed to study and recommend the detailed course content of the harmonised basic training courses. Based on the programme proposed by the Expert Group, training institutions were to develop their own basic training courses for kindergarten teachers and child care workers and seek recognition of these courses from the Education Department/Social Welfare Department. Mutual recognition would be given by the two Departments to graduates of basic training courses developed according to the recommended basic programme so that they could work in either kindergartens or child care centres. The overall aim of the Basic Programme for Kindergarten Teachers and Child Care Workers was to enable kindergarten teachers and child care workers to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required of competent educators working in a variety of pre-primary settings (Education Department, 1995).

Qualifications and Statutory Requirement

In 1995, the Hong Kong government raised the minimum education qualification for kindergarten teachers from completion of Secondary Three level to completion of Secondary Five level with at least two passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (Education Department, 1995). In 2000 this qualification was further raised to five passes, including both Chinese and English, in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE).

In 1995, a 360-hour basic professional training course was developed by the Expert Group for practitioners in the field to gain the Qualified Kindergarten Teacher (QKT) status or registered Child Care Worker (CCW) qualification. At the same time, more advanced professional training courses were introduced, including a part-time, in-service

Certificate of Kindergarten Education course for graduates of the QKT course and a three-year full-time pre-service Certificate of Early Childhood Education Course (CE) for secondary school graduates (Chan & Chan, 2003, p. 10).

After the formation of the HKSAR government, in the 2000 Policy Address, the Chief Executive instructed that,

> To upgrade the quality of teachers, we have decided to raise the entry requirements of all newly appointed kindergarten teachers. They will need five passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, including Chinese and English, starting from the 2001-2002 school year. Starting from the 2003-2004 school year, they will be required to complete at least one year of pre-service training. In addition, the ratio of teachers to pupils for half-day and whole-day schooling will both be improved from 1:30 and 1:20 respectively to 1:15 by stages within three years. Within the next five years, we will make arrangements for all serving kindergarten principals and child care centre supervisors to attend courses leading to the Certificate in Early Childhood Education (Tung, 2000, np).

For work in child-care centres, staff were required to have either completed the 360-hour pre-service, basic training or to undertake in-service part-time training offered by the Institute of Vocational Education within the first year of their employment. In 1988 a two-year, part-time Higher Certificate in Child Care course and in 2000 a three-year part-time Higher Diploma in Early Childhood Education course were offered for child-care workers to upgrade their professional qualifications beyond the basic training level. The Education Commission Report (2000) indicated that the professional competence of teachers and principals/supervisors of kindergartens and child-care centres directly affects the quality of early childhood education. Hence, the Education Commission proposed that the professional standards of early childhood educators should be enhanced through training and raising their entry requirements (Chan & Chan, 2003, pp. 10-14). To implement the policy for enhanced training, an abridged in-service course and a Certificate in Early Childhood Education was jointly arranged by the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD). These courses serving kindergarten principals and child care supervisors were introduced as scheduled (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004).

Further changes were introduced by the HKSAR government to be implemented in phases. From 2000, kindergartens were required to have 60 % qualified kindergarten teachers (QKT) and from 2003, all newly appointed kindergarten teachers were required to possess a QKT qualification or its equivalent. By 2004/2005, all kindergartens were required to employ 100% QKT in the required teaching staff establishment calculated on a teacher to child ratio of 1:15. Kindergarten principals were required to have completed the training course and acquired the status of QKT or its equivalent and by 2002, all newly appointed kindergarten principals were required to have completed the Certificate in Kindergarten Education Course (CE), or its equivalent. By 2005/2006, all serving kindergarten principals were required to possess the CE or its equivalent (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2007b). With the introduction of PEVS in 2007/08, all serving kindergarten teachers will have to obtain the Certificate in Early Childhood Education qualification by 2011/12 and new principals will have a degree in Early Childhood Education (BEd (ECE)) and all current serving principals are encouraged to obtain a degree qualification (EDB, 2008a).

Four higher education institutions, including the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) and the Vocational Training Council's Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Lee Wai Lee (VTC/LWL) offered basic courses for kindergarten teachers. These training courses were recognised as teaching registrations both by the Education and Manpower Bureau and the Social Welfare Department (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2005a).

When the Education Commission (2000) proposed to enhance the professional standards of early childhood educators through training and raising their entry requirements, in-service training for the kindergarten teachers and principals became a priority of the four training institutions. Courses were designed under the harmonized training framework as directed by the Expert Group of the WPKG, resulting in HKSAR statistics showing that as at 2006/2007, the number of kindergartens totalled 986 schools. The teacher population was about 10,355 teachers with 96.8% having had received approved professional training (EDB, 2008a).

Teachers' training development in HKSAR

A one year pre-service preschool teachers' training program in Hong Kong began in 1959 and was intermittently conducted by the Training Section of the Social Welfare Department in Hong Kong. However, the course was in operation for only 7 years (1959, 1961, 1968-1973). In 1976, the Hong Kong Polytechnic, which was later renamed Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU) developed a pre-service, one-year full-time course for students possessing five passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). In 1980, the Vocational Training Council's campus of Lee Wai Lee Technical Institute which was later renamed Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (VTC/LWL) commenced a pre-service, two-years full-time course, titled the Certificate in Care of Preschool Children, for students graduating from their Senior Three in their Secondary School. HKPU transferred its pre-service course to VTC/LWL in 1985, and started a part-time evening Higher Certificate in Child Care to cater for the further training needs of graduates from the Certificate courses (Lee, 2004).

In response to the government's support from the Education Commission which was published in 2000 to enhance training provisions for preschool teachers, to "draw up an implementation timetable for requiring all new KG teachers to have completed one-year pre-service training, after assessing the supply of human resources" (Chan & Chan, 2003, p. 15), the pre-service course was developed into a two year full-time Diploma in Child Care and Education. In addition, a three year full-time Higher Diploma in Child Care and Education in 2000 was introduced by the VTC/LWL, while the HKIEd introduced its pre-service, Qualified Kindergarten Teachers' Certificate training and Certificate in Kindergarten Education Course (CE). HKIEd introduced its undergraduate programme in early childhood education in 1999 and HKPU, HKBU and VTC/LWL began collaboration with local and overseas universities for articulation of their CE graduates. In response to PEVS introduced by the government in 2007, the Chinese University of Hong Kong began a B.Ed (ECE) in 2007/08. An important milestone in teacher education in Hong Kong occurred when the policy of mandating pre-service professional training for entry to the early childhood teaching profession was implemented. "Credibility will depend on the quality of the graduates produced" (Chan & Chan, 2003, p. 15).

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance of the establishment and maintenance of educational standards in the kindergarten/child care centres is achieved mainly through the government monitoring and providing guidelines for curriculum and a set of performance indicators for them to comply with. Monitoring by the government is done through annual inspection and by the kindergartens/child care centres submitting their planned annual programme of activities to the Education Bureau. As stated by the government, "apart from the statutory requirements, they (kindergartens/child care centres) should also comply with this operation manual, the *Performance Indicators for Pre-primary Institutions* and the *Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum* where appropriate" (EMB, 2006b).

In 2000, a set of *Performance Indicators* was published by the government as a reference guide for self-evaluation and external evaluation of these kindergartens/child care centres. This self-evaluation instrument comprises four domains: management and organization, learning and teaching, support for children and school ethos, and child development (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2002). To achieve accountability, these reports are published to inform the public of the general performance and the major areas of concern that required further improvement. With PEVS in 2007, all kindergartens/child care centres are subject to a quality assurance mechanism and should undergo a Quality Review for validation of the kindergartens/child care centres self-evaluation. They are required to prepare and submit to EMB their School Reports evaluating their performance in the preceding school year and to draw up an Annual School Plan for improvement in the following school year. EMB stated that by 2012/13, only non-profit making kindergartens/child care centres meeting the prescribed standards may redeem the education voucher (PEVS) (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2007a). This requirement should ultimately upgrade the quality of provision in the early childhood sector.

In order to ensure the credibility of qualification awarded by the wide range of education and training providers, HKSAR introduced the Qualification Framework (QF) which is a mechanism of academic and vocational accreditation to assure the quality of these qualifications (The Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualification Ordinance Cap). Some 1150 were passed by the Legislative Council in May 2007, providing for the accreditation of academic and vocational qualifications under the QF by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) as the Accreditation Authority and the Qualification Register Authority

(Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, 2007). This authority was charged with the responsibility of academic accreditation of tertiary institutions, assuring the quality of qualifications recognized under the QF, to assess academic and vocational programmes conducted by the non-self-accrediting institutions. The eight universities obtained their self-accrediting status, formed a Joint Quality Review Committee to oversee the quality of their self-financed sub-degree programmes and to assess these programmes for classification into the QF. The QF is a hierarchy of qualifications, by clearly outlining what a holder of a certain qualification stands for. The seven levels of QF characterized by outcome based generic level descriptors are broadly comparable to qualification systems in other countries (EMB, 2007). Hence, all tertiary institutions providing teacher education and training for early childhood teachers have to submit themselves to accreditation and assessment for the qualifications to be recognized under the QF, either through self-accrediting status or through assessment by HKCAAVQ.

Summary of Early Childhood Education Contexts of HKSAR

This chapter has examined and presented information about the development of preschool training in Hong Kong from 1959 to 2008. Since the change of sovereignty in Hong Kong, HKSAR has undergone considerable education reform in a number of ways. First, emphasis on learning about the Chinese culture and its values has been called for. Second, education reforms were introduced in the education sectors in Hong Kong, and pertinent to preschool education, an enhanced requirement for teacher training in preschool education evolved resulting in the harmonizing of child care centres and kindergartens. Third, QKT was upgraded to CE as professional training qualification and the Curriculum Guidelines for preschool education was revised and updated. Though universities and tertiary training institutions have become self-accrediting, the issue of funding for teacher education still creates unnecessary tension and competition. As suggested by Yuen (2008), as compared to the colonial government, the HKSAR administration has indeed given more resources to the early childhood education field. However, due to pressure for unbiased fund allocation, the government has had no choice but to resort to the use of tenders (i.e. bids) (EDB, 2008b) to deal with resource allocation and teacher education issues. This brought about tensions among the different teaching education institutions and ongoing competition. There had been strong opinions about tenders and the government was criticized by teacher educators as treating education like a business, purely using

competition to allocate resources. However a government policy-maker in EMB explained that after 1997, economy, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are high on the agenda. In spite of this uneasiness, there was wider variety in pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes in early childhood education provided by the various teacher education institutions, ranging from initial level to master's degree (Yuen, 2008).

1.4. Overall Structure of the Thesis

In order to examine the views of the student-teachers on using storytelling to develop and preserve Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children in HKSAR, the thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One describes the background of HKSAR, explaining the challenges confronted by HKSAR because of the handing-over of the colony to PRC in 1997 which brings forth the need for this research. The chapter further explains the cultural and moral context together with the characteristics often seen in young Chinese children and the influence of Confucianism on them. This is followed by background information on the development and changes in the education system in HKSAR, with special reference to early childhood education and services, their policies, practices, curriculum and moral education and teacher education and training and the quality assurance mechanism.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on Confucian values and the impact of modernization on Confucianism. The relationship between Confucianism and moral education with special reference to Kohlberg and Bandura is further examined. The researcher sees early childhood teachers as an important agent for developing and preserving Confucian values in young children. This chapter further explores the effect of the student-teachers using storytelling and cultural stories as well as the cultural festivals as a tool to develop and preserve Confucian values in young children.

Chapter Three presents justifications and the rationale for the methodology of the study, using a multi-method design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering. It also presents the samples of two cohorts of pre-service early childhood student-teachers and in-service early childhood student-teachers, who after completing a series of training conducted by the researcher on Confucian values and storytelling, each conducted a Confucian values storytelling intervention project related to the cultural

festival of HKSAR with a class of kindergarten-aged children in a kindergarten/child care centre. The purposes were to examine their views on using storytelling as a tool and to study the Confucian values as expressed by the children. The chapter further discusses the data collection and data analysis mechanism.

Chapter Four presents the findings and discussion on the views of student-teachers on using storytelling to develop and preserve Confucian values in young children and the responses of children to such intervention. The discussions were triangulated in relation to the views on the Confucian values which young children should learn as given by Confucian experts and early childhood teacher educators, and the change of views of the student-teachers and the young children's expression of behavior related to the Confucian values.

Chapter Five concludes the research with justifications of the use of storytelling as an effective tool to develop and preserve Confucian values in young children and the implications for implementation in both for the early childhood teacher training institutions and for the government of HKSAR. To pave a future for young children as leaders and owners of the world, the time for change is now, and there should be a stronger stance on implementing Confucian values in the early childhood curriculum.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This study aimed to examine pre-service and in-service child care and education student-teachers using storytelling as a teaching method to develop or preserve Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children in HKSAR. In this Chapter, two major strands of literature are reviewed in order to form the theoretical basis of the present study: 1) Storytelling; and 2) Confucian values. Within each strand, definitions, importance, and relevant teaching and learning issues are discussed.

2.2. Storytelling

2.2.1. Definition

Storytelling is an activity which has been one of the oldest forms of communication and has been used to educate, to inspire, to record historical events and to transmit cultural mores. Storytelling, besides being an act of 'telling' and 'receiving', is defined as an ancient art and a means of communication. Umaschi (1996, p. 526) stated that storytelling is an art form that allows humans to share experiences, thoughts and values. Grainger (1997, p. 13) elaborated that storytelling is an integral part of human existence and is the most enduring form of education. It is also an accessible and creative form of communication and reflection of experiences, both real and imagined. Amaro and Moreira (2001, p. 1) mentioned that storytelling was once the only means by which people could express themselves and communicate to others, to learn about their culture, values, history and the surrounding world. Gershon and Page (2001, p. 37) suggested that storytelling is

an ancient art rooted in our common human culture. An observation is that, a particular storytelling skill could even make a person seem powerful in the community and, as human's need and capacity for expression matured, stories about actual experiences moved into the realms of stories about humans' origins and their gods (Boltman, 2001). Therefore, storytelling may be defined as a tradition that has been instrumental in transferring the human culture, wisdom, experiences of survival, do's and don'ts of life, values, sense of humour and poetic perspective, languages and sciences (Katre, 2002, p. 1). Shirley (2005, p. 30) in his doctoral study proposed that story telling is a way of thinking, a primary organizer of information and ideas, the soul of a culture, and the mythic and metaphoric consciousness of a people. Another refined and consistent definition is also found in Bishop and Kimball's recent study (2006, p. 28) that storytelling is an art which is as old as oral communication itself, and human beings use stories to define themselves, to make sense of the world, and to create a community.

Within this study, storytelling was defined by the researcher as an activity that has been one of the oldest forms of communication and has been used to educate, to inspire, to record historical events and to transmit cultural mores. Stories can illustrate customs, beliefs and traditions of a culture (Cooper, Collins, & Saxby, 1994, pp. 242-243). Through stories, tellers may connect with their listeners and transport them to another time or place and information may be passed on, accompanied with entertainment and pleasure. Young children' exposure to storytelling may result in a variety of cognitive and social- benefits, including the development of a sense of self and well-being (Bettelheim, 1976; Campbell, 1988; Erikson, 1959; Wigren, 1994) and children's ethical and value systems (Hensel, 1992; Scott, 1971).

2.2.2. *Importance of Storytelling for Young Children's Learning and Social Development*

Research has found valuable learning potential in storytelling experiences for young children, and that storytelling benefits children in multiple and diverse ways. To provide a clear and concise overview of relevant research on the importance of storytelling for young children, this section of literature is presented according to two major aspects of child development: 1) Cognitive development; and 2) Social development.

Cognitive Development

Cognition refers to the inner processes and products of the mind that lead to 'knowing', which includes all mental activities – attending, remembering, symbolizing, categorizing, planning, reasoning, problem solving, creating and fantasizing (Berk, 2006, p. 219). Research shows that storytelling may have positive impacts on these mental activities of young children. Alparaque (1988) and Maguire (1985) emphasized the power of storytelling to facilitate children's attention span and concentration. Kim (1999) suggested that storytelling can enhance children's narrative recalling ability. Kauchak and Eggen (1998) indicated that the storytelling process allows children to use higher-order thinking skills and to become more metacognitively aware of their own learning. McWilliams (1997) highlighted that storytelling provides opportunities for children to anticipate the possible consequences of one's actions. A recent study by Shirley (2005) also confirms that storytelling could be employed to help connections to link children's prior knowledge and new knowledge being introduced. Storytelling may be used as a mnemonic device to help children transfer stored information to new situations. Furthermore, researchers (Applebee, 1978; Engel, 1999; Feldman, 1989) emphasized the opportunities of problem solving through storytelling, and the effectiveness of storytelling to enhance children's imagination (George & Schaer, 1986; Raines & Isbell, 1994). Some researchers argue that storytelling may be regarded as a media for children to acquire a better understanding of the world (Agatucci, 2000; Bruner, 1986; Egan, 1988, 1995; Engel, 1999; McWilliams, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1988; Schank, 1995), of people's behaviours and emotions (Baker & Greene, 1977; Wright, 1995), and of the importance of having multicultural awareness (Farris, 1997).

As stated by Egan (1988, p. 37), telling a story is a way of establishing meaning. He explained that though children may lack a logical conception of causality, they have the sense to hold stories together and the conceptual tools to learn the most profound things through them. Embedded in stories may be binary opposites and conflicts which allow children to organize and make sense of things such as between good and bad, courage and cowardice or fear and security. Egan (1988) further explained that, as stories unfold, children may resonate affectively with the rhythm of the conflicts and the events which carry the story forward. Such feelings may further provide them with the motives for actions or for further engagement in knowledge. As suggested by Casey et al., (2008) story is a natural package of organised knowledge. Information may be learned and retained

more effectively when it is learned within a story context, rather than a de-contextualized format (Bruner, 1987; Schank & Abelson, 1995). There is evidence that learning material within a story context does result in greater retention and recall of that information (Bower & Clark, 1969; Graesser, Hauft-Smith, Cohen, & Pyles, 1980; Lucariello & Nelson, 1985; Mishra, 2003).

Social Development

Social development today is a rapidly expanding area of research in early childhood education. Berk defined 'social' as thinking of self and of other people (2006, p. 437). Hay (2000, p. 37) suggested that one's social consciousness is a "natural human predisposition", but it must be nurtured. Storytelling is commonly suggested as one of the powerful tools to nurture young children's social development (Denham & Auerbach, 1995; Russo, Vernam, & Wolbert, 2006; Shirley, 2005; Smith, 1986; Willan, 2007). A research study by Chesin (1966) highlighted that storytelling usually has a positive emotional and psychological effect upon children which may help them face problems that confront them, and may develop children's understanding of human nature, understanding of feelings, and awareness of the roles people assume. Recent research (Phillips, 1996) further supported Chesin's argument by revealing storytelling's positive impacts on different details of children's social growth. It may be a source of joy and pleasure for children's learning experiences (Sanders, 1997), a way to enhance young children's understanding of self and others (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; Lenox, 2000; Sanders, 1997), a tool for children to manage and to learn their social roles (Forest, 2000), and a way of socialization and a means for the transmission of a whole set of social knowledge such as rules, moral values and ideals (Egan, 1988; Egan, 1995, 1999; Forest, 2000).

Storytelling is regarded as an effective tool to enhance one's understanding of culture. Culture is defined as a set of values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a particular group of people, communicated from one generation to the next (Chan, Cheung, Mok, Cheung, & Tong, 2006, p. 302). Culture is a learned behavior that shapes attitudes and encourages some types of behavior over others (Minami, 2000). Also, as suggested by Lubeck, Jessup, deVries and Post (2006) it is a shared organization of ideas that includes the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic standards prevalent in a community and the meanings of communicative actions (Le Vine, 1984, p. 68).

All societies strive to educate their young towards adaptive and successful membership in their cultural communities (Rosenthal, 2006, p. 253). Phillips (2000) argued that young children could develop a closer relationship and a sense of community and culture, through the intrinsically social experience of storytelling. Similar statements can be found in other research (Bredikyte & Hakkarainen, 2007; Bruchac, 2003; Ewers, 1992; Glazer, 2000; Lenox, 2000; Zabel, 1991). Herendeen (1995, p. 16) highlighted that "in some parts of the world the narration of stories continues to be the main or most important means of teaching the history, values and beliefs of a people; to explain natural phenomena, and to entertain". A research study in Kenya revealed that storytelling for young children has been left to the elders in order to ensure ethical insight (Gacheru, Opiyo, & Smutny, 1999). Berk (2006, p. 25) also stated that "today more research is examining the relationship of culturally specific practices to child development". Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978; 1986; 1987), focuses on how culture is transmitted to the next generation. Given that every group has traditional stories that present a cosmic vision of a given culture (Herendeen, 1995, p. 14), cultural stories of the Chinese community are therefore used within the present study as a tool to seek answers for the research questions.

2.2.3. *Teaching and Learning Issues of Storytelling for Young Children*

Katre (2002) highlighted in a conference presentation that the storyteller is the only inevitable element among all forms of stories. In the early childhood context, teachers in the kindergartens/ child care centres are inevitably the storytellers for young children. In order to meet their pedagogical needs, there is ample research and resources available. As early as 1905, Bryant published the first American storytelling text named *How to Tell Stories to Children* (Greene, 1996). Also, a *Storytelling Etiquette* has been available since early 1990s (Griffin et al., 1993). Today there are studies specifically on storytelling techniques or strategies for young children (Bishop & Kimball, 2006; Glassner, 2004; Hill, 2006; Livo & Rietz, 1991; Nodelman & Reimer, 2003; Phillips, 2000; Smyth, 2005), and on the integration of storytelling into the curriculum (Cooper, 2005; Egan, 1988; Essa, 2003). There are different resources which are supported by respective countries' government bodies to uphold teachers' and/or adults' storytelling activities with young children. Such resources are the *Little Big Book Club* (http://www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/) in Australia, *Storytellers of Canada* in Canada (www.sc-cc.com), the

International Storytelling Centre in United States (http://www.storytellingfestival.org/), and the *Read With Your Children* in HKSAR (http://resources.edb.gov.hk/story_telling/). In most public libraries, teachers have free access to children's books, story time sessions and professional advice. In addition, in most developed countries, storytelling activity has also been integrated as an important element of early childhood curriculum and in their teachers' training packages.

Even though extensive materials and resources are available to early childhood teachers nowadays it is important to understand *how* teachers can actually be more aware of conducting storytelling activities with young children. Researchers found that storytelling training for teachers is always an important strategy for providing teachers with necessary tools and motivation (Baker & Greene, 1987; Trostle & Hicks, 1998; Zipes, 1995). A recent qualitative research study by Groce (2004, p. 128) further confirmed that "workshop and training in storytelling played a significant role in their (teacher's) implementation of storytelling". Indeed, researchers have also tried to propose different curriculum emphases for storytelling training for teachers (Carter, 1997; Speaker, 2000). As suggested by Phillips (2000, p. 4), while telling a story, a teacher should not spoon feed the audience with imageries, but should inspire their imagination during or after the end of the story. Smyth talks of the voice, body, hands, face and particularly the eyes as being the tools of a storyteller (Hill, 2006, p. 105). Chesin (1966, p. 212) reminded us that the storyteller should be bound by nothing, should be free to watch the audience; free to note their reactions to the story and free to use the body, eyes, voice as aids in expression so as to convey the story content and the meaning through spontaneous interaction between them.

McMullen and Alat suggested (2002, p. 4) that we cannot claim with confidence that specialized early childhood teacher training ensures that teachers will internalize certain beliefs and that their beliefs will then become principles upon which they build their practices. There may be other factors that may influence early childhood teachers' actual practices (Buchanan, Burts, Bidner, White, & Charlesworth, 1998; Hao, 2000; Lally, 1998; Lee & Ginsburg, 2007; McMullen, 1999; Raths, 2001). Lovat & Smith (1995, p. 26) suggested that where there is an absence of sound theoretical basis to their teaching practices, the teachers' own experience and tacit behaviour will determine the ways that they make sense of the world and the approaches they adopt. What they do and say will be based on their ideologies, which have emerged from their personal and collective lives.

Personal experience is hence powerful and has the potential to override understandings developed through formal education if the understandings are inconsistent or if the understanding is fragile. Groce (2004, p. 128) also highlighted that teachers' implementation of storytelling may be based on "their individual experiences with it and their perceptions of it as a pragmatic fit into the current curriculum". Such a reminder is consistent with Spodek's (1988) early argument that early childhood educators are influenced by personal, practical knowledge rather than understandings founded in child developmental theory or related to a theorist. Some other recent research has also revealed evidences that early childhood teachers' experiences may be one of the dominant influences on their teaching practices (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000; Schoonmaker & Ryan, 1996).

Even though we do not clearly understand the mechanism involved in early childhood teachers' adoption of and the transmission of their beliefs, knowledge, and/or experiences about practices into their actual classroom behaviors (McMullen & Alat, 2002, pp. 3-4), an examination of teachers' views before and after a specific storytelling training program in the present study may uncover ways to support their implementation of storytelling to young children. In addition, this present study may also provide a more balanced view between the western and eastern contexts in terms of the teaching and learning issues of storytelling specifically in the early childhood field.

2.3. Confucian Values

2.3.1. Definition

Confucian values were developed by the Chinese philosopher, thinker, and educator Confucius (551-479 B.C.) (Figure 2.1). These values can be regarded as the principles of Confucianism. Confucianism is not a religion; instead it is a set of guidelines for proper behaviour, and an ideology that underlies, pervades, and guides Chinese culture (Hofstede, 1991; Tu, 1998a; Yan & Sorenson, 2006). In the Han Dynasty (221-206 B.C.), Confucianism reached its peak as the only orthodox state philosophy and content for education at the expense of other knowledge and other schools of thought. In history, this is known as *fei chu bai jia, du zun ru zhu* (*廢輟百家，獨專儒術* i.e., suppression of the hundred schools and the exclusive recognition of Confucianism) (Hui, 2005). The *Analects*

(*Lunyu*) (Ames & Rosemont, 1998), also known as the *Analects of Confucius*, is commonly regarded as the representative work of Confucianism. The *Analects* is a record of the words and acts of Confucius and his disciples, as well as the discussions and beliefs they held. It was written during the Spring and Autumn Period in the Warring States Period in China (479 B.C. - 221 B.C.). Confucian values are the teaching principles inside the Analects. These values have been firmly established as an undeniable, unofficial, but powerful system of moral, political and social principles governing nearly every aspect of Chinese life since the Han era (206 B.C. – A.D. 220) (Wang, Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005, p. 314).



Figure 2.1. Picture of Confucius
(source: http://www.smso.net/Confucius)

A review of literature revealed that a consistent consensus occurred among researchers' definitions of Confucian values as a philosophy which considers the proper behavior and human relationships in a society. However, slight variation may be found in the translation of the words in the English and the Chinese languages and in the application of these words into different contexts. In an early publication, Berling (1982) summarized that Confucianism consisted of two conforming and reforming sides – *wu lun* and five virtues. *Wu Lun* means the five cardinal role relations between emperor-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder-younger brothers, and friend-friend, while the five virtues are *ren* (humanity-benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), *li* (propriety), *zhi* (wisdom) and *xin* (trustworthiness) (Berling, 1982). Meyer (1988) further elaborated that Confucianism includes four cardinal virtues (*szu wei*) and eight moral virtues (*pa te*). The four cardinal virtues are *li* (ritual or etiquette); *yi* (righteousness or justice); *lien* (honesty, cleanliness or integrity); and *chih* (a sense of shame that prevents one from doing anything dishonourable), while the eight moral virtues are *chung* (loyalty to one's group or nation), *xiao* (filial piety), *ren* (benevolence or humanity), *ai* (love), *shin* (trustworthiness), yi (righteousness), *ho* (harmony) and *ping* (peace).

Kirkbride and Tang (1992) highlighted that Confucianism urges individuals to adapt to the collectivity, to control personal desires and emotions, to restrain self-interest for the benefit of the group, and to avoid conflict and maintain harmony. Also, Confucianism

requires a broad commitment to the harmonious operation and welfare of the society in retaining paternalism and an emphasis on kinship (Fan, 1995). As referred to by Hofstede & Bond (2001, p. 8), Confucianism preaches that stability of the society is based on the unequal relationships between people. La Tourette (1964, p. 127) explained that it emphasizes man's duty to man and praises such virtues as sincerity, kindness, loyalty, filial piety, and not doing to another what one does not like to have done to oneself. Zhou (1996) noted that Confucianism emphasizes the development of the individual as a member of the family and of society at large, and learning the rules of social relationships is an essential step towards becoming a mature and responsible person. To the Confucians, relationships are based on mutual complementary obligations to respect and obey.

Ornatowski (1996) summarized the Confucian values into four key phrases: 1) respect for learning, 2) loyalty, 3) filial piety, and 4) harmony. Buttery and Leung (1998) further mentioned that the Confucian values are centered on four main aspects: 1) harmony, 2) hierarchy, 3) development of moral potential, and 4) kinship. Chiu, Wong and Kosinski (1998, p. 11) also consistently defined the Confucian values as "the respect for authority, frugality, a meritocratic examination system, and sacrifice for the common welfare". Furthermore, Tu (1998a; 1998b) and Xing (1995) summarized that the Confucian values include filial submission, loyalty, duty, conscience, harmony, consensus, reciprocity, trust, and sympathy. In a recent sociological conference in Sweden, Zheng (2005) also reminded participants that Confucian teachings include a series of values such as benevolence and humaneness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), ritual and etiquette (*li*), love within the family (*xiao*), loyalty to the state (*zhong*), honesty and trustworthiness (*xin*) etc.

Consistently, Ackerly (2005, p. 553) in his recent research elaborated that even though Confucius taught people to live according to the traditional virtues of humaneness (*ren*), ritual propriety (*li*), righteousness (*yi*), and wisdom (*zhi*), the Confucian virtues also included a right and appropriate action (*xin*), reverence (*jing*), benevolence (*hui*), dutifulness (*zhong*), thinking (*si*), and virtue (*de*). Indeed, besides the above consistent definitions among researchers, further similar definitions of Confucian values can also be located in recent research across disciplines within the Asian culture, such as social-cultural study of the Koreans (Hyun, 2001), research on Japan's economy (Ornatowski, 1996), health care study in Singapore (Ho, 2007), and also on early childhood education in Taiwan (Hadley, 2003; Hadley & Nenga, 2004).

Within the present study, Confucian values is defined as the key principles of Confucianism – a philosophy which is the basic starting point for every individual to arrive at the state of perfect morality and is a teaching based on a moral code for human relations. The Confucian values form the core of the Chinese culture, penetrating all levels of social life, and also sets the standards for family, community and political behavior. For the purpose of this research, Confucian values are centred on the five virtues: 1) benevolence (*ren* 仁); 2) righteousness (*yi* 義); 3) courteousness (*li* 禮); 4) filial piety (*xiao* 孝); and 5) wisdom (*zhi* 智). A brief explanation of each of these virtues is as follows:

Benevolence (Ren)

To the Confucians, the family is the prototype of all social organizations and to maintain harmony in the family is highly valued. Virtuous behavior towards others consists of treating others as one would like to be treated oneself, a basic human benevolence '*Ren*'. *Ren* means a kind of being (human), a way of being (humane), a reason for being (other humans), and an 'overarching virtue of being a perfected human being' (Ackerly, 2005, p. 554). Bockover (2003, pp. 160-161) stated that *ren* is "the basic human goodness...and humanity that a good act expresses and that brings people together in ways that are mutually recognized and responded to". Wang and colleagues (Wang, Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005, p. 314) further elaborated in their recent study that *ren* is "the source of all virtues, and it nurtures the inner character of the person and furthers his or her ethical maturation". Hofstede & Bond (2001, p. 8) explained that in '*ren*', moderation and harmony is enjoined in all things. Van Norden (2002) also suggested that *ren* may also be referred to two meanings in the *Analects* – the consummation of personal excellence, as well as the virtue of benevolence (see *Analects* 6:28, 9:28, 12:22 and 14:1) (Confucius, 1979). In this study, the researcher refers *ren* to the second meaning, that is, the virtue of benevolence.

Righteousness (Yi)

Yi can be defined as the right action or appropriate conduct (Bockover, 2003, p. 173). Brook (1999, p. 32) highlighted that one is deemed to have *yi* to the extent that he or she fulfils duties to others, and *yi* signifies the realization of moral standards in a public context.

Also, *yi* means appropriateness, respecting and loving others according to who they are (Hwang, 2001). Rarick (2007, p. 25) in a recent publication also precisely stated that one with *yi* is expected to uphold the highest standards of moral conduct. A more detailed definition is also mentioned by Lu (1998, p. 95); *yi* means that individuals are expected to act appropriately to their ascribed roles and statutes, take responsibility for family and clans, and conform to social hierarchy and group norms. In addition, *yi* also refers to righteousness and is an outward moral behavior of a person. This is the behavior that places the interest of the state above one's own and to sacrifice oneself, ranging from individual pleasure, material gains, to valuing life, to loyalty towards friends and one's superiors (Lu, 1998, p. 95). In this study, the researcher uses *yi* to denote righteousness, morality, and faithfulness.

Courteousness (Li)

Li is sometimes translated as rules of propriety, that is, rules which govern customs, ceremonies, rituals and human relationships. Koller (1984) in his early research suggested that *li* means moral discipline (propriety) in personal conduct, which may be as simple as greetings between two people when they meet, as good table manners, or as complicated as mourning rituals and ceremonies. Yuan and Shen (1998, p. 195) state that *li* denotes "ritual or etiquette, but implies a whole host of external expressions that indicate, as one relates to others, one's place in the total hierarchy of society". Emery (1999) later defined *li* as rules of action governing customs, ceremonies, and human relationships. In Ho's latest publication (2007, p. 209), it was further highlighted that *li* may also refer to three meanings in the *Analects* – religious rituals (*Analects* 2:5), rules of etiquette (*Analects* 9:3), and proper behavior in general (*Analects* 4:16). In this study, the researcher uses *li* to denote proper behavior and courtesy.

Filial Piety (Xiao)

Xiao, or filial piety, is the virtue of reverence and respect for family, and is also the root of humanity (Emery, 1999). Yan and Sorenson (2006) suggested that *xiao* is the parent-child reciprocal relationship for which children serve their parents with filial piety and submission, while parents also treat their children with kindness and care. This virtue is regarded as one of the most emphasized in Confucianism. Hsu (1998, p. 61) stated that

"...the Chinese have traditionally held on to filial piety as their cardinal virtue. This is to say, all other virtues, from honesty to love of spouse, from devotion to the ruler, to interest in abstract principles, were either subordinated to this cardinal virtue or modified by it". In addition, other researchers (Hsu, 1998; Li, 1997; Tu, 1998c; Weber, 1957) also highlighted that filial piety (*xiao*) is displayed by high levels of devotion, including affection, respect, duty, and obedience. Ho (2007, p. 209) in his recent research further reminded that in the *Analects*, *xiao* means that one should always be pious to his or her parents (see *Analects* 2:5, 2:6, 4:19). In this study, the researcher uses filial (*xiao)* to denote one's respect, love and reverence for parents.

Wisdom (Zhi)

Zhi means knowledge, wisdom and discernment (Berthrong, 2006). It denotes knowing *what* the action is, knowing *how* to do the action, or knowing that one *should* do the action (Perkins, 2006, p. 507). Raphals (1991, p. 16) in her book about Chinese wisdom also highlighted that *zhi* means knowledge, intelligence, skill, cleverness, or cunningness. *Zhi* is also frequently mentioned in pair with *ren*. For example, Chan in an early research (1963, p. 30) stated that "in the Confucian system, humanity [*ren*] and wisdom [*zhi*] are like two wings, one supporting the other. One is substance, the other, function". Consistent reference can also be found in recent research which mentioned that *zhi* is "undoubtedly inferior to *ren* (see *Analects* 15: 33), and that even when a person has attained wisdom, it cannot last without *ren* (see *Analects* 15: 32)" (Herr, 2003, p. 485). Yu (2006, p. 341) in recent research further highlighted that *zhi* means an amoral cognitive state or intelligence, and the honest mind that one has regarding one's knowledge state and level. In this study, *zhi* means children's knowledge and their practical reasoning processes.

2.3.2. *Importance of Confucian Values*

Global View

Globally speaking, Confucianism has influenced the values and behaviours of over 20 per cent of the world's population (Yan & Sorenson, 2006). Many recent researchers (Jacobs, Goupei, & Herbig, 1995; Kirkbride & Tang, 1992; Niemann & Burghart, 2004; Richter, 2002; Slote & DeVos, 1998; Xing, 1995; Yan & Sorenson, 2006; Zheng, 2005)

confirmed that Confucianism still exerts significant influence on people's different activities nowadays, including their social behaviors, attitudes, politics, education and economy. Research on Confucianism is popularly conducted in different cultural contexts all over the world, such as those in the United States (Hyun, 2001; Meyer, 2007; Son, 2006) , Vietnam (Hunt, 2005), Europe (Zeigler, 1988), Singapore (Lele, 2004), Korea (Park & Cho, 1995; Rhee, 2002) and Japan (Winfield, Mizuno, & Beaudoin, 2000). In addition, Confucianism is also a common issue in the research trend of globalization and/or universalism (Cheung, 2003; Nuyen, 2003; Rozman, 2002).

In eastern and southeastern Asian countries, Confucianism has also shaped the social interaction of people for more than 2,000 years (De Bary, 1991; Fung, 1952; Levenson, 1972; Slote & DeVos, 1998; Tu, 1998a, 1998b). Due to migration and historical evolutions, Confucianism has spread its roots deeply in many Oriental countries, such as Japan, Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia (Emery, 1999; Wang, Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005; Zheng, 2005). Researchers (Jacobs, Goupei, & Herbig, 1995; Tu, 1998c; Xing, 1995) have also revealed that Confucianism continues to exert a major influence on the everyday lives of Asian communities.

Indeed, when discussing the influence of Confucianism on East Asian societies, Tu, a leading scholar in the studies of modern Confucianism, stated the following,

> Confucianism, . . . is a worldview, a social ethic, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition, and a way of life. . . . Both in theory and practice, Confucianism has made an indelible mark on the government, society, education, and family of East Asia. . . . Confucian ethical values have, for well over 2,000 years, served as the source of inspiration as well as the court of appeal for human interaction at all levels— between individuals, communities, and nations in the Sinic world. . . . so deeply ingrained in the fabric of society and polity that is often taken for granted as naturally human. East Asians may profess themselves to be Shintoists, Taoists, Buddhists, Muslims, or Christians, but rarely, if ever, do they cease to be Confucians (Tu, 1998a, p. 3).

In the present twenty-first century, with China accelerating into its inevitable place among the world's most important states and markets, the world is paying close attention and debates about when modern Confucianism began in the west (Berthrong, 2003; Neville, 2000; Peerenboom, 2004; Scarborough, 1998). Interest in the Confucian views and value systems grew as other states saw that Confucian views permeated China's culture, value systems and those of all East Asia. Neville (2000) further stated that

Confucianism is a world philosophy which transcends cultural divisions. Contemporary Western intellectuals can learn something significant from the Confucians. Peerenboom (2004) suggested that as contemporary Confucianism is rising out of its history of a century ago when it was discarded as a result of an anti-Confucian campaign in 1973-74 (Gregor & Chang, 1979) It must adapt to modernity if it is to remain relevant. At the heart of modern Confucianism, is the effort to engage the west by entering into dialogue especially with democracy and scientific thinking, that is, with modernity and the best of its own long tradition (Swidler, 2003). Dallmayr et al., (1993, p. 209) suggested that Confucian thought should not be a form of anti-modern traditionalism which stifles self-development and human freedom. Rather, it can be the teacher of an open, democratic, non-oppressive society where all human relations are governed by '*Ren*', that is, by considerateness and fairness and also by '*Li*', that is by certain public institutional forms, structures, and conventions which render fellowship concretely feasible.

Scarborough (1998) suggested that it is beneficial for the west to understand that Confucianism is a system of values that govern inter-personal behaviour with an eye towards building a civil society. It embodies a very hierarchical, pyramidal, bureaucratic structure. Information is closely held and decision making is top-down. Individual rights are alien concepts to traditional Chinese and unity is essential when confronted with many hardships. Order is the highest social ideal. Berthrong (2003) found that Confucianism has demonstrated the ability to grow, change, revive and reform over its cumulative history of more than 2550 years and it has not become a historical relic. He sees that the virtues in the Confucian values are a fine set of ethical goals and ideals which fit the whole human race even to the present day.

Local View

Locally speaking, as a Chinese researcher, I strongly agree with Rarick 's (2007, p. 27) comment that "Confucianism remained a dominant social force in Chinese society for two thousand years". Even though the imperial system of governance no longer exists in the PRC and Confucian teaching was once eliminated, the ideals espoused by Confucius never left the Chinese people (Lin & Chi, 2007; Xing, 1995). Bond & Wang (1983) highlighted that understanding Confucianism will not only be important, but may also be indispensable in different aspects of the Chinese community and culture. As stated by

Spence (2005), "despite its incredible pace of change, China continues to carry echoes of its past." Similar to most cultures, the Chinese still cling to their long past and are still greatly influenced by important historical figures and philosophies (Rarick, 2007, p. 22). Within this study, Confucius and Confucianism are undoubtedly one of the significant historical figures and philosophies respectively.

A revival of Confucianism in the PRC is seen when Xiao (1994) stated that this traditional doctrine can serve contemporary China as Confucianism in the 1990s no longer portrays anti-modernity. Furthermore, Chen (1997, p. 608) suggested that the Confucian traditions, particularly its moral codes and its sense of social responsibilities, can be the best basis upon which to rebuild Chinese cultural identity. Li Ruihuan, (the chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) and Li Lanqing, (the Vice Premier of PRC) in a conference celebrating Confucius' 2425th anniversary, praised Confucianism as a positive force to unite the Chinese nation and to foster a socialist spiritual civilization. As commented by Chen (1997, p. 609) the speeches by these two leaders of PRC on this occasion are symbolically significant, since it is the first time that the top Communist leaders had publicly spoken on such occasions, and are read as an official gesture in favour of the revival of this traditional culture.

The 2,550th birthday of Confucius was celebrated in his hometown in September 1999, and for the first time in 50 years the government of PRC officially organized the celebration. Such events demonstrate the continuing vitality of the Confucian ideology. Recent research (Mooney, 2007; Osnos, 2007) confirmed that Confucianism has been reintroduced into the Chinese educational system so that a number of Confucian institutes have been established. In HKSAR, the Confucius Academy (http://www.confucian academy.com/) has regained public attention and awareness. In addition, a recent best-seller book named *Yu Dan's Reflections on 'The Analects'* by a professor in China, has sold 4.2 million legal copies in a year and with an estimated 6 million pirated versions (Melvin, 2007). This phenomenon may be further regarded as a conspicuous symbol to show that a national studies fever of Confucianism is back in contemporary PRC and Confucius has undeniably left a permanent mark on the psyche of the Chinese people (McGregor, 2007). The present study therefore not only merges well into the global research trend of Confucianism, but also responds actively to the local need for re-exploration into teaching and learning issues of Confucianism.

2.3.3. *Teaching Confucian Values to Young Children*

Confucian values and children's education are frequently connected together in the research field. Yan and Sorenson (2006, p. 8), highlighted that Chinese families usually use stories, sayings, and special terms to instill Confucian ideals in children. Other researchers (Bond & Hwang, 1986; King & Bond, 1985; Wu, 1996) also mentioned that adults in the Chinese cultures around the world frequently draw on Confucianism when socializing their children. Rarick (2007, p. 22) in his recent journal article further revealed a historical scenario that for thousands of years, up until the fall of the imperial system in China in the early 1900's, Chinese school children would raise their hands in respect to Confucius at the start of the school day, and they would recite the saying of Confucius until they were permanently recorded into their memory. A closer look at literature further reveals that there is ample recent research on bridging Confucian values with different aspects of early childhood education. For instance, in the area of curriculum planning (Kim & Lim, 2007; Kwon, 2004), educational systems (Kwon, 2003), teacher education (Yoo, 2002), parental beliefs (Park & Cheah, 2005), parent-child interaction (Tulananda & Roopnarine, 2001), adult-child and/or peer relationships (Liang, 2000; Lin & Tsai, 1996; Miller, Wiley, Fung, & Liang, 1997; Pan, 1994) and also early numeracy (Fitzsimons, 2002).

Confucian beliefs frame the socialization processes of young children at home and parents entrust teachers with the important job of socializing their children in the wider society (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Ho (1994) says that the school is entrusted by parents with the responsibility to teach their children the Confucian value system and to learn their place in the order and structure in society. In relation to the socialization process of young children, Ho (1994, pp. 350 - 351) further says that Confucian thinking on morality assumes a fundamental distinction between right and wrong, and children must be taught the correct knowledge without questioning it. Such knowledge is contained in the teachings of sages in the classics. Children are socialized to respect the authority of parents and teachers, to heed and memorize the words taught, and to believe that good academic performance will ensure a route to success and glory to the family name. Hence, children are to obey their parents, and parents are to bring up their children to be morally acceptable adults. Studies by Hadley (2003) and Hadley and Nenga (2004, p. 435) on children's

responses to Confucian indoctrination by their teachers teaching them to be good students, good family members and good peers, revealed that they confronted such Confucian values within their own peer cultures and resisted it through word play and also through popular media. Nevertheless, there seems to be little research on exploring the possible link between Confucianism and one of the increasingly significant and closely-related areas of child development – moral education.

Moral education

Moral education is defined as a matter of internalization: adopting societal standards for right action as one's own (Berk, 2006, p. 477). It is also about character development, that is, learning the difference between right and wrong, having respect for oneself and others, and being empathic and caring toward other human beings (Muzi, 2000). Moral education can be approached from different perspectives, such as Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Bandura's social learning theory, and Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental perspective. Within this present study, Bandura and Kohlberg are the major foci. It is because, firstly, today most researchers (see Kochanska, 1991; Kochanska, Gross, Lin, & Nichols, 2002; Tellings, 1999; Zahn-Waxler, Kochanska, Kruprick, & McKnew, 1990) disagree with Freud's account of conscience development. They have moved on from that perspective. Secondly, Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental perspective is regarded as the most influential approach to moral development (Berk, 2002, p. 594). Thirdly, certain underlying principles of Bandura's social learning theory and Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental perspective seem to be consistent with or complementary to the philosophy of Confucianism. These possible consistencies or complementariness will be discussed below and they may further support the present study to maintain a better balance between the western and the eastern points of view.

Social Learning Theory and Confucianism

The major consistency between social learning theory and Confucianism would be their congruous emphasis on the importance of modelling in young children's moral education. Social learning theorists believe that children learn to behave morally largely through modelling – observing and imitating adults who demonstrate appropriate behaviour (Bandura, 1977; Berk, 2006; Grusec, 1988). Also, certain characteristics of the

model may affect children's willingness to imitate, including warmth and responsiveness (Yarrow, Scott, & Waxler, 1973), competence and power (Bandura, 1977), and consistency between assertion and behaviour (Mischel & Leiebert, 1966).

Similarly, Confucianism also emphasizes the importance of adult modelling in children's moral development. Confucius once stated a very clear example of role modelling, "the gentleman's morality may be compared to the wind, and the mean spirited man's morality to the grass. Under the force of the wind the grass will certainly bend in the direction of the wind" (Yang, 1980, p. 129). Cheng also highlighted in his recent research on moral education of adolescents in Hong Kong (2004, p. 542) that Chinese culture emphasizes a modelling approach due to the possible influence of Confucianism. Chinese parents usually regard themselves as models for their children's moral lives. Though parents can make mistakes, it is difficult for Chinese parents to admit their mistakes to their children. Indeed, the same modeling approach is applicable to the Chinese schooling context. Jin and Cortazzi (2006, p. 13) confirmed that 'follow models' is one of the important elements in their model of 'Student learning activity in Confucian heritages' (Figure 2.2).

The role of parents in the process of developing children's moral understanding is significant. Research has revealed that children who gain most in moral understanding have parents who tell stories with moral implications, engage in moral discussions, encourage prosocial behaviour, and create a supportive atmosphere by listening sensitively, asking clarifying questions, and presenting higher-level reasoning (Pratt, Skoe, & Arnold, 2004; Wyatt & Carlo, 2002). In contrast, children whose parents lecture, use threats, or make sarcastic remarks show little or no change (Berk, 2006; Walker & Taylor, 1991). There is evidence that in cultures where young people participate in the institutions of their society at early ages, moral reasoning is advanced (Fuchs, Eisenberg, Hertz-Lazarowitz, & Sharabany, 1986) and some Asian countries place more weight on obligations to others than do people in Western societies (Berk, 2006, pp. 495-496; Miller & Bersoff, 1995). Gonzalez (2004, p. 36) also mentioned that teachers in the Chinese context are seen as role models for students, "whatever is expected of students, teachers are expected to achieve the same and indeed to perform better. In other words, teachers are not only expected to know more than students, but they are also expected to act as examples in all the moral aspects".

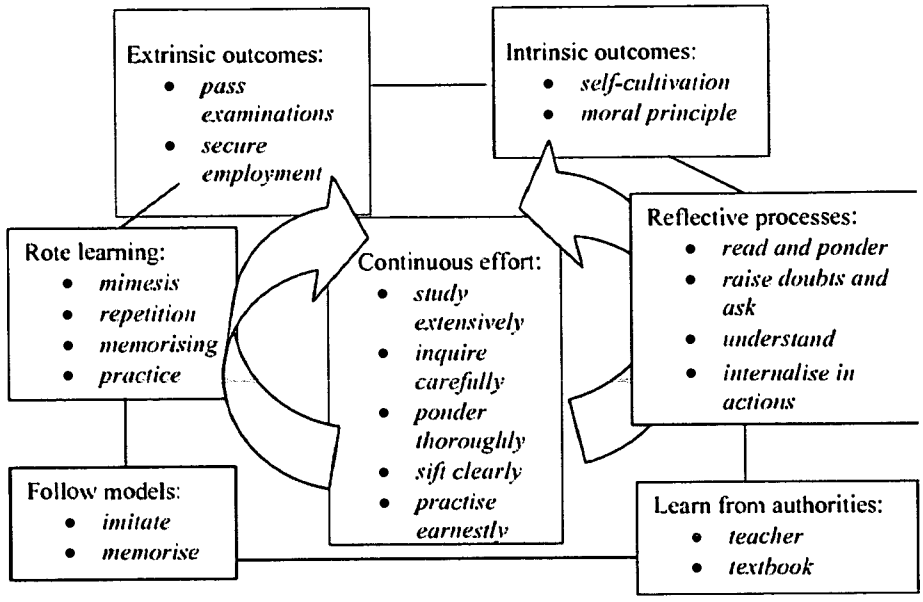


Figure 2.2. Student learning activity in Confucian heritages (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006, p. 13).

Cognitive-developmental perspective and Confucianism

The first complementary view between Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental perspective and Confucianism is one's developmental and hierarchical sequence towards an ultimate goal of moral maturity. Kohlberg's (1969, 1970, 1976) cognitive-developmental perspective regards moral development as extending beyond childhood into adolescence and adulthood in three main levels, each containing two stages: the pre-conventional level, the conventional level, and the post-conventional level. These levels and/or sequences denote a shift from self-interested orientation to pro-social intention or mutual concern of interpersonal relationship. The ultimate goal of moral development would be one's self-chosen ethical principles of conscience that are valid for all humanity, regardless of law and social agreement (Berk, 2002, p. 597).

Similar development of moral maturity can also be seen in one of the famous Confucian mottos – *Xiu Shen, Qi Jia, Zhi Guo, Ping Tian Xia (修身，齊家，治國，平天下)*. This motto can be interpreted as educating oneself to become a moral person as the first step, securing harmony and prosperity of the family as the second step, and consequently, qualify to govern the country to achieve peace in the world (Fang et al., 2003, p. 137). The ultimate goal of moral education in Confucianism is to become *JunZi*

(gentleman or man of noble character, a Confucian term meaning the ideal person whose character and acts are in accordance with rituals and rightness); a person who can understand what morality is (Fang et al., 2003, p. 136). Specifically, Confucian moral education aims at becoming "a noble person who is characterized by superiority of mind, character, ideals or morals" (Fengyan, 2004, p. 432). Confucius suggested that moral education of an individual should comply with the principle of proceeding in an orderly way and step by step. The early stage of moral maturity tends to be more focused on one's self-interest, while the later stage increasingly shows concern for the welfare of the society and all humankind. In the present study, Kohlberg's first development level (i.e., the pre-conventional level) and the Confucian view of '*Xiu Shen*' (i.e., educating oneself to become a moral person) will be the main foci due to the early childhood nature of this research.

The second complementary point between Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental perspective and Confucianism is the significant role of moral authority particularly in one's early stage of development. Kohlberg (1976) stated that the pre-conventional stage is a time when children rely very heavily on adults for direction as to what is good and bad. They are obedient to adult's authority and base their judgments and behaviors on models. Kohlberg and Hersh (1977, p. 54) in another journal article also mentioned that, in stage one of the pre-conventional level (the punishment-and-obedience orientation), "avoidance of punishment and unquestioning deference to power are valued in one's own right, not in terms of respect for an underlying moral order supported by punishment and authority". Berk (2006, p. 489) proposed that children at this stage "focus on fear of authority and avoidance of punishment as reasons for behaving morally".

Similarly, authority also plays an important role in Confucianism. Kwon (2002, p. 155) asserted in her recent research that acceptance of authority is still prevalent in the early childhood educational context of a Confucian society, as when Korean parents constantly teach their children to respect and obey their parents, teachers and elders. Moreover, Chan (1999, pp. 298-301) also revealed that Chinese learners have been socialized to respect highly those who provide knowledge and to avoid challenging those in authority. Teachers are usually seen as possessing the authority and power to decide what knowledge is to be taught. Liu (2002, p. 45) also commented that "being polite to teachers as a moral principle in Chinese culture is still a widely held belief and behavior". In addition, as seen in Figure 2.2 (see p. 42) learning from authorities is still one of the key

elements in the model of 'Student learning activity in Confucian heritage' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). Even though one may argue that moral authority may relate to the concept of moral leadership which has been developed by a number of authors (Etzioni, 1988, 1993; Greenfield, 1986; Hodgkinson, 1991, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1992, 1996); the researcher will not cover this aspect in this present study.

Last but not the least, another complementary between Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental perspective and Confucianism is the universal view of moral development. Kohlberg (1981) asserted that the principled morality based upon our conception of justice is a culturally universal stage of moral judgment. Also, "justice is a naturalistic virtue, emerging in children (at differing rates and with differing points of final equilibration) in all cultures as a result of their interaction with other persons and with social institutions" (Fowler, 1980, p. 130). The validity and universality of Kohlberg's theory of moral development has been widely supported by longitudinal studies (e.g., Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983; Page, 1981; Walker, 1989) and cross-cultural research (Boyes & Walker, 1988; Rest, 1975; Snarey, 1985). Moreover, Ma's two research studies (1988, 1992) on Chinese people's moral development confirmed that the initial three stages of Kohlberg' moral developmental sequence seems to be universal.

Similarly, the Confucian view is that morality is absolute and universal. The Confucians believe that there is a "common principle of order running through heaven, earth, and human society" (Munro, 1969, p. 39). The sense of justice as mentioned by Kohlberg (Glazer, 2000; Puckett & Black, 2005, p. 355) being the outcome of moral thinking is comparable in meaning to the Confucian value of '*Yi*' which encompasses the value of righteousness. Dien (1983, p. 88) further highlighted in his publication about the Chinese perspective on Kohlberg's theory of moral development that "the Confucians see the universe as moral, with a design exhibiting justice and goodness... and morality is absolute and universal".

