"When the person is being nice to me… then I will consider befriending them" – A Qualitative Study Exploring Hong Kong Children's Friendship Preferences and Experiences after migrating to the UK

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Abstract

In January 2021, the United Kingdom government introduced a Visa scheme for British National (Overseas) passport holders. This allows Hong Kong citizens with BN(O) passports to settle in the UK with their families. Therefore, tens of thousands of children from HK have migrated to the UK with their families. There has been little to no research conducted to scrutinise how migrant children from HK perceive their experiences in forming and maintaining friendships after moving to the UK. This has raised concerns about whether the voices of these children are being heard. Additionally, the number of people from HK moving to the UK is expected to increase significantly in the next five years, highlighting the urgent need to pay attention to the experiences of Hong Kong migrant children in the UK.

Therefore, this qualitative research project aims to explore the complexities of friendship experiences of HK migrant children in the UK after migrating by conducting one-to-one online semi-structured interviews to gain their perspectives. The findings of this study revealed HKMC's friendship preferences in choosing who to befriend and how such preferences led to their experiences in forming and maintaining friendships after migrating to the UK. Hence, leading to discussions of their perceptions of intimacy between peers and their friendship agency when navigating their friendships as active social agents. Thus, this study also promotes awareness to understand the perceptions of young migrants towards friendships, enabling related stakeholders to plan suitable measures for facilitating HKMC's friendships in the UK.

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Acronyms/Abbreviations

HK	Hong Kong
UK	United Kingdom
BN(O)	British National (Overseas)
HKMC	Hong Kong migrant children
CS	Childhood Studies
USA	United States of America

Chapter One - Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by outlining my motivation behind conducting it. It then shows the study's research questions and aims of the study.

1.1. Motivation for the Study

As a HK migrant under the BN(O) passport scheme, I also left behind close friends and a place I called home. Yet, forming new friendships in unknown territories was challenging even as an adult. Throughout studying how to research *with* children in MA Childhood Studies and realising the importance of listening to children's perspectives in research, my experiences of forming friendships during my studies have led me to reflect on the realities of migrating children in the UK like myself.

HK children have been stereotypically labelled as "Kong Kids", a derogatory name that refers to HK children who lack agency and are overly dependent on their parents. Migrant HK children are even labelled as passive migrants since their parents are the ones responsible for immigration. It is unfair for adults' views to take precedence over those of children, as children and adults perceive things differently.

Moreover, Hong Kong migrant children are severely under-researched as there are no available studies regarding their friendships after migrating. These children deserve a platform to voice their opinions instead of being perceived as passive migrants by adults without having their realities expressed or understood.

1.2. Research Questions

The concerns I raised earlier have led to questions about the friendships of HKMC, shaping the rationale and aims of this study. Correspondingly, three key research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. What are the friendship preferences of HKMC, aged 8-13 in the UK?
2. How do HKMC describe their friendship experiences with their best friends in the UK?
3. How do HKMC discuss the challenges of friendship conviviality-based integration while navigating the British educational system?

1.3. Aims of the Study

This study aimed to examine HKMC's friendship preferences and how such preferences influence their friendship experiences after migrating to the UK. It specifically examined the friendship preferences of HKMC aged 8-12, the biggest group of children among all age groups of HKMC (Home Office, 2022; UKHK, 2022). The study also analysed HKMC's perceptions of their intimacy with peers, friendship agency, and challenges that occurred within friendships after migrating.

This study provides valuable insights for related stakeholders, such as HKMC's parents, UK school teachers, and educators, to plan effective measures to facilitate HKMC's friendships in the UK.

Chapter Two - Context

This chapter examines the situation of HK children considering the recent trend of migrating with BN(O) passports, including HK's multilingual background, the BN(O) passport status policy, and statistics related to HKMC. These topics form the basis for studying the experiences of HKMC in the UK.

2.1. Multilingual HK: Bilingual HK Children

HK is "Asia's World City" with East and West cultures (Li, 2022). It is a coastal city geopolitically positioned in the South China Sea and a former British Empire colony from 1841 to 1997 (Lau, 2020; Li, 2022; Ullah and Azizuddin, 2022). On 30 June 1997, after the handover of HK's sovereignty to the People's Republic of China, HK was announced as a Special Administrative Region under the model 'One country, Two systems' (Lau, 2020; Li, 2022). Nevertheless, administrative infrastructures such as legal, economic, political and social systems were reported to have remained intact (Lau, 2020; Li, 2022). Thus, the language usage and policy in HK since colonial times, including the use of Chinese in public primary schools, have remained essentially unchanged. (Lau, 2020; Li, 2022).

After the handover, the HK government espoused the language policy, 'Trilingual and biliterate' (Wang and Kirkpatrick, 2015). Under this policy, HK children are expected to be proficient in Cantonese, English and Mandarin, and read and comprehend English and Chinese in the traditional script (Li, 2022). Regarding spoken languages, Cantonese is the first and most common language among most HK residents, it is the main language used in kindergartens and primary schools for educational instruction (Lau, 2020; Census and Statistics, 2016). Mandarin, the national language of the People's Republic of China, is promoted and taught across all levels of education in HK (Zhang and Yang, 2004). English is formally introduced in grade one in HK primary schools as a compulsory language subject. However, HK children are exposed to English teaching and learning opportunities from an early age, starting in kindergarten (Lau, 2020). Hence, under such an education system and societal attitudes, HK children are developed as bilingualists in Chinese and English while growing up (Civil Service Bureau, 2022; Li, 2022; Wang and Kirkpatrick, 2015).

2.2. BN(O) status and the latest HK migrating trend

After the enactment of the HK Act in 1985, the BN(O) status was created and came into effect for HK residents to retain a form of British nationality after the UK transferred HK's

sovereignty on 1 July 1997 (HM Passport Office, 2024; Kan et al., 2021). Before the handover, HK residents were eligible to apply for a lifelong BN(O) status, which did not grant them the right to live, work, or study in the UK, nor did it confer status to their spouses or children (Kan et al., 2021).

After the crackdown of the Anti-Extradition Bill movement in 2019, China passed the National Security Law in HK on 30 June 2020 (Chan et al., 2020; Cheung and Foster, 2023; Chong et al., 2024; Rolfe and Benson, 2023; Kan et al., 2021). The UK government acted upon the tension between HK and China by launching the Visa scheme on 31 January 2021, providing a pathway to UK citizenship for HK BN(O) holders (Ullah and Azizuddin, 2022). The route enabled BN(O) status holders to work and study in the UK and settle with their family members in the UK for five years in the resident period, thus earning full British citizenship a year after the five years (Chan et al., 2020; Kan et al., 2021; Ullah and Azizuddin, 2022). Approximately 5.4 million HK citizens born before 1st July 1997 with a BN(O) status are now eligible to migrate to the UK (Chan et al., 2020; Cheung and Foster, 2023).

Consequently, with more concerns growing about socio-political factors, more than 120,000 BN(O) holders have migrated from HK to the UK since January 2021, leading to the newest wave of immigration in HK (Chan et al., 2022; Rolfe and Benson, 2023; Home Office, 2023). Thus, more than tens of thousands of HK children migrated to the UK with their parents who hold the BN(O) status (Yam and Loi, 2024). In late September 2021, a survey (Home Office, 2022) for HK BN(O) visa holders highlighted 300 participants reported they would bring their children along for migration, most of the children are aged 4-10 and 11-15 years old, making them the biggest demographic among all age groups of children who migrated to the UK under the BN(O) status migration trend (See Figure 2.1).

Age group of children	Percentage of visa holders with children
0-3 years old	10%
4-10 years old	48%
11-15 years old	43%
16-17 years old	6%
18+ years old and living with parents	23%

Figure 2.1 Table of age groups of children of BN(O) visa holders. (Home Office, 2021)

2.3. Underheard voices of HKMC

The population of BN(O) visa holders and their children in the UK is increasing continuously, and studies that explore the experiences of these recent HK migrants are also growing (Chan et al., 2020; Kan et al., 2021; UKHK, 2022; Benson and Rolfe, 2023; Cheung and Foster, 2023). However, these studies' concerns do not usually reflect the migrant children's realities as they revolve around adults' perceptions of migration experiences. There are few studies that showed HKMC's migration experiences in the UK. UKHK's (2022) study explored some youths' general perceptions towards their migration experience. Their research highlighted that the group of 5-11-year-old HKMC in the UK is larger than the other two groups of children and young people (Figure 2.2), echoing the statistics from the Home Office (2022) (UKHK, 2022). The study then outlined how confident young HK migrants are about integrating into the UK (Figure 2.3) (UKHK, 2022, p. 15). Overall, among the 1081 respondents in the study, individuals aged 10-19 were confident about settling in the UK, showing HK young people's positive attitudes towards their new life in the UK (UKHK, 2022).

Respondents and family members by age groups

Age group	Percentage
<5	3.4%
5-11	14.3%
12-20	11.7%
21-30	6.9%
31-40	13.8%
41-50	26.9%
51-60	14.3%
61-70	6.3%
70+	2.4%
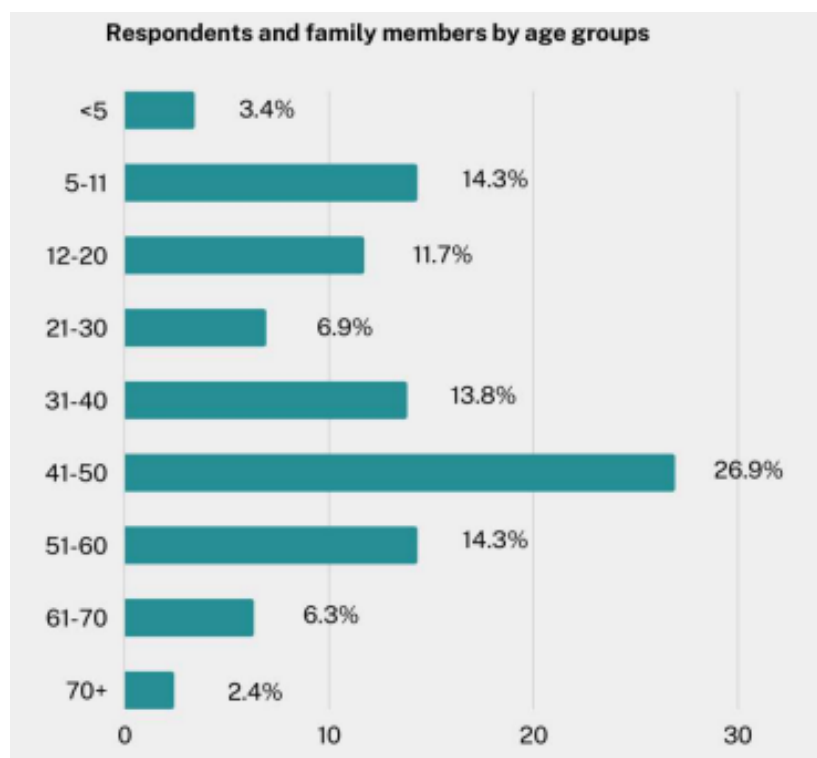
Figure 2.2 Age groups of participants in the UKHK report
(UKHK, 2022, p.4)

How confident are you about integrating into British society?
Crosstab with age group distribution data.

Age Group	Age group Distribution	Average Score (1=lowest; 10=highest)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10-19	0.7%	8.14	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	28%	32%	35%
20-29	5.9%	7.03	0%	0%	1%	3%	7%	15%	25%	31%	12%	7%
30-39	17.1%	6.95	0%	0%	2%	3%	4%	14%	27%	31%	6%	13%
40-49	42.2%	7.21	0%	0%	1%	2%	5%	13%	21%	30%	19%	9%
50-59	25.2%	7.37	0%	1%	1%	1%	3%	11%	19%	30%	20%	15%
60-69	8.8%	7.67	0%	0%	0%	2%	4%	6%	21%	25%	30%	12%
70-79	0.1%	9.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Grand Total	**100%**	**7.24**	**0%**	**0%**	**1%**	**2%**	**4%**	**12%**	**22%**	**30%**	**18%**	**12%**

Figure 2.3 A table of participants' confidence levels about

integrating into the UK (UKHK, 2022, p. 15)

Meanwhile, Benson and Rolfe (2023) investigated what HK migrants think UK schools can do to help their children integrate. They went to five schools in different UK areas and interviewed senior leaders and staff to understand the transition of life and challenges HK migrants face after migration. The study highlighted the importance of Buddy Systems at schools in broadening HKMC's peer networks, as schools introduce new arrival students to peers of the same age and first language to help navigate the environments. The study's interviewees, the HK migrants who are teaching in UK schools, criticised the Buddy System's effectiveness and argued the compatibility of interests or personalities between HKMC and buddies were neglected (Benson and Rolfe, 2023). No children's voices were captured when reviewing the effectiveness of Buddy Systems, and only one child's perceptions towards friendships were reflected in their confidence in maintaining existing friendships they made in HK:

> *"Sure, definitely. There will be friends in HK that we miss, but through technology, even though there are some timezone problems, we can manage." (Benson and Rolfe, 2023, p. 23)*

Nevertheless, these studies failed to understand the children's friendships in the UK fully. Until recently, only one interview article (Yam and Loi, 2024) published by Radio Free Asia has reported some HK children's experiences in forming and maintaining friendships in the UK through their parents' narratives. The parents addressed how their child's experiences of friendship in school got smoother as the child improved their English fluency:

> *"After they caught up in English, communication became easier, and they both like to play football, so it became a lot easier for them to communicate with their friends." (Yam and Loi, 2024)*

While there is a lack of research on HKMC, research on migrant children's friendships in the West is increasing to explore their perceptions. To understand HKMC's friendship preferences and experiences after migrating to the UK, the next chapter will review literature related to children's friendship preferences and experiences in Childhood Studies concerning topics of children's intimacy and friendship agency and migrant children's friendship.

Chapter Three – Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on key research areas in studying children's friendships within the field of CS. It examines the research on children, particularly pre-adolescents' preferences and perceptions of friendships, and research frameworks of vital features in children's friendships to assess their perceptions. The main themes that emerged within current studies of children's friendships, including children's intimacy and agency in forming or maintaining friendships, will be discussed. Migrant children's experiences in friendship after migrating within existing research studies will also be addressed.

3.1. Researching Children's Friendships in CS

Friendships are built upon affection through 'reciprocal' and 'voluntary' relationships between individuals, they are essential for children's well-being and acquisition of skills to develop socially, emotionally and cognitively while being their 'fun', 'defence' and 'support' (Craig, 2000, p. 59; Rogers, 2012; Mayall, 2009, p. 180). Since the 1980s, children's friendships have been an essential subject for child development research as more attention has been paid to children's perspectives towards their friendships (Rubin, 1980; Asher and Gottman, 1981; Berndt and Ladd, 1989; Erwin, 1993; Craig, 2000; Davies, 2015). Additionally, the notion of studying childhood was acknowledged as vital as the new paradigm developed during the 1990s in CS, the interdisciplinary field encompassing sociology, anthropology, and psychology (Ryan, 2012). This new theorisation on childhood allows researchers to study children through a social constructional lens (Schneider, 2000; Tesar, 2016; Hammersley, 2017; Mayall, 2012). Therefore, children's perspectives on building childhoods in specific social circumstances, influenced by diverse cultures and histories can be explored (Prout, 2008; Hammersly, 2017; Wyness, 2018).

Although individuals will grow out of their childhood, this vital period remains an 'ever-present' characteristic in human existence (Schneider, 2000). Thus, children's friendships and peer relations are advocated to be studied as a distinctive and vital aspect of life as children's social contexts, cultural patterns and role of social beings are deemed worthy of being studied (Schneider, 2000; James and Prout, 2015; Prout, 2005). Various theoretical or empirical research studies have been conducted to illustrate and scrutinise children's social interactions (Schneider, 2000; Corsaro, 2003; James, 2013); development of relationships with peers (Asher and Gottman, 1981; Bowker and Weingarten, 2022); perceptions towards healthy and unhealthy peer relationships (Peters et al., 2010; Hoffmann et al., 2021; Apostolou and Vetsa,

2022); and the ways they maintain and transform their peer relationships across time and settings (Craig, 2000). Thenceforth, new theories and methodological methods in researching children's friendships were proposed, leading to the achievement of new knowledge of children's social development (Craig, 2000).

3.2. Researching Children's Friendship Perceptions and Experiences

3.2.1. Pre-adolescence's Friendships

Peer relationships have been debated to be a relational concept, as relationship itself is a vital factor in determining whether a person can be labelled as a friend (Graham, 2021). Therefore, the notions of children's friendships were argued to be varied, where different children have diverse ideas about the nature of friendships and what makes a person a friend (Rubin, 1980). Rubin (1980) asserted different age groups of children's definition of 'friend' reflect the commonality within the functions of peer relationships among people of different ages, by stating how his interviewees at the ages of three and thirteen agreed peer relationships require the process of fostering a sense of belonging and identity. Contrarily, Rubin (1980) also acknowledged that individuals' forms and perceptions of friendship evolve throughout childhood. Erwin (1993) asserted similar ideas, stating that children, starting at the age of nine, can form more complex and sophisticated information and descriptions of their peers. Craig (2000) also supports the idea that friendships vary in different developmental phases, children's conceptions of friendship become more abstract as they get older. These concepts include how children of different ages define a friend, what occurring behaviours indicate friendships, and the quality and quantity of friends (Craig, 2000). This increasing interest in studying children of different age groups led to a better understanding of the various forms and perceptions of friendships and peer relations during childhood (Fine, 1981; Erwin, 1993; Roffey et al., 1994; Corsaro, 2015).

This study aims to understand the friendship preferences and experiences of children aged 8-12, the age stage known as pre-adolescence is a critical period in developing social skills, where these children start to navigate their childhood with less adult supervision (Fine, 1981; Ladd et al., 2000). Pre-adolescence has been shown to have specific perceptions and practices of friendships (Hartup, 2000; Corsaro, 2015). For instance, these older children emphasise intimacy and loyalty through having more stable friendships with shared views and intimate personal knowledge, such as by valuing friends who can provide psychological and emotional support by helping each other (Dunn, 2004; Roffey et al., 1994). Their form of friendships can

also change from 'primary dyadic' to 'peer networks' or 'cliques' (Craig, 2000, p. 59). Through interacting in friend groups, these children are gaining knowledge of themselves and society, such as ideas about 'social structures', 'in-groups and out-groups', and 'leadership and followership', leading to mastery in social and interpersonal skills (Fine, 1981, p. 33).

3.2.2. Assessing Children's Friendship Preferences and Perceptions

Numerous studies have been conducted to understand the features of children's friendships through children's perspectives. Researchers have identified different background factors that can influence children's friendship preferences to understand their perceptions of friendships, including *age* (Epstein, 1989; Drewry and Clark, 1984), *gender* (Thorn, 1993; Erwin, 1993; Roffey et al., 1994), *ethnicity and culture* (Boultan and Smith, 1996, Chen et al., 2006), and *shared interest* (Chatterjee, 2005; Antonopoulou et al., 2022). Through examining how these items influence children's friendships, research suggests that having similar background factors with a peer is the key to building successful friendships for children (Erwin, 1993; Rubin, 1980; Peters et al., 2010; Sprecher and Regan, 2002).

However, sharing similarities in varied background factors among peers is not the sole reason leading to successful and positive friendships. Rubin (1980) argues that children's friendships depend on compatibility and complementarity, where individuals fit and negotiate with one another to facilitate growth together. They also set up friendship criteria for deciding if an individual is a friend. Therefore, different frameworks and measurement tools in relation to vital features of children's friendships have been developed to assess their friendships (Sprecher and Regan, 2002; Doll, 1996; Ladd et al., 2000).

1	Warmth and kindness	8	Sense of humor
2	Expressiveness and openness	9	Exciting personality
3	Physical attractiveness	10	Similarity on background characteristics
4	Intelligence	11	Similarity on attitudes and values
5	Ambition	12	Similarity on social skills
6	Money and earning potential	13	Similarity on Interests and leisure activities
7	Social status	14	Complementarity on personality characteristics

Table 3.1 Fourteen most desirable characteristics in peers adapted from research (Sprecher and Regan, 2002, p. 472-473)

Mutual Affection and Personal Regard	The demonstrations of caring responsibilities for one another
Shared Interests and activities	The investment of time and intention to have fun together between individuals
Commitment	The intention in continuing to foster relationships between individuals over time
Loyalty	The intention to protect the interests of one another
Self-disclosure and mutual understanding	The peer acquires and contributes to an uncommon understanding of one another
Horizontality	The shared power in the relationship of individuals

Table 3.2 Definitions of the six essential conditions of friendship (Doll, 1996, p. 166)

Companionship	Engaging in common activities with a friend
Validation	Receiving positive feedback or support from a friend
Aid	Receive assistance from a friend in the face of emotional or instrumental problems
Self-disclosure	Discussing secrets or negative affect with a friend
Conflict	Engaging in arguing, bossy, rejecting, or other contentious behaviours with a friend
Exclusivity	Perceived selectivity of friends' liking and association

Table 3.3 Definitions of the six friendship processes (Ladd et al., 2000, p. 142)

Sprecher and Regan (2002) adapted fourteen traits from mate selection (See Table 3.1) studies and found "Warmth and kindness," "Expressiveness and openness", "Sense of humour," and "Similarity in interests" were the most preferred traits American young people looked for in a peer. Meanwhile, Doll (1996) reviewed developmental definitions of children's friendship to understand children's perceptions in the conceptualisations of social interactions, revealing six vital elements throughout the developmental processes in childhood (See Table 3.2). Similarly, Ladd et al. (2000) developed quality interviews and identified six friendship processes (See Table 3.3) by combining existing measure instruments in research with children for assessing essential characteristics of their friendships, thus learning the predictors of friendships for school adjustments. Various elements within the frameworks share similar concepts, such as the themes of expressiveness or self-disclosure and engaging in common activities as essential elements in children's friendships. Using these influencing factors or frameworks in research studies has greatly assisted researchers in examining the development processes and quality of children's friendships. Hence this led to discussions of different sub-themes within children's friendships, such as children's intimacy and friendship agency.

3.2.3. Children's Intimacy in Children's Friendships

With more interest in researching children's peer relations, researchers examined their perceptions of friendships and observed the growth of children's intimacy throughout their childhoods (Erwin, 1993). Nevertheless, Davies (2015) argued that children's intimacy is under-researched within studies of children's relationships due to the preoccupation with intimacy to be sexual, as it is usually applied in couple relationships. Correspondingly, intimacy was redefined in two ways to be applied in discussions of children's relationships, as friendships are suggested to be the 'purest form of intimacy' (Jamieson, 2011, p. 4). Firstly, Gabb (2008) expresses that intimacy is concerned with the affective interactions within individuals' day-to-day relationships. Second, Jamieson (2005, p. 189) claims intimacy is a form of closeness with a high level of trust that includes the involvement of 'strong positive emotional attachments' in practices of 'close association, familiarity and privileged knowledge'. Meanwhile, Morgan (2013, p. 35) built on the new conceptualisations of intimacy and identified three vital dimensions of intimacy (Table 3.4). These three dimensions include: embodied intimacy, emotional intimacy, and intimate knowledge, and have been taken up for considering children's embodied intimate relationships within their personal circles (Morgan, 2013; Davies, 2015).

