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Abstract

Title of Thesis- *Foreign Students' Experience in Socialization through Participation in Sports in a Singapore International School: A Case Study*

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This is a qualitative case study that aims at researching on six foreign students' experiential process in inter-national socialization and identity development in their participation in a Singapore international school's sport programme. Based on the multi-dimensional model, the study aims to provide understanding of the factors and experiences involved in the socialization process of these students as they participate in both formal and informal sporting activities. The study seeks to gain a theoretical understanding of the phenomena involved through using various social-psychological perspectives and theories to explain research findings. The study also serves to provide an understanding of the value of sport participation in a person's schooling life as well as the problems young people generally encounter whilst socializing in an international setting.

The findings of the study reveal the importance of having sporting activities as a means for inter-national socialization among the young students, where sport participation can provide a sense of shared reality which builds and develops positive relationships. The study also reveals the importance of having an amicable and people-oriented ethos in a school, which helps promote socialization in general. In relation to theoretical understanding from both the 'developmental' and 'humanistic-social constructionist' perspectives, the study reveals that multiple theories have to be utilized to provide better comprehension of the phenomena involved.

**Foreign Students' Experience in Socialization through
Participation in Sports in a Singapore International School:
A Case Study**

Peh Kian Chye Ken

A dissertation submitted to the School of Education of Durham University in partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Chapter 1- Introduction

The research topic 'Foreign Students' Experience in Socialization through Participation in Sports in a Singapore International School: A Case Study' is a qualitative study which considers the socialization and identity development of six foreign students through their participation in extra-curricular sport activities in a Singapore international school. The research is not concerned with examining sport as a vehicle for the socialization of the students into the wider school community. Rather the concern here is focusing on sport participation and the intrinsic value this has for their socialization within their sports clubs and teams. In other words, the study focuses on their socialization experiences within their sports clubs as they participate in sporting activities.

Here, the term 'socialization' or the act of 'socializing' is defined as a person's process of interaction, through which they may become more socially competent, learning and acquiring ways and values to effectively interact with their physical and social environment (Martens, 1975). It is also a process of identity development where they establish their personal and social identities. In the thesis, the terms 'students' and 'student subjects' are sometimes used inter-changeably to refer to the six foreign students selected for the study, though 'students' is more frequently used.

According to Boyd (2001), in qualitative studies, two to ten research participants are sufficient to generate adequate data for both a constructive analysis and a good understanding of researched issues. As this is a qualitative case study that involves six students as the main participants, the main purpose of the research thesis is, as far as possible, to offer a rich understanding of their experiences (Boyd, 2001). Instead of looking at social behaviour of large groups of people at a broad based level, the study focuses on the inter-national socializing experiences of six individuals and

how these individuals interact in their school sports clubs through their personal perceptions and responses to social situations and influences. As such a social-psychological theoretical approach is adopted as it enables the study of the social dynamics that occur in the relationship between these individuals and their sport environment (Farozi, 2009; Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2005; Ashworth, 1979). For this reason, the literature review in Chapter 2 provides an in-depth analysis of social psychological theories as applied to the notion of socialization. This is not to suggest that other theories of socialization do not exist, rather for the purposes of this thesis the standpoint taken is a social-psychological one.

All research has a subjective element, especially qualitative research where researchers make decisions on the choice of topics, the way the research should proceed and interpretation of results. These decisions involve individual choices and often evolve from previous personal experiences and commitment (Walford, 2001: 98). As the researcher, I am both a physical education teacher and the coordinator of the sport extra-curricular programme (ECA) in the school and someone who knows and is known as a teacher by the students (The implications of which are discussed in Chapter 3). As someone who has been involved in physical education and sport for many years as both a student and teacher, and keen on understanding the role of sport in a person's growth, so I have chosen a theme on 'sport and socialization' as a topic of study. In this instance a single case design (i.e. a school) with multiple units (i.e. six students) is adopted for the purpose of investigating a unique and revelatory case (Yin, 2003: 42). As this is a qualitative case study that involves mainly six students, the main purpose of the research thesis is, as far as possible, to offer a rich understanding of their experiences (Boyd, 2001). Whilst the research is unable to make generalizable claims, it is hoped that it will contribute to a greater qualitative in-

depth understanding of the role extra-curricular sport activities may play in socializing foreign students in similar settings.