Social Learning Theory, Cognitive-developmental Perspective and Confucianism

The meeting point between the two western perspectives and Confucianism is that moral education should start early. Social learning theory emphasizes that the impact of modelling is most influential during the preschool years (Berk, 2006; Mussen & Eisenberg-Berg, 1977). Kohlberg in one of his early publications (1968) stressed the

importance of moral education in early years. Consistently, Confucians also recommended that moral education should start from one's earliest years in daily life. Wang Tingxiang (1474-1544 A.D.), a Confucian in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.), said "the innocent child has no preconceived distracting thoughts and can easily accept positive moral education....Therefore, positive education should begin in innocent childhood" (Quoted in Fengyan, 2004, p. 435). To a certain extent, these western perspectives and Confucianism further echo the Aristotelian conception that childhood is an essentially prospective state, for which what is good for a child will tend to be understood as something that will contribute to its good in adulthood (Matthews, 2005). Therefore, the present study emphasizes the importance of developing young children's understanding of moral education in the early childhood years, and also explores the possibility of establishing a link between the western and eastern perspectives on moral development in early childhood education.

2.4. Conclusion

This Chapter has presented two major sections to facilitate representation of literature reviews, that of Storytelling and of the Confucian values. The first section defines storytelling, discusses its possible significant impact on child development, and also explores its relevant teaching and learning issues within the early childhood context. Rationales for choosing cultural stories as the tool to explore answers to the research questions of the present study are also explained, with the need for an examination of student-teachers' views within the present study highlighted. In addition, the awareness of providing a more balanced view between the western and eastern contexts in terms of the teaching and learning issues of storytelling specifically in the early childhood field is also explored.

The second section defines the Confucian values and the five virtues selected for the present study. These virtues are: 1) benevolence (*ren*); 2) righteousness (*yi*); 3) courteousness (*li*); 4) filial piety (*xiao*); and 5) wisdom (*zhi*). The importance of Confucianism from both global and local points of view is discussed emphasizing a need to conduct the present research within a local context. The researcher then established a possible link between Confucianism and two western perspectives of moral education (i.e., Social Learning Theory and Cognitive-developmental Perspective) with an exploration of

the possible similarities and complementariness between the two western perspectives of moral education and Confucianism for a more objective view of moral development in early childhood context between west and east. The next chapter will present the research questions for the present study and the rationale for the methodology and processes adopted for data gathering.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology and processes used in this study to answer the identified research questions. The chapter explains the rationale for choosing a multi-method research design utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering.

This research study has two principal concerns: a) examining the views of early childhood student-teachers (pre-service and in-service) on using story telling as a tool to preserve and develop Confucian values in young children and to find out if there were any changes to these views after implementing Confucian values story projects with kindergarten-aged children; and b) to study the Confucian values seen to be preserved and developed as expressed by children in response to the Confucian values story projects.

The fundamental questions that were addressed in the study are as follows:

1. *What, if any, are the possible stories and Confucian values linked to the four main cultural festivals in HKSAR as expressed by (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers?*
2. *What, if any, are the Confucian values expected to be preserved and developed in kindergartens in HKSAR as expressed by professionals?*
3. *How do kindergarten-aged children respond to the Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) designed to preserve Confucian values?*
4. *In what way, if any, do (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' views of possible influential factors behind cultural storytelling activities differ after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*
5. *How does (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques differ, if any, before and after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*
6. *In what way, if any, do (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' views of using storytelling as a tool to preserve and develop Confucian values differ after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*

3.2. Sample

3.2.1. Overview

Participants of the study included 57 early childhood student-teachers studying a final year of a (total 3 years) Higher Diploma in Child Care and Education programme in a local tertiary institute in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The sample also included 798 kindergarten-aged children, aged 4 to 5, from 29 local kindergartens and/or child care centres.

3.2.2. Rationale

Two groups of student-teacher cohorts, were selected by the researcher for their similarity in that both groups were studying the same programme and at the same level of training, forming two intact groups (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p.130). However, one group was studying the pre-service training mode, while the other group was studying in an in-service training mode.

The participants, originally totalled 58, but were reduced to 57 when in the course of data collection, one student-teacher participant in the pre-service group dropped out of the class. The pre-service student-teachers' group comprised 28 pre-service students preparing themselves to become teachers in kindergartens. The in-service student-teacher group comprised 29 student-teachers employed as local kindergarten teachers who were receiving further training. The major difference between the two groups was that the pre-service group did not have any work experience, apart from short periods in their course of 'practical training', while the other in-service group had work experience in kindergartens. For the purpose of this study all subjects have been referred to as 'student-teachers'.

Each student-teacher participant had to complete a fieldwork placement in a local kindergarten or child care centre (with the location assigned by the tertiary institute for the pre-service group, or according to individually employed kindergarten or child care centres for the in-service group) as a requirement scheduled in their final year of study. Each student-teacher was assigned 14 children to a class, to be under their care during this fieldwork period. For this research, each student-teacher participant conducted a project on

storytelling and Confucian values related to Chinese festivals. The project was for the children attending the kindergartens/ child care centres that they were attached to for fieldwork placement. The 392 children, aged 4-5, were studying in full-day programmes of 29 local kindergartens and child care centres.

3.3. Research Design

3.3.1. Mixed-Method Approach

The research design was based on a mixed-method approach (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Creswell, 1994; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003; Blaikie, 2000, p. 265; Morse, 2003, p. 189). This design "facilitates the synergy between the techniques to discover relationships and the generalisation of ideas" and through this triangulation, enhances the validity of research (McMurray, Pace, & Scott, 2004, p. 262). According to Morse (2003, p. 189), by combining and increasing the number of research strategies used within a particular project, the researcher is able to broaden the dimensions of the project. Such an approach is also defined as "a class of research that combines both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single design" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). The following Table 3.1 summarizes the quantitative and qualitative research techniques of the mixed-method approach that were applied in this current study. Details of each technique is discussed in Section 3.4 'Research Instrument' of this chapter on p. 53.

Table 3.1. Summary of mixed-method approach research instruments which were employed within the present study.

Research paradigms	Types of research instruments
Quantitative	Questionnaire
Qualitative	Reflective Report
	Non-participant Observation
	Focus Group
	Expert Interview
	Children's Artefacts

The mixed-method approach was selected so qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined to provide multiple perspectives and lenses that could help the researcher to gain more insight, new ideas and fresh meaningful perspectives (Greene, Kreider, & Mayer, 2005, p. 275). The researcher considered the dominant/less-dominant design where "one primary technique is used with alternative techniques taking a secondary role"

(McMurray, Pace, & Scott, 2004, pp. 261-263). This design was more appropriate for the study with the qualitative data being the dominant design, as qualitative methods permit "access to individual meaning in the context of ongoing daily life" (Burns, 2000, p. 388).

The researcher used a mixed-method approach in how the student-teacher participants' views on Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children in Hong Kong were seen in action in their daily work with children, and to measure both behaviours as well as actions with their intents, meanings and consequences. As Burns (2000, p. 392) stated, the value of qualitative studies lies with the ability to investigate real experiences that could not be done experimentally and it allows the researcher to delve in depth into processes; it also enables the researcher to study events from the informant's perspective.

To gather qualitative data, the researcher used the following instruments: reflective reports, non-participant observations, focus group interviews, interviews with experts, and children's artefacts. This enabled the researcher to examine the views and responses of the student-teacher participants and the young children in the natural environment of the kindergarten. Sherman and Webb (1988) considered that such data could reveal experience, feelings and responses of participants, in this case, of the student-teachers, as they lived through the story projects.

With the quantitative design the researcher obtained objective data which could be measured. As stated by Wiersma (2005, p. 83) such research design's outcomes are largely expressed as numbers, enabling the researcher to make valid interpretations through comparisons and partitioning of these numbers. In order to measure the dependent variable (i.e. the views of using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children) over time, there were two different investigation points. The data were taken before and after an intervention of Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST) and the Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) by means of a Pre-test and a Post-test questionnaire (details of CST and CSP will be discussed in Section 3.5.2 'Research Study' of this chapter).

The second reason for choosing the mixed-method approach was to triangulate the research findings. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004, p. 778) emphasized that mixed-method data analyses could enhance the "interpretation of significant findings in both quantitative- and qualitative-based evaluation research". Specifically, this methodological triangulation approach has the potential to maximize the possibility of using one method to verify

findings stemming from the other method. The major advantage of using multiple sources of data collection and data analysis is cross-data validity checking. Denzin (2000, p. 5) emphasized that the use of multiple methods, or triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Laws, Harper, & Marcus (Laws, Harper, & Marcus, 2003, p. 281) point out that 'the key to triangulation is to see the same thing from different perspectives'. Glaser and Strauss (1967) in LeCompte et al. (1993, p. 48) stated that it prevents the researcher from accepting too readily the validity of initial impressions; enhancing the scope, density, and clarity of constructs developed during the course of the investigation (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, pp. 574-575; Gay & Airasian, 2003, pp. 215-216). Data collected in this study, from different sources and methods, were triangulated.

3.3.2. Quasi-Experimental method

To enable the researcher to examine the views of the early childhood student-teacher participants from both pre-service and in-service groups, before and after using storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children, a pre-test and post-test design was conducted. The views of each participant were initially recorded in pre-test questionnaires and in pre-test focus groups and their views were further recorded in post-test questionnaire and post-test focus groups. In-between the pre- and post-test settings, two independent variables were applied. They were: 1) Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST); and 2) Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP). The following Figure 3.1 summarized the quasi-experimental setting, the relevant instruments, and interventions which were applied during the pre- and post-test setting of the current study.

The quasi-experimental design was used for the reason that the samples being studied were taken as an intact group from a class of student-teachers, not randomly selected or randomly assigned to each group, allowing the researcher a degree of control over the scheduling, and that each group was studied over a period of 12 weeks' involvement in the study (Kumar, 2006, p. 83; McMurray, Pace, & Scott, 2004, p. 118; Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996, pp. 137-144).

For this study, a before/after, quasi-experimental study was undertaken in natural settings. The researcher sought to measure changes, if any, in the student-teacher

participants' views after receiving CST and conducting CSP in local kindergartens in Hong Kong. The researcher sought also to examine and identify any impact of the intervention on the independent variables, specifically that of CST and CSP on the student-teacher participants.

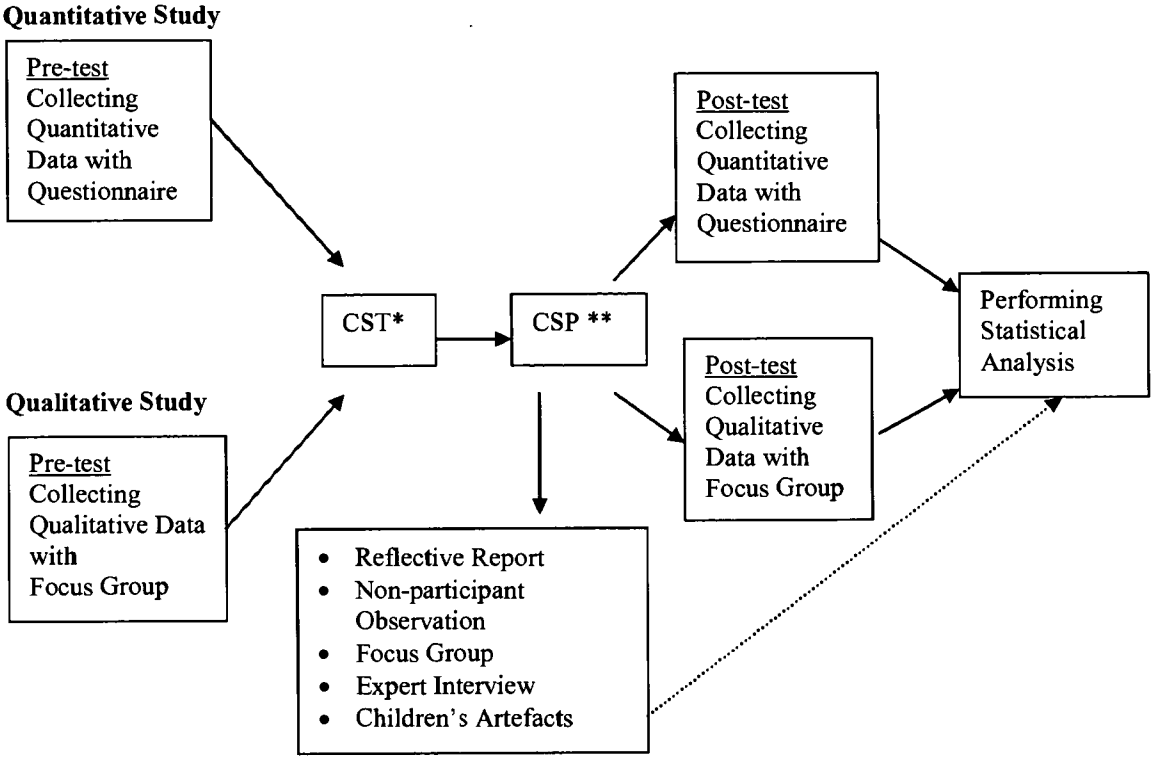


Figure 3.1. Quasi-experimental method for the current study
Remarks: * Confucian Values Story Training (CST)
** Confucian Values Story Project (CSP)

3.3.3. *Ethnographic Research Method*

An ethnographic research method was used to enable the researcher to describe, interpret and understand how both groups of student-teacher participants interacted with children in the natural setting of a local kindergarten. This also allowed the researcher to gain insight into the cultural and social environment, where the student-teachers were working in their fieldwork placement setting (Burns, 2000, p. 394; Norris & Walker, 2005, p. 132; Watson-Gegeo, 1988). Ethnographic methodology emphasizes the importance of seeing the activities of subjects (in this case, student-teachers) within the general context of the organisation as a whole (in the Hong Kong community and in the kindergartens in which they were employed or placed on fieldwork). In addition, as the activities of each individual were motivated by events within the larger whole (the local culture, the home

and the kindergartens), therefore they could not be understood apart from it (Burns, 2000, p. 397). As Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 166) stated, culture is viewed as the things humans had learned that influenced their behaviour. This statement was particularly relevant in this research, as the culture of the Chinese people of Hong Kong, being Asian and Confucian, involved a particular view of the Confucian values in their lives and in the roles they played in a child's learning.

3.3.4. Semiotic

Children participants in the current study were encouraged to voluntarily express their ideas in both verbal and non-verbal ways. Therefore, drawing was chosen as a tool to collect children's non-verbal expressions – ie. a semiotic approach. Such an approach enabled the researcher to understand the meaning of the signs represented in the children's artefacts, that could be social and cognitive in character and could be adapted to non-verbal modes of communication (Carson et al., 2005, p. 165; Kress & Mavers, 2005, p. 172); and that could also reflect the children's learning the festivals and the Confucian values embedded in them. In addition, children could also choose to share their drawings with the student-teacher participants as a complementary source of data.

3.4. Research Instrument

A total of six instruments were used in the study and each is discussed in the sections below:

1. Questionnaire
2. Reflective Report
3. Non-participant Observation
4. Focus Group
5. Interview
6. Children's Artefact

The following Table 3.2 further presents the participants involved in each research instrument used.

Table 3.2. Summary of research instruments and participants within the current study

Instrument	Participants			
	Student-teacher Participants (Pre-service and In-service)	Experts	Early Childhood Teacher Educators	Children
Questionnaire	√			
Reflective Report	√			
Non-participant Observation	√			
Focus Group	√		√	
Interview		√		
Children's Artefact				√

Remarks: √ = Participants involved

3.4.1. Questionnaire

A Pre-test questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and a Post-test questionnaire (see Appendix 2) were designed by the researcher and each of the student-teacher participants of the pre-service and the in-service group was requested to complete. The Pre-test questionnaire had six questions and the Post-test questionnaire had five questions where each student-teacher was requested to express their views under the following headings: the Chinese New Year, the Dragon Boat festival, the Mid Autumn festival and the Chung Yeung festival (see Appendices 15-19 for details of the festivals). In addition, they were asked to express their views about the stories they would use with children in these festivals and their views on the effectiveness of storytelling as a teaching method for children to understand the Confucian values. Besides expressing their understanding and judgement, the questionnaires were used to collect their views about the possible influential factors behind cultural storytelling activities. All 57 student-teacher participants in the two groups completed the Pre-test questionnaire, and the Post-test questionnaire was administered to both groups at the end of their CSP. A Pilot study was implemented for trial of the questionnaires (refers to Section 3.5.1 on p. 58).

3.4.2. Reflective Report

Each student-teacher participant was trained to focus and reflect on the experiences of both CST and CSP. No restricted format was required and each was requested by the researcher to submit the reports within two weeks after the implementation of CSP. Information including, for instance, one's knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs,

emotions, behaviour and/or children's responses was encouraged to be recorded. A total of 57 reflective reports was collected.

3.4.3. Non-participant Observation

Student-teacher participants were to conduct CSP according to one of four Chinese cultural festivals with each group assigned two festivals. Each participant (pre-service and in-service) was randomly assigned one of two festivals, and the student-teachers grouped in the same festival were further voluntarily arranged into groups of two or three to conduct a 30-minute, non-participant observation of their partner's in-class young children during the implementation of CSP. The 27 pre-service student-teacher participants were assigned by the researcher to implement CSP according to the Chinese New Year festival (January 2006) and the Dragon Boat festival (May 2006) as this would naturally align with their fieldwork placement schedule and also with the occurrence of the festivals (January to May). The 28 in-service student-teacher participants were assigned by the researcher to implement CSP according to the Mid-Autumn festival (early October 2006) and the Chung Yeung festival (late October 2006) and also to align with their fieldwork placement schedule and with the occurrence of the festivals (October to November).

One of the issues of observing participants as they go about their daily lives in their natural settings is the effect of the presence of the observer. It has been noted that adults being observed have been shown to do more and behave more appropriately during periods when they know that their actions are being recorded. However, after repeated observations they become habituated to the presence of an observer. Though an observer can never pass entirely unnoticed, the observer aimed to be unobtrusive so that the observed behaviour is as close to normal as possible (Bell, 2005). It was not anticipated that 'an observer effect' would be of concern with the children as Bergen (1997, p. 110) asserted that a characteristic of young children that makes them good subjects for observation in their natural environments is that their behaviour is less likely to change when they are being observed. Although they may show some initial interest, they usually return quickly to their typical pursuits. As Flick (2002, p. 135) noted, behaviour and interaction would continue as they would without the presence of the observer, uninterrupted by intrusion.

A standardized non-participant observation guideline (see Appendix 3) was designed by the researcher and given to each student-teacher participant during CST with necessary guidelines and training on how to observe and record children's verbal and physical responses. A total of 57 observation forms were collected by the researcher one week after the implementation of CSP by the pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants.

3.4.4. *Focus Group*

Focus groups were conducted with the two cohorts of samples in the study: 1) early childhood teacher educators, 2) student-teacher participants.

1) Early childhood teacher educators

The first focus group consisted of six early childhood education teacher educators who were invited to discuss their views based on their experience with kindergarten teachers related to Confucian values in kindergartens. The questions (see Appendix 4) were focused on the values they saw being preserved and which they suggested should be preserved in kindergartens and child care centres. One interview of one hour duration was conducted in the interviewee's office environment by the researcher for this purpose, and records of the focus group were sent to each participant for comments and proof-reading.

2) Student-teachers

The second cohort was further divided into a pre-service student-teacher focus group and an in-service student-teacher focus group with seven participants from each sub-group. Each participant had volunteered to take part in the focus groups. Two interviews of one hour duration for each of these two focus groups were conducted by the researcher in the teacher's classroom environment, one being a Pre-test session and the other a Post-test session. Student-teacher participants in each focus group were invited in both instances to express their views regarding what, if any, Confucian values should be preserved in Hong Kong local kindergartens. Another question discussed was what, if any, were possible factors that contribute to the ways children learn Confucian values by using storytelling (see Appendix 5). Records of the meetings were sent to each participant for their comments and proof-reading.

3.4.5. *Interviews with Confucian Experts*

As relatively few studies have been conducted on Confucian values for children aged 4-5, the researcher invited local experts on Confucianism and on early childhood education to give their expert views on the Confucian values which they suggest should be taught to young children. A total of five local experts was individually interviewed by the researcher, using an interview guide which the researcher had designed (see Appendix 6), and with the prior consent of the expert, the interview was audio recorded, supplemented by notes written by the researcher. A hard copy of the interview schedule was given to each interviewee to read three days prior to the commencement of the interview. The duration of each interview was two hours, and was conducted at their work or home environment.

Among the experts, two were experts in Confucian studies, and three were experts in both early childhood education and Confucianism. The first expert interviewed was a theologian philosopher who had studied and published his interpretation of Confucianism and how it was practised. The second Confucian expert interviewed was an educator, administrator and a historian who had studied Confucianism. The third and fourth experts interviewed were retired early childhood educators and Confucian experts who had been practitioners in early childhood education in Hong Kong for over forty years, and had vast experience of working with children, kindergarten teachers and parents and had also studied Confucianism. The fifth expert interviewed by the researcher was an advocate and educator, teaching Confucian values to post-secondary students and early childhood education teachers. The transcriptions of the interviews were sent by the researcher to the interviewees for comments and proof-reading.

3.4.6. *Children's Artefacts*

A drawing table was set up in each student-teacher participant's kindergarten/child care centre during the Confucian Values Story Project (CSP) (that is, one week after the festival stories were told). As the researcher suggested, drawing on paper could be an alternative means for children who preferred to express feelings via non-verbal or non-physical communication. Children were encouraged by the student-teacher participants to voluntarily express their feelings towards the festival/stories using papers and coloured pencils. To the children who were interested in sharing their drawings, the student-teachers

would ask a standardized question, "Would you like to tell me what is this you drew?" The children's verbal responses, if any, would be written down by the student-teacher participant. After CSP, a total of 110 children's artefacts were collected and were all returned to the children after necessary documentations were made by the researcher.

3.5. Procedure

3.5.1. Pilot Study

A pilot study for the data collection methods was conducted by the researcher in December 2004 to a group of 30 pre-service student-teachers who were in their final year of the same programme as the pre-service student-teacher participants' sample. The data gathering instruments comprised the pre-test and post-test questionnaire, and a non-participant standardized observation form, the Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST), with 16 training sessions on Confucian values and cultural festivals, character building of a child, storytelling, symbolism and children's drawings, non-participant observation skills and records and reflective report writing. Each completed a Pre-test questionnaire which the researcher distributed in class. Participants were encouraged to think aloud and to raise necessary queries. Implementing CST commenced with training sessions conducted by the researcher, and on completion, each student-teacher participant conducted a Confucian Values Story Project (CSP) to children aged 4-5, on Chinese New Year festival (February 2005) in a local child care centre or kindergarten to which they were assigned for their fieldwork placement.

A small group of student-teacher participants in the Pilot study, after completion of CST and CSP, confirmed the appropriateness of the data collection methods. It also confirmed that conducting CSP should coincide with the time frame of the occurrence of the related cultural festival. An outcome from the pilot study was that as the four festivals occurred in January 2006 (Chinese New Year), in May 2006 (Dragon Boat festival), in early October 2006 (Mid Autumn festival) and in late October 2006 (Chung Yeung festival), the researcher invited the pre-service student-teacher participants who were graduating in July 2006 to participate in the first two festivals, and invited the in-service student-teacher participants who were graduating in July 2007 to participate in the latter two festivals.

The pilot steps provided the researcher with opportunities to critically examine the relevancy of the training workshops and the timing for conducting CSP

3.5.2. The Research Study

After the confirmation of instruments from the pilot study and the recruitment of the sample for the current study, data collection commenced according to the following 10 procedures:

1. *Pre-test Questionnaire*

The researcher distributed the Pre-test questionnaire to 29 pre-service student-teacher participants when they were in-class in the day time in November 2005, and to 29 in-service student-teacher participants when they were in-class in the evening in September 2006. Each cohort was given 30 minutes to fill in the questionnaire which all completed and returned. However, one student-participant from the pre-service group dropped-out from her study which resulted in a total of 28 valid questionnaires collected from this cohort.

2. *Pre-test Focus Group*

Seven student-teacher participants from the pre-service cohort and seven from the in-service cohort volunteered to participate in the Pre-test Focus Group conducted by the researcher. One interview of one hour duration for each cohort was conducted in the classroom environment by the researcher, the purpose of which was to gather views on their understanding and teaching of Confucian values by using storytelling. The interviews were held in 2005/6.

3. *Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST)*

The two independent variables of this study were a series of 16 training activities on Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST) which all of the student-teacher participants had to attend (See Appendix 7) and the Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) which each of the sample planned and conducted.

In order to measure the dependent variable (i.e. the views of using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children) over time, there were two different investigation points. The data were taken before and after an intervention which included the CST and the CSP.

Both groups of student-teacher participants were invited to attend a series of the training workshops (CST) conducted by the researcher, the content of which were two main areas:

a) *Confucian values and storytelling*, which included storytelling; character and moral development of a child; signs and symbolism and understanding children's drawings; Confucian values as practiced in daily lives and the Chinese festivals of Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat festival, Mid Autumn festival and Chung Yeung festival with their related cultural stories; and

b) *Data collection methods*, which included skills and recording for non-participant observation, reflective report writing, children's artefacts and documentation. The CST was conducted twice a week with two hours duration for each meeting, and continued for 4 weeks before student-teacher participants started to plan their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP). Each group had their training sessions in classrooms in the tertiary institute, with the pre-service student-teacher group met in the day and the in-service student-teacher group met in the evenings.

4. Confucian Values Story Project (CSP)

The Confucian Values Story Project (CSP) required each student-teacher participant, after completion of the CST, to plan and conduct their own Confucian values story project related to the Chinese festivals, for children (aged 4-5) in the kindergartens where they were either teaching or were on fieldwork placement (for the in-service student-teacher participants) or they were assigned for fieldwork placement (for the pre-service student-teacher participants). Each group conducted their story projects (CSP) on two Chinese festivals, and due to the occurrence of the festivals, the in-service group took up the story projects (CSP) for the Mid Autumn festival and the Dragon Boat festival, while the pre-service group took the time slot for the Chinese New Year and the Chung Yeung festival. Each participant designed an activity using story books or other artefacts as they deemed fit to conduct a Confucian value story project related to the cultural festival. CSP for the

pre-service student-teacher participants was conducted between January to May 2006, to coincide with the Chinese New Year and the Dragon Boat festival while the in-service student-teacher participants conducted their CSP between October to November 2006 to coincide with the Mid Autumn and the Chung Yeung festival.

5. Reflective Report

As naturalistic enquirers, according to Denzin (2005), the reflections on self and others and their conduct in interaction became central pieces of data, and the self is not just an instrument for collecting data but is also part of the interpretive frame (Norris & Walker, 2005 , p. 132). Each student-teacher participant had to write a reflective report on the CSP experience and to submit it to the researcher within two weeks after the CSP.

6. Non-participant Observation

A 30- minute non-participant observation on the young children in-class was conducted by the partner of each student-teacher participant and the standardized observation forms were submitted to the researcher within one week after CSP.

7. Children's Artefacts

Each student-teacher participant had a drawing table set up in the children's classroom where CSP was conducted for one week. Children who preferred not to express themselves verbally were free to put such expressions and signs in this table. The student-teacher was available in the classroom should the child want to share his/her drawings with the student-teacher. Children's artefacts, if any, were collected by the student-teacher participant after one week of CSP. All artefacts, after documentation, were returned to the children concerned.

8. Post-test Focus Group

The seven student-teacher participants from the pre-service cohort and seven from the in-service cohort, who had volunteered to participate in the Pre-test Focus Groups, gathered to attend another post-test focus group meeting of one hour duration for each cohort, conducted in the classroom environment by the researcher. The purpose of this activity was to gather their changed views, if any, on their understanding and teaching of Confucian values by using storytelling. The meetings were conducted after the full

implementation of CSP by each cohort in June 2006 for the pre-service group and in December 2006 for the in-service group.

9. Focus Group

Apart from CSP for the student-teacher participants, the researcher conducted a focus group in February 2006, with six early childhood education teacher educators who were teaching early childhood teachers in a tertiary institute, to discuss their views based on their experience with kindergarten teachers related to Confucian values in kindergartens (For outcomes of this interview, see Research Question 2 on p. 84).

10. Expert Interview

Apart from the above mentioned procedures, individual interviews with five experts in Confucian values and in early childhood education were conducted by the researcher from 2005 – 2007 to obtain their expert views on Confucian values and their appropriateness for kindergarten-aged children in Hong Kong. The first Confucian scholar was interviewed by the researcher in 2005 after the pilot study and at the commencement of the research design. Another Confucian scholar was interviewed in 2006, and three experts in early childhood education and Confucian values were interviewed by the researcher in 2007 to comply with their availability (for details of experts refer to Section 3.4.5 on p. 57).

3.6. Data Analysis

For the quantitative data, the SPSS 12.0 programme was used to run analysis of the data from the questionnaires. Several descriptive statistics were calculated for variables of the study, including means and standard deviation. SPSS paired-sample t-test analysis was conducted, and tested with the Cohen Effect Size (*d*), between and within pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' mean scores before and after the storytelling project intervention.

For the qualitative and ethnographic data obtained through the interviews, reflective reports, non-participant observation records, focus group and artefacts, QSR NVivo 7.0 were used for analytical purpose.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

The research was undertaken in an ethical and professional manner following the University of South Australia's protocols. Prior approval was obtained from the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee. The principles of informed consent, non-exploitation and non-coercion of participants were guaranteed at all times throughout the study. During the study these principles were addressed in the following ways:

1. The Principal of the tertiary institute of the current study sample was fully briefed in person about the research, and approval was obtained for conducting this study on his campus (see Appendix 8).

2. The participants in this study were fully briefed in person about the research, including any expectations of them and their involvement by the researcher. They clearly understood the research and agreed in writing to the work. Details can be found in Appendices 9 and 10.

3. The supervisors and parents of the kindergartens were fully briefed in person about the research and they clearly understood the research and agreed in writing to the work and that samples of children's drawings would be collected after the story projects. Details are to be found in Appendices 11 and 12.

4. The experts and educators interviewed were fully briefed in person about the research and they clearly understood the research and agreed in writing to the work. Details can be found in Appendix 13.

5. The names of all participants who took part in the focus group interviews at the beginning and the end of the study period had their real names removed and were not used in this thesis nor in any other research reports connected with it. Furthermore, to ensure the anonymity of all participants, including the children, the early childhood personnel and the centres, pseudonyms were used throughout this research.

6. The information sheets clearly set out the participants' rights in this voluntary, participatory study and their rights to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty or explanation were made clear (see Appendix 14).

3.8. Limitation of the Study

The following limitations could be identified within the present study:

1. Factors affecting the external validity of this research study could be due to the lack of representativeness of the available target population. The present study attempts to include two groups, one without working experience and the other with working experience, to capture the views of student-teachers. However, the research participants did not include early childhood teachers who have already received their training. In view of this limitation, the study may not be able to reflect the views of this third group, and this may affect the external validity of the study.

2. As suggested by Burns (2000), events other than the experimental treatments may occur during the time between the pre-test and the post-test which may produce effects which may mistakenly be attributed to differences in the treatment.

3.9. Conclusion

The ultimate goal of this research was, first, to discover the views of the student-teacher participants on using story telling as a tool to teach Confucian values to young children; and second, to reveal their change of views after a series of eight training workshops and direct experience of planning and using a story about a Chinese festival as a tool for teaching Confucian values in early childhood settings in Hong Kong.

The methodology paradigm chosen as a means of exploring the core elements of the stated research purposes was a mixed method approach that is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. A quasi-experimental, before/after design was used for the research utilizing an ethnographic and naturalistic approach. Data collection utilized a pre-test and post-test questionnaire, reflective reports, non-participant observation, and children's artefacts produced in the story projects, supported by focus group interviews and expert interviews. All data obtained were triangulated and tested for significance, reliability and validity.

In the next chapter, both qualitative and quantitative data collected through the research instruments discussed, are analyzed and presented according to the six research questions of the study.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

In the previous Chapter, the methods for collecting and analysing the data to search for answers to the research questions were presented. This Chapter presents the findings from those processes. Findings are presented according to the six research questions of the study. They are:

1. *What, if any, are the possible stories and Confucian values linked to the four main cultural festivals in HKSAR as expressed by (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers?*
2. *What, if any, are the Confucian values expected to be preserved and developed in kindergartens in HKSAR as expressed by professionals?*
3. *How do kindergarten-aged children respond to the Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) designed to preserve Confucian values?*
4. *In what way, if any, do (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' views of possible influential factors behind cultural storytelling activities differ after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*
5. *How does (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques differ, if any, before and after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*
6. *In what way, if any, do (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' views of using storytelling as a tool to preserve and develop Confucian values differ after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*

A brief introduction of the relevant sources of data which were employed to answer each research question will be followed by the detailed findings. A summary and conclusion of the findings are provided at the end of the results of each research question.

4.2. Results of Research Question 1

4.2.1. Research Question

What, if any, are the possible stories and Confucian values linked to the four main cultural festivals in HKSAR as expressed by (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers?

4.2.2. Introduction

To seek answers to this Research Question, a pre-test questionnaire was used to collect data. All 57 pre-service or in-service student-teachers were invited to answer two open-ended questions on the pre-test questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The two questions were:

1. "Which story/stories will you use to present each of the following four cultural festivals (Chinese New Year; Dragon Boat; Chung Yeung; and Mid-Autumn)?"
2. "What are the Confucian values represented in the following four cultural festivals (Chinese New Year; Dragon Boat; Chung Yeung; and Mid-Autumn) in Hong Kong?"

4.2.3. Results

All 57 student-teachers were able to answer both questions on the pre-test questionnaire by mentioning at least one story related to each of the four festivals (Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat, Chung Yeung and Mid-Autumn) and to express their views of the Confucian value(s) behind each story (i.e. 100% response rate). Detailed findings and analysis of their responses on festival related stories and the related Confucian value(s) are as follows:

1. Chinese New Year

a. Story

All 57 (pre-service and in-service) student-teacher participants were able to name at least one story related to the Chinese New Year. Six of them named even more than one story. As a result, a total of 63 responses was recorded. After coding, the following three categories were found to be commonly named by both cohorts: 1) New Year monster story (f = 45, 71%); 2) festivity celebration story (f = 15, 24%); and 3) 12 animals' story (f = 3, 5%) (Figure 4.1.1). Figure 4.1.2 further showed that similar pattern of responses occurred in both cohorts.

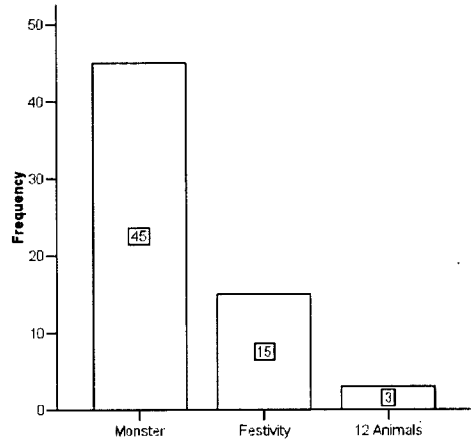


Figure 4.1.1. All student-teacher participants' views of Chinese New Year story

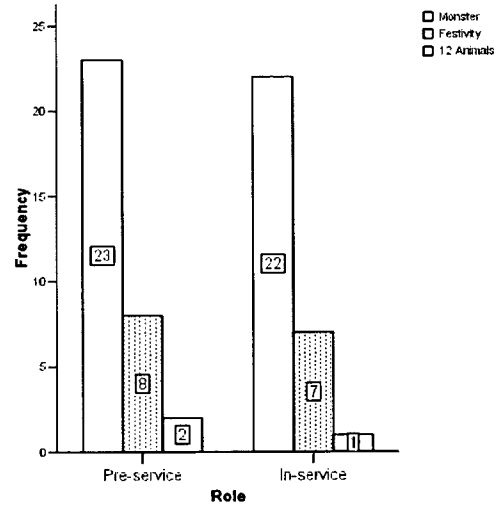


Figure 4.1.2. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' views of Chinese New Year story

The New Year monster story was mentioned consistently by both pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants by clearly stating the name of the monster — "Nian" (i.e. Year Monster). Forty-four responses out of a total of 45 responses stated the name correctly according to the traditional legend, except that one participant named it as a dragon monster. Students' consistency may probably be due to the high popularity and presence at festivals of this legendary monster among Chinese communities.

The festivity celebration story (f = 15, 26%), however, covers a wider variety of content. This type of story can basically be classified into two major categories: 1) stories related to customs and celebrations; and 2) stories related to good-will wishing visits to elders, relatives and friends. The first category includes 'the red packet money' which children receive from adults as a sign of blessing; the burning of fire crackers and red spring couplets decorating the homes; both being symbols of the warding away of the evil spirits. The second category relates to good-will wishing, valued in the Chinese culture when the younger generation pay their respect to the senior members of the family and/or friends through such visits. Table 4.1.1 shows examples of Chinese New Year stories:

Table 4.1.1. Examples of Chinese New Year stories

Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
"...celebration customs e.g. burning fire crackers"
"...New Year red packets (given on New Year's Eve) story"
"...New Year good will couplets"
"...good will wishing visits to relatives and friends"

b. Confucian Values

Fifty-six student-teacher participants (from pre-service and in-service), out of a total of 57 participants, were able to mention at least one Confucian value behind the aforementioned Chinese New Year stories. Fourteen of them mentioned more than one value. As a result, a total of 70 responses was recorded. After coding, the following five categories emerged: 1) Filial (f = 41, 58.6%); 2) Li (f = 13, 18.6%); 3) Ren (f = 12, 17.1%); and 5) Yi (f = 4, 5.7%) (Figure 4.1.3). Figure 4.1.4 further shows that filial was the most common value named by both cohorts. The response pattern for 'Li' and 'Ren' were, however different between cohorts. 'Yi' was least popularly mentioned by both cohorts.

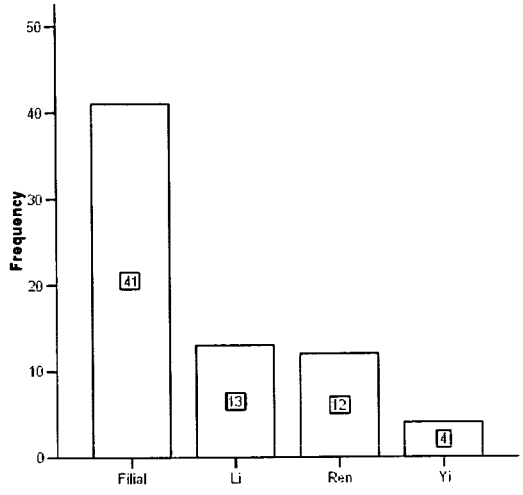


Figure 4.1.3. All student-teacher participants' views of Confucian values behind Chinese New Year stories

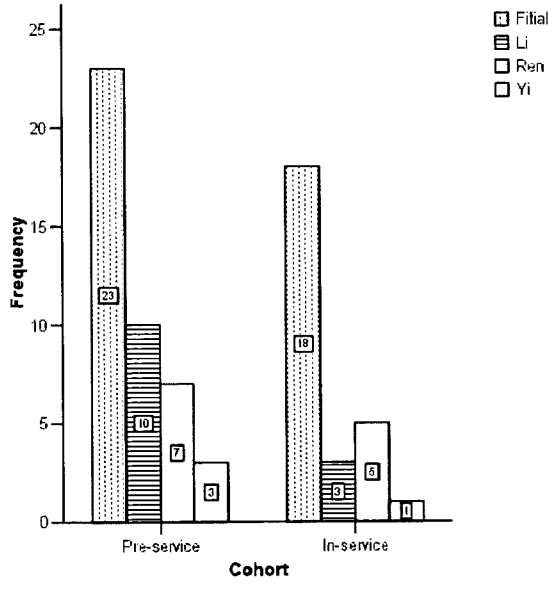


Figure 4.1.4. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' responses on Confucian values behind Chinese New Year stories

Table 4.1.2 illustrates some examples of student-teacher participants' responses to Confucian values for Chinese New Year:

Table 4.1.2. Examples of pre-service and in-service cohorts' responses of Confucian values behind Chinese New Year stories

Confucian Value	Meaning of the Values in Chinese New Year	Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
Filial	Love, care and respect parents and grandparents	*"...filial respect for the relatives and elders in the family, to care for them"* *"...love of parents and family"* *"...reunion with grandparents to show love and respect for them"*
Li	Appropriate behaviour of respect and courtesy, especially to parents and elders.	*"...be polite and courteous to teachers and elders"* *"...courtesy and appropriate mannerism"* *"...there's a place and order for each in the society and we should respect this order and act appropriately"* *"...there is an order in the society and we should submit to these orders and positions with courtesy and appropriate manner"*
Ren	Loving, caring and sharing relationship with others.	*"...show their love"* *"...love and care and social relationship with relatives and friends"* *"...sharing"*
Yi	Loyalty and love of the country.	*"...love of country"*

2. Dragon Boat Festival

a. Story

Among 57 student participants, two of them were able to name more than one story related to the Dragon Boat festival. A total of 59 responses was recorded. After coding, two stories were categorized: Poet Wat Yuen story (f = 49, 83%) and festivity celebration story (f = 10, 17%) (Figure 4.1.5). Figure 4.1.6 further showed that a similar pattern of responses occurred in both pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants.

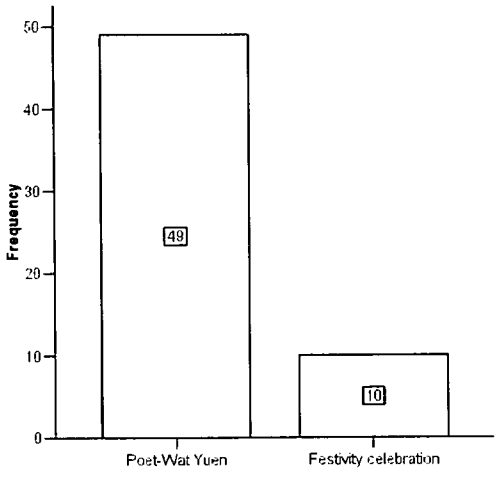


Figure 4.1.5. All student-teacher participants' views of stories behind Dragon Boat festival

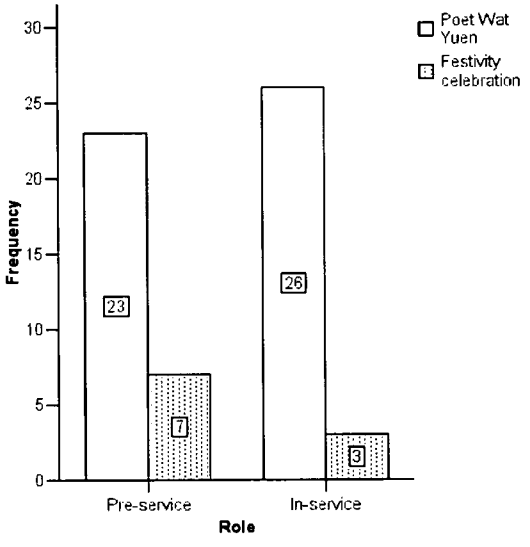


Figure 4.1.6. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' views of stories behind Dragon Boat festival

The poet's name 'Wat Yuen' was mentioned consistently and correctly by all 49 responses of both cohorts. Their consistency may probably be due to this well-known and famed Chinese poet in the historical and cultural contexts, and to whom must go most of the credit for the origin of the festival. Among these 49 responses, four participants also mentioned further details about Wat Yuen's suicide in protest against a corrupt regime.

The Festivity celebration story about the Dragon Boat festival (f= 10, 17%) mainly focuses on traditional customs such as dragon boat racing, the eating of dumplings and feeding fish. The Dragon Boat festival happens in early summer in Asia, a story about

swimming is commonly mentioned by student-teacher participants. Indeed, swimming, particularly on the Dragon Boat festival day, is a popular cultural practice as well. Table 4.1.3 shows examples of participants' responses:

Table 4.1.3. Examples of Dragon Boat festival stories

Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
"...dumplings' origin and different kinds of dumplings"
"...the custom of dragon boat races"
"...go to the beach for swimming"
"...feeding fishes"

b. Confucian Values

All 57 participants were able to mention at least one Confucian value behind the Dragon Boat festival stories. Some four of them even mentioned more than one value. A total of 61 responses was recorded. After coding, the following five categories emerged: 1) Yi (f= 40, 65.6%); 2) Filial (f= 9, 14.8%); 3) Li (f= 7, 11.5%); and 4) Ren (f= 5, 8.2%) (Figure 4.1.7). Figure 4.1.8 further showed that the value "Yi" was the most common value named by both cohorts. This finding is contrary to the result which was found in the aforementioned Confucian values behind the Chinese New Year stories. Also, the response pattern for 'Filial' and 'Li' were different between cohorts.

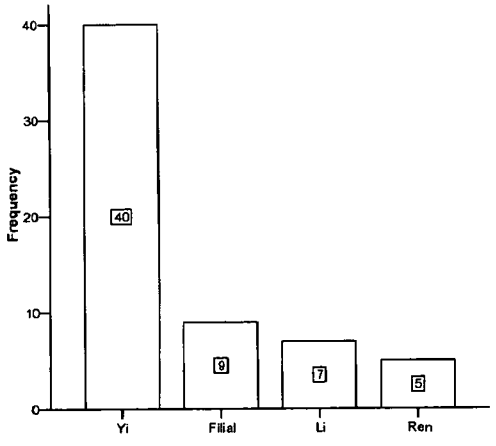


Figure 4.1.7. All student-teacher participants' views of Confucian values behind Dragon Boat festival stories

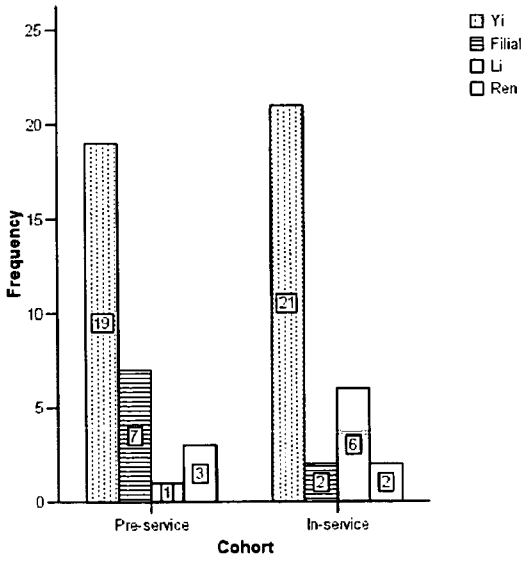


Figure 4.1.8. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' view of Confucian values behind Dragon Boat festival stories

Table 4.1.4 illustrates some examples of student-teacher participants' responses of Confucian values for Dragon Boat festival:

Table 4.1.4. Examples of all student-teacher participants' responses of Confucian values behind Dragon Boat festival stories

Confucian Value	Meaning of the Values in Dragon Boat	Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
Yi	Loyalty for the country, righteousness, confidence and ability to solve problems	*"...loyalty to country"* *"...righteousness"* *"...loyal to self"* *"...respect for those who sacrificed for the country"*
Filial	Custom of honouring the elders, commemorating the ancestors and deceased elders in the family	*"...revere ancestors"* *"...honour the elders and seniors"* *"...commemoration of the deceased"*
Li	The act of respecting others	*"...learn to respect others"* *"...respect"*
Ren	Loving, caring and sharing relationship with others	*"...love and care"* *"...sharing"*

3. Chung Yeung Festival

a. Story

Fifty five student-teacher participants, out of a total of 57, named at least one story related to the Chung Yeung festival. Two student-teachers were able to state more than one story. A total of 57 responses were recorded. After coding, three stories were categorized: 1) Outing story (f= 28, 49%); 2) Woon King story (f= 27, 47%); and Festivity celebration story (f= 2, 4%) (Figure 4.1.9). The Festivity celebration story was found to be the least mentioned when compared to the other three festivals in this present study. Figure 4.1.10 further shows that the response patterns of 'Outing story' and 'Woon King story' were different between the cohorts. The pre-service student-teacher participants seemed to focus more on stories about the traditional context as Woon King was a character in a folk legend. The in-service student-teacher participants may probably be more interested in stories related to young children's real-life experiences (i.e. outing with family).

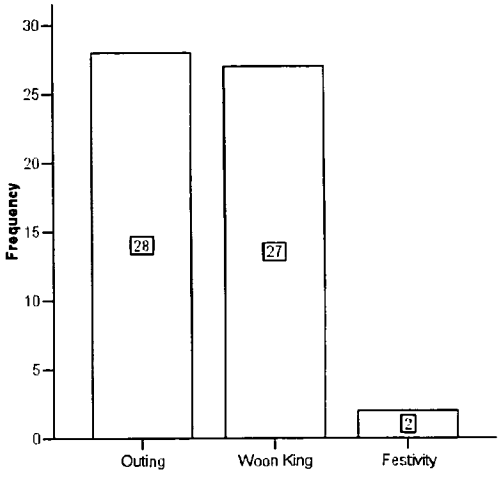


Figure 4.1.9. All student-teacher participants' views of Chung Yeung festival stories

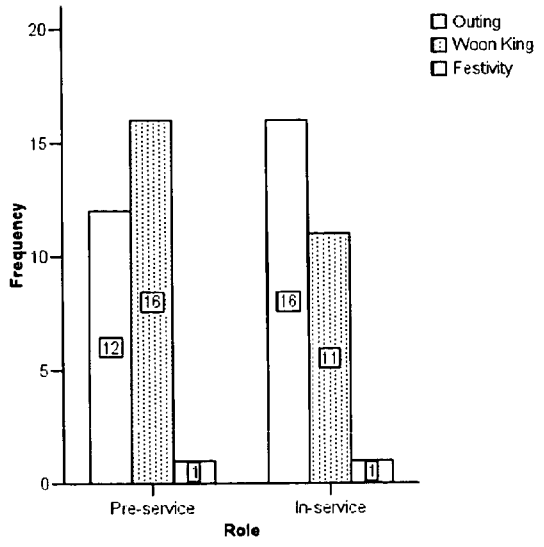


Figure 4.1.10. Pre-service and in-service student- teacher participants' views of Chung Yeung festival stories

Among the responses to the 'Outing Story' ($f = 28$, 83%), which was mentioned by both cohorts, 23 responses were about going to the hill but without further elaboration. The other five respondents were able to elaborate clearly on the activities that people commonly do in the hills during the Chung Yeung festival nowadays in HKSAR (e.g. sweeping the graves). The following table shows some of their responses

Table 4.1.5. Examples of Chung Yeung 'Outing' festival stories

Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
"...visiting the graves of ancestors"
"...tomb sweeping for ancestors"
"...going to the hills"

The 'Woon King' story, similar to the aforementioned 'Outing story', is also a popular story related to the Chung Yeung festival. The name of the legendary character 'Woon King' was stated clearly and correctly by four participants (out of a total of 27 responses for this story). The other participants were able only to mention the legend content (i.e. to go to the hill with family in order to avoid disaster and plague in the village). Indeed, it is still a common practice for Chinese families to have outings and picnics on the festival day in accordance with this legend. Some examples of students' responses are as follows:

Table 4.1.6. Examples of Chung Yeung 'Woon King' festival stories

Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
"...like Woon King, to avoid disasters and go to the hills"
"...avoid the plague"
"...origin of the story on avoiding disaster"

b. Confucian Value

Except for one in-service student-teacher, all participants were able to mention at least one Confucian value behind the aforementioned Chung Yeung festival stories. Three of them mentioned more than one value. As a result, a total of 59 responses were recorded. After coding, as was similar to the Dragon Boat festival, the following five categories emerged: 1) Filial (f= 47, 79.7%); 2) Yi (f= 8, 13.6%); 3) Li (f= 3, 5.1%); and 5) Ren (f= 1, 1.7%) (Figure 4.1.11). Figure 4.1.12 further shows that 'Filial', as similar to the values behind Chinese New Year stories, was viewed by both cohorts as the most common and important Confucian value behind the Chung Yeung festival stories. The values of 'Li' and 'Ren' were stated only by the in-service student-teacher cohort. Table 4.1.7 illustrates some examples of their responses to Confucian values for Chung Yeung festival:

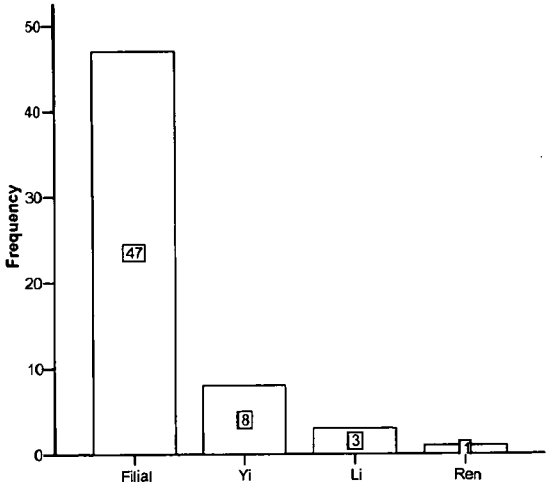


Figure 4.1.11. All student-teacher participants' views of Confucian values behind Chung Yeung festival stories

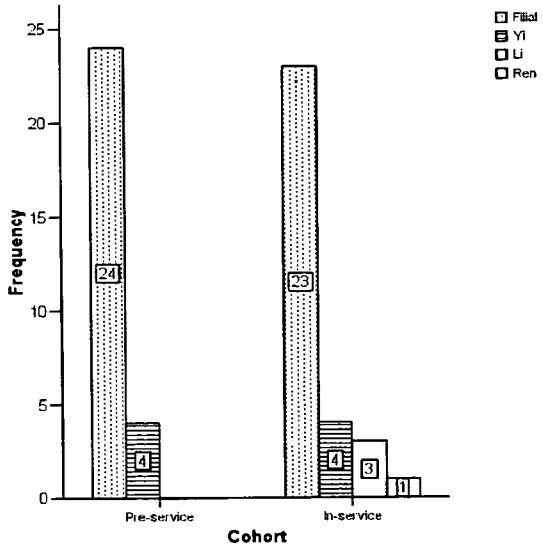


Figure 4.1.12. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' views of Confucian values behind Chung Yeung festival stories

Table 4.1.7. Examples of all student-teacher participants' responses of Confucian values behind Chung Yeung festival stories

Confucian Value	Meaning of the Values in Chung Yeung	Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
Filial	Revering, commemorating and respecting the ancestors, to show love and appreciate the origin of love and roots as symbolised by water. Filial value also includes the deceased and the ancestors in the list of family members, for their commemoration.	*"...revere ancestors"* *"...drink water and remember the source of the water"* *"...a way to show our love to ancestors"* *"...commemorate ancestors, roots, appreciate and be grateful to the source of water"* *"...love for family and commemoration of ancestors"*
Yi	Loyalty, righteousness, cooperation, responsibility and the ability to judge and solve problems	*"...loyalty and righteousness, Yi"* *"...judgement and how to solve problems"* *"...trustworthiness"* *"...cooperation and righteousness"* *"...righteousness and responsibility"*
Li	Appropriate manners	*"...to respect others"*
Ren	Loving and caring relationships	*"...love and care"*

4. Mid-Autumn Festival

a. Story

All 57 participants were able to name at least one story related to the Mid-Autumn festival. Five of them mentioned more than one story. A total of 63 responses was recorded. After coding, four stories were categorized: 1) Sheung Ngor story (f = 40, 63%); 2) Moon Cake story (f = 12, 19%); 3) Festivity celebration story (f = 10, 16%); and 4) Astronaut story (f = 1, 2%) (Figure 4.1.13). Figure 4.1.14 further shows that the response patterns were similar between both cohorts. Only one in-service student-teacher stated the 'Astronaut' story.