Embodied intimacy	It includes different types of embodied caring which is not limited to sexual intimacy, such as everyday physical touch.
Emotional intimacy	It involves sharing and disclosing understandings of each other, which is not limited to the verbalised level; such knowledge is also known as emotional intelligence.
Intimate knowledge	It emerges within embodied intimacy and emotional intimacy, along with the interweaving of relationships over a considerable period of time.

Table 3.4 Morgan's three dimensions of intimacy (Morgan, 2013, p. 35)

Thenceforth, through new conceptualisations of intimacy, children's friendships have also been examined along with their intimacy. For instance, studies demonstrated children's ability to identify and categorise peers as best or regular friends based on their evaluation of the level of intimacy in their relationships (Urberg, 1992; Parker and Asher, 1993; Bukowski et al., 1994; Berndt, 2002).

3.2.4 Friendship Agency in Children's Friendships

Children's agency is another heated topic that emerged within the new paradigm for the social study of childhood (James, 2009). This topic of interest has recently been extended to the discussions in research on children's friendships, particularly in the ways children build or maintain their friendships (Corsaro, 2015; Alvarez-Miranda, 2019; Carter, 2023b). Generally, agency is an individual's capacity to act autonomously as they navigate different contexts socially and culturally through their decisions (Robson et al., 2007; Katsiada et al., 2018). Mayall (2002) argued that recognising children as social agents with agency involves acknowledging their role in the relationships they form within their social contexts and the societies they inhabit, as they form social relationships and cultures independently.

Under such theorisation of children's agency, recent studies of children's friendships have revealed their agentic nature when choosing peers to befriend. For instance, Carter (2023a) examined the importance of young children's agency in navigating their ways of selecting friends and found that children use their agency in selecting friends according to their preferences, where these friendship preferences echo the background factors of peers mentioned in Chapter Three. Moreover, as the children were permitted to have agency to approach and befriend a peer, they preferred to be friends with peers who are kind and nice, followed by having good skills in particular hobbies such as football, the way the peers dress themselves and present their appearances, and the willingness to play and share objects (Carter, 2023a). These results reflected some of the preferred personal traits found in the above literature review session and emphasised the influence of children's agency on their friendship preferences.

Despite being viewed as agentic when managing their friendships, Carter (2023b) also debated that children's agency can be limited due to negative aspects or situations which emerge when children navigate friendships on their own, leading to children's need for adult supervision and support where various studies can support this claim (Katsiada et al., 2018; Hedges and Cooper, 2017; Parry, 2015; Varghese, 2019). Children have been observed to recognise the limits of their agency, and understand adults' ability and power in enforcing ways to assist them in conflicts when they are maintaining friendships (Katsiada et al., 2018; Hedges and Cooper, 2017). Thenceforth, these children's uncertainty in their friendship agency and knowledge will lead to their need for adults' explicit guidance and modelling, where their social interacting skills can be nurtured to manage negative experiences in friendships (Hedges and Cooper, 2017; Parry, 2015; Varghese, 2019). Ultimately, children's friendship agency in school settings

is advocated for acknowledgement while also being supported by teachers and schools by giving children time and opportunities to facilitate their processes of making friends (Danby et al., 2012).

3.3. Migrant Children's Friendship

Research acknowledges migration as a global concern, more attention has been paid to migrant children's perceptions of their immigration experiences as researchers adhere to a CS perspective and recognise migrant children as important social actors (Hutchins, 2011; Gök and Bozak, 2023; Tardif-Grenier and Côté, 2023). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of understanding of children as immigrants due to ethical challenges during data collection with children (McMichael et al., 2010; Tardif-Grenier and Côté, 2023). Knowledge relating to children's relationships with families and peers after migration received particularly less attention in studies (Sime and Fox, 2015). Yalaz and Zapata-Barrero (2018) warned that given the emergency of the issues in migrant children, it is necessary to have more immediate academic attention.

3.3.1. Migrant Children's Friendship Preferences

Various studies aimed to understand issues revolving around migrant children's friendships, including migrant children's friendship preferences (Fortuin et al., 2014; Strohmeier and Spiel, 2003; Jugert et al., 2011; Schachner et al., 2016; Oh and Lee, 2019). Literature usually focuses on the influences of ethnicity that bring in migrant children's friendship preferences. Findings mostly show migrant children prefer to have friends who share a similar ethnic background. In Fortuin et al.'s study (2014), they found among 266 6th-grade participants from fourteen multi-ethnic Netherlands schools, there was a higher tendency to favour an ethnicity among immigrant students. Similarly, Jugert et al. (2011) studied friendship preferences among 106 German and 45 Turkish pre-adolescents, they discovered that immigrant Turkish children strongly preferred same-ethnic friendships at the start of the school year. Likewise, in Schachner et al.'s study (2016) about friendship patterns of early immigrant adolescents in Germany, these children were found not to prefer local German peers and formed immigrant friend groups as they believed friendships with German children would not be reciprocated. Strohmeier and Spiel's study (2003) also examined immigrant children's friendship patterns and preferences, but discovered the different ethnicities of immigrant children show dichotomous perceptions. Similar to Fortuin et al. (2014) and Jugert et al.'s (2011) studies, Turkish immigrant children strongly prefer peers of the same ethnicity (Strohmeier and Spiel,

2003). Nonetheless, the way Yugoslavian immigrant children form friendships is similar to native Austrian children as Strohmeier and Spiel (2003) asserted the idea that Yugoslavian children were observed to be more similar to local Austrians than the other immigrant children. Additionally, one study was able to discuss migrant children's friendship preferences which do not revolve around students' ethnicity. In Oh and Lee's study (2019), two Korean immigrant children who were studying in the USA discussed personal features related to children's intimacy, they preferred peers who can communicate and negotiate non-verbally, respect their ongoing play activities, and offer mutual support.

3.3.2. Migrant Children's Friendship Experiences

Another topic of interest in research with migrant children is their perceptions of maintaining old and forming new friendships after migrating (Sime and Fox, 2015; Moskal, 2014). Research has shown that immigrant children often take active roles in maintaining relationships with kin and peers because they understand that they would lose opportunities to interact with them from their former homes (Sime and Fox, 2015; Moskal, 2014). In Sime and Fox's study (2015), Eastern European immigrant children in Scotland have been shown to connect with their friends by writing letters and keeping in touch through internet access. Moreover, the immigrant children in their study discussed how their friends from their former homes and new friends in Scotland are different in terms of temperament, showing immigrant children's awareness about their 'marginal position in inter-ethnic networks' (Sime and Fox's study, 2015, p. 387). Such social awareness was debated to have a bigger influence on older immigrant children as they were seen to be more 'selective' when developing social networks and separate ethnic groups in schools (Sime and Fox's study, 2015).

These findings elucidated children's roles and experiences in actively choosing to maintain their friendships or forming new friendships after migrating, thus showing their friendship agency and perceptions in deciding who to befriend. Since migrant children are viewed as active agents, this raises another popular research topic concerning migrant children: challenges in friendships after migration.

3.3.3. Challenges in Migrant Children's Friendships

Studies have explored immigrant children's perspectives on their friendship challenges after migrating, and their biggest challenge is difficulty adapting to a new language (Dusi, 2014; Jørgensen, 2015; Oikonomidoy, 2018; Popyk, 2023). According to researchers, language plays a significant role in immigrant children's experiences when forming friendships after migrating

(Dusi, 2014; Jørgensen, 2015). Migrant children who are not proficient in the local language are more likely to be rejected by local students. In Popyk's (2023) study, a 12-year-old immigrant boy mentioned that the language barrier hindered effective communication and made him more vulnerable to bullying and discrimination:

> *"In the beginning, I wanted to go back to (name home country), because I did not understand properly. Some people did not understand me and could laugh at me. I did not understand them as well. I was speaking with an accent or making mistakes. It was not pleasant, though."* *(Popyk, 2023, p. 468)*

The above claim is supported by another immigrant child in Oikonomidoy's study (2018). He mentioned that because he was not fluent in the local language, racial tensions escalated in the classrooms. Friend groups were divided along racial lines, and fights between students of different races were frequent:

> *"Sometimes people that come from another country cannot speak, like, English really well. Sometimes people make fun of them. That's why it is kind of racism."*
>
> (Oikonomidoy, 2018, p. 193)

Although the language barrier can be a hindrance to immigrant children's friendship experiences, studies have argued that language also acts as a 'gift' and facilitates the inclusion of immigrant children in distinctive social environments while being an 'anchor' for these children to settle in new territories (Dusi, 2014, p. 183; Popyk, 2023, 468). Thus, developing proficiency in the local language after immigrating strengthens the sense of belonging and social connections of immigrant children with their peers (Popyk, 2023). Nonetheless, Oikonomidoy (2018) warns the positive effects which language can bring only exist when all children can interact under the condition of mutually respecting each other. For instance, an immigrant girl in Oikonomidoy's study (2018, p. 194) was challenged by her inability to speak and befriend everybody, but she identified how mutual respect within the classroom is the key to successful friendships. These challenges encountered by immigrant children in the studies reflect their realities after migrating and reveal children's agency while maintaining friendships at school.

Overall, friendship research with migrant children recognised them as social actors and gave them platforms to voice their thoughts on the topic of friendships after migration. Nevertheless, to understand immigrant children's friendships better, studies should include key features of children's friendships in existing assessment frameworks to examine their friendship quality and intimacy. For example, research can apply Doll's (1996) six essential conditions of friendship to assess the friendships of migrant children, and determine if conflicts between local and migrant students arise from lower levels of mutual affection. Moreover, most studies mentioned above have adult researchers' predetermined themes, such as influences of ethnicity on immigrant children's friendship preferences (Fortuin et al., 2014; Strohmeier and Spiel, 2003; Jugert et al., 2011; Schachner et al., 2016). These fixed themes can restrict children's ideas as researchers neglected other potential factors.

Nevertheless, Oh and Lee's study (2019) achieved research *with* immigrant children as they respected children's views on friendships after migrating and provided findings through participants' perspectives. This study shall embrace the same notion of respecting HKMC as agentic social actors while spreading awareness by reflecting on their needs, and providing a platform to voice their perspectives and concerns towards friendships after migrating to the UK. Thus, urging educators and parents to provide relevant measures to facilitate these young migrants' friendships. Discussions of literature concerning the findings and discussions of this study will be presented in Chapter Five. The next chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of the research design methodology employed in this study.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

4.1. Research Design

To explore HKMC's childhoods in the UK, this study defined childhood as a socially constructed structure in learning the constantly evolving contemporary childhood (Christensen and Prout, 2005). I acknowledged that we as adults can gloss over issues in childhoods as children perceive their realities differently from adults (Kellett, 2010). Hence, during the time I spent with the child participants, I ensured my role as an adult researcher who could learn *with* them and be open to receive and connect with the findings generated by the children thus fostering our positive relationships (Christensen, 2004; Kellett, 2010; Davis, 2009; Mann et al., 2014).

To generate truthful knowledge with children, I reckoned child participants as 'competent social agents' who can challenge adults' assumptions towards childhood (Bucknall, 2014, p. 69; Greig et al., 2013). An interpretive paradigm was then adopted as I upheld two vital principles of interpretivism, including the application of face-to-face interactions and the ability to engage with the children in this study to develop social understandings (Clark et al., 2021).

Along with the interpretive paradigm, a participatory research approach was adopted for this qualitative study. The participatory creative method, drawing and photography, was used as a visual prompt for the interview and a prop to defuse the tensions between the participants and me as we reciprocated through common engagement (Greene and Hogan, 2005; Scott, 2000; Sevón et al., 2023; Flewitt, 2014). As a young adult HK migrant, to some degree, it enabled the participants and me to discuss friendships after migrating on common ground as we share similar backgrounds. Hence, as I listened to children's underheard voices by conducting online semi-structured interviews, knowledge of HKMC's perceptions of friendships was generated.

4.2. Sampling

This study examines perspectives towards migration in HK children aged 8-13 years old, as HK pre-adolescents are the largest group of children that settled in the UK (UKHK, 2022). After careful consideration and consultation with my dissertation supervisor, the number of participants was first decided to be four to five participants. Smaller sample size was chosen to ensure that children could provide detailed information regarding sensitive themes that could emerge within topics of migration and friendship (Gallagher, 2009). Purposeful sampling and

snowball sampling were used as I specifically looked for children aged 8-13 who migrated from HK to the UK starting in the year 2021 to understand these children's perspectives towards friendships after migrating (Clark et al., 2021).

HK migrants in the UK will gain information from others or invite people to participate in research on online communities. I am involved in WhatsApp, a messaging app group consisting of 143 members who mostly are HK parents who settled in Leeds. Hence, this research adopted purposeful sampling as I reached out to potential participants' parents and messaged them individually to promote my research. I sent the parents both the digital information leaflet for children (see Appendix 1) and adults (see Appendix 2) to explain my research. The leaflets contain my personal information, the purpose of the research, potential benefits towards participants, a summary of research methods and timetable, ethical considerations and the risks which can emerge during the study (Alderson, 2004; Roberts, 2008; Alderson and Morrow, 2020).

Potential participants were contacted starting in mid-June, and the process took longer than expected. Initially, there were four participants who agreed to join the study during the sampling process (10/6 – 22/6), but one of the participants suddenly withdrew from the study around the end of the sampling period, the targeted sample size was not met by the expected deadline of recruiting participants. Accordingly, I used snowball sampling by contacting the three participants' parents, who approved of their children joining the research, and asked if they knew any other potential participant who possessed experiences that were relevant to my research (Clark et al., 2021). On the 24th of June, one participant's parent managed to refer me to another participant. Hence, by the end of June, this small-scale study ended up with four participants confirmed joining.

4.3. Participants

Four HKMC joined this study around mid-June and participated in semi-structured one-to-one online interviews in late June. Although I instructed the participants' parents to pass my contact information to the participants for direct contact in the leaflet, parents were the persons who sent back the consent forms signed by the participants, no participants contacted me directly to join this study. Although I encouraged parents to have their children decide the times for interviews, interviews were all arranged between the parents and me. It is understandable for these parents' actions, as they are the gatekeepers of their children who were concerned about my motives as the researcher, leading them to decide the interview times on behalf of their

children (Masson, 2004; Clark et al., 2021; Hill, 2005; Conrad et al., 2015; Alderson and Morrow, 2020).

All the participants were pre-adolescent girls in the Junior age range (Key Stage 2), aged 7-11 (Department for Education, 2014). Table 4.1 summarises the subjects' basic personal information.

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Duration of stay in the UK	Times of transferring to different primary schools
Serene	11	Female	HK Chinese	A little more than 1 year	Once (Reason: Change of address)
Angie	10	Female	HK Chinese	Almost 2 years	Once (Reason: Change of address)
Esther	9	Female	HK Chinese	1 year	0
Kris	11	Female	HK Chinese	About 3 years	Once

Table 4.1 Participants' basic personal information.

4.4. Data Collection

Interviews, the popular research method when conducting research with children were selected for this qualitative research (Greig et al.,2013; Kellett, 2010). The qualitative interview method was chosen as it allowed in-depth exploration of the child participants' perspectives, enabling me to generate detailed and valuable information, including nonverbal cues, attitudes, and emotions, by interacting with the participants in real-time. (Clark et al., 2021; Gibson, 2010; Greig et al.,2013; Flewitt, 2014).

Before contacting the participants, I planned to conduct focus group discussions, yet participants could not agree on the group interview time before July, when most participants would return to HK for vacation. Hence, I resorted to adopt *one-on-one semi-structured interviews* as the interview format before they left the UK. Using semi-structured interviews allowed more flexibility in using preset questions in an interview guide (Appendix 4) while formulating new questions spontaneously (Flewitt, 2014; Gibson, 2010). Thenceforth, having a mix of structured and unstructured questions enabled participants to address their unique discourse events within the topic of friendship after migration, such as bullying (Gibson, 2010;

Greig et al.,2013). Additionally, changing from a group discussion to a one-on-one online interview allowed me to focus on each participant and accommodate their individual needs (Gallagher, 2009). For example, I adjusted my approach based on the different temperaments of the participants by being upbeat or gentle.

As mentioned, I applied using visual props to stimulate interview discussions among participants. Before the interviews, I requested the participants to draw and send their drawings of their best friends, with or without themselves. However, I failed to consider that children can be uncomfortable sharing their art with unfamiliar people (Veale, 2005). Three out of four participants sent their drawings while Angie did not want to draw and instead sent a picture of her and her best friend. The drawings and the photo submitted by the participants can be seen in Figures 4.1 to 4.4. Additionally, I worked on the same pre-interview task as the participants and drew my best friend and me (Figure 4.5) in attempting to bond and work *with* the participants in my research.

Drawing by participant 1: Serene
Figure 4.1 Drawing of Serene (left) and her best friend (right).

Photograph of participant 2: Angie
Figure 4.2 Photo of Angie (left) and her best friend (right).

Drawing of participant 3: Esther
Figure 4.3 Drawing of Esther's best friend.

Drawing by participant 4: Kris
 Figure 4.4 Drawing of Kris's best friend.

Drawing by researcher of this study
 Figure 4.5 Drawing of my best friend and I (The researcher of this study).

The online interviews were conducted between 21st – 25th June 2024. To ensure participants' comfort during online interviews as the times were arranged by their parents and me, other than having the children read the information sheet and sign a consent form, I contacted the parents on WhatsApp thirty minutes before the interviews to ensure the participants were physically and mentally ready, by being in a setting children could feel safe and relaxed, such as their homes.

Three participants were at home for the online interviews, yet Esther was in her parent's car during the interview. All the participants used their parents' phones to make the video call through WhatsApp. Considering children's language abilities mentioned in Chapter Two, the interviews were conducted in Cantonese, but I reassured the participants that they could speak in English, considering they have been exposed to the use of English in the UK for over a year. The interviews lasted between 25 to 45 minutes, which was shorter than the one hour I anticipated for the interviews. I shortened them to accommodate reserved participants who were hesitant to answer questions. Thenceforth, despite knowing that participants' parents could influence their answers, I understood they could be anxious during the interviews. (Kellett and Ding, 2005). I asked the participants if they wanted to have their parents with them during the interviews to feel more contented (Anderson and Morrow, 2020). Three participants chose to have their mothers with them during the interviews, while Kris was comfortable being interviewed alone in her bedroom as her mother waited outside.

During the interviews, I read the interview guide, which guided me in structuring the interview processes to be applicable to all participants. It guided me in introducing myself and explaining the study's purpose and the interview process to my participants and their parents. It then guided me in addressing ethical issues around participants' confidentiality and rights in research. Lastly, the guide lists sixteen questions that reflect the study's research aims and questions. Using the interview guide in all sessions encouraged more comparable data, leading to higher reliability and validity during data analysis for common themes or patterns (Denscombe, 2014).

Occasionally, participants got sidetracked, and the discussion topics did not connect to the research. For instance, Serene started asking about Japanese animation. Although controlling the topic of interest for child participants as the adult moderator can disrupt our power balance, I carefully refocused the participants on the research topics to ensure the study's validity while trying to welcome conversations on topics that are important to participants (Clark et al., 2021; Hennessy and Heary, 2005).

The four interview sessions were audio recorded with participants' consent. The interview processes were noted and transcribed (Appendix 5), ensuring effective data analysis.

4.5. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves classifying and interpreting linguistic data to form ideas about 'implicit or explicit dimensions' and 'structures of meaning-making' in the data (Flick, 2014, p. 5). I conducted thorough data analysis to gain a deeper understanding of my research topic for rich findings (Flick, 2014; Denscombe, 2014).

Coding Interview data - Transcripts

Textual data were collected from the conversations by recording the interview sessions. These recordings were then relistened to and translated from Cantonese to English during the transcription process by using an unfocused transcription approach, as I focused on what participants had said rather than how they shared their opinions (Gibson, 2010). Transcripts are the key to secure a study's validity, yet when non-English data is translated into English, translation can result in the loss of the original meaning within a language (Nikander, 2008; Nes et al., 2010). To ensure the validity of the study, I used my bilingualism and translated participants' statements as I stayed in the original language, Cantonese as much as possible, thus representing and understanding the experiences of my participants (Nes et al., 2010). An example can be seen in Table 4.2.

Original Cantonese quote	"冇㗎啦，冇得救㗎啦，送佢哋入**青山**啦"	The literal meaning of "青山" is green hills. In participant's context, she was talking about Castle Peak, the shortened name for the psychiatric hospital in HK, Castle Peak Psychiatric Hospital.
Direct English translation	"Nothing, nothing can help. Send them to <u>Castle Peak</u>."	
Finalised English translation	"Nothing can help *them*. Just send them to <u>mental hospitals</u>."	To avoid misunderstanding, I translated "Castle Peak" as "mental hospitals". I also added the "them" to clarify the context where the participant talked about the school bullies.

Table 4.2 An example of how the Cantonese language cannot be translated directly and careful consideration was made during translations.

After finishing transcribing the interviews, I applied Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-stage process of data analysis by first familiarising myself with my notes taken during the interviews (See Appendix 6) and transcripts. I then started annotating the transcripts with different colours to represent the initial emerging themes and examined the emergent features in the data for initial coding (See Appendix 7). After coding the themes, I identified and contrasted similar findings within the annotated transcripts to find consistent patterns of ideas and refine the theme names while reflecting upon the theoretical concepts in the research, such as friendship preferences, children's intimacy and friendship agency. Lastly, I linked the themes to the literature related to my research for writing the findings and discussions.

Children were once excluded from interpreting or producing knowledge, as adult researchers claimed these processes were challenging (Jones, 2004; Alderson and Morrow, 2020). Nevertheless, this study aims to research *with* children by preventing my adult views from taking precedence over their views (Kellett, 2010). After careful scrutiny in coding and analysing the findings in late July, I reached out to the participants through their parents on WhatsApp and sent them individual lists of the main themes that emerged during the interviews. I asked participants to read the lists and assess if their ideas and views were represented with fairness and accuracy. Three participants agreed that my interpretations of their views fit their narratives, with one participant correcting two of my points as shown in Figure 4.6 (Alderson and Morrow, 2020). By verifying the findings with the participants, I gained respondent validation and the chance to check on the data's accuracy, thus enhancing the study's validity (Denscombe, 2014).
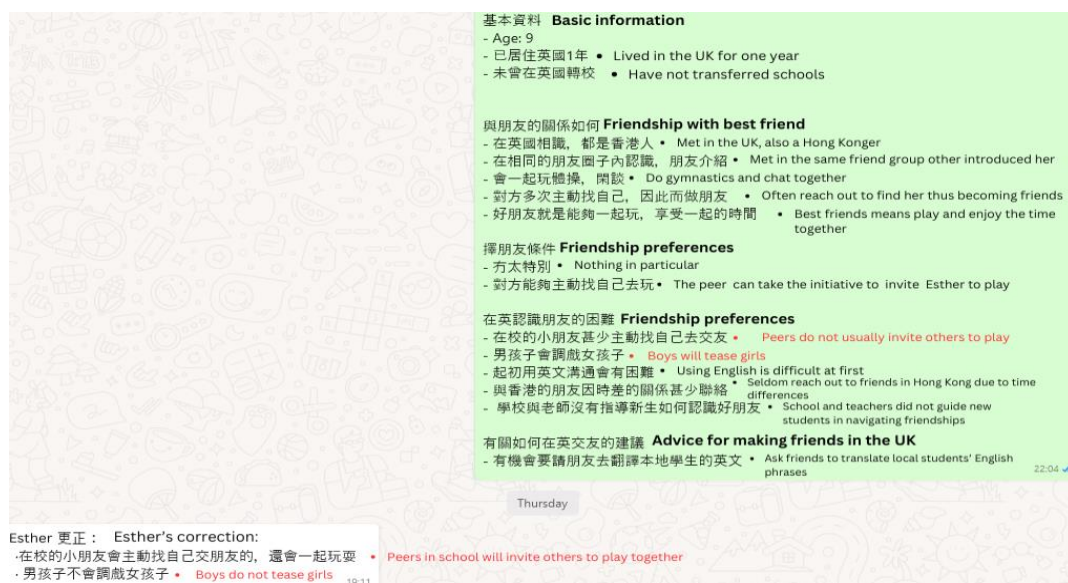

Figure 4.6 Esther read the list with her mother and corrected
my interpretations of her views.

