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Teachers' Multicultural Awareness and the Ethnic Identity of Minority Students: An Individual Case Study of a Hani Student

Abstract This study considers the role of teachers' multicultural awareness in promoting minority students' ethnic identity by considering the situation in one particular middle school. A case study of a Hani student is presented to show how teachers' multicultural awareness affects ethnic identity and the academic achievement of minority students. This case study enables the authors to assess the significance and value of teachers' multicultural awareness as an educational concept. Through the study, the authors point to a need to strengthen multicultural awareness in teachers' education to meet requirements of cultural diversity. The authors also emphasize that such awareness should be an objective of teacher training.

Keywords minority students, ethnic identity, teachers' multicultural awareness

Introduction

Various scholars have noted that the People's Republic of China's ethnic minority population represents a cultural contrast to the country's ethnic majority Han population. However, generally speaking, the school enrollment rate in ethnic minority areas is low, as the performance of ethnic minority students in China tends to be lower than that of Han students, and they are more likely to drop out of school early (Harrell, 2000). One reason for the relatively lower academic achievement of ethnic minority students may be their sense of ethnic identity. Positive ethnic minority cultural identification may enhance teenagers' self-esteem, increase a sense of psychological belonging and help them to form positive social attitudes, thereby improving their self-efficacy, use of positive

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emotions, and ability to mitigate against negative emotions. It is therefore useful to explore the relationship between ethnic identity and formal schooling. With most research in this field in China using scale tests, there are few in-depth studies about the influence of educational background in the development of teenage ethnic identity, or the role ethnic identity plays in the development of youth. However, factors that influence the development and formation of ethnic and national identity may be considered a pool of material for future research. This paper focuses on how teachers' multicultural awareness may shape a student's ethnic identity.

Literature Review

Research on ethnic identity began to emerge in the 1960s based on societal needs, and have been highlighted by the growth of immigration. Since then it has received increasing attention. However, until now, domestic research from China on national or ethnic identity has been very limited and mainly focuses on the following aspects: namely, the theory of ethnic identity, the promotion of ethnic identity in education, and the current situation regarding ethnic identification.

Basic Theory of Ethnic Identity

Research on the basic theory of ethnic identity includes the definition and structure of ethnic identity. So far, no researchers have a generally accepted definition of ethnic identity. Phinney is one of the key researchers on ethnic identity in the American psychological field. According to Phinney's article (1990), ethnic identity is a complex structure that includes "self-identification as a group member, a sense of belonging to the group, attitudes about one's group membership, and ethnic involvement (social participation, cultural practices and attitudes)" (p. 503). Chinese researchers have mostly followed Phinney's point of view about the composition of ethnic identity. Wan and Wang (2004) focus on the groups that ethnic minority people affiliate with, based on the theory of the positive and negative attitudes toward one's ethnic group as proposed by Phinney. Zuo (2000) conducts research from cognitive and emotional sub-systems when exploring the dimension of ethnic identity. Qin (2005) believes ethnic identity includes four dimensions: cognition (awareness of one's own ethnic identity and comprehension of objective cultural knowledge of one's ethnic group), evaluation (one's own positive evaluation of ethnic identity and its importance for self), emotion (attachment and belonging to the ethnic group, whether one considers oneself as a member of his or her own ethnic group), action (some classical action and behavioral tendency for safeguarding national identity, culture, and

interest). At present, studies about the structure of ethnic identity mainly involve cognition, emotion and behavior.