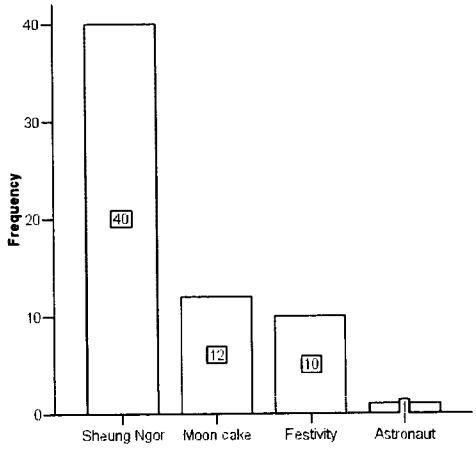


Figure 4.1.13. All student-teacher participants' views of Mid-Autumn festival stories

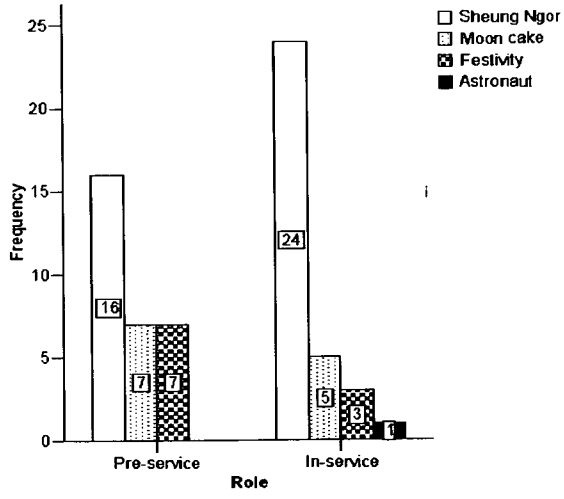


Figure 4.1.14. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' views of Mid-Autumn festival stories

The majority of both cohorts were able to name 'Sheung Ngor'– the main character of the legend correctly and consistently. This consistency may probably be due to the popularity of this traditional legend among the Chinese community. Participants may therefore tend to provide no further elaboration on the details of the story, but only state the name. Participants who named the 'Moon Cake' story were able to mention briefly about the historical background of a revolution in China. Stories of 'Festivity' were concerned mainly about activities that are carried out nowadays on the festival day. Examples of these festivity activities are as follows:

Table 4.1.8. Examples of Mid-Autumn festival stories

Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
"...Chinese eating and drinking culture"
"...eating moon cakes and playing with lanterns"
"...family reunion and festive story"

b. Confucian Values

Except for two student-teacher participants (one pre-service and one in-service student-teacher), all of them were able to mention at least one Confucian value behind the aforementioned Mid-Autumn festival stories. Fifteen of them mentioned even more than one value, resulting in a total of 70 responses being recorded. After coding, the following three categories emerged: 1) Filial (f= 46, 65.7%); 2) Yi (f= 14, 20%); and 3) Ren (f= 10, 14.3%) (Figure 4.1.15). As similar to the New Year and the Chung Yeung Festivals, the value of 'Filial' was the most popular one. Figure 4.1.16 further shows that different patterns of responses were found between both cohorts, particularly on the values of 'Yi' and 'Ren'. The value of 'Ren was mentioned only by the in-service student-teacher cohort.

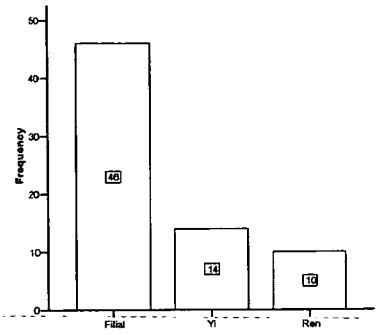


Figure 4.1.15. All student-teacher participants' views of Confucian values behind Mid-Autumn festival stories

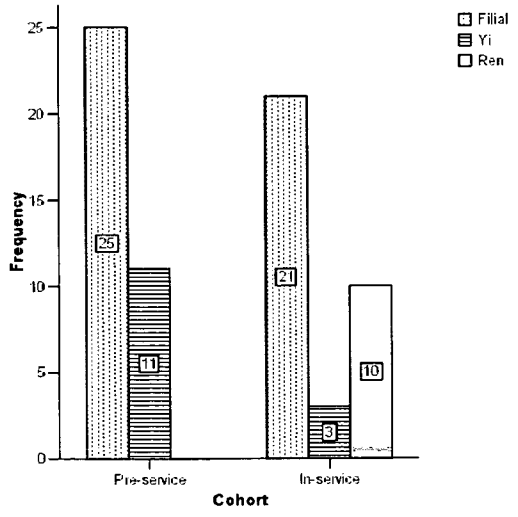


Figure 4.1.16. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' views of Confucian values behind Mid-Autumn festival stories

Table 4.1.9 illustrates some examples of student-teacher participants' responses of Confucian values for Mid-Autumn festival:

Table 4.1.9. Examples of all student-teacher participants' responses of Confucian values behind Mid-Autumn festival stories

Confucian Value	Meaning of the Values in Mid-Autumn	Examples of student-teacher participants' responses
Filial	Harmony in the family with parents and child loving and respecting each other, unity and caring for grandparents and parents	*"...full moon is like when man is like the full moon, both enjoying harmony with parents"* *"...value the chance of being together with parents and child and grandparents and care for them"* *"...family as one, unity, reunion, loving and respecting each other"* *"...spending time with your parents"*
Yi	National unity, loyalty, distinguishing right from wrong, acting from own conscience and honesty	*"...national unity"* *"...understand right from wrong"* *"...act according to own conscience"* *"...Yi - to fight for what one believes in."* *"...honesty and righteousness"*
Ren	An occasion for reunion, the love and joy of being together with friends, enjoying and sharing	*"...Sharing"* *"...love one another"* *"...sharing with others"*

4.2.4. Summary

To summarize the findings of Research Question 1, the majority of student-teacher participants were able to name at least one story behind each of the four cultural festivals

and also to state the Confucian values behind these stories. The most popular story related to each of the four festivals and their inherent Confucian values are summarized in Table 4.1.10.

Table 4.1.10. Summary of the most popular stories and Confucian values of four festivals

Festival	Student-teacher	Story	Confucian Value
Chinese New Year	Pre-service	New Year Monster	Filial
	In-service		
Dragon Boat	Pre-service	Poet Wat Yuen	Yi
	In-service		
Chung Yeung	Pre-service	Woon King	Filial
	In-service	Outing	
Mid-Autumn	Pre-service	Sheung Ngor	Filial
	In-service		

4.2.5. Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the views of both cohorts of student-teachers, it is apparent that they have a sound knowledge of the values of the festivals and their related stories. The results further revealed the prior knowledge of the student-teachers on Confucian values and cultural festivals, which assisted the researcher in forming a culturally sensitive package on CST for the participants to review, organize, activate their knowledge and to connect with the context. Solid prior knowledge may bring forth self-confidence, enabling student-teachers to contribute constructively to their learning and to enjoy the process of teaching children. Based on their personal and cultural experiences, their knowledge was further enhanced by examining pedagogical approaches, which could develop or preserve Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children.

Generally, one popular story was commonly mentioned by student-teachers for each festival, with the exception of Chung Yeung, when two stories were selected. This popularity for a story could be understood because of the number of children's collections of storybooks and songs published on these festivals. With Chung Yeung festival being the least published, the titles of the stories could be categorized into 1) general customs and celebrations, and 2) named after the main heroes (Table 4.1.11). Furthermore, of the children's collections listed in the online catalogue of the HKSAR Public Libraries titles, 'Sheung Ngor' and 'Wat Yuen' were those stories most popularly published (Hong Kong Public Libraries). However, titles of 'Monster' and 'Woon King' had only one

publication each, which may reveal the lower popularity rating of the Chung Yeung festival story.

Table 4.1.11. Children's collection on the four cultural festivals in the online catalogue of the HKSAR Public Libraries

Cultural Festival	Content	Language		Total
		Chinese	English	
Mid-Autumn	General customs	12	3	25
	Sheung Ngor	10	0	
Dragon Boat	General customs	10	4	24
	Wat Yuen	10	0	
Chinese New Year	General customs	18	10	29
	Monster	1	0	
Chung Yeung	General customs	3	0	4
	Woon King	1	0	

These stories chosen by student-teachers were packed with tension or conflict which could hold children's interest (Lukens, 2007), with plots related to fighting the monster, flying to the moon, saving a body and fleeing from disaster, rather than stories about facts, customs and habits that could be less exciting. This choice reflected their prior knowledge on selection of storybooks that should meet children's needs and interests (Lukens, 2007).

Three festivals were represented by 'Filial', showing the importance the Chinese community has for this value, celebrating a special bondage and relationship between parent(s) and child. Despite signs of some communities making changes to the festivals' customs, as in the Chung Yeung festival in PRC; the practice of paying honour to ancestors is still commonly practised in HKSAR, so much so that special traffic arrangements for the Chung Yeung festival are made each year (Citibus & Firstbus, 2007).

Chinese cultural festivals are usually celebrated in accordance with common customs and traditions which are passed across generations and learnt through practice. Such customs, typical of the Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat and Mid-Autumn festivals, are celebrated with lion dances, fire crackers, red packets, dragon boat races, dumplings and moon cakes. However, the celebration of the Chung Yeung festival could vary from tomb-sweeping to family outings in HKSAR, or as in the PRC, it could be a day for the elderly or for sports (蓋國梁, 2004). The diversity and changing of practices for this festival reveal how an ancient tradition changes to meet the present community's needs.

Indeed, some celebration for this festival, like the use of a fragrant herbal sachet and the drinking of chrysanthemum wine, are now seldom seen (蓋國梁, ２００４).

Cultural festivals in a society may be used to celebrate values and customs deemed important, with the purpose of transmitting particular values to the younger members of the culture and reliving customs passed on from ancestors. In HKSAR, festivals are celebrated in designated holidays with streets and shops colourfully decorated and special food specific to the festival available in the markets, and with the local government providing spectacular events such as fireworks displays or lantern displays in parks. Schools may use these events for special learning activities, and kindergartens may organise outings to the flower markets, for games with lanterns and moon cakes, or with dragon boat races and tasting of dumplings. Some participants who are more environmentally conscious, may choose to alert children on social issues such as fire hazards and safety. Similarly, stories and legends related to the cultural festivals could be used in kindergartens to further the children's knowledge of the Chinese culture. However, relevant to the stories and related celebrations would be the Confucian values that teachers should teach young children, thus leading to the findings from the Research Question 2, which are the responses of Confucian experts and professionals to the Confucian values which children are expected to develop and preserve.

4.3. Results of Research Question 2

4.3.1. Research Question

What, if any, are the Confucian values expected to be preserved and developed in kindergartens in HKSAR as expressed by professionals?

4.3.2. Introduction

The sources of data to answer Research Question 2a were from the expressed views of three cohorts of professionals. Specifically they were:

1) Five local experts – two were experts on Confucianism, and three were experts on both early childhood education and Confucianism. All of them were interviewed individually.

2) Six early childhood teacher educators who were invited to express their views in a focus group interview.

3) Fifty seven pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants whose data was collected in two ways. Firstly, all student-teachers were invited to fill in the pre-test questionnaire. Secondly, out of those 57 students, 14 of them (seven pre-service students and seven in-service students) volunteered to participate in one of the two pre-test focus groups (one for the pre-service cohort and one for the in-service cohort).

Table 4.2.1 summarizes the aforementioned three cohorts and their corresponding sources of data for answering the research question. Due to the qualitative nature of the data, presentation of the findings has been based on frequency count (*f*) and percentage (%). Data is presented under each of the three participant cohorts. A collation and comparison of these professionals' viewpoints are also included in the last part of this section.

Table 4.2.1. Source of data for Research Question 2

No.	Cohort		No. of participants		Source of Data
1	Local experts on early childhood and/or Confucianism		5		Individual Interview
2	Teacher educators		6		Focus Group
3	Student-teachers	Pre-service	28	7	Pre-test Focus Group
				28	Pre-test Questionnaire
		In-service	29	7	Pre-test Focus Group
				29	Pre-test Questionnaire

4.3.3. Results

Experts' Responses

Among the five local experts, a total of 10 responses gained at individual interviews were recorded. The responses dealt with the Confucian values that are expected to be preserved or developed in local kindergartens in HKSAR. After coding, five categories of Confucian values emerged: 1) Ren (*f*=4, 40%); 2) Li (*f*=3, 30%); 3) Filial (*f*=2, 20%); and 4) Yi (*f*=1, 10%) (Figure 4.2.1). Figure 4.2.2 shows that experts on both early childhood and Confucianism had a wider response to the variety of values expected for local young children than those experts on Confucianism only. Confucianism experts tended to focus predominantly on the values of 'Ren'.

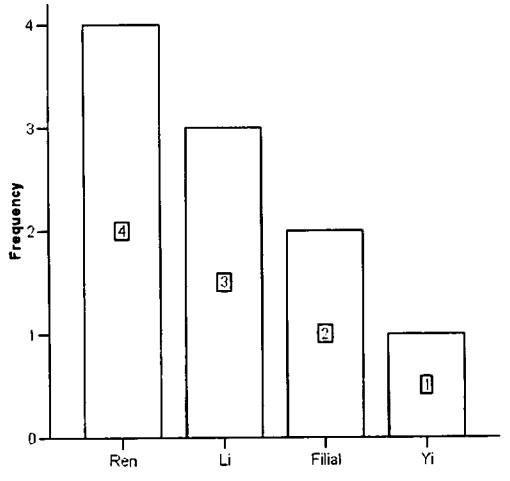


Figure 4.2.1. Frequency of experts' views on Confucian values which were expected to be preserved in local kindergartens in HKSAR



Figure 4.2.2. Experts' expertise and the frequency of their views on Confucian values which were expected to be preserved in local kindergartens in HKSAR

'Ren' was one of the most popular values mentioned by both cohorts of experts. They generally defined this value as love, care and/or positive relationship (or network) with people or objects. 'Ren' is expected to bring altruistic love. Also, experts generally agreed that this value is important for young children as it could be the seed for their future kindness. Therefore this value is expected to be carefully nurtured to maturity. Examples of these experts' views on 'Ren' are as follows:

Table 4.2.2. Examples of experts' views on 'Ren'

Views on 'Ren'
"...the nucleus of Confucian values is Ren. Ren is about love and the attitudes and manners in human relationships...We also named Ren as the source of kindness, guiding humans into developing a noble personality, living in a healthy state of mind, heart and body...We need to carefully nurture Ren and let it grow to maturity" (Expert 3 on early childhood and Confucianism)
"...Adults should teach children to love and care for one another, an altruistic love" (Expert 1 on Confucianism)
"...Ren is the most important concept in Confucianism, and should be introduced first to young children. The word Ren means "good will" and the Chinese character of Ren (仁) means the relationship of two persons...Ren is life bearing. It is a seed that enables life to grow. With good will, a positive relationship will develop, and this will bring more kindness, love, experience and knowledge" (Expert 2 on Confucianism)

The value of 'Li' was the most popular value among experts, both early childhood and Confucianism. All of them consistently used the word 'respect' to define this value.

They generally believed that 'Li' was expressed first through the attitude and manner of respect, courtesy and politeness. Also, they mentioned four basic traits of 'Li': 1) that which should come through appreciation and love; 2) it is about obedience to advice given by authority (in the case of children, this would be parents, teachers or family elders); 3) it is one's responsibility to complete tasks initiated by them; and 4) it is one's self restraint. One expert further suggested that 'Li' is the basis of the value of 'Filial'. The following examples illustrate some of the experts' responses:

Table 4.2.3. Examples of experts' views on 'Li'

Views on 'Li'
"...They have to learn to follow directions, be obedient to advice given by authority, elders, and to respect them" (Expert 4 on early childhood and Confucianism)
"...We encourage children to be responsible and to complete their task or whatever they have started to do" (Expert 3 on early childhood and Confucianism)
"...For Li, we have to suppress one's personal feeling and to show respect to someone higher in seniority than you. This respect stems from your appreciation for this person, for giving you what you have and what you are...The outward expression of Li is courtesy, politeness. These are all acts of Li...The root of filial is respect, and this comes from Li. This respect is the least one can do in filial, and is also the easiest to do, so Li always goes with filial" (Expert 5 on early childhood and Confucianism)
"...We should start by teaching Li, explaining to children why we should respect others, and then we could continue to teach love and filial together. They need to know how to restrain themselves and not to indulge or misbehave, before they could calmly listen and participate in meaningful discussions" (Expert 3 on early childhood and Confucianism)

'Filial' was mentioned by the two experts who were both experts on early childhood and Confucianism. One common expression identified was that this value comes naturally. One of the experts suggested that 'Filial' comes naturally from love because filial is the foundation of all human behaviour and is found in all values. Also, 'Ren' could be the manifestations of 'Filial'. Another common expression used between the above two experts was that 'Filial' should start at home. One of them suggested that the closest relationship was the parent-child relationship and 'Filial' should come naturally from it. This is the value which should be the easiest for children to learn from those who are nearest to them, such as parents. Examples of their responses are:

Table 4.2.4. Examples of experts' views on 'Filial'

Views on 'Filial'
"...In the Chinese society, Filial is the foundation of all human behaviour. Parents are where a child comes from and are also the ones closest to the child and looking after all the needs of their children" (Expert 5 on early childhood and Confucianism)
"...Filial is really an attitude towards others. Filial comes from love, and children should love their parents naturally, automatically. Love is not something which should be forced onto them or something artificially arranged by others" (Expert 3 on early childhood and Confucianism)
"...Filial is found in all values, and Ren is one of the manifestations of Filial. They should be filial to those who are nearest to them, and these should be their parents...Such behaviour starts at home, and they are the small things and words which one should do everyday at home, e.g. greeting their mother a good morning, giving Daddy a cup of water after his work" (Expert 5 on early childhood and Confucianism)

The value of 'Yi' was mentioned by one who was both an early childhood and Confucianism expert. She defined 'Yi' as justice and righteousness. Also, she argued that 'Yi' is as important as 'Li', and it "must be preserved in the kindergarten". It is because this value is actually shown in many festival stories, such as '*in the stories of the new year monster, Wat Yuen, Sheung Ngor, the moon cake uprising, Woon King overcoming the plague, and the customs of hanging decorations and using gongs and fire crackers etc. to ward away the evil spirits.*'

Teacher Educators' Responses

Teacher educators' views were collected in a focus group interview. Six teacher educators participated in the data collection process, and a total of 17 responses were recorded regarding this research question. After coding, two major Confucian values were expressed by them: 1) Li (f= 9; 53%); and Ren (f= 8; 47%). Indeed, this finding is similar to the local experts' views that have already been discussed.

Among teacher educator participants, the value of 'Li' was the most popular value which was expected to be preserved or developed in local kindergartens in HKSAR. They defined this value as mannerism including behaviour such as respect, courtesy and responsibility. Young children are expected to develop orderly behaviour at home, in the early childhood centres, and in the society. Orderly behaviour may include greeting others, tidying up and following instructions. Examples of teacher educators' responses are as follows:

Table 4.2.5. Examples of teacher educators' views on 'Li'

Views on 'Li'
"...Li is most often taught and is the most important value in kindergartens – children have to learn the daily routines, how to take care of themselves, greet teachers in the morning, farewell to parents and teachers, greet teachers and children before meals, thank the helpers and cooks in preparing their food" (Teacher educator 1)
"...They have to be responsible for what they have played with, and are instructed to tidy up afterward. They need to develop their self-discipline...Children learn Li quite easily as these routines are practiced daily" (Teacher educator 2)
"...They have to learn how to behave at home, to love and respect their parents and their elders. Children tend to listen to the instructions of their teachers and so parents welcome the intervention from teachers" (Teacher educator 5)
"...in kindergartens, Li is the most emphasized and taught Confucian value, and teachers have many rules and expectations for children to comply with" (Teacher educator 3)

Among teacher educator participants, the value of 'Ren' was the second most popular value which was expected to be preserved or developed in local kindergartens in HKSAR. The majority of responses (five out of a total of eight responses regarding 'Ren') emphasised the importance of young children's development of social relationships, such as making friends, sharing and caring. Examples of their responses are as follows:

Table 4.2.6. Examples of teacher educators' views on 'Ren'

Views on 'Ren'
"...children have to be taught how to treat one another, how to be friends, how to be sympathetic to those who are not happy, how to share their toys with other children, how to show their love for others and animals" (Teacher educator 4)
"...Celebrating the festivals with children is also very effective and welcomed by children. They learn to share and enjoy a happy relationship with friends" (Teacher educator 1)
"...They have to learn how to make friends and this is very important for them in kindergartens and is useful for their social development and for their future relationship in the society...They should learn how to care for others and to be friends. This is important for their social development" (Teacher educator 6)

Student-Teachers' Responses

All 57 student-teacher participants expressed their views regarding this research question by using two research tools. Firstly, all were invited to answer one dichotomous question (yes/no) and two open-ended questions in the pre-test questionnaire (57 participants). The dichotomous question was concerned with their views regarding whether or not there is a need to preserve Confucian values in kindergartens in HKSAR. The first open-ended question was concerned with their reasons for their dichotomous

choice. The second open-ended question was concerned about which, if any, Confucian values should be preserved and developed.

Secondly, 14 out of 57 student-teacher participants chose to further express their views by participating in one of the two pre-test focus groups (one for the pre-service cohort and one for the in-service cohort). In order to collect more detailed views, they were invited to respond to the open-ended question concerning what, if any, Confucian values they expect to be preserved or developed. The following findings are presented according to these two data sources—questionnaire and focus group.

Pre-test questionnaire

All 57 student-teacher participants indicated in the pre-test questionnaire that there is a need to preserve Confucian values in kindergartens in HKSAR. Except for one in-service student-teacher, all were able to provide at least one reason for their choice of answer. Therefore, there was a total of 70 responses. After coding, two major categories of their reasons emerged: 1) Confucian values may help young children to develop positive moral values ($f = 41$; 59%); and 2) Confucian values have long been part of the Chinese culture ($f = 29$; 41%) (Figure 4.2.3). Figure 4.2.4 further shows that a similar pattern of response occurred in pre-service and in-service student-teacher cohorts.

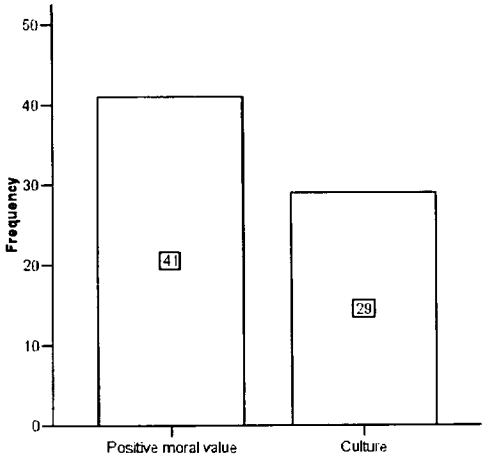


Figure 4.2.3. Reasons to preserve Confucian values expressed by all student–teacher participants

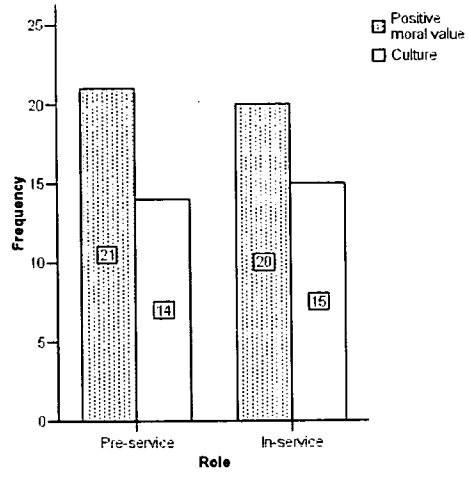


Figure 4.2.4. Reasons to preserve Confucian values expressed by pre-service and in-service student – teacher participants

The majority of student-teacher participants ($f = 41$; 59%) stated that the reason behind the need to preserve Confucian values is that it may help young children to develop positive moral values. These positive moral values would be important for young children's holistic development and would have a life-long impact on them. Also, young children's development of these values may in turn benefit the stability of the society. The following table illustrates some examples of the two student-teacher cohorts' responses.

Table 4.2.7. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' sample responses in the pre-test questionnaires regarding the development of positive moral values as a reason behind the need to preserve Confucian value in local kindergartens

Student-teacher Cohort	Examples of responses
Pre-service	*"...to help them (young children) understand the country and the community which they are living in" (student 6)* *"...to develop a good positive atmosphere which is helpful for child's heart and mind and healthy physical development" (student 7)* *"...good for the child's personal development and will have long lasting impact in his life in future" (student 9)* *"...moral values can help a child adapt to the norms of the society and help to maintain order in the society" (student 22)*
In-service	*"...these values are important and will affect their whole life and give them the ability to solve different problems (student 33)* *"...have good moral values so that human beings can support and accept one another...there is hope in the world and a meaning for life (student 35)* *"...education is very important for children, especially moral education, to prepare them to be good and constructive adults in the society...this will bring a harmonious and prosperous society" (student 39)*

The continuity of culture (f = 29; 41%) was another popular reason behind the response to preserve Confucian values. Student-teacher participants tended to state that Confucian values have long been indivisible with Chinese culture. These values could be regarded as a kind of knowledge and/or philosophy that was left behind by their ancestors. There would be a need to preserve these values and indeed to pass them to the next generation. Table 4.2.8 illustrates some sample responses of the two student-teacher cohorts.

Table 4.2.8. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' sample responses in the pre-test questionnaires regarding the continuity of culture as a reason behind the need to preserve Confucian value in local kindergartens

Student-teacher Cohort	Examples of responses
Pre-service	*"...Confucian values can help a child understand the Chinese custom and traditions" (student 1)* *"...because it is a traditional culture and spirit which should be taught and continued in future generations" (student 8)* *"...know roots of ancestors, know, appreciate and be grateful for the source of water is very important" (student 19)*
In-service	*"...traditional culture needs to be transferred to the next generation to preserve the Chinese thoughts and philosophies" (student 41)* *"...because as a Chinese, we have the responsibility to preserve this Chinese culture and customs, and to pass them to the next generation, especially those words of wisdom that were left to us from our ancestors" (student 45)* *"...children should learn these basic moral values when they are young, especially they should learn to respect and understand their own culture and traditions" (student 57)*

In the pre-test questionnaire, student-teacher participants were further invited to express their views on what, if any, Confucian values they expected to be preserved or developed in local kindergartens. All 57 responses were able to name at least one value, resulting in a total of 137 responses. After coding, five categories of values emerged: 1) Li (f = 46, 33.6%); 2) Ren (f = 37, 27%); 3) Filial (f = 35, 25.5%); and 4) Yi (f = 19, 13.9%) (Figure 4.2.5). This finding is consistent with the teacher educators' views and is similar to the experts' views which were presented earlier. Figure 4.2.6 further shows that different patterns of responses occurred between cohorts. Pre-service student-teacher participants stated that 'Li' would be the most important value to be preserved; while in-service student-teachers opted for 'Ren'. Table 4.2.9 illustrates some sample responses of both cohorts.

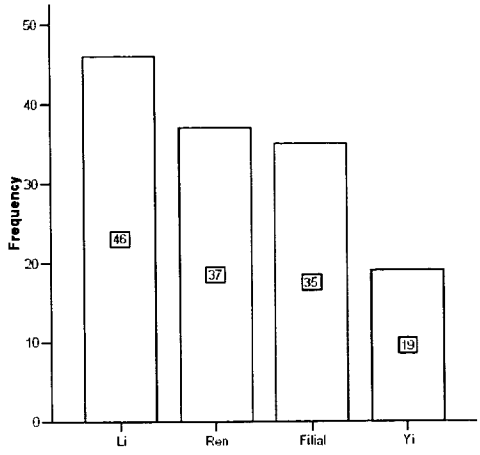


Figure 4.2.5. Confucian values expected to be preserved in kindergartens expressed by all student–teacher participants

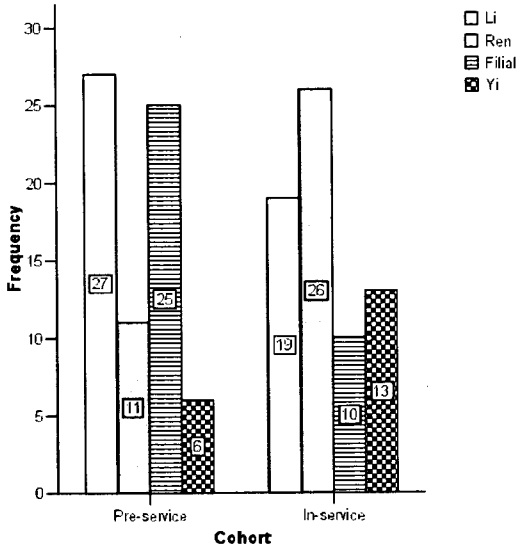


Figure 4.2.6. Confucian values expected to be preserved in kindergartens expressed by pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants

Table 4.2.9. All student-teacher participants' pre-test questionnaires' sample responses of Confucian values to be preserved in kindergartens

Value	Responses
Ren	*"...love and appreciation of self and others" (pre-service student 13)* *"...love of the world" (pre-service student 18)* *"...learn how to love and care for others" (in-service student 30)* *"...love and care for myself and family" (in-service student 35)*
Li	*"...courtesy, obey rules and regulations" (pre-service student 9)* *"...respect teachers and be polite" (pre-service student 17)* *"...respect of others & obedience to people older than yourself" (in-service student 44)* *"...obey rules and regulations, behave appropriately" (in-service student 54)*
Filial	*"...love their (children's) parents" (pre-service student 14)* *"...filial is to care and love elders in the family" (pre-service student 20)*

	"...filial, love and care for parents" (in-service student 42) *"...filial to parents, show your care and obey them" (in-service student 54)*
Yi	*"...loyalty to country" (pre-service student 3)* *"...sense of self-righteousness and accepts own mistakes" (pre-service student 21)* *"...responsibility and know right from wrong" (pre-service student 25)* *"...honesty, righteousness, perseverance and responsibility" (in-service student 52)* *"...responsibility and righteousness" (in-service student 57)*

Pre-Test Focus Group Responses

Seven pre-service student-teachers participated in the pre-test pre-service focus group; and another seven in-service student-teachers participated in the pre-test in-service focus group. They were invited to express their views regarding what, if any, Confucian values should be preserved and developed in HKSAR kindergartens. Each student-teacher participant was able to name at least one value which was expected to be preserved. Therefore, a total of 98 responses were recorded. After coding, four categories of Confucian values emerged: 1) Ren (f=33, 34%); 2) Li (f=27, 28%); 3) Filial (f=20, 20%); and 4) Yi (f=18, 18%). This finding is consistent with the experts' views, and is similar to the teacher educators' views and student-teachers' pre-test questionnaire responses presented earlier.

'Ren' was the most popular value expected to be preserved in the local kindergartens by both cohorts in the pre-test focus group. Pre-service students tended to define this value as a good moral standard for children in order to develop a healthy personality and to learn the principles of social relationships. In addition, this value should be learned when children are young so that such values will become their natural responses to others. In-service student-teachers defined this value as a means for building up harmony and a positive society. Respondents from both focus groups recommended that children should learn the social norms and standards to gain social acceptance. They agreed that this value would be beneficial to the development of a child's love, generosity, compassion, forgiveness, and his/her overall social development. Table 4.2.10 exemplifies some of their responses.

Table 4.2.10. Student-teacher cohorts' sample responses on 'Ren' in the pre-test focus group

Student-teacher Cohort	Samples of responses
Pre-service	*"... love myself and love others as oneself, to cherish and treasure what you have, to be generous, accepting and forgiving"* *"...Children should learn these values when they are young so that this appropriate behaviour will become a natural response in them. Children should learn to be thankful, appreciative, and they will grow up to be happy people"* *"...these are basic principles that guide one's behaviour, and we hope that children's growth will be healthy and complete and this will be a good foundation"*
In-service	*"...This will make the society more harmonious and will have lesser conflicts. They will know how to live together, and accept the same social norms and standards so that they will become socially acceptable persons"* *"...They should learn the appropriate behaviour for treating others, and do loving, merciful and good deeds"* *"... if every child has love and compassion, feels for and understands others, many problems may be solved"*

'Li' was the second popular value that both student-teacher cohorts recommended should be preserved and developed in the local kindergartens in the pre-test focus group. Pre-service student-teachers tended to define 'Li' as a mannerism, that is expressed through respect, courtesy, politeness and observing the rites. It may also be a basic attitude to socialize with others which is important for a child's social development. In-service student-teacher cohorts indicated that 'Li' is the foundation of human behaviour that is likely to affect the child's moral values and influence his/her social relationship. It may be a set of rules and social norms that children should learn so that they will develop good thoughts and good habits, and live together with fewer conflicts. Table 4.2.11 illustrates some of their responses:

Table 4.2.11. Student-teacher cohorts' sample responses on 'Li' in the pre-test focus group

Student-teacher Cohort	Samples of responses
Pre-service	*"... respect people, objects, be courteous and polite and observe rites"* *"...This is very important to children, because it includes the basic method and attitude for treating others. A child's development is like a sheet of white paper. We should colour it carefully with the correct values and principles"* *"...it will affect the child's whole personality development and his social relationship"*
In-service	*"...it is the foundation of human behaviour: it will directly affect the child's moral values and influence his social relationship and appropriate behaviour to treat others"*

	"...Learning this moral value is to learn the rules and norms of the society" *"... these are traditional values passed down by our ancestors. Learning the foundation of moral values will affect the way children treat others and treat the world"*

'Filial' was the third popular value that both student-teacher cohorts recommended should be preserved and developed in the local kindergartens in the pre-test focus group. Pre-service student-teachers generally defined this value as an act of love, respect and obedience to parents and elders in the family. This value is positive. It may become a solid foundation for the child's moral development. It may also be a traditional Chinese value that it is a duty of a child to care for his/her parent(s). Indeed, the in-service student-teacher cohort also focused on children's acts of love and obedience to parent(s) and grandparent(s). Table 4.2.12 illustrates some of their responses.

Table 4.2.12. Student-teacher cohorts' sample responses on 'Filial' in the pre-test focus group

Student-teacher Cohort	Samples of responses
Pre-service	*"... this is a Chinese traditional value, and we should know how to express our love for parents. It is our duty to care for them. We should be filial to parents, seniors, relatives and respect them"* *"...Filial is a correct and just value and should be the first value to be taught"* *"...Children should learn to be filial, so that they will respect, love, care and obey their parents"*
In-service	*"...Filial is the most important value to be learnt because one should learn how to love and treat one's parents, before one knows how to treat others. What you want for yourself, you will want for others"* *"...Children should know how to behave in the correct ways at home, to be obedient and loving to their parents"*

'Yi' was the remaining popular value that both student-teacher cohorts opted to be preserved and developed in the local kindergartens in the pre-test focus group. Pre-service student-teachers described this value as righteousness which allows one to judge right from wrong and also imparts fairness. It may also be related to respect and value for life. In-service student-teacher cohorts tended to define 'Yi' as righteousness, knowing right from wrong and being able to make sensible judgments. It may also be related to one's care for the better good of the society and the environment. Table 4.2.13 presents samples of their views:

Table 4.2.13. Student-teacher cohorts' sample responses on 'Yi' in the pre-test focus group

Student-teacher Cohort	Samples of responses
Pre-service	*"...to know how to judge right and wrong, to be fair and just and righteous"* *"...Yi is important because it is not only knowledge, but is an attitude with principles and guidelines for behaviour to be righteous"* *"...for children to learn how to respect and value life"*
In-service	*"...Yi is righteousness, knowing right from wrong, and this is important"* *"...They should know what are the correct and just things to do. They need to learn how to judge"* *"...They will learn how to value and respect life and live peacefully."*

4.3.4. Summary

Table 4.2.14 lists the first and the second most important values that were mentioned by each cohort and their relevant sources of data. Results show the consistency and similarity found between all three cohorts of professionals.

Table 4.2.14. Comparison of professionals' views on Confucian values to be preserved in kindergartens

Cohort	Sources of data	1st most important value	2nd most important value
Experts	Individual interview	Ren	Li
Teacher educators	Focus Group	Li	Ren
Student-teachers	Pre-test questionnaire	Li	Ren
	Pre-test Focus Group	Ren	Li

4.3.5. Conclusion and Discussion

To conclude, there is a consistency between the four sources of data presented with 'Ren' and 'Li' indicated by all professionals to be the two Confucian values that are expected to be preserved or developed in kindergartens in HKSAR. The views of the experts and the pre-test focus groups agreed, with 'Ren' being the first most important value and followed by 'Li'. The views of the teacher educators' focus group and the pre-test questionnaires of the students were similar, with their choice of 'Li' being first and followed by 'Ren'.

The study confirmed the view that there is a need to preserve cultural values to enable the child to be accepted in the society, especially with the value of 'Ren' helping one to learn how to interact with others and with the value of 'Li' further defining the appropriate behaviour in this interaction. Kahn and Bond, (2001, p. 86) defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind" and a "mental programming throughout our life". This process of facilitating follows a set of values and behaviour, and requires schools and parents/caregivers to have the skills to teach and to create a supportive social environment in which the child may learn and practise comfortably.

As discussed earlier (p. 94), one of the popular views of the student-teachers was that Confucian values and customs, being positive and reflecting good moral values, would possibly bring forth harmony in society. This echoed explanations by modern Confucian scholars that "harmonious human relations" is one of the chief characteristics of the Confucian society (Dirlik, 1995, p. 246). Dirlik also emphasized "the collectivity against selfish desire", and a "priority given to the group over individual interest, beginning with the family and extending to social life in general". Harmony is highly valued in both China (PRC) and in HKSAR. The premier of PRC, Wen Jiabao in his report to the National People's Congress (2005), stated that the country has to "actively develop our society and foster social harmony" (Ho & Chan, 2007, p. 2), and this message was further reiterated by the Vice President (PRC) Zeng Qinghong to HKSAR that "harmony should be the basis of stability and prosperity" (Ho & Chan, 2007, p. 2). Subsequently, the Chief Executive of HKSAR, Donald Tsang laid out fostering social harmony as one of the three major objectives in his policy address in 2005 (Ho & Chan, 2007). However, people in HKSAR, living in a prosperous cosmopolitan city, tend to put personal gains as a priority, ignoring the importance of mutual aid and trust, preventing the successful establishment of love and social harmony (Ho & Chan, 2007, p. 18). This calls for a need to develop in young children this altruistic love as represented by the Confucian value of 'Ren'. The present study confirmed that through storytelling, children understood this harmony caring for their families, as well as extending it to their friends and to the community at large. Confucianism maintains social harmony and order as the highest ideal and Confucius advocated a golden mean (Ho & Chan, 2007), that is a moderation and balance in all things.

Another view, which the student-teachers expressed, was the need for children to know their roots and be grateful for what they had. Gratefulness and appreciation calls for

respect for the family and forefathers, and thus the emphasis on the value of 'Li' and 'Filial'. The source of oneself is the parents and grandparents, which is the genealogy of the family. The value of 'Filial' defines for each child and parents the responsibilities, and the value of 'Li' further defines the manner of interacting within these relationships. Another meaning of roots described by student-teachers was the 'source of water', that is, the source which brings forth the Chinese culture, showing a recognition for history and ancient philosophies, and of how life and meaning evolved. These views follow the observation made by Scarborough (1998, pp. 22-23) that "Chinese culture is paternal in nature, age is accorded with wisdom and elders are the primary source of knowledge and guidance, and hence respect and gratitude for the elders is a behaviour expected".

The main characteristics of the modern age interpretation of Confucian values, according to Kahn and Bergy, (cited by Dirlik, 1995, p. 246) are the high evaluation of education, the priority of group over individual intentions and an emphasis on harmonious human relations. These characteristics bring forth a need for teachers to help young children learn and adapt the ancient values to the modern age, with anemphasis on 'Ren', 'Li' and 'Filial' values, starting from family and extending to others in the community. The findings noted here for Research Question 2 lead directly into a consideration of the findings of Research Question 3, which considers the responses of children to the student-teachers' efforts to preserve and develop Confucian values through story projects.

4.4. Results of Research Question 3

4.4.1. Research Question

How do kindergarten-aged children respond to the Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) designed to preserve Confucian values?

4.4.2. Introduction

To seek answers to Research Question 3, the following three sources of data collection were used:

1. *Non-participant observation reports of 57 student-teacher participants.* All 57 student-teachers were divided into two groups according to their study mode (i.e. pre-service or in-service) with the pre-service group assigned to the Chinese New Year and the Dragon Boat festival to align with their fieldwork schedules and the occurrence of the festivals (January to May) and with the in-service group assigned to the Chung Yeung and the Mid-Autumn festival also to align with their fieldwork schedules and occurrence of the festivals (early October to late October). The student-teachers in each group had random assignment of one of the two festivals (Table 4.3.1). Student-teachers who were grouped into the same festival were further arranged into groups of two or three, in order to conduct a 30-minute non-participant observation of their partners' children in-class during the implementation of the Confucian Values Storytelling Project (CSP). A standardized observation guideline (see Appendix 3) was designed by the researcher, and was given to each student-teacher participant during the Confucian Values Storytelling Training (CST) with necessary guidelines and trainings (refer to Methodology Chapter on p. 47 for training details). Student-teacher participants were requested to use the observation form to record young children's verbal and physical responses during the implementation of the CSP. The submission of the observation report to the researcher was within one week after the implementation of the CSP. At the end of the research process, a total of 57 reports were collected (i.e. 100% response rate).

Table 4.3.1. Distribution of student-teacher participants for the four festivals

Festival	Student-teacher Cohort	Number of participant
Chinese New Year	Pre-service	15
Dragon Boat		13
Chung Yeung	In-service	14
Mid-Autumn		15

2. *Reflective report of 57 student-teacher participants*. Student-teachers were asked to submit a reflective report within two weeks after their implementations of the CSP. There was no restricted format for the report. Student-teachers were asked to focus on experiences of both CST and CSP – such as one's knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions, behaviours and/or children's responses. Information related to children's responses was extracted, categorized and coded for the purpose of answering this present research question. At the end of the research process, a total of 57 reports were collected (i.e. 100% response rate).

3. *Artefacts of young children*. A drawing table was set up in each student-teacher participant's child care centre/kindergarten during the CSP period (i.e. one week after the festival-story was told). Young children were encouraged to express their feelings towards the festival-stories by using papers and coloured pencils. A drawing table was also an alternative means for children who preferred to express their feelings by non-verbal or non-physical communication. Student-teacher participants collected the drawings given voluntarily by the children and recorded their verbal responses, if any, to a standard question directed to the child, "Would you like to tell me what you have drawn?" and submitted children's artefacts to the researcher for documentation. Art works were then returned to children afterward.

Data from the aforementioned three sources is presented according to the four festivals – 1) New Year; 2) Dragon Boat; 3) Chung Yeung; and 4) Mid-Autumn. Due to the qualitative nature of the data, the presentation of the following findings will be based on frequency count (*f*) and percentage (%). A collation and comparison of the above three sources of data according to each festival, and also a summary of findings of both Research Question 2 and 3 are presented in the last part of this section.

4.4.3. Results

1) Chinese New Year

Non-Participant Observation Reports

Fifteen non-participants observation reports by pre-service student-teachers regarding the CSP of the Chinese New Year were collected (i.e. 100% response rate). A total of 133 records regarding children's responses to the Chinese New Year story were documented. After coding, six categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Filial (f= 11, 8.3%); 2) Li (f= 32, 24.1%); 3) Ren (f= 33, 24.8%); 4) Zhi (f= 29, 21.8%); and 5) Yi (f= 28, 21.1%) (Figure 4.3.1).

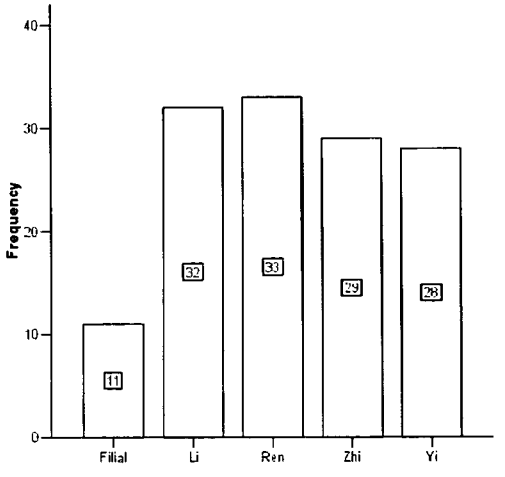


Figure 4.3.1. Frequency of children's responses to Chinese New Year festival stories according to pre-service student-teachers' non-participant observation reports.

The above figure shows that children's responses related to the value of 'Ren' were the most popular categories (f= 33, 24.8%) during the implementation of the CSP using Chinese New Year festival stories. Children expressed the value of 'Ren' by mentioning some cultural practices to celebrate the Chinese New Year with family and relatives, such as New Year Eve's family dinner, preparation of special New Year food, decoration of the home, and shopping in the annual New Year flower markets. Also, children showed their care and love of others by mentioning the good feeling of being with friends and family during the New Year days. In addition, some children were concerned about the safety of the 'cat' – one of the characters in the 12-animal New Year Story (see Appendix 15). The following examples illustrate some of their responses:

Table 4.3.2. Examples of children's responses of 'Ren' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses of 'Ren'
"...New Year Eve's dinner must be eaten with the whole family and everyone must be home. You can go to grandma's home for this meal, for this will make her happier" (4-year-old boy)
"...I went with my daddy and mommy to the New Year flower markets. There were many New Year flowers" (5-year-old girl)
"...This is the whole family cleaning the house in preparation for the New Year. These are the New Year couplets; children are playing with fire crackers, and receiving red packets from their daddy and mommy" (5-year-old boy)
"...I like Chinese New Year because I can say good wishes to our friends and relatives...I am very happy when I see them...I will play with my cousins in my uncle's home. I will share my toys with them" (4-year-old girl)
"...The cat (in the 12 animals' story) is falling into the river! It doesn't know how to swim! It will drown!" (4-year-old girl)
"...if I am the cat, I will forgive the mouse even though he'd cheated me" (5-year-old girl)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Li' (f = 32, 24.1%) was the second popular category during the implementation of the CSP using Chinese New Year stories. Children expressed the value of 'Li' by mentioning the expected appropriate manners during the festival, such as greetings to adults and appreciation of the 'red packet' (i.e. a customary symbol to put money into a red packet and then give it to children and unmarried adults for good luck and good health). Also, children talked about some common cultural practices during the Chinese New Year day, such as offering tea to grandparents and the writing of spring couplets (i.e. black or gold words printed on red paper) for others. Examples of children's responses to 'Li' are as follows:

Table 4.3.3. Examples of children's responses on 'Li' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses on 'Li'
"...You have to say 'kung hei fat choy' (i.e. Happy New Year) and 'wish you good health'... When they give me the red packet money, I must say thank you. We cannot open them. Mommy said that it is not polite" (4-year-old boy)
"...I have to kneel down and offer tea to my grandfather and grandmother, and wish them good health" (5-year-old girl)
"...I will give people my best wishes and blessings when I see them in Chinese New Year. You have to put your hands together like this (He demonstrated the act to others)" (4-year-old boy)
"...We cannot sweep the floor on new year's day because this means that good luck will be swept away then" (5-year-old girl)
"...I know how to write the word "吉" (i.e. good luck) on red paper which we use for Chinese New Year" (5-year-old boy)
"...We will have to wear new clothes, and they should be red. This is for good luck" (5-year-old girl)

Children's responses related to 'Zhi' (f = 29, 21.8%) was the third popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chinese New Year stories. Responses of 'Zhi' denote children's discussions of story content, associations of stories to prior knowledge, and also imaginative response. With regard to the Chinese New Year stories, children talked about their prior knowledge of the story characters (e.g. the appearance of a dragon); their understanding of the relationship between traditional stories and modern practices (e.g. 2007 was the Year of the Pig); their observations of daily life (e.g. lion dances and the big drums); and their creativity (e.g. the possibility of including other animals in the 12-animal story). Examples of children's cognitive responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.4. Examples of children's responses to 'Zhi' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses to 'Zhi'
"...Dragon is very long...its body looks like a snake...The dragon head has two very long horns and beard" (4-year-old boy)
"...This is the year of the dog...Each year has an animal and there are 12 animals in total" (5-year-old girl)
"...I saw pictures of the 'Door Gods' (i.e. two paintings of warriors pasted on a door which was commonly used by the Chinese as good luck) in Yunnan (a province in northern China), when I went travelling with my parents" (5-year-old boy)
"...We can use a black paper and a white paper to draw two 'Door Gods'" (5-year-old girl)
"...Why are there only 12 animals?...Can we include cat, crocodile, lion and fox? They can also run very fast" (4-year-old boy)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' (f = 28, 21.1%) was the fourth popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chinese New Year stories. This category of responses was mainly related to the traditional New Year Monster story (see Appendix 16). Children tended to talk about possible ways to protect their families and friends against the Monster, such as the use of 'Kung Fu' (i.e. Chinese martial arts), fire crackers, or even a special request to superman or daddy for help. In addition, children discussed the concept of 'right or wrong', regarding the illegality of shooting fire crackers in HKSAR and the inappropriateness of locking the New Year Monster in a cage. Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.5. Examples of children's responses to 'Yi' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses to 'Yi'
"...I am not afraid of the New Year monster. I can fight it, using my fist. I know kung fu" (5-year-old boy)
"... (if the New Year monster came and scared people), I will ask my daddy to help them" (4-year-old girl)
"...We can protect the house with these red spring couplets, and the monster will not enter as it is afraid of red colour" (4-year-old boy)
"...Let's ask superman to help...Jesus will come to help too" (5-year-old girl)
"...It is not allowed to play with fire crackers in HKSAR. It will cause fires and can burn houses or people may get hurt...It is dangerous because of the fire. We may hurt ourselves too" (5-year-old girl)
"...(regarding the 12-animal story), It is bad to trick others...We should not hit others...We should not tell lies" (4-year-old girl)
"...we should not lock the (New Year) monster in cages nor poison the monster...because these are very cruel ways to treat animals" (5-year-old boy)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Filial' (f = 11, 8.3%) was the least popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chinese New Year stories. They mentioned possible ways to show their love and affection to their parents (e.g. giving them kisses and offering tea to them). Indeed, Chinese New Year has long been commonly regarded as a festival which emphasizes the value of filial and family. The following examples illustrate some of their responses:

Table 4.3.6. Examples of children's responses to 'Filial' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses to 'Filial'
"...I will give my daddy and mommy melon seeds and candies (i.e. traditional New Year food), and I will give them a kiss too" (4-year-old girl)
"...I will offer tea to my daddy and mommy" (5-year-old boy)
"...Daddy and mommy will bring me to visit my grandparents and to wish them good health. We do this every year...Daddy and mommy love this" (4-year-old boy)
"...We celebrate this with daddy and mommy and we go to granny's home to wish her happy New Year. She is most happy to see me" (5-year-old girl)
"...I have helped mom with the New Year's Eve sweeping at home. We need to buy many new things – new toothbrush, new brooms, new slippers, new shoes, new clothes" (4-year-old girl)

Reflective Reports

Fifteen reflective reports by pre-service student-teachers regarding CSP of the Chinese New Year were collected (i.e. 100% response rate). A total of 91 records regarding children's responses to the Chinese New Year story were documented. After coding, six categories of children's responses emerged:

1) Filial (*f* = 5, 5.5%); 2) Li (*f* = 22, 24.2%); 3) Ren (*f* = 35, 38.5%); 4) Zhi (*f* = 23, 25.3%); and 5) Yi (*f* = 6, 6.6%) (Figure 4.3.2).