4.6. Ethical Issues

I ensured high ethical standards were incorporated into this study by respecting and safeguarding participants from harm throughout the research (Clark, 2014; Alderson and Morrow, 2020; Alderson, 2014). I followed the Guidelines for Research with Children and Young People by the National Children's Bureau (2011), as I scrutinised ethical considerations surrounding my participants' emotional well-being and rights. Christensen and Prout's (2002) Ethical Symmetry was applied in the study where participants' competencies or conceptual knowledge were not judged (Roberts, 2008).

Nonetheless, emotional harm or risks arise easily within social research with children, especially when my research topic revolves around sensitive topics such as migration or friendship issues (Clark et al., 2021; Hartas, 2010; Alderson and Morrow, 2020). I observed child participants' emotional states sensitively and not stressed in painful friendship experiences while still being open to give children opportunities to speak about the issues if they feel comfortable (Hill, 2005). I tried to avoid my participants feeling embarrassed or humiliated due to the differences in age and power with me (Hill, 2005; James and James, 2012). However, my inexperience in interviewing children led to moments of silence between me and two participants. Ultimately, I was able to make the atmosphere more comfortable by asking light-hearted questions, such as asking about the participants' happiest moments with their best friends.

Informed consent from participants and their caregivers was asked as it is vital to ensure participants had a sense of control while having the right to be fully informed throughout the research process (Clark et al., 2021; Alderson, 2014; Hill. 2005; Alderson and Morrow; 2020). After participants understood the content in the information leaflet and agreed to participate in the study, I sent a simple digital consent form via participants' parents' WhatsApp for participants to sign (Appendix 3). I shared all research details and assured parents and participants the right to opt out of audio recordings and withdraw from the study. Thus, one potential participant withdrew from the study after confirming.

In this study, participants are respected as capable social actors, making their privacy and confidentiality rights more complex as it emphasises protection (Alderson and Morrow, 2020). Nevertheless, reports found child participants find it more comfortable to trust researchers when their confidentiality is ensured (Kellett, 2010). Therefore, I applied the Data Protection Act (UK Government, 2018), a set of rights to privacy in research to this study so that

participant's 'public confidentiality' and 'social network confidentiality' were ensured and 'third-party breach of privacy' was avoided (Alderson and Morrow, 2020; Hill, 2005, p. 75). It would be ideal for the non-participants, participants' parents, to respect their children's privacy by not involving in the interview sessions (Hill, 2005). However, three participants requested to have their parents by their side during the interview sessions. Hence, I gently reminded the parents to allow their children to express their thoughts freely to avoid parent's views dominating my participants' views, as this study focuses on children's perceptions.

Chapter Five - Findings and Discussions

This section presents the study's major findings relating to participants' friendship preferences as they migrated to the UK and their perceptions of building positive friendships while navigating the British Education system. The findings, which are the views and quotes of participants, will be outlined to discuss emerging themes, where pseudonyms are used for the participants.

First, information about participants' best friends will be presented, leading to the discussion of participants' friendship preferences, including concepts within the frameworks of assessing children's friendships reviewed previously in Chapter Three (Sprecher and Regan, 2002; Doll, 1996; Ladd et al., 2000). Findings in this study showed how having similarities in personal attributes between peers can lead to compatible friendships.

Second, participants' friendship experiences after migrating to the UK will be shown to discuss participants' perceptions towards the element of intimacy in children's friendships by continuing to apply the frameworks of assessing children's friendships and Morgan's (2013) three dimensions of intimacy, which were discussed previously in Chapter Three.

Lastly, the challenges of friendship faced by participants while navigating the British educational system will be explored, leading to discussions of migrant children's friendship agency and the roles of adults in navigating children's friendships after migration.

5.1. Similar Personal Characteristics between Participants and their Best Friends – Participant's Hidden Preference towards Friendships

Serene's best friend			
Gender	Ethnicity	Where they currently locate	Where did the participant meet them
Female	HK Chinese	HK	HK Primary School Year 1

Table 5.1 Basic personal information of Serene's best friend.

Angie's best friend			
Gender	Ethnicity	Where they currently locate	Where did the participant meet them
Female	Indian	UK	UK primary school

Table 5.2 Basic personal information of Angie's best friend.

Esther's best friend			
Gender	Ethnicity	Where they currently locate	Where did the participant meet them
Female	HK Chinese	UK	UK primary school

Table 5.3 Basic personal information of Esther's best friend.

Kris's best friend			
Gender	Ethnicity	Where they currently locate	Where did the participant meet them
Female	HK Chinese	UK	UK primary school

Table 5.4 Basic personal information of Kris's best friend.

	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Common interests
Serene and her best friend	Same grade	Same; female	Same; HK Chinese	Drawing, watching anime
Angie and her best friend	Same grade	Same; female	Asian; HK Chinese, and Indian	Arts and crafts (e.g. making bracelets), watching YouTube
Esther and her best friend	Same grade	Same; female	Same; HK Chinese	Gymnastics
Kris and her best friend	Same grade	Same; female	Same; HK Chinese	Physical activities (e.g. playing tag)

Table 5.5 Participants share similar personal aspects with their best friends.

All participants commented on how they met their best friends as they studied in the same class (See Table 5.1-5.4). Three out of four participants befriended their best friends in the UK, while Serene, stated she met her best friend back in HK primary school. Participants share many similarities with their best friends, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and interests. Table 5.5 lists the common attributes between participants and their best friends, showing that participants can have friendship preferences unconsciously.

Having similar personal characteristics while being compatible with a peer is the key to building successful friendships for children and has been a contentious subject in friendship research (Erwin, 1993; Rubin, 1980; Sprecher and Regan, 2002). Findings from this study are mostly consistent with research studies mentioned in Chapter Three, which explored primary school-age children's friendship preferences which generally, children make friends by seeking

shared views and similar traits in peers, including age (Drewry and Clark, 1983), gender (Qian et al., 2020), race or ethnicity (Tuma and Halliman, 1979; Qian et al., 2020), common interests and activities (Sprecher and Regan, 2002; Ladd, 1983) while having no conscious beliefs in choosing a friend who is similar to themselves (Hartup, 2000; McPherson et al., 2001; Roffey et al., 1994).

5.1.1 Age

This study shows that age is a significant indicator of children's preferences in friendship. Participants stated their current best friends are in the same class and grade as them, although Serene expressed that her best friend remained in HK, both were once in the same class and grade. Generally, children in grade 4 are starting to become more aware of themselves as individuals and their surroundings (Epstein, 1989). These children have seen to select friends who share the same age and grade as themselves, these findings in Drewry and Clark's study (1984) thus echo the findings in this study as participants are studying in grade 4 and above, solidifying the idea that children tend to choose to befriend peers who share similar ages.

5.1.2. Ethnicity/Culture

Ethnicity and culture are also key influences in children's friendship preferences, and this phenomenon can be somewhat reflected in this study. All four British HK participants have Asians as their best friends: three of the participants have best friends who are also from HK, and one participant's best friend is from India.

Chen et al. (2006) argued that cultural norms and values enable individuals to interpret others' behaviour and even judge the appropriateness of a person's actions. Hence, despite Serene not expressing verbally that she prefers peers of her race, she found the local students weird and acknowledged there are cultural differences between her local classmates and her:

> *"Some classmates are pretty weird, like… I always think they are kind of strange. Also! They often lay on the ground. I think that is pretty unhygienic. The way we live is different, like they prefer to play games like Roblox and Minecraft. I don't like them though."*

Previous research studies have demonstrated own-race favouritism in children's friendship preferences. Boultan and Smith (1996) concluded that children usually prefer peers of the same race. However, participants did not elaborate on whether race is a major influence on their choices of friendship as they expressed other factors, such as gender and common interests, are more influential when it comes to their friendship preferences. Interestingly, much like the

findings in this study, they also found young Asian girls have less of a friendship preference in terms of a peer's race. Therefore, researchers asserted gender can overshadow influences of race that affect children's friendship preferences (Qian et al., 2020; Fishbein et al., 2009; Shutts, 2015; Shutts et al., 2010).

5.1.3. Gender

Gender-related factors also greatly influence children's friendship preferences. Children's friendship choices are said to be influenced by societal values. For instance, when children identify with their gender, this leads to gender-separation play in schools (Roffey et al., 1994). Previous studies support such findings on children's preferences for befriending peers of the same gender (Luria and Herzog, 1991; Verkuyten, 1996; Qian et al., 2020). This same-sex preference in children's friendship choices has also been concluded as a 'cross-cultural universal and robust phenomenon' by Whiting (1973) and Edwards (1988). Although all female participants expressed how they do not mind interacting with anybody of any gender, they all have a best friend who is also female. Esther did not have strong opinions about making friends with boys or girls and expressed how all the peers in the class were her friends. Meanwhile, Kris stated that most of her friends are girls and pointed out gender separation in her school by stating, "*Boys will reach out to other boys.*"

Serene, despite having no preference in who to befriend, expressed how she found her male classmates have different play styles than her as mentioned previously. Concurrently, Kris stated she places having similar interests in peers as a higher priority than her peers' gender when choosing who to be friends with. Thus, she and her female best friend share the same interest, swimming. Such findings echo Thorne's statements (1993, p. 57), where she discussed three key explanations for children's choices to be with peers of the same gender: "shared interests or behavioural compatibility," "psychoanalytic processes," and "cognitive dynamics of gender labelling and identity". It is likely that participants in this study prefer peers of the same gender due to shared interests and behavioural compatibility as boys and girls grow up with varied types of temperament, play styles or interests (Thorne, 1993).

5.1.4. Common interests

Sharing the same interests is one of the vital elements in children's friendships as it encourages the formation of friendships, and this study has consistently shown this theme (Chatterjee, 2005; Antonopoulou et al., 2022; Doll, 1996). All participants enjoyed doing the same activities with their best friends. Some participants enjoyed physical activities such as playing tag,

swimming, or gymnastics, while some participants enjoyed artsy activities such as drawing or making bracelets. Serene expressed one of her interests is to watch Japanese animations. She stated she found it "difficult" for her to befriend peers who do not watch them as *both cannot understand each other*". The way participants seek peers who share similar interests as themselves can also be reflected in previous studies, such as Antonopoulou et al.'s study (2022), where they found children acknowledged their best friends usually shared common interests, thus becoming their source of support.

Nevertheless, although all participants shared similar interests with their best friends, two of the participants expressed that it was not necessary for their best friends to be entirely similar to them. Some participants reckoned how a person acts is more important than sharing interests. Esther expressed, "*It depends on how the person is*". Similarly, Kris stated, "*Because… even if you are different, you can still play with them. It's about how you act*". Such statements show behavioural characteristics in peers can have a higher effect on how children befriend others and the intimacy between them and their friends. Children in the Peters et al. study (2010) reflected the same idea brought up by the participants in this study, thus showing children's awareness of how their peers' actions influence how they choose friends.

5.2. Making friends and maintaining friendships after migrating to the UK – HKMC's Perceptions of Intimacy in Friendships

Participants shared their experiences with their peers and best friends. As they reflected upon these experiences, they assessed their friendships and their intimacy with peers, thus enabling them to distinguish the differences between a normal friend and a best friend.

The way participants described their best friends reflects findings from previous research where pre-adolescents can distinguish and provide key friendship processes and specific descriptions of a peer along with abstract concepts that relate to a person's 'behavioural dispositions' (Dunn, 2004; Roffey et al., 1994; Rubin, 1980, p. 43; Ladd et al., 2000). Through these descriptions provided by the participants, an interesting phenomenon can be observed in this study: all participants befriended their best friends after serendipitous encounters with them despite having no intentions to make friends initially. Serene met her best friend in a HK primary school because her best friend shared "a pack of snacks" with her; Kris "*randomly*" met her best friend in a UK school; Esther's other friends introduced her best friend as the two shared the same friend group, the best friend then insisted on following Esther around school. Lastly, Angie had the most interesting first meeting with her best friend. The two did not have a

pleasant encounter, as her best friend complained about Angie's actions with their school vice principal:

> *"She asked me if she could sit next to me, but I told her that she*
> *needed to sit in her English spot. Then, I got told off because she*
> *said I was being mean to her. She went to the vice principal of*
> *my school and said that I was being mean to her."*

The participants then shared how they became closer to their best friends and explained what makes someone a best friend. The participants' friendship processes reflected concepts in the frameworks to assess children's friendships in studies reviewed previously in Chapter Two (Sprecher and Regan, 2002; Doll, 1996; Ladd et al., 2000).

When participants reflected on their preferences and experiences in friendships, they recalled the processes of assessing a person's personal characteristics, where these items echoed the frameworks which assess friendships mentioned in Chapter Three. The most important feature the participants looked for in a peer is if they can be nice and demonstrate responsibility in caring for one another. These qualities can reflect the themes: '*warmth and kindness*' (Sprecher and Regan, 2002) and '*Mutual Affection and Personal Regard*' (Doll, 1996). Angie expressed she would be comfortable with a peer when they can remain '*nice*' to play with her at or outside of school. Similarly, Kris also preferred to hang out with '*nice*' peers, and she expressed how she demonstrated her skills in actively assessing the actions of their peers as she sought friendships:

> *"If they are nice… then I will be friends with them. If they are*
> *not nice, then I will stop playing with them and play with others*
> *instead."*

Although children's friendships are usually harmonious, conflicts and disputes are also a vital element within children's friendships (Corsaro, 2003). Through conflicts or teasing among pre-adolescents, these experiences can bring them together as they test friendships and display their social identity (Corsaro, 2015). These components can be reflected in Ladd et al.'s six friendship processes (2000, p. 142), '*conflict*' mentioned in Chapter 3. In this study, other than Angie, who negotiated and befriended her best friend upon having conflicts with their first meeting mentioned above. Serene also agreed arguments with friends are vital to children's friendships:

"Without arguments, a friendship cannot be built. If you can argue with them, you can be friends. Because with arguments… if you are not close with a person, you cannot really find anything to argue about."

By resolving conflicts, some participants reported they could view their best friends as '*trustful*' individuals, enabling them to share secrets with their best friends. For instance, Angie reported having deep conversations and sharing secrets with her best friend. Kris also stated that she would gossip about people from school during sleepovers with her best friend. These concepts of opening up to peers can be reflected in Sprecher and Regan's (2002) '*Expressiveness and openness*' and Doll's (1996) '*Self-disclosure and Mutual Understanding*' mentioned in Chapter Three. Interestingly, this phenomenon of girls sharing secrets with friends has been consistent with existing studies about children's intimacy, where it has been argued that telling secrets with close friends is predominantly practised by girls (Singer and Doornenbal, 2006).

Furthermore, the notion of sharing intimacies or disclosures is interpreted as an act of children's intimate practice, which reflects the concept of Morgan's (2013) '*Emotional Intimacy*' discussed in Chapter Three (Davies, 2015). As participants reflected on these intimate practices they shared with their best friends, they also differentiated between normal and best friends, showing their capability to assess their intimacy by reflecting on the dimensions of intimacy mentioned in Chapter Three (Morgan, 2013). Such findings in this study of children's ability to assess and differentiate their intimacy between good and regular friends are consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Three (Urberg, 1992; Parker and Asher, 1993; Bukowski et al., 1994; Berndt, 2002; You et al., 2013). Esther commented with regular peers, she could only chat with one or two sentences or even maybe don't speak at all. Meanwhile, when she is with her best friend, she can be '*joyful*' and enjoy the time playing together. This idea that spending time with best friends is more enjoyable is also supported by Kris, as she stated, "*You will spend more time playing with your close friends*".

According to participants in this study, time is important for them and their friendships. Angie believed it is important for individuals to hang out with their peers to let others know they are willing to maintain friendships. The longevity of relationships is argued to be the key to building intimacy (Davies, 2015). Curiously, Serene assessed two of her friends and examined the intimacy she shared with them. She reported she had known one friend for ten years, and another one, her best friend, who she had known for five years. When asked why she could be better friends with her best friend, she explained she could not get close to the friend she had

known for ten years as the friend had a busy schedule, they did not have quality time to spend together. These reflections on intimacy reflect participants' awareness of '*Commitment*' and '*Loyalty*' in friendships and their '*Intimate Knowledge*,' where intimacy can emerge while maintaining the intention to invest time in fostering their friendships through long-lasting quality time (Doll, 1996, Morgan, 2013; Davies, 2015).

Overall, participants reflected on the meaning of forming and maintaining friendships in the UK and showed their understanding of intimacy between friends and abilities in actively assessing their quality of friendships. Participants' agency can also be seen in their experiences facing challenges within their friendships.

5.3. Challenges and Advice in Making Friends in the UK - Children's Friendship Agency

Children from this study identified three main challenges they have faced when forming or maintaining friendships after migrating to the UK. Nevertheless, much like the process of assessing and choosing peers to befriend, they discussed their roles as social agents who reacted agentically when facing their challenges after migrating.

5.3.1. Language Barrier and HKMC's Friendship Agency

Although HK children are raised as 'Trilingual and Biliterate' as mentioned in Chapter Two, the language barrier issue with local UK students is the biggest challenge participants face after migrating to the UK. Serene and Esther, expressed their English fluency was not ideal when they arrived in the UK. These findings are consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Three (Dusi, 2014; Jørgensen, 2015; Oikonomidoy, 2018; Popyk, 2023). However, all participants agreed that language is vital to building friendships in UK schools. Hence, participants suggested some ways of facilitating their friendship-making processes through language. Participants' common advice was to seek peers who are fluent in English and can help translate between languages for migrant children. Serene commented, "*You can't learn English if you hang out with HK people*"; Esther preferred peers who spoke fluent English because there were some English words that she could not understand. All participants also agreed on the importance of confidence when they were befriending English-speaking peers. Angie, Esther, and Kris admitted that they initiated to befriend others. When asked what advice on friendship-making they would give to future HKMC, Angie expressed:

> "*Like you cannot be shy. When you want to make friends, you cannot be bashful. You need to initiate conversations with others*."

The interview data demonstrated the participants' agentic nature when selecting and befriending peers despite encountering language barriers in an English-speaking environment. This echoes the concepts of friendship agency from Carter's study (2023b), as participants exercised their agency in making autonomous decisions when seeking friendships.

5.3.2. Teasing and Isolation – Children's Agency in Retaliating Bullies

As Serene faced the language barriers within UK schools, she could not befriend her peers whom she deemed unfriendly. This leads to the discussion of the second major challenge faced by HKMC when making friends in the UK, in which three participants reported being unable to connect with local students due to differences in temperament styles. Some interviewees even mentioned encountering unfriendly behaviours from their peers, such as isolation, teasing or bullying. Kris did not manage to make friends in the first school she enrolled in the UK and expressed that local students "*would not ask others to play and they would not talk nor greet others*". Meanwhile, Serene recalled her peer teasing her with a "*What the hell*" when she made jokes with her class teacher to practice her English.

Research suggests these unfriendly acts from peers would lower bully victims' confidence or self-esteem, particularly for girls, as boys usually react in a 'nonchalant manner' (Rubin et al., 1995; Salmavalli et al., 1996, p. 99). Yet, not all female participants in this study appeared distressed by their circumstances, some commented on how they had been actively exercising their agency by settling conflicts in their own unique ways (Corsaro, 2003). This shows an interesting phenomenon where gender norms in previous research were broken. Moreover, Oliver and Candappa (2003) highlighted that children in their study stopped bullying by avoiding the bullies and standing up for themselves. In this study, Serene and Kris commented that they ignored peers they deemed unkind or unfriendly. Interestingly, other than ignoring the English-speaking peers who would tease others, Serene made use of Cantonese, her native language and retaliated verbally at the bully: "*Are you sick in the head?* (你個腦係咪有病?)". Hence, showing her ability to stand up for herself through language as a defence mechanism when being teased:

> "*Like when somebody makes fun of you, you can just talk back*
> *in Chinese to snap at them. Like they can't understand us, I can*
> *say whatever I want*."

5.3.3. The Lack of Adult Support in Facilitating Children's Friendships – HKMC's Independence in Navigating Friendships

Despite being teased, HKMC expressed that they did not get any help from adults and refused their support. This leads to the discussion revolving around the third challenge HKMC faced in UK schools: the lack of adult support in facilitating their friendships when settling in the schools or implementing the Buddy System mentioned in Chapter Two.

Research identifies the role of teachers in supporting and facilitating children's friendships as vital, and schools should prioritise children's friendships and social curriculum to be as important as academic curriculum (Carter, 2023b; Erwin, 1993; Roffey et al., 1994; Doll, 1996). Sullivan (1998) even proposed five strategies for addressing isolated children's needs in schools where teachers should spend quality time with these children by modelling positive social behaviours, putting children into ideal social situations with peers, and designing effective classroom management or social environments that facilitate children's social interactions. Nevertheless, all participants in this study claimed that they got little to no support in guiding them in navigating their friendships in schools. Only one participant, Kris, commented on how her teacher introduced her to her class on her first day in school. Serene even expressed "*The teachers don't care*" when her peers were teasing her. Furthermore, when being asked if their schools adopted the Buddy System in pairing them with existing students to navigate their new environments (Benson and Rolfe, 2023), all participants reported that they had not experienced it, and only Esther was aware of the scheme as she heard her brother mention his school adopted the method.

These perceptions of adults not forcing adult skills or knowledge in friendships upon children or intervening in their friendships were seen in research, and children were claimed to have more privacy in their friendships and flexibility in exercising their agency without adult supervision (Corsaro, 2003; Carter, 2023b; Brogaard-Clausen and Robson, 2019). Interestingly, participants in this study reflected on the phenomenon and unanimously agreed that migrant children themselves should mostly be in charge of the process of making friends in the UK. For instance, even when being teased, Serene believed nothing could be done about her situation and teachers could not help them or the bullies. Furthermore, participants were aware of the differences between the perspectives of adults and children and believed their decisions in friendships would benefit them better. Angie and Kris both expressed children should choose

who to hang out with independently as adults will not understand their perspectives on whom they enjoy spending time with:

> "*If you rely everything on the adults, then you may not really*
> *want to be friends with those peers (adults introduced).*"
>
> (Angie)

> "*I think if you choose to hang out with the people you like… the*
> *personalities that you like in a friend because others won't know*
> *who you enjoy spending time with.*"   (Kris)

Nonetheless, while most of the participants can show their agentic nature, some of them were also aware of the limits in their agency and acknowledged adults' power in facilitating children's friendships, echoing the results from Katsiada et al.'s study (2018). This phenomenon is mainly seen in participants' experiences maintaining friendships online. Angie mentioned contacting their local UK friends who transferred to different schools online. She did not own a cell phone and believed that without her parents' help in exchanging contact with those friends' parents, she could not stay in contact with these friends.