How to Promote Ethnic Identity in Formal Education

Since the 1990s, some scholars have begun to pay attention to the relationship between formal education and ethnic identification in China. Postiglione (1999), in his book, *China's National Minority Education: Culture, Schooling, and Development*, pointed out that national education has an important influence on the formation of an ethnic group's identity, and can even re-engineer ethnic groups. According to him, this influence mainly depends on what is taught in schools, how it is taught, and how it is evaluated. Gu and Tan (2008) note that consciousness of ethnic identity is gradually built up through language and cultural education, and awareness of national identity is gradually built through ideological and political education. Teng and Zhang (1997) discuss the significance, content and method of ethnic and national identity education launched in national schools. They think that national schooling should launch proper national education, as well as ethnic minority education. Schools should promote a combined history, which includes the history and viewpoint of ethnic minority communities, and emphasizes the harmony and unity of all ethnic groups. Qi (2008) states that the school's derivative functions are to cultivate students' ethnic identity and national citizenship. According to the situation of China's multi-ethnic country, patriotic education, collectivism education, democracy and ideological education, civic and moral education, and national history education should all be included.

The Present State of Ethnic Identify

In China, in addition to the theory of ethnic identity and the relationship between ethnic identity and formal education research, researchers also study the current level of different groups' ethnic identification. In these studies, ethnic minority participants often discuss their high level of "national identity," but few papers focus on the level of identification of specific ethnic minorities. Phinney, according to a proposed national identification structure, worked out a Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), which includes 14 questions (Phinney, 1992). Some Chinese researchers have also adapted different ethnic identity measures. The main characteristic of this kind of research is conducting a questionnaire survey about every minority student. Some, referring to Phinney's scale and his definition for ethnic identity, worked out a Multi-Ethnic College Students' Ethnic Identity and Group of Interstate Attributions Questionnaire (Li, 2002). During 1994–1996, Hansen conducted an ethnographic study with field research

in the Lijiang Naxi Nationality Autonomous County and Xishuangbanna Dai National Minority Autonomous County in Yunnan province. Hansen (1999) discussed how the Chinese government inculcates the concept of "Chinese nation" to students through formal education. Jin (2004) conducted the field survey on Chinese Koreans' double self-identity.

Among studies on the ethnic identity of minorities, the research literature on Hani students is extremely limited. Hu and Li (2010), from the Honghe College in Yunnan, surveyed 621 teenage Hani students through the use of questionnaires on ethnic identity and assessments of school-life-satisfaction; the results revealed that Hani students' cultural identity was associated with their levels of school-life-satisfaction. Hu and Li's research mainly focuses on Hani students in the Honghe region, with the three frontier counties in Hani colonies, namely, Luchun, Honghe, and Yuanyang serving as the sample sources. Hani culture is the main body of culture in these areas.

Through fieldwork in the Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Xishuangbanna, the authors found that Hani students' school adaptive situation is not optimistic. In contrast to Hu and Li's findings, the vast majority of Hani students of Menghan Middle School in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture show more serious problems in education, compared with the students of Han and Dai ethnicity. These Hani students showed low self-esteem and poor school performance. However, during the eight-month field study in Menghan Middle School, the authors found that Hani students who can adapt to school life and concurrently have a relatively positive sense of ethnic identity are rather few.

The teachers in Menghan Middle School paid a lot of attention to one Hani student named Men'er, who had excellent academic achievements and had adapted well to school life. Therefore he was favored by teachers of all subjects. Why did Men'er show such distinct differences from other Hani students? This research involved carrying out a case study to generate an in-depth and detailed discussion of how the ethnic identity of this Hani student was constructed. From this, the authors explore how teachers' multicultural awareness may influence a student's ethnic identity.

Methodology

Method Used in the Study

The method adopted for this research is mainly that of a descriptive case study, focusing on just one particular student. The authors visited one school five times, and conducted eight-month anthropological fieldwork in this school. Participant observation is an important method used in cultural anthropology research. Teachers, students and their activities in school or in daily life were observed. We

observed Men'er's class performance on many occasions. During the research in the school, the authors interviewed Men'er and his teachers several times, carrying out both formal and informal interviews. In these interviews, the authors wanted to know the ethnic identity of different minority students. In addition to observations and collection of information, some material objects also aroused the authors' interest, such as transcripts of academic records of different minority nationality students, Men'er's academic records for different courses and schoolwork. Analysis of Men'er's case is conducted according to three categories, which were discussed in the literature review section: cognition, emotion and behavior.