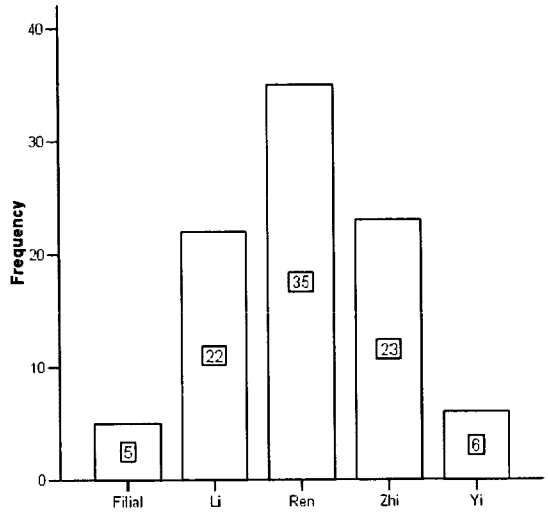


Figure 4.3.2. Frequency of children's responses to Chinese New Year festival stories according to all student-teacher participants' reflective reports

The above figure shows that children's responses related to the value of 'Ren' (*f*=35, 38.5%) was the most popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chinese New Year stories. This finding is similar to the analysis of the observation reports regarding the same festival presented on p. 102. Children demonstrated the value of 'Ren' by showing their love and care of people (e.g. concerned for the safety of villagers when the New Year Monster attacked) and to animals (e.g. concerned for the 'dog' that could not swim in the New Year 12-animal story). Also, children talked about forgiveness and love (e.g. to forgive the 'mouse' in the New Year 12-animal story although it has cheated the 'cat'). The following extracts from pre-service student-teachers' reflective reports illustrate some examples of children's responses:

Table 4.3.7. Examples of children's responses to 'Ren' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses to 'Ren'
"...They were very concerned when each animal had to cross the river, one said, "The dog didn't know how to swim, how could he cross the river? Why should you let him into the race?" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 10)
"...They talked about visiting their relatives and offering them greetings for good health and happiness, and sharing food with friends who came to visit them" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 6)
"...They talked about how one should support and help your neighbours when they were in trouble. Together they fought away the monster" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 8)

"...One episode in the story was about why the cat was always catching the mouse, and the children were very interested in it. After that, they talked about friends and enemies, and that they would forgive their enemies and be friends. I was quite amazed with their readiness to forgive and care for others" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 9)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Zhi' (f = 23, 25.3%) was the second popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chinese New Year stories. Responses to 'Zhi' here denote children's application of prior knowledge, logical thinking and creativity. Children were interested to know the existence of the New Year Monster and the fairness of choosing animals into the race of the 12 animals. They also used their prior knowledge (e.g. crocodile and snake) to interpret some new information (e.g. dragon). One child also demonstrated logical thinking by answering teacher's question about New Year's Eve. The following examples illustrate some of their responses:

Table 4.3.8. Examples of children's responses to 'Zhi' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses to 'Zhi'
"...When I asked them, what is the day before the first day of the new year, I was hoping to get the answer of 'New Year's Eve', but to my surprise, the answer I got was 'last night'"(Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 11)
"...Their (children's) questions were most interesting to me e.g. "the crocodile could swim very fast and could run very fast, why was he not in this race?" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 6)
"...They did not know what a dragon looked like, and they would say that it was a crocodile, tiger, snake or a lion" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 18)
"...The children were very curious, and asked if there were any New Year monster now, or why not...The children were very interested in the ways of life of people in the past, and were also curious about the customs and manners then"(Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 15)
"...From their response to my questions, I'd realised that they had a good memory, and could remember the names of the 12 animals, and could recall them in the correct sequence" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 18)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Li' (f = 22, 24.2%) was the third popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chinese New Year stories. Children showed this value mainly by mentioning some traditional and cultural manners during the Chinese New Year festival. Their responses were generally based on their personal experiences even though they may not have a clear understanding of the meaning behind those manners. Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.9. Examples of children's responses to 'Li' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses to 'Li'
"...The children knew that they should wish their elders good health during this time, but it seems that they didn't know the reasons behind" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 23)
"...They'd talked about visiting friends and relatives to wish them good health for the New Year, and they'd shared about the different forms of greetings that they had to use on these visits" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 20)
"...They had to practice the right manners and were aware of what not to do or what not to say in this festival... My story was about these manners when visiting friends during the New Year...The children spontaneously responded, they'd even invented more details to the story, e.g. giving the red packets to the people who came to visit" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 20)
"...After the story, when I asked the children what would they do in the New Year, one immediately said, "Kung Hei Fat Choy" (i.e. Happy New Year), which was what one would usually greet others with during the new year"(Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 26)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' (f = 6, 6.6%) was the fourth popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chinese New Year stories. Children showed this value mainly by suggesting ways to protect their families and friends from the monster. They mentioned different ways to attack that imaginative monster. Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.10. Examples of children's responses to 'Yi' in Chinese New Year stories

Responses to 'Yi'
"...Some children suggested locking the monster in cages, and some suggested poisoning the monster. However, some responded and said that such suggestions were very cruel ways to treat animals...another child wanted to use fire crackers to scare away the monster, so that it would not attack his home" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 25)
"...One child drew a picture of his whole family fought the monster together and defeating it...another child said that his whole family fighting the monster together and defeated it" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 26)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Filial' (f = 5, 5.5%) was the fourth popular category during the implementation of the CSP using Chinese New Year stories. Children showed this value mainly by mentioning times spent with their family. Their responses were also based on their personal experiences. Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.11. Examples of children's responses to 'Filial' in Chinese New Year stories

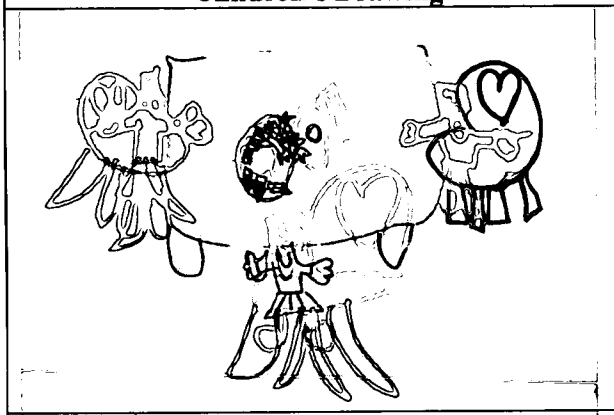
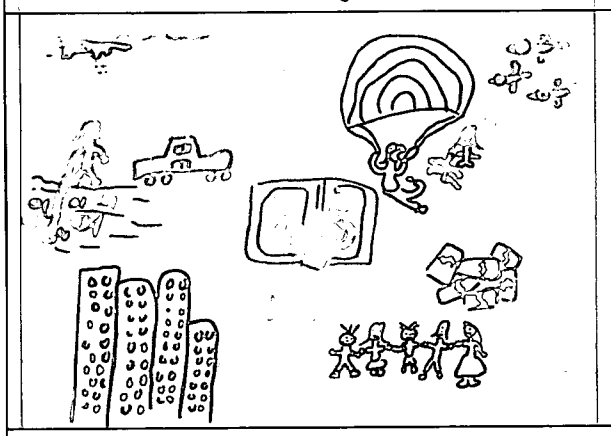
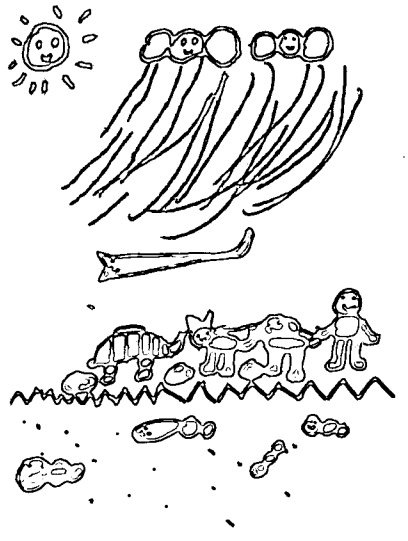
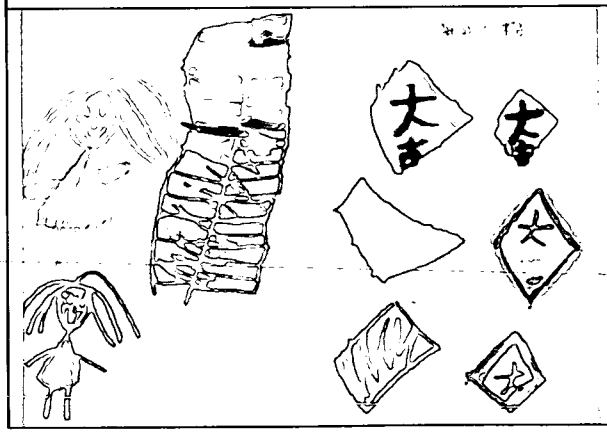
Responses to 'Filial'
"...They'd showed the values of filial to parents, caring, loving others, and respect for elders during their conversations" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 24)
"...some children mentioned going with their family to China, to visit their relatives there; some talked about greeting others and getting red packets, eating the family reunion dinner on New Year's Eve etc. All these revealed to me that they had a strong family concept, family ties and love and care for their parents and others. New year is a time for the whole family to enjoy together" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 26)

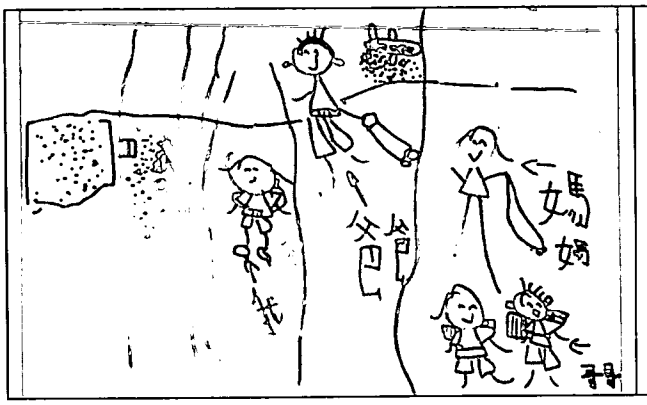
Children's Artefacts

Forty-eight drawings by children after the Chinese New Year CSP were collected and after coding, a total of 51 records regarding children's non-verbal responses to the Chinese New Year story were documented. Three categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Li (f= 3, 6%); 2) Ren (f= 37, 72%); and 3) Yi (f= 11, 22%).The findings show the values of 'Ren' and 'Yi' were the most popular categories of children's responses after the implementation of CSP by using Chinese New Year festival stories.

Children expressed the value of 'Ren' by drawing themselves with their family and friends, all with smiling faces, celebrating the festival with food and Chinese New Year decorations such as firecrackers and spring couplets and flowers. These were pictures of children's relationship with others, for example, a child with parents cleaning and decorating their home; eating happily with their family; going to the airport with their luggage, playing with friends. One drew the child together with different animals, showing that all could be friends and one child expressed her wish to buy a new house with her red packet money. Examples of their drawings (Table 4.3.12) are as follows:

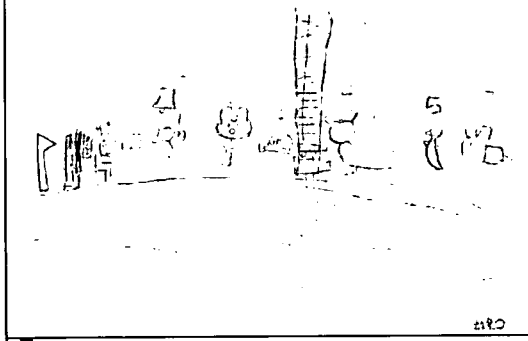
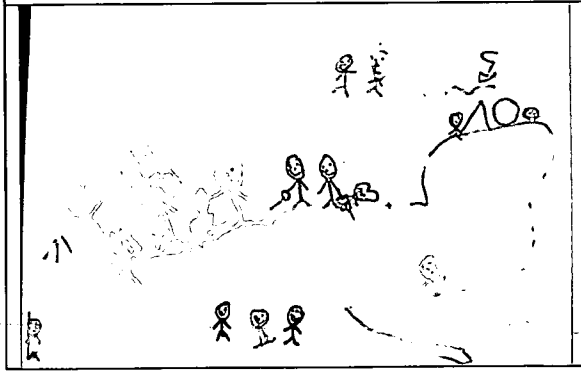
Table 4.3.12. Children's artefacts expressing 'Ren'

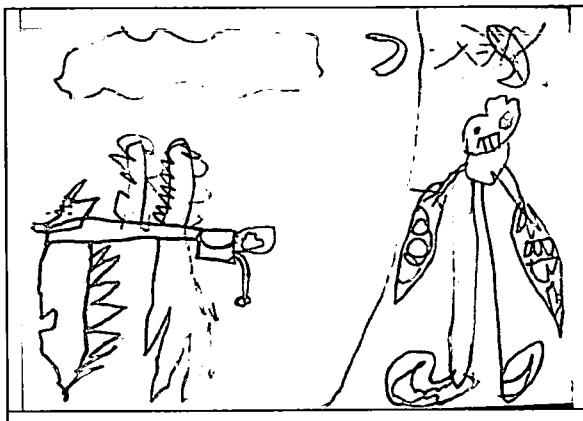
Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"...I was with dad and mom, sitting on chairs, with happy faces and open arms on chairs with a big heart at the table with 2 round Chinese New Year delicacy containers filled with assortment of food"*
	*"... My mother was busy cleaning the window and I was holding hands with my brothers and sisters. With the red packets money, I wish to buy a new house and a new car, so that we can go fishing"*
	*"...The animals (dog, rabbit, and cow) were holding hands with smiling faces. The last in the line was me, smiling. On the ground were smiling worms eating grass and pebbles. The clouds above have happy faces and the wind were blowing down It was a bright sunny day"*
	*"I was helping mother and we were decorating our home with strings of red fire crackers and 6 spring couplets with the words "Dai Gut (good luck)"*

	*"... We were flying out for a holiday. My mother was holding a baggage on wheels, and my two elder brothers had back packs, and my father was also holding a baggage on wheels. I had a back pack too. We were waiting in front of the counter in the airport. In the background is an airplane, with people outside the plane"*

The value of 'Yi' was the second most commonly found theme in the children's drawings. They expressed the value of 'Yi' by drawing themselves protecting their family and friends against the monster, by fighting them with machine guns, swords and rocks or by sending the legendary 'door gods' which they heard from the Chinese New Year stories. One child created a mechanism to monitor the race of the animals. Children generally expressed that it was not fair when they realised that the cat in the 12 animals' story, was cheated out of her first position and out of the race. Examples of these drawings (Table 4.3.13) are as follows:

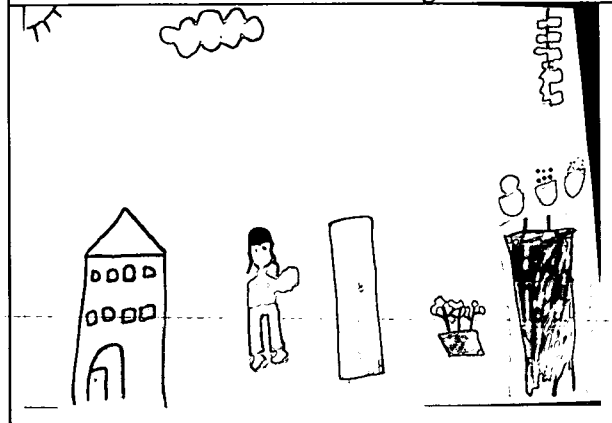
Table 4.3.13. Children's artefacts expressing 'Yi'

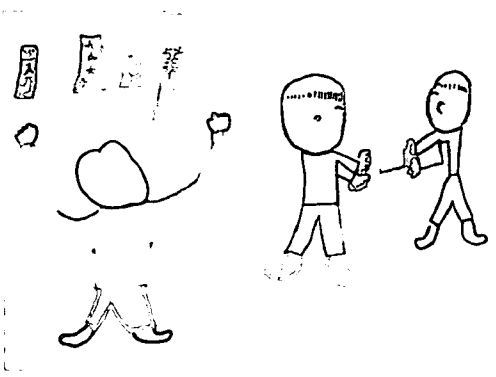
Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"... The emperor was sleeping next to the traffic lights. The winner has to ring the bell in front to awake the emperor. The first was the mouse, followed by the rabbit, the turtle. Each has to pass through the tall washing machine to wash their furs before going to the emperor"*
	*"... I was throwing rocks at the monster, while my brother was standing next to the monster ready to fight, and mother was holding a sword pointing at the monster on the other side. My cousin was holding a big piece of rock ready to throw at the monster. Surrounding them were many people, some throwing rocks at them and some hiding behind a big rock"*

	*"...In the dark (when there was no moon) was a big monster with pair of red eyes, large teeth, sharp hands and big feet. In the brighter side (where there were clouds and the moon) was a big machine gun pointing at the monster, ready to attack it"*
	*"...I drew a colourful "door god" with long black beard and a pair of big black eyes, wearing his traditional Chinese armour and helmet and a big sword hanging by his side ready to protect the people"*

The value of 'Li' was the least occurrence in the drawings. Children expressed this value by drawing their understanding of the expected behaviour in accordance with the rites of the Chinese New Year, such as cupping their hands to wish people happy new year; or to receive the red packets money from elders. Examples of these drawings (Table 4.3.14) are as follows:

Table 4.3.14. Children's artefacts expressing 'Li'

Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"... I had both hands cupped together, to make the sign of wishing someone happy new year. There were spring couplet of "Good luck and good fortune" and plum blossoms and fire crackers at home during the Chinese New Year"*

	*"... I had to receive red packet money from father with both hands and say some best wishes for my father. Mother was hanging the spring couplets"*

2) Dragon Boat Festival

Non-Participant Observation Reports

Thirteen non-participants observation reports by pre-service student-teachers regarding the CSP of the Dragon Boat festival were collected (i.e. response rate = 100%). A total of 147 records regarding children's responses to the Dragon Boat story was documented. After coding, five categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Filial (f= 6, 4.1%); 2) Ren (f=44, 29.9%); 3) Zhi (f= 15, 10.2%); and 4) Yi (f= 82, 55.8%) (Figure 4.3.3). The category of 'Li' was not recorded as compared to the findings of the non-participants observation reports of Chinese New Year festival which was presented earlier on p. 102.

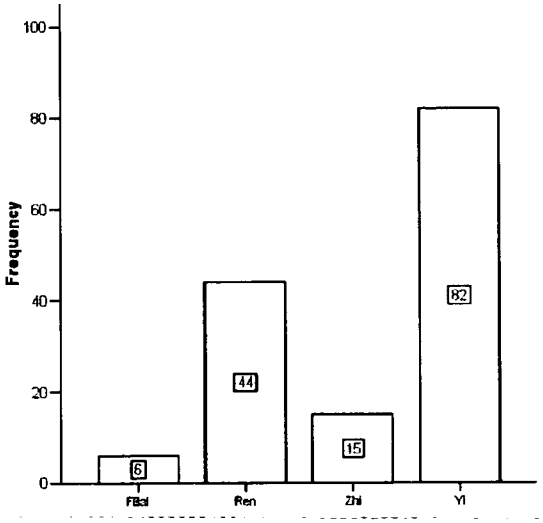


Figure 4.3.3. Frequency of children's responses to Dragon Boat festival stories according to pre-service student-teachers' non-participant observation reports

Children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' (f = 82, 55.8%) was the most popular category during the implementation of the CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories (see Appendix 17). Children tended to mention righteousness (e.g. the emperor's incorrect judgement in Poet Wat Yuen story). Also, they talked about readiness to help others (e.g. to rescue the Poet Wat Yuen out of the river) and about the value of life (e.g. the inappropriateness of Poet Wat Yuen's suicide). Some examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.15. Examples of children's responses to 'Yi' in Dragon Boat stories

Expressions to 'Yi'
"...The emperor is not good, because he only listened to the bad people who wanted to hurt Wat Yuen. But Wat Yuen didn't hurt them back" (5-year-old girl)
"...Even if he (Poet Wat Yuen) couldn't find a way out, he still should not end his precious life" (5-year-old girl)
"...Life is a gift from God and we should take good care of it. It will make the family very sorrowful and pained if one takes away his own life" (5-year-old girl)
"...This is not correct. He (Poet Wat Yuen) could talk to Jesus when he was unhappy" (5-year-old boy)
"...I will jump into the water to save him (Poet Wat Yuen). If I don't know how to swim, I can row a boat to save him... I will continue to search till I find his body" (5-year-old girl)
"...Even though a person had done bad things, if he'd previously done good things, so he is still a good person" (4-year-old boy)
"...I will use a submarine, a mechanical fish detector to search for Wat Yuen, and to use a train under the sea to travel and search for his body" (4-year-old boy)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Ren' (f = 44, 29.9%) was the second most popular response category during the implementation of CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories. Children expressed their love and care to Poet Wat Yuen (e.g. his safety in the river). In addition, a child was also concerned about her pet's loneliness when the whole family went out for the festival celebration. Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.16. Examples of children's responses to 'Ren' in Dragon Boat stories

Responses to 'Ren'
"...I'll celebrate with my daddy and mommy...but we have a dog at home, and someone has to stay behind to look after him" (4-year-old girl)
"...I am worried about Wat Yuen, if he is still there in the water, will the dragon boats hit him during the races? They can hurt him very easily with so many boats on the river" (5-year-old girl)
"...When others are not happy, you should talk to them and show that you care for them, and tell them not to think of stupid things" (5-year-old girl)
"...I can ask them questions like: why are you not happy? What has happened to you? Are you alright? What's the matter? Can I help you?" (5-year-old boy)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Zhi' (f = 15, 10.2%) was the third most popular category during the implementation of CSP. Responses to 'Zhi' here denote children's application of prior knowledge (e.g. appearance of dragon boats) and the use of logical reasoning (e.g. effectiveness of saving Poet Wat Yuen's body by feeding dumplings to the fish). In addition, children were able to recall their personal experiences of the festival (e.g. different types of dumplings). Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.17. Examples of children's responses to 'Zhi' in Dragon Boat stories

Responses to 'Zhi'
"...The front of the dragon boat looks like the Chinese dragon. I would like to row the dragon boat too" (5-year-old girl)
"...I don't like the yellow dumpling, but I like the red bean dumplings. It tastes better with some sugar added" (45-year-old girl)
"...Dumplings are salty, made with meat and sticky rice, but are very big... I can only eat half of it. Yummy...my mouth is watering already" (5-year-old boy)
"...The fish don't eat rice, so it is useless to throw dumplings to them...but fish eat bread...fish eat special food in boxes" (4-year-old boy)
"...Only big fish can eat a human being... No, even small fish can eat a human, by eating one mouthful at a time" (4-year-old girl)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Filial' (f = 6, 4.1%) was the least popular category during the implementation of CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories. They mentioned possible ways to show their love and affection for their parents during the festival. They tended to mention the sharing of festival food with their parents as a way to please them. Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.18. Examples of children's responses to 'Filial' in Dragon Boat stories

Responses to 'Filial'
"...I will save my pocket money and buy dumplings that mother likes and give them to her" (5-year-old boy)
"...I will be obedient and listen to my mother...mother always says that I am a good girl" (4-year-old girl)
"...My mother only wants me to be a nice girl, and that is enough for her" (5-year-old girl)
"...To make my mother happy, I will give her flowers on mother's day...and give her dumplings on dragon boat festival" (5-year-old boy)

Reflective Reports

Thirteen (13) reflective reports by pre-service student-teachers regarding the CSP of the Dragon Boat festival were collected (i.e. response rate = 100%). A total of 100 records regarding children's responses to the Dragon Boat festival story were documented. After coding, five categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Li (f = 8, 8%); 2) Ren (f = 35, 35%); 3) Zhi (f = 10, 10%); and 4) Yi (f = 47, 47%) (Figure 4.3.4). No response related to 'Filial' was recorded.

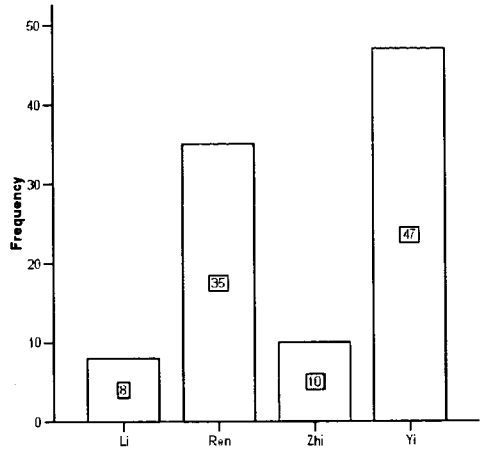


Figure 4.3.4. Frequency of children's responses to Dragon Boat festival stories according to pre-service student-teachers' reflective reports

Children's response related to the value of 'Yi' (f = 47, 47%) was the most popular category during the implementation of CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories. Children's sense of righteousness could be seen in their oppositions to suicide and malicious talk. They discussed some alternative ways for Wat Yuen to use, that he could use his ability to help though he would not be in the emperor's court, and mentioned the importance of helping each other. The following extracts from pre-service student-teachers' reflective reports illustrate some examples of children's responses:

Table 4.3.19. Examples of children's responses to 'Yi' in Dragon Boat stories

Responses to 'Yi'
"...They didn't like and disagreed with the suicide of Wat Yuen, that is, his drowning in the river. They believed that life was very precious and very important...I was impressed how strong the children felt about life and that everyone should value their life." (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 1)
"...Some children volunteered comments like, 'Some bad people must have been gossiping bad things about Wat Yuen, that's why he was driven away from the Emperor's court...but Wat Yuen still cared and loved the Emperor...Even if he was not in the

court, he could still use his ability to help the people'" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 3)
"...after the story, a child said, while shaking his head, 'What Wat Yuen did was wrong, he should not kill himself, for his family would be very sad. He really shouldn't do this'" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 4)
"...When they knew that Wat Yuen was wronged by bad people, they'd suggested to tell the emperor that he (the emperor) was wrong and that Wat was a good man, and that he should use him... This showed to me that the children had good sensible judgement of right and wrong" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 7)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Ren' (f = 35, 35%) was the second popular category during the implementation of CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories. Children showed their love and care by expressing their worries for the safety of Poet Wat Yuen. They were concerned about Wat Yuen's unhappiness. Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.20. Examples of children's responses to 'Ren' in Dragon Boat stories

Responses to 'Ren'
"...When I talked about the dragon boat races to save Wat Yuen, one child said, 'Wat Yuen would not be eaten by the fish, because there would be many people to help him'" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 3)
"...when Wat Yuen was down and upset, the children were very eager to comfort and help him, offering different suggestions to help him" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 12)
"...I'd noticed that the children were very concerned for others...I'd also noticed this from their facial expression and from their positive answers to my questions" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 21)
"...Even though they did not really understand the meaning of loyalty to the country, but from their discussion on Wat Yuen's death, they'd showed good compassion for his family" (Reflective report of pre-service student 28)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Zhi' (f = 10, 10%) was the third popular category during the implementation of CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories. Children were able to demonstrate information processing by mentioning the origin of the festival (e.g. Wat Yuen's story) and by recalling story details that they have heard before. In addition, they showed interest in learning cultural customs and practices (e.g. dragon boat). Examples of children's cognitive responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.21. Examples of children's responses to 'Zhi' in Dragon Boat stories

Responses to 'Zhi'
"...They also said that people had the dragon boat races and threw dumplings into the river to scare away the fishes so that they would not eat Wat Yuen's body. This also resulted in celebrating this festival with dragon boat races and eating of dumplings" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 5)
"...When I asked them about the contents of the stories which I told them last time, they could remember them well, and recalled the details" (Reflective report of pre-service

student-teacher 4) *"...They were also very interested in the appearance of the dragon boats and discussed how to row the boats" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 7)*

Children's responses related to the value of 'Li' (f = 8, 8%) was the fourth popular category during the implementation of CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories. Pre-service student-teachers tended to record children's attentiveness and positive behaviours while listening to the festival stories. Children were able to show respect for others by being patient and by taking turns. One student-teacher was also able to record children's 'Li' responses which were more directly related to the festival stories (e.g. the proper manners for the Dragon Boat festival). The following examples illustrate some children's responses related to the value of 'Li':

Table 4.3.22. Examples of children's responses to 'Li' in Dragon Boat stories

Responses to 'Li'
"...children talked about commemoration rituals and appropriate manners that were used during the Dragon Boat festival" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 5)
"...They'd respected other's opinions or expressions, and responded to each other's remarks" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 14)
"...When I asked them questions, they would raise their hands in an orderly way, waiting patiently for me to invite them to talk" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 4)
"...The children were very orderly in class, and would raise their hands, and then waited quietly till I invited them to speak" Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher (13)
"...they all sat quietly to listen, with expressions of deep interest in the pictures. The children were very well behaved and respected others" (Reflective report of pre-service student-teacher 13)

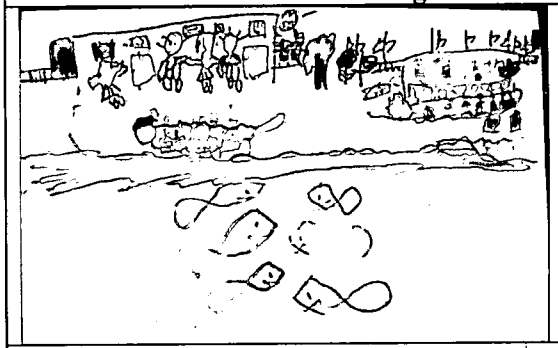
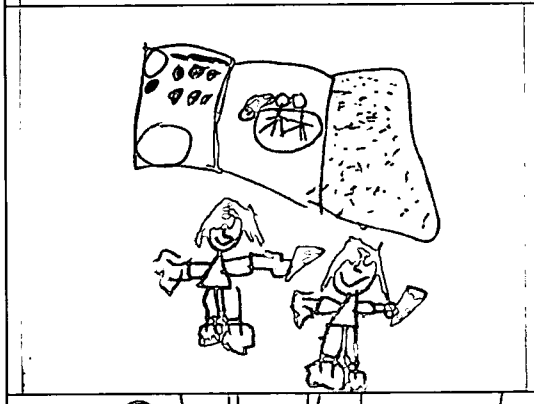
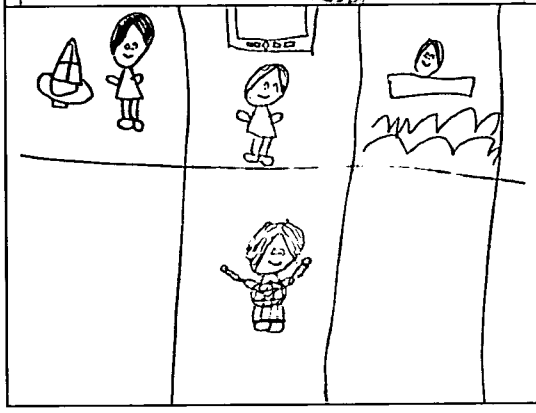
Children's Artefacts

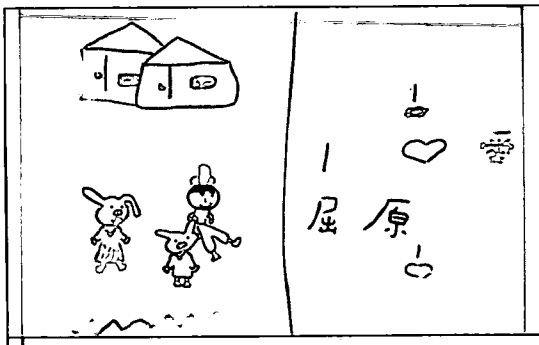
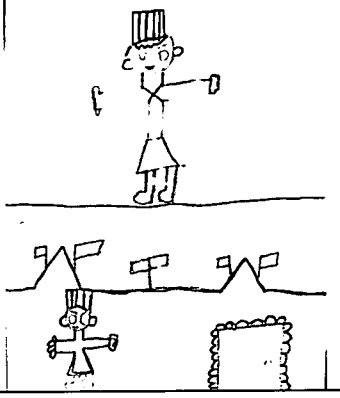
Forty-eight drawings by children after the Dragon Boat festival CSP were collected. A total of 62 records regarding children's non-verbal responses to the Dragon Boat story was documented. After coding, two categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Ren (f = 39, 63%); and 2) Yi (f = 23, 37%).

The findings show that the value of 'Ren' was the most popular category of children's responses after the implementation of the CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories. Children expressed the value of 'Ren' by drawing themselves with their family

and friends, all with smiling faces, celebrating the festival with food and dumplings and watching the dragon boat races either at home on the television or at the waterfront. Some children showed their positive sentiment and care for the poet Wat Yuen by drawing a Dragon Boat card for Wat Yuen. They believed that it would make him happy, as her mother was when she made her a Mother's Day card. Another child drew two portraits of Wat Yuen standing both inside and outside of the city, happy and smiling to show positively that he was safe. Examples of the drawings (Table 4.3.23) are as follows:

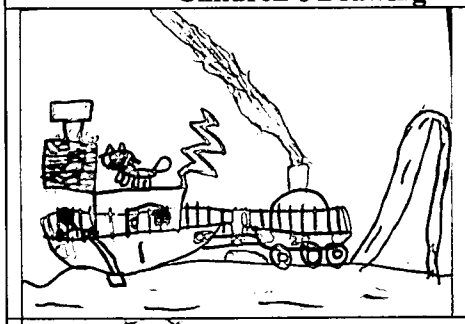
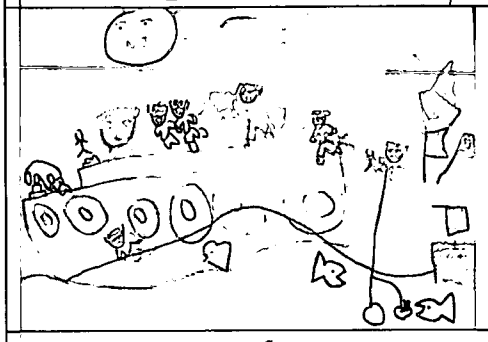
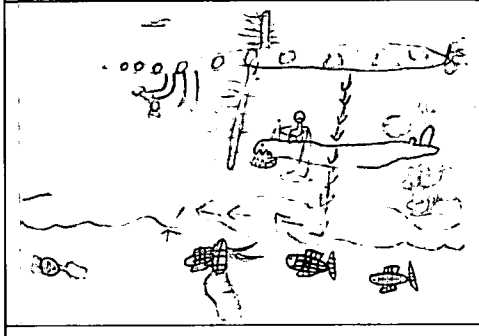
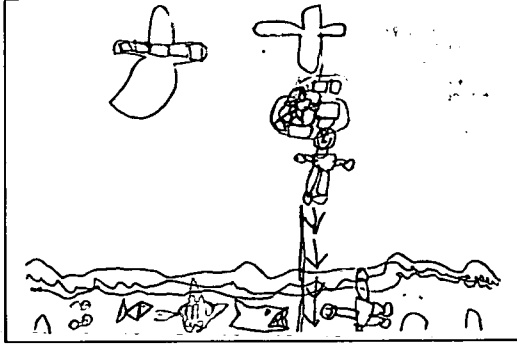
Table 4.3.23. Children's artefacts expressing "Ren"

Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"...I watched the races with my family and friends in the park. The fish would not eat Wat because fish wouldn't eat human being"*
	*"...My mom went with me to buy dumplings and food for the festival. Then we watched television and ate the dumplings"*
	*"...I ate dumpling, watched television and the dragon boat races and I told the story of Wat Yuen to my family"*

	*"...My mother was very happy when I made her a card on Mother's Day, so I made a Dragon Boat card for Wat Yuen. I think he will be very happy to receive it. I have written the words "I love Wat Yuen" on the card"*
	*"...Wat Yuen was very safe and happy both inside and outside the city"*

The value of 'Yi' was the second theme in the children's artefacts after listening to the tragedy of the poet Wat Yuen's death in the river. The children expressed their readiness to save the poet because he was a good person. They wanted to save his body from attack by the fish and sharks in the sea by throwing dumplings and other food to feed the fish and lure them away from the body, or by throwing nets to keep him away from the attacking fish, or by inventing mechanical submarines, trains and aircrafts to save him or by sending the cats to eat all the fish. Examples of their drawings (Table 4.3.24) are as follows:

Table 4.3.24. Children's artefacts expressing 'Yi'

Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"...There was lightning in the sky to electrify the fish if they ate the body of Wat Yuen. There was a big cat on the boat to help eat up the fish"*
	*"...People were looking for Wat Yuen with life floats, and they used apples as baits on fishing lines and a big net to catch the fish. They were pulling him up with the life float"*
	*"...We could send a plane to save him. Some were beating the drums in the dragon boat to scare away the fish. A submarine with fishing nets was there to protect Wat Yuen, so that the fish cannot eat him. I want to save him because he helped and protected the country. The emperor should trust him and should not let him die"*
	*"...There was a submarine to save Wat Yuen - see he was floating in the river. The people were looking for him in dragon boats because he was a good man and they cared for him. There was a safety net around him and the big fish and sharks could not eat him"*
	*"...We could send people in a helicopter to save Wat Yuen. They descended to the river and found him. I wanted to save him because he was a good man and loyal to his country"*

3) Chung Yeung Festival

Non-Participant Observation Reports

Fourteen non-participant observation reports by in-service student-teachers regarding the CSP of the Chung Yeung festival were collected (i.e. response rate = 100%).. A total of 191 records regarding children's responses to the Chung Yeung festival stories was documented, being the greatest number of records gathered from all four festivals. After coding, six categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Filial (f = 37, 19.4%); 2) Li (f = 26, 13.6%); 3) Ren (f = 61, 31.9%); 4) Zhi (f = 32, 16.8%); and 6) Yi (f = 35, 18.3%) (Figure 4.3.5).

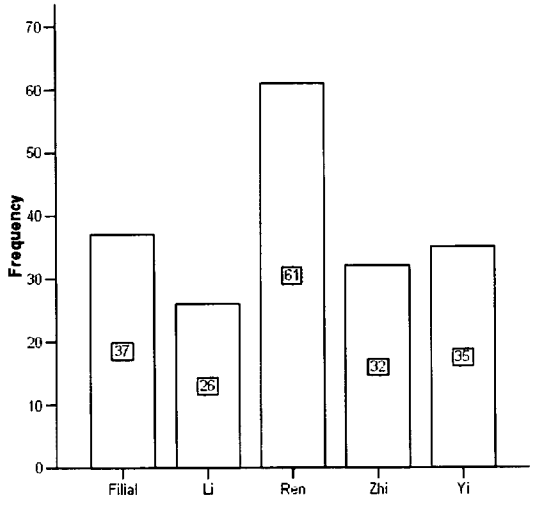


Figure 4.3.5. Frequency of children's responses to Chung Yeung festival stories according to in-service student-teachers' non-participant observation reports

Children's responses related to the value of 'Ren' (f = 61, 31.9%) was the most popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories (see Appendix 18). This finding is similar to the analysis of both non-participant observation reports and reflective reports of the Chinese New Year festival which were presented (see p. 102 and p. 105). Children mentioned about their care for other people and/or animals (e.g. bring friends and all animals to the hills to avoid the plague). They showed sympathy for those who are suffering. Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.25. Examples of children's responses to 'Ren' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Ren'
"...If there's a disaster, I will hold the hands of my elder brother and run for the hills" (5-year-old boy)
"...Lucky that they'd brought all the animals up to the hills; otherwise, they all would be dead" (5-year-old girl)
"...All the animals are dead, what a pity. How very sad!" (4-year-old girl)
"...I feel very sad to see the pigs, cows, and sheep all dead. They should have brought them up to the hills too" (5-year-old girl)
"...They should bring some mattresses to go to the hills. It will be more comfortable for sitting down" (5-year-old girl)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Filial' (f= 37, 19.4%) was the second popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories. Children shared their feelings of how they loved and cared for their parents and grandparents. In addition, they mentioned the custom of visiting ancestors' graves on the festival day – a common cultural practice in HKSAR, to honour the deceased and strengthen family relationships. Some children seem to understand that deceased family members also formed part of their identity history. Examples of their responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.26. Examples of children's responses to 'Filial' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Filial'
"...When I grow up and get married and have a husband and a baby and become a wife, I will go with them to sweep my ancestors' graves" (4-year-old girl)
"...I went with my mom, granny and grandpa to a very far away place to fly kites. There were many rocks there, and I told granny to be careful when walking, and not to trip and fall" (5-year-old boy)
"...I gave my bottle of water to mom to drink while we were walking in the hill. She was thirsty" (4-year-old girl)
"...Tomorrow is Chung Yeung, and I have to sweep the graves. My father is dead. I will give him my love" (5-year-old boy)
"...I gave my mother a kiss. I love my mom and my younger sister very much" (5-year-old boy)
"...I love my mom very much, and sometimes my dad hits my mom and makes her cry, I would cry with my mom too...But my dad is now dead" (5-year-old boy)
"...Granny was tired when she reached the hill. Next time, I should bring a chair for her to sit" (5-year-old girl)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' (f= 35, 18.3%) was the third popular category during the implementation of the CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories. Children mentioned different ways to save their families and friends and the importance of protecting the environment. Also, they mentioned the inappropriateness for children to drink wine (i.e. chrysanthemum wine is a traditional liquor in the Chung

Yeung festival). In addition, children tended to believe the teacher is the source of authority and righteousness. Examples of children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' are as follows:

Table 4.3.27. Examples of children's responses to 'Yi' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Yi'
"...Children should not drink wine, mom said it. So we cannot drink the chrysanthemum wine" (4-year-old girl)
"...we can call an ambulance to take all the injured animals to the hospital to save them" (5-year-old girl)
"...If I were Woon King, I would also listen to my teacher, and go to the hills to avoid the disaster. Woon King is very good and well behaved. He'd listened to his teacher" (5-year-old boy)
"...We can donate clothes to them (people in need), or we can knit some sweaters for them" (4-year-old boy)
"...If there's a hill fire, then HKSAR will be without trees and the air will become very bad. HKSAR is our home and we must protect it well" (5-year-old girl)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Zhi' (f = 32, 16.8%) was the fourth popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories. Responses of 'Zhi' here denotes children's logical thinking (e.g. see doctor when one is sick), free association (e.g. plagues are like...), and creativity (e.g. if I....). In addition, children were generally able to use their personal experiences and prior knowledge to interpret new terminology (e.g. plague and disaster). Examples of their responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.28. Examples of children's responses to 'Zhi' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Zhi'
"...We should arrange for them (Woon King and the animals) to go to the emergency hospital" (4-year-old girl)
"...Why did we go to sweep the graves if Chung Yeung is for going to the hills?" (5-year-old boy)
"...Drink chrysanthemum wine? Is it like drinking red wine?" (5-year-old girl)
"...Plague is like the bird flu. All of the chickens are dead...You'll have to go to the doctor and you will be better" (4-year-old girl)
"...Disaster is like when the bridge fell down....The wind blew so strong that many houses fell down too....there were very big waves, which knocked down all the trees" (4-year-old boy)
"...If I knew magic, then I would immediately change myself into a water hose and put out the fire...so that people are saved" (5-year-old girl)
"...I am sure tomorrow is Chung Yeung, because my mom and dad will be taking me to sweep the grave of granny. I know it is Chung Yeung, because we only go to sweep the grave on Ching Ming and Chung Yeung festival" (5-year-old boy)
"...They have to wear red ornaments and drink the chrysanthemum wine to avoid disaster" (4-year-old boy)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Li' (f = 26, 13.6%) was the least popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories. Children generally mentioned the traditional mannerism in the commemoration of ancestors (e.g. clasped hands). Some also talked about ways that they showed respect and honour to the elders of their family. Examples of children's responses related to the value of 'Li' are as follows:

Table 4.3.29. Examples of children's responses to 'Li' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Li'
"...When we pray to our ancestors, we should clasp both of our hands like this" (5-year-old girl)
"...Mom said that we have to behave well because granny can hear us in heaven...we have to be quiet there (in cemetery)" (5-year-old boy)
"...I helped my mom clean the tombstone and made it very clean" (4-year-old girl)
"...We have to bring many fruits to him (deceased Grandfather). He liked oranges" (5-year-old boy)

Reflective Reports

Fourteen reflective reports by in-service student-teachers regarding the CSP of the Chung Yeung festival were collected (i.e. response rate = 100%). A total of 44 records regarding children's responses to the Chung Yeung festival stories was documented, which was the lowest number of records from reflective reports among all four festivals. After coding, six categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Filial (f = 7, 15.9%); 2) Li (f = 3, 6.8%); 3) Ren (f = 14, 31.8%); 4) Zhi (f = 14, 31.8%); and 5) Yi (f = 6, 13.6%) (Figure 4.3.6).

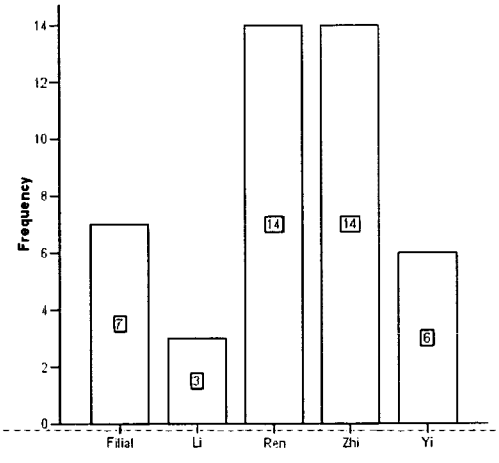


Figure 4.3.6. Frequency of children's responses to Chung Yeung festival stories according to in-service student-teachers' reflective reports

Figure 4.3.6 showed that children's responses related to the value of 'Zhi' (f = 14, 31.8%) and responses related to the value of 'Ren' (f = 14, 31.8%) were equally popular during the implementation of CSP by using Chung Yeung festival stories. Responses of 'Zhi' here denote children's information processing in that they were able to use their prior knowledge or personal experiences (e.g. typhoon) to synthesize new information or terminology (e.g. disaster). Children were able to use logical thinking and creativity for problem solving as well. Examples of children's cognitive responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.30. Examples of children's responses to 'Zhi' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Zhi'
"...When I told this story, they asked many questions, e.g. why were the animals dead? Some attempted to logically explain this fact, e.g. there could be a typhoon, landslide etc. The animals could die because of poisoning or accidentally fell and died etc" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 38)
"...When the children heard about the disaster that happened to Woon King's village, they related it to the Tsunami disaster that had happened in South East Asia...They understood that the story happened a long time ago, besides learning a new vocabulary, that of "disaster and plague", they had deeper understanding of the new words" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 39)
"...In general, the concept of Chung Yeung is rather new to children, but they seem to have certain understanding of life and death or commemoration of their ancestors" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 57)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Ren' (f = 14, 23.3%) was also popularly recorded in reflective reports for the implementation of CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories. Children were able to show their love, care and compassion to others. In-service student-teacher participants noticed that children showed great anticipation that the story characters could be alive and happy. Examples of children's responses related to 'Ren' are as follows:

Table 4.3.31. Examples of children's responses to 'Ren' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Ren'
"...they were very eager to change the ending of the Woon King story, when Woon King and his family returned to the village safely, they were all relieved and pleased" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 49)
"...they learned from Woon King to love their family, as he loved and cared for his family, and didn't abandon them in disaster, and in spite of the difficulties, he brought all of them up to the hills" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 38)
"...they felt sad and worried for the villagers, and felt sad for the animals that died. This showed me that they are very compassionate and loving" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 49)
"... a child drew Woon King returning from the hill and gave presents to the friends who notified him of the disaster, to show his thanks and appreciation" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 36)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Filial' (f = 7, 15.9%) was the fourth popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories. Children talked about their love and care for their parents. They enjoyed being with them and would feel sad when someone in the family passed away, although they may have only little experiences of both festivals and the concept of death. Indeed, their love and honour was also extended to ancestors as well. The following extracts from student-teachers' reflective reports illustrate some examples of children's responses related to 'Filial':

Table 4.3.32. Examples of children's responses to 'Filial' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Filial'
"...children's experience with Chung Yeung was very little, and only three of them in my class had the experience of "tomb sweeping and visiting the ancestors' graves", so to most of them, this day would be just another holiday which they went out happily with their parents" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 33)
"...Some children suggested that they will ask their parents to go together, because they wouldn't want them to be in danger. This showed me their filial compassion, their love and care for them" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 50)
"...From their responses, I noticed that they have very strong fondness for and attachment to their parents" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 57)
"...Child Y has great respect for tradition and customs, and I think commemoration of the ancestors was very important...this will bring the whole family closer together" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 39)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' (f = 6, 13.6%) was the fifth popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories. Children were able to show their concern for those unfortunate characters in the story of 'Woon King' and their desire to help or rescue them. They appreciated Woon King's righteousness and his action of saving people and animals. Some children even talked about the sorrow of people who suffered from the landslides and disasters and discussed actions to alleviate their problems. They were also able to show awareness of the importance of environmental protection and identified these as ways to prevent natural disasters. Examples of children's responses related to 'Yi' are as follows:

Table 4.3.33. Examples of children's responses to 'Yi' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Yi'
"... Children agreed that when others are in trouble, they would go to their help" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 38)
"...When the children heard about the disaster that happened to Woon King's village, they related it to the typhoon disasters that had recently happened in South East Asia, and

felt a need to try to solve the problem and help those in need...they came up with many suggestions for action...and the need to protect the environment" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 39)
"...They took turn to talk about their experiences and some were aware of the importance to protect the environment, and not to leave any fire burning, nor should they pick flowers as this could destroy the ecology" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 57)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Li' (f = 3, 6.8%) was the least popular category during the implementation of CSP using Chung Yeung festival stories. Children were able to mention some culturally-expected mannerisms and some traditional practices for this festival. In addition, children talked about the original meaning of the festival (i.e. respect and commemoration), although they may not be able to fully understand the underlying meaning. The following extracts from student-teachers' reflective reports illustrate some examples of children's responses related to 'Li':

Table 4.3.34. Examples of children's responses to 'Li' in Chung Yeung stories

Responses to 'Li'
"...They learnt that this festival of Chung Yeung was not one for joyful celebration, but for respect and commemoration, however, it was difficult for them to fully understand the meaning behind, as they had limited experience in going to the hills for outings" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 49)
"...To some who had experience of tomb sweeping with their family, they knew what to bring, how to behave in front of the tomb, and who should be participating" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 35)
"...what impressed me most was that one child clearly told others about tombstones and the whole process of tomb sweeping! She had been to tomb sweeping with her parents earlier. She said, "first the people go up the hills, and then clean the tombs, and then come down the hills" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 36)

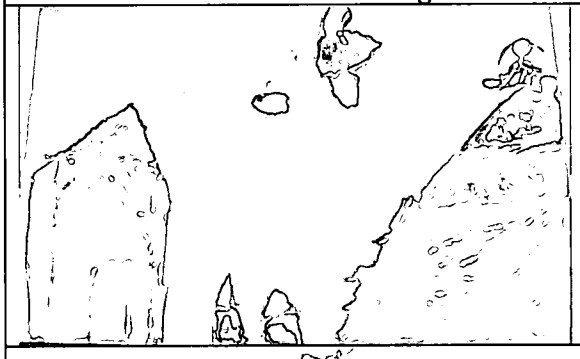
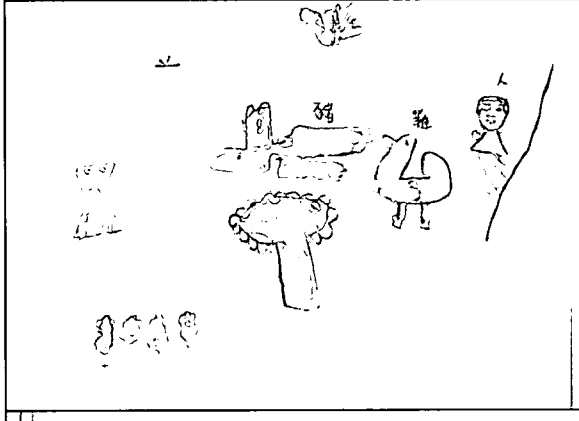
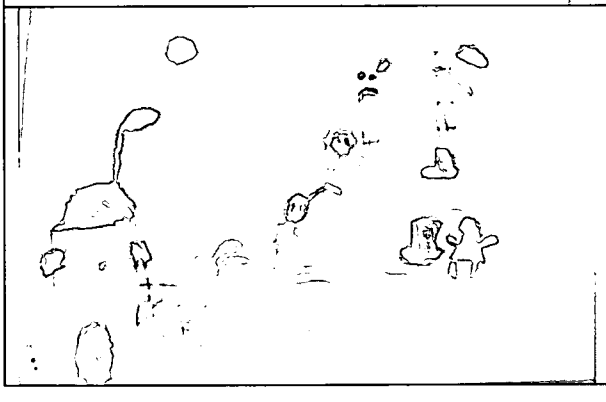
Children's Artefacts

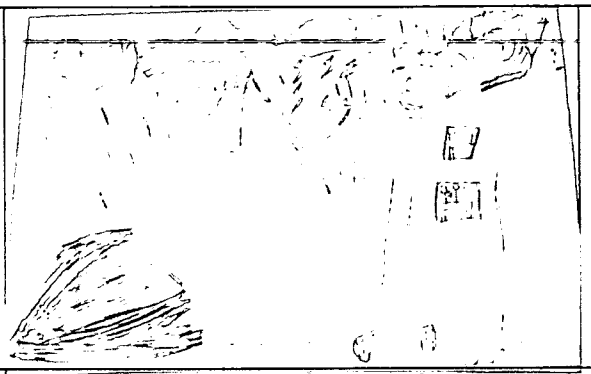
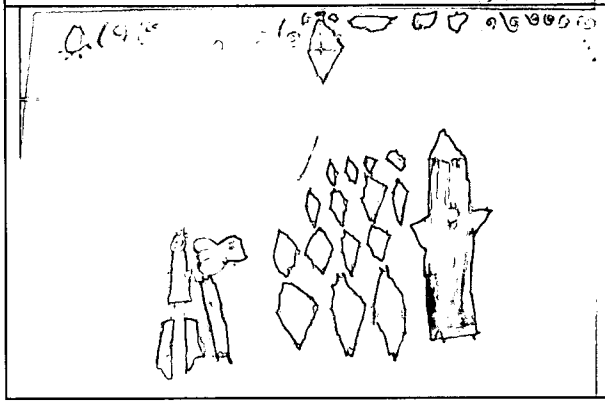
Twenty eight drawings by children after the Chung Yeung festival CSP were collected. A total of 33 records regarding children's non-verbal responses to the Chung Yeung story was documented. After coding, three categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Li (f = 7, 21%); 2) Ren (f = 15, 45%); and 3) Filial (f = 11, 33%).

The findings show that the values of 'Ren' and 'Filial' were the most popular categories of children's responses after the implementation of CSP by using Chung Yeung festival stories while Li was the least mentioned value.