> "*If they tell you before they transfer schools, like their parents*
> *talk to your parents, where they exchange contacts, then maybe*
> *when they move away, you can still find them.*"   (Angie)

Overall, HKMC in this study beat the stereotype of them being overly dependent on adults mentioned in Chapter One. They expressed their preference for navigating their friendships independently after migrating to the UK and showed their agentic nature when facing challenges in friendships. Nonetheless, some children still welcome adult support as they are aware that their agency can be limited due to external material factors.

5.4. Implications of the Study

Despite its relatively small scope, this study has significant implications for school practice and further discourse about HKMC. By answering the three research questions, this study emphasises the importance of understanding children's perspectives and the necessity for tailored support to promote children's autonomy in forming and maintaining their friendships.

Firstly, previous studies indicate children's preferences in choosing friendships and migrant children have been shown to form friendships based on same or similar ethnicity (Fortuin et al.,

2014; Strohmeier and Spiel, 2003; Jugert et al., 2011; Schachner et al., 2016). Although participants in this study did not show clear preferences in relation to their peers' ethnicity, they chose peers from HK or Asia as their best friends. Schools and teachers need to establish connections and create opportunities to enable HKMC to interact with local students, such as by adopting Buddy Systems in schools, in order to create a harmonious social environment for better and fruitful interethnic friendships.

Secondly, HKMC's friendship perceptions and experiences mostly aligned with existing studies. Particularly in assessing the intimacy within their friendships to distinguish between normal and best friends. Such knowledge will allow teachers to observe children's friendship experiences, thus facilitating these relationships with suitable scaffolding. Nevertheless, there is a discrepancy between this study and existing literature about gendered roles in friendships (Rubin et al., 1995; Salmavalli et al., 1996). Such as female participants' nonchalant reactions towards bullying in this study do not match with findings that existed in the past. Therefore, future research and teaching practices should look beyond norms such as gendered patterns and focus on children's individual qualities to study and facilitate children's friendships.

Thirdly, the study challenges the stereotype of HKMC as overly dependent within HK society, as mentioned in Chapter One. Educators and parents need to understand children's perspectives before making assumptions about their agency. By gaining more insights into children's perceptions of friendships, we can tailor appropriate support or opportunities to foster autonomy in forming or maintaining friendships, thus more effectively meeting children's individual needs.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

6.1. Revisiting the Study

This study reflected the concerns about HK children's friendships after migrating to the UK under the BN(O) status migration trend. The aim of this study was achieved as the friendship preferences of HKMC were examined, and the effects of the preferences on their experiences in forming and maintaining friendships after migrating to the UK were explored.

As I explored HKMC's friendship preferences, experiences, and challenges, their preferences in choosing peers with similar backgrounds, interests, and desirable personality traits were revealed. Their ability to assess their friendships and intimacy was also highlighted. I then discussed of their agentic nature when dealing with challenges they encountered in friendships after migrating to the UK. Most of this study's findings related to migrant children's preferences align with the literature reviewed in this study. Yet, migrant children's experiences in this study do not always align with existing studies, such as HK migrant girls in this study did not display gender stereotypical reactions towards school bullies.

Curiously, this study challenges the stereotype of HKMC as incapable and dependent. Participants revealed their agentic nature when tackling friendship challenges after migrating to the UK, thus showing the importance of adults listening and understanding this group of children's perspectives.

6.2. Limitations and Recommendations of the Study

First, the generalisation of this study is limited due to the small sample size and despite the female participants beating the social norms discussed in previous research, knowledge related to male HKMC's friendships is absent. Future studies should include more male and female HKMC of different ages to assess their friendship preferences and experiences to form a more holistic view of children's perceptions towards friendships after migrating to the UK. Second, since this was my first time conducting research *with* children, my interview skills were not polished enough to provide participants with a completely comfortable experience, moments of silence could be observed in interviews where participants hesitated to express themselves. Third, although this study does not aim to research the quality of HKMC's friendships fully, a proper framework for assessing children's friendships should be developed for better clarity in discussing the findings. Lastly, the participants did not share information about their

neighbours, further research should be concerned with HKMC's friendships in their neighbourhoods, as this study overlooked such types of friendships.

Notwithstanding, this research is one of the few studies that provides HKMC the platform to voice their concerns about their friendships after migrating to the UK. It also revealed these children's agentic nature, contrasting the way HK society stereotypes them as dependent migrants. This will pave the way for further research with future HKMC and enable related stakeholders, such as parents and teachers, to understand this group of young migrants' perspectives.

6.3. What I learned from the Study

MA Childhood Studies changed how I perceive children and reflect on how to conduct research *with* children. I now realise that children should be viewed as social agents while adults should still provide support when children seek it. This change undoubtedly played a big part in my professional growth. Researching with HKMC made me realise their strong agency and the importance of conducting further studies with them as they are strikingly under-researched. I hope this study has been a good starting point in gaining knowledge of HKMC's perspectives and experiences, even if it's just a small step in the right direction.

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Appendices

Tell me all about friendships!

Hi! I am Audrey! After coming to the UK, it took me some time to make friends because I only talked to my friends back in Hong Kong! So I need your help! I want you to tell me your ideas about friendships after coming to the UK!

What I will do...

Ask questions!
Write down what you say!
Record us so I will not miss anything you say!

What you have to do is...

Talk with other children around your age!
Ask questions!
Have fun sharing stories about your friends!

Who are your friends?

Where are your friends from?

Differences in making friends in the UK and Hong Kong?

What makes a close friend?

Got any help in making friends?

Ready to help?

Talk with your parents about joining the project then draw your best friend(s) ! This can tell me you want to help and feel okay to have me record your voice! And don't worry! The files will be deleted after the project is finished!

Contact me!
Email: ed23pyw@leeds.ac.uk
Whatsapp: +44

Thank you for thinking about joining this project!

Consent Form

☐ I read everything and understand what I have to do for the project.

☐ I understand that I am free to join and free to leave the project.

☐ I feel comfortable about having my voice being recorded.

☐ I agree to join this project.

Your name: _____

Date: _____

After signing the form, please draw your friend(s) on paper and take a picture of it! Send it to me and let's talk about them soon!

Appendix 2 – Information Sheet for Parents

Information Sheet and Consent Form for Parents/Guardians

Overview

My name is ███████████, and I am a master's student at the University of Leeds. I am conducting a research project with the University of Leeds, and your child has been invited to participate.

The title of the research project

Friendship preferences among Hong Kong migrant children in the United Kingdom

Your child is being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide, you and your child need to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Please take the time to read through this form and decide whether you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the project?

The project aims to examine the friendship preferences of Hong Kong migrant children. For instance, the friendship preferences of British HK Migrant Children in the UK? What does it mean for them to make friends in UK school settings? How do they talk about friendship conviviality-based integration challenges in navigating the British Educational system? Thus, the study also aims to understand the challenges and solutions to making and maintaining friends from their perspectives.

Is it a must for my child to participate?

It is up to your child to decide whether to take part. If they decide to participate, you and your child will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form), and they can withdraw at any time. They do not have to give a reason.

What does my child have to do? What will happen to me if my child takes part?

Your child will participate in a focus group of four children to discuss topics revolving around friendships. During the discussions, children will be given prompts to express their perspectives on the topic and interact with other participants of similar ages.

Will my child be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Yes. The discussions will be audio-recorded, and the recorded audio files will be processed in transcribing the sessions as a Word document. The audio files can only be accessed by me. They will be stored and encrypted with a strong password. As the transcription process is finished, the files will be destroyed permanently.

Potentially, your child's quotes can be included in the finalised written research project. However, all child participants' real names will be replaced with a pseudonym, and other identifiable details will also not be disclosed.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Friendship can be a sensitive topic to discuss in research with migrant children. Emotional harm can emerge as children might be upset about leaving Hong Kong and their friends back in Hong Kong. They can also feel embarrassed due to the differences in age and power between me and the adult researcher.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Your child can benefit from the study by better understanding their life experiences, developing interpersonal relationship skills, growing confidence, and becoming more knowledgeable in navigating friendship-related topics.

Use, dissemination and storage of research data.

Information will be stored on my university's cloud space, and I will ensure that I only write my dissertation on my PC in my place while using a VPN. I will also avoid accessing the files through public Wi-Fi networks for online security. Once the project is submitted, related materials will be destroyed permanently and not used further.

What will happen to my personal information?

Your personal information will be saved and secured on a password-protected drive at the University of Leeds. You can also find information on the University's Privacy Notice for Research.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

All the contact information that I collect about you during the research will be kept strictly confidential and will stored separately from the research data. I will take steps wherever possible to anonymise the research data.

Who is organising/ funding the research?

The University of Leeds, school of education will be facilitating this research. This is part of my Master's research dissertation in Childhood Studies.

Contact for further information

To contact the researcher ██████████████████████████████████

Or to contact the ██

What if something goes wrong?

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds: EthicsEnquiries@leeds.ac.uk

You will be given a copy of this participant information sheet and a copy of your child's signed consent form to keep if you choose to accept this information to participate.

Thank you for taking time to reading this information.

Appendix 3 – Signed Consent Forms

Participant 1 – Serene's Signed Consent Form

Participant 2 – Angie's Signed Consent Form

Consent Form

☑ I read everything and understand what I have to do for the project.

☑ I understand that I am free to join and free to leave the project.

☑ I feel comfortable about having my voice being recorded.

☑ I agree to join this project.

Your name: Ang█████

Date: 18.6.2024

After signing the form, please draw your friend(s) on paper and take a picture of it! Send it to me and let's talk about them soon!

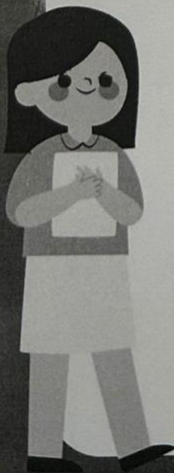Participant 3 – Esther's Signed Consent Form

Participant 4 – Kris' Signed Consent Form

Appendix 4 – Interview Framework and Guiding Questions

Interview Outline and Guiding Questions

1. Purpose and outlining the interview

Hello. My name is Audrey, and I am an MA Childhood Studies from the University of Leeds. Thank you for your invaluable contribution to this study. I also greatly appreciate your willingness to share your experiences. During this one-hour interview, we will delve into topics related to your friendships after migrating from Hong Kong to the UK.

2. Confidentiality

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers, as this interview is not an evaluation. I encourage you to answer the questions in as much detail as possible, and please raise concerns if you find any questions I ask difficult or ambiguous. Your answers are strictly for the purpose of this study, and I assure you that all data will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. If you find the interview session uncomfortable, we can terminate the session as you seek your parents' comfort.

So now I will record the interview session, with your consent.

Before we start, do you have any questions for me relating to this project?

Interview Questions

Personal information:

To start with, can you introduce yourself, including your age, how long you have lived in the UK, and what kind of school are you attending?

Current friendships:

I have asked you to draw your best friend(s) on a sheet of paper:

1. Can you please share your thoughts when drawing the picture?
2. Who is it? Where are they from? How did you meet them?
3. Tell more about how the two of you became friends and what you enjoy doing with them.
4. What makes them your good friend?

5. (If they choose HK friends) What about peers in the UK? How are you enjoying being friends with them?

6. (If they choose UK friends) What about peers back in HK? How are you maintaining friendships with them?

7. Overall, how are you enjoying the types of friendships you have in the UK? (Face-to-face friendships in the UK/online friendships with peers in HK?)

Friendship preferences:

Now that you have told me about your best friend(s), what do you think are the most important qualities of a person when you want to know them better?

1. Is it their ethnic background?
2. Gender?
3. Personalities and interests?
4. Or others?

Why do you think you have such preferences?

1. Parental influences?
2. Media?
3. Personal feelings?
4. Others

Some people say similarities attract, and some say differences attract. Do you think you and your friends are similar or different?

Challenges in maintaining friendships after migration:

As you navigate the processes of making friends or maintaining friendships, have you been facing any challenges during the processes? And how do you feel about them?

I have heard that there is a buddy system in UK schools, where you pair up with another student when you first arrive. Did you have a buddy?

1. (If yes) Do you like the experience of having a buddy? How is your buddy like? How have they been helping you navigate and make friends?

2. (If not) Has your school done anything in helping you to navigate and make friends?

Do you think the school has been helping you to make friends in school with other students? Or is there anybody else helping you during the process (e.g. your parents?)

Closing

Would you give any advice to the schools or parents regarding helping British HK children make friends in the UK?

Lastly, do you have anything to say to the HK children and families who will migrate to the UK in the future?

Are there any further questions you want to ask or any issues you want to express?

Participant 1 - Serene (Age: 11)

Date of the Interview: 21/06/2024 17:00-17:45

Audrey: Hello, good day to both of you. My name is Audrey, I am a MA childhood study student from University of Leeds. I would like to briefly introduce my project again to you. So, before I start, I would like to inform you that, right now this conversation is being recorded, are you okay with me recording your voices?

Serene: Okay.

Audrey: Right, but no worries, after I am finished with the transcript I will delete the recording.

Serene: Mhm.

Audrey: So, before I start asking questions, do you have any questions or anything unclear about this project?

Serene: nothing much.

Audrey: Nothing much… got it… Then let me ask you something about yourself first. So your name is Serene right? How old are you now? How long have you been in the UK?

Serene: A little more than a year.

Audrey: About a year… so how old are you now?

Serene: 11.

Audrey: okay… so what kind of school are you attending? You don't have to disclose the exact name of your school but can you describe how your school is?

Serene: It's about two, three levels tall, there's a playground.

Audrey: Hmm, so does the school consists of a lot of local UK students?

Serene: most of them are UK students, I'm the only student from Hong Kong.

Audrey: I understand… okay let me mark down your words… Also please understand that I might not be able to maintain eye contact when jotting down the notes, my apologies.

Serene: it's understandable, it's okay.

Audrey: Okay… so the only student from Hong Kong… Right. So, before we had this interview, I asked you to draw a picture of your friend, and I want to say your drawing is really good. I didn't have much time for this drawing but this is me and my best friend who is in Hong Kong.

Serene: Thanks! I have self taught myself in drawing for eight years!

Audrey: That's impressive, so I'd like to know this drawing of your friend, is she from the UK?

Serene: No, I knew her back in Hong Kong.

Audrey: Right, so when did you meet her?

Serene: I met her in primary grade one.

Audrey: So you knew her for quite some time, are you girls still in contact?

Serene: Yes, we do.

Audrey: What kind of ways are you using in staying connected with each other?

Serene: We usually use WhatsApp.

Audrey: So, you two knew each other since primary one, how did you two meet?

Serene: Through a pack of snacks.

Audrey: That's a great way to get to know a person; food is always good.

Serene: Then we got closer, we would pass notes in class, too.

Audrey: Passing notes, huh? I understand that it sounds like you had fun.

Audrey: So, with all that, can you tell me how you know this friend can be a good friend of yours? What is special about your friend that makes you feel like you can be good friends with her?

Serene: She… after knowing her just for a while, she would come up to me to chat. Then… after class, during break times, we would hang out… Then, when we didn't have school, we would also go out to hang out together.

Audrey: Sounds like you spend a lot of time with your friend.

Serene: Yeah, I have known her for like… 4-5 years.

Audrey: Quite some time already!

Serene: I have another friend that I have known for ten years.

Audrey: Oh wow! Even some of my friends have not been around for that long! Hmm, I'd like to ask, even if you have known this friend for ten years, do you still consider this friend who you have known for four to five years as your best friend instead? Why do you think you can be closer to this friend then?

Serene: Because my friend, whom I have known for 10 years… has to go to extracurricular classes after school, and her schedule is very full, I cannot really hang out with her that much.

Audrey: So, with that, do you think people need more time to spend together to get closer as friends?

Serene: I think so.

Audrey: So, back to the UK, were you able to make friends in school?

Serene: Are you talking about Hong Kong children in the UK or local UK children?

Audrey: Both works; feel free to share anything about anything related.

Serene: If we are talking about Hong Kong (children), coming to the UK I have known a big group of them. If we are talking about local (students), they will be in school.

Audrey: What do you mean by a big group of Hong Kong children?

Serene: It means… we have 10 plus children in the group. We knew each other from school, then the group got bigger and bigger.

Audrey: So, how was making friends in the UK? Did you find it challenging?

Serene: I guess communication is still fine, but at the end of the day, it's all about time. Time decides everything.

Audrey: How do you feel about connecting with friends in Hong Kong via WhatsApp?

Serene: It is okay, we would also use Zoom. The Zoom that we use for school.

Audrey: Do you think that is a good way to connect with friends?

Serene: It was okay, I prefer to make calls on WhatsApp.

Audrey: So, while you are on the phone, do you and your friends do anything? Eating?

Serene: I don't quite understand you, if I am WhatsApping my friends while I have to eat, we don't have to WhatsApp.

Audrey: Oh, I must have mixed up something, I thought you and your friends would do video calls.

Serene: Oh, I do make video calls, but I would have to sit on the sofa.

Audrey: Right… cause with my experience, when I am doing video calls with my friends in Hong Kong, sometimes we would play video games together…

Serene: Oh right! We did play "Draw Something" while calling each other, because on Zoom there is a whiteboard for you to draw, so we would just draw there.

Audrey: You and your friends make good use of the functions in different communicating applications!

Serene: Yeah.

Audrey: Give me a minute… I am afraid I will miss something…

Serene: How old are you?

Audrey: Me? I am in my twenties. And right, give me just a minute to write some notes. Because for me, I also came to the UK recently, I find it challenging to make friends, and seeing what is happening in Hong Kong, makes me wonder how Hong Kong children make friends after coming to the UK?

Serene: Was it because of language issues?

Audrey: Language is one of the issues?

Serene: For me it is, my English has always been poopy.

Audrey: Did coming to the UK make any difference?

Serene: It's okay. I guess it did get better. Back in Hong Kong, my academic performance in English was already not so good. I barely passed.

Audrey: So, with this issue, has it been challenging to befriend local UK students?

Serene: Not really, they would be accommodating to my needs.

Audrey: Sounds like they are very nice people. How have they been accommodating to your needs?

Serene: Like for example, they would slow down talking for me. And if there is anything unclear, they would repeat themselves again. More details, simpler.

Audrey: Right…

Serene: You forgot a lot of Chinese already?

Audrey: I guess so, my notes have English and Chinese all over, haha.So other than spending enough time with each other, what can the best qualities that your best friend has that makes you reckon her as your best friend?

Serene: Erm… they will. She... even though she has great academic performance, she still passes notes with me during class. She is, like… the top 10 students in my class; I mean, I was one of them, too.

Audrey: That's impressive, and it makes you two share more similarities. Do you think these similarities have helped you two become closer friends?

Serene: I guess so… we would watch anime together.

Audrey: Oh, I do watch some anime, too, right… so other than sharing similarities, you two share the same interests!

Serene: Yeah. But then her grades are a few levels above me. Her English is better but my Chinese is better.

Audrey: Hmm, so you two have differences in academic performances, has there been times that you two help each other out?

Serene: We argued about whether Chinese is better or English is better.

Audrey: You two argued?

Serene: Because… she said English is easier while I think Chinese is easier.

Audrey: So with these arguments, how has it been influencing your friendship?

Serene: Without arguments, a friendship cannot be built.

Audrey: Can you elaborate more on that?

Serene: If you can argue with them, you can be friends. Because with arguments… if you are not close with a person you cannot really find anything to argue about.

Audrey: So the closer you are with a person, the more likely it is for them to argue?

Serene: Only very close friends can argue.

Audrey: So, other than having arguments about academics, did you two argue about other topics? Feel free not to share and only share anything when you feel comfortable.

Serene: Hmm… about anime characters, who is better?

Audrey: So arguments on your interests, hmm…

Serene: We have similar interests… I guess… I like to sketch but she likes to colour.

Audrey: It seems like you two complement each other.

Serene: I only enjoy the sketching part; I hate colouring. She, on the other hand, is better at colouring but not at sketching.

Audrey: But I think that's good. Once you've finished the sketch, she can help with the colouring. I think it is interesting that you said arguments make better friendships. Is that your own interpretation, or did you get that idea from somewhere?

Serene: I forgot.

Audrey: Let me put it this way: would your own experience in interacting with others make you come up with such thoughts?

Serene: Arguing with people is a good way to interact with people?

Audrey: For me, it is. Because you need to make up with them.

Serene: I wouldn't say it was full-on arguing; it was more like talking, a conversation. Talking is more my way of interacting with people. Normally, when I am with my friends, I am the one who is known to be the annoying one.

Audrey: That's interesting. Do you think that accepting you the way you are is an important quality in a friend?

Serene: Yeah, I think so. Like even if they think I am annoying, they would continue to talk to me.

Audrey: I can see you and your friend have both similarities and differences. I have heard some people say similarities attract, while some say differences bond two people together, what do you think about those statements?

Serene: I think the more similar people are, the closer they can be. Like they can have the same topic of interest, and then get closer. If people are different, it would be difficult for

them to have a topic of interest. For example, a person who watches anime and a person who doesn't watch anime, they might… yeah. Both cannot understand each other.

Audrey: I understand. So, other than WhatsApping friends back in Hong Kong, I remember you mentioned you would interact with children in the UK. Other than the language barrier, are there any other things you have encountered that make you think befriending students here is challenging?

Serene: Some classmates are pretty weird, like… I always think they are kind of strange. Like… some of them like to kick the ball up to the ceiling and when the ball falls it hits other people.

Audrey: So, you think their way of play is different from what you are used to?

Serene: I guess so. The boys once kicked the ball to the ceiling and the ball landed on my head.

Audrey: So, there is a difference in play between children from the UK and Hong Kong…

Serene: Also! They often lay on the ground. I think that is pretty unhygienic.

Audrey: So would you say you would not want to play with this person because they are unhygienic?

Serene: Not just one, but a bunch of them.

Audrey: A lot of the other children are also like that?

Serene: Hmm… most of them are like that. Maybe most of the kids are like that in here.

Audrey: So first it could be the language difference…

Serene: The way we live is different, like they prefer to play games like Roblox, Minecraft. I don't like them though.

Audrey: Hmm… things you enjoy are different… would you say children from the UK and Hong Kong are exposed to different mediums?

Serene: Like, they… I think Minecraft and Roblox are meh. Do you play Minecraft or Roblox, big sis?

Audrey: Me? I haven't gotten the time to play these games yet. But I am making some DIY things based on Minecraft.

Serene: Oh, that's the bee from Minecraft.

Audrey: Right… I am also trying to fit into the culture here. Hmm… so do you think this gap between lifestyles is due to differences in culture or race?

Serene: I think so? Maybe? Like as kids, they would be exposed to things that are different from us.

Audrey: What do you think that might be the differences between Hong Kong children and children from the UK? Like… it seems like children from the UK are more active, and the things they enjoy are different… so what about Hong Kong children? What do you think about them?

Serene: Very busy. Tests, dictations, you name it, we have it.

Audrey: So, a lot of academic concerns…

Serene: You don't have that here unless it's time before the SAT, then we might need extra lessons. Normally, we don't have that. There is not much homework either; we don't even have a handbook. Then, for homework, it's only a few pages, nothing like Hong Kong at all. They were given a pile upon pile of homework in Hong Kong. We don't even have summer homework here.