Limitations of the Method

Although the authors realize the importance of teachers' multicultural awareness for encouraging students' ethnic identity, other factors may also take effect at the same time, for instance family environment and other personal factors. However, in this study the authors did not make contact with Men'er's elementary school teachers, so information about Men'er's earlier education was only gained indirectly from his middle school teachers and fellow students. Men'er's class teacher in middle school told the authors that Men'er had made great progress during that period. Men'er's home was very far away from his school, and the road to his home was very dangerous, so the authors did not visit his home to make a family investigation, another shortfall of this research.

Second, a microcosmic ethnographic study can provide some basic material and opinions, but the integrity of a microcosmic ethnographic study is insufficient. Although the authors think this case cannot represent or explain all ethnic identity problems of minority students, it may be seen as one problem of Chinese minority education that is worthy of further explanation. This study can give some interpretations to the case why some minority students have a more positive ethnic identity, and the authors expect that this could offer some inspiration in promoting ethnic identity of Chinese minority students. In consideration of research ethics, the names of students discussed in this paper have been disguised.

About the Sample

Hani Students in Menghan Town Middle School

The Hani nationality is one of China's 55 ethnic minority groups. In 2000, the census records its population as 1.44 million people. There are 65 thousand people living in Honghe county, making up about 50% of the Hani population. According to the Menghan government's unpublished statistics, in 2006 there

were 26,471 people in Menghan town, of whom Dai were 75.6%, Hani were 21.2%, Han were 2.6%, Li were 0.35%, and Jinuo were 0.38%.

Menghan Middle School is a typical country school in a minority area. There are 26 classes and 1,228 students, of which the number of minority students is 1,043. Minority students comprise 84.95%; among them there are 826 Dai nationality students (67.26%), 130 Hani nationality students (10.59%), 34 Ake Students (2.79%), 48 other nationality (Jinuo, Yi, and Hui) students (3.91%), and 185 Han nationality students (15.07%)¹.

In the school, the academic achievements of the Han students are the highest, Dai students’ are second, and Hani students’ are the lowest. When teachers of the school were interviewed about this, they said:

Teachers have the greatest hope for the Han students, then the Dai students and then Hani students. Han students are demanded to speak actively, to interact with teachers; Hani students are demanded not to play truant, or know how to spend their pocket money properly [Hani students’ homes are very far away from school, and they go home once a month usually, so their parents give them some pocket money]. As a result even a Hani student sleeping in a class is allowed by the teacher. The drop-out rate for Hani students is the highest, so if they stay in school, nothing else is a problem.

Men’er

At the time of the field study, Men’er was an eighth grade male student aged 15. As a Hani student, he was different from many of the other students, in that he appeared to be happy, outgoing and confident. In addition, Men’er’s academic performance was much better than that of other Hani students (Table 1), and also better than that of Dai and Han students. Before meeting him, the authors had heard of him from his reputation as a successful and well behaved ethnic

Table 1 Men’er’s Scores Compared with the Five Other Hani Students in Grade 8 Half Term Test

	Chinese	Mathe- matics	English	Politics	History	Geog- raphy	Biology	Physics	Total Score
Men’er (Actual Scores)	82.00	52.00	46.00	64.00	75.00	74.00	85.00	41.00	519.00
Hani Classmates (Average Scores)	54.68	19.99	34.20	40.72	41.82	41.42	38.00	19.01	290.79

Source: Data supplied by Menghan Middle School.

¹ Data supplied by Menghan Middle School.

minority student.