Children expressed the value of 'Ren' with drawings about the story of Woon King but with the emphasis that the animals were brought to safety, mentioning that they cared for their safety, or were sad because the animals died. A few expressed their care for their family by bringing them on outings to avoid the plague. Some expressed the happy relationship with their parents with pictures of flying kites or having a barbeque with them. Examples of their drawings (Table 4.3.35) are as follows:

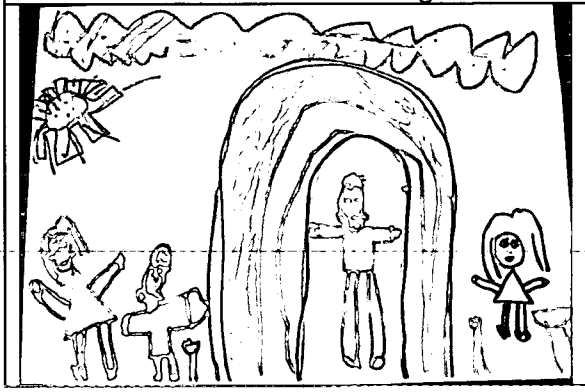
Table 4.3.35. Children's artefacts expressing 'Ren'

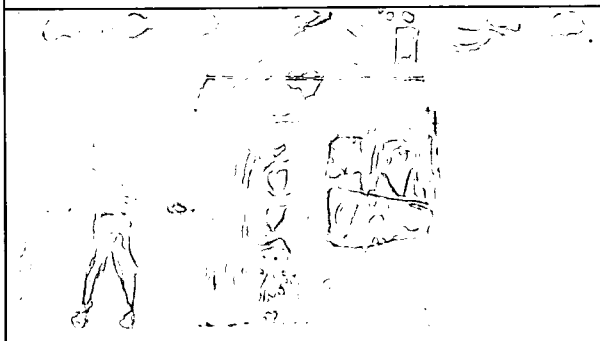
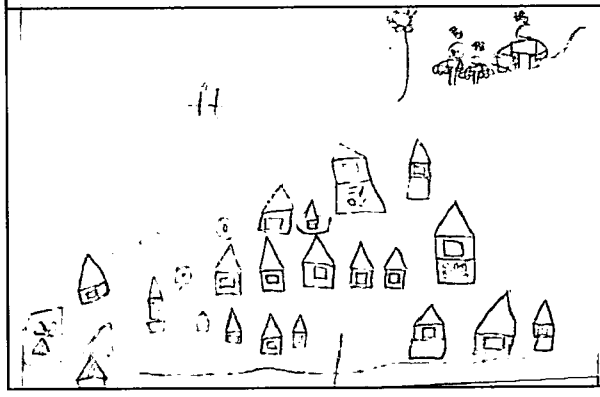
Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	"*...I went with daddy and mommy up the hill to see the scenery. I saw the birds and we visited my granny's grave. My little pig is waiting for me at home as she couldn't go with us*"
	"*... In Chung Yeung festival, many people will go to the hills to avoid the plague. I brought the chicken and the pig and other people with me because I care for them*"
	"*...Many people went to the hills to avoid the plague. Their faces were blue because they were very unhappy: they saw the animals were all dead*"

	*"...I hope the people will listen and go to the hills to avoid the plague and the fire. I will make it rain with thunder to put out the fire"*
	*"...I like Chung Yeung festival for I can go with daddy for hiking. We brought our kites with us. I went to fly kites with daddy and then we had barbecue."*

Children expressed the value of 'Filial' with scenes of them remembering their deceased grandparents, by visiting graveyards with flowers, chicken, noodles, candies, oranges and drinks. One child expressed the detail of his father washing and cleaning the face of his grandfather's picture. Some expressed their love and affection for their parents and grandparents. One child mentioned that as he loved his grandfather very much he would call him on the telephone or draw pictures for him. Examples of their drawings (Table 4.3.36) are as follows:

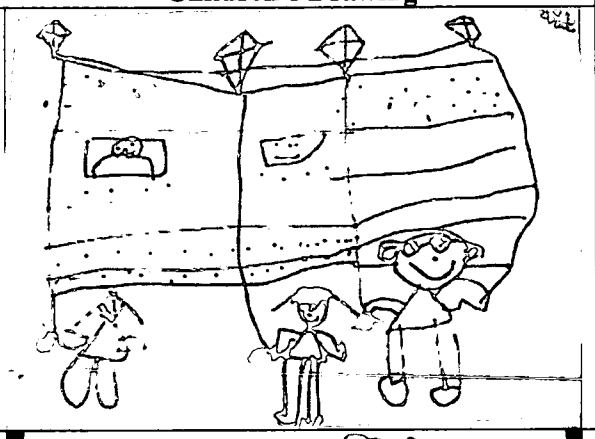
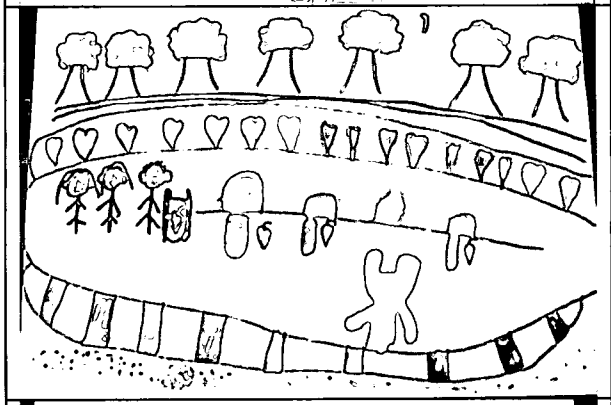
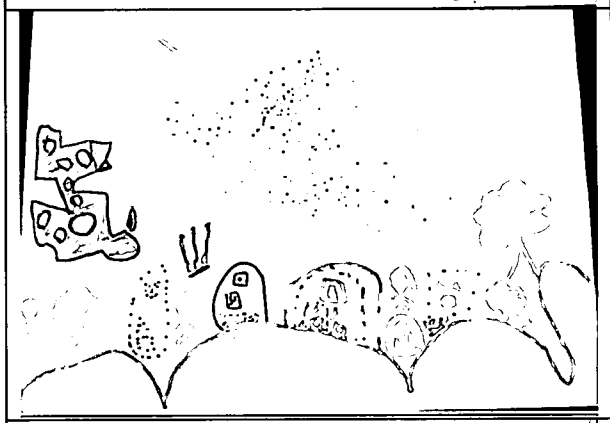
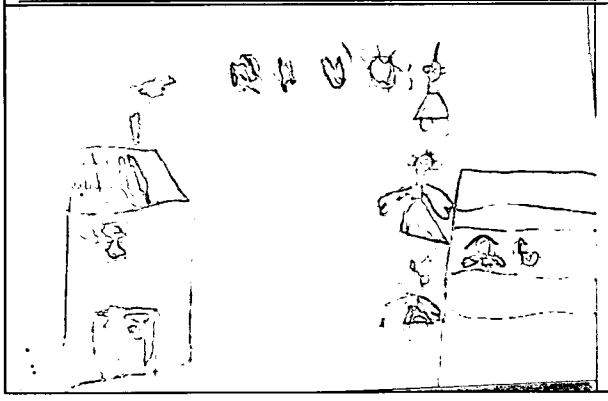
Table 4.3.36. Children's artefacts expressing 'Filial'

Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"...Daddy and mommy brought us to visit our grand father's grave. I brought him flowers and my father washed grandfather's face on the tombstone"*

	*"...My father, mother, sister and me brought chicken, noodle, candies, oranges and drinks to visit my grandparents' graves. These were food they liked. I miss my grandfather"*
	*"...I love my grandfather very much. I will call him on the telephone and draw for him"*
	*"...At Chung Yeung, my mom and elder brother went with me to visit the graves of our grandfather. We had to walk a very long distance. Mom was very tired. I gave her my flask of water"*

Children expressed the value of 'Li' with detailed drawings showing their understanding of the ceremonial rites and appropriate attitudes and behaviour during the visits to their ancestors. One mentioned that he had to be respectful and attentive, while another expressed that it was a duty to clean and sweep the graves; that they had to burn incense and put the offerings on the ground, that they should let the ancestors first eat before they would eat them. One even mentioned that the inscriptions on the tombstones had meaning. Examples of their drawings (Table 4.3.37) are as follows:

Table 4.3.37. Children's artefacts expressing 'Li'

Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"...My daddy, mommy and I had to stand very straight in front of the graves, each holding offerings. You have to be very respectful and pay full attention when doing this"*
	*"...I went with daddy and mommy to visit the graves of mommy's grandfather. We had to insert some smoky incense on the ground. We brought a roast pig and put it on the ground in front of the graves"*
	*"... I was with my daddy, mommy and aunt. We had to first put the food on the ground, and then offer the food to our ancestors and let them eat first, and then we can eat later"*
	*"...We went to the hills to visit my grand-father's grave. There were his picture and his name on it, and some words with meanings on the tombstone. I had placed three sticks of incense for my grandfather"*

4) Mid-Autumn Festival

Non-Participant Observation Reports

Fifteen non-participants' observation reports by in-service student-teachers regarding the CSP of the Mid-Autumn festival were collected (i.e. response rate = 100%). A total of 228 records regarding children's responses to the Mid-Autumn festival story was documented in the reports, resulting in the greatest number of records by using non-participant observation reports among all four festivals. After coding, five categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Filial (f= 16, 7%); 2) Li (f= 7, 3.1%); 3) Ren (f= 97, 42.5%); 4) Zhi (f= 48, 21.1%); and 5) Yi (f= 60, 26.3%) (Figure 4.3.7).

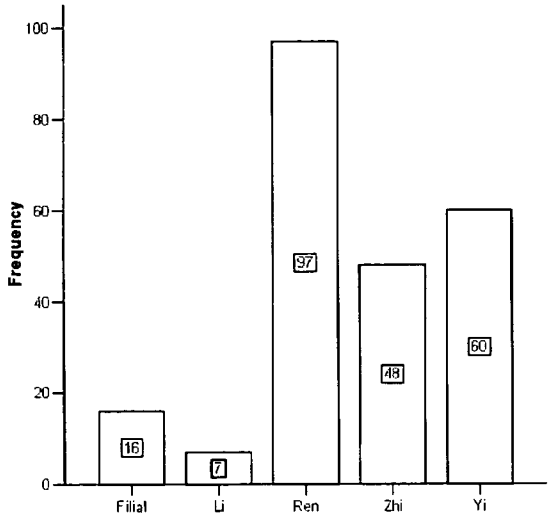


Figure 4.3.7. Frequency of children's responses to Mid-Autumn festival stories according to in-service student-teachers' non-participant observation reports

Children's response related to the value of 'Ren' (f= 97, 42.5%) was the most popular category during the implementation of CSP using Mid-Autumn festival stories (see Appendix 19). This finding is similar to the analysis of the observation reports of the Chung Yeung festival, and the analysis of both non-participant observation reports and reflective reports of the Chinese New Year festival which have been presented earlier (see p. 102 and p. 105). Children's responses related to 'Ren' were about their sharing and celebration of the festivals with friends and/or siblings. Also, some children expressed their love, care and compassion for other people (e.g. Sheung Ngor's possible loneliness

in the moon) and animals (e.g. the suffering of the animals because of the heat from the nine suns). Examples of children's responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.38. Examples of children's responses to 'Ren' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Ren'
"...Even though I like to eat moon cakes, I will cut them up and share them with my sister" (5-year-old girl)
"...I wanted to play with lanterns, so I bought many lanterns and played with my friends" (4-year-old boy)
"...I will share my lantern and my food with my cousins" (4-year-old girl)
"...I hope Sheung Ngor can return home to her family. I will ask the stars to guide her way to return home....I think Sheung Ngor will be very lonely in the moon. I hope I can fly to the sky and visit her, and we could eat moon cakes together, sitting on the clouds...She will be very unhappy in the moon, because she could not be with her family... and her family will miss her too" (5-year-old boy)
"... With only one sun left, the animals will not have to die" (5-year-old boy)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' (f = 60, 26.3%) was the second popular category during the implementation of CSP using Mid-Autumn festival stories. This finding is similar to the analysis of the observation reports of the Chinese New Year festival (see p. 102). Children expressed their sense of righteousness (e.g. Sheung Ngor's inappropriateness to steal the longevity potion). Moreover, some mentioned the importance of helping others (e.g. people who were suffering under the ten suns). Examples of children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' are as follows:

Table 4.3.39. Examples of children's responses to 'Yi' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Yi'
"... I think Sheung Ngor should not steal the longevity potions. It was very wrong...She should not eat something that didn't belong to her" (5-year-old boy)
"...My mom said that we should not eat any medicine we find; otherwise, we will have a stomach ache" (4-year-old girl)
"...We should not eat too many moon cakes. You'll get indigestion if you eat too many" (5-year-old boy)
"...We should not be naughty and boastful like the ten suns. They were very impolite to Hau Ngai (the husband of Sheung Ngor) who came to plea with them to treat the people kindly ...boastful and proud people don't know how to play with others, and they don't know how to share and to love one another. Mommy told me not to be boastful!" (5-year-old girl)
"...We must think of ways to save them (people who were suffering under the 10 suns...we can buy food for them....Just turn on the air conditioners and it will not be so hot...they can go to swim. My mom has brought me swimming before" (5-year-old boy)

Children's responses related to 'Zhi' (f = 48, 21.1%) was the third popular category during the implementation of CSP using Dragon Boat festival stories. Children were able

to relate their prior knowledge and personal experiences of the festival (e.g. playing lanterns). Also, they were able to use free-association (e.g. related the legend of 'Sheung Ngor' flying to the moon to that of his parents flying on the airplanes); logical reasoning (e.g. no one living in the moon as there is no gravity on the moon); and creativity to interpret and to extend the festival stories. Examples of children's cognitive response are as follows:

Table 4.3.40. Examples of children's responses to 'Zhi' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Zhi'
"...Is this (i.e. Sheung Ngor flying to the moon) like my dad and mom taking the air planes and flying?" (5-year-old boy)
"...We brought moon cakes, lanterns and fruits to the park. But you could not really find Sheung Ngor in the moon...We can play with lanterns....Play in the park...Eat fruits...eat moon cakes" (5-year-old girl)
"...I am always sweating. We only have one sun, and I feel very hot already. In the past, if they had 10 suns, wouldn't it be very much hotter?" (5-year-old boy)
"...But there should be no one living on the moon. There is no gravity" (5-year-old boy)
"...There is an egg yolk in the middle of the moon cake, that's why it is called moon cake...The egg yolk looks like the moon, that's why we have to eat it in Mid-Autumn" (4-year-old girl)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Filial' (f= 16, 7%) was the fifth popular category during the implementation of CSP using Mid-Autumn festival stories. Children mentioned mainly about their experiences of sharing moon cake (i.e. a traditional festival food) with their parents. To share a moon cake with family is indeed a common and cultural practice in the festival. Children seemed to be able to learn the value of 'Filial' through this traditional practice. Examples of their responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.41. Examples of children's responses to 'Filial' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Filial'
"...I want to cut it up and share it with my dad, mom, granny, granddad to eat. I will eat less to save some for them" (5-year-old girl)
"...I will give my grandmother a massage and cut up the moon cakes and serve my dad and mom" (4-year-old girl)
"...I cut the moon cake by myself at the park. I gave them to my dad, mom and granny. They all said that I was a good boy" (4-year-old boy)
"...I want to share my moon cake with my mom. Dad will have the apples" (4-year-old girl)
"...one moon cake is for daddy and one is for mommy" (5-year-old girl)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Li' (f= 7, 3.1%) was the least popular category during the implementation of CSP using Mid-Autumn festival stories. Children talked about some traditional mannerism (e.g. arrange the food on an altar for worshiping

purposes) and cultural practices (e.g. share the moon cake) during the festival. The importance of respecting elders was also mentioned by children. In addition, they also related the story of 10 suns to the importance of being nice to others. Examples of their responses are as follows:

Table 4.3.42. Examples of children's responses to 'Li' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Li'
"...they have to line up the food on the altar like this... for worshipping the moon"
"...We should not be naughty like the 10 suns. They were very impolite to Hau Ngai who came to plea with them to treat the people kindly. We should always be polite to people" (4-year-old girl)

Reflective Reports

Fifteen reflective reports by in-service student-teachers regarding the CSP of the Mid-Autumn festival were collected (i.e. response rate = 100%). A total of 64 records of children's responses was documented. After coding, four categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Li (f = 1, 1.6%); 2) Ren (f = 16, 25%); 3) Zhi (f = 37, 57.8%); and 4) Yi (f = 10, 15.6%) (Figure 4.3.8). There were no responses related to 'Filial' recorded.

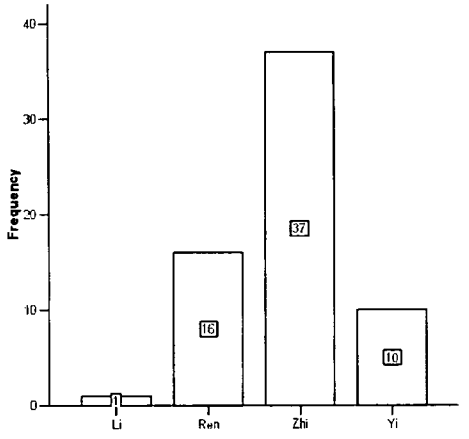


Figure 4.3.8. Frequency of children's responses to Mid-Autumn festival stories according to in-service student-teachers' reflective reports

Children's responses related to 'Zhi' (f = 37, 57.8%) was the most popular category during the implementation of CSP using Mid-Autumn festival stories. In-service student-teachers noticed that children were able to use their personal experiences, and logical and critical thinking to 'filter' the story content. Also, children were capable of extending

their knowledge by using their creativity, free-association and imagination. The following extracts of in-service student-teachers' reflective reports illustrate some children's responses to 'Zhi':

Table 4.3.43. Examples of children's responses to 'Zhi' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Zhi'
"...In the story process, some were very interested to know if there really were longevity potions" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 37)
"...The children were very imaginative, and they could integrate the story content with their daily lives, e.g. they suggested that they could pray to God to give them good weather" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 45)
"...I noticed that they will not blindly receive information, and will use their own experience to filter and then make their own judgement" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 30)
"...When the story talked about 'Sheung Ngor' flying out to the moon, they raised the question that no human being can live on the moon because the temperature difference on the moon can be very high" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 34)
"...Children were very involved and they identified with the story and one even suggested that the heat of the nine suns could be like that of boiling hot water! They related concepts in the story to those events found in their daily lives" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 42)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Ren' (f= 16, 25%) was the second popular category during the implementation of CSP using Mid-Autumn festival stories. This finding is similar to the analysis of the reflective reports of the Chung Yeung festival, and to the analysis of both non-participant observation reports and reflective reports of the Dragon Boat festival which have been presented earlier (sees p. 113 and p. 116). Children displayed love, care and compassion for those story characters. They mentioned sympathy (e.g. people suffering from the nine suns), understanding (e.g. a story character Hau Ngai's possible sadness). Examples of children's responses were as follows:

Table 4.3.44. Examples of children's responses to 'Ren' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Ren'
"... from their interactions and conversations, the message of love, care and family togetherness was very clearly expressed by the children" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 46)
"...children also had compassion for Sheung Ngor who was living alone on the moon. They wanted to have some magical moon cakes as curing potions for her" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 30)
"...The children felt and pitied the people suffering under the great heat coming from the nine suns" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 53)
"...In the role play after the story, they all displayed their love and care for each other. They willingly shared their food and helped others fetch their lanterns" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 55)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Yi' (f = 10, 15.6%) was the third popular category during the implementation of the CSP using Mid-Autumn festival stories. Children talked about the importance of peace and morality (e.g. inappropriateness of stealing) and the inappropriateness of war. Also, they mentioned the importance of honour and being responsible for one's behaviour. In addition, children showed admiration for story characters that were positive and who valued life. Examples of children's responses to the in-service student-teachers' reflective reports are as follows:

Table 4.3.45. Examples of children's responses to 'Yi' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Yi'
"...They did not like injustice, fighting and wars" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 47)
"...Without too much explanation from me, the children knew that it was wrong of Sheung Ngor to steal the longevity potion from her husband. They expressed that it was immoral and she should be punished" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 53)
"...This proved that from stories, children learned to respect others, and that we should ask before taking something from someone; as Sheung Ngor stole the magic potion from her husband. They expressed that she was wrong in doing so" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 32)
"...They realised that if one committed mistakes, they should have the courage to admit them, be responsible and they must make amendments" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 42)
"...From their conversation, I found that they were happy to go to the help of people in need, and that they should not be selfish or mean to others" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 54)

Children's responses related to the value of 'Li' (f = 1, 1.6%) was the least popular category during the implementation of CSP using Mid-Autumn festival stories. This finding is similar to the analysis of the observation reports in the same festival, to the analysis of the reflective reports of the Dragon Boat festival, and also to the analysis of both non-participant observation reports and reflective reports of the Chung Yeung festival which have been presented earlier (see p. 122 and p. 125). Only one in-service student-teacher recorded in the reflective journal children's 'Li' responses to Mid-Autumn festival stories. This student-teacher mentioned children's response to the traditionally expected mannerism during the family dinner and their awareness of sharing with others. The following extract from this student-teacher's reflective report illustrates children's responses related to 'Li':

Table 4.3.46. Examples of children's responses to 'Li' in Mid-Autumn stories

Responses to 'Li'
"...Child X said 'we have to wait for grandfather to start the meal...once he started eating, then everyone can eat ...I have to wait'...Other children were eagerly suggested that they would invite their friends and share their moon cakes with them. They realised the importance of courtesy and sharing" (Reflective report of in-service student-teacher 52)

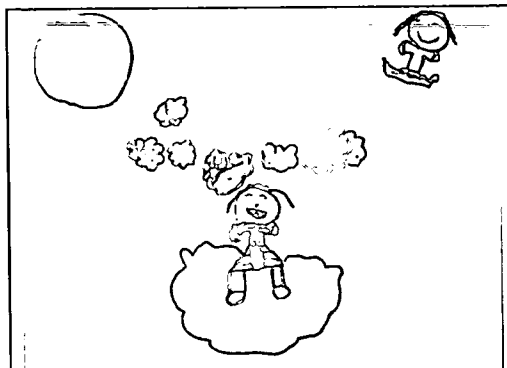
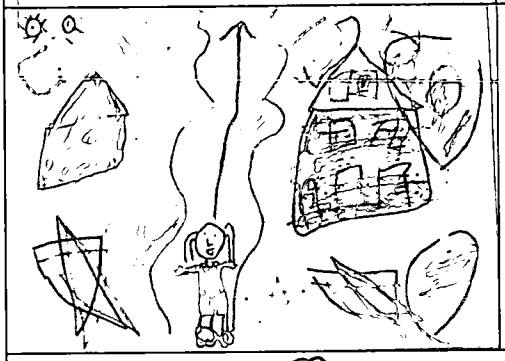
Children's Artefacts

Twenty five drawings by children after the Mid-Autumn festival CSP were collected and a total of 29 records regarding children's non-verbal responses to the Mid-Autumn story was documented. After coding, two categories of children's responses emerged: 1) Ren (f= 24, 82.7%); and 2) Yi (f= 5,17.2 %).

Children expressed the value of 'Ren' by drawing themselves with their family and friends, celebrating the festival by eating moon cakes, playing with lanterns in the park and gazing at the moon. Some children mentioned the darkness of the sky; that the dark clouds covered the moon; that they had to use torches and neon flashes and candles to light their lanterns. Five children mentioned that Sheung Ngor would be lonely on the moon, and expressed their wish to share moon cakes with her and that the stars would show her the way home and one child suggested that he will share the longevity potion which Sheung Ngor drank with his parents. Examples of the children's drawings (Table 4.3.47) are as follows:

Table 4.3.47. Children's artefacts expressing 'Ren'

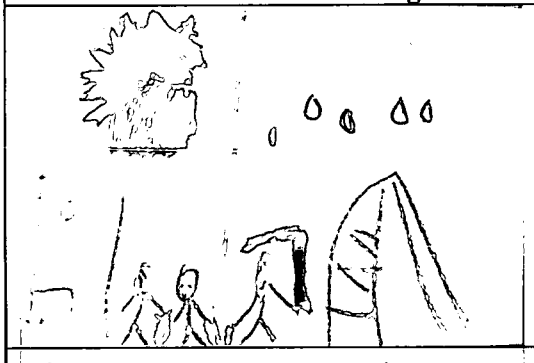
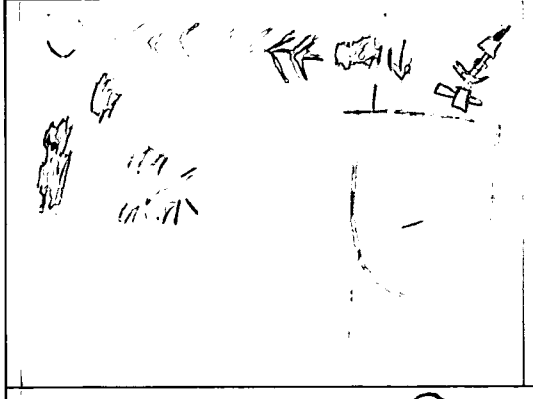
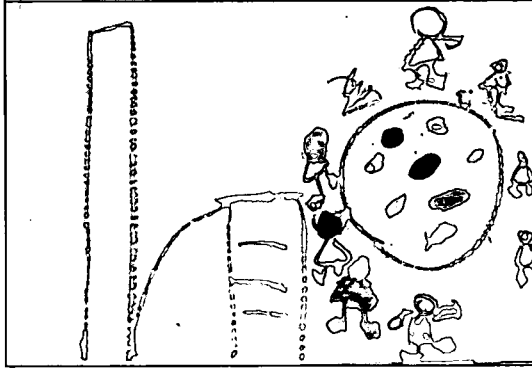
Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"...We gazed at the moon together, at Sheung Ngor flying to the moon. I played with the lantern and my brother ate moon cakes. Mommy lost her phone and daddy used the torch to help look for it"*

	*"...Sheung-ngor is very lonely on the moon. She would miss her family. I will fly to the moon with some moon cakes to share with her"*
	*"...I hope Sheung- ngor can be with her family. The stars will show the way home for her"*
	*"...I ate moon cakes and drank the longevity potion with dad and mom. We flew to the moon after that. Each of us has a moon"*
	*"... I went with mommy, daddy, granny, kid-brother and auntie to the park. It was very dark. We played with neon torches, and lanterns. It was very crowded"*

Children expressed the value of 'Yi' by drawing themes of celebrating the festival in the evening, and noticing people littering the park with used neon torches or burnt candles. Two children expressed that littering was wrong, that they would be fined and that they should bring their rubbish home. Two further mentioned that they had to be very careful with candles to avoid being burnt. One child drew the scene of Hau Ngai –

the legendary hero, shooting down the nine suns. Examples of their drawings (Table 4.3.48) are as follows:

Table 4.3.48. Children's artefacts expressing 'Yi'

Children's Drawing	Children's Verbal Response
	*"...I saw people playing with candles in the corridor. This is wrong and they will be fined $5000 and it will make the place dirty. We should bring the rubbish home"*
	*"...Hau Ngai was shooting the suns with his arrow...He shot nine suns, and they were falling down. The people will be saved!"*
	*"...We are playing with lanterns, but it will be painful if burnt by candles. You have to be very careful"*

4.4.4. Summary

Table 4.3.49 summarized children's first and the least popular responses during the implementation of CSP using stories of four festivals. Data was collected by using student-teachers' observation reports, their reflective reports and children's artefacts. Results showed that children's responses were mainly related to the value of 'Ren' (i.e.

Love/Care). However, children's responses related to the value of 'Li' (i.e. Mannerism) tended to be the least popular category.

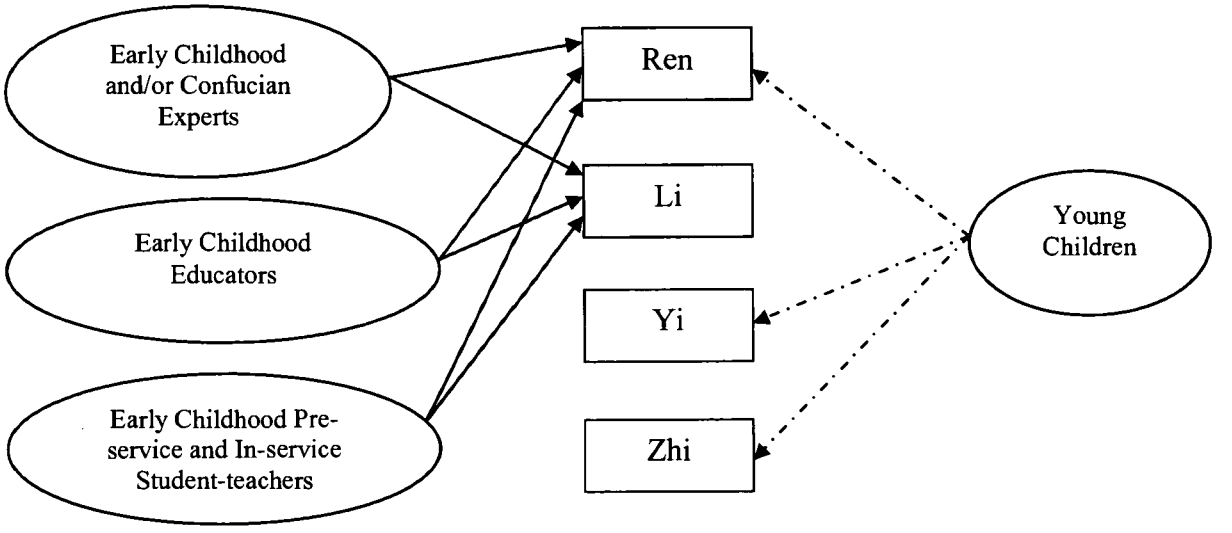
Table 4.3.49. Comparison of children's responses during the implementation of the CSP by using stories of four festivals

Festival	Source of Data	The most popular responses	The least popular responses
Chinese New Year	Observation report	Ren	Filial
	Reflective report		
	Artefacts		Li
Dragon Boat	Observation report	Yi	Filial
	Reflective report		Li
	Artefacts	Ren	Yi
Chung Yeung	Observation report	Ren	Li
	Reflective report	Zhi/Ren	
	Artefacts	Ren	
Mid-Autumn	Observation report	Ren	Li
	Reflective report	Zhi	
	Artefacts	Ren	Yi

4.4.5. Conclusion and Discussion

To conclude, in respect of the findings for Research Questions 2 and 3, Figure 4.3.9 shows the consistency and inconsistency among all four cohorts of this study regarding Confucian values that are expected to be preserved in local child care centres /kindergartens and the children's responses to festival stories that were adopted as tools to preserve those values. Figure 4.3.9 shows the comparison of the findings from the four cohorts.

Figure 4.3.9. Comparison of findings from Confucian and early childhood experts, early childhood educators, pre-service and in-service student-teachers, and children's responses to festival stories on the Confucian values which are expected to be preserved in local kindergartens



Key:

——► Experts, educators and student-teachers' expressed views of the Confucian values that are expected to be preserved or developed in local kindergartens

- - - ►Children's responses to festival stories during the implementation of CSP

Concerning the Confucian values that are desirable to be preserved in young children, the values of 'Ren', 'Yi' and 'Zhi' were observed, revealing that the majority of children had substantial experience and knowledge of the festivals when these behaviours were elicited through stories of the festivals and their subsequent drawings.

The value of 'Ren' as mentioned by experts as being the foundation of Confucian values, is consistently seen in the responses of children in the various festival storytelling sessions. This consistency confirms that the young children possess the awareness of a caring relationship starting from home and extending to others and also the priority of the group over individual interests. In this study, there were many incidences where the children expressed their concerns over the villagers' safety when confronted by the ferocious 'monster', the 'ten suns', or the 'plague', and they would not only save their parents but also the villagers. The children related these stories of the past with the present, and the values that were applicable then were also found to be applicable now. Hence, they talked of how they would share their lanterns, mooncakes or dumplings with their parents and also their friends. It is apparent that the children have assumed these values and know how to practise them daily.

As noted in their responses, children displayed a strong sense of 'Yi' and such behaviour positively relates to Kohlberg's 'Pre-conventional level'(Berk, 2006) when he referred to morality at this level as being controlled externally, when behaviour resulting in punishment is deemed bad and when behaviour leading to reward is deemed good. Children revealed such moral judgement in their discussions of the cultural stories, where it was naughty to trick others or to lie and that playing with fire was wrong and was against the law. Some also suggested that Sheung Ngor should be punished for stealing the longevity potion. Kohlberg also stated that children use their own power of reason to attain moral excellence (in Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). The children's responses in this study also confirmed his statement. Some children mentioned that they should not lock or cage the monster because these were very cruel ways to treat animals, and many children proposed plans to save the body of Wat Yuen because he was a good man. Piaget suggested that children were capable of judging ill-intentioned people as being naughtier and more deserving of punishment than well-intentioned ones (Berk, 2006). Likewise, the children judged the 'ten suns' for scorching the earth with immense heat as being very bad and deserving of punishment, but they would forgive the mouse for cheating the cat out of the race, though it was wrong to cheat.

A demonstration of their 'Zhi' is their use of information, cognition and logic which they have gained through their experience of the festivals. Children were seen constructing knowledge in CSP. By constructing knowledge, according to Vygotsky, "children seek, structure, and even demand the assistance of those around them in learning how to solve problems" (Rogoff, 1990, p. 16). The children were seen to use their knowledge gained from personal experiences and of modern technology to find logical explanation or solutions to the stories. Hence, in their discussions and/or artefacts drawn, they mentioned the lion-dance, dragon boat race, cars, airplanes, motorboats, submarines, machine guns and prayers. Some children even created detailed plans on missions to save Wat Yuen using radar, submarines and airlifters; rockets on the moon and wars using cannon and robots.

In the four festivals, the Confucian value of 'Li', as indicated in the observations, reflective reports and artefacts, was the least noted in children's verbal/physical responses. This was in contradiction to the views indicated by experts, teacher educators and student teachers that the value of 'Li' should be an important value to be taught to children. This value calls upon a person to control their own behaviour and mannerism to

conform to certain rites. Most of the responses were seen in the Chinese New Year and the Chung Yeung festivals, as these celebrations have certain behaviours which children have to comply with, like that of receiving red packets 'lai-see' or cupping of hands together to wish someone 'happy new year', or the rite of offering incense and food to the ancestors on visits to their tombs. These two festivals enable children to learn and practice the rites as suggested in the value of 'Li', whereas the other two festivals (Dragon Boat and Mid-Autumn) have no specific ceremonial rites. Besides the demonstration of rites, 'Li' also refers to appropriate manners in their relationship with others, especially courtesy. The behaviours of courtesy and politeness would be shown by children's routine activities such as greeting teachers; thanking people for services or in waiting for their turn to use facilities or toys, all of which would seldom occur in a story or discussion process. Most childcare centres and kindergartens in HKSAR have detailed guidelines for appropriate behaviour expected of young children, and the teachers were expected to give "routine training to children to greet others, to share and to establish their living habits and self-care skills" (EMB, 2006b, p. E7-2). The children's expression of the value of 'Li' would normally be observed in their daily routines other than storytelling activities. The fact that this behaviour of 'Li' was the least popular value noted by children in this study may not necessarily mean that children do not have an understanding or appreciation of this value, hence, further research using other tools for observing children at their routine behaviour or daily behaviour should be made.

The results of this RQ3 confirmed that children had developed and preserved Confucian values via CSP. Research Question 4 further examined the factors influencing the cultural storytelling activities that enabled children to develop such values.

4.5 Results of Research Question 4

4.5.1. Research Question

In what way, if any, does (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' views of possible influential factors behind cultural storytelling activities differ after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?

4.5.2. Introduction

To seek answers to Research Question 4, the following two sources of data collection were used:

1. *Pre- and Post-test Questionnaires.* All 57 pre-service and in-service student-teachers were invited to answer an open-ended question on the pre-test Questionnaire (see Appendix 1) before their Confucian Values Story Training (CST). The question stated "*What, if any, are the possible factors that contribute to the ways children learn Confucian values by using storytelling?*" They were invited to answer the same question in the post-test Questionnaire (see Appendix 2) after the CSP.

2. *Pre- and Post-test Focus Groups.* Out of the aforementioned 57 student-teacher participants, a total of 14 (seven pre-service student-teachers and seven in-service student-teachers) voluntarily participated in the focus groups (one for the pre-service cohort and one for the in-service cohort). These student-teachers were invited to express their views verbally by responding to the same question as in the questionnaire listed above. These two groups of volunteers were the same as those who contributed to Research Question 2 mentioned earlier in this chapter (see p. 84). Responses of participants were taped and transcribed by the researcher.

Due to the qualitative nature of the data, the presentations of the following findings are based on frequency count (*f*) and percentage (%). The data is presented under each of

the above two sources. A collation of student-teachers' viewpoints that were collected from these two sources is included in the last part of this section.

4.5.3. Results

Pre- and Post-test Questionnaires

In the pre-test questionnaire, all 57 (pre-service or in-service) student-teachers were able to mention at least one possible factor that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling. Among them, 31 were able to mention more than one possible factor. As a result, a total of 102 responses were recorded. After coding, the following four categories of factors were found: 1) Pedagogical (f = 42, 41.2%); 2) Parental (f = 32, 31.4%); 3) Socio-cultural (f = 24, 23.5%); and 4) Developmental (f = 4, 3.9%) (Figure 4.4.1). Figure 4.4.2 further showed that more responses were recorded from the in-service student-teacher cohort. Also, the same figure further shows that a similar pattern of response was found between the cohorts.

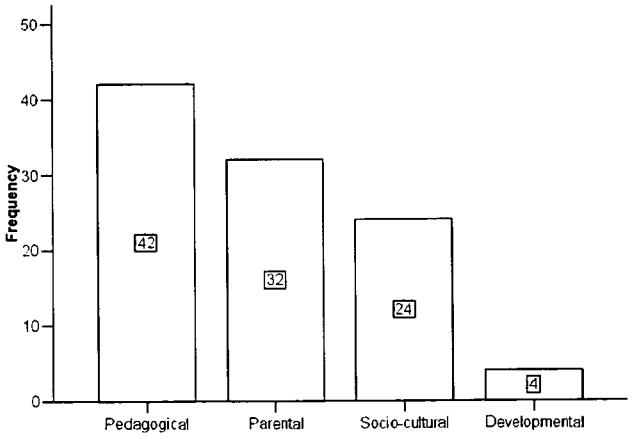


Figure 4.4.1. Factors influencing children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling according to all student-teachers in the pre-test questionnaires

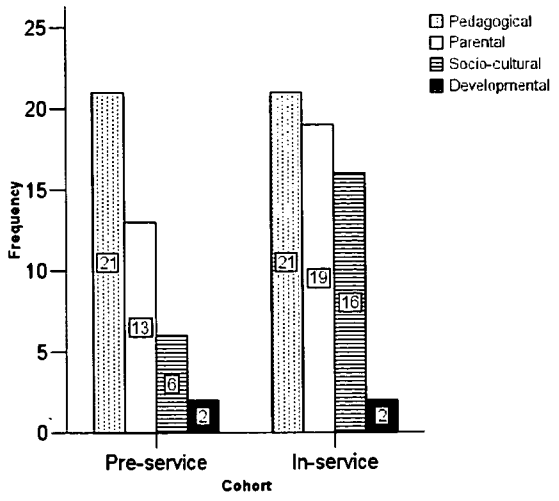


Figure 4.4.2. Factors influencing children's learning of Confucian values through story-telling according to each student-teacher cohort in the pre-test questionnaires

In the post-test questionnaire, all 57 pre-service and in-service student-teachers were also able to mention at least one possible factor that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling. Among them, 28 were able to mention more than one possible factor. As a result, a total of 107 responses were recorded. After coding, as different from the findings from the pre-test questionnaires, three categories of factors emerged: 1) Pedagogical (f = 35, 32.7%); 2) Parental (f = 47, 43.9%); and 3) Socio-cultural (f = 25, 23.4%) (Figure 4.4.3). A similar pattern of response was found between the two student-teacher cohorts (i.e. pre-service and in-service) (Figure 4.4.4). The same figure further shows that, as similar to the findings from the pre-test questionnaires, more responses were recorded from the in-service student-teacher cohort.

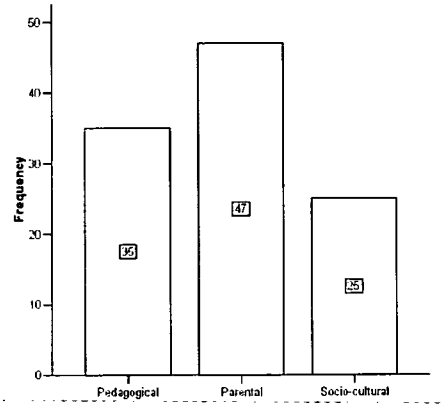


Figure 4.4.3. Factors influencing children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling according to all student-teacher participants in the post-test questionnaire

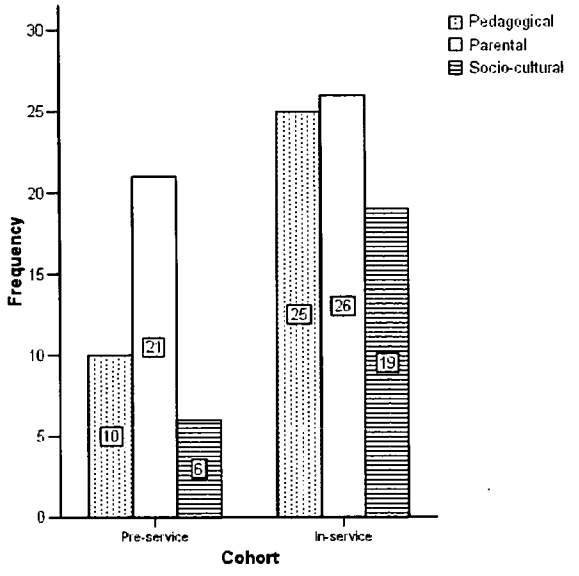


Figure 4.4.4. Factors influencing children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling according to each student-teacher cohort in the post-test questionnaire

In order to explore student-teachers' possible differences in understanding factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling before and after CST and CSP, qualitative and quantitative findings from the pre- and post-questionnaires of both student-teacher cohorts were further collated, analysed and presented as below.

Quantitative findings

The quantitative results showed that the total number of student-teachers' responses regarding possible factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling were similar (a total of 102 responses in the pre-test questionnaire, and 107 responses in the post-test questionnaires). A collation of findings from both pre- and post-questionnaires further show that three categories of factors were commonly found: 1) Pedagogical; 2) Parental; and 3) Socio-cultural (Figure 4.4.5). The same figure further shows that a different pattern of responses of these three common factors was found in the pre- and post-test questionnaires. Responses to 'developmental factor' were solely recorded in the pre-test questionnaires.

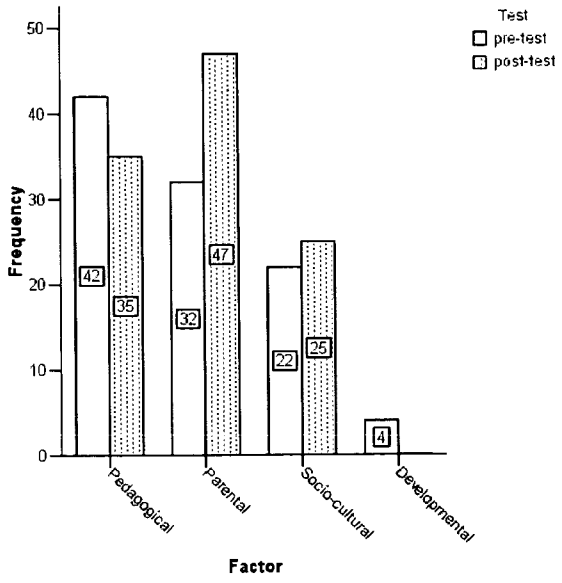


Figure 4.4.5. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' responses regarding possible influential factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

In order to understand the possible differences between student-teachers' responses to those three common factors, paired-sample t-tests were run to test the mean differences of students' number of responses to each of the aforementioned three common factors between the pre- and post-test questionnaires.

1. Pedagogical factors

A paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was no significant mean difference (t = - 1.4, df = 56, p > .05, d = .28) in overall student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- (M = .74, SD = .44) and post-questionnaires (M = .61, SD = .49) over the responses of 'pedagogical factor' (Figure 4.4.6). This finding suggests that CST and CSP may not be effective in affecting overall student-teachers' views of pedagogical factor as one of the possible factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling.

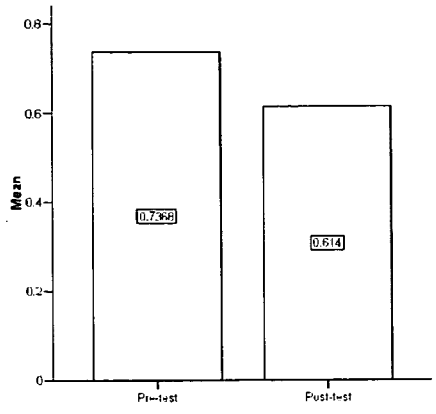


Figure 4.4.6. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding pedagogical factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

However, results did not hold true within each of the pre-service and in-service cohorts. Further paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was significant mean difference ($t = 3.0$, $df = 27$, $p < .05$, $d = .84$) in pre-service student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- ($M = .75$, $SD = .44$) and post-questionnaires ($M = .36$, $SD = .49$) over the pedagogical factor (Figure 4.4.7). Nevertheless, as similar to the results from the overall student-teachers, there was also no significant mean difference ($t = -1.3$, $df = 28$, $p > .05$, $d = -.34$) in in-service student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- ($M = .72$, $SD = .46$) and post-questionnaires ($M = .86$, $SD = .35$) over the pedagogical factor (Figure 4.4.8). This finding indicates that after the CST and CSP, fewer pre-service student-teachers suggested the pedagogical factor as one of the factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling.

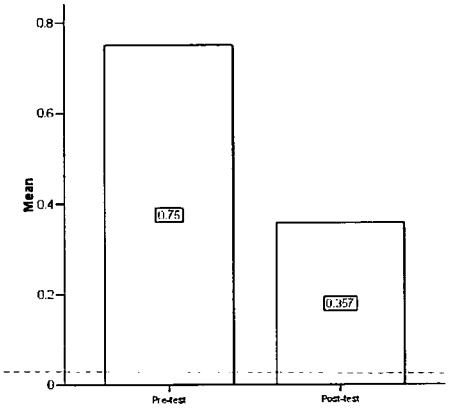


Figure 4.4.7. Pre-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding pedagogical factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

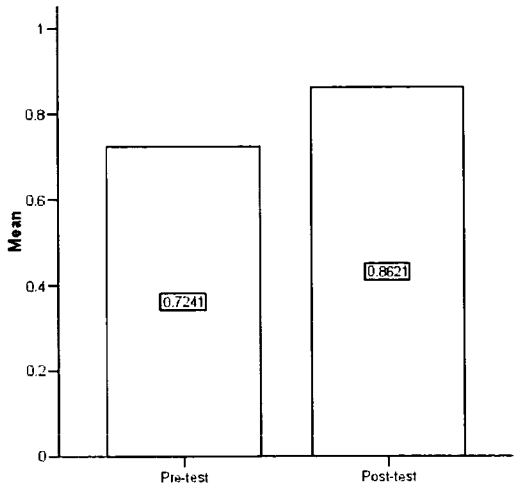


Figure 4.4.8. In-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding pedagogical factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

2. Parental factors

A paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was significant mean difference (t = - 3.0, df = 56, p < .05, d = -.59) in overall student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- (M = .56, SD = .50) and post-questionnaires (M = .82, SD = .38) related to the responses of 'Parental factor' (Figure 4.4.9). This finding suggests that after CST and CSP, there was an increase in overall student-teachers' views that parental factor is one possible factor that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling.

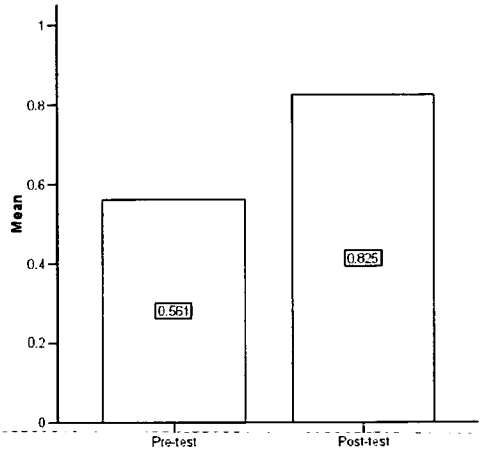


Figure 4.4.9. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding parental factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

In addition, results further hold true in each of the pre-service and in-service cohorts. Further paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was a significant mean difference (t = -2.1, df = 27, $p < .05$, d = -.61) in pre-service student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- (M = .46, SD = .51) and post-questionnaires (M = .75, SD = .44) related to the parental factor (Figure 4.4.10). Also, there was a significant mean difference (t = - 2.0, df = 28, $p \leq .05$, d = -.59) in in-service student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- (M = .66, SD = .48) and post-questionnaires (M = .90, SD = .31) related to the parental factor (Figure 4.4.11). This finding indicates that after CST and CSP, more pre-service and in-service student-teachers suggested parental factor as one of the factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling.

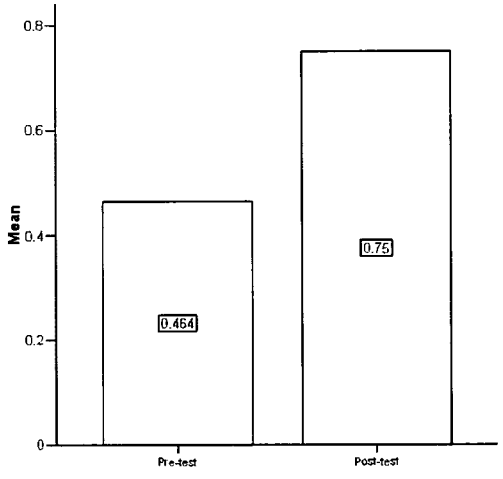


Figure 4.4.10. Pre-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding parental factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

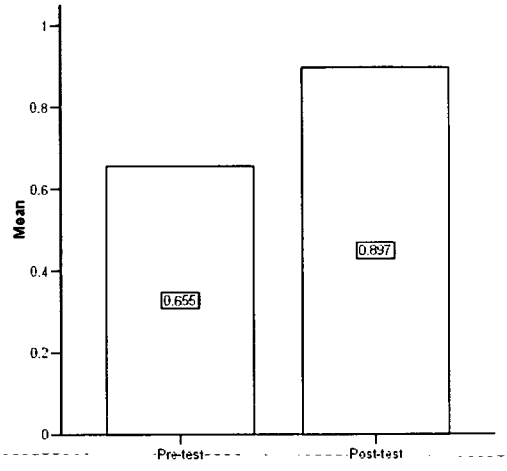


Figure 4.4.11. In-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding parental factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

3. Socio-cultural factors

A paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was no significant mean difference (t = - 3.0, df = 56, p < .05, d = -.59) in overall student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- (M = .56, SD = .50) and post-questionnaires (M = .82, SD = .38) related to 'Socio-cultural factor' (Figure 4.4.12). This finding suggests that CST and CSP may not have any impact on overall student-teachers' views of socio-cultural factor as one of the possible factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling.

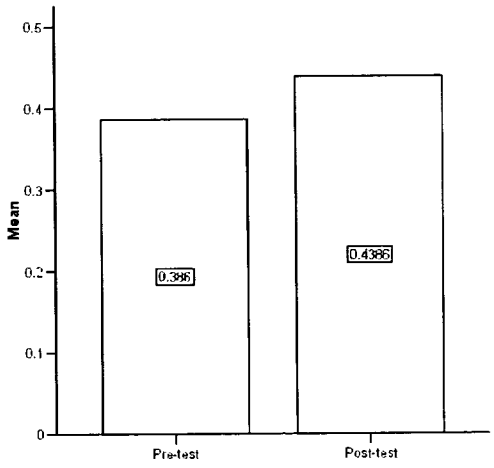


Figure 4.4.12. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding socio-cultural factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

In addition, the result further holds true in each of the pre-service and in-service cohort. Further paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was also no significant mean difference (t = 0, df = 27, p > .05, d = -.61) in pre-service student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- (M = .21, SD = .42) and post-questionnaires (M = .21, SD = .42) regarding the socio-cultural factor (Figure 4.4.13). Also, there was no significant mean difference (t = -.68, df = 28, p >.05, d = -.59) in in-service student-teacher participants' mean number of responses between pre- (M = .55, SD = .51) and post-questionnaires (M = .66, SD = .48) regarding the socio-cultural factor (Figure 4.4.14). These findings indicated that CST and CSP may not have any impact on both pre-service and in-service student-teachers' views of socio-cultural factors as one of

the possible factor that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling.

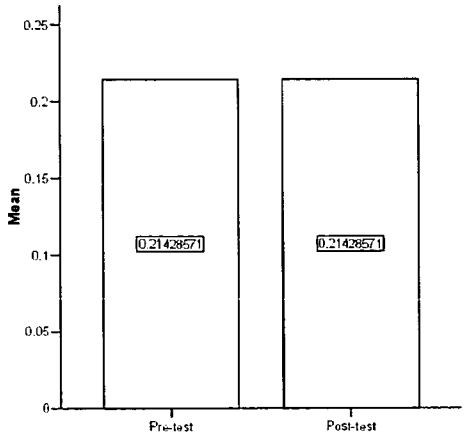


Figure 4.4.13. Pre-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding socio-cultural factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

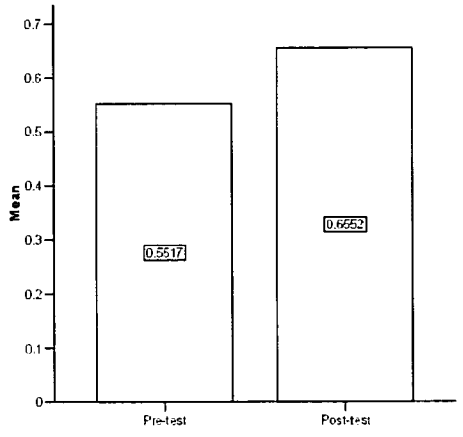


Figure 4.4.14. In-service student-teachers' mean number of responses regarding socio-cultural factors in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

Qualitative findings

Qualitative data showed that there was a change in the pattern of responses relating to the categories of factors that emerged during the process of coding. As mentioned above (see Figure 4.4.5 on p. 150), a collation of findings from both pre- and post-questionnaires showed that three categories of factors were commonly found in both pre- and post-test questionnaires, namely: 1) Pedagogical; 2) Parental; and 3) Socio-cultural. The response to 'developmental factor', however, was solely recorded in the pre-test

questionnaires. A comparison of the qualitative data for these categories shows that student-teachers' views of possible factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling were changed in the following three ways. Firstly, there was a shift in the views from 'pedagogical factor' to 'parental factor'. Secondly, there was comparatively more in-depth elaboration of student-teachers' views of the possible factors in the post-test setting. Thirdly, in the post-test setting, student-teachers were no longer doubtful about young children's developmental ability in learning Confucian values through storytelling. These three findings from the qualitative data imply that student-teachers generally tend to have a deeper understanding of children's learning ability and the possible influential factors of storytelling after CST and CSP. Table 4.4.1 shows some examples of student-teachers' responses regarding possible factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling.

Table 4.4.1. Student-teachers' responses of possible factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling in both pre- and post-test questionnaires

Factors	Student-teachers' responses	
	Pre-test	**Post-test**
Pedagogical	*"...teacher's way of teaching" (pre-service student-teacher 04)* *"...teacher's role modelling" (pre-service student-teacher 13)* *"...activities and programs in the kindergarten conducted by the teacher" (pre-service student-teacher 14)* *"...school's attitude" (pre-service student-teacher 20)* *"...teacher's moral values" (in-service student-teacher 34* *"...role modeling of adults and teachers" (in-service student-teacher 52)* *"...our kindergarten forbids us to tell stories that are different from their religion (in-service student-teacher 56)*	*"...teachers' degree of support and understanding of the Confucian values are very important factors" (pre-service student-teacher 02)* *"...the school's guiding principles; visions and background is very influential" (pre-service student-teacher 18)* *"...school's willingness to integrate these values into the daily curriculum programmes" (pre-service student-teacher 25)* *"...role modeling of teachers" (in-service student-teacher 36)* *"...teachers' own moral values and role modelling" (in-service student-teacher 44)* *"...teachers' attitude and behaviour...and school's curriculum and emphasis" (in-service student-teacher 52)*
Parental	*"...family background and parents belief" (pre-service student-teacher 16)* *"...parent's attitude" (pre-service student-teacher 18)* *"...family's moral concepts" (pre-*	*"... parents naturally pass on the tradition and values" (pre-service student-teacher 12)* *"...family's willingness to teach the values...and the family background" (pre-service student-*

	service student-teacher 26) *"...personal experience at home" (pre-service student-teacher 27)* *"...parents' own education" (in-service student-teacher 34)* *"...Parents' support" (in-service student-teacher 46)* *"...family education and parents' educational background" (in-service student-teacher 56)*	*teacher 13)* *"...daily experience of children at home" (pre-service student-teacher 15)* *"...parents would share and discuss with children their own social experiences, and help them to learn how to judge" (pre-service student-teacher 20)* *"...some parents cannot be good role models for children...they teach the wrong messages or values" (in-service student-teacher 29)* *"...the attitudes, behaviour and background of members in the family, (39)* *"...parents' negligence may give a wrong message to children" (in-service student-teacher 40)* *"...family background and the role modelling of parents" (in-service student-teacher 55)*
Socio-cultural	*"...social culture, norm and the environment" (pre-service student-teacher 21)* *"...social factors and the environment" (pre-service student-teacher 26)* *"...Newspaper and mass...television" (in-service student-teacher 32)* *"...social impact" (in-service student-teacher 45)* *"...mass media's incorrect message" (in-service student-teacher 57)*	*"...mass media...especially the television and their messages have bad influence on the children" (pre-service student-teacher 11)* *"...social culture and norms" (pre-service student-teacher 24)* *"...society's atmosphere, the attitude of the society towards loyalty to country" (pre-service student-teacher 26)* *"...mass media and the internet and television usually have adverse messages and publicize the wrong things for children" (in-service student-teacher 34)* *"...some of society's incorrect message, such as money being the most important thing in life, and that it is even better than love, had very bad influence on children" (in-service student-teacher 40)* *"...religious beliefs of the majority in the society" (in-service student-teacher 47)*
Developmental	*"...the age and development of the children may be a hindering factor" (pre-service student-teacher 9)* *"...age of the child...cognitive ability of the child" (pre-service student-teacher 16)* *"...children's cognitive*	*N/A*

	development" (in-service student-teacher 35) *"...child's learning ability" (in-service student-teacher 53)*	

Pre- and Post-Test Focus Groups

In the pre-test focus group, each of the 14 student-teacher participants was able to mention at least one possible factor that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling. A total of 13 responses from the pre-service and 28 responses from the in-service cohorts were recorded. After coding, in the pre-service cohort, two major categories of factors were found: 1) Pedagogical (f= 9, 69.2%); and 2) Developmental (f= 4, 30.8%). In the in-service cohort, three major categories of factors emerged: 1) Pedagogical (f= 21, 75%); 2) Parental (f= 5, 17.9%); and 3) Developmental (f= 2, 7.1%). Similar to the analysis of the pre-test questionnaire mentioned earlier (see Fig. 4.4.1), student-teachers suggested that pedagogical factors were the most common factors influencing children's learning of Confucian values by using storytelling.