Audrey: Wow… I remember I had this much homework that I needed to do.

Serene: Me too! I had to do at least 10 homework a day.

Audrey: Back in Hong Kong, with that amount of Hong Kong, did you have time to spend with your friends? Did you work on them with your friends together?

Serene: Yeah, we did. We would open a group call on Zoom and find solutions for the homework together. And after work, we would continue the call and hang out there.

Audrey: I see… work hard play hard.

Serene: Like we would share our screens, some showed their Roblox gameplay, and they watched me play Minecraft or something like that.

Audrey: With having less homework after you came here to the UK, does that mean you have one less topic of interest of friends?

Serene: It just means I don't have to stress about it again. We don't even need group calls to find the solutions anymore; I just have to Google it.

Audrey: Oh my, I hope that is allowed.

Serene: Oh right, the Maths in here is relatively easier. Don't you think? Like SAT tests onl require us to do three-digit addition… two-digit multiplication… two-digit and three-digit multiplication… like… something divided by 0… something adding a thousand…

Audrey: It's been quite a while since I did primary school Maths, if I were to be honest, I am not very familiar with the systems these days, so it is a pleasure to understand what is happening in schools through listening to you and other children.

Serene: Hmm.

Audrey: So I have heard about a thing called Buddy System in the UK which aims to help new students to befriend…

Serene: Buddy System? What is that?

Audrey: For example, teachers would pair up a new student with an existing student in class for the newcomer to get to know he school and people better. Have you heard anything like that before?

Serene: I am not aware of that.

Audrey: So when you first came to the school, did anybody help you navigate how to befriend others?

Serene: Nope.

Audrey: So you navigate your friendships on your own?

Serene: Yeah, it's all on your own. So like, at first, I would only chat with the teachers.

Audrey: Oh… did the teachers interact with you in a way that made you feel more inclusive in school?

Serene: Not much, I would be listening to dumb things.

Audrey: Like?

Serene: So… I would ask my teacher questions like… do you know why the sea is blue? Because the fishes are like blu blu blu…

Audrey: Haha… that's such a nice conversation with your teacher.

Serene: Then another classmate heard me, he said, "What the hell?" and opened his mouth wide.

Audrey: Hmm… How did you feel when he said that?

Serene: Nothing much.

Audrey: Did the teacher hear what the student said?

Serene: The teachers don't care.

Audrey: Hmm… with that, do you think the school needs to do more in order to make new students feel more welcome? Not just for students from Hong Kong, let's say, every child who is new in the school, do you think the school should be responsible for that?

Serene: No, we just have to be on our own when trying to make new friends.

Audrey: So, the school doesn't have to get involved in any way?

Serene: Yeah, as long as we can communicate. If we can communicate, everything can be solved.

Audrey: Communication… man… English, I suddenly forgot how to write the Chinese words for that.

Serene: Just write communication… isn't the Chinese word written like that?

Audrey: Right… thank you Serene. So overall, the school doesn't have to get involved?

Serene: Yeah, they don't have to help us that much. And… I also figured out the advantage of learning more languages.

Audrey: Oh, tell me more about it.

Serene: Like when somebody is making fun of you, you can just talk back in Chinese to snap at them. Like they can't understand us. I can say whatever I want.

Audrey: You tried that before?

Serene: Of course.

Audrey: What was the occasion that made you do that?

Serene: It's… like when they are being dumb, being weird, then I will snap at them in Chinese.

Audrey: What might be the dumb things that those children do?

Serene: It's just strange things. For example, when I was talking to myself, they would tell me to shut up, and then I said, "Are you sick in the head?" in Cantonese. And, when we were singing as a class, they told me to shut up. Like it's singing time, why do I have to shut up?

Audrey: Your school didn't get involved when things like these happen?

Serene: Not much, hmm. Yeah, nothing much.

Audrey: So what about you? I can see that you took it quite lightly, and you didn't seem bothered by those students.

Serene: I just don't want to waste my time.

Audrey: Hmm, it seems like time is very important to you. It's about quality time, if the person is not right, you don't bother to interact with them, and it's about who you are comfortable spending time with.

Serene: That's right.

Audrey: But even with incidents like this, should the schools have any measures to cater to the needs of students like you?

Serene: Nothing much can be done; they cannot help us; they cannot help them (the bullies); they are helpless.

Audrey: What do you mean by them being helpless?

Serene: Nothing can help them, maybe just send them to mental hospitals.

Audrey: Ha… let's just say… hmm, that you understand there will always be misunderstandings between different students?

Serene: Yeah, I kind of predicted that there would be things like this happen.

Audrey: When did you start thinking about these predictions?

Serene: Hmm, I understood this idea when I first entered the first primary school when I just arrived in the UK.

Audrey: First primary school?

Serene: Oh right, I first lived in Leeds for a year then I moved to somewhere else.

Audrey: Oh! You have to study in another primary school because you moved. I understand now. Are there any differences between these schools?

Serene: The first one… there were fewer restrictions, not much hmm… no… how to say… more freedom; unlike Hong Kong schools, we could even bring our toys out to play in class.

Audrey: Oh, it sounds relaxing. What about the school you are in now?

Serene: It is more normal.

Audrey: Does that mean it's more similar to the schools you studied in Hong Kong?

Serene: I guess so. Like better than the first UK Primary school.

Serene's mother: The first primary school did not feel like a primary school, it was more like a day-care centre.

Serene: Haha.

Serene's mother: Like the first feels like a daycare centre, it's kind of like freestyle teaching. At first, I didn't think there would be differences among UK schools, but with the second primary school, I can now know the difference, drastic differences really.

Audrey: So Serene can now study like normal students can, haha.

Serene's mother: The disparity is a lot. The students from the first school in general, are kind of…

Serene: Weird and dumb.

Serene's mother: Yeah, pretty much. Like children in the UK are funnier.

Serene: Nope, they are just dumb. Just dumb.

Serene's mother: When they notice you are not local people, they will stare more.

Audrey: So, when the school atmospheres varied, do you think schools that are more similar to what you experienced in Hong Kong allow you to have a better experience befriending others? If the backgrounds of children are more similar, will that help you befriend others easier?

Serene: Not really. This school is still far different from the Hong Kong school that I was in.

Serene's mother: Hong Kong has a lot of tests for kids.

Serene: When I told the teachers here that I had homework every day back in Hong Kong, they were really shocked. Like, we normally have only one homework per week, and within these three weeks of holiday? Nothing, no homework at all.

Audrey: I understand… so for this summer holiday, will you be going somewhere to hang out with your friends? Or having more time to stay connected with them?

Serene: I will go back to Hong Kong.

Audrey: Oh! Any plans on what to do with them?

Serene: Play what?

Audrey: Any games?

Serene: We play with our fingers.

Audrey: Haha, I guess you can enjoy doing anything with close friends.

Serene: Ha, I mean we will probably play with our phones. Maybe we will go to some parks, supermarkets, no, not supermarkets, super… I mean the city centre maybe, like Mong Kok, Sino Centre. (Sino Centre is known for selling anime merchandise.)

Audrey: Are you excited to be back in Hong Kong?

Serene: Because I really want to go to Sino Centre.

Audrey: Oh that! Place is very important. Is it because the place has lots of things that you and your friends enjoy?

Serene: Not really, I am the only one among my friends who enjoy going to Sino Centre.

Audrey: They are really good friends who can accommodate to your needs, haha.

Serene: Nope. I might just go with my dad for that. And I go to the city centre with them. Like going to Toysaurus.

Audrey: That's nice though, you get to go back to Hong Kong and hang out with friends.

Serene: Hmm.

Audrey: Would you say if you have the chance to visit Hong Kong, you will always go back to the city so that you can see your friends?

Serene: Every two years, yeah.

Audrey: Hmm… that's nice.

Serene: One year I will go after Taiwan, then the next year I will go after Japan. Alternately visiting these places after Hong Kong. Because if I go to Japan I want to go to Akihabara.

Audrey: Well that you have to discuss with your parents I guess, haha.

Serene: Tokyo is fine too! Maybe Osaka too! What is Akihabara known for? Anime.

Audrey: You have shared a lot of useful information with me just now which I think I would be enough information for now. So to end this, I would like to ask one last question, which is,

when there are more and more Hong Kong families moving to the UK, what kind of things they have to be aware when children are making friends in schools? Any advice for them?

Serene: Don't get to know any double-sided people.

Audrey: What do you mean by that?

Serene: Like don't be like one of my friend, don't show and act differently.

Audrey: So this is your…

Serene: Pretty sure she is sneezing right now.

Audrey: Haha, so this is your own experience?

Serene: We are still keeping in touch because our parents are friends.

Audrey: Oh… I understand.

Serene's mother: I would say, give more freedom to your children, ask them… families don't really have to go to the big cities in the UK, because even living in small towns like we now are, it's…

Serene: I don't think this is a small town! It takes half an hour for me to travel from school to home!

Serene's mother: What I am saying is that… I'm suggesting…

Serene: That families don't have to go to cities like London, like originally, I have this friend I made back in kindergarten, they moved to the UK and was planning to live in London, but the rent is crazily high.

Audrey: Right… so not necessary for newcomers to live in big cities…

Serene's mother: There can be a lot of Hong Kong people in big cities…

Serene: But you can't learn English if you hang out with Hong Kong people!

Audrey: You can't learn English if you hang out with Hong Kong people?

Serene: When I was in the first primary school, I met a bunch of Hong Kong children, so we were hanging out a lot, our English was so bad compared to now.

Serene's mother: Now that we moved to where we are, there are not many people from Hong Kong.

Serene: There is though! My house has two right here!

Serene's mother: If you choose a neighbourhood that does not have many Hong Kong people, you will be forced to quickly acquire the skills in speaking English. Like she went from hating speaking English to now she keeps asking the teachers many silly questions.

Serene: I have asked the teachers if there was chicken first or egg first.

Audrey: This is an important question, in my opinion at least, haha. So, you two would suggest Hong Kong parents who are deciding to move to the UK. One of the key concerns is to consider where the child can thrive better in learning English.

Serene: Remember to ask teachers if there was chicken first or egg first.

Audrey: Ha, right, will it be important for new students to interact with the teachers?

Serene: Yes, it is pretty important. There can be times when you do need help from teachers. As for me, I don't understand grammar that much; I am not good at that. My spelling is bad, my grammar is bad, reading is bad.

Audrey: It's important to take your time, too; English requires a lot of time and experience for you to get better at it.

Serene: Have you seen the SAT papers? There is like three pages of lengthy passages you need to read and then answer.

Audrey: No, unfortunately, I am not very familiar with that.

Serene: You can search it online.

Serene's mother: Like compared to the way we learn English in Hong Kong, the modes are quite different here. Like the way kids have to read passages or answer questions are different. The style is different.

Serene: Because they grew up speaking English, so they will study more difficult English.

Serene's mother: It's not just about the difficulty; the main point is, even after reading the passages thoroughly, I don't really understand what message it wants to deliver.

Serene: Yeah! It's like we have to understand the lore of the world. Like Full Metal Alchemist (A Japanese animation/comic series), I understand the lore of the world; I have already pushed through the gates of knowledge. Did you watch Full Metal Alchemist, big sis?

Audrey: I have watched some episodes but didn't finish the show.

Serene's mother: Big sis should be the one asking questions not you, silly! She's not as free as you.

Audrey: Haha, I just don't have enough time to watch.

Serene's mother: Silly Serene, you should always be goofing around after coming back from school and not doing your homework.

Serene: We barely have any homework!

Audrey: So, overall, the biggest concern of yours would be language issues, is that right?

Serene: It doesn't matter what language, I can still snap at them (in Cantonese) if I want to.

Audrey: Right, I understand. I guess this is pretty much it. Do you have anything you would like to add to the topic of making friends?

Serene: Having the same topic of interest is really important.

Audrey: I understand.

Serene: Hmm… that's pretty much it.

Audrey: So the interview is done now. I would like to thank you for talking to me today as I got to understand more about the circumstances of Hong Kong migrant children in the UK, especially how they make friends in the UK.

Serene: But every child can have different situations.

Audrey: You are right! So, I have yet to understand more; I will have two more interviews to do tomorrow.

Serene: Interview?

Serene's mother: Like what you are doing now.

Serene: I get it, but does this count as an interview? I thought I was just chatting with big sis.

Audrey: I am very pleased to hear that. It's nice that you feel comfortable sharing your experiences and thoughts. That is the most important thing for me to do in an interview.

Serene: I didn't have to face you like I did with the teachers in Hong Kong. They would miss break times, but we still had to be on time for classes, and then when classes were over, they would still continue. "School bells are ringing, go back to your seats, won't you?" I really wanted to reply to her, "But it sounds like the bell when school ends".

Audrey: Haha, right. Also, I would like to thank you for spending time drawing that beautiful picture of you and your best friend. That drawing will be included in my project, so there will be others who look at it. Would that be alright?

Serene: It's okay. I don't look like my drawing.

Audrey: Right, so I will include that for further analysis. So, after this interview, I will type the transcript and analyse our conversation; I might get back to you and your mother to see if my interpretation matches with what you said today. Will you be available for that?

Serene's mother: Yeah, if you need further information, feel free to contact us.

Audrey: Thank you so much!

Serene: Yeah, if you have any questions please find my mom.

Audrey: Haha, if necessary can I also ask you questions?

Serene: It will be better if you just ask my mom.

Audrey: Haha, I understand. Again, thank you so much for your time, and I will contact you as soon as I am done analysing what we have said today; thank you!

Serene's mother: Say goodbye.

Serene: Bye bye.

Audrey: Thank you, bye bye.

Participant 2 – Angie (Age: 10)

Date of the Interview: 22/06/2024 15:00-15:47

Audrey: Hello, how are you all?

Angie's mother: Here kiddo! She ran away. Come here, come back!

Audrey: It's okay, take your time.

Angie's mother: Kiddo, kiddo come back. Kiddo. Hey! She dashed out, haha.

Audrey: It's okay. Thank you for taking the time to join this interview.

Angie's mother: It's no problem. Hold on, hold on, I have to call her back here. Kiddo! Kiddo!

Angie: What?

Angie's mother: It's about time. Hey! Angie! Angie! Hurry up! Big bro you have to get out of her room too… hey, sorry…

Audrey: No worries, it's no problem. I understand interviews can be a little overwhelming, is that right?

Angie's mother: Kiddo come here, quickly, you… you can ask questions… Angie you sit here first.

Audrey: Right, big sis is only here to talk to you, no huge tasks need to be done today.

Angie's mother: Come on, you can sit here I won't face the camera towards you.

Audrey: Yes, that's right, it is okay to not show your face if you don't feel comfortable facing the camera.

Angie's mother: What? What? Oh, you can still see yourself there. Hey! You just answer the questions and come back here…

Audrey: It's okay. Take your time. If you want, Mommy can stay with you during the interview.

Angie's mother: Yeah… I will ask her… big bro you have to get out of your sister's room. Hurry up… kiddo… sit down.

Audrey: It's okay, no rush. It's no problem.

Angie's mother: What? I will sit next to you, so sit here.

Audrey: Yes, mommy can be here with you, it's okay.

Angie's mother: What? Yeah… okay, okay, you sit down first, alright? Be good, please.

Audrey: It's okay, no worries, take your time.

Angie's mother: All right, my daughter is here… you have to speak though… you can still ask her questions I'll ask her to answer…

Audrey: No problem it's okay. Is your name Angie?

Angie: That's right.

Audrey: My name is Audrey nice to meet you. Is it your first time to do interviews with older people like me?

Angie's mother: My daughter needs a little bit of time to warm up. But it's fine you can ask her questions and then we can answer it together.

Audrey: It's no problem. It is understandable that you are anxious. It's been quite some time since I've done one, so I am a bit anxious, too, but it is okay. We can go through this process slowly together, take some time to digest the questions, and answer them; it's no problem at all. So maybe let me introduce myself first. I am an MA childhood study student from the University of Leeds. Right now, I would like to learn more about how Hong Kong migrant students in the UK are making or maintaining friendships to understand their needs and the way they accommodate their new lives in the UK. Right now this interview process will be recorded, in order for me to process the data with more accuracy, but the audio will be deleted as soon as I am finished analysing the data, will that be alright?

Angie's mother: Okay! The camera is not facing you it's OK to answer the questions…

Audrey: it's no problem at all; it's OK that you don't show your face; as long as we can continue the conversation, it's OK that you don't show your face.

Angie's mother: Exactly, you have to sit properly or else your back is going to hurt, please.

Audrey: take it slowly, it's OK.

Angie's mother: you have to sit properly because my hands are tangled with your hair. Close the closet door and come out.

Audrey: take your time don't worry about it.

Angie's mother: the camera cannot see you.

Audrey: So… Angie, how old are you this year?

Angie's mother: how old are you this year? you have to answer the question.

Angie: 11.

Angie's mother: 11? Are you sure? You tell big sis how old you are right now.

Angie: 11, no?

Angie's mother: not until you have your birthday! So, how old are you right now?

Angie: 11.

Angie's brother: 3 years old.

Angie's mother: she is currently 10 years old.

Audrey: it's no problem, how long have you been living in the UK? For me I've been here for around a year, a little bit more than a year.

Angie's mother: you tell big sis yourself, how long have you been here?

Angie: I don't know.

Angie's mother: you don't know? You know. When did you come? July what?

Angie: 22nd of July.

Angie's mother: which year?

Angie: 2022.

Angie's mother: 22nd July, 2022, that means how long have you been in the UK?

Angie: a year and a half?

Angie's mother: a year and a half? A little bit more than that, right?

Angie: almost two years.

Angie's mother: almost two years.

Audrey: how do you feel about living in here? Is it comfy in here?

Angie's mother: is it comfy here in the UK?

Angie: it's okay.

Audrey: I also went out for a walk because the weather is very nice today.

Angie's mother: yeah, today is very hot, both of them went out to mop the floor.

Audrey: Right, Angie, the school that you are studying in, what do you think about its environment, what kind of students are studying in school?

Angie's mother: how's the school's environment? Hurry up and tell big sis.

Angie: It's okay.

Angie's mother: don't just say OK all the time. You have to describe how is it like to be studying in your school, what kind of people are studying in there?

Audrey: If possible, maybe try to describe a little bit more? As I've never studied as a primary student in the UK, only as a university student, it will be great if you can share a bit of your experience.

Angie's mother: you have to sit up, maybe you sit here. It's OK the camera cannot see you, it's just me, now you talk, how's your primary school? What does it have?

Angie: primary school… sometimes it's boring, sometimes it's interesting.

Angie's mother: maybe you talk about the facilities in the school? What kind of equipment does your school have?

Angie: there are monkey bars, grass field, and then…

Angie's mother: what is the main difference between the schools in Hong Kong and the schools in the UK?

Angie: the schools in Hong Kong don't have monkey bars, no grass fields.

Angie's mother: in Hong Kong in to bring a lot of pens a lot of books, but in here you don't have to bring much, right?

Angie: there are no books, I don't even need to bring my pencil case, the school will provide a pencil case for us.

Audrey: it sounds like there are more outdoor areas for children to enjoy in the UK, is that right?

Angie's mother: what do you think? Is that right?

Angie: I guess so.

Audrey: do you spend a lot of time to play outside with your friends?

Angie: 15 minutes breaktime. Sometimes it is a little bit more than 10 minutes, sometimes there are only 5 minutes of it because of the assemblies take a little bit longer to end. And we only have 30 minutes of lunch break.

Angie's mother: at least you have 30 minutes of lunch break, you still have time to play with your friends right?

Angie: and then?

Angie's mother: did you spend time playing with your friends during lunchtime?

Angie: Yeah.

Angie's mother: so all together with a 15 minutes break time and a 30 minutes lunch break you have total of 45 minutes to play with your friends, right?

Angie: but sometimes it is not 15 minutes break time, sometimes 13, 14, sometimes we only have 5 minutes.

Angie's mother: what about lunch break?

Angie: 30.

Angie's mother: that's right so 30 plus 15, so the maximum will be 45 an at least you will get maybe 30 minutes right?

Audrey: that is good that you have enough time to play with your friends in school. So, Angie, your mother send me a photo of you and your friend, is she a best friend?

Angie: Dittie, your friend, right?

Angie: Right.

Audrey: So, I also prepared something before the interview…this is my best friend and me… we knew each other for so long already… What about you? Can you introduce her a little bit more? It will be great to know more about your best friend. What kind of person is she?

Angie: She is Indian.

Audrey: what do you usually enjoy doing with her?

Angie: play with the monkey bars.

Audrey: Ah… so how did the two of you meet? Did you two meet in school?

Angie: Yes.

Audrey: can you describe a little bit more in how the two of you met? How was it like to 1st get to know her?

Angie: at first, it was nothing, she asked me if she could sit next to me. She asked me if she could sit next to me, but I told her that you need to sit in your English spot, and then blah blah blah…Then, I got told off, because she said I was being mean to her.

Angie's mother: can you be clearer about what you said?

Angie: so there was this one time she asked me if she could sit next to me, and then, I said she has to sit in her English spot, then, I declined something she asked because the teacher said so, then she went to Mr. Walkins, the vice-principal of my school, that I was being mean to her.

Angie's mother: so how did you two become friends?

Angie: and then she said, if… and with (Another classmate's name), a very naughty boy from my class, she said he was being mean to her… then, she said if he continued to tease her or being mean to her… then she has to talk with his parents.

Angie's mother: big sis cannot hear you, you have to close the closet door.

Angie: Then, on the next day, I became friends with her.

Angie's mother: what does that even mean?

Angie: on the next day we became friends when I gave her a keychain.

Angie's mother: Oh so you made a little gift for her, you made a keychain for her.

Audrey: would you say… although the two of you have some arguments at the beginning, but because she was being teased by another student, so you decided to be friends with her, is that what you're trying to say?

Angie's mother: you have to answer big sis's question, say yes or no, yes right?

Audrey: you sounded excited when you were talking about your friend. So, after that happened, from the arguments to how you stood up for her… how did the two of you get closer and become best friends? What do you two usually enjoy playing?

Angie's mother: what kind of things did you invite her to do with you?

Angie: Dittie? Play dates.

Angie's mother: Right, she usually invites her over for play dates. Please sit up, please sit it properly.

Angie: we can continue though?

Audrey: right, as long as you are comfortable, we are just chatting, no stress.

Angie: You are pointing the camera at me…

Audrey: so when your friend comes over what kind of things do you two play?

Angie: you are still pointing the camera at me…

Angie's mother: It's just me… what do you play with her at home?

Angie: at home? We don't have anything to play with.

Angie's mother: no, big sis is asking you what you two usually play during play dates.

Angie: We do arts and crafts… watching YouTube… watching iPad, something like that.

Angie's mother: not just that she did something else last time, right? You guys drew something last time, right?

Angie: Stickers? Drawing stickers… and then yeah something like that.

Angie's mother: Making bracelets too, right? From last time.

Angie: last time we didn't, we only drew.

Audrey: would you say you two enjoy similar interests?

 Angie: she lives nearby the park...

Angie's mother: she lives nearby us…

Angie: she lives nearby us somewhere around the park, takes about 3 minutes to reach her place, so whenever I visit the park, I will also… I will also knock on her door.

Audrey: that's nice you guys spend time on doing similar things, would you say you two share the same interests?

Angie: Yeah.

Audrey: would you say if you want to be friends with the person, you need to share similar interests?