The Teachers of Menghan Middle School

The faculty of the school totaled 90, including six Dai, eight Hani, two Jinuo, one Hui, one Lahu, one Yi, and 71 Han. The Han teachers accounted for 78.9% of the total faculty, while Hani teachers only made up 8.9%. Fifteen of the teachers were members of ethnic minorities, and of these the percentage of Hani teachers was the highest. However, from the authors' investigation, the Hani teachers were not brought up with Hani culture; that is, no Hani teacher at the school could speak the Hani language and they knew little about Hani culture. In contrast, all of the Dai teachers could speak the Dai language and they all had the experience of living in Dai villages.

Although the Dai ethnic group was the main ethnicity among students in Menghan Middle School, the Han nationality constituted the main body of faculty. The Han teachers were mostly descendants of Han nationality people from other provinces, mainly Hunan. In the 1950s–1960s, most of their parents came to Yunnan to assist in the development of the border regions. They worked in communes in Xishuangbanna, in farm police stations, farm schools and farm hospitals, etc. This lasted until January 2003 when the separation of enterprise reforms were implemented in Yunnan. At that time, the police station, primary school, and middle school, formerly parts of different systems, were integrated by the local government. Han nationality teachers were mostly born and raised on farms. Although they were second generation migrants, they did not know much of the culture in the wider Dai community in which they lived. During an in-depth survey into the school, the authors discovered that only a small percentage of teachers showed interest in the local ethnic culture or had any kind of real understanding of it.

Among Men'er's eighth grade teachers, his biology and English teachers were of Dai ethnicity, and his physical education teacher was of Hani ethnicity. Apart from them, other subjects were all taught by Han teachers. Men'er liked his math teacher best, and this teacher appeared to have had the greatest influence on him. Like most of the Han teachers in the school, his math teacher was born and raised on a farm of Xishuangbanna. However, unlike the others, he had a deep understanding of local ethnic cultures and showed a keen interest in them.

Findings and Analysis

Men'er's Cognition of Hani Culture

Cognition is an understanding of ethnic culture based on exploration. From

multiple interviews, the authors found that Men'er had a comprehensive understanding of the traditions of his ethnic group. A few examples are included below.

What is Sharen?

The curriculum included a lesson entitled, "Know These Plants." The teacher showed students pictures of plants of the Xishuangbanna area, one of which was Sharen (*Fructus Amomi*), a traditional plant used by the Hani people. However, the plant was unknown to the Han and Dai students. Men'er was invited to introduce this plant to his classmates. Men'er stood up and told others about it happily. He identified it and said it was a kind of medicine for gastro-intestinal conditions, used in Hani medicine to normalize the functions of the spleen and stomach, and told the class how to grow the herb. Men'er was happy to share the knowledge about the unique plant of Hani medicine with others, and his voice was loud and full of pride.

The System of Father-Son Linked Names (fuzi lianmin zhi)

Once in an interview, the author asked Men'er about the origin of his name. Men'er explained in detail.

Author(s): Why are you called Men'er?

Men'er: Because we have a system in Hani culture; the last character of my father's name is "Men," so the first character of my name is also "Men." I have an older brother, so my name is Men'er ["Men'er" translates from Chinese as: the second "Men"].

Author(s): Your older brother's name is Menda? ["Menda" translates from Chinese as Big (or older) "Men"; Men'er was surprised that I could say his older brother's name out accurately].

Men'er: I also have a little brother.

Author(s): His name is Mensan? ["Mensan" translates from Chinese as: the third "Men"; Men'er nods] (May 2008, field notes, at Menghan Middle School)

Through observations and interviews the authors found that Men'er knew very clearly about "Father-Son Linked Names," an important part of Hani culture. His knowledge mostly came from his father, mother and grandmother, demonstrating the influence of his family and community on him.

Men'er's Attitude towards Hani Culture

Attitude towards ethnicity is an important part of ethnic identity, with positive

and negative aspects. A positive attitude leads to a positive ethnic identity, while a negative attitude leads to a negative ethnic identity. People who have a positive attitude treat their ethnic identity positively, are proud of their mother tongue, culture and customs. Men'er not only demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of his culture but also showed pride in it (His knowledge of the plant Sharen is a good example of this). Traditional clothing and festivals play an important role in the culture of many ethnic groups of China. The authors spoke with Men'er about these aspects. In particular, Men'er volunteered to introduce Hani festivals to us. The authors could clearly identify Men'er's positive attitude towards Hani culture.