In the post-test focus group, each of the 14 student-teacher participants was able to mention at least one possible factor that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling. A total of 37 responses and 41 responses were recorded in the pre-service and the in-service cohorts respectively. After coding, in the pre-service cohort, two categories of factors were found: 1) Pedagogical (f= 10, 27%); and 2) Parental (f= 27, 73%). In the in-service cohort, two major categories of factors emerged: 1) Pedagogical (f= 14, 34.1%); and 2) Parental (f= 27, 65.9%).

A collation of the qualitative data from both pre- and post-test focus groups further showed that student-teachers' views differed after the CST and CSP in the following three major ways. Firstly, there was a shift in the views of the most likely factor that may influence children's learning from 'pedagogical factor' to 'parental factor'. Students tended to comment more on the importance of parental influence and support. Table 4.4.2 illustrates the frequency count of student-teachers' responses in the pre- and post-test focus groups regarding all three categories of factors.

Table 4.4.2. Student-teachers' responses of possible factor that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling (in frequency count)

Factor	Test	Cohort	
		Pre-service	In-service
Pedagogical	pre	9	21
	post	10	14
Parental	pre	N/A	5
	post	27	27
Developmental	pre	4	2
	post	N/A	N/A

Secondly, student-teachers no longer regarded young children's developmental ability as one of the factors that may hinder their learning of Confucian values through storytelling. In the post-test setting, student-teachers were indeed surprised about the young children's positive learning ability. Feeling words, for instance, 'surprised', impressed' and 'amazed' were commonly recorded during the post-test focus group. Several student-teachers further admitted that they indeed were over-worried about children's possible lack of ability in the pre-test setting. This finding seems to be consistent with the results from the pre- and post-test questionnaires mentioned earlier (see Fig. 4.4.5). The following table (Table 4.4.3) shows some examples of student-teachers' change of views regarding the developmental factor as one of the possible factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling.

Table 4.4.3. Student-teachers' responses regarding developmental factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling in both pre- and post-test focus groups

Factors	Student-teachers' responses	
	Pre-test	Post-test
Developmental	*"...Children may not like story telling...They may not be attentive, and will not sit still" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...Sometimes children are not interested in what I have to say during storytelling time...they don't understand" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I don't know if they will understand the story. (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I hope that children will be willing to sit and listen to my story till the end...the story may be too difficult for them" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I believe that children's moral values are very weak as they are very self-centered and selfish,*	*"...I was worried about their interest to listen to me earlier, but I was quite surprised instead about their wonderful learning abilities" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I was worried about children's understanding of the values before the project, however, I was very amazed by the logical explanations they had expressed after hearing the story" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...the children did know about the custom of this festival before my storytelling...they were actually well prepared to learn" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I was amazed at the expressiveness of the children and their comprehensive ability, for*

	ignoring the feelings of others, are not willing to be polite and, not willing to share. They were not interested in most activities, and also not interested in reading story books" (in-service student-teacher) *"...The children in my class did not enjoy storytelling or reciting rhymes...the abstract concept is too hard for them" (in-service student-teacher)*	*they were even able to talk about things beyond the story content" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I was quite amazed to see how logical children's discussions were, and how they respected others' views" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...After the story project, I understood that I didn't really have to worry that the children could be bored with the story, for I realized that they liked to listen to stories so much that they enjoyed even repeats of the same story, over and over again" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...I was quite impressed by their clear sense of justice (in-service student-teacher)* *"...I realized that they had a good understanding of the customs and manners of the festival" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...I was a bit uncertain about how children would react to my story telling, but to my surprise, they were very interested and became involved in the story quickly" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...I was pleased to realize that children understood the meaning and values behind the festival through my story" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...I did not expect the children to ask so many questions all of which were very reasonable and sensible" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...I'd never expected that children could express their compassion and emotion so well!" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...I discovered something very special: that the children had a very different perception on aging and death. They also had great compassion for people around them, and they were very interested in the Chinese tradition and culture. This is an aspect which we should pay more attention to" (in-service student-teacher)*

Lastly, there was a shift from negative to positive views regarding possible factors that may influence children's learning. In the pre-test focus group, student-teachers tended to comment on negative factors – such as teachers' lack of confidence, inflexibility of curriculum, and parents' insufficient support. However, in the post-test focus group, student-teachers were generally inclined to provide positive and constructive suggestions that may facilitate children's learning – such as interaction with children, establishment of good relationships with children, and an increase in both quality and quantity of family education. Table 4.4.4 illustrates some examples of the student-teachers' responses regarding pedagogical and parental factors – the two major categories of factors which emerged in both pre- and post-test focus groups.

Table 4.4.4. Student-teachers' responses to pedagogical and parental factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling in both pre- and post-test focus groups

Factors	Student-teachers' responses	
	Pre-test	**Post-test**
Pedagogical	*"...I may not be able to teach them any Confucian values...I am not confident enough" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...It is how to keep the children in order, to sit very still and to listen to me that's worrying me" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...My voice is neither attractive nor loud enough" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...Sometimes the class is very big, about 30 children, and some cannot see the story book, and they will start pushing or fighting with other children" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I don't know how to select story books. I will only look at the pictures to see if they are pretty" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...The stories that I normally used were not interesting. I couldn't find an interesting story book in my school" (In-service student-teacher)* *"...the child care centre director wanted us to use the time for curriculum learning...we rarely*	*"...A good relationship with the children will make the whole storytelling event happy...this is a key to children's learning" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I realized that the main reason for children's effective learning is their teachers listened patiently to children's views, responded positively and studied their views in detail together" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...Inviting them to share is a very important facilitator for children's learning" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I learned that I need to be very careful with selecting the right story book. It should be closely related to their lives, in order for the children to be able to respond and share. This will directly influence children's learning atmosphere" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I used the occasion to observe and know what the children already knew and had experiences of; this will enable me to better*

	tell stories to children" (In-service student-teacher) *"...The kindergarten has only 3 hours of operation, and we need to cover many aspects of academic learning, and so usually it is difficult to find time to select appropriate stories for them" (In-service student-teacher)* *"...because of the shortage of time, most teachers will only carelessly and briefly tell a story, get it completed and continue with other more important 'academic' activities...so there is no time for teaching Confucian values through storytelling" (In-service student-teacher)*	*communicate with them and to facilitate their learning" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...Once the teacher plans the seating to avoid disturbance and distractions in the environment, children would be able to learn" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I realized that it was very important to prepare myself well before starting the story. I should have had everything that I'd needed ready and reachable" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...I have realized that children have their own creative thoughts and we should listen with our heart to understand what they really meant and wanted. A harmonious relationship will be built based on this. This will in return facilitate children's learning" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...Selecting appropriate contents is very important, and the content should be interesting and more related to their daily lives. Children became more attentive and responsive to this" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...I must have the best interest of the child as my foundation" (in-service student-teacher)*
Parental	*"...Parents are not pleased that we spend our time telling stories to their children" (pre -service student-teacher)* *"...At home, the parents seldom tell stories to their children" (In-service student-teacher)* *"... parents are only interested in how much their children learn and skills taught, and ignore the basic of education" (In-service student-teacher)* *"...With modernization, some young families may not even have this habit of preserving some traditional cultural practices" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...The parents do not want us to tell stories to children" (in-service student-teacher)*	*"...Children would be able to learn from their parents at home during different festival celebrations" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...Parents should bring children on outings to see the real festivities, and I believe, this would be an effective way to teach" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...adults should increase children's daily life experiences, and let them talk and share about them" (pre-service student-teacher)* *"...Parents should bring their children out to really experience the festivals" (in-service student-teacher)* *"...Confucius' teachings and values cannot be learnt from one or two activities and stories...for children should be immersed into such an*

		atmosphere, and they need continuous activities to help them learn the behavior and internalize the values...there is a need for the support and cooperation from the family" (in-service student-teacher)

4.5.4. Summary

Results from both questionnaires (pre- and post-test) and focus groups (pre- and post-test) showed that student-teachers' views of possible factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling were different after the implementation of the CST and the CSP. Quantitative data showed that, in the post-test setting, more pre-service student-teachers tended to regard the pedagogical factor as being influential. In addition, more student-teachers (both pre-service and in-service cohorts) were aware of the importance of the parental factor as being influential in children's learning. Qualitative data showed that student-teachers were more able to provide in-depth elaboration of possible factors in the post-test setting. Furthermore, they no longer regarded young children's developmental ability as one possible factor that may hinder children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling. In addition, qualitative data from the focus group further showed that student-teachers were more able to provide positive and constructive comments regarding possible influencing factors after the CST and CSP.

4.5.5. Conclusion and Discussion

To conclude, student-teachers generally regarded parental and pedagogical factors as the two major factors that may influence children's learning of Confucian values through storytelling. The concerns related to parental factors were that the parents should share the same moral values, be role models and have the ability to guide in such a way that their children could be immersed in an environment that is conducive to their moral development. This view agrees with Bandura's suggestion (1977) that moral behaviour is acquired through children modeling, imitating the behaviour of others, by learning through observation and models are especially influential during the preschool years

(Berk, 2006; Mussen & Eisenberg-Berg, 1977). It is natural that the first role model for a child is the parent whose practices and preservation of Chinese values, cultures and customs become acts for the child to observe and imitate. For learning to take place, the child must be motivated to engage in challenges that are often provided by the child's desire to 'be like' or 'to be liked by' the person imitated (Siraj-Blatchford, 1999, p. 32), in this case, their parents. As suggested by Bandura (1989) one's actions are partly guided by observing their consequences, such that one may profit from the successes and mistakes of others, for example, the conduct and behaviour of the parents. Furthermore, parents need to guide their children by using positive reinforcement in the form of praising the act (Mills & Grusec, 1989) and to be warm and responsive (Yarrow, Scott, & Waxler, 1973) in a supportive environment if they are to foster their development of moral reasoning and value standards. Besides acting as a model, parents can develop an interactive partnership with the child where the child may become responsible for his/her own learning with parents serving as source of information (Siraj-Blatchford, 1999, p. 37). Within this partnership, as reiterated by the student-teachers, parents provide direct experiences and opportunities for the child in their local and cultural context, so that the child can internalise the learning to become part of his/her moral value and standards. As suggested by Bruner, culture shapes the mind and learning must be considered within its situated context (Siraj-Blatchford, 1999, p. 36). Hence, the home environment and the celebration of the festivals provided the opportunities for such learning to take place.

The concern of the pedagogical factor was significantly noticed in the pre-service student-teacher cohort and specifically the pedagogical techniques involved in their establishing of a relationship with the child. In addition, the concerns related to the ability to select appropriate teaching materials and the ability to create an environment so that the child could be both attentive and interested to participate. With relatively limited working experience in the early childhood centres, the pre-service student-teachers felt some inadequacy with techniques for working with young children. This inadequacy was subsequently replaced by confidence and an awareness of the need to improve their pedagogical practices. Gage (1985) stated that an interactive process between the teacher, learner and the learning environment, provides for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and disposition. These views are further confirmed by Siraj-Blatchford (1999, p. 20) who stated that "to be an effective pedagogue means to be skilled in the selection of appropriate teaching techniques in order to facilitate learning... for the effective

transmission of different forms of knowledge". A similar view was stated by Watkins and Mortimore (1999, p. 3) who defined pedagogy as "any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another". This consciousness alerted the student-teachers that they should be role models and not only transfer knowledge, but also understand what the child already knows and coordinate activities that may scaffold the children's learning further. As suggested by Bruner (1996), the teacher should "highlight critical features... buffer the child's attention against distractions... channel activities to foster success...turn errors into learning opportunities... enable explanations and allow responsibility to be transferred to the learner", as cited by Siraj-Blatchford (2002, p. 35). To be capable of performing these roles requires the teacher to be alert and conscious and have good understanding of the development and needs of each child, which for a pre-service student-teacher would be overwhelming and hence their awareness of this factor.

The shift of views from both cohorts from pedagogical to parental factors was apparent after CSP, confirming that teachers alone cannot accomplish the task of developing and preserving the Confucian values in young children. Children need to practise and immerse themselves in such an environment for the values to be internalised. Vygotsky has suggested that "cognitive development is the result of the child participating in problem solving, together with a partner who can provide leadership and guidance within the activity" as cited by Siraj-Blatchford, (2002, p. 34), and as seen in this study, the partnership is between the parents and the child and also between the teacher and the learner (the child). Thus, teachers and parents should take the initiative and be engaged in discussion and problem solving processes with the children, offering guidance whenever appropriate, that may result in the development or preservation of the values.

Among possible pedagogical factors, teachers' inadequate storytelling techniques were found in both data sources for this research question. There were concerns about the children's reactions to the teachers' storytelling or the teachers' own responses to children. It is possible to suggest that student-teachers' understanding and implementation of specific storytelling techniques could be one significant problem as student-teachers' views may change regarding storytelling techniques after CST and CSP. This point will be examined in the next Research Question 5.

4.6 Results of Research Question 5

4.6.1. Research Question

How does (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques differ, if any, before and after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?

4.6.2. Introduction

To seek answers to Research Question 5, the following two sources of data collection were used:

1. *Pre- and post-test questionnaires.* All 57 pre-service or in-service student-teachers were invited to answer an open-ended question on both the pre- and post-test questionnaire (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). The question stated: "*What, if any, are some possible effective storytelling techniques for young children?*" At the end of the research process, all participants were able to answer this question by mentioning at least one possible effective storytelling technique in both pre- and post-test questionnaires (i.e. 100% response rate).

2. *Reflective report of 57 student-teacher participants.* Student-teachers were asked to submit a reflective report within two weeks after their implementation of CSP. There was a free format for the report. Student-teachers were asked to focus on experiences of both CST and CSP – such as one's knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions, behaviours and/or children's responses. Information related to their views of the effectiveness of storytelling was extracted, categorized and coded for the purpose of answering this research question. At the end of the research process, a total of 57 reports were collected (i.e. 100% response rate).

Due to the qualitative nature of the data, the presentation of the findings is mainly based on frequency count (*f*) and percentage computations (%). Nevertheless, paired-sample t-tests were also applied in order to identify any possible significant difference in

the quantitative data which may emerge from the pre- and post-test questionnaires. Data is presented under each of the above two sources (i.e. questionnaires and reflective reports). A collation of findings from both questionnaires and reflective reports is included in the last part of this section.

4.6.3. Results

Pre- and Post-Test Questionnaires

In the pre-test questionnaire, all 57 pre-service and in-service student-teachers were able to mention at least one possible effective storytelling technique for young children. Fifty of them were able to mention more than one possible technique. As a result, a total of 134 responses were recorded. After coding, the following five categories of storytelling techniques emerged: 1) Read aloud (f= 53, 39.6%); 2) Role-play (f= 40, 29.9%); 3) Use of teaching aids (f= 26, 19.4%); 4) Relate story to real life experiences (f= 13, 9.7%); and 5) Integrate storytelling with other learning disciplines (f= 2, 1.5%) (Figure 4.5.1). Among these five categories of storytelling techniques, three were mentioned by both pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants (Figure 4.5.2), namely: 1) Read aloud; 2) Role-play; and 3) Use of teaching aids. A similar pattern of responses was also found in these three common categories, except for the technique of the 'use of teaching aids". The technique of 'Read aloud' was mentioned most frequently by both cohorts. The technique 'Relate story to real life experiences' was mentioned by pre-service student-teachers only, whereas the technique of 'Integrate storytelling with other learning disciplines' was mentioned by the in-service student-teachers only.

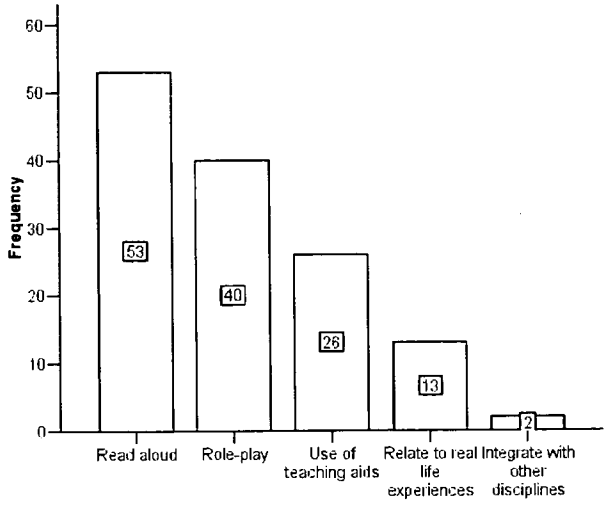


Figure 4.5.1. Story-telling techniques mentioned by all student-teacher participants in Pre-test questionnaires

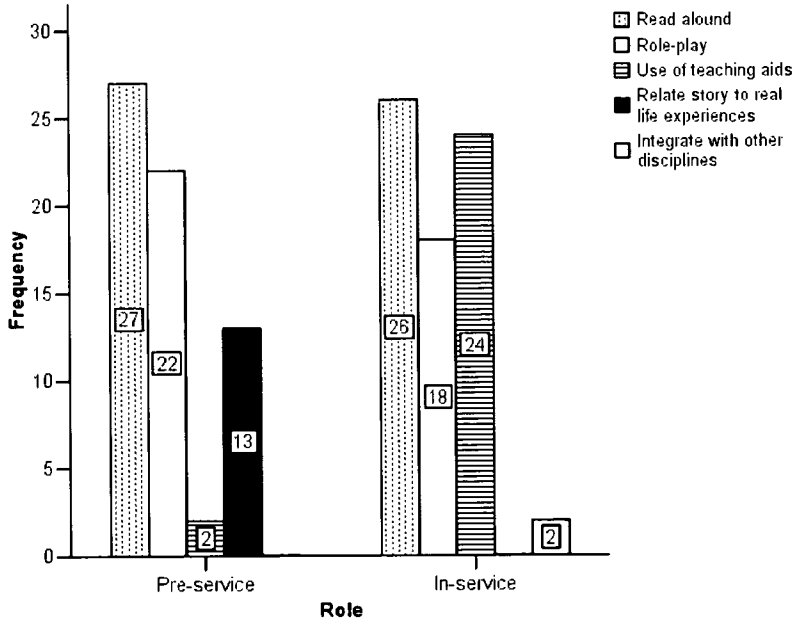


Figure 4.5.2. Story-telling techniques mentioned by pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants in Pre-test questionnaires

In the post-test questionnaire, all 57 pre-service and in-service student-teachers were also able to mention at least one possible effective storytelling technique for young children. Fifty six of them were able to mention more than one possible technique. A total of 157 responses was recorded. After coding, the following four categories of storytelling techniques emerged: 1) Read aloud (f = 56, 35.7%); 2) Role-play (f = 39, 24.8%); 3) Use

of teaching aids (f = 38, 24.2%); and 4) Relate story to real life experiences (f = 24, 15.3%) (Figure 4.5.3). These four categories of storytelling techniques were mentioned most frequently by both pre-service and in-service student-teacher cohorts (Figure 4.5.4). Similar to the findings from the aforementioned pre-test questionnaire, the technique of 'Read aloud' was also mentioned most frequently by both cohorts. The techniques of the 'Use of teaching aids' and 'Relate story to real life experiences' were the least frequently mentioned ones.

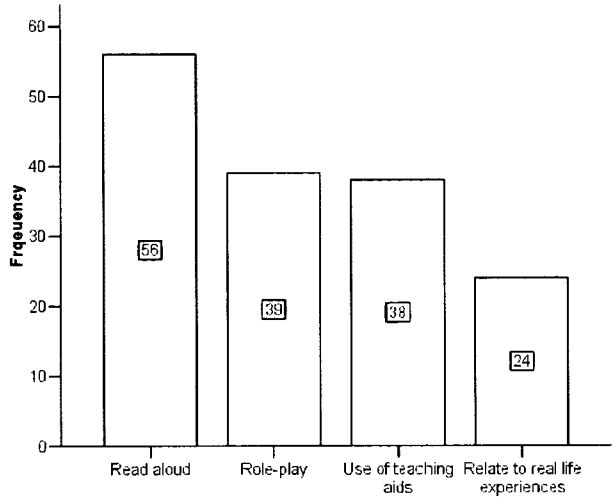


Figure 4.5.3. Story-telling techniques mentioned by all student-teacher participants in post-test questionnaire

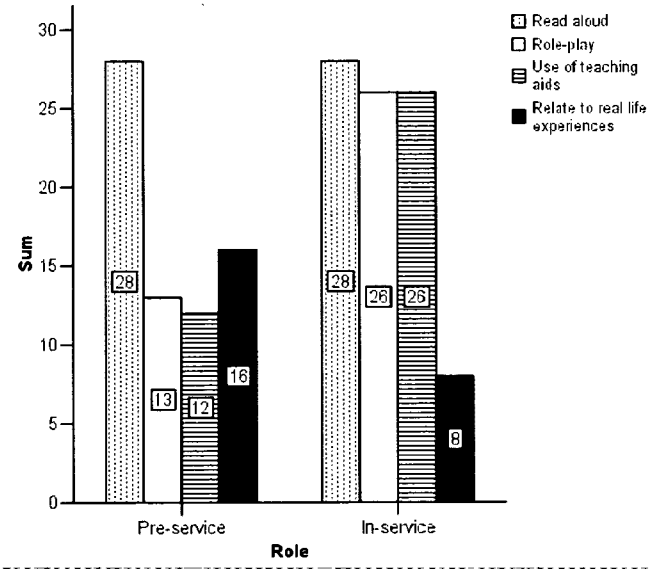


Figure 4.5.4. Story-telling techniques mentioned by pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants in post-test questionnaire

In order to explore student-teachers' possible differences in understanding storytelling technique before and after their Confucian Values Storytelling Training (CST) and Confucian Values Storytelling Project (CSP), the qualitative and quantitative data from the pre- and post-questionnaires of both student-teacher cohorts were collated and are presented as follows:

Quantitative findings

The quantitative results showed that overall, student-teachers were able to mention more storytelling techniques after the CST and CSP procedures. The total number of student-teachers' responses to the open-ended question regarding storytelling techniques increased from 134 responses in the pre-test questionnaire to 157 responses in the post-test questionnaires. A paired-sample t-test was run to test the mean differences of participants' number of responses between pre- and post-test questionnaires. The analysis showed that there was a significant mean difference (t = - 3.2, df = 56, $p < .05$, d = - .59) in each student-teacher participant's number of responses between pre- (M = 2.4, SD = .72) and post-questionnaires (M = 2.8, SD = .64) over the number of storytelling techniques (Figure 4.5.5). This finding indicates that the CST and CSP may be effective in improving overall student-teachers' understanding of a number of storytelling techniques.

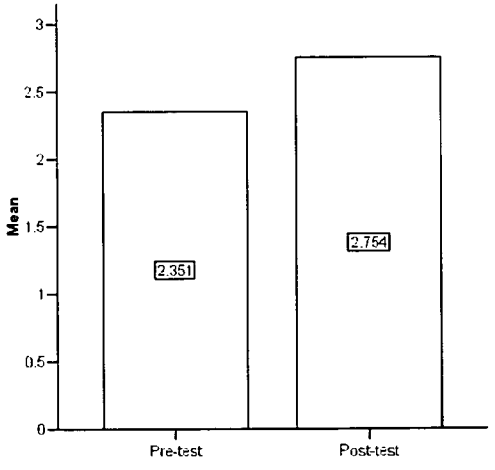


Figure 4.5.5. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the question of "*What, if any, are some possible effective storytelling techniques for young children?*" in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

In addition, another paired-sample t-test was run to test the mean differences of each cohort's number of responses between pre- and post-test questionnaires. The analysis showed that there was no significant mean difference (t = - .93, df = 27, p > .05, d = - .29) in each pre-service student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- (M = 2.3, SD = .66) and post-questionnaires (M = 2.5, SD = .74) over the number of storytelling techniques (Figure 4.5.6). However, there was a significant mean difference (t = - 4.1, df = 28, p < .05, d = -1.0) for each in-service student-teacher participant's number of responses between pre- (M = 2.4, SD = .78) and post-questionnaires (M = 3.0, SD = .33) over the number of storytelling techniques (Figure 4.5.7). This finding indicates that the CST and CSP were more effective in improving the in-service student-teachers' understanding of a number of storytelling techniques.

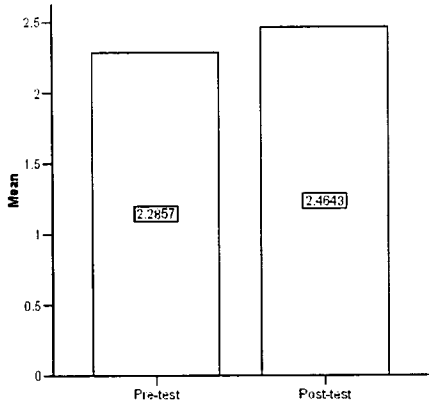


Figure 4.5.6. Pre-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the question of "*What, if any, are some possible effective storytelling techniques for young children?*" in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

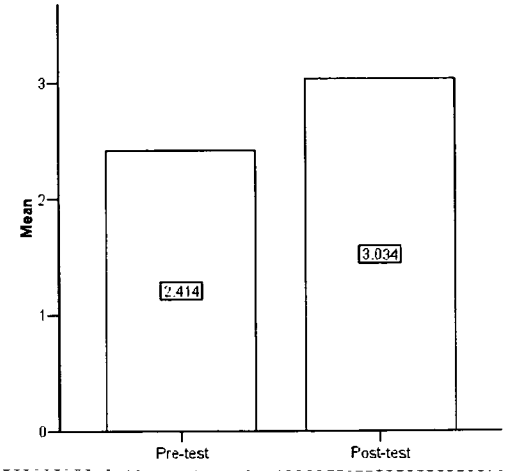


Figure 4.5.7. In-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the question of "*What, if any, are some possible effective storytelling techniques for young children?*" in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

A collation of findings from both pre- and post-questionnaires further showed that four types of storytelling techniques were commonly mentioned by both pre-service and in-service student-teachers. They were: 1) Read aloud; 2) Role-play; 3) Use of teaching aids; and 4) Relate story to real life experiences (Figure 4.5.8). In order to understand the possible differences between student-teachers' responses to these four common types of storytelling techniques, further paired-sample t-tests were run to test the mean differences of students' number of responses to each of the these techniques between pre- and post-test questionnaires.

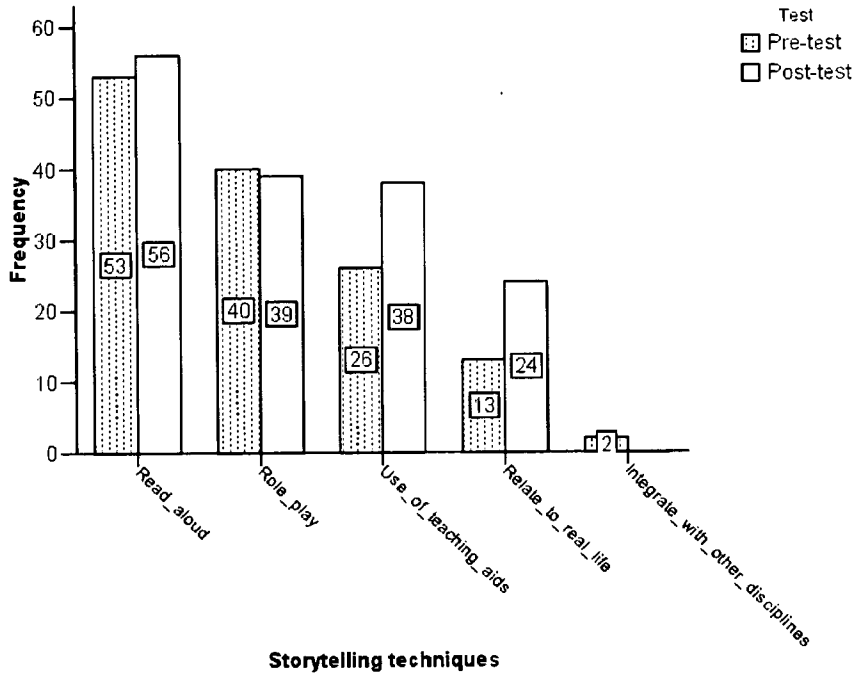


Figure 4.5.8. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' responses to the question of "*What, if any, are some possible effective storytelling techniques for young children?*" in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

1. Read aloud

The paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was no significant mean difference (t = - 1.4, df = 56, p > .05, d = - .24) in overall student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- (M = .93, SD = .26) and post-questionnaires (M = .98, SD = .13) over the number of the technique of 'Read aloud' (Figure 4.5.9). This finding indicates that CST and CSP made no difference in the overall student-teachers' awareness of this storytelling technique.

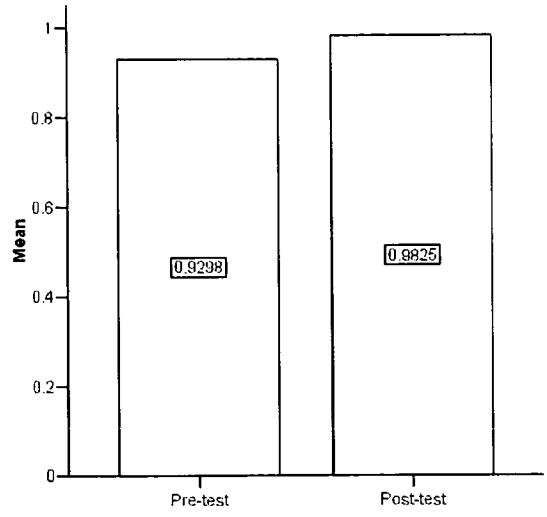


Figure 4.5.9. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the storytelling technique of 'Read aloud' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

2. Role-play

The paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was also no significant mean difference ($t = -.19$, $df = 56$, $p > .05$, $d = .04$) in overall student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- ($M = .70$, $SD = .46$) and post-questionnaires ($M = .68$, $SD = .47$) over the number of the technique of 'Role-play' (Figure 4.5.10). This finding indicates that the CST and CSP was not effective in improving overall student-teachers' awareness of this storytelling technique.

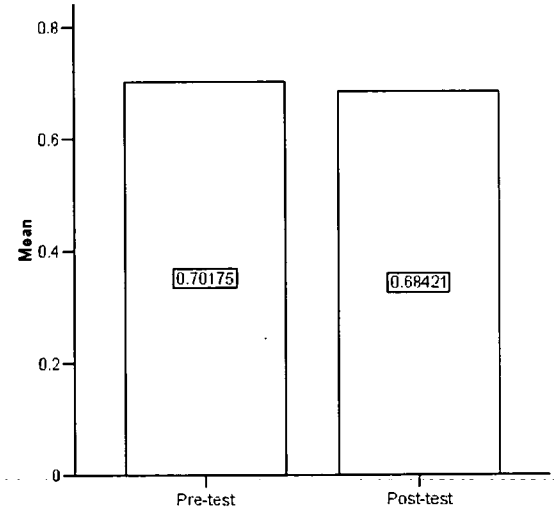


Figure 4.5.10. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the storytelling technique of 'Role-play' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

3. Use of teaching aids

The paired-sample t-test analysis, however, showed that there was a significant mean difference (t = - 3.5, df = 56, p < .05, d = - .43) in overall student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- (M = .46, SD = .50) and post-questionnaires (M = .67, SD = .48) over the number of the technique 'Use of teaching aids' (Figure 4.5.11). This difference was also the largest among the four common categories of storytelling techniques both for the pre-service and in-service student-teacher cohorts. This finding indicates that the CST and CSP may be effective in improving overall student-teachers' awareness of this storytelling technique.

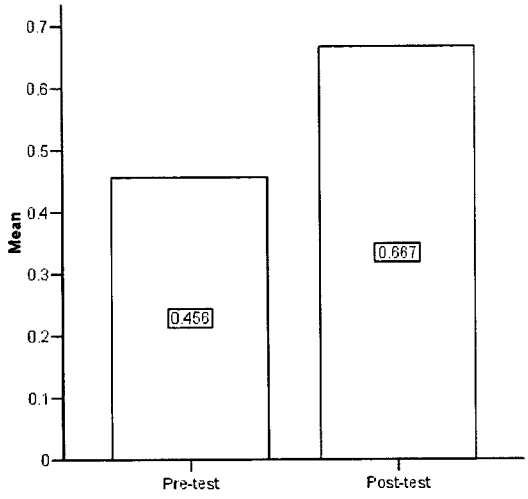


Figure 4.5.11. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the storytelling technique of the 'Use of teaching aids' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

The analysis further showed that the above significant mean difference holds true for the pre-service cohort only. The paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was a significant mean difference (t = - 3.8, df = 27, p < .05, d = - .90) in each pre-service student-teacher participant's number of responses between pre- (M = .07, SD = .26) and post-questionnaires (M = .43, SD = .50) (Figure 4.5.12). However, there was no significant mean difference (t = - 1.0, df = 28, p > .05, d = - .20) in each in-service student-teacher participant's number of responses between pre- (M = .83, SD = .38) and post-questionnaires (M = .90, SD = .31) (Figure 4.5.13). This finding indicates that CST

and CSP may be more effective in improving pre-service student-teachers' awareness of this storytelling technique.

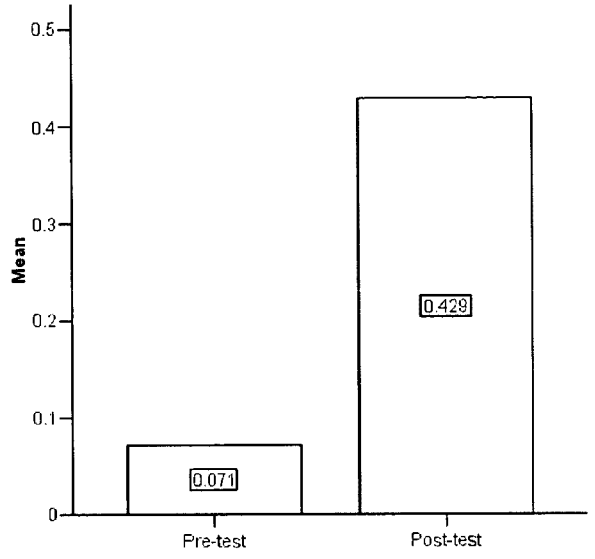


Figure 4.5.12. Pre-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the storytelling technique of the 'Use of teaching aids' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

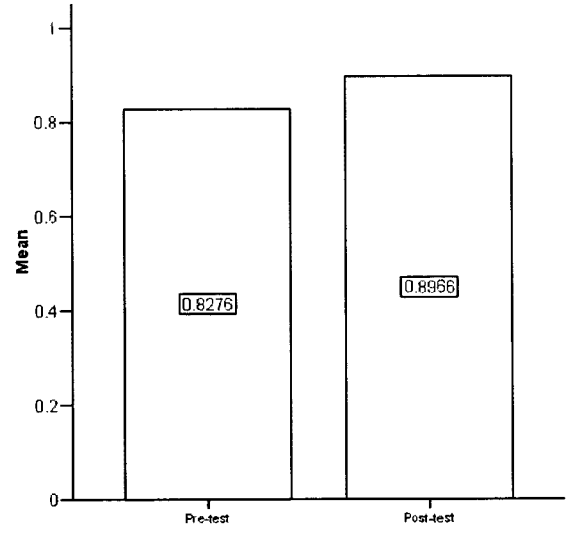


Figure 4.5.13. In-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the storytelling technique of the 'Use of teaching aids' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

4. Relate story to real life experiences

The paired-sample t-test analysis also showed that there was a significant mean difference (t = - 2.5, df = 56, p < .05, d = - .41) in overall student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- (M = .23, SD = .42) and post-questionnaires (M = .42,

SD = .50) over the number of the technique of 'Relate story to real life experiences' (Figure 4.5.14). This finding indicates that CST and CSP may be effective in improving overall student-teachers' awareness of this storytelling technique by almost double.

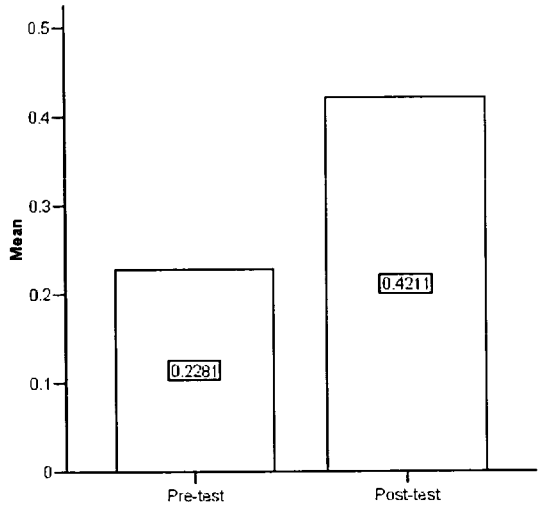


Figure 4.5.14. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the storytelling technique of 'Relate story to real life experiences' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

The paired-sample t-test analysis further showed that this significant mean difference holds true for the in-service cohort only. The analysis showed that there was no significant mean difference (t = - .83, df = 27, p > .05, d = - .22) in each pre-service student-teacher participant's number of responses between pre- (M = .46, SD = .51) and post-questionnaires (M = .57, SD = .50) (Figure 4.5.15). However, there was a significant mean difference (t = - 3.3, df = 28, p < .05, d = -.86) in each in-service student-teacher participant's number of responses between pre- (M = 0, SD = 0) and post-questionnaires (M = .28, SD = .46) (Figure 4.5.16). This finding indicates that CST and CSP may be more effective in improving in-service student-teachers' awareness of this storytelling technique.

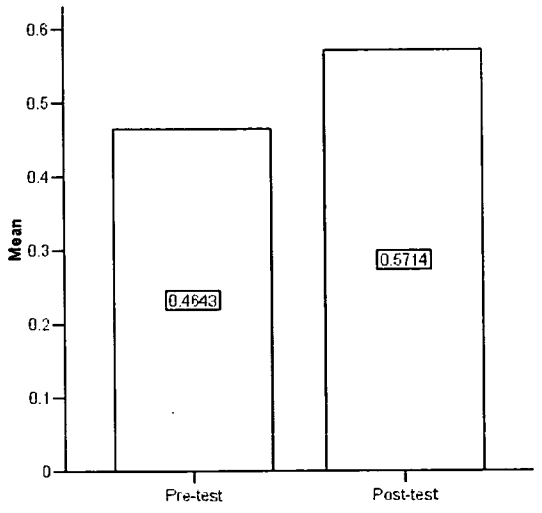


Figure 4.5.15. Pre-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the storytelling technique of 'Relate story to real life experiences' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

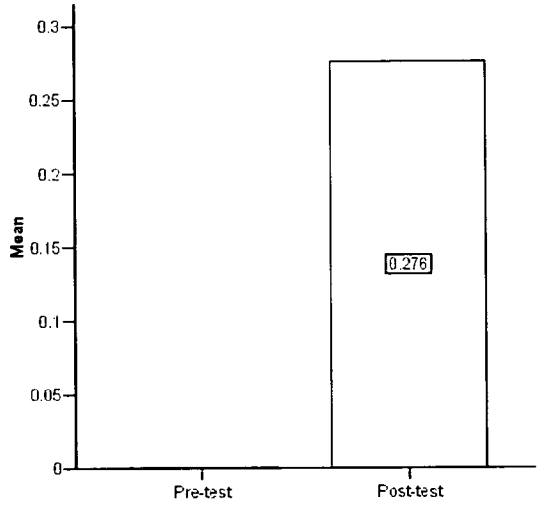


Figure 4.5.16. In-service student-teachers' mean number of responses to the storytelling technique of 'Relate story to real life experiences' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

Qualitative findings

Qualitative data also showed that both cohorts of student-teacher participants' understanding of storytelling techniques improved after CST and CSP, although the number of categories of storytelling techniques was reduced from five to four (refer to Figure 4.5.1 and Figure 4.5.3). As mentioned, the four common categories between the findings from the pre- and post-test questionnaires were: 1) Read aloud; 2) Role-play; 3)

Use of teaching aids; and 4) Relate story to real life experiences. A comparison of the qualitative data for these four common categories showed that the quality of both cohorts of student-teachers' understanding of storytelling technique improved in three ways. Firstly, student-teachers were generally more able to mention the details of each storytelling technique in the post-test questionnaires. Secondly, student-teachers' awareness of including play-based elements and of linking storytelling experiences to real life experiences had improved as shown in the post-test questionnaire. Thirdly, student-teachers were generally more able to enrich the quality of each technique, such as extending from 2-dimensional visual teaching aids to 3-dimensional real objects. The findings from the qualitative data may imply that both pre-service and in-service student-teachers tended to have deeper understanding of the storytelling techniques after CST and CSP. Table 4.5.1 shows student-teachers' different responses to storytelling technique in the pre- and post-test questionnaires.

Table 4.5.1. Student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in both pre- and post-test questionnaires

Storytelling techniques	Student-teachers' responses	
	Pre-test	**Post-test**
Read aloud	*"...I read the story book to children" (pre-service student-teacher 3)* *"...I'll usually use the story book"(pre-service student-teacher 1)* *"...choose a suitable book and read it" (pre-service student-teacher 35)* *"...I will select story books with colourful and informative pictures (In-service student 41)* *"...I will use story books and pictures to tell the stories" (In-service student 55)*	*"...use story book to start and let the children feel and interact with the characters and talk about their reactions and responses to the story" (In-service student-teacher 34)* *"...read the story books aloud mixed with gestures, movements and expressions...I will make good use of my voice" (In-service student-teacher 35)* *"...read story book, using facial expression and expressive voice to tell stories. There must be good eye contact and bodily movement" (In-service student-teacher 39)* *"...read story books and talk about the pictures using descriptive expression and good use of voice" (In-service student-teacher 44)*
Role-play	*"...role-play and games" (pre-service student-teacher 4)* *"...role play and narrating, mixed with good use of voice and expression g(in-service student-teacher 30)* *"...role-play and acting" (in-*	*"...to do a drama according to the story, and also to involve children too" (Pre-service student-teacher 3)* *"...to invite children to act out the story characters" (Pre-service student-teacher 8)*

	service student-teacher 54)	*"...using my voice and facial expression, I will pretend with the children to be the characters of the story" (Pre-service student-teacher 9)* *"...I will set up the imaginative corner for children to role play" (In-service student-teacher 39)* *"...to do a drama according to the story content" (In-service student-teacher 54)*
Use of teaching aids	*"...use pictures to facilitate storytelling" (Pre-service student-teacher 2)* *"...can use children's drawing as well" (Pre-service student-teacher 6)* *"...hand puppets" (In-service student-teacher 29)* *"...puppets" (In-service student-teacher 31)* *"...teaching aids (e.g. pictures and photos) and artefacts" (In-service student-teacher 49)* *"...use story books and artefacts to tell the stories" (In-service student-teacher 55)*	*"...use children's favourite toys and objects" (In-service student-teacher 31)* *"...different real objects that children can touch and sense" (In-service student-teacher 32)* *"...festival celebration with food and objects like red packets, lanterns" (In-service student-teacher 36)* *"...use objects and materials that are seen in the festivals...something real" (In-service student-teacher 43)* *"...use real materials like containers, food, visual aids" (In-service student-teacher 46)* *"...real objects and aids, e.g. doll, puppets, paddles, lanterns" (In-service student-teacher 48)"*
Relate story to real life experiences	*"...real life experiences" (pre-service student-teacher 20)* *"...discussion of life experiences" (pre-service student-teacher 25)* *"...sharing of life experiences" (pre-service student-teacher 28)*	*"...to talk about the linkage between the story and their (children's) real life experiences" (Pre-service student-teacher 7)* *"...discussion of story contents and their (children's) daily experiences" (Pre-service student-teacher 8)* *"...to discuss their (children's) personal experiences that were induced from the story" (Pre-service student-teacher 15)* *"...discuss with children their daily practices, including custom, culture and tradition" (Pre-service student-teacher 28)* *"...daily experience and practice of such values...may include newspaper sharing and discussion" (In-service student-teacher 33)* *"...application and discussion of values in daily life roles (In-service student-teacher 40)*

Reflective Reports

Fifty seven reflective reports were collected from both pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants after CST and CSP (i.e. 100% response rate). As listed earlier in Table 4.3.1 in the current chapter (see p. 101), the distribution of the number of reflective reports for each of the four selected Chinese festivals for this research were 15 (Chinese New Year), 13 (Dragon Boat festival, 14 (Chung Yeung festival), and 15 (Mid-Autumn festival). Data from the reflective reports is presented according to each festival. A summary of findings from all four festivals is presented after that.

Chinese New Year

Fifteen reflective reports of pre-service student-teachers regarding both CST and CSP of the Chinese New Year were collected (i.e. 100% response rate). Fourteen of them included at least one comment on storytelling techniques, and a total of 50 records were documented. After coding, four categories of techniques emerged: 1) Read aloud (f= 16, 32%); 2) Role-play (f= 2, 4%); 3) Use of teaching aids (f= 5, 10%); and 4) Relate story to real life experiences (f= 27, 54%) (Figure 4.5.17). Student-teachers were able to provide detailed and critical comments on each technique, such as their awareness of capturing children's learning interest, the integration of drama, the use of 3-dimensional aids, and the inclusion of children's personal experiences. Among these four categories of techniques, 'Relate story to real life experiences' was most frequently mentioned. Examples of student-teachers' comments of the four categories of techniques are listed in Table 4.5.2.

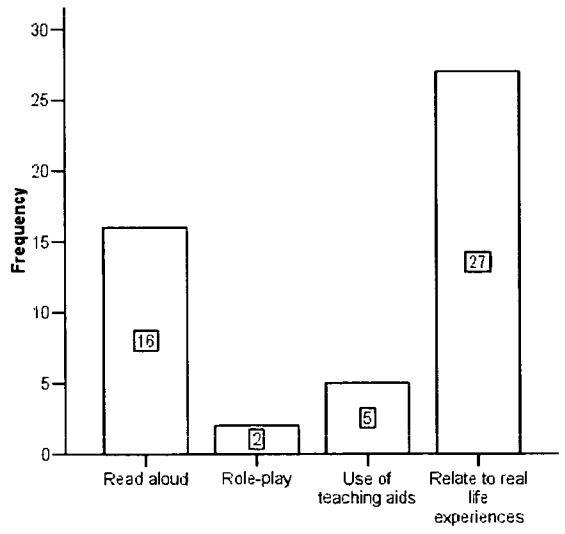


Figure 4.5.17. Pre-service student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both CST and CSP of the Chinese New Year

Table 4.5.2. Student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both CST and CSP of the Chinese New Year

Storytelling Techniques	Student-teachers' responses
Read aloud	*"...I used storybook to tell my story, but I added a touch of mystery, by asking them to guess and predict which animal would arrive after one had arrived" (Pre-service student-teacher 2)* *"...I realised that they liked to listen to my story so much that they enjoyed even repeats of the same story, over and over again. It really depended on whether the teacher could capture the children's interest during the story telling" (Pre-service student-teacher 11)* *"...besides reading the story to the children, I used my voice, my expression and my interaction with the children so as to make the story lively and interesting" (Pre-service student-teacher 15)* *"...I felt confident reading story books to the children, but the problem was that sometimes the books I found were too short; the content too simple or not appropriate to their ability and interest. Because of this, I gave up using story book, and made my own story book and visual aids instead... as a teacher, we had to clearly understand the children's abilities and needs before we could maximize the effectiveness of story telling" (Pre-service student-teacher 16)* *"...when I read the story, I was the one controlling the tone and pace of the story. I used informal and witty ways to start the story, so as to catch their (children's) attention and curiosity, and to establish a good rapport between us" (Pre-service student-teacher 22)*
Role-play	*"...After this story, I suggested to have a role play for the children to act out the 12 animals' race...this helped them learn more about the story" (Pre-service student-teacher 2)* *"...After the story, we had role-play activities simulating eating the Chinese New Year's Eve's meals together at home. We (teacher and children) also practiced the New Year greetings and the appropriate manners when one received red packets from the*

	elders...it was a great fun and we had a wonderful time" (Pre-service student-teacher 26)
Use of teaching aids	*"...Besides using the story book, I made some visual cut-outs of the 12 animals so that it would be more interesting and easier for the children to recognize. This method of using cut-outs and puppets was very successful" (Pre-service student-teacher 9)* *"...Besides the story book, I brought some animal puppets and they were very interested when they saw them. They wanted to touch and pat them." (Pre-service student-teacher 10)* *"...I placed cut-out pictures of the Chinese word "Year (Nin)" in a bag and asked them to pull the cards out. I realised that this magical trick was very effective...Everyone was very curious to know what was inside the secret bag and became very attentive" (Pre-service student-teacher 11)* *"...I made my own monster puppet. As the monster in my story was afraid of fire, but I could not use a real fire in the school, so I used a torch instead. The children loved these artefacts and aids"(Pre-service student-teacher 16)* *"...besides the story book, I made puppets of a monster, a few villagers and a 3 -dimensional stage of a Chinese village. I also made some fire crackers and Chinese New Year spring couplets and red packets to help the children relate better to the story content...The children enjoyed the involvement very much" (Pre-service student-teacher 26)*
Relate story to real life experiences	*"...After the storytelling, I discussed with them (the children) issues related to the content and asked them to relate to their present living experiences, and to help them understand and practice these Chinese moral values" (Pre-service student-teacher 2)* *"...I led the children in discussions and sharing about their New Year's practices and celebrations. The children were very enthusiastic and participated actively" (Pre-service student-teacher 9)* *"...it's very important for the children to relate the content of the story to their daily lives and to use their own reasoning to understand the story and its meanings" (Pre-service student-teacher 10)* *"...I related the year of the rooster to my story of the 12 animals, to help them understand the story in relation to their daily life. I believe this was important" (Pre-service student-teacher 18)* *"...I used this (CSP) to relate their (children's) experiences to the story content and to the meaning and values behind the related behaviour...it was very important for me to link the story content with their daily experiences and to the modern way of living" (Pre-service student-teacher 23)*

Dragon Boat Festival

Thirteen reflective reports by pre-service student-teachers regarding both CST and CSP of the Dragon Boat festival were collected (i.e. 100% response rate). All included at least one comment on storytelling techniques, resulting in a total of 36 records

documented. After coding, four categories of techniques emerged: 1) Read aloud (f = 7, 19.4%); 2) Role-play (f = 2, 5.6%); 3) Use of teaching aids (f = 6, 16.7%); and 4) Relate story to real life experiences (f = 21, 58.3%) (Figure 4.5.18). This pattern of response was similar to the findings for the Chinese New Year festival mentioned on p. 181. The technique of 'Relate story to real life experiences' was also most frequently mentioned by student-teachers. They were able to provide detailed and critical comments on each technique, such as choosing an age-appropriate story, including drama elements and real objects, and sharing real life experiences with young children. Examples of their comments of the four categories of techniques are listed in Table 4.5.3.

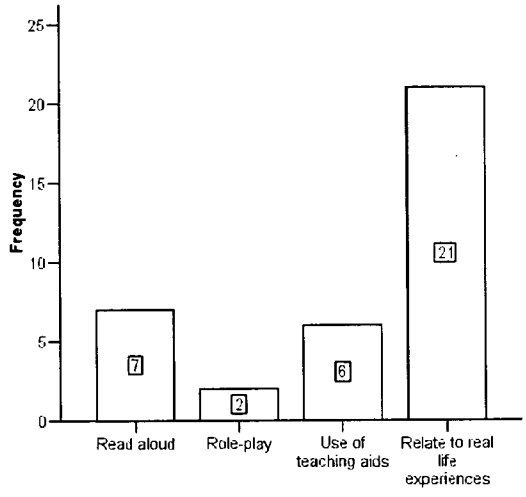


Figure 4.5.18. Pre-service student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both CST and CSP of the Dragon Boat festival

Table 4.5.3. Student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both CST and CSP of the Dragon Boat festival

Storytelling Techniques	Student-teachers' responses
Read aloud	*"...I can read to children, but there's a lack of good and age-appropriate story books on Chinese traditional tales for young children" (Pre-service student-teacher 3)* *"...when I read to children, I tried to simplify the story content and used simple terms and avoided complicated words...especially when the children did not know too much about Chinese history" (Pre-service student-teacher 7)*
Role-play	*"...After the story, we celebrated the festival by eating imaginary dumplings and by pretending to row the dragon boat" (Pre-service student-teacher 4)* *"...Besides the story book, I used role play to help the children understand the relationships and interactions in the content" (Pre-service student-teacher 5)*

Use of teaching aids	*"...I made my own story visual aids, with drawings of Wat Yuen's story, and made a paper carton television to house them, so as to make the story more attractive to the children" (Pre-service student-teacher 3)* *"...With the artefacts I showed children, they actively discussed their experiences in using them" (Pre-service student-teacher 14)* *"...It would be very useful if we had the real objects or artefacts for children to observe, touch and taste (if possible)" (Pre-service student-teacher 19)*
Relate story to real life experiences	*"...Children liked to mix their personal experience with the story, e.g. one said, 'I know how to swim. I can save Wat Yuen.' 'There are meat, eggs and rice in the dumplings, I like to eat them, very yummy'" (Pre-service student-teacher 4)* *"...Though children didn't know much about Wat Yuen, they were able to share their experience in celebrating this festival" (Pre-service student-teacher 7)* *"...The children already knew a lot about the customs and celebration of this festival, so when we talked about this, they were very involved and interested" (Pre-service student-teacher 17)* *"...Their reactions were very strong and excited when the story talked about the festivities and the celebrations, for they had such experiences, and they joined in, contributing to the content of the stories" (Pre-service student-teacher 21)*

Chung Yeung Festival

Fourteen reflective reports by in-service student-teachers regarding both CST and CSP of the Chung Yeung festival were collected (i.e. 100% response rate). All reports included at least one comment on storytelling techniques, resulting in a total of 21 records documented. After coding, similar to the previous two festivals, four categories of techniques emerged: 1) Read aloud (f = 3, 19.4%); 2) Role-play (f = 1, 5.6%); 3) Use of teaching aids (f = 1, 16.7%); and 4) Relate story to real life experiences (f = 16, 58.3%) (Figure 4.5.19). Similar to the findings of the previous two festivals, the technique of 'Relate story to real life experiences' was the most frequently mentioned by student-teachers. In addition, the percentage of the number of comments on this technique was, coincidently, the same as the findings in the Dragon Boat festival (see p. 184).

Additionally, the qualitative data further showed that student-teachers were able to provide detailed and critical comments on each technique, including the realisation of the values of traditional story, the inclusion of drama, the use of shadow puppets, and the importance of linking story to real life experiences. Examples of student-teachers' comments of the four categories of techniques are listed in Table 4.5.4.