Angie: Hmm, no. Even as friends, you don't need to be the same; you don't need to share the same interests.

Audrey: but would you say when your best friend enjoys making bracelets together with you which is something you enjoy, helps the two of you getting closer as friends?

Angie: nope.

Audrey: Does that mean that as long as you two spend time together, no matter what kind of activities you two are doing, the most important thing is having each other's company?

Angie: Mhm.

Audrey: so other than this friend, how about the friends back in Hong Kong?

Angie: What did you say?

Audrey: let's say are you still in contact with the friends in Hong Kong?

Angie: Nope.

Audrey: I understand…

Angie: most of my friends back in Hong Kong are primary school friends…

Audrey: do you know if they are doing good these days?

Angie: I don't know.

Audrey: that's OK, I'm really glad that you enjoy spending time with your new friend in the UK, that is very important… so other than this friend that you met in school, what about your peers in your class? Are you friends with the other people in your class?

Angie: Huh?

Audrey: are you friends with the other people in your class?

Angie: Yeah.

Audrey: Right, I would also like to ask you when you choose a friend, is there any special qualities that a person should have, for example a specific personality, that makes you feel like you want to be friends with them? Or whether it be them being a girl or a boy? Or some interests that you can share with?

Angie: It's… most of my friends are girls.

Audrey: and why might that be?

Angie: because when you are having deep conversations, girls tend to understand more than boys.

Audrey: What kind of deep conversations do you usually have?

Angie: I don't know, it's silly.

Audrey: Is it because sometimes girls understand girl issues more, and does that allow you to have deeper conversations with them?

Angie: Yeah. Sometimes boys also share secrets.

Audrey: could you repeat that sorry? Boys also?

Angie: Boys also share secrets.

Audrey: You also share secrets with boys?

Angie: No, like boys… If you share secrets with the boys they will let the secrets out.

Audrey: Oh… that's a shame, boys these days… So, other than wanting to be friends with girls instead of boys, are there any important qualities that you value in a person that make you want to be friends with them? For example, your best friend, what kind of personality she has that makes you think, I really want to be friends with her.

Angie: because I don't want to be told off again.

Audrey: In what way? Why do you feel like that?

Angie: Because If I'm not friends with her, and I am not being nice to her, and then she will think I'm not being nice to her, then she will go to the vice-principle again… and then they will ask my parents to visit the school again…

Audrey: so, you want peace with others?

Angie: Huh?

Audrey: Like… You want to be friends with everybody at school, so you want as few arguments as possible and want to be friends with others. Is that what you're trying to say?

Angie: Yeah.

Audrey: do you have any special memories that you share with your best friend? Maybe other than the very first encounter with her? What's the happiest moment that you two share?

Angie: When we play the monkey bars together? Maybe when we go to the park? I'm not so sure.

Audrey: would you say time is very important for being friends? In order to be friends the two people have to spend time together.

Angie: I don't understand that.

Audrey: enough for two people to be friends, do you think time is very important, for example the two people need to hang out together, able to spend time with each other?

Angie: Yeah, if you don't spend time to hang out with the person then the other person will think that you don't want to play with them.

Audrey: so if a person don't spend time playing with them…how do you think the other person will react?

Angie: The other person… they will get upset or angry…

Audrey: So other than the incident you share with your best friend, are there any other obstacles that you have faced when you started studying in the schools in the UK? What might be the biggest challenge?

Angie: Huh?

Audrey: When first arrived the schools in the UK, what might be the hardest things you faced when making friends?

Angie: I don't understand.

Audrey: Hmm… for example… for me, it was the constant usage of English; it was kind of difficult for me as I was not used to speaking in English.

Angie: Try.

Audrey: Pardon?

Angie: you need to have more confidence.

Audrey: Confidence… So what about you when you're making friends do you have any confidence?

Angie: What did you say?

Audrey: do you think you had enough confidence when you were making friends?

Angie: Huh?

Audrey: Did you have enough confidence to initiate conversations with others?

Angie: I did.

Audrey: That's nice, I guess that's quite important… do you think the other person should also have confidence when they want to befriend you?

Angie: What did you say?

Audrey: Like if the other person is anxious or… do you prefer a person to be more confident in order for you to be friends with them?

Angie: what do you mean they are anxious?

Audrey: For example, you said that it is important for a person to have confidence when making friends…

Angie: what I meant by being confident… that means you need to open up and speak to the person…

Audrey: so if the person doesn't do the things you just said, do you still want to be friends with them?

Angie: If the person is being nice to me, then I will think a bit, maybe consider it.

Audrey: what do you mean by being nice to you?

Angie: For example…… they're willing to speak to me and then… sit with me… mostly something like that.

Audrey: But then, during talking and sitting… does the person need to speak about topics you both can enjoy? Let me rephrase it a bit: So there can be times for friends to have arguments. Do you think two people need to have the same or different thoughts in order for them to be good friends?

Angie: it depends.

Audrey: it depends on… why do you think it is?

Angie: Because when you speak up… like you cannot… like if you think the same things with another person, but you don't want to speak up… like you don't… you are not really thinking about that thing then… so like… like… if the other person say this item is very pretty but you deep down think it is very ugly and you don't speak about it that you like…

like they won't know what you actually like or enjoy… like you need to express what you think.

Audrey: so when you hear the other person has a different thought, then you will open up and tell them your thoughts?

Angie: What does that mean?

Audrey: For example, it's like something you just said. When the other person says it's pretty but you don't think so, will you be honest about it?

Angie: it depends on how the person is feeling.

Audrey: Feelings… so it doesn't matter if the person is different from you, it depends on how they're feeling when you are with them, as long as the both of you are spending quality time together to play then the two people can be friends.

Angie: I don't really understand what you said.

Audrey: My apologies. Sometimes, I tend to speak a lot. What you say, as long as the time you two spend together is happy and comfortable, then it's easier for you guys to be friends.

Angie: Maybe.

Audrey: Right… I understand… so I have heard that in the UK there is a measure called the Buddy System, where a new student will be paired up with a current student in order to enable new students to get introduced to new people and environments, so that the student can feel more welcome, does your school have similar measures which cater to the needs of new students like you?

Angie: Nope.

Audrey: So, nothing… so when you first came to the school in the UK, did the school help you with making friends?

Angie: So because I was a new student, like… the UK people want to play with the new girls or boys.

Audrey: so what did they exactly do to make you think they want to play with you?

Angie: They… didn't really do anything but they asked me if I wanted to play with them.

Audrey: So what did you answer, did you say yes at first? How did you all play together at first?

Angie: Yes. But then after that in the first school, I don't know where the other student went, and then I also went away from the school.

Audrey: so you have transferred from the school before?

Angie: Huh?

Audrey: do you have transferred schools before?

Angie: Yes.

Audrey: are there any big differences between the schools especially when you are making friends?

Angie: Eh… I don't know.

Audrey: Nothing much? Are the children in the schools similar?

Angie: Yeah, like on the first day I arrived, the girls will play with me.

Audrey: so you hung out with the girls, what about the boys?

Angie: like the boys will reach out to other boys, they will ask if they can play with each other.

Audrey: I understand… it is quite interesting where girls hang out with the girls and boys hang out with the boys… so other than the friends that will reach out to you and play, what about the teachers? How are your relationships with the teachers in school?

Angie: what do you mean?

Audrey: Hmm… for example will you reach out to talk with the teachers?

Angie: for example when a teachers are talking to a student, for example when they were standing next to me, I… umm… I… I will talk about… they will be talking about something… like last time the teacher was next to me talking to my classmate, then she asked something, and I said I could not go to that place because I had to go on a trip.

Audrey: I understand…

Angie: and if you get injured you need to find a teacher.

Audrey: have you ever got injured before?

Angie: Hmm?

Audrey: have you ever got injured before that lead you to reach out to the teachers?

Angie: I've tried for three times.

Audrey: School times… injuries do happen sometimes. I hope you are okay… So, with what you have just said, I feel like the students in your school are very welcoming. They will reach out to new students and play with them. So, it seems like the teachers don't have to help new students make friends that much?

Angie: Like… like it depends on the new students too, like if they're a nice person or not and you have to assess if they would waste your time or not. Like if they are thinking they are wasting their time playing with you, then they are not nice. And it also depends on whether they are a good person or not, because the new person, there was this new girl, she… the whole class didn't like her, including me.

Audrey: What makes you say that?

Angie: because… she… the last time I put my hand on a carpet… like we were playing games, and then she stepped on my hand. I told the teacher… I told her directly that I told her, and I only asked her to say sorry… And then she said… "I didn't!" And then she kept saying she didn't when I only expected a sorry from her. So I finally told the teachers.

Audrey: so other than the other peers that are important in a friendship, so you, yourself, as a new student, they, themselves, their personalities also matter in order to have good friendships, is that correct?

Angie: I guess so, because sometimes… sometimes… because me and my best friend, the Indian, new student, the new student is also an Indian so like her dad, and my best friend's father are friends. And then, my friend, she said last week, last Thursday when we were on a trip, she then… she was hitting others… wait no… She was disturbing others… like originally… like she scratched… my friend… she scratched my friend… then my friend said when she is home she will talk to her dad so he can talk to that classmate's dad that she was being mean to her.

Audrey: Hmm… so after this incident happened, did you do anything about it?

Angie: No, because yesterday I skipped school and went to London. I forgot it was a non-uniform day, and then in the morning, I asked my mom if I should continue to go to London, and she said if she were me, she would still go.

Audrey: I would like to add another question pics I didn't ask… so when you choose a friend do you think that… it is an influence from your parents or it is just your personal feeling

when you're trying to make friends, where your comfort is the most important thing when making friends?

Angie: I would think I need to be comfortable, like when the person is being nice to you… then you… like when the person is being nice to me, like at school or even outside of school, and they remain the same person and as nice as they are, then I would consider befriending them.

Audrey: So… other than interacting in schools, interactions outside of school are as important?

Angie: for example if I go to… then… I will ask… we will… I forget what we did… we would chat… then… I… we… we didn't say if we were friends, we didn't say it because when it was Monday, but I don't know why we were even spending time during breaktimes… then I decided to make a bracelet for her.

Audrey: Hmm… and it is very important to feel right with a person when you spend time with them… as well as spending quality time.

Angie: because they understand how you feel.

Audrey: how will they understand how you feel?

Angie: they understand your feelings, I think it is your feelings, yes.

Audrey: so, in what way you can understand how people are feeling?

Angie: Like… if… because… like… like… if… if a person pushed you and you feel upset because they pushed you, and they don't even say sorry and then if I talk to my classmates about it, and they say they understand how I feel… just like that.

Audrey: Empathy… like how you can understand how others feel, I guess that is quite an important quality that a person needs… we are almost coming to an end, I have some closing questions to and want to ask you. So, in the upcoming years, there can be more and more Hong Kong children that are coming to the UK to study. Do you have any thoughts that you want to share with them? Or to their family members, or even to the schools? Do you have any advice for them?

Angie: Like you cannot be shy. Like… when you… if you want… When you want to make friends, you cannot be bashful; You need to initiate conversations with others…

Audrey: so, if you need to start the conversations with the others, what should you talk about?

Angie: Initiate conversations by… saying, "Can we be friends?" or something similar. You tell them what you like, what your name is or something similar.

Audrey: So you will introduce who you are, what you like or enjoy, and what interests you have. This will be the advice for children. What about their parents? Do you have anything that you want to share with them? For example, do they need to do anything to help their children make friends in school?

Angie: Nope.

Audrey: so the most important thing is the child, themselves?

Angie: If you rely everything on the adults then you may not really want to be friends with those peers (adults introduced).

Audrey: So it is very important for the child to navigate their friendships themselves... right…

Angie: you need to rely on yourself.

Audrey: so even for schools you don't have much to say to them, because the most important thing is for the child themselves to conversate with others?

Angie: Yep.

Audrey: I understand…

Angie's mother: And most of the children in the UK always transfer schools.

Audrey: Oh, I am not aware of that. Angie, have you ever seen anything like that before?

Angie: Not much students transferred though…

Angie's mother: You have said When we were renting a place, you said you didn't want to transfer schools, and continue to study in that school so we can drive you back to school… and after that we moved to a new place you said it's OK for you to transfer schools because there are other students also did it.

Angie: no it's because… I know… there was… that I can make friends in the new schools.

Audrey: I'm glad that you take the initiative to meet other people and be friends with them.

Angie's mother: back in Hong Kong it is very hard to transfer schools, but here in the UK, I feel like, it's kinda… I don't know if it's because it's Cambridge… you go talk to big sis first I need to take care of something…

Angie: what were you saying again?

Audrey: Are you asking me?

Angie: Hmm.

Audrey: so just now we were saying something about transferring schools.

Angie: Ah right, transferring schools. So the people in my school, they… not much.

Audrey: So most of the students remain studying in the school you are in.

Angie: What did you say?

Audrey: Like… the students in your school don't really transfer to other schools.

Angie: like even when they move to a new place, they also didn't transfer schools. Like my classmate, even they moved houses they didn't transfer schools.

Audrey: so if a person did transfer schools, do you think that will affect how you make friends with a person? Will that be difficult to maintain the friendship?

Angie: like if they tell you before they transfer schools, like their parents talk to your parents where they exchange contacts then maybe when they move away you can still find them.

Audrey: Oh… So during times like this the help from parents is kind of important.

Angie: so, for example, for year 6, if we're going to different schools, maybe my mom will ask them for their contact.

Audrey: so maybe for children at the age like you, their parents roles are very important because they can arrange play dates even after friends part ways when transferring schools, is that right?

Angie: not just to play, it's just to keep in touch.

Audrey: Right, to keep in touch, that is very important, I understand. I think the questions that I want to ask are about it. Do you have anything that you would like to add to this topic? Are you there any questions that you would like to ask?

Angie: Nope.

Audrey: Alright… Thank you so much for spending time with me today and answering my questions. I learned a lot from you because compared to what I heard from another child yesterday, their circumstances are a little bit different from yours. I can tell that you are very proactive when making friends, and I think that is a very good thing for you.

Angie's mother: you can't stop coughing… come on drink some water.

Audrey: We are wrapping things up, Mrs. I've heard a lot of interesting points from Angie, so once I'm done analysing the data, I will send back a short list to you so maybe the both of you can have a look at whether what I interpret matches with what Angie thinks.

Angie's mother: Sure thing, sure thing.

Audrey: Thank you so much again.

Angie's mother: Say goodbye to big sis. Wait, no, just now… making friends in school… Ah! Here in the UK, there are more lunchtimes for the children, and they are allowed to sit anywhere with anybody…

Angie: Yeah, but we only have 30 minutes for that. The other school had 1 hour.

Angie's mother: The other school had an hour… but then during lunch time you can still eat lunch with others, right? And then you can choose your own seat to sit with others, right?

Angie: Yeah.

Angie's mother: Back in Hong Kong, children have to sit in their own seats. They cannot change their seats, and they cannot run around. But here in the UK, I think they have more…

Angie: like for example if you sit here… and your friend sits there, you can move.

Audrey: So, time, by giving more time to children, then they can spend more time with each other.

Angie: Also, we don't have homework.

Audrey: Oh… so when you guys don't have any homework do you have more time to play with each other?

Angie: Yeah!

Angie's mother: exactly when she came home from school, she would say I need to hang out with Dittie and hang out in the park. It's me who cannot get used to the lifestyle here.

Audrey: ha-ha, so there are lots of difference between the schools in the UK, in Hong Kong… like maybe back in Hong Kong there are so much homework…

Angie's mother: because in Hong Kong…

Angie: Hong Kong… has so much…

Angie's mother: so like back in Hong Kong…

Angie: She is a Chinese teacher.

Angie's mother: back then I didn't really have to bother much, the problem is the school already has homework and dictations, tests… here they have… they also have dictation but they don't tell you the marks for the dictation.

Angie: No, they do. There are marks in the booklet.

Angie's mother: but the parents won't know, right?

Angie: yeah.

Angie's mother: there was just one time, after the math test was distributed… who was the one that cried in your class? Who was the classmate?

Angie: Amelia?

Angie's mother: No, you said it last time someone cried. There was someone in the parent's group chat who said schools should not disclose the marks to the students… the math test was the only time that the students knew their marks… so there was somebody in the group chat who complained about it.

Audrey: Oh… I understand

Angie: Who cried?

Angie's mother: I forgot who was it, but you said they cried and then said why are they stupid.

Angie: Venus?

Angie's mother: No… I forgot…

Angie: I only remembered when this person received a bad mark, like out of 20 marks… they got 20 marks out of 30 marks… so like they didn't get everything correct so they cried.

Angie's mother: I don't know… but yeah, that's how it's like in the UK. Marks are not that important. In general, schools don't talk about their marks at all.

Audrey: so, under no discussion about students' marks, will that make any difference when it comes to interacting with others compared to Hong Kong?

Angie's mother: Hmm… in Hong Kong it is not the kids that have pressure… like the kids don't have pressure… way no, most pressure of the kids comes from parents. So like in the

parents group chat, they will say something like I need to get my child into an elite school, which cram schools do they attend… like in Hong Kong I think… children in Hong Kong seldom have the time to hang out at each other's places. Or even… here students have many activities to enjoy… where did you go last week, again? On Thursday?

Angie: And then we… on Thursday we went to a museum.

Angie's mother: what about the week before where did you go?

Angie: the week before…

Angie's mother: the week before did you go to the park?

Angie: we did not go to the park…

Angie's mother: Oh right science… that one. Like here in the UK, every now and then they have activities for children, where they will go out.

Angie: We will… please keep quiet for awhile. On the 13th… we did we go…

Angie's mother: 13th…

Angie: Let me look at the note again.

Angie's mother: overall I think here, other than having outdoor activities in schools, some of the activities they don't arrange school buses for the kids, they will have to walk all the way to the venue. Sometimes they do not take the bus and just walk there, do you remember that? Like during journey went there walking maybe they will start chatting.

Angie: No! At the end they came to our school, that Cambridge science thingy…

Angie's mother: wait no last time the school took you guys to the cinemas to watch a movie don't you remember?

Angie: Oh right.

Angie's mother: yeah so that time they took the bus, I think.

Angie: we took the bus and then we walked back. Every time we need to walk some.

Audrey: so as you and your classmates are walking will you guys talk with each other?

Angie: Yeah we talk.

Angie's mother: So my daughter right now is in Year 5 but back then my friend he lives around and his daughter year 1 also need to walk around, like walk a lot, he checked the

watch of his daughter she had like 10K steps or so, and then he said she walked a lot… so like he was saying her daughter was sighing a lot while walking, but then I think it is a very good experience for the children as they can chat on the way there. Like back in Hong Kong you can never get to experience something like this. I don't know, here is like this I guess.

Audrey: so during these times of walking it is also the time for children to bond with each other, they get more time to hang out with each other…

Angie's mother: Yeah… Angie, did you answer the questions nicely?

Audrey: She did. So, our interview comes to an end right now. Is there anything you would still like to add?

Angie's mother: do you have anything to add? She's already enjoying her tea time.

Audrey: Yeah, please enjoy; she has been talking a lot, so it is time to take some good rest.

Angie's mother: The camera is still pointing at me not you…

Audrey: so once again, thank you so much for taking the time to join the interview today. So quick reminder again, once I finished analysing the data I was sent a short list of what we have said today to you guys, so that you guys can review a little bit and see what I've written matches with what Angie thinks.

Angie's mother: Alright, hope your project goes well.

Audrey: Right, thank you so much, please rest well.

Angie's mother: Bye-bye.

Audrey: Bye-bye.

Angie's mother: Say bye-bye.

Angie: Bye-bye.

Audrey: Bye-bye Angie.

Participant 3 – Esther (Age: 9)

Date of the Interview: 22/06/2024 16:40-17:05

Audrey: Hi there, nice to meet you. My name is Audrey. I am an MA childhood study student from the University of Leeds. I would like to briefly introduce my project again to you. So, before I start, I would like to inform you that, right now, this conversation is being recorded. Are you okay with me recording your voices?

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: Remember there is no right or wrong answers and please raise concerns if you find any questions I ask difficult or ambiguous. If you find the interview session uncomfortable, we can terminate the session as you seek your parents' comfort.

Esther: Hmm

Audrey: So now, I would like to ask what is your name and how should I call you?

Esther: Esther (pseudonym).

Audrey: Right, Esther, how old are you now?

Esther: I am 9 years old, turning 10 this year.

Audrey: Turning 10… so how long have you been in the UK?

Esther: 1 year.

Audrey: 1 year, that's about the same time I have been here… okay let me mark down your words… Also, I might not be able to look at you when jotting down the notes, my apologies. So, one year in the UK… and right, you have sent the drawing of a girl earlier… so similarly, I also prepared mine! This is my best friend and me…we knew each other since primary… what about you? is that your best friend in your drawing?

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: Would you like to introduce her a little? Where is she from?

Esther: She is from Hong Kong.

Audrey: Oh, she is from Hong Kong. Can you tell me more about her? What does she like to do? And what do you usually like to do with her?

Esther: Normally, she would be role-playing as a monster.

Audrey: Oh, as a monster? That sounds like an interesting friend. So, what do you two enjoy doing together?

Esther: Normally… we do random stuffs together.

Audrey: So, this friend from Hong Kong, how did you two meet?

Esther: First, I got to know another friend when studying here, and then I got to know her among the friend group.

Audrey: Oh, so she was being introduced to you to be friends.

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: As your friend was being introduced at first, so how did you two become best friends?

Esther: Umm, we spend a lot of time playing together, and we do gymnastics together.

Audrey: What kind of play do you two usually enjoy?

Esther: For example… we strike poses, it is almost like yoga poses.

Audrey: So can I say you two share similar interests?

Esther: Yeah, everyone (the friend group) is similar.

Audrey: Would you say if the person is more similar to you, that would be easier for you two to be better friends?

Esther: Hmm. Maybe.

Audrey: Other than sharing similarities with a person, do you think there are any important qualities that a person needs to have in order to be good friends?

Esther: Hmm, nothing much really.

Audrey: You mentioned about spending time together, playing together, do you think that will be a key to good friendship?

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: So, this is a friend from Hong Kong… how about other children in class? How has interacting with local students been for you since studying in the UK?

Esther: It's okay.

Audrey: Interacting just fine… any examples? What kind of activities do you usually do with other classmates?

Esther: I chat with them.

Audrey: What do you usually chat about with them?

Esther: Just random chatting and play.

Audrey: Hmm… are chatting and playing the same as you did in Hong Kong? For examples, are the topics of discussion different?

Esther: I don't chat often with others.

Audrey: Oh… is there any reason for that?

Esther: Eh… not really.

Audrey: No particular reason hmm… would you say it's because you all share different interests or way of talking?

Esthers: It's just… I seldom reach out to talk to them.

Audrey: Hmm, what about the others? Do they reach out to you and invite you to play with them instead?

Esther: Seldom. But yeah, the boys often tease us (the girls).

Audrey: For example? How do the boys tease?

Esther: For example, they often poke us at random times, but I always scare them away.

Audrey: You scare them away?

Esther: Yeah! I usually chase them away.

Audrey: It seems like you enjoy playing with both the girls and the boys. It does not matter if a classmate is a boy or a girl?

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: Right, back to the Hong Kong friend of yours. Are you two still in contact?

Esther: She is in the UK. I met her in the UK.