Men'er's Views of Hani Traditional Dress

Author(s): Do you like your Hani traditional clothes?

Men'er: Yes. The women's clothing is more beautiful than the men's.

Author(s): When do you dress in your traditional clothing?

Men'er: We usually wear our clothing for festivals, as they are not as convenient as Dai clothing. (May 2007, field notes, at Menghan Middle School)

Men'er Invited Classmates and Others to Take Part in a Hani Festival

Once in an interview, Men'er invited the first author to take part in their Hani festival. The record is as follows:

Men'er: Teacher, [he calls the author teacher as courtesy] our festival is coming, would you come and enjoy it?

Author: Thank you, I'm afraid I can't; I'm leaving for Beijing.

Men'er: I invited many students last year, and they were very happy. I always invite classmates to our festival.

Author: Do you participate in the Dai festival?

Men'er: Yes, they invited me to participate in their Water-Splashing festival.

Author: Do you like it?

Men'er: Yes.

Author: Do you like your Hani national festival?

Men'er: Absolutely! (May 2008, field notes, at Menghan Middle School)

Men'er's Action towards Hani National Culture

Action includes national, social and cultural participation. Some researchers consider national engagement and social culture to be the main indicators to measure ethnic identity. Specifically, native languages, community and ethnic group participation, and cultural customs, can all be used as measures.

The Use of Hani Language

Author(s): Men'er, can you speak the Hani language?

Men'er: Absolutely, we can all speak our language.

Author(s): When do you speak your language?

Men'er: At home, sometimes at school with a Hani classmate.

Author(s): Do you like to speak it?

Men'er: Yes! (November 2008, field notes, at Menghan Middle School)

Men'er's Ideals

Men'er showed far-reaching ideals that differentiated him from other students. In one interview, Men'er told the authors that he hoped to go to medical school, where he would develop the traditional medicine of the Hani people.

Author(s): What do you want to be when you grow up?

Men'er: [embarrassed for a while] Go to college.

Author(s): What kind of college do you want to attend?

Men'er: A medical college.

Author(s): Why do you want to study medicine?

Men'er: Because my math teacher tells me that I am fit for it.

Author(s): Why does your mathematics teacher think so?

Men'er: Once my mathematics teacher played basketball and twisted his wrist. Many students began to massage his wrist, including me. My teacher said that I did the best. Later I asked my father to gather some herbs in the mountains; after muddling I put them on my teacher's injured wrist. He said it worked very well, and hoped for me to be a doctor in the future.

Author(s): Who teaches you these things?

Men'er: Nobody, I have seen somebody in my family do so before, but I learned massage from my grandmother.

Author(s): Can all Hani people massage?

Men'er: Some people can and some cannot.

Author(s): What did you think after you helped your teacher?

Men'er: I was very happy because I was the best at massage. (November 2008, field notes, at Menghan Middle School)

The traditional massage of the Hani has a long history and is still practiced today. It is one of the oldest forms of health care in China. Hani massage is full of the struggle experiences of the Hani people against illness, and can be seen as an important part of Hani cultural heritage. The above material reflects the fact that Men'er participates positively in the cultural traditions of his ethnic group,

going so far as to express a desire to become a doctor so as to develop Hani traditional medicine.