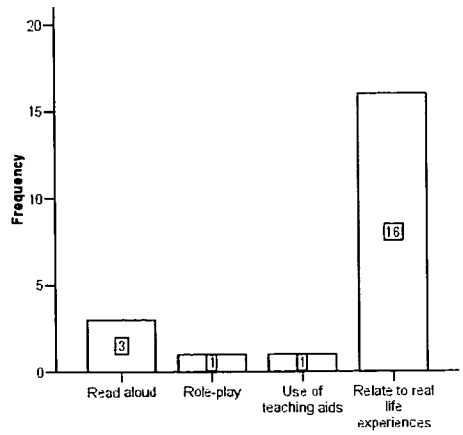


Figure 4.5.19. In-service student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both CST and CSP of the Chung Yeung festival

Table 4.5.4. In-service student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both CST and CSP of the Chung Yeung festival

Storytelling Techniques	Student-teachers' responses
Read aloud	*"...The children love to hear dramatic stories...so I have to read the content in an interesting way, otherwise, they will be bored and become restless" (In-service student-teacher 39)* *"...Before I read the story, I made the contents very simple for them to understand" (In-service student-teacher 57)*
Role-play	*'...we had a role-play on picnics in the park which was related to the story...it was fun" (In-service student-teacher 56)*
Use of teaching aids	*"...I deliberately chose the method of Chinese shadow puppetry to tell my story; through the use of light and shadow I made the story more attractive to the children. From their expressions and reactions, I noticed that they (the children) were very attentive, even to the minute details" (In-service student-teacher 57)*
Relate story to real life experiences	*"...Through this story project and our discussion, they were able to talk about their experiences and come to some common understanding for this festival...this was a very good experience" (In-service student-teacher 35)* *"...In my story, there were four pictures that described the celebration of this festival with outdoor trips of the whole family. One depicted a very happy relationship of a child with his mother. Another picture was that of the family visiting the ancestors' graves and commemorating them. The children had such experiences and related easily to them" (In-service student-teacher 41)* *"...the children's description of picnics and flying kites came from their previous experiences, and my story gave them a chance to share about such experiences. As these were happy occasions, they remembered the details very well, and were very expressive (In-service student-teacher 43)* *"...I am happy to see that there are values for story telling, and I am glad that the story gave them unlimited space to imagine, create and extend their stories beyond the realities of life. Through story, they can imagine to do things which they are not allowed to do" (In-service student-teacher 50)*

Mid-Autumn Festival

Fourteen reflective reports by in-service student-teachers regarding both CST and CSP of the Mid-Autumn festival were collected (i.e. 100% response rate). All reports included at least one comment on storytelling techniques, resulting in a total of 28 records documented. After coding, different from the previous three festivals, five categories of techniques emerged: 1) Read aloud (f = 6, 21.4%); 2) Role-play (f = 4, 14.3%); 3) Use of teaching aids (f = 1, 3.6%); 4) Relate story to real life experiences (f = 16, 57.1%); and 5) Integration with other learning disciplines (f = 1, 3.6%) (Figure 4.5.20). Similar to the findings of the previous three festivals, 'Relate story to real life experiences' was the most frequently mentioned. The technique of 'Integration with other learning disciplines' emerged solely in this festival, although its frequency was comparatively low. Student-teachers were also able to provide detailed and critical comments on each technique, such as the awareness of the value of repetition, the value of involving children in role-play, the use of visual aids, the effectiveness of including real life experiences, and the integration of singing. Examples of student-teachers' comments of the five categories of technique are listed in Table 4.5.5.

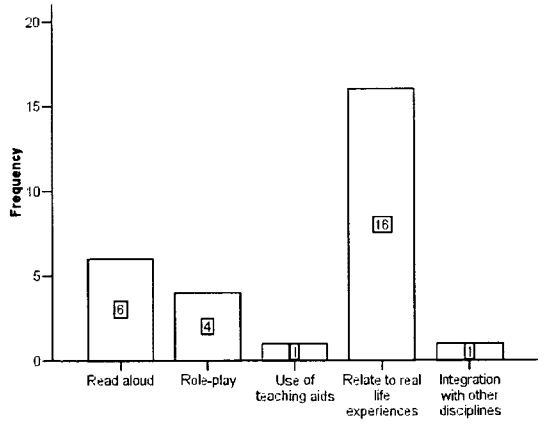


Figure 4.5.20. In-service student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both the CST and CSP of the Mid-Autumn festival

Table 4.5.5. In-service student-teachers' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both the CST and CSP of the Mid-Autumn festival

Storytelling Techniques	Student-teachers' responses
Read aloud	*"...I also realised that the children loved to hear the same story over and over again - and reading aloud is also a good teaching technique" (In-service student-teacher 45)* *"...When I used the pictures in the story book, together with my tonal changes and gestures, the children began to become more focused and their attention rested on me" (In-service student-teacher 31)* *"...This was my first attempt in using a different technique in telling a story... While I was telling the story, I also drew the pictures of the content, and this helped to attract the attention of the children" (In-service student-teacher 34)*
Role-play	*"...The children did a role-play on families' celebration of the festival, such as eating mooncakes and fruits. One child brought imaginary fruits to another who was acting as a mother...they were very happy" (In-service student-teacher 46)* *"...While I was telling the story, I did a simple drama with the children... we had a celebration with lanterns and fruits. The children were very involved and enjoyed the whole process (In-service student-teacher 52)*
Use of teaching aids	*"...besides enjoying the story, there was also visual stimulation from the pictures or artefacts of the storybook" (In-service student-teacher 46)*
Relate story to real life experiences	*"...I can see that if we talked about things that the children had daily exposure and experience with, or places where the adults had brought them to see or visit, they would become even more interested and involved" (In-service student-teacher 30)* *"...This showed that the effect of the story was very good, and they related the story to their daily life, and extended it beyond the story itself" (In-service student-teacher 31)* *"...I should find something more related to their own life, in areas which they had experience or were more interested in, so that they would have more to talk and share" (In-service student-teacher 34)*
Integration with other learning disciplines	*"...The children loved singing, and so I sang their favourite songs, "Dear Sun", "The Bright Moon" together with the story. As the children knew the words of these songs, they happily joined me in singing, and moved their bodies and gestures as they sang" (In-service student-teacher 31)*

4.6.4. Summary

In order to explore both pre-service and in-service student-teacher cohorts' understanding of storytelling techniques after CST and CSP, a collation of data from all 57 reflective reports of the four selected festivals regarding storytelling techniques was carried out (Fig. 4.5.21). Results indicated that four categories were commonly mentioned by both cohorts. They were 1) Read aloud; 2) Role-play; 3) Use of teaching aids; and 4)

Relate story to real life experiences. Among these four techniques, 'Relate story to real life experiences' was the most frequently mentioned by both cohorts across the four selected festivals. This finding was indeed consistent with the finding of the significant increase in the number of responses overall of student-teachers between the pre- and post-test questionnaires (see Fig. 4.5.8). In addition, the qualitative data from the reflective reports further showed that student-teachers were generally able to express detailed, specific and critical comments on each technique. These findings also are consistent with the qualitative findings in the post-test questionnaires (see Table 4.5.1) in which student-teachers' understanding of the details of the techniques may be improved after CSP.

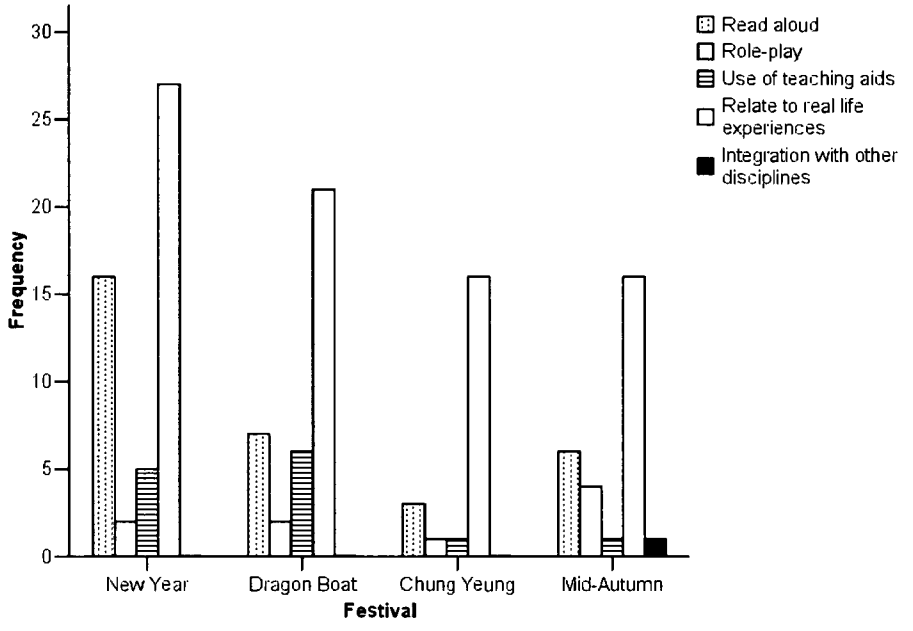


Figure 4.5.21. All student-teacher participants' responses to storytelling techniques in reflective reports regarding both CST and CSP of four selected Chinese festivals

Findings from both questionnaires and reflective reports indicated that student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques improved both quantitatively and qualitatively after their involvement with CST and CSP. Data from the pre- and post-questionnaires showed that four categories of storytelling technique were commonly mentioned by both pre-service and in-service student-teachers. They were: 1) Read aloud; 2) Role-play; 3) Use of teaching aids; and 4) Relate story to real life experiences. Among these four categories, quantitatively speaking, there was a significant increase in student-teacher participants' mean number of responses particularly over the techniques of 'Use of teaching aids' and 'Relate story to real life experiences'. The qualitative data from both

questionnaires and reflective reports further showed that the quality of student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques in general was that they were able to provide more detailed, specific and critical comments on each technique. These findings imply that student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques for young children were more comprehensive and thorough after CST and CSP. In addition, data from reflective reports also indicated that the technique of 'Relate story to real life experiences' was most frequently mentioned by both pre-service and in-service student-teacher cohorts. This finding was also consistent with the finding of the significant increase in the number of responses of overall student-teachers between the pre- and post-test questionnaires over this category of technique.

4.6.5. Conclusion and Discussion

The technique that was significantly improved in both cohorts of student-teachers after the CST and CSP in storytelling activities, namely, 'Relate story to real life experiences', revealed that they have a firm understanding that storytelling should be an interactive process between teacher and children for constructing knowledge. Recalling the experiences of the children and integrating them with the new input from the stories through discussions helps them to connect and relate to their lives. This outcome is an important aspect of storytelling. This is comparable to the suggestion from Cochran-smith (1984, p. 30) that "children should be encouraged to see the relationships between storybooks and their own lives and be guided in making connections between previously acquired world knowledge and experience of the story". As suggested by Morrow & Smith (1990), studies have confirmed that this process is characterised by interactive negotiations by the storyteller. The listeners actively participate and construct meaning based on the story (Bloom, 1985; Flood, 1977; Heath, 1982; Ninio & Bruner, 1978); affects the child's acquisition of information, attitudes (Morrow & Smith, 1990; Teale & Sulzby, 1987). However to achieve this participation and meaning-making requires a conscious effort on the teacher's part to use discussion techniques effectively so as to encourage children to focus and develop their ideas. As proposed by Teale and Martinex (1996) the most effective talk involves a teacher encouraging children to focus on the important story ideas and giving them opportunities to reflect rather than expecting a quick answer. Similarly, Dickinson and Smith (1994) also found that talk that was

"analytic in nature" requiring children to reflect on story content was most beneficial (cited by Beck & McKewown, 2001, p. 11). Noting the importance of this interaction, there is a need for teachers to prepare and plan their questions before storytelling starts. Beck and McKewown (2001) indicated that teachers should design questions that encourage children to talk about and connect ideas and to develop follow-up questions for elaboration. Hence it is suggested that preparation by teachers before a storytelling activity commences should be given serious consideration, and teachers need to be more conscious of the flow of discussions and interaction between the children during and after the storytelling, in order to maximize the effects of storytelling.

The use of teaching aids was popularly found in the pre-service student-teacher cohort, as these student-teachers had relatively little direct experience working with children. When they plan for activities, it is understandable that they would be seeking for more tangible support in the form of teaching aids besides the use of the storybook. Indeed, teaching aids like puppets or flannel boards were commonly used. Studies by Brodie (1994) showed that the use of puppets can promote storytelling and children's use of imagination. Renfro (1978) suggested that such use can soften hard edges and offer greater flexibility. In addition, Mullenbach (1999) stated that the use of puppets may help explain abstract concepts and concepts of social differences and traditions in the area of social studies in visual ways. Contractor (1984) suggested that weaving the puppets into the fibre of a story may result in a powerful multi-sensory experience for the children. Mullenbach (1999), in her study using puppets to test children's retention, confirmed that children have better retention when they see pictures actively created by teachers placing figures on a flannel board as the story unfolds. Using such an aid as an intermediary, with the puppet to become a more intimate friend of the children, creates a fresh and creative learning environment allowing the children to actively participate and construct the story with the teacher. However, Mullenbach (1999) suggested the teacher could use exaggerated movements and voice inflections to contribute to the vividness of the story, such that children may visualize the settings in their imagination. Hence, the teacher as storyteller becomes an instrument in this process. In some instances, within the current research, student-teachers used simple artefacts that children are familiar with to enhance the storytelling effects. Indeed, among the in-service student-teachers cohort, relying on using storybooks supported by simple artefacts and their expression, movements and voice were the techniques more commonly seen.

To conclude, data showed that both pre-service and in-service student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques was improved after CST and CSP. In order to acquire a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the effectiveness of CST and CSP in the present research, both cohorts of student-teacher participants' possible change of view regarding the use of storytelling as a tool to preserve Confucian values in the local early childhood context is further examined in the last research question of the current study (i.e., Research Question 6).

4.7 Results of Research Question 6

4.7.1. Research Question

In what way, if any, does (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' views of using storytelling as a tool to preserve and develop Confucian values differ after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?

4.7.2. Introduction

To seek answers to Research Question 6, the following three sources of data collection were used:

1. *Pre- and post-test questionnaires*. All 57 (pre-service and in-service) student-teachers were invited to answer a dichotomous question (yes/no) followed by an open-ended question in both pre- and post-test questionnaires (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). The dichotomous question stated "*Do you think storytelling is an effective tool to develop and preserve Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children?*" The open-ended question stated "*Please explain your answer.*"

2. *Pre-test Focus Group*. Out of the aforementioned 57 student-teacher participants, a total of 14 of them (seven pre-service students and seven in-service students) participated in one of the two pre-test focus groups (one for the pre-service cohort and one for the in-service cohort). These student participants were asked to express their views verbally by responding to the dichotomous question and the open-ended question mentioned above. The two groups were the same as the groups who contributed to Research Questions 2 and 4 which had been presented on p. 84 and p. 146).

3. *Reflective report of 57 student participants*. Students were asked to submit a reflective report within two weeks after their implementations of the Confucian Values Story Project (CSP). There was no required format for the report. Students were asked to focus on their experiences of both the Confucian Values Story

Training (CST) and CSP – such as one's knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions, behaviours and/or children's responses. At the end of the research process, a total of 57 reports were collected (i.e. 100% response rate). The distribution of the number of reflective reports for each of the four selected Chinese festivals for the research is listed in Table 4.3.1 in the current chapter. Information related to the effectiveness of using storytelling to teach Confucian values to young children was extracted, categorized and coded for the purpose of answering this research question.

Due to the qualitative nature of the data, the presentation of the following findings is mainly based on frequency count (*f*) and percentage (%). Nevertheless, paired-sample t-test was applied in order to understand the possible significant difference, if any, in the quantitative data which might emerge from the pre- and post-test questionnaires. Data is presented under each of the above three sources (i.e. questionnaires, focus group and reflective reports). A collation of findings from these sources is included at the last part of this section.

4.7.3. Results

Pre- and Post-test Questionnaires

In the pre-test questionnaire, all 57 (pre-service and in-service) student-teacher participants were able to indicate their views of the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of using storytelling as a method to teach Confucian values to young children by answering the dichotomous question (yes/no) (i.e. 100% response rate). Results showed that 56 of them (98.2%) provided a positive response while only one participant (1.8%) from the in-service cohort provided a negative view (Figure 4.6.1).

In addition, among all 57 (pre-service and in-service) student-teacher participants, 37 were further able to explain their dichotomous answers. As a result, a total of 49 responses was recorded. After coding, three categories of the participants' positive views of the effectiveness of using storytelling as a method emerged, namely: 1) Facilitation of in-depth learning (f = 13, 26.5%); 2) Establishment of positive learning environment (f = 16, 32.7%); and 3) Arousal of learning interest (f = 19, 38.8%). Figure 4.6.2 further

shows that in-service student-teacher participants were more able to provide an explanation for their dichotomous answers. Also, the same figure shows that the three common categories of participants' positive responses were shared by both pre-service and in-service cohorts. Among these three common categories, 'arousal of learning interest' was the most popular explanation of participants' views of the effectiveness of using storytelling as a method to teach Confucian values.

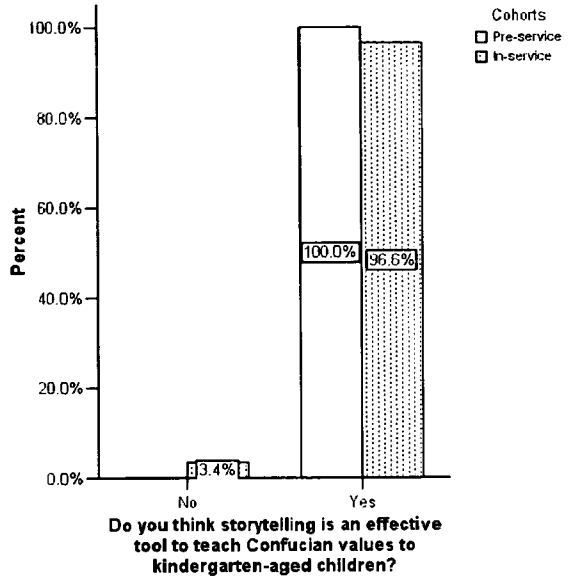


Figure 4.6.1. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' views of the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of using storytelling as a tool to preserve Confucian values in the pre-test questionnaires

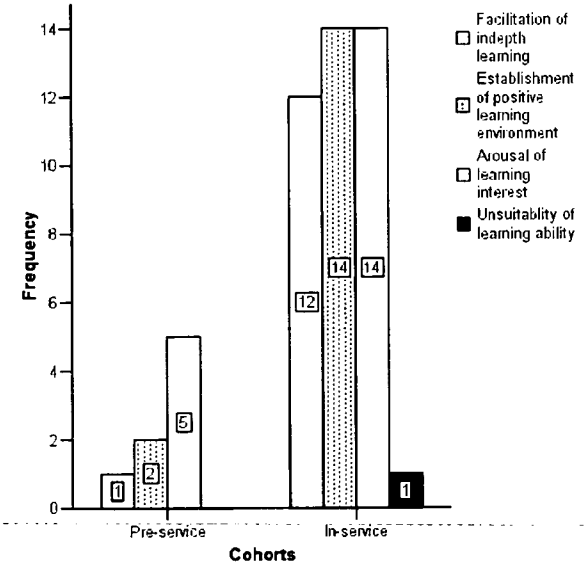


Figure 4.6.2. All student-teacher participants' views of the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of using storytelling as a tool to teach Confucian values in the pre-test questionnaires

In the post-test questionnaire, all 57 (pre-service and in-service) student-teacher participants were able to indicate their views of the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of using storytelling as a method to teach Confucian values to young children by answering a dichotomous question (yes/no) (100% response rate). Results showed that all of them provided positive views (Figure 4.6.3).

Furthermore, among all 57 (pre-service and in-service) student-teacher participants, 49 were further able to explain their positive views. As a result, 63 responses were recorded. After coding, three categories of their views of the effectiveness of using storytelling as a method to teach Confucian values emerged from both cohorts, namely: 1) Facilitation of in-depth learning (f = 26, 41.3%); 2) Establishment of positive learning environment (f = 18, 28.6%); and 3) Arousal of learning interest (f = 19, 30.2%) (Figure 4.6.4). Among these categories, 'facilitation of in-depth learning' was the most common category mentioned in both cohorts. Similar to the results from the pre-test questionnaires mentioned earlier (see p. 194), in-service student-teachers were again more able to explain their choice of views (Figure 4.6.5).

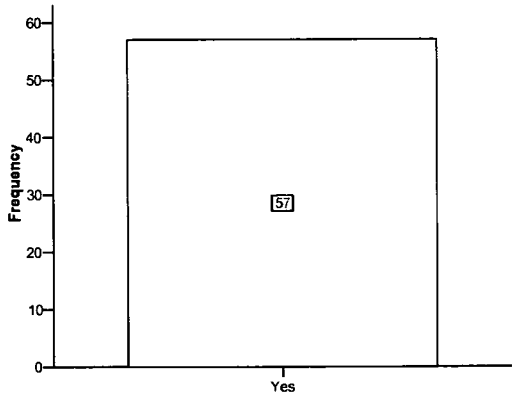


Figure 4.6.3. All student-teacher participants' provided positive views of the effectiveness of storytelling to preserve and develop Confucian values in the post-test questionnaires

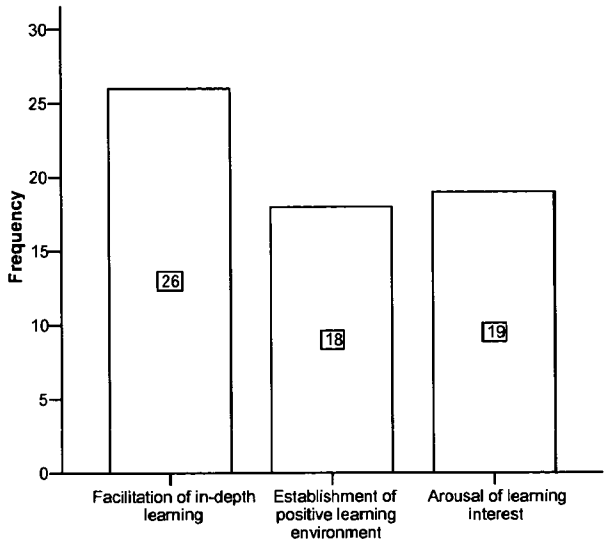


Figure 4.6.4. All student-teacher participants' positive views of the effectiveness of storytelling to teach Confucian values in the post-test questionnaires

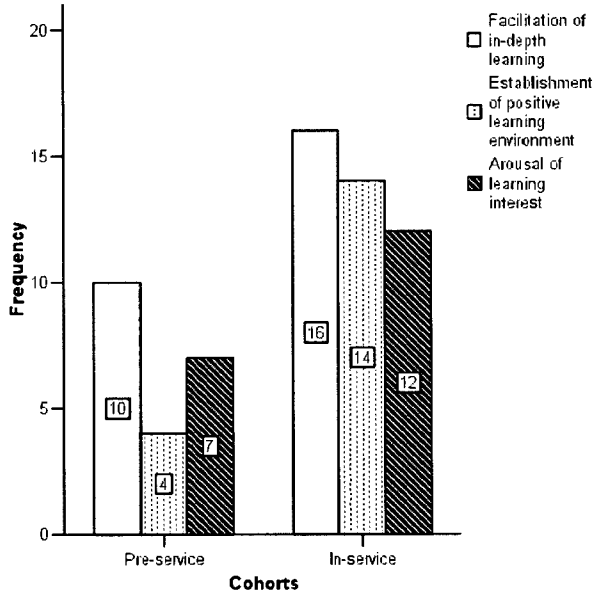


Figure 4.6.5. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' positive views of the effectiveness of storytelling to teach Confucian values in the post-test questionnaires

In order to explore student-teachers' possible differences in their views of the effectiveness of using storytelling as a tool to teach Confucian values to young children, qualitative and quantitative findings from both the pre- and post-questionnaires of all student-teacher participants were collated and are presented as follows:

Quantitative Findings

Quantitative results showed that, overall, student-teachers expressed positive views of the effectiveness of using storytelling as a tool to teach Confucian values to young children as 98.2% and 100% participants agreed on the effectiveness of storytelling in the pre- and post-test questionnaires respectively (see Figure 4.6.1 and Figure 4.6.3). This finding indicates that, overall, student-teachers agree on the effectiveness of using storytelling as a method to teach Confucian values to young children regardless of CST and CSP.

In addition, results showed that three categories of participants' explanations emerged in both pre- and post-test questionnaires of both cohorts. The three common categories were: 1) Facilitation of in-depth learning; 2) Establishment of positive learning environment; and 3) Arousal of learning interest (Figure 4.6.6). Although common categories were found, patterns of responses to these three common categories were quite different. In the pre-test questionnaire, the most popular explanation was directed at the 'Arousal of learning interest' category. In the post-test questionnaire, however, the most popular explanation was the 'Facilitation of in-depth learning' category. In order to understand the possible significant difference between each of these three common categories of student-teachers' explanation, a series of paired-sample t-test analysis were applied and the results are discussed below.

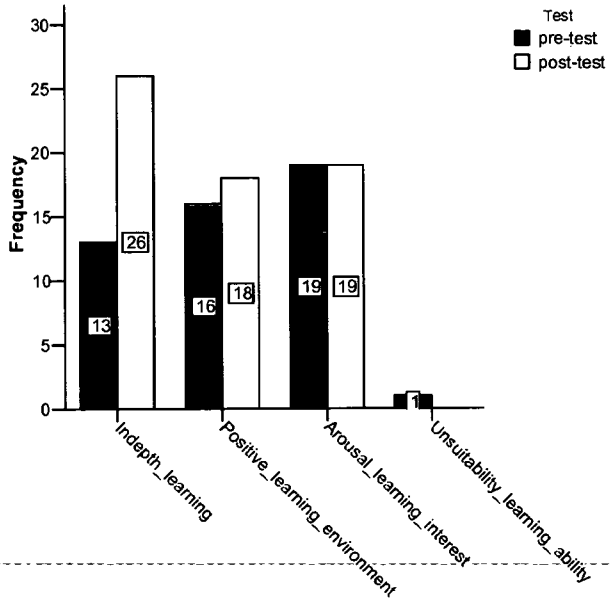


Figure 4.6.6. Pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants' views of the effectiveness of using storytelling as a method to teach Confucian values in both pre- and post-test questionnaires

1. Facilitation of In-depth Learning

A paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was significant mean difference (t = - 2.9, df = 56, p < .05, d = - .50) in overall student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- (M = .23, SD = .42) and post-questionnaires (M = .46, SD = .50) over the explanation of the effectiveness of the 'Facilitation of in-depth learning' (Figure 4.6.7). This finding indicates that more student-teacher participants were aware of the effectiveness of storytelling in facilitating children's in-depth learning after being involved in CST and CSP.

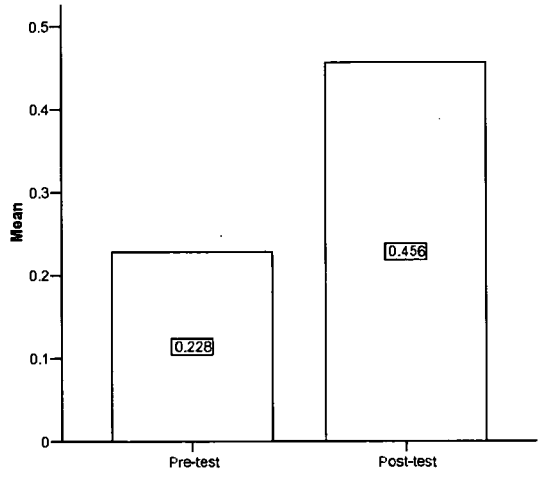


Figure 4.6.7. All student-teacher participants' mean number of responses to the effectiveness of storytelling of the 'Facilitation of in-depth learning' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

The analysis further showed that the above significant mean difference holds true in the pre-service cohort only. The paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was a significant mean difference (t = - 3.1, df = 27, p < .05, d = - .86) in each pre-service student-teacher participant's number of responses between pre- (M = .04, SD = .19) and post-questionnaires (M = .36, SD = .49) related to 'facilitation of in-depth learning' (Figure 4.6.8). However, for each in-service student-teacher participants there was no significant mean difference (t = -1.2, df = 28, p > .05, d = -.28) in the number of responses between pre- (M = .41, SD = .50) and post-questionnaires (M = .55, SD = .51) (Figure 4.6.9). This finding indicates that CST and CSP were more effective in improving

pre-service student-teachers' awareness of the storytelling's effectiveness of facilitating children's in-depth learning.

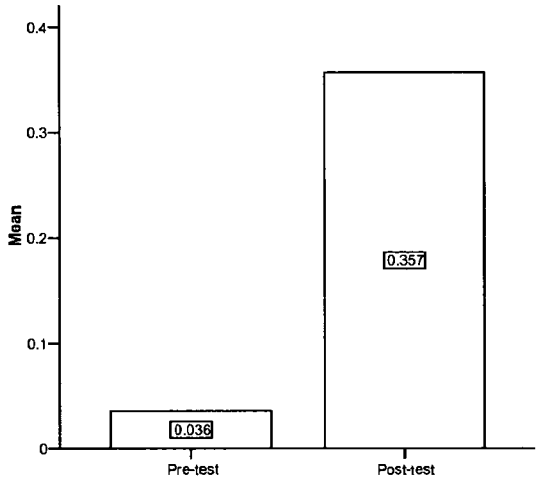


Figure 4.6.8. Pre-service student-teacher participants' mean number of responses to the effectiveness of storytelling of the 'Facilitation of in-depth learning' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

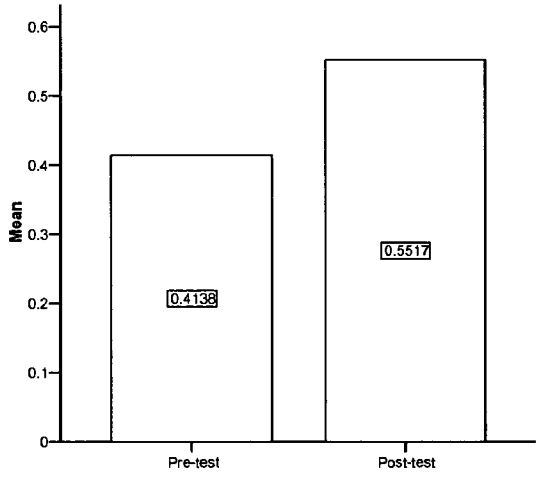


Figure 4.6.9. In-service student-teacher participants' mean number of responses to the effectiveness of storytelling of the 'Facilitation of in-depth learning' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

2. Establishment of positive learning environment

A paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was no significant mean difference ($t = -.47$, $df = 56$, $p > .05$, $d = -.09$) in overall student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- ($M = .28$, $SD = .45$) and post-questionnaires ($M = .32$, $SD = .47$) over the explanation of the effectiveness the 'Establishment of positive learning

environment' (Figure 4.6.10). This finding also holds true for both pre-service and in-service cohorts. Analysis showed that there was also no significant mean difference (t = -.18, df = 27, p > .05, d = -.22) in each pre-service student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- (M = .07, SD = .26) and post-questionnaires (M = .14, SD = .36). Also, there was no significant mean difference (t = - .00, df = 28, p > .05, d = .00) in each in-service student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- (M = .48, SD = .51) and post-questionnaires (M = .41, SD = .50). This result indicates that student-teacher participants' awareness of storytelling's effectiveness of establishing a positive learning environment showed no significant change after involvement with CST and CSP.

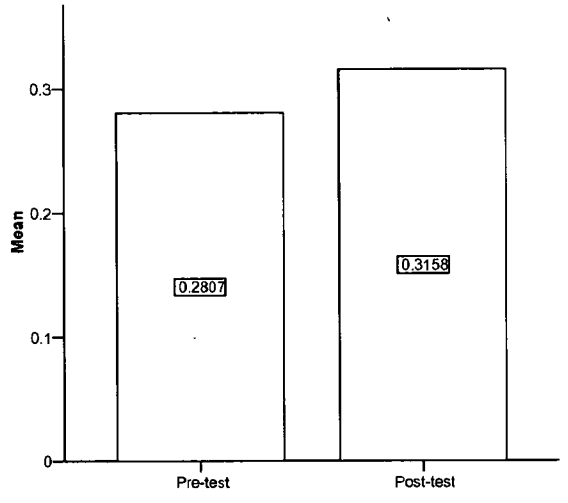


Figure 4.6.10. All student-teacher participants' mean number of responses to the effectiveness of storytelling of the 'Establishment of positive learning environment' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

3. Arousal of learning interest

A paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was also no significant mean difference (t = .00, df = 56, p > .05, d = - .09) in overall student-teacher participants' number of responses between pre- (M = .33, SD = .48) and post-questionnaires (M = .33, SD = .48) over the explanation of the effectiveness of the 'Arousal of learning interest' (Figure 4.6.11). This finding also holds true for both pre-service and in-service cohorts. Another paired-sample t-test analysis showed that there was also no significant mean difference (t = - .57, df = 27, p > .05, d = -.17) in each pre-service student-teacher

participant's number of responses between pre- (M = .18, SD = .39) and post-questionnaires (M = .25, SD = .44). Also, there was no significant mean difference (t = -.57, df = 28, p > .05, d = -.14) in each in-service student-teacher participant's number of responses between pre- (M = .48, SD = .51) and post-questionnaires (M = .41, SD = .50). This result indicates that student-teacher participants' awareness of storytelling's effectiveness of the 'Arousal of learning interest' remained unchanged after involvement with CST and CSP.

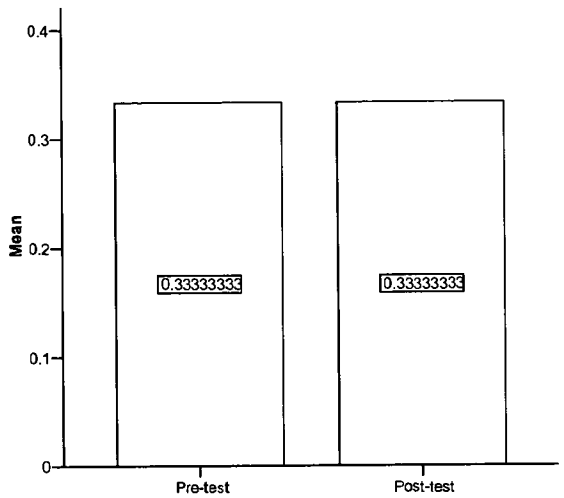


Figure 4.6.11. All student-teacher participants' mean number of responses to the effectiveness of storytelling of the 'Arousal of learning interest' in the pre- and post-test questionnaires

Qualitative Findings

Qualitatively, after CST and CSP, data showed that both cohorts of student-teacher participants have a better understanding of the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in children. As mentioned, three common categories found in the findings from both the pre- and post-test questionnaires were: 1) Facilitation of in-depth learning; 2) Establishment of positive learning environment; and 3) Arousal of learning interest (see Figure 4.6.6).

A comparison of the qualitative data from these three categories showed that the quality of both cohorts of students' understanding of storytelling techniques improved in three ways. Firstly, in the post-test questionnaires, student-teachers (particularly the pre-

service cohort) were generally more able to explain the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children. More detailed and relevant responses were recorded in the post-test questionnaire. Secondly, there was a change in student-teachers' views of the effectiveness of storytelling from 'Arousal of learning interest' to 'Facilitation of in-depth learning'. Student-teachers seemed to be more aware of the possible deeper level of learning that storytelling could facilitate in young children's cognitive development. Thirdly, student-teachers generally tended to be more aware of the importance of the linkage between stories and children's real life experiences. In the post-test questionnaire, they emphasized more the realistic characteristics of storytelling and their impact on children's learning. These qualitative findings suggest that both pre-service and in-service student-teachers' tended to have deeper understanding of the effectiveness of storytelling after CST and CSP. Table 4.6.1 shows student-teachers' responses to the effectiveness of storytelling in the pre- and post-test questionnaires.

Table 4.6.1. Student-teachers' responses to the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children in both pre- and post-test questionnaires

Effectiveness of Storytelling	Students' responses	
	Pre-test	**Post-test**
Facilitation of In-depth learning	*"...through stories, children understand the content and certain message better" (In-service student-teacher 31)* *"...from story characters children can learn the personality and development better" (In-service student-teacher 34)* *"...stories can turn abstract values into realistic examples which are easier for children to understand (40)* *"...children can understand the content and the meaning behind them (stories), and children can give their own thoughts and reactions" (In-service student-teacher 41)* *"...through stories children can understand more abstract values and content" ((In-service student-teacher 45)* *"...children feel and identify with the stories, which will give them a lasting impression and help them in understanding" (In-service student-teacher 56)*	*"...more realistic, will enable children to understand better and have identification" (Pre-service student-teacher 03)* *"...children need time to internalise abstract values, and frequent listening to stories will remind children of these values and behaviour" (Pre-service student-teacher 10)* *"...stories are realistic, simple and easy for children to understand the abstract values" (Pre-service student-teacher 12)* *"...stories become related to children's daily lives and experience, and easier for children to accept and understand" (In-service student-teacher 31)* *"...storybooks are informative, realistic and easier for children to understand" (In-service student-teacher 37)* *"...through stories, complicated values can be easily understood by children by the simple explanation and realistic content" (In-service*

		student-teacher 53) *"...easy for children to understand and relate to their daily lives" (In-service student-teacher 57)*
Establishment of positive learning environment	*"...because in story activities, children can talk and discuss with me...they are able to express these values" (Pre-service student-teacher 03)* *"...through stories, children can interact and discuss with me...they enjoy this learning atmosphere" (Pre-service student-teacher 25)* *"...children can identify, feel and interact with the characters in the stories and me" (In-service student-teacher 30)* *"...story enables children to identify, feel and interact with the characters and give them exposure to experience which they never had before" (In-service student-teacher 33)* *"...because children can identify and participate in the stories...they can have active participation" (In-service student-teacher 47"* *".....there is no right or wrong answer in storytelling...children feel comfortable to express and to learn" (In-service student-teacher 49)* *"...teachers can adjust the story to fit the ability of children and help them to better understand the story content and its values" (In-service student-teacher 55)*	*"...children can feel, react and imagine with the story, there is neither correct nor incorrect way" (Pre-service student-teacher 11)* *"...enables children to talk about their experiences in relation to the stories (Pre-service student-teacher 24)* *"...Children can easily identify and feel for the characters in the story...will react and respond to the discussion actively" (In-service student-teacher 43)* *"...children can identify with the story easily, and they can understand the abstract values in the stories by doing so and interacting with the teacher and discussing their views" (In-service student-teacher 45)* *"...they can discuss the content, and teacher can then understand the values as expressed by the children" (In-service student-teacher 52)* *"...they can identify with the story and react and discuss with teachers, helping them to better understand these values" (In-service student-teacher 56)*
Arousal of learning interest	*"...children love to listen to stories...they want to know more about the content" (Pre-service student-teacher 05)* *"...children love stories because they are lively, interesting and easy to understand" (Pre-service student-teacher 12)* *"...pictures of the story books are attractive and capture children's attention and interest (Pre-service student-teacher 19)* *"...stories are interesting and attractive to children...which may enhance their learning motivation" (In-service student-*	*"...stories are lively, interesting and easy to understand" (Pre-service student-teacher 06)* *"...children naturally love to hear stories" (Pre-service student-teacher 09)* *"...children love story telling; their interest is easily aroused and they can better understand the values" (Pre-service student-teacher 10)* *"...stories are interesting and funny and stimulating to children" (Pre-service student-teacher 28)* *"...children love stories and identify; they react to content and understand abstract conteni" (In-*

	teacher 43) *"...children love listening to stories...their learning interest will be aroused" (In-service student-teacher 57)*	*service student-teacher 35)* *"...children love to listen to stories and have good attention span" (In-service student-teacher 36)* *"...children like to listen to stories and are interested in them" (In-service student-teacher 51)* *"...pictures of the story books are attractive and capture children's attention and interest" (Pre-service student-teacher 05)*

Pre- and Post-test Focus Groups

Findings from the pre- and post-test focus groups showed that there was quite a dramatic change in the student-teachers' views of the effectiveness of storytelling. In the pre-test focus group, a total of 24 responses were recorded from both cohorts of participants. Consistently, they tended to have a negative or at least an uncertain attitude towards the effectiveness of storytelling. They mentioned the insignificant role of storytelling in their present daily curriculum. They generally used storytelling as either entertainment or for behaviour management purposes. It is doubtful that many of them might have thought of the possible effectiveness of storytelling, especially in preserving and developing Confucian values in young children. Furthermore, one in-service student-teacher participant also highlighted the insignificant role of Chinese cultural stories in her choice of teaching materials. Some examples of both cohorts' negative responses in the pre-test focus group are as follows (Table 4.6.2):

Table 4.6.2. Student-teachers' responses to the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children in both pre- test focus group

Cohort	Responses
Pre-service	*"...I tell stories to keep children occupied and to sit quietly...I am not aware of other purposes, except to help their language development"* *"...Story is a simple activity and I didn't spend too much time on it. Instead, I will spend more time on the curriculum"* *"...I was not aware that story is effective for teaching"* *"...I have never thought of using story for purposes other than to keep them happy"* *"...I don't know the purpose of telling a specific story. I will just tell the content, and hope they will remember the sequence or the words* *"...I have never thought of using stories to teach Confucian values"*
In-service	*"...I have never thought of using traditional Chinese stories...I would normally be using a story non-locally written, usually translated stories from the West or Chinese stories written in Taiwan."* *"...Probably because I didn't think carefully about the function and value of storytelling, thinking it is only for imaginative and emotional expression,*

	I'd always thought that story is not of much use" *"...I know that story can be useful, but had never really thought that it can be effective"* *"...Storytelling was not interesting. I can't find an interesting story book in my school"* *"...So story telling has became a trivial and extra-curricular activity"* *"...I believe that story is only used for language development"* *"...I only use story for specific teaching and learning related to the curriculum"*

However, by comparison, in the post-test focus group, the same student-teacher participants were more able to express their views on the effectiveness of storytelling. A total of 99 responses was recorded from both cohorts. Most of their views were, indeed, contrary to the findings from the pre-test focus group. They emphasized positively the effectiveness of storytelling on young children's overall learning, including the preservation and development of Confucian values in young children. Similar to the finding from the pre- and post-test questionnaires mentioned earlier on p.194, three categories of effectiveness of storytelling emerged, namely: 1) Facilitation of in-depth learning (f = 57, 57.6%); 2) Establishment of positive learning environment (f = 22, 22.2%); and 3) Arousal of learning interest (f = 20, 20.2%). Similar to the finding from the pre- and post-test questionnaires, the effectiveness of the 'Facilitation of in-depth learning' was the category most popularly mentioned by both cohorts. Responses from the student-teacher participants showed that CST and CSP in the current study not only enriched their understandings of the significant role of storytelling (particularly the use of Chinese cultural stories) in early childhood education, but also made them aware of the possible in-depth, positive, and enjoyable impact such stories have on young children's whole-person development. Some examples of both cohorts' responses in the post-test focus group are as follows (Table 4.6.3):

Table 4.6.3. Student-teachers' responses to the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children in both post-test focus group

Cohort	Responses
Pre-service	*"...Now I understand the value and importance of story; it can be more effective than a normal teaching skill in class; it is a valuable experience which every child should have. Story should be as important as other teaching activities"* *"...I think story telling is a very good approach. Children enjoy stories very much, and through them, we can make dull topics very interesting"* *"...I was very expressive with non-verbal - facial and verbal expressions, using my personality and skill in storytelling. This is a very effective and quite a successful method too"* *"...I am pleased and interested to see that children have their moral principles, in that those who care for others are good persons and those who don't are bad persons...this project was very successful and further enhanced their interest in the story"* *"...I used lai see packets, couplets as my teaching aids together with my story book. The children were interested in the whole process....and with our jokes, it made us relax and we enjoyed the story together...I am very impressed with how the children express their compassion to others, and how they care about people and their environment"* *"...This is an effective method to help a child develop positive social behavior, and I believe more of such story activities will be useful"* *"...I related the story to children's daily experiences, and they became very interested and participated actively in the discussion....After the sharing and summarizing, I was amazed to observe that children did understand the abstract meaning behind the festival...This attempt was very successful"* *"...Children are very interested in talking about their own experiences, especially about dumplings...Using stories, artefacts and other teaching objects are very effective"*
In-service	*"... The story project opens my eyes and I come to know more about the value and skills of storytelling"* *"...After this story project, I believe that children should learn moral values, and storytelling will be my first choice of tools. Children will grasp the abstract value concepts more easily by using story telling"* *"... when I did my own story project, and saw the difference and change of behavior of my students, I came to really believe the value of stories"* *"...This story project changes my views, and I realize that I should use more positive methods to face children's behavior. I have learned to use a variety of methods to help children, and avoid using a restrictive and uncompromising method"* *"...I believe that storybooks will be good friends of children, because it can bring them into the world of fantasy; it will be a media for ventilation of emotion, it has educational value and will enhance their verbal and written language ability, it can inculcate moral values into children, and it can broaden a child's experience and knowledge"* *"...Through the story experience, and through inter personal interaction and collaboration, children are enabled to build up positive attitudes and social relationships. Like Bandura's theory, knowledge is learnt through interaction with other humans, environment, man and man, man and matters"* *"...After this story project, I have deeper thoughts and changed my views. If only we could, from our hearts, select an appropriate story, try to understand the meaning of the story, and plan with our hearts how to tell*

	it, then we can use stories to achieve our purpose" *"...Though the children may not fully understand the meaning behind the stories , nor do they know how to express themselves appropriately, but the impact will be like seeds implanted in the child's life, and in time, the effect will appear"* *"...This story project broadened my understanding of the value of storytelling, and that it can be useful for many different needs of children. It has also helped me to understand children's psychological and social needs and that as a teacher I should be more conscious and responsive to them"*

Reflective Report

A total of 57 reflective reports were collected from both pre-service and in-service student-teacher participants after CST and CSP (i.e. 100% response rate). A total of 149 responses related to student-teacher participants' views of the effectiveness of storytelling were recorded. All responses were positive. After coding, three categories emerged: 1) Facilitation of in-depth learning (f = 93, 62.4%); 2) Establishment of positive learning environment (f = 38, 25.5%); and 3) Arousal of learning interest (f = 18, 12.1%) (Figure 4.6.12). These three categories were consistent with the findings from the post-test questionnaires and the post-test focus group discussed earlier (see Figure 4.6.4). Further, results from the reflective reports also showed that similar patterns of responses were found between both pre-service and in-service student-teachers (see Figure 4.6.13). This pattern of responses was also consistent with the findings from the post-test questionnaire (in-service student-teacher cohort) (see Figure 4.6.5) and the post-test focus group (both student-teacher cohorts) also discussed on page 206.

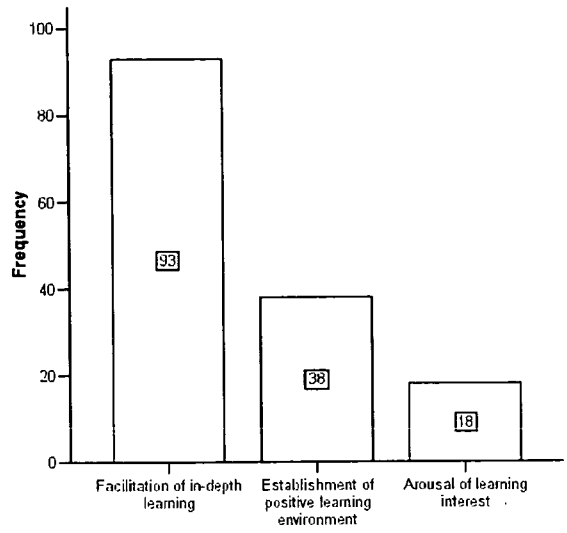


Figure 4.6.12. All student-teacher participants' number of responses related to the effectiveness of storytelling in the reflective reports

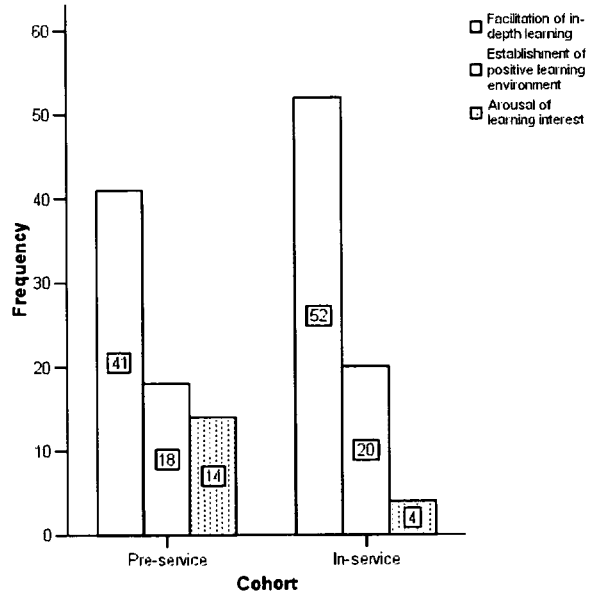


Figure 4.6.13. Pre-service and in-service student-teachers' number of responses related to the effectiveness of storytelling in the reflective reports

Among the three categories of effectiveness of storytelling, 'Facilitation of in-depth learning' (f= 93, 62.4%) was the most popular one mentioned in both pre-service and in-service student-teacher cohorts. Results showed that after CST and CSP, student-teachers were more aware of the positive impacts of storytelling on children's cognitive, social-emotional, and moral development. In addition, positive feeling words such as 'good',

'amazed' and 'impressed' were found in the data. This finding suggests the positive changes in the student-teachers' attitudes towards storytelling. Table 4.6.4 illustrates some examples of both student-teacher cohorts.

Table 4.6.4. Student-teachers' responses of the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children in both Reflective Reports regarding 'Facilitation of in-depth learning'

Cohort	Responses
Pre-service	*"...I realized that storytelling could be a very effective teaching method...I was impressed how strong the children felt about life and that everyone should value their life" (Pre-service student-teacher 01)* *"...Using traditional tales to help children understand the Chinese culture, tradition and values were good methods, but the teachers should be sensitive in directing and guiding children" (Pre-service student-teacher 05)* *"...Storytelling could be very effective in helping children clear up any doubts they had and to produce their own explanations and solutions to problems. This is a good teaching method which we have given too little attention before" (Pre-service student-teacher 07)* *"...I felt very good with this story project, because it gave the children a chance to learn about our Chinese spirit, values and customs. This is something which all schools should take up" (Pre-service student-teacher 11)* *"...In future, I would integrate the Confucian values into my discussion with the children, and through celebrating the festival and using stories to help them appreciate the abstract ideas...Storytelling activities should be conducted more in the school" (Pre-service student-teacher 12)* *"...Using story to teach children was very effective, especially when they could discuss and use their imagination to solve problems and injustices they saw" (Pre-service student-teacher 14)* *"...Through this story project, I learned more about the Chinese culture and its relevancy to our daily lives. I realized that children did learn much more about our culture and values through storytelling, and it was important for them to know about this" (Pre-service student-teacher 15)* *"...The biggest finding that I had in this story project was that the children learned much more about the values of the festival and the meanings behind the customs and practices through storytelling. This reinforced their basic knowledge and they learned the reasons behind their offering good will wishes, and special foods to friends and relatives. They learned how to express their good will and to be kind and caring to others" (Pre-service student-teacher 22)* *"...I concluded that story was an effective media to introduce the Chinese traditions, culture and values to children...Starting them with storytelling, discussions and relating their own experiences and helping them to develop their own value behavior was important. We need to plant these roots in each child when they are still young" (Pre-service student-teacher 26)* *"...After this project, I realized that the effects of storytelling could be great. It gave me a chance to understand the children better; to guide them in their discussions; and to help them develop the positive moral values of love, care and helping others in need" (Pre-service student-teacher 28)*
In-service	*"...After the story project, children still continued to talk about their experiences of the Chinese festival. This showed that the effect of the story*

	was very good, and they related the story to their daily life, and extended it beyond the story itself" (In-service student-teacher 31) *"...As a teacher, this story project gave me a very deep feeling. I'd never known how powerful a simple story could be. Children were able to use words to express thoughts and feelings that were deep in their hearts and feelings. I'd never expected that children could express their compassion and emotion so well! ... after this project, I realized that traditional stories enabled children to learn something about our culture and thoughts of other cultures" (In-service student-teacher 33)* *"...This story project alerted me to the powerfulness and effectiveness of storytelling...it increases their knowledge, clarifies their concepts (or misconceptions), and stimulates their logical thinking and science exploratory interest...I believe that storytelling is an important activity which should not be ignored" (In-service student-teacher 37)* *"...I realized that story telling was an effective teaching method, for besides enjoying a story, children was able to learn better, and their memories of story content, details, the meaning and values behind the stories were very good" (In-service student-teacher 45)* *"...From now on, I am determined that I should introduce children to more traditional tales, and even stories from different countries and cultures, e.g. Rome, India, Scandinavia and Japan etc...storytelling is such a powerful tool" (In-service student-teacher 48)* *"...A teacher can use stories to know the thoughts of the children, their reactions, their analysis of situations and especially to see their love for their family and their care for animals" (In-service student-teacher 50)* *"...Storytelling helped the children to understand, feel, and believe in the festival and brought them closer to the hearts of the children. It is an effective method to help teach such abstract moral values, and make the teaching very realistic and interesting to children" (In-service student-teacher 53)* *"...I think storytelling is an effective method, and if the teacher uses it carefully, it can teach and allow children a lot of thinking and reasoning. This is especially good in letting them think through different values and their manners of expression" (In-service student-teacher 54)* *"...I was impressed that storytelling could be so effective and useful, and especially when it let me realize the many hidden abilities in the children, which I would have missed otherwise" (In-service student-teacher 55)* *"...I believed that storytelling could be a useful method to help children understand more abstract ideas that they may not have any experience with...Through the content of the story, they were able to feel, identify and understand what happened, and some would use this to ask teachers about the causes" (In-service student-teacher 56)*

Among the three categories of effectiveness of storytelling, the category 'Establishment of positive learning environment' ($f = 38$, 25.5%) was the second most popular in both pre-service and in-service student-teacher cohorts. Student-teachers mentioned the relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere that was induced by storytelling. Children were stimulated to discuss and express themselves. Active interaction occurred between children and teachers and also among the children

themselves. Student-teachers were impressed by the establishment of a good learning environment due to the use of the storytelling as a teaching method. Table 4.6.5 illustrates some of their responses.