Audrey: Oh! So, she is a Hong Kong student who is also studying in the UK, my apologies for mixing up things. Do you two attend the same primary school?

Esther: Same school, yes.

Audrey: Same school. Also from Hong Kong… I understand now… So, would you say it is easier for you to be friends with other children from Hong Kong? As you have told me about this Hong Kong girl.

Esther: For me I just follow the others, even back in Hong Kong.

Audrey: I was pretty much like that too, whenever someone spotted me and wanted to be friends, they would adopt me as their friend then I will follow.

Esther: Hmm… I wouldn't say that's entirely the case for me. She is the one who kept following me.

Audrey: Oh so she is the one who kept following! Hmm…

Esther: The whole group followed me.

Audrey: Oh… so they are the one who initiated to be friends with you. Would you say in that way it will be easier for you to make friends as the others reach out to you first?

Esther: Yeah.

Audrey: So other than having enough time to play together or having similar interests, is there anything in a person you think is important in order for you to think about being friends with them? For example, for this best friend of yours, what qualities of her do you like the most?

Esther: Nothing much.

Audrey: What about personality?

Esther: Doesn't matter.

Audrey: Hmm, what about you share one of the happiest moments you shared with her? Is there any?

Esther: Yeah.

Audrey: … If you do not want to share it, it is completely fine, I hope that you cherish this great feeling you have with this friend. But I'd guess you enjoy the time playing with this friend?

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: You mentioned you both do gymnastics right? So do you think when making friends, two persons should be share more similarities or differences can be better friends?

Esther: It depends on how the person is.

Audrey: Can you elaborate on that?

Esther: I am not sure.

Audrey: Maybe I put it like this, would the process of making friends be different if they are different moods, or they amount of time they decide to spend together?

Esther: For example, a friend who will find me as soon as the break time starts.

Audrey: Hmm. So, a person who is willing to take their time to spend time with you and play is who you want to be friends with?

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: Have you been encountering any challenges when you tried to make friends in the UK?

Esther: Not really. All of my friends are connected to one another. I know one who knows the other one, and the other one knows another one.

Audrey: Right… they introduce each another. Okay…I can see that the others are the ones who took initiatives in making friends. Would you say when Hong Kong children want to make friends in the UK, should they reach out to others, or you think your way of making friends is better?

Esther: Maybe help is needed right from the start (of trying to make friends).

Audrey: Right, who do you think can help and how can they help?

Esther: Like helping with translating.

Audrey: Oh… translating. Did you get any help with translating at first when making friends?

Esther: I did.

Audrey: Hmm. Any reason you need translation?

Esther: Because there are some English words that I could not understand, and I didn't know that much.

Audrey: Hmm… would you say speaking English is one of the obstacles when trying to make friends in the UK?

Esther: I guess.

Audrey: Any personal experiences that you had leading to you talking about that?

Esther: (Shrugs)

Audrey: No worries. Maybe let's talk about your friend again, you chose her to be one of the closest friends, what about the others? Is there any reason why you do not want to be friends with other children?

Esther: Most of my classmates are my friends though.

Audrey: What makes the difference between your best friend and the other friends in class?

Esther: With others, I might just chat with one or two sentences or even maybe don't speak at all, but we are still friends.

Audrey: Any reason why short conversations with them?

Esther: We are not close enough.

Audrey: Hmm, so how can two people be closer friends?

Esther: When you are friends with them.

Audrey: So, in your perspective, how do people be good friends as you seem to be able to identify who are your best friends and who are just normal friends in the class.

Esther: For example, you can enjoy the time while playing with them. You can be joyful together as you play.

Audrey: Would you say the play process needs to be comfortable for the people in order to have fun?

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: What do the friend needs to do in order to make you feel happy and comfortable to play with them?

Esther: I am not sure.

Audrey: It's okay. I am glad you you felt safe when enjoying the time them. Other than these new friends in the UK, have you been able to contact the friends back in Hong Kong?

Esther: Yes.

Audrey: Do you spend much time with them?

Esther: Not that much.

Audrey: I understand, but still, how are you and the friends in Hong Kong keeping in touch with each other?

Esther: WhatsApp.

Audrey: Did you get their contact information by yourself, or you needed help from your parents for that?

Esther: I forgot.

Esther's mother: Miss Audrey is asking you did you have their contact by yourself or did you needed me and baba's (father) help.

Esther: Oh, I had their contact by myself, I asked them myself.

Audrey: Hmm. Have you been encountering any issues when keeping in contact with friends in Hong Kong as there is a time difference between the UK and Hong Kong? Is time differences hindering how you stay friends with them?

Esther: When I come back home from school, its already late for them (friends in Hong Kong).

Audrey: Hmm. Do you think there are any differences when making friends in the UK and back in Hong Kong?

Esther: Not really.

Audrey: Hmm, I have heard from other children that, schools in the UK allow children to interact with each other more when comparing what they had in Hong Kong. Do you think you now have more time to play with the others, in which allowing you all interact better?

Esther: Yeah.

Audrey: Has your school provided any activities that allow more time for all children to interact with each other?

Esther: On Fridays, breaktimes will be extended from 15 minutes to 45 minutes.

Audrey: Oh, wow that's a lot, what will you do with friends in these 45 minutes breaks?

Esther: Random things.

Audrey: Any examples?

Esther: We will eat snacks, and then we play games.

Audrey: As I can recall, you spend time with your friends doing same activities. Have you had any experience where you argue with others due to some kind of disagreement?

Esther: Not really.

Audrey: Hmm… glad to hear you and your friends share happy and comfortable moments with each another. I have heard there is a method of familiarising pupils with the school in the UK, which is the buddy system, have you ever heard about it? If not, has your school been helping you in navigating making friends when you first arrived at school?

Esther: (Shakes head). My brother's school seems to have it though.

Audrey: Oh. What about you? Has there been any classmate who introduced the school when you first arrived?

Esther: No but my brother's school has it, I am pretty sure.

Audrey: Oh, so your school has no measurements when it comes to helping new arrived students in making friends.

Esther: Right, there was nothing.

Audrey: I understand. Since there can be even more children from the Hong Kong moving to the UK and settling here, do you have any advice for them when it comes to making friends in the UK or that they have to pay attention to?

Esther: Nothing much.

Audrey: Hmm, what about to their parents? Do they need to be aware of anything when it comes to their children's friendships in the UK?

Esther: (Shakes head).

Audrey: Maybe I put it in this way. Do you have anything to say to the old self of yours who just arrived in the UK and tried to make friends, what advice would you give to her?

Esther: Nothing much.

Audrey: I understand, is there anything you want to say about your best friend?

Esther: That's about it.

Audrey: Are there any other things you want to share or ask?

Esther: No.

Audrey: Let me review my notes and see if I missed anything… Maybe the questioning will stop now.

Esther: Okay.

Audrey: Right, once again thank you so much for taking time to talk to me.

Esther: Hmm.

Audrey: May I know if your parents are around or not?

Esther's mother: I am here.

Audrey: Thank you so much for taking your time in participating in my project.

Esther's mother: She doesn't really know how to answer some of the questions though.

Audrey: It is not an issue, every child is different, your child's voice is as important as other children's, and I am sure including her voice helps me understand their perspectives and understand ways to help them navigate friendships in the UK.

Esther's mother: I understand, she is the type who doesn't open up much.

Audrey: I understand, it's not an issue at all, every child is unique.

Esther's mother: Maybe she doesn't know how to express herself to you. I know she did in a very simple way; it's just she could express with more details, I guess.

Audrey: It is fine, if she has anything she wants to add on please feel free to reach out to me.

Esther's mother: Sure. Okay.

Audrey: Once again, thank you so much for taking your time in participating in my project.

Esther's mother: You're welcome, thank you.

Audrey: Thank you.

Esther's mother: Say goodbye to Miss Audrey.

Esther: Bye bye.

Audrey: Goodbye.

Participant 4 – Kris (Age: 11)

Date of the Interview: 25/06/2024 18:04-18:35

Audrey: Hello, good day.

Kris: Hello.

Audrey: Sorry for arranging this interview in a hurry. May I know if your parents are around or not?

Kris's mother: I am here, I am here.

Audrey: Hello, I am terribly sorry for arranging this interview with such a short notice

Kris's mother: It's no problem, it's no problem at all.

Audrey: So, before I start, I would like to inform you that, right now, this conversation is being recorded but the recordings will be deleted after the data has been analysed. Are you okay with me recording your voices?

Kris and Kris's mother: Okay, okay.

Audrey: Okay, alright. As we arranged this interview in a hurry, let me introduce myself and my project. My name is Audrey. I am an MA childhood study student from the University of Leeds. Right now, I would like to learn more about how Hong Kong migrant students in the UK are making or maintaining friendships in order to understand their needs and the way the accommodate to their new lives in the UK.

Kris's mother: Sure.

Audrey: Do you have any questions you want to ask before I start the interview?

Kris: No.

Audrey: Maybe you can introduce yourself first, what is your name?

Kris: Kris.

Kris's mother: I'll leave her to you then.

Audrey: Thank you, Mrs, thank you so much. Oh, right, Kris, remember there is no right or wrong answers and please raise concerns if you find any questions I ask difficult or ambiguous. If you find the interview session uncomfortable, we can terminate the session as you seek your parents' comfort. So, how old are you now?

Kris: 11.

Audrey: 11, right, okay… How long have you been in the UK?

Kris: About three years, almost.

Audrey: That is quite some time already, so what grade were you in when you first study in here?

Kris: Primary 4.

Audrey: I understand… throughout these three years have you been transferred to different schools?

Kris: Yes. I studied in one school then transferred to another school.

Audrey: Hmm… have you noticed any differences between two schools? Which school do you prefer to be studying in?

Kris: It's more fun, the school that I am studying in.

Audrey: How is it more fun?

Kris: Erm, there isn't many lessons. (Spoke the word: lessons in English)

Audrey: Isn't many lessons… right Kris, if you want to speak in English, it is also fine by me as I figured that you have been living here for quite some time, please feel free to speak the way you are comfortable with.

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: So with the new school you are in, you enjoy learning in there more, what about the interaction with students? Do you notice any differences among students in the two schools?

Kris: They are nicer.

Audrey: You mean the students in the school that you are studying in?

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: Do you know why they are nicer? Is it because of the school…

Kris: They will ask you if you want to play with them.

Audrey: Oh, they sound very welcoming, that's nice. Would you say you would prefer to befriend those who initiate to play with you?

Kris: There is one classmate.

Audrey: Oh… would you say that is your best friend?

Kris: Yes.

Audrey: Hmm… right… I also drew my best friend and I, and she… I have known her since primary school… what about you and your best friend? Can you describe your best friend a little? What do you enjoy doing with them? How did you two meet?

Kris: She is also from Hong Kong.

Audrey: Oh! Also from Hong Kong. Did she come up to you and invite you to play?

Kris: Oh no.

Audrey: Oh, so how did you two meet?

Kris: We just play.

Audrey: What do you usually play then?

Kris: We play tag.

Audrey: Okay… did someone introduce her to you? Or did you two have a faithful encounter that the encounter was random?

Kris: Yeah, random.

Audrey: I see… what good qualities do you think are your best friend has that made you go, I want to be best friends with this person? Is it about personality? Interests?

Kris: She is… easy-going.

Audrey: In what way she is easy-going?

Kris: She… is okay with anything.

Audrey: Okay with all food and games?

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: Right… what do you usually enjoy doing with her?

Kris: Play games.

Audrey: What kind of games?

Kris: Mostly we chase others.

Audrey: Hmm, a lot of physique activities…

Kris: Hmm. She will come by for sleepovers.

Audrey: Oh, sleepovers, that's cool. What do you usually talk about during sleepovers?

Kris: Hmm. People from school.

Audrey: A little bit of girl gossip time.

Kris: That's right.

Audrey: So now that you have been in the UK for three years, are you still in contact with the friends you made in Hong Kong?

Kris: Not really, I still have their phone numbers though.

Audrey: Oh, so you still have their contacts… so other than this Hong Kong girl you met in school, how has the interaction with local students been for you?

Kris: It's… we would still play with them. We often… we usually play with them.

Audrey: Do you play tag, like physical activities with the local students?

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: With your best friend being a person from Hong Kong, would you say you have any preferences when making friends with others? Or you are okay to be friends with anybody?

Kris: Hmm, yeah.

Audrey: So you are okay to befriend with anybody, correct?

Kris: (nods)

Audrey: Right, is your best friend a boy or a girl?

Kris: A girl.

Audrey: Hmm, do you think it is more fun to hang out with girls more than with boys? Or that you think gender doesn't make any difference?

Kris: It doesn't matter.

Audrey: With you and your best friend… do you two enjoy doing similar things? Do you two share same interests?

Kris: Sometimes we enjoy swimming.

Audrey: Swim together…

Kris: We had swum in school, once.

Audrey: It sounds like you spend a lot of time with this friend, do you think time is an important indication, as in a person need more time with a person to make better friends?

Kris: Sometimes, because… because people can be bad.

Audrey: Oh, can you talk more about it? What do you mean by bad people?

Kris: For example, they will gossip.

Audrey: Hmm, nosy people who gossip, I understand. So personality in a person matters, any other traits you think that can be an indication for you that you cannot befriend with that person?

Kris: They… always… often… they often do whatever they feel like to.

Audrey: As in they do not consider other's feelings and thoughts?

Kris: Right, and being selfish.

Audrey: Hmm. I understand. Seeing these people can be a little daunting and make you not want to get close with them. You said your best friend comes by for sleepovers. Are you two living close to each other?

 Kris: I guess so.

Audrey: Let me see… I have a feeling that you like being around peers that are easy-going, is there any reason for that? Like if it is because you feel comfortable around them? Or any other circumstances that influence you to think like that?

Kris: I am not too sure.

Audrey: Maybe it's a gut feeling?

Kris: Maybe sometimes you just feel it, you feel like they are nice people then you will play with them.

Audrey: So when you learn that they are nice people…

Kris: You can try play with them at first but if you don't want to be friends with them afterwards then just don't play with them anymore.

Audrey: Try first… how long do you need to learn if they can be your friend?

Kris: If they are nice… then I will be friends with them. If not, if they are not nice then I will stop playing with them and play with others instead.

Audrey: I understand… hmm… can you also tell me what might be the happiest moment that you share with your best friend? Is there anything you two enjoy doing the most?

Kris: Play together. Any kind of play. It's nice.

Audrey: So as long as you are spending time with her, anything can be enjoyable.

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: I can see that you and your best friend share a lot of similarities and interests, would you say it is better for people to be similar or people to be different when they are befriending each other?

Kris: Even if people are different, they can still be friends.

Audrey: What makes you say that?

Kris: Because… even if you are different, you can still play with them. It's about how you act.

Audrey: How should a person act to be a good friend?

Kris: Like they won't be toxic.

Audrey: Toxic… like you mentioned those who gossip? Who are selfish?

Kris: Yeah.

Audrey: So how do your best friend usually act to make you think they are not toxic but a nice person? Any examples?

Kris: She… she plays with a lot of people. She doesn't argue with people a lot.

Audrey: Sounds like a very warm friend you have.

Kris: And welcoming.

Audrey: What about you? Do you initiate to befriend others like your best friend does?

Kris: Yup.

Audrey: How do you usually initiate to befriend others?

Kris: When they ask me if I want to play with them.

Audrey: Hmm… so, with you being here for three years and transferred schools, has there been any challenges for you when you are making friends in the UK?

Kris: Nothing much. Maybe in the first school.

Audrey: Can you tell me more about what happened in the first school?

Kris: I didn't make many friends. It's not that easy to make friends.

Audrey: Do you think there is any reason for that?

Kris: They… many of them are rude, very… not friendly.

Audrey: How are they not friendly?

Kris: They would not ask others to play and they… they would not talk… like they would not greet others.

Audrey: I understand… cold shoulders…

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: Did you get to befriend with anyone in the first school then?

Kris: Not really.

Audrey: Right, that is unfortunate that happened. But then, I have noticed that your English sounds really nice, how was your English back then when you studied the first school? Has that affect the way you make friends?

Kris: The teachers did not teach well.

Audrey: That's a shame.

Kris: In here, it is better. They will teach more.

Audrey: Do you think how teacher teach affects the way you make friends in class?

Kris: Not really.

Audrey: With what you have said, I feel like the school atmosphere is also important, like if the students are studying happily, they are more likely to make friends.

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: What do you think? Do you think a school environment is important to encourage children to make friends?

Kris: I am not sure.

Audrey: Hmm, no worries. Let me just quickly go through what you said… as you mentioned it is harder for you to make friends in the first school because other students did not react much towards each other, while with you in the new school, everyone is warm and welcoming, it enables you all to be friends with each other, is that correct?

Kris: Yes.

Audrey: So I have heard that there is a programme in The UK called Buddy System, where a new student will be paired up with a current student in order to enable new students to get introduced to new people and environments, does your school have similar measures which cater to the needs of new students like you?

Kris: Can you repeat that again?

Audrey: My apologies, I will speak slower. Schools in the UK might pair current students with new students to give new students access to new people and environments. Does your school have such measures?

Kris: Yes, at least on the first day. A person will show you around the school.

Audrey: Does that person share the same age as you and are they from your class?

Kris: Yes.

Audrey: Are you close friends with that person then? Still hanging out with them?

Kris: Yeah, I do.

Audrey: Hmm, are you close with them?

Kris: Hmm… she is just a friend.

Audrey: Okay, a normal friend. Is there any reason that you two are not best friends?

Kris: Because… she doesn't really enjoy physical activities that much while I like to play physical activities.

Audrey: Hmm, would you say because two people don't share similar interests, it makes it harder for them to be closer friends?

Kris: Eh, like how?

Audrey: Like how you two enjoy different hobbies and interests.

Kris: Maybe sometimes.

Audrey: It depends?

Kris: Because you can still be friends even if you enjoy different things.

Audrey: Right, does this buddy of yours introduce you to your classmates?

Kris: Yes, she introduced some to me.

Audrey: Oh, that's very kind of her. Do you still hang out with the ones she introduced to you?

Kris: Eh… yeah.

Audrey: Are you close with those peers?

Kris: Eh… also normal friends.

Audrey: Right… I can see that you can differentiate normal friends from best friends. What might be the difference between the two?

Kris: You will spend more time playing with them (close friends).

Audrey: If you are spending time playing with your best friends, do you need to be similar with each other in order to enjoy the time?

Kris: You can be different; you can do different things together. Sometimes… when they play something they enjoy, I will also do it with them.

Audrey: So, a lot of compromising and negotiating…

Kris: Yes.

Audrey: It's my first time hearing a child has experienced the Buddy System in the UK, I would like to learn more about it… So other than this peer who introduced you the environment of the school as well as your classmates, did the school also get involved in helping you to navigate to make friends? For example, did the teachers help?

Kris: Teachers… they would introduce me to the class.

Audrey: Okay… how did they introduce you? Or did you have to introduce yourself in the class?

Kris: She helped, she introduced me.

Audrey: How did she introduce you? Did she describe you when introducing you?

Kris: She said I am new to the class and told the class my name.

Audrey: So when you are making friends, do you think you need any help from others? Like from your friends, teachers or parents?

Kris: By myself.

Audrey: You prefer to navigate on your own?

Kris: Because… I think… if you choose to hang out with the people you like… the personalities that you like in a friend because others won't know who you enjoy spending time with.

Audrey: It's very nice that you mentioned personality in a person is important to you, like you mentioned you love hanging out with people who are easy-going, or those that are welcoming… are there any more personalities that you admire which makes you want to be friends with those who have such qualities?

Kris: They… they will be trustful.

Audrey: How should a person act to be trustful?

Kris: They… they do not snitch on others.

Audrey: Hmm… if you say it like that, did you have any experience of being snitched on?

Kris: No, it's not me but there was another student, poor one.

Audrey: I understand…

Kris: They would say codenames, and then my best friend and I know what the codenames stand for; which include us, I am C, and she is D.

Audrey: Okay… do you know why that person is using codenames?

Kris: Because, she doesn't want to know… she doesn't want us to know that she is talking about us but we already knew what she was talking about, she thought we don't know.

Audrey: You… do you feel comfortable sharing what she has said about you and your friend? It's okay not to answer it, though, but I would love to learn what is going on.

Kris: Yes. Sure.

Audrey: So why did she use codenames? What did she talk about?

Kris: Because she wanted to talk badly about us.

Audrey: What kind of gossip would that be?

Kris: Because… I was with one… like she doesn't want me to be friends with that person so she kept talking badly about me.

Audrey: Hmm… what exactly are the bad things these people said?

Kris: Eh… because… me and my best friend… my best friend would hang out with her, but later, she told me she did not enjoy hanging out with that person, so she played with me instead. But then… that person got mad because my best friend played with me instead, so she hung out with another peer to try and make us jealous.

Audrey: I understand… that's quite unfortunate. Other than that person's personality, which makes you not want to be friends with her, are there any other reasons that make you not want to be friends with her?

Kris: Eh… maybe because of that incident, she is not nice. Maybe because she is selfish. She wants everyone to be her friend.

Audrey: Sigh… that is a shame. How did the others react when they saw her acting like that? Or did the others not notice her actions?

Kris: She will not act like that with others… but she purposefully persuaded a classmate to talk bad about us. She doesn't act like that with others, it's just us. When she is with others, she acts like she is very kind.

Audrey: Two-sided person… How did you react to her actions?

Kris: My best friend and I ignored her, it made her very angry.

Audrey: Hmm. That makes sense, ignoring these people.

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: So you did not tell the teachers about these incidents? You deal with the issues on your own?

Kris: Yeah, no. You won't talk about these things with teachers. If you tell the teachers, they will talk even more behind your back.

Audrey: I understand… you did a great job standing up for yourself, that is something you should be proud of. Right… that's about it… I would also like to ask, we might have more

and more Hong Kong families that will settle in the UK, what kind of advice would you give to the children when it comes to making friends in the UK?

Kris: You need to take more initiative.

Audrey: How so?

Kris: Like you can ask the others if you can join in or play with them… or you can stay with one friend, and that one friend introduces you to their other friends; in that way, you can make even more friends.

Audrey: Connection is very important, yeah?

Kris: Hmm, and don't only hang out with one person. For example, if you only play with one person and that person wants to hang out with the others on the other days, then you will end up being alone on that day.

Audrey: If you really only have one friend what might happen?

Kris: You will be pretty close… I guess, because you are their only friend.

Audrey: Okay…

Kris: But I always think it is better to make more friends because they are not obliged to hang out with you only throughout the day, so if they want to play with other people, then you can have somebody to hang out with even that friend will be hanging out with others.

Audrey: Right, I understand… the more the merrier. Those are some very nice advice for Hong Kong children who might settle in the UK, what about the schools in the UK or the parents? Is there anything that adults have to be aware of when children are making friends in the UK?

Kris: I think… it goes the same for everyone.

Audrey: So… would you suggest adults let children navigate the process of making friends in the UK on their own?

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: Would you say the adults need to help children to make friends to any extent?

Kris: It's better to be on our own.

Audrey: I understand. Okay… So overall, you said it is important for you to be comfortable when you are hanging around with a friend… not everyone can be your friend and it is important that their personalities make you feel comfortable…

Kris: Hmm.

Audrey: I guess this will be it for the questions, do you have anything you would like to add on for the topic?

Kris: Nope.

Audrey: Right, again thank you so much for joining this interview and answering the questions.

Kris: It's no problem.