Discussion of Men'er's Ethnic Identity

Men'er, 15 years old, was in a crucial period of self-identity. He showed the authors a positive sense of cultural identity. He was familiar with the culture of his own ethnic group. He knew not only the special system of Hani naming, but also the traditional massage of Hani. He could introduce the specialties and customs of his hometown in detail. His love for his own culture and confidence in it also showed his identification with Hani culture. In interviews, he was excited to show and introduce Hani culture to the authors and even invited the first author to enjoy the traditional Hani festivals in his village. He did the same thing with his teachers and classmates. Different from other shy Hani students, he appeared to be an outgoing and generous student. In addition, though he identified with the culture of his own ethnic group, he also expressed enthusiasm for other cultures. For example, he invited classmates to enjoy their Hani festival and was invited to enjoy the Water-Splashing Festival of the Dai nationality. He was fond of such activities. Because of his positive sense of ethnic identity, he also displayed a high level of self-acceptance and self-appreciation.

Why did Men'er have positive identification with his own culture? The authors found that Men'er's math teacher played a crucial role in promoting his ethnic identity. Although not a Hani teacher, the math teacher who also acted as head teacher of Men'er's class understood and appreciated the Hani culture. In his spare time, he asked Men'er about Hani culture, which made Men'er so proud that he was willing to acquaint himself with Hani culture and introduce it to others. From the interview above it can be seen that Men'er aimed to study medicine in the future. Men'er's math teacher had praised him for his ability in Hani traditional massage. His math teacher's praise for his massage technique made him think highly of his culture, and this brought him confidence. When the teacher praised his massage as the best, Men'er had the experience: "I am as good as others, even better than others." The teacher implicitly conveyed a message that he appreciated his culture, and young Men'er was inspired to go to a medical college. Because Men'er had high aspirations he was strict with himself, and studied very hard. The math teacher's acknowledgement of his culture promoted Men'er's affirmation of his own culture. This increased Men'er's confidence and increased his learning motivation and level of achievement.

Minority students' positive identification with their own cultures increases their confidence. This can promote minority students' sense of pride, and then improves their academic achievement. In the school, the authors found that Men'er actively communicated with teachers and other minority nationality

students. A sound cultural identity and sense of belonging within his own ethnic group made him very confident, and happy at the school. Because Men'er was very well adapted to his school environment, teachers and students appreciated him, which indicated that Men'er and other persons could mutually identify with each other, and that Men'er was able to express his attitude and ability. This helped to build his social identity. Men'er's good mental state enhanced his confidence, improved his academic achievement and increased his expectation of himself. The excellent academic achievement could enhance his identity more from the teacher. Thus, a virtuous cycle was formed, and a vicious circle was avoided. When taking a lesson in Men'er's class, the authors found that Men'er took pleasure in sharing Hani culture. There were plenty of examples showing that Men'er actively talked about his minority culture in class, rather than avoiding the topic.

An increase in minority students' confidence enhances teachers' expectations of students. Teachers' attitude and expectation for minority students can lead to their academic success or failure. Various studies have demonstrated that usually non-minority teachers expect little of minority students, thus the low expectation may result in their negative self-identity and maladjustment and lead to academic failure. If someone rejects his social environment, and does not identify with his role, he or she will be lost in his or her life and will not know who he or she is.

Readers may question why other Hani students did not have as good academic achievements as Men'er, though they had the same teachers. People tend to assume cultural groups behave as a unit with the same requirements and character, but this assumption is highly doubted. Cultural group is complicated and various, and a students' cultural group is also different and diverse. Every student should be seen as an independent one; we cannot think of all students of one ethnic group as the same (Davis, 2008). Students' academic achievements are the results of interaction between teachers and students; learning exists in communication. This interaction depends on trust from teachers on the one hand, and on students' acceptance of teachers' trust on the other hand.

The authors believe that teachers played an important role in Men'er's study progress. First, the math teacher promoted Men'er's ethnic identity; second, the math teacher accepted Men'er's Hani culture without prejudice. This generated mutual respect between teacher and student, and resulted in a virtuous circle.

Conclusion

Through the discussion of the case above, the authors conclude that teachers may play an important role in promoting the ethnic identity of minority students. Although the authors admit that reasons for Men'er's success in this study are

complicated, including factors such as family, himself, teachers and school, after interviews with Men'er and his teachers it was confirmed that his math teacher's actions were the most important factor.