Table 4.6.5. Student-teachers' responses to the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children in both Reflective Reports regarding 'Establishment of positive learning environment'

Cohort	Responses
Pre-service	*"...We need to know our roots, and doing this through story was a relaxing and enjoyable means, which children loved" (Pre-service student-teacher 15)* *"...It enabled children to discuss with the teacher their doubts and to express their feelings and reactions to certain behavior in an interesting and relaxing way" (Pre-service student-teacher 17)* *"...More of such activities should be done to help them in their learning, and to make learning more interesting" (Pre-service student-teacher 20)* *"...Using storytelling to introduce and share historical knowledge or traditional customs was a good teaching skill, because all children loved listening to stories, and the teacher could turn something hard and solid into an interesting and happy learning activity... There was an atmosphere of joy and sharing" (Pre-service student-teacher 22)* *"...After this story project, I had more faith in storytelling as a teaching method. It really served more purpose and meaning than merely giving children a time to enjoy a simple story. We could use it to introduce information, to encourage rational and imaginative discussions, to share and love one another and to respect others" (Pre-service student-teacher 25)* *"...I was very happy when the children said that they'd enjoyed the story very much....I was also delighted to see that they did remember the details of my story, as I heard them talking among themselves while drawing" (Pre-service student-teacher 26)* *"...I was very happy that I had a chance to tell this story to them, which brought forth this wonderful discussion with them. It was a wonderful moment for all of us" (Pre-service student-teacher 28)*
In-service	*"...In this process of 20 minutes, it brought a very good time and space for the children...and they could imagine and also widen their social relationship with others. They greatly enhanced their self image and confidence because they freely discussed and expressed their opinions, and more importantly, there was no correct or wrong answer" (In-service student-teacher 30)* *"...This event also gave me an experience to feel a sense of unity and sharing together with the children and my colleagues" (In-service student-teacher 33)* *"...Using stories to talk about new things could be interesting, and this also gave them a chance to talk and ask questions freely" (In-service student-teacher 36)* *"...This (story project) alerted me to the powerfulness and effectiveness of storytelling. It brings joy and happiness to children" (In-service student-teacher 37)* *"...Through storytelling, an activity which all children like, to introduce such traditional values and cultures to them was appropriate and effective. This method is interesting and easy for them to understand, as it also*

	relates to their daily experience" (In-service student-teacher 45) *"...I believe that storytelling is an effective and attractive teaching method...children could be learning in a happy, relaxed manner, and teacher could easily draw their responses and guide them in discussions" (In-service student-teacher 46)* *"...There are values for storytelling, and I am glad that the story gave them unlimited space to create and extend their stories and to avoid confronting the hard realities of life" (In-service student-teacher 50)* *"...After this story project and training, I realized that storytelling has many more effects than I had thought. This is not only a time for children to enjoy a story, but also a good time for the teacher and children to discuss and talk about issues found in the story" (In-service student-teacher 53)* *"...In understanding the values, children used this opportunity to discuss and ask questions, and I could help them unlock their queries in a relaxing atmosphere" (In-service student-teacher 55)*

Among the three categories of effectiveness of storytelling, 'Arousal of learning interest' (f= 18, 12.1%) was the least popular in both pre-service and in-service student-teacher cohorts. Student-teachers were impressed by young children's positive interest in learning during the storytelling process. The children showed positive motivation and attitudes. Indeed, the children's positive interest in learning encouraged student-teachers to expand on both the quantity and quality of storytelling. This positive change of the student-teachers in their attitudes towards storytelling, in return, was of a mutual benefit of both their teaching experiences and the young children's interest in learning. Table 4.6.6 illustrates some of the student-teachers' responses.

Table 4.6.6. Student-teachers' responses of the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children in both Reflective Reports regarding 'Arousal of learning interest'

Cohort	Responses
Pre-service	*"...I was very happy when the children waved to me when I walked pass them after the story, and they asked me to repeat the story to them again, because the story was very interesting and they loved to hear it"(Student-teacher 03)* *"...I was very happy that the children were so active in participating in the storytelling time" (Student-teacher 05)* *"...This storytelling project went on smoothly, because the children were very attentive and focused. They loved to listen to stories, and I was very pleased with my performance too. Most of them leaned forward, with smiling faces and were very responsive during the story" (Student-teacher 06)* *"...I was quite pleased when the children could tell me their own Chinese animal horoscope when I'd asked them. So when I began this story about the origin of the 12 animals horoscope, they became very interested and attentive... I'd realized that using indirect approaches like story telling was more interesting, lively and effective to teach children" (Student-teacher 18)*

	"...Story was a good way to get children interested in the traditional customs, and moral values, but we had to sustain their interest with more learning activities after the story, and there should be occasions for them to practise" (Student-teacher 19) *"...I believed starting from stories, and getting them interested in something could be a good start for another learning project" (Student-teacher 21)*
In-service	*"...After I finished the story, they requested me to repeat it again, this made me feel very happy and proud, giving me a sense of achievement, and I knew that they were very interested" (Student-teacher 29)* *"...they would become very interested and involved" (Student-teacher 30)* *"...With good use of pictures in the story book, describing them, and using them to lead children in discussion is very effective. Even though they did not have a deep understanding of the festivals, they would have a good appreciation of it after the story and discussions" (Student-teacher 41)* *"...I see the effects on stories on my class of children, I was very touched. They sat quietly, attentively, waiting and eager to listen to my story. Their attention span, surprisingly, was much longer than usual" (Student-teacher 45)* *"...Through storytelling, an activity which all children likes, to introduce such traditional values and cultures to them was appropriate and effective. This method is interesting and easy for them to understand, as it also relates to their daily experience" (Student-teacher 46)* *"...After my story project, I realized that children were interested in the ways of life of people living in the past. I told them many traditional stories, like the beginning of the world, Sheung Ngor, Woon King etc. They were most interested and we had good discussions for each story" (Student-teacher 48)*

4.7.4. Summary

In summary, the findings from questionnaires, focus group and reflective reports indicated that student-teachers' views of the effectiveness of storytelling to preserve and to develop Confucian values were positively changed after their involvement with CST and CSP. Data from the pre- and post-test questionnaires firstly showed that the majority of student-teachers indicated that storytelling was effective in three ways: 1) Facilitation of in-depth learning; 2) Establishment of positive learning environment; and 3) Arousal of learning interest. Among these three categories of effectiveness, a significant increase was found in student-teachers' understanding of storytelling's effectiveness in facilitating children's in-depth learning. Secondly, data from the focus group further demonstrated quite a dramatic change in the student-teachers' views when they shifted from being uncertain and negative towards the effectiveness of storytelling to being confident and positive. Similar to the results from the questionnaires, the majority of student-teachers'

responses showed that they realised the effectiveness of storytelling in facilitating children's in-depth learning. Thirdly, findings from student-teachers' reflective reports were consistent with those from the aforementioned two data sources (i.e. questionnaire and focus group).The effectiveness of 'Facilitation of in-depth learning' was most frequently mentioned by both student-teacher cohorts. Furthermore, positive 'feeling words' related to the effectiveness of storytelling were also found in the data from their reflective reports.

4.7.5. Conclusion and Discussion

Using storytelling as a method to preserve and develop Confucian values has been found to be effective, as confirmed by the student-teachers' change of views especially in their understanding that storytelling facilitates in-depth learning by the children. They came to a better understanding of sharing with children the values or themes behind the story contexts. Storytelling is characteristically a shared interactive process between the storyteller and audience. It can become an inspiration for children's exploration of knowledge, when they associate their personal experience and emotion with the story context, and as they attempt to sort out the logic or meanings of the content (Phillips, 2000). Children's stories also tend to be focused on some central themes that relate to adult concerns (Nodelman & Reeimer, 2003, pp. 199-200) to further develop the children's cognitive skills (Britsch, 1992; Mallan, 1991; Nicolopoulou, Scales, & Weintramb, 1994). In this study, the adult's concern was that of the development of Confucian values in children, hence, the main emphasis was on ways to educate children to share this adult view of the world, and to effect a personal meaning.

In order to have this deeper level of understanding of how children learn, the student-teachers effectively used cultural stories and encouraged and stimulated children to enter into dialogues that challenged their use of logical argumentation and persuasion (Nodelman & Reeimer, 2003, p. 48). Indeed, under such stimulation, the children turned out to be individuals with a rich understanding of what the adults understood and were also capable of making wise choices (Nodelman & Reeimer, 2003, p. 99) as seen in their discussions with the student-teachers throughout CSP.

The experiences that the student-teachers had in CSP brought a clear change of views after they first displayed doubts about their capabilities to teach the abstract Confucian values, to a later display of self-confidence in the effectiveness of storytelling and their enjoyment in this process. As teachers gain confidence, they will be more ready to develop their skills and motivation to implement new practices (Ashton, 1984; Chen & Chang, 2006; Vartuli, 2005). There was evidence from the student-teachers' positive responses that their sense of achievement resulted in a commitment to pursue the use of storytelling for further development of Confucian values in young children.

To conclude, data showed that both pre-service and in-service student-teachers' views of the effectiveness of storytelling positively improved after being involved in CST and CSP. Such improvement was demonstrated by the consistent findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data. Student-teachers' positive view change was found not only in the significant increase in the number of their positive responses, but also in their comparatively more detailed, positive, and in-depth comments in the post-test settings. Such findings suggest that CST and CSP effectively and positively brought some changes to student-teachers' views of the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool to develop Confucian values in young children.

4.8 Conclusion of Chapter 4

This Chapter presented the findings and discussions related to the six research questions that contribute towards the topic of this study – *Pre-service and in-service child care and education students using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children in HKSAR: A study of expressed views.*

Through the intervention of CST and CSP, insight into the student-teachers' perception of storytelling as a teaching and learning method for preserving and/or developing Confucian values in young children was obtained. Six research questions were posed by the researcher and all results through the implementation of CSP confirm the appropriateness of the use of CST. Table 4.6.7 presents a summary of the key findings for the research questions.

Table 4.6.7. Summary of Key Findings for Research Questions

Research Question	Summary of Key Findings		
1. *What, if any, are the possible stories and Confucian values linked to the four main cultural festivals in Hong Kong as expressed by (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers?*	**Cultural Festival**	**Confucian values**	**Cultural Story**
	Chinese New Year	'Filial'	'New Year Monster'
	Dragon Boat	'Yi'	'Poet Wat Yuen'
	Chung Yeung	'Filial'	'Woon King' & 'Outing'
	Mid-Autumn	'Filial'	'Sheung Ngor'
2. *What, if any, are the Confucian values expected to be preserved and developed in kindergartens in Hong Kong as expressed by professionals?*	• 'Ren' • 'Yi'		
3. *How do kindergarten-aged children respond to the Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) designed to preserve Confucian values?*	• 'Ren' • 'Zhi' • 'Yi'		
4. *In what way, if any, does (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' views of possible influential factors behind cultural storytelling activities differ after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*	Changed views: • Parental factor • Pedagogical factor		
5. *How does (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' understanding of storytelling techniques differ, if any, before and after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*	Changed views/understanding : • Relate story to real life experiences • Use of teaching aids • Reflective and detail critique of own techniques		
6. *In what way, if any, does (pre-service and in-service) early childhood student-teachers' views of using storytelling as a tool to preserve and develop Confucian values differ after their Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) experiences?*	Changed views/understanding: • Storytelling facilitates in-depth learning in children • Distinct positiveness of storytelling's effectiveness		

The views of the two cohorts of student-teachers revealed that firstly, they had sound knowledge of the cultural festivals in HKSAR, especially in relation to the cultural stories and their imbedded Confucian values. The Confucian values that the student-techers expected to be preserved and developed in young children were those of 'Ren'

and 'Li' and these views were commonly shared as well by the Confucian experts and the early childhood education experts. However, the children's display of Confucian values as observed in CSP differed slightly. The popular Confucian value that the children demonstrated as being assimilated in them was that of 'Ren'. This was the same value the educators and experts expected of them. The second popular value expressed through their behaviour was that of 'Yi' and followed by that of 'Zhi'. Indeed, the value of 'Li' was least expressed in CSP process. However, it is suggested that the value of 'Li' is mainly expressed instead in the children's daily routine behaviour in the child care centres/ kindergartens.

The changed view of the student-teachers indicated a shift from identifying pedagogical factors to that of parental factors as the important factors influencing their use of storytelling to preserve and develop Confucian values in young children. However, the category of pedagogical factor was still considered by the pre-service student-teacher cohort as essential, and expressed a concern about their inadequate storytelling techniques in developing such values in children. In view of their considered poor storytelling techniques, both cohorts of student-teachers were able to discuss and reflect on the improvement in these techniques seen after CSP. Formerly, most of them suggested using 'read aloud', 'role play' and 'teaching aids', but the majority changed these techniques to the use of 'techniques to relate stories to children's life experience' which, they believed, were needed to integrate the abstract values imbedded in the stories to the children's daily lives. The pre-service student-teachers cohort also identified 'the use of teaching aids and artefacts' as a technique they would use to help children relate better with the main characters in the stories or the artefacts used in the festival celebrations. Finally, both cohorts of student-teachers' understanding of the effectiveness of storytelling as a technique for preserving and developing Confucian values in young children was very positive and they came to realise that storytelling could facilitate in-depth learning in children. This was particularly important in enabling children to know and discuss in greater depth the meaning of the values and how they may be practiced in their daily lives so that the values could become part of their daily behaviour and not only demonstrated during the cultural festivals.

In conclusion, the use of storytelling as a technique to preserve and to develop Confucian values in young children is confirmed as a successful teaching method. Within the culture of the people of HKSAR, it is accepted that children possess some knowledge

of Confucian values. However, this knowledge can be enhanced in the early childhood setting through the use of stories of the cultural festivals and intervention by teachers. Furthermore, in relation to the effectiveness of staff development practices such as specific in-service training, the understanding and practice of the student-teachers on storytelling as a method and its techniques was seen to improve after experiencing and being involved in CST and CSP.

CHAPTER 5

Implications of Findings and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

Chapter Four identified and discussed the Confucian values that kindergarten-aged children in HKSAR should preserve and/or develop and the use of cultural storytelling as a strategy for developing such values. Drawing on the findings and analyses obtained, Chapter Five examines the implications of these findings in relation to the research questions.

5.2. Summary

The results of this study about student-teachers' use of storytelling to preserve and/or develop Confucian values in young children in HKSAR confirms that the vehicle used in this study is an effective medium as it shows that young children can understand these Confucian values, given the right emphasis in the curriculum of early childhood centres. The research questions that were posed, directing the focus of the research and results throughout the implementation of CSP, confirm the appropriateness of its use. The results also showed that teacher education courses should place more emphasis on Confucian values and re-consider the roles teachers should play in education in HKSAR, given the changing social milieu and desires of the people of Hong Kong to strengthen their Chinese culture.

The study was successful also because it shows that teachers' understanding of storytelling as a teaching method was strengthened. The moral issues discussed with the young children through storytelling were related to the teachings of Confucian values and

were also congruent with the principles of moral development as suggested by Kohlberg (1981), Piaget (1997) and Vygotsky (1978) in western orientations.

5.3. Implications

The answers to each of the six research questions showed that children could benefit from activities, specifically storytelling, to assist them to develop Confucian values. The implications for these findings are discussed as follows:

5.3.1. Global Aspect

A study such as this one, which has focussed on Confucian values, is highly relevant today, not only to children, teachers and early childhood centres, but also to the world at large. As countries throughout the entire world grapple with intolerance, violence and discord, politicians, administrators, educators and parents all look for ways of assisting us to live and work together in harmony. Indeed, Confucian values supporting development, equality, social harmony and unity of knowledge and action were adopted by some East Asian countries such as, Singapore, Korea and Japan as possible solutions to their economic and social problems (Dirlik, 1995). Confucianism, characterized by the emphasis on social and cosmic harmony and on 'Ren' and 'Li', provides a vision of harmony and reconciliation, which in the midst of conflicts in the world, helps keep peace in the control of peoples' palms (Dallmayr & Dee, 1993). Dallmayr and Dee (1993) further proclaimed that, "Confucianism is still a living legacy today, and its teachings can still be a guidepost for the 21st Century, a century which hopefully will be more sociable and peaceful" (p. 210) . The world today is often filled with tension and conflict and is a place where people find it difficult to live. The rebirth of interest in Confucian values with the call for harmony to be fostered in children, could be significant, given that once these values have been inculcated by them, our world might be a better one.

5.3.2. *Implication for HKSAR*

Children are the future citizens of the world and their education is of prime importance to HKSAR, because like all human values, citizenship can be perfected by proper training, understanding, sympathy, and practice (Burdette, 1942, p. 269). This study confirms that children can develop positive responses to and understanding of the Confucian values that are suggested by the HKSAR government for its citizens to practise (Tung, 1997). Confucianism is a system of values that govern interpersonal behaviour with an eye towards building a civil society and emphasizing the primacy of individual duties over individual rights (Scarborough, 1998, pp. 20-21). Such Confucian values are challenged by modernization and especially the values of 'Ren' and 'Li' which are not seen as conducive to a modern dynamic society as they encourage harmony and social conformity rather than critical innovation (Dallmayr & Dee, 1993). However, as suggested by Dirlik (1995, p. 17), Chinese people always believe that peace, harmony and cohesion can bring prosperity. Such pursuit of harmony has affected the way the Chinese and various Chinese communities around the globe behave. Indeed, harmony, as represented in the Confucian value of 'Ren', is called forth in the modern community of HKSAR (Ho & Chan, 2007).

This study has highlighted that when children are exposed in a systematic way to the Confucian values then moral issues are brought to the forefront. Although the study cannot assess the long term retention of the values, it has demonstrated that children can respond to the CSP with demonstrations of behaviour related to the Confucian values. The children in the CSP process have shown that they have acquired some understanding of the importance of social harmony in the family, the school and in the community. They have also displayed a concern for the value of life and, indeed, some of them were motivated to take initiative to see that justice was being addressed, for example, sending the police against the New Year monster or the army to defend Wat Yuen. With Confucian values developed in young children at an early age the implication for HKSAR is that it may have future leaders who encompass values fostering human sociability and fairness (Dallmayr & Dee, 1993).

5.3.3. *Implications for Early Childhood Education in HKSAR*

Looking ahead positively, there is a need for early childhood educators to help young children to be positive thinkers and movers (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003, p. 229). When considering future citizens and leaders of the community, HKSAR needs a younger generation that is equipped with a general sense of well-being, of fairness, and a supporter for social harmony to battle against the contradictions of values from capitalism, modernization and from champions of individual rights. As suggested by Dirlik (1995), the emphasis in Confucian values is on people and virtue, which is quite different from capitalism that emphasizes wealth and belittles morality.

Confucian values focus on human-relatedness of the self and this extends to a network of human relationships that exist beyond the self, like the family and the society. To achieve this purpose, a firm understanding of Confucian values and behaviour should be developed into a profound understanding wherein an individual is able to discern and adapt these traditional values to the modern society. This adaptation requires a supportive social environment, with early childhood teachers and parents having the appropriate knowledge of Confucian values and the skills to teach them to their children. They should also show children how to take their place in their modern society and to make it a better place now and in the future. The implication here is for an enhanced training for both early childhood teachers and parents on how to empower children to meet changes with a future perspective and to know how to capitalize on them with the young children under their care (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003, p. 230).

The findings from the research also confirm that student-teacher participants are both interested and capable of developing in young children the behaviour related to Confucian values and culture. The implication of this finding is particularly important in that it reveals the teachers' awareness of the importance of their role in bringing these traditional values to the children amidst the challenges of the modernized society in HKSAR. Hence, being placed in a time when the ancient Confucian values are re-awakened into the present age, teachers and parents need to learn more about these Confucian values and their relevance to the modern ways of life before they could readily share these interpretations with young children in their care.

Hofstede and Bond (2001, p. 7) suggested that "cultural inheritances are not genetically transferred but are acquired by one who is at the right place at the right time,

from the day one is born and continues throughout one's lifetime". Children acquire the principles, values and customs in a particular society through interaction with and learning from their parents, teachers and the social environment. The implication here is that those Confucian values that are predominant in the Chinese community and culture should be introduced to the children at the right time, starting from early childhood, with this process continuing into the future, shaping the children to become the future leaders of the community. With the numerous festivals customarily celebrated each year in HKSAR, such festivals and stories could also be the right time for the children to be immersed in the atmosphere where the cultural customs and inheritances are experienced and practiced.

Collaborative efforts are required between teachers and parents, for them to be role models for children from whom to learn moral values (Bandura, 1989). Together, as partners, they should enable the children to acquire a sense of future by challenging and empowering them to be active participants in their own learning and to pursue a mastery of the future. With the appropriate strategies provided through storytelling and discussions, parents and teachers can discuss the past with the children, as illustrated in the story content; their present, as they are experiencing in the modern life; and to anticipate their future. Hence, another implication is for both teachers and parents to provide their children with more social exposure for the demonstration of morally acceptable behaviour and to establish an interactive relationship with their children so as to more effectively use storytelling to facilitate their in-depth learning.

5.4. Conclusion

It could be claimed that the field of early childhood in HKSAR is in some ways at the cross roads as shown in Chapter One. The time for change is now! If young children and their families are to benefit from the type of exposure as shown in the CST and the CSP conducted in this research, then perhaps administrators in positions of influence in HKSAR should review the early childhood curriculum and take a stronger stance on implementing Confucian values in the early childhood curriculum. This could be achieved by incorporating Confucianism and storytelling as a teaching method for Confucian values into the training programmes for early childhood teachers and by establishing a network of support and collaboration with early childhood centres and

children's parents and families. The following recommendations emanating from this study point a way forward.

5.5. Recommendation

5.5.1. Recommendation 1

That the appropriate authority in HKSAR reviews the early childhood curriculum in early childhood centres so as to incorporate the teaching and development of Confucian values in young children.

5.5.2. Recommendation 2

That the teacher training institutions for early childhood teachers consider incorporating in their curriculum Confucian Values Storytelling Training (CST) and Confucian Values Storytelling Project (CSP) in three ways:

1. Confucianism and values be introduced as a Liberal Studies course set at an adult level, for early childhood teachers to learn the knowledge, principles and implications, considering its relevancy to the global world;
2. Confucian values be studied by early childhood teachers with consideration of how they could be applied at the early childhood education level;
3. The storytelling skills and techniques of early childhood teachers be further strengthened and adopted with an aim to inculcate Confucian values in young children.

5.5.3. Recommendation 3

That through collaboration between early childhood centres and families, children be empowered to meet the changes happening in their society with a future perspective and to envisage that peace and harmony is within their control.

5.5.4. Recommendation 4

That a training programme and/or resources similar to the CST is accessible to parents, so that they may learn more about the Confucian values and the appropriate storytelling techniques that help develop and sustain Confucian values in their young children.

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Pre-test Questionnaire

Use of Storytelling to Develop and Preserve Confucian Values
Pre-Test Questionnaire for Student-Teachers

1. Name (Optional) : _____
2. Age : ☐ 20 or Below ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31 or above
3. Gender : ☐ Female ☐ Male
4. Occupation : ☐ Pre-service Teacher ☐ In-service Teacher
5. Today's date : _____
6. Do you think there is a need to preserve Confucian values in kindergarten in Hong Kong?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   Please explain your answer.

7. What, if necessary, are the Confucian values that should be preserved in kindergartens in Hong Kong?

8. What are the Confucian values represented in the following cultural festivals in Hong Kong?

Festival	Confucian Value(s)
Chinese New Year	
Dragon Boat Festival	
Mid Autumn Festival	
Chung Yeung Festival	

9. Which story/stories will you use to present each of the following four cultural festivals?

Festival	Story/Stories
Chinese New Year	
Dragon Boat Festival	
Mid Autumn Festival	
Chung Yeung Festival	

10. Do you think storytelling is an effective tool to develop and preserve Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please explain your answer.

11. What, if any, are some possible effective storytelling techniques for young children?

~ Thank you ~

~ End of Questionnaire ~

Appendix 2: Post-test Questionaire

Use of Storytelling to Develop and Preserve Confucian Values
Post-Test Questionnaire for Student-Teachers

1 Name (Optional) : _____

2 Age : ☐ 20 or Below ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31 or above

3 Gender : ☐ Female ☐ Male

4 Occupation : ☐ Pre-service Teacher ☐ In-service Teacher

5. Today's date : _____

6. Do you think there is a need to preserve Confucian values in kindergarten in Hong Kong? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please explain your answer.

7 What, if necessary, are the Confucian values that should be preserved in kindergartens in Hong Kong?

8 Do you think storytelling is an effective tool to develop and preserve Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please explain your answer.

9 What, if any, are the possible factors that contribute to the ways children learn Confucian values by using storytelling?

10 What, if any, are some possible effective storytelling techniques for young children?

~ Thank you ~

~ End of Questionnaire ~

Appendix 3: Non-participant Observation Guidelines

Non-Participant Observation Guidelines

1. Code
2. Date
3. Time
4. Venue
5. Space: the physical setting
6. Actors: the people in the situation
7. Activities: the sets of related acts that are taking place
8. Objects: the artefacts and physical things that are there
9. Acts: the specific actions/ language that the object is doing/saying
10. Events: the sets of activities that are taking place
11. Goals: what the object is trying to achieve
12. Feelings: what the object feels and how he/she expresses this

Other Remarks

Appendix 4: Focus Group for Early Childhood Educators

Focus Group for Early Childhood Educators

Please discuss your views on the following issues:

1. What are the Confucian values which you think should be preserved in kindergartens and child care centres? Please explain.

2. What are the behaviours related to the Confucian values which you see expressed in children in kindergartens and child care centres? Please explain.

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 5: Focus Group for Student-teachers

Focus Group for Student-teachers

Please discuss your views on the following issues:

1. What are the Confucian values which you think should be preserved in kindergartens and child care centres? Please explain.

2. What are the possible factors that may contribute to the ways children learn Confucian values by using storytelling in kindergartens and child care centres? Please explain.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 6: Interview Guide for Local Experts

Interview Guide for Local Experts

Area of expertise:

Name (Optional): _____

Please express your views on the following issues:

1. What Confucian values do you think should be preserved or developed in young children in Hong Kong? Explain your answer.
2. In what ways are Confucian values important to young children? Explain your answer.
3. What Confucian values are usually seen practiced by children in kindergartens in Hong Kong? Explain your answer.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 7: Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST)

Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST)

Training Outline

Duration: 16 hours

Content Outline:
***Part One: Confucian values and storytelling* (12 hours)**

1. Storytelling (2 hours)
   - Forms of storytelling:
     - Myths, folktales, modern-life stories
   - Values of storytelling:
     - In relation to social and emotional development
   - Skills of storytelling:
     - Selection criteria
     - Use of self, intonation and expression
     - Read aloud, aids and puppets
     - Listening, discussion and response techniques
     - Relate experience to daily needs of child

2. Character and moral development of a child (2 hours)
   - Kohlberg:
     - Stages of moral development – Characteristics of the preconventional stage
   - Bandura:
     - Social learning and Role modelling

3. Semiotics, signs and symbolism and understanding children's drawings (2 hours)
   - Values of drawing
   - Stages of children's drawing development
   - Symbolism and the understanding of children's drawing

4. Confucian values as practiced in modern daily lives in Hong Kong (3 hours)
   - Filial (filial piety, hsiao)
   - Ren (benevolence)
   - Yi (righteousness)
   - Li (propriety, courtesy)
   - Zhi (wisdom)

5. Chinese cultural festivals and cultural stories (3 hours):
   - Chinese New Year
   - Dragon Boat Festival
   - Mid Autumn Festival
   - Chung Yeung Festival
   - Confucian values cultural stories

Part Two: Data collection methods **(4 hours)**

1. Non-participant observation:
   Guideline
   Recording techniques

2. Reflective report writing:
   Reporting techniques

Children's artefacts, discussion and documentation

Appendix 8: Information Sheet for Principal

University of South Australia

School of Education

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Information Sheet for Principal
Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (Lee Wai Lee)

Researcher: Lai-wan Maria LEE

B.Soc.Sc (SW), B.Phil (Ed of Young Children)

Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck

School of Education, University of South Australia

Telephone: 08 3023965

Executive Officer UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee: Ms Vicki Allen

Telephone: 08 83023118

E-mail: V.allen@unisa.edu.au

Dear Principal,

I have recently enrolled in a PhD from University of South Australia and wish to do my research about expressed views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children in Hong Kong.

Research Project:

The study focuses on views that Confucian values are considered as appropriate moral values for teachers and children. The focus of teaching is to help each one to be a human being. Teachers have to teach these values to children first and foremost by living it, practising it and being a role model for children. Hence, it is most important for teachers to acquire these values and behaviour. Storytelling is an effective means of immersion and children may learn these Confucian values comfortably. There would be moral values they would emphasize for the cultural festivals which children will experience. The most important step is to study the views of the student-teachers and the response of children in storytelling projects related to the four main cultural festivals in Hong Kong, namely, Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and Chung Yeung Festival.

This research study is to investigate how kindergarten aged children, five to six years of age, respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.

The research findings will be shared with all participants. It is my belief that gaining understanding of the views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method

to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children and the children's response to Confucian values will be of great help to teachers and parents.

The research will involve:

- Using questionnaires for pre-test before the training session, to obtain the expressed views of student teachers in-training.
- Using questionnaires for post-test after the story projects to record any changed views (if any) on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children.
- Having Non-participant Observations on student-teachers participating in the research, with the purpose of seeing the student-teachers in operation and how kindergarten aged children respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.
- Using Observation Reports and Reflective Reports to record and/ or to confirm views and responses of children to the specially designed project.
- Meeting Focus Group with student-teachers at the beginning and the end of the story projects.
- Interviewing experts and focus groups to record their expressed views on the Confucian values to be preserved or developed in the kindergartens in Hong Kong.

The study period is from January 2005 to November 2007. I will use Cantonese in the interviews with student-teachers.

I would like to request your permission to do the research at your campus. Should you have any queries please write to me at – mlee@vtc.edu.hk or call me at 90404491.

Looking forward to your positive response and support.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Lai wan Maria Lee

Appendix 9: Information for Student-teachers (Pre-service)

University of South Australia

School of Education

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Information for Student-teachers (Pre-service)

Researcher: Lai-wan Maria LEE

B.Soc.Sc (SW), B.Phil (Ed of Young Children)

Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck

School of Education, University of South Australia

Telephone: 08 3023965

Executive Officer UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee: Ms Vicki Allen

Telephone: 08 83023118

E-mail: V.allen@unisa.edu.au

Dear Student-teachers,

I have recently enrolled in a PhD from University of South Australia and wish to do my research about expressed views of student teachers in-training on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children in Hong Kong.

Research Project:

The study focuses on views that Confucian values are considered as appropriate moral values for teachers and children. The focus of teaching is to help each one to be a human being. Teachers have to teach these values to children first and foremost by living it, practising it and being a role model for children. Hence, it is most important for teachers to acquire these values and behaviour. Storytelling is an effective means of immersion and children may learn these Confucian values comfortably. There would be moral values they would emphasize for the festivals. The most important step is to study the views of the student-teachers and the response of children in storytelling projects related to the four main cultural festivals in Hong Kong, namely, Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and Chung Yeung Festival.

This research study is to investigate how kindergarten aged children, five to six years of age, respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values. After completing the Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST) you will be conducting Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) in the kindergarten/child care centre where you will be on fieldwork placements.

The research findings will be shared with all participants. It is my belief that gaining understanding of the views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children and the children's response to Confucian values will be of great help to teachers and parents.

The research will involve:

- Using questionnaires for pre-test before the training session, to obtain the expressed views of student teachers in-training.
- Using questionnaires for post-test after the story projects to record any changed views (if any) on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children.
- Having Non-participant Observations on student-teachers participating in the research, with the purpose of seeing the student-teachers in operation and how kindergarten aged children respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.
- Using Observation Reports and Reflective Reports to record and/ or to confirm views and responses of children to the specially designed project.
- Meeting Focus Group with student-teachers at the beginning and the end of the story projects.
- Interviewing experts and focus groups to record their expressed views on the Confucian values to be preserved or developed in the kindergartens in Hong Kong.

The study period is from January 2005 to November 2007. I will use Cantonese in the interviews with student-teachers.

I would like to request your permission to participate in the research. Should you have any queries please write to me at – mlee@vtc.edu.hk or call me at 90404491.

Looking forward to your positive response and support.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Lai wan Maria Lee

Appendix 10: Information for Student-teachers (In-service)



University of South Australia

School of Education

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Information for Student-teachers (In-service)

Researcher: Lai-wan Maria LEE

B.Soc.Sc (SW), B.Phil (Ed of Young Children)

Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck

School of Education, University of South Australia

Telephone: 08 3023965

Executive Officer UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee: Ms Vicki Allen

Telephone: 08 83023118

E-mail: V.allen@unisa.edu.au

Dear Student-teachers,

I have recently enrolled in a PhD from University of South Australia and wish to do my research about expressed views of student teachers in-training on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children in Hong Kong.

Research Project:

The study focuses on views that Confucian values are considered as appropriate moral values for teachers and children. The focus of teaching is to help each one to be a human being. Teachers have to teach these values to children first and foremost by living it, practising it and being a role model for children. Hence, it is most important for teachers to acquire these values and behaviour. Storytelling is an effective means of immersion and children may learn these Confucian values comfortably. There would be moral values they would emphasize for the festivals. The most important step is to study the views of the student-teachers and the response of children in storytelling projects related to the four main cultural festivals in Hong Kong, namely, Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and Chung Yeung Festival.

This research study is to investigate how kindergarten aged children, five to six years of age, respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values. After completing the Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST) you will be conducting

Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) in the kindergarten/child care centre where you will be on fieldwork placements.

The research findings will be shared with all participants. It is my belief that gaining understanding of the views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children and the children's response to Confucian values will be of great help to teachers and parents.

The research will involve:

- Using questionnaires for pre-test before the training session, to obtain the expressed views of student teachers in-training.
- Using questionnaires for post-test after the story projects to record any changed views (if any) on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children.
- Having Non-participant Observations on student-teachers participating in the research, with the purpose of seeing the student-teachers in operation and how kindergarten aged children respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.
- Using Observation Reports and Reflective Reports to record and/ or to confirm views and responses of children to the specially designed project.
- Meeting Focus Group with student-teachers at the beginning and the end of the story projects.
- Interviewing experts and focus groups to record their expressed views on the Confucian values to be preserved or developed in the kindergartens in Hong Kong.

The study period is from January 2005 to November 2007. I will use Cantonese in the interviews with student-teachers.

I would like to request your permission to participate in the research. Should you have any queries please write to me at – mlee@vtc.edu.hk or call me at 90404491.

Looking forward to your positive response and support.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Lai wan Maria Lee

Appendix 11: Information for Centre Supervisors/Kindergarten Principals

School of Education

University of South Australia

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Information for Centre Supervisors/Kindergarten Principals

Researcher: Lai-wan Maria LEE

B.Soc.Sc (SW), B.Phil (Ed of Young Children)

Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck

School of Education, University of South Australia

Telephone: 08 3023965

Executive Officer UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee: Ms Vicki Allen

Telephone: 08 83023118

E-mail: V.allen@unisa.edu.au

Dear Supervisors/Principals,

I have recently enrolled in a PhD from University of South Australia and wish to do my research about expressed views of student teachers in-training on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children in Hong Kong.

Research Project:

The study focuses on views that Confucian values are considered as appropriate moral values for teachers and children. The focus of teaching is to help each one to be a human being. Teachers have to teach these values to children first and foremost by living it, practicing it and being a role model for children. Hence, it is most important for teachers to acquire these values and behaviour. Storytelling is an effective means of immersion and children may learn these Confucian values comfortably. There would be moral values they would emphasize for the festivals. The most important step is to study the views of the student-teachers and the response of children in storytelling projects related to the four main cultural festivals in Hong Kong, namely, Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and Chung Yeung Festival..

This research study is to investigate how kindergarten aged children, five to six years of age, respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values. Student-teachers who had undergone the Confucian Values and Storytelling Training (CST) will be conducting Confucian Values Story Projects (CSP) in your kindergarten/child care centre

when they are on fieldwork placements. All records and artefacts collected from your kindergarten/child care centre will be returned to you after documentation.

The research findings will be shared with all participants. It is my belief that gaining understanding of the views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children and the children's response to Confucian values will be of great help to teachers and parents.

The research will involve:

- Using questionnaires for pre-test before the training session, to obtain the expressed views of student teachers in-training.
- Using questionnaires for post-test after the story projects to record any changed views (if any) on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children.
- Having Non-participant Observations on student-teachers participating in the research, with the purpose of seeing the student-teachers in operation and how kindergarten aged children respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.
- Using Observation Reports and Reflective Reports to record and/ or to confirm views and responses of children to the specially designed project.
- Meeting Focus Group with student-teachers at the beginning and the end of the story projects.
- Interviewing experts and focus groups to record their expressed views on the Confucian values to be preserved or developed in the kindergartens in Hong Kong.

The study period is from January 2005 to November 2007. I will use Cantonese in the interviews with student-teachers.

I would like to request your permission to do the research at you centre. Should you have any queries please write to me at – mlee@vtc.edu.hk or call me at 90404491.

Looking forward to your positive response and support.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Lai wan Maria Lee

Appendix 12: Information for Parents

School of Education

University of South Australia

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Information for Parents

Researcher: Lai-wan Maria LEE

B.Soc.Sc (SW), B.Phil (Ed of Young Children)

Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck

School of Education, University of South Australia

Telephone: 08 3023965

Executive Officer UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee: Ms Vicki Allen

Telephone: 08 83023118

E-mail: V.allen@unisa.edu.au

Dear Parents,

I have recently enrolled in a PhD from University of South Australia and wish to do my research about expressed views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children in Hong Kong.

Research Project:

The study focuses on views that Confucian values are considered as appropriate moral values for teachers and children. The focus of teaching is to help each one to be a human being. Teachers have to teach these values to children first and foremost by living it, practising it and being a role model for children. Hence, it is most important for teachers to acquire these values and behaviour. Storytelling is an effective means of immersion and children may learn these Confucian values comfortably. There would be moral values they would emphasize for the festivals. The most important step is to study the views of the student-teachers and the response of children in storytelling projects related to the four main cultural festivals in Hong Kong, namely, Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and Chung Yeung Festival.

This research study is to investigate how kindergarten aged children, five to six years of age, respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.

The research findings will be shared with all participants. It is my belief that gaining understanding of the views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children and the children's response to Confucian values will be of great help to teachers and parents.

The research will involve:

- Using questionnaires for pre-test before the training session, to obtain the expressed views of student teachers in-training.
- Using questionnaires for post-test after the story projects to record any changed views (if any) on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children.
- Having Non-participant Observations on student-teachers participating in the research, with the purpose of seeing the student-teachers in operation and how kindergarten aged children respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.
- Using Observation Reports and Reflective Reports to record and/ or to confirm views and responses of children to the specially designed project.
- Meeting Focus Group with student-teachers at the beginning and the end of the story projects.
- Interviewing experts and focus groups to record their expressed views on the Confucian values to be preserved or developed in the kindergartens in Hong Kong.

The study period is from January 2005 to November 2007. I will use Cantonese in the interviews with student-teachers.

I would like to request your permission to do the research and observing your child in the centre. Should you have any queries please write to me at – mlee@vtc.edu.hk or call me at 90404491.

Looking forward to your positive response and support.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Lai wan Maria Lee

Appendix 13: Information for Experts/ educators



University of South Australia

School of Education

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Information for Expert/educator

Researcher: Lai-wan Maria LEE

B.Soc.Sc (SW), B.Phil (Ed of Young Children)

Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck

School of Education, University of South Australia

Telephone: 08 3023965

Executive Officer UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee: Ms Vicki Allen

Telephone: 08 83023118

E-mail: V.allen@unisa.edu.au

Dear

I have recently enrolled in a PhD from University of South Australia and wish to do my research about expressed views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children in Hong Kong.

Research Project:

The study focuses on views that Confucian values are considered as appropriate moral values for teachers and children. The focus of teaching is to help each one to be a human being. Teachers have to teach these values to children first and foremost by living it, practising it and being a role model for children. Hence, it is most important for teachers to acquire these values and behaviour. Storytelling is an effective means of immersion and children may learn these Confucian values comfortably. There would be moral values they would emphasize for the festivals. The most important step is to study the views of the student-teachers and the response of children in storytelling projects related to the four main cultural festivals in Hong Kong, namely, Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and Chung Yeung Festival.

This research study is to investigate how kindergarten aged children, five to six years of age, respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.

The research findings will be shared with all participants. It is my belief that gaining understanding of the views of student-teachers on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten aged children and the children's response to Confucian values will be of great help to teachers and parents.

The research will involve:

- Using questionnaires for pre-test before the training session, to obtain the expressed views of student teachers in-training.
- Using questionnaires for post-test after the story projects to record any changed views (if any) on using storytelling as a teaching method to understand Confucian values in kindergarten-aged children.
- Non-participant Observations on student-teachers participating in the research, with the purpose of seeing the student-teachers in operation and how kindergarten aged children respond to the story projects designed to preserve Confucian values.
- Using Observation Reports and Reflective Reports to record and/ or to confirm views and responses of children to the specially designed project.
- Meeting Focus Group with student-teachers at the beginning and the end of the story projects.
- Interviewing experts and focus groups to record their expressed views on the Confucian values to be preserved or developed in the kindergartens in Hong Kong.

The study period is from January 2005 to November 2007.

I will use Cantonese in the interviews with you and the student-teachers.

I would like to request your permission to interview you at you office/centre. Should you have any queries please write to me at – mlee@vtc.edu.hk or call me at 90404491.

Looking forward to your positive response and support.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Lai wan Maria Lee

Appendix 14: Participant's Rights and Consent Form



University of South Australia

School of Education

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Participant's Right and Consent Form for the Principal
Hong Kong Institue of Vocational Education (Lee Wai Lee)

Researcher: Lai Wan Maria Lee
B. Soc Sc. (SW), B. Phil (Ed. Of Young Children)
Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck
School of Education, University of South Australia
Telephone: 08 3023965

I, _____ have read the information sheet and the nature and purpose of this study has been explained to me. I understand and agree to give my permission to Lai-wan Maria Lee to carry out her proposed research at our campus. I understand that, while information gained during the study may be published, the children and the student-teachers will not be identified and personal details will remain confidential.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time and that this will not affect our status now or in the future.

Signature _____ Date _____

I certify that I have explained the study to the Campus Principal _____ and that he understands what is involved.

Signature _____ Date _____

School of Education

University of South Australia

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Participant's Right and Consent Form for Centre Supervisors/ Kindergarten Principals

Researcher: Lai Wan Maria Lee
B. Soc Sc. (SW), B. Phil (Ed. Of Young Children)
Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck
School of Education, University of South Australia
Telephone: 08 3023965

I, _____have read the information sheet and the nature and purpose of this study has been explained to me. I understand and agree to give my permission to Lai-wan Maria Lee to carry out her proposed research at our centre/school. I understand that, while information gained during the study may be published, the children and the centre will not be identified and personal details will remain confidential. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time and that this will not affect our status now or in the future.

Signature _____ Date _____

I certify that I have explained the study to the Centre Supervisor / Kindergarten Principal _____ and that she understands what is involved.

Signature _____ Date _____

School of Education

University of South Australia

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Participant's Right and Consent Form for Student-teachers

Researcher: Lai-wan, Maria, LEE
B. Soc.Sc.(SW), B. Phil. (Ed. Of Young Children)

Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck
De Lissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies
University of South Australia

Telephone: 08 3023965

I, _____ have read the information sheet and the nature and purpose of this study has been explained to me. I understand and agree to give my permission to Lai-wan, Maria LEE to carry out her proposed research in my class. I understand that, while information gained during the study may be published, the children and the centre and my identity will not be identified and personal details will remain confidential.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time and that this will not affect our status now or in the future.

Signature _____ Date _____

I certify that I have explained the study to the student-teacher_____and that she understands what is involved.

Signature _____ Date _____

School of Education

University of South Australia

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Participant's Right and Consent Form for Parents

Researcher: Lai-wan, Maria, LEE

Supervisor: Professor Marjory Ebbeck
De Lissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies
University of South Australia

Telephone: 08 3023965

I, _____ have read the information sheet and the nature and purpose of this study has been explained to me. I understand and agree to give my permission to the Lai-wan, Maria, LEE to carry out observations in my child's classroom. I understand that, while information gained during the study may be published, the children and the centre will not be identified and personal details will remain confidential.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time and that this will not affect our status now or in the future.

Signature _____ Date _____

I certify that I have explained the study to Mrs. / Mr. _____ and that she/he understands what is involved.

Signature _____ Date _____

School of Education

University of South Australia

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowled
Serving the Community

Participant's Right and Consent Form for Expert/educator

Researcher: Lai-wan, Maria, LEE

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I, _____ have read the information sheet and the nature and purpose of this study has been explained to me. I understand and agree to give my permission to the Lai-wan, Maria, LEE to carry out the interview. I understand that, while information gained during the study may be published, the children and the centre and my identity will not be identified and personal details will remain confidential. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time and that this will not affect our status now or in the future.

Signature _____ Date _____

I certify that I have explained the study to Mrs. / Mr. _____ and that she/he understands what is involved.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 15: Chinese New Year Story – The Twelve Animals

Chinese New Year Story (新年故事)
Story of the Twelve Animals (十二生肖)

The legend was told many centuries ago, when the Chinese had not invented a time measurement yet. For it, the Jade Emperor (Emperor of Heaven) decided to call for a contest: a race! All the animals of the kingdom were invited to participate in this event that incidentally took place during the emperor's birthday. They were told there would only be 12 winners. In order to win and gain a permanent place in the Zodiac Years, the animals must cross a swift current river and reach the designated spot on the shore.

While we are all aware of the hatred between a cat and a rat, these two animals were actually very good friends once. Good friends they may be, but these two animals are the worst swimmers in the animal kingdom. Although bad swimmers, they were both intelligent. They decided that the best and fastest way to cross the river is to hop on the EDFNRI WKHR[7KHR[EHQJ DQDWHDQGJ RRG-natured animal, agreed to carry them across. However, when there is a carrot dangling in front, it is sometimes difficult to stick to friendship and the crafty rat decided that in order to win, it had to do something and promptly pushed the cat into the river. Because of this, the cat had never forgiven the rat, and no doubt, hated the water too. After the ox had crossed the river, the rat jumped ahead and reached the shore first, and it cleverly claimed first place in the race!

Following closely behind was the strong ox, and it was named the 2nd animal in the zodiac. After the ox, came the tiger, panting away while explaining to the emperor just how difficult it was to cross the river with the heavy currents pushing it downstream all the time. But with powerful strength, it reached the shore and was named the 3rd animal in the cycle.

Suddenly, from a distance came a thumping sound and out popped the rabbit. It explained how it crossed the river: by jumping from one stone to another in a nimble fashion. Halfway through, it almost lost the race but the rabbit was lucky enough to grab hold of a floating log that later washed him to shore. For that, it became the 4th animal in the zodiac cycle. Coming in 5th place was the gallant dragon, flying and belching fire into the air. Of course the Emperor was deeply curious as to why a strong and flying creature such as the dragon should fail to reach first. The mighty dragon explained that he had to

stop and make rain to help all the people and creatures of the earth, therefore he was held back a little. Then on his way to the finish line, he saw a little helpless rabbit clinging on to a log so he did a good deed and gave a puff of breath to the poor creature so that it could land on the shore. The emperor was very pleased with the actions of the dragon and he was added into the zodiac cycle. As soon as he had done so, a galloping sound was heard and the horse appeared. Hidden on the horse's hoof was the slimy sneaky snake whose sudden appearance gave the horse a fright thus making it fall back and gave the snake 6th spot whilst the horse took the 7th.

Not long after that, a little distance away, the sheep, monkey and rooster came to the shore. These three creatures helped each other get to the shore. The rooster spotted a raft, and took the other two animals with it. Together, the sheep and the monkey cleared the weeds, tugged and pulled and finally got the raft to the shore. Because of their combined efforts, the Emperor was very pleased and promptly named the sheep as the 8th creature, the monkey as the 9th, and the rooster the 10th.

The 11th animal was the dog. His explanation for being late although he was supposed to be the best swimmer amongst the rest was that he needed a good bath after a long spell, and the fresh water from the river was too big a temptation. For that, he almost didn't make it to the finish line. Just as the emperor was about to call it a day, an oink and squeal was heard from a little pig. The term "lazy pig" is due here as the pig got hungry during the race, promptly stopped for a feast then fell asleep. After the nap, the pig continued the race and was named the 12th and last animal of the zodiac cycle.

Source: http://www.thingsasian.com/stories-photos/2363

Retrieved on : 21st June 2008

Appendix 16: Chinese New Year Story – The New Year Monster

Chinese New Year Story (新年故事)
Story of the New Year Monster (年獸)

There is a legend about the origin of "year". In ancient times, our ancestors were subject to the threat of a most ferocious animal called 'Nian' (year), which lived on various kinds of animals. In winter where food was scarce in the mountains, 'Nian' would intrude the villages to eat human beings and beasts of burden. People were frightened and on tenterhooks. People fought against Nian for many years, and they found Nian was afraid of three things: red color, fire and sound. Therefore, in winter people hung a piece of red peach wood at the door, lighted a pile of fire at the gate, beat gongs and drums heavily to make a loud sound, without sleeping throughout the night. One night Nian intruded into the village again and saw the red color and fire at every door and heard a thunderous sound. It was frightened and retreated to the mountains. From then on it dare not come out again. After the night was over, people congratulated each other. They put up red lanterns and drank liquor and wine at feasts to celebrate their victory.

To celebrate the great victory people of every family would paste red paper couplets on the door panels, light red lanterns, beat gongs and drums, let off fireworks and firecrackers all through the night. Early next morning they would greet each other happily. Generation after generation, the day of Spring Festival came into being.

Source: http://www.chinavoc.com/festivals/spring/springfestival.htm
Retrieved on: 21st June 2008

Appendix 17: Dragon Boat Festival Story – Wat Yuen

Dragon Boat Festival Story (端午節故事)
Story of Wat Yuen (屈原)

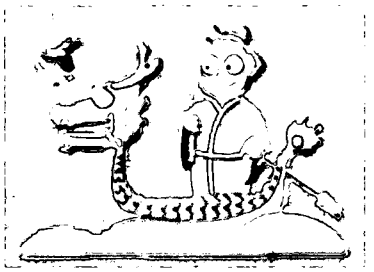
The Dragon-Boat Festival, commonly called the Fifth Moon Festival in Chinese, is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth moon in the lunar calendar. The Fifth Moon Festival was also noted for its dragon-boat races, especially in the southern provinces, where there are many rivers and lakes. This regatta commemorated the death of Wat Yuen an honest minister and poet who is said to have committed suicide by drowning himself in a river.

Wat Yuen was a minister in the kingdom of Chu situated in present-day Hunan and Hubei provinces, during the Warring States period (475 -221 BC). He was upright, loyal and highly esteemed for his wise counsel that had brought peace and prosperity to the kingdom. However, when a dishonest and corrupt prince vilified Wat Yuen, he was disgraced and dismissed from his office. Realizing that the country was now in the hands of evil and corrupt officials, Wat clasped a large stone and leaped into the Mi Lo river on the fifth day of the fifth moon. Nearby fishermen rushed over and tried to save him, but they were unable even to recover his body. Thereafter, the kingdom declined and was eventually conquered by the kingdom of Qin.

The people of Chu, mourning the death of Wat Yuen, threw rice into the river to feed his hungry ghost every year on the fifth day of the fifth moon. One year, the spirit of Wat Yuen appeared and told the mourners that a huge reptile in the river had stolen the rice that had been offered. The spirit advised them to wrap the rice in silk and bind it with five different colored threads before tossing it into the river.

On the Fifth Moon Festival, a glutinous rice pudding called dumpling was eaten to symbolize the rice offerings to Wat Yuen. Ingredients such as beans, lotus seeds, chestnuts, pork fat and the golden yolk of a salted duck egg were often added to the glutinous rice. The pudding was wrapped with bamboo leaves, bound with a sort of raffia and boiled in salt water for hours.

The dragon-boat races represented the attempts to rescue and recover the body of Wat Yuen. A wooden dragonhead was attached at the bow, and a dragon tail at the stern. The hull was decorated with a design of red, green and blue scales edged in gold. In the center of the boat was a canopied shrine. Behind the shrine sat drummers, gong-beaters and cymbal-crashers that would set the pace for the paddlers. Men standing at the bow set off firecrackers, tossed rice into the water and made believe they were looking for Wat Yuen. All the noise and pageantry created an atmosphere of gaiety and excitement for the participants and spectators. Competitions were held between different clans, villages and organizations, and winners were awarded medals, banners, jugs of wine and festive meals.





Source:
http://www.chinavoc.com/festivals/Dragonboat.htm

Retrieved on: 21st June 2008

Appendix 18: Chung Yeung Festival Story – Woon King

Chung Yeung Festival Story (重陽節故事)
Story of Woon King (桓景)

Chung Yeung is on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, when many visit their ancestors' graves or hike up mountains in remembrance of an ancient Chinese family's escape from plague and death by fleeing to a mountain top. Chung Yeung is a day to head to the cemetery to pay tribute to ancestors and perform cleansing rites. However, the day is not all about solemn gestures. It also honors a Han Dynasty legend (202BC-220AD).

Traditionally you are supposed to "go up the mountain" on this day. The story goes that a long time ago there appeared a devil of plague in the Ruhe River. A man named Woon King was taught by an old Taoist how to defeat this plague. The priest told the man that the devil would come back on the 9th of September and told him to go back and save the village. He did this by telling them to go climb up a mountain, then while the villagers were safe he tricked the plague devil with some strong Chinese wine made of Chrysanthemum flowers and killed him. The men obeyed Woon King and went to a high place for the entire ninth day of the ninth moon, they found upon returning home that all living things had died during their absence.

This festival is also known as Autumn Remembrance. Observers go to high ground and so all means of transport to such areas are heavily used, although there are some extra services to cope with increased traffic. They share the food they bring along, especially Chinese cakes, 'Ko', which is a homonym of the word for "top". Some believe that those who eat these cakes will be promoted to the top. It is also a day for hiking. On this day, many Hong Kong families head to the hills to picnic during the Chung Yeung Festival.



Source: http://www.asiarooms.com/travel-guide/hong-kong/hong-kong-festivals--&-events/chung-yeung-hong-kong.html

Retrieved on: 22nd July 2008

Appendix 19: Mid-Autumn Festival Story – Sheung Ngor

Mid-Autumn Festival Story (中秋節故事)
Story of Sheung Ngor (嫦娥)

There are many beautiful legends about the moon in China. the most popular one tells how a goddess named Sheung Ngor's ascended to the moon. A long, long time ago, a terrible drought plagued the earth. Ten suns burned fiercely in the sky like smouldering volcanoes. The trees and grass were scorched. The land was cracked and parched, and rivers ran dry. Many people died of hunger and thirst.

The King of Heaven sent Hau Ngai down to the earth to help. When Hau Ngai arrived, he took out his red bow and white arrows and shot down nine suns one after another. The weather immediately turned cooler. Heavy rains filled the rivers with fresh water and the grass and trees turned green. Life had been restored and humanity was saved.

One day, a charming young woman, Sheung Ngor made her way home from a stream, holding a bamboo container. A young man came forward, asking for a drink. When she saw the red bow and white arrows hanging from his belt, Sheung realized that he was their savior, Hau Ngai. Inviting him to drink, Sheung Ngor plucked a beautiful flower and gave it to him as a token of respect. Hau Ngai, in turn, selected a beautiful silver fox fur as his gift for her. This meeting kindles the spark of their love. Soon after that, they get married.

A mortal's life is limited, of course. So in order to enjoy his happy life with Sheung forever, Hau Ngai decided to look for an elixir of life. He went to the Kunlun Mountains where the Western Queen Mother lived. Out of respect for the good deeds he had done, the Western Queen Mother rewarded Hau Ngai with elixir, a fine powder made from kernels of fruit which grows on the tree of eternity. At the same time, she told him: If you and your wife share the elixir, you will both enjoy eternal life. But if only one of you takes it, that one will ascend to Heaven and become immortal.

Hau Ngai returned home and told his wife all that had happened and they decided to drink the elixir together on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month when the moon is full and bright.

A wicked and merciless man named Feng Meng secretly heard about their plan. He wished Hau Ngai an early death so that he could drink the elixir himself and become immortal. His opportunity finally arrived. One day, when the full moon was rising, Hau Ngai was on his way home from hunting. Feng Meng killed him. The murderer then ran to Hau Ngai's home and forced Sheung Ngor to give him the elixir, without hesitating, Sheung Ngor picked up the elixir and drank it all.

Overcome with grief, Sheung Ngor rushed to her dead husband's side, weeping bitterly. Soon the elixir began to have its effect and Sheung Ngor felt herself being lifted towards the moon.

Sheung Ngor decides to live on the moon because it is nearest to the earth. There she lived a simple and contented life. Even though she was in the moon, her heart remained in the world of mortals. Never did she forget the deep love she had for Hau Ngai and the love she felt for the people who had shared their sadness and happiness.



Source: http://www.chinavoc.com/festivals/Midautumn_Le.htm

Retrieved on: 21st June 2008