Audrey: So our interview is now finished… could you please ask your mother to come by real quick so that we can wrap things up?

Kris: Oh okay, I will call her to come.

Audrey: Thank you, thank you.

Kris's mother: Coming.

Audrey: Hello Mrs., we just finished the interview and I just wanted to quickly inform you that too.

Kris's mother: Alright, nice.

Audrey: Right, once I am done with analysing the data, I might compile a list to show Kris what we have said today in order to ensure what I recorded matches with her thoughts.

Kris's mother: Sure, no problem.

Audrey: Right, please give me some time for that, and once again thank you so much for doing this interview even in such short notice, my apologies.

Kris's mothers: No worries, it's just she won't be available later this week, and I realised we don't have many dates to arrange for the interview, and, oh, we can only do it today. It's nice that you are okay with that arrangement.

Audrey: Right, thank you so much.

Kris's mother: Please, it's nothing.

Audrey: Alright, I wont bother for any longer, thank you and bye bye.

Kris and Kris's mother: Bye bye!

Appendix 6 – Interview Notes

Interview Notes for Participant 1 - Serene

① *21/06/2024 (FRI)* *Participant name:*

▮▮▮▮ *(HK friend in picture)*

Interview Outline and Guiding Questions

1. Purpose and outlining the interview

Hello. My name is Audrey, and I am an MA Childhood Studies from the University of Leeds. Thank you for your invaluable contribution to this study. I also greatly appreciate your willingness to share your experiences. During this one-hour interview, we will delve into topics related to your friendships after migrating from Hong Kong to the UK.

2. Confidentiality

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers, as this interview is not an evaluation. I encourage you to answer the questions in as much detail as possible, and please raise concerns if you find any questions I ask difficult or ambiguous. Your answers are strictly for the purpose of this study, and I assure you that all data will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. If you find the interview session uncomfortable, we can terminate the session as you seek your parents' comfort.

~~So now I will record the interview session, with your consent.~~

Before we start, do you have any questions for me relating to this project?

Research questions

1. What are the friendship preferences of British HK Migrant Children (BHKMC), aged 8-13 in the UK?
2. What does it mean for BHKMC to make friends in UK school settings?
3. How does BHKMC talk about friendship conviviality-based integration challenges in navigating the British Educational system?

Interview Questions

Personal information: *Age* *More than 1 year* ⑪

To start with, can you introduce yourself, including your age, how long you have lived in the UK, and what kind of school are you attending? *HK 學生*

Flip

Current friendships:

I have asked you to draw your best friend(s) on a sheet of paper:

Whatsapp → 朋友

香港 朋友

1. Can you please share your thoughts when drawing the picture?
2. Who is it? Where are they from? How did you meet them?
3. Tell more about how the two of you became friends and what you enjoy doing with them.

食物 bonding → 上堂 giving memo → Time

4. What makes them your good friend? give time to chat → 4-5年

(香港)
UK ×group

5. (If they choose HK friends) What about peers in the UK? How are you enjoying being friends with them? → Gets upset

can you tell me about something that your friend that makes you laugh?

6. (If they choose UK friends) What about peers back in HK? How are you maintaining friendships with them?

7. Overall, how are you enjoying the types of friendships you have in the UK? (Face-to-face friendships in the UK/online friendships with peers in HK?)

Whatsapp + Zoom
↳ 時間方便
用畫發猜 → Application
→ 玩

Friendship preferences:

Tolerance

Now that you have told me about your best friend(s), what do you think are the most important qualities of a person when you want to know them better?

衣著好都差不多

1. Is it their ethnic background?
2. Gender? Top 10
3. Personalities and interests? 共同興趣
4. Or others?

語言 ⇒ barrier
⇒ average
Local people 當地
→ 我怀
speak slower / simpler + precise

中英↑↓
開食 =
better friendship
興趣

Why do you think you have such preferences?

1. Parental influences?
2. Media?
3. Personal feelings?
4. Others

Some people say similarities attract, and some say differences attract. Do you think you and your friends are similar or different?

一半一半

共同話題 → close
e.g. anime

HK kids very 忙
→ academic based → zoom meeting
→ 功課   組個 → 玩嘅都唔同

② 生活方式
（文化）

Challenges in maintaining friendships after migration:

As you navigate the processes of making friends or maintaining friendships, have you been facing any challenges during the processes? And how do you feel about them?

① 語言   性格奇怪 → 玩方式不同 eg. ~~dirty~~ dirty play.

I have heard that there is a buddy system in UK schools, where you pair up with another student when you first arrive. Did you have a buddy?   × 靠自己 → 同老師傾斜 → 同學 eg. jokes

1. (If yes) Do you like the experience of having a buddy? How is your buddy like? How have they been helping you navigate and make friends?   others hear and said "what the hell)

2. (If not) Has your school done anything in helping you to navigate and make friends?

Do you think the school has been helping you to make friends in school with other students? Or is there anybody else helping you during the process (e.g. your parents?) ×

Closing   → 線上多 communicate 到 就可以   ☆☆ [Language]
                                                                                    ↓
Would you give any advice to the schools or parents regarding helping British HK children   Language learning is different
make friends in the UK?
×

Lastly, do you have anything to say to the HK children and families who will migrate to the UK in the future?   雙面人 → • need not to be in London
                                        × learn english   ∴ HK community group
Are there any further questions you want to ask or any issues you want to express?
        × 大帝   → Interact with teacher
                           → learn + practice

用中文話其他
  eg. ~~他~~ 奇怪的時候 ⇒ Bullying ⇒ ×waste 時間
        → shut up.
    ↳ Teacher intervention × can't help.   返香港   每兩年見
                                                → 公園   朋友
    預去曾有 bullying   → city centre
        → First primary   →
                                                    才

摘錄   Leeds → other city
  ↑   ↓
~~less restricted~~ (free style) more related to
less restricted   HK

共同話題 好重要啦嗎 → similarity

☆ Every children is & different they have different stories of friendships

Interview Notes for Participant 2 - Angie

Participant #2   22/06/2024
                  1500-1600   Name: [redacted]   Age 10

Interview Outline and Guiding Questions

1. Purpose and outlining the interview

Hello. My name is Audrey, and I am an MA Childhood Studies from the University of Leeds. Thank you for your invaluable contribution to this study. I also greatly appreciate your willingness to share your experiences. During this one-hour interview, we will delve into topics related to your friendships after migrating from Hong Kong to the UK.

2. Confidentiality

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers, as this interview is not an evaluation. I encourage you to answer the questions in as much detail as possible, and please raise concerns if you find any questions I ask difficult or ambiguous. Your answers are strictly for the purpose of this study, and I assure you that all data will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. If you find the interview session uncomfortable, we can terminate the session as you seek your parents' comfort.

So now I will record the interview session, with your consent.

Before we start, do you have any questions for me relating to this project?

Research questions

1. What are the friendship preferences of British HK Migrant Children (BHKMC), aged 8-13 in the UK?
2. What does it mean for BHKMC to make friends in UK school settings?
3. How does BHKMC talk about friendship conviviality-based integration challenges in navigating the British Educational system?

Interview Questions

Personal information: 一開始可能介紹下你自己先呀

To start with, can you introduce yourself, including your age, how long you have lived in the UK, and what kind of school are you attending?

今年幾多歲
嚟左英國幾耐 讀嘅學校係點   2022 7月21
讀緊學校係點有啲人?

Current friendships:

I have asked you to draw your best friend(s) on a sheet of paper:

→ Park → 單車 outdoorsy

土轉校
G家長聯絡 for play dates

[margin notes:]
Lunch time多
→ more time for bonding
UK 有功課
→ can play
↓
UK
X play dates
↓
UK school
→ funntions

1. Can you please share your thoughts when drawing the picture?
2. Who is it? Where are they from? How did you meet them?
3. Tell more about how the two of you became friends and what you enjoy doing with them.
4. What makes them your good friend?
5. (If they choose HK friends) What about peers in the UK? How are you enjoying being friends with them?
6. (If they choose UK friends) What about peers back in HK? How are you maintaining friendships with them?
7. Overall, how are you enjoying the types of friendships you have in the UK? (Face-to-face friendships in the UK/online friendships with peers in HK?)

Friendship preferences:

Now that you have told me about your best friend(s), what do you think are the most important qualities of a person when you want to know them better?

1. Is it their ethnic background?
2. Gender?
3. Personalities and interests?
4. Or others?

Why do you think you have such preferences?

1. Parental influences?
2. Media?
3. Personal feelings?
4. Others

Some people say similarities attract, and some say differences attract. Do you think you and your friends are similar or different?

Challenges in maintaining friendships after migration:

As you navigate the processes of making friends or maintaining friendships, have you been facing any challenges during the processes? And how do you feel about them?

→ 自信

I have heard that there is a buddy system in UK schools, where you pair up with another student when you first arrive. Did you have a buddy?

1. (If yes) Do you like the experience of having a buddy? How is your buddy like? How have they been helping you navigate and make friends?
2. (If not) Has your school done anything in helping you to navigate and make friends?

Do you think the school has been helping you to make friends in school with other students? Or is there anybody else helping you during the process (e.g. your parents?)

Closing

Would you give any advice to the schools or parents regarding helping British HK children make friends in the UK?   Dont be shy 主動請問 → can we be friends 中意.興趣

Lastly, do you have anything to say to the HK children and families who will migrate to the UK in the future?

Are there any further questions you want to ask or any issues you want to express?   UK activities → bonding e.g. 陳戲

New students are very welcoming
→

Also changed ~~students~~ schools
girls are very welcoming / Boys play with boys

Depends on the new student + other students
↳ another student fully participant

students are changing schools all the time

☆ Conflicts make better friendship
→ understanding quality

☆ Confidence and taking initiatives

☆ Migrant children trying to fit in
→ observe others preferences
    #1. Others isolating → rejecting → find HK friends

    #2 others welcoming → Initate to make friends

    #3 others welcoming → Jon to be friends

Childrens
peer
relationship
varies
→ rejection
    +

☆ prefer to navigate friendships on
   their own ⇒ Differ from teacher
              support for mixed
              races friendship

[Ethnicity:]
Prefer HK
~~Prefer~~ No preferences
No preferences
              ⤷ How they are treated +
                activities they enjoy

[Gender]
No preferences
Notice differences in how girls/boys interact
No preferences

Interview Notes for Participant 3 - Esther

participant #3 22/06/2024 Name: Esmie Age: 10
1700-1800
英國

Interview Outline and Guiding Questions

1. Purpose and outlining the interview

Hello. My name is Audrey, and I am an MA Childhood Studies from the University of Leeds. Thank you for your invaluable contribution to this study. I also greatly appreciate your willingness to share your experiences. During this one-hour interview, we will delve into topics related to your friendships after migrating from Hong Kong to the UK.

2. Confidentiality

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers, as this interview is not an evaluation. I encourage you to answer the questions in as much detail as possible, and please raise concerns if you find any questions I ask difficult or ambiguous. Your answers are strictly for the purpose of this study, and I assure you that all data will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. If you find the interview session uncomfortable, we can terminate the session as you seek your parents' comfort.

So now I will record the interview session, with your consent.

Before we start, do you have any questions for me relating to this project?

Research questions

1. What are the friendship preferences of British HK Migrant Children (BHKMC), aged 8-13 in the UK?
2. What does it mean for BHKMC to make friends in UK school settings?
3. How does BHKMC talk about friendship conviviality-based integration challenges in navigating the British Educational system?

Interview Questions

Personal information:

To start with, can you introduce yourself, including your age, how long you have lived in the UK, and what kind of school are you attending?

Current friendships:

I have asked you to draw your best friend(s) on a sheet of paper:

1. Can you please share your thoughts when drawing the picture?

2. Who is it? Where are they from? How did you meet them? *朋友介紹*

3. Tell more about how the two of you became friends and what you enjoy doing with them. *(quality time)* ☆☆ *玩 + gymastics*

4. What makes them your good friend?

5. (If they choose HK friends) What about peers in the UK? How are you enjoying being friends with them? *訊號 少 傾計 同 UK 同學* *WhatsApp 朋友*

6. ~~(If they choose UK friends) What about peers back in HK? How are you maintaining friendships with them?~~

7. Overall, how are you enjoying the types of friendships you have in the UK? (Face-to-face friendships in the UK/online friendships with peers in HK?) *Time Zone* *Not an issue*

香港嘅朋友 扮鬼 ↓ *英國 同學*

跟住 玩開 有C群組 組 ↓

Friendship preferences:

Now that you have told me about your best friend(s), what do you think are the most important qualities of a person when you want to know them better?

1. Is it their ethnic background? *男仔會搞*
2. Gender?
3. Personalities and interests?
4. Or others?

→ Have distinctive systems of friends eg. some can only chat for a bit

Why do you think you have such preferences?

1. Parental influences?
2. Media?
3. Personal feelings? *Personal feelings*
4. Others

Some people say similarities attract, and some say differences attract. Do you think you and your friends are similar or different?

性格接近 → take the initiative to play together ☆

盡唔多

Challenges in maintaining friendships after migration: 朋友靠組

As you navigate the processes of making friends or maintaining friendships, have you been facing any challenges during the processes? And how do you feel about them?

I have heard that there is a buddy system in UK schools, where you pair up with another student when you first arrive. Did you have a buddy?

1. (If yes) Do you like the experience of having a buddy? How is your buddy like? How have they been helping you navigate and make friends?
2. (If not) Has your school done anything in helping you to navigate and make friends?

✗ particular but knows brother.

Do you think the school has been helping you to make friends in school with other students? Or is there anybody else helping you during the process (e.g. your parents?)

Closing

Would you give any advice to the schools or parents regarding helping British HK children make friends in the UK? Nothing particular

Lastly, do you have anything to say to the HK children and families who will migrate to the UK in the future?

Are there any further questions you want to ask or any issues you want to express?

Initiate
→ translate conversations   Language barrier

· The break will longer
  → 食野

Interview Notes for Participant 4 - Kris

Participant #4   1804 - 1836   Name: ▓▓▓▓▓ Kris (F)
                                                    Age: 11
                                              3年 (小四+學校)

Interview Outline and Guiding Questions

1. Purpose and outlining the interview (Starts recording)

Hello. My name is Audrey, and I am an MA Childhood Studies from the University of Leeds. Thank you for your invaluable contribution to this study. I also greatly appreciate your willingness to share your experiences. During this one-hour interview, we will delve into topics related to your friendships after migrating from Hong Kong to the UK.

2. Confidentiality

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers, as this interview is not an evaluation. I encourage you to answer the questions in as much detail as possible, and please raise concerns if you find any questions I ask difficult or ambiguous. Your answers are strictly for the purpose of this study, and I assure you that all data will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. If you find the interview session uncomfortable, we can terminate the session as you seek your parents' comfort.

So now I will record the interview session, with your consent.

Before we start, do you have any questions for me relating to this project?

Research questions

1. What are the friendship preferences of British HK Migrant Children (BHKMC), aged 8-13 in the UK?
2. What does it mean for BHKMC to make friends in UK school settings?
3. How does BHKMC talk about friendship conviviality-based integration challenges in navigating the British Educational system?

老師教得
好得多
→ 英

Interview Questions

Personal information:

To start with, can you introduce yourself, including your age, how long you have lived in the UK, and what kind of school are you attending?

(小四) Harder to meet friends → rude/friendly
x welcomy

① 好耐... 多堂 x 新朋友
② → 友善
→ Welcoming
自願問又玩

Current friendships:

I have asked you to draw your best friend(s) on a sheet of paper:

破壞 Make them jealous → Trustful × snitching (篤到人地) 揀~事件 → Trustful

→ 同人玩 welcoming × 關怒 → Play tag at random 香港人朋友

selfish ↓ 要識到全世界的朋友 ↓↓ Reaction → Ignore

1. Can you please share your thoughts when drawing the picture?
2. Who is it? Where are they from? How did you meet them?
3. Tell more about how the two of you became friends and what you enjoy doing with them.

→ 有所謂: 隨和 Physical activities sleepover → 學校 呢班朋友

4. What makes them your good friend?
5. (If they choose HK friends) What about peers in the UK? How are you enjoying being friends with them? → depends on the situation; 仲有電話
6. (If they choose UK friends) What about peers back in HK? How are you maintaining friendships with them? → If parents can help
7. Overall, how are you enjoying the types of friendships you have in the UK? (Face-to-face friendships in the UK/online friendships with peers in HK?) 都係一齊玩的

Friendship preferences:

Now that you have told me about your best friend(s), what do you think are the most important qualities of a person when you want to know them better? (use examples)

1. Is it their ethnic background? → no preferences   Bad personality
2. Gender? → no preferences   → × gossip
3. Personalities and interests? 潛水 → 學校   → selfish
4. Or others?
5. Places ⇒ pretty close

(When I ask the question → participants are influenced by my prompts and choose their answers)

Why do you think you have such preferences?

1. Parental influences?   覺得時新
2. Media?   try first → then play if they are nice
3. Personal feelings?   ↓
4. Others   if not then drop out

Some people say similarities attract, and some say differences attract. Do you think you and your friends are similar or different? B also okay

→ act
× toxic → gossip → selfish

Challenges in maintaining friendships after migration:

As you navigate the processes of making friends or maintaining friendships, have you been facing any challenges during the processes? And how do you feel about them? → First (cold)
→ Second (warm)
☆ Personality

I have heard that there is a buddy system in UK schools, where you pair up with another student when you first arrive. Did you have a buddy? Yes → First day : show around (同學)

1. (If yes) Do you like the experience of having a buddy? How is your buddy like? How 介紹朋友比 have they been helping you navigate and make friends? 興趣不同
Normal friends ↓
想一齊做

2. (If not) Has your school done anything in helping you to navigate and make friends? 老師 → 介紹比 新組 New student + name

Do you think the school has been helping you to make friends in school with other students?
Or is there anybody else helping you during the process (e.g. your parents?) (Personal preferences)
分配 → Personality

Closing

Would you give any advice to the schools or parents regarding helping British HK children make friends in the UK? 主動 → Can I join in? Don't be friends with → Friend 機會 just one person
↓
Lastly, do you have anything to say to the HK children and families who will migrate to the Phone UK in the future?

Are there any further questions you want to ask or any issues you want to express? More the merrier
→ make time for everyone

Parent + School
→ pretty similar let them navigate alone Normal Best
→ spend more time

Theme:

UK and HK → ethnic
Role of parents
→ Compromisiny + negotiation

Appendix 7 – Annotated Transcript Excerpt

[handwritten left margin: Participant seems excited to talk about her art]

really good. I didn't have much time for this drawing but this is me and my best friend who is in Hong Kong.

Serene: Thanks! I have self taught myself in drawing for eight years!

Audrey: That's impressive, so I'd like to know this drawing of your friend, is she from the UK?

[handwritten legend, right side:]
— general code
— Preferences
— Experiences of friendship (intimacy)
— Challenges   — Agency
— Advice

Serene: No, I knew her back in Hong Kong.

Audrey: Right, so when did you meet her?

Serene: I met her in primary grade one.

Audrey: So you knew her for quite some time, are you girls still in contact?

Serene: Yes, we do.

Audrey: What kind of ways are you using in staying connected with each other?

Serene: We usually use WhatsApp. *[handwritten: social media to stay connected with others]*

Audrey: So, you two knew each other since primary one, how did you two meet?

Serene: Through a pack of snacks. *[handwritten: Experience of making friends → starting point of intimacy]*

Audrey: That's a great way to get to know a person; food is always good.

Serene: Then we got closer, we would pass notes in class, too. *[handwritten: more intimacy ∴ ↑ common activities]*
(Smiling and giggling)

Audrey: Passing notes, huh? I understand that it sounds like you had fun.

Audrey: So, with all that, can you tell me how you know this friend can be a good friend of yours? What is special about your friend that makes you feel like you can be good friends with her?

[handwritten: friend takes initiatives to be with participant]

Serene: She… after knowing her just for a while, she would come up to me to chat. Then… after class, during break times, we would hang out… Then, when we didn't have school, we would also go out to hang out together. *[handwritten: OUTSIDE school playdates ↘ similar to Angie #2]*

Audrey: Sounds like you spend a lot of time with your friend.

Serene: Yeah, I have known her for like… 4-5 years. *[handwritten: significant time spent with her friend]*

Audrey: Quite some time already!

Audrey: Hmm… things you enjoy are different… would you say children from the UK and Hong Kong are exposed to different mediums?

Serene: Like, they… I think Minecraft and Roblox are meh. Do you play Minecraft or Roblox, big sis?

[margin note: More bonding times with participant]

Audrey: Me? I haven't gotten the time to play these games yet. But I am making some DIY things based on Minecraft.

Serene: Oh, that's the bee from Minecraft.

Audrey: Right… I am also trying to fit into the culture here. Hmm… so do you think this gap between lifestyles is due to differences in culture or race?

Serene: I think so? Maybe? Like as kids, they would be exposed to things that are different from us.

Audrey: What do you think that might be the differences between Hong Kong children and children from the UK? Like… it seems like children from the UK are more active, and the things they enjoy are different… so what about Hong Kong children? What do you think about them?

Serene: Very busy. Tests, dictations, you name it, we have it. *[margin note: HK children → academic performance >> UK → more play]*

Audrey: So, a lot of academic concerns…

Serene: You don't have that here unless it's time before the SAT, then we might need extra lessons. Normally, we don't have that. There is not much homework either; we don't even have a handbook. Then, for homework, it's only a few pages, nothing like Hong Kong at all. They were given a pile upon pile of homework in Hong Kong. We don't even have summer homework here. *[margin note: → culture differences (academic)]*

Audrey: Wow… I remember I had this much homework that I needed to do.

Serene: Me too! I had to do at least 10 homework a day.

Audrey: Back in Hong Kong, with that amount of Hong Kong, did you have time to spend with your friends? Did you work on them with your friends together?

Serene: Yeah, we did. We would open a group call on Zoom and find solutions for the homework together. And after work, we would continue the call and hang out there.

Audrey: Oh… did the teachers interact with you in a way that made you feel more inclusive in school?

Serene: Not much, I would be listening to dumb things.

Audrey: Like?

Serene: So… I would ask my teacher questions like… do you know why the sea is blue? Because the fishes are like blu blu blu…

Audrey: Haha… that's such a nice conversation with your teacher.

Serene: Then another classmate heard me, he said, "What the hell?" and opened his mouth wide. → Being teased by classmates

Audrey: Hmm… How did you feel when he said that?

Serene: Nothing much.

Audrey: Did the teacher hear what the student said?

Serene: The teachers don't care. → Teachers X involved in peer conflicts

Audrey: Hmm… with that, do you think the school needs to do more in order to make new students feel more welcome? Not just for students from Hong Kong, let's say, every child who is new in the school, do you think the school should be responsible for that?

Serene: No, we just have to be on our own when trying to make new friends.

Audrey: So, the school doesn't have to get involved in any way?

Serene: Yeah, as long as we can communicate. If we can communicate, everything can be solved. → Prefers to navigate friendships by themselves (matches other participants)

Audrey: Communication… man… English, I suddenly forgot how to write the Chinese words for that.

Serene: Just write communication… isn't the Chinese word written like that?

Audrey: Right… thank you Serene. So overall, the school doesn't have to get involved?

Serene: Yeah, they don't have to help us that much. And… I also figured out the advantage of learning more languages.

Audrey: Oh, tell me more about it.