The investigation of the school reveals that although it was a middle school for minorities, the status quo of multicultural awareness among teachers was unsatisfactory. The case study also found that the major problem in the interaction among teachers and minorities in this school was that the teachers were not familiar with their minority students' cultures. Because the teachers had a different cultural background from their students, students' behaviors or attitudes, which were taken for granted in their minority culture, had the potential to be misunderstood or neglected by their teachers (Hornett, 1990). Teachers who are interested in students' cultural backgrounds and respect these cultures appear to be rare. Most of the teachers completely lacked multicultural awareness. For example, when interviewed, many teachers stated that Dai students often ask for leave to go home to attend various activities called "Dan." They complained that Dai students are not eager to learn. But there is one teacher with familiarity towards Dai culture. He told the authors his opinions.

At the beginning, I did not understand why they must ask for leave to attend that activity. But now, I have tried to understand it from the perspective of Dai culture and tell them to ask for leave when needed. In Dai culture, for example, "Dan Sala" is an initiation rite for Dai girls. Usually Dai parents pay so much attention to it that they slaughter pigs and cattle to treat relatives and friends. This initiation rite is important for the Dai. But many teachers don't know that, so they usually disapprove when their Dai girl students ask for leave to attend such activities. Thus the students and their parents in question are not satisfied with the school and relevant teachers. So generally speaking, I will decide whether to allow them leave according to the importance of such activities in their culture. (Interview record, May 2008)

Most teachers in the school lacked multicultural awareness, so most neglected multicultural backgrounds when interacting with students.

China's population comprises of 56 different ethnic groups. According to the sixth national census data, out of a total population of 1,370,536,875, Han people made up 1,225,932,641 or 91.51% and minorities constituted 113,792,211 or 8.49% (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). Cultural diversity is a reality in minority areas in China. For this reason, teachers in minority areas should learn to communicate with students from different cultural backgrounds and understand those minority cultures. Those teachers who have multicultural awareness can promote self-confidence in minority students, which makes it possible for those minority students to improve their academic achievements. Therefore, teachers with multicultural awareness are essential for minority areas.

From the perspective of minority education, this study lays out the importance

of training teachers to have multicultural awareness. In fact, multicultural awareness should be one of the goals of teacher education not only in minority areas, but in the entire country. With the development of society and global economic integration, cultural diversity is increasing and how to deal with cultural diversity is growing in significance for every teacher.

On one hand, how to treat students from different cultural and social backgrounds is becoming an issue every teacher has to pay attention to. This is a new requirement for a new era for teachers. On the other hand, teachers should learn how to help students bridge different lives, cultures and knowledge systems, how to cultivate students' ability to communicate and cooperate with others, how to cultivate students' sense of responsibility and self-identity. The authors follow the idea of Fei Xiaotong: "Personal integrity and an appreciation of good in others should combine to create positive diversity; the foundation of harmony and unity." (1997). Therefore, multicultural awareness in the teaching profession should be strengthened to meet the requirements of the new age.

Meanwhile, no matter whether in minority areas or in other areas, multicultural awareness of Chinese teachers should be improved. In the development of teacher education, the lack of the cultural dimension is implicated in the lack of multicultural awareness among teachers. Chinese teacher education should add more cultural requirements; encourage teachers to know and respect different cultures and conventions, develop an attitude of tolerance, respect and openness; increase teachers' international and global consciousness; and possess the knowledge, ideals and techniques of cultural critique, cultural introspection and social acts.

Future Research

Through the careful analysis of the individual case of Men'er, the authors conclude that the multicultural sense of teachers may play an important part in promoting a positive sense of ethnic identity among minority students. But upon reflection, further research could include the following aspects. For example, how do teachers' multi-cultural sensibilities come into being? How should teachers' multi-cultural sense be cultivated? How does this affect the ethnic identity of minority students, in terms of process, methods and results?.

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