The study is carried out through a research methodology that is based on a multi-dimensional approach and involves the utilization of methods such as interviews, conversations and observations (see Chapter 3). The thesis adopts the multi-dimensional approach in order to gain a more incisive understanding of the student subjects' socialization process. The multi-dimension model designed by Hutchinson (2008) is adopted as its social- psychological orientation covers both personal and social factors, which can provide a more all-round explanation of a person's socialization. The multi-dimensional perspective is one that approaches a topic by investigating several relevant areas. These areas cover the 'personal dimension', 'environmental dimension' and 'time dimension', and are explored in order to gain a fuller qualitative understanding of the students' experience (Hutchinson, 2008). Based on the multi-dimensional approach, five areas for investigation are selected for discussion in the thesis and they are: 'The School' (Chapter 4) which offers a basic understanding of the nature of the school's educational philosophy and programme. Students' Profiles (Chapter 5) looks at their backgrounds and perspectives towards sport. Students' Perception of the School (Chapter 6) looks at their overall impression of the school's various programmes. Students' Socialization Experience with Schoolmates in Sport Participation (Chapter 7) looks at their interacting experiences with fellow schoolmates in sporting activities. Students' Socialization Experience with the Teacher In-Charge and Coach of their Sport Activity/Club (Chapter 8) looks at their interacting experiences with both the teacher in-charge and coach of their sports clubs. In sum, the objectives of the thesis are:

- To investigate the extent to which students' participation in the various sports engenders a process of socialization;
- To theoretically explain the socialization process through a social-psychological lens.

In order to address these objectives, engagement with the data is undertaken in two main ways. Firstly, in Chapters 4-8 through a descriptive analysis which includes a critical discussion of the various factors and conditions which are involved in the students' socialization. Secondly, in Chapter 9 by further theoretical analysis and reflection where social-psychological theories from both the 'developmental' perspective and the 'humanistic-social constructionist' perspective are used to explain the phenomena and conclude on the findings. The two perspectives are adopted as they offer meaningful ways of interpreting and understanding the data as well as explaining the studied phenomena, and enable the categorisation of the various social-psychological theories explored. A detailed discussion of the various theories under the two perspectives will be presented in Chapter 2. But before turning to this discussion, the thesis turns first to providing a broader insight into the context and social-economic background to the case study school.

Background

In order to understand the context and socio-economic background it is important to reflect briefly on the process through which private mainstream education in Singapore came into being, and the country's education system that has evolved in a process of renewal and reform, over the last few decades. The idea of privatization of mainstream education was first mooted back in the mid 1980s when Singapore experienced a global recession that affected most parts of the world. Apart from responding to the crisis using economic tools, the government also felt the

urgency of innovating changes in the education system to directly respond to the crisis and also to produce people in the future who can manage the changing global economy. From 1959 to the mid-1980s, the government had been playing the roles of the main initiator, director and controller in the implementation of educational policies. The 'top-down' approach that had worked well in the initial nation-building years began to show its rigidities and flaws in the face of economic recession and changing world economic climate by the mid 1980s. A government sanctioned economics committee recommended that education should be able to develop an individual to their maximum potential and develop their skills in critical thinking and creativity, which would add value to Singapore's international competitiveness in the global economy (Tan, 1997). In other words, school has to teach students to think critically and analytically, and be flexible enough to adapt to changing situations in both corporate system and inter-personal relationships in work organizations (Yip & Sim, 1990). In the words of the then Deputy Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong:

Excellence in education is our goal. The government aims to raise the standard of all schools in Singapore,...to nurture inquiry minds and to create a lively intellectual environment which will ultimately spread throughout Singapore society.

(Yip & Sim, 1990: 3).

With growing affluence in the mid-1980s and amidst the public call for excellence both in schools and the Singapore society at large, the education system entered a new phase of development, characterised by efforts at rectifying deficiencies and problems inherent in the system as well as endeavours at fine tuning the system to meet national goals and varied individual needs of students. In order to enable education to achieve these aims, a 'bottom up' approach was hence essential for

educational reform to take place. This meant that the government welcomed ideas from the public and educationists on ways to re-invigorate education in Singapore. Eventually the Ministry of Education felt the need to offer more autonomy to schools in initiating innovative educational programmes that could respond promptly and sensitively to the needs of students and parents, which would eventually produce better quality people (Yip & Sim, 1990). Between 1988 and 1990, eight local popular secondary schools were granted 'Independent' status. Apart from having to conform to the basic requirements of the national education policy (such as sitting for the national GCE 'O' and 'A' levels examinations), they were allowed the freedom to design their own curricular programme and recruit their own staff with competitive salaries. Although being independent schools, they were still heavily subsidized by the government and were allowed to charge higher fees than other government schools. Throughout the 1990s, other schools were also granted 'Autonomous' status as well. From 1988 through the 1990s, the education system moved towards a more decentralized mode of school management which theoretically allowed for a more student oriented policy where schooling programme was more able to address the practical needs of students. It was also designed to more promote critical thinking and analytical skills. More subject choices in the sciences, humanities and arts were offered to meet the varied needs and talents of individuals. All in all, these changes aimed at producing creative thinkers and adaptable people who can manage well and help add value to Singapore in the changing world (Yip & Sim, 1990).

As Singapore entered the 21st century, the public call for a student-centered education became even stronger. The government understood this strong desire and responded accordingly by allowing more flexible curriculum and a wider range of subject choices in schools. Selected secondary schools were also allowed to

implement the 'Integrated Programme' where students can skip the GCE 'O' levels and do a six-year uninterrupted course before they sit for the 'A' levels. Over the last four years, it has enabled the establishment of specialist schools such as the Sports School, the School of Mathematics & Science, and the School of the Arts. These together with the increasing intakes in polytechnic and university admission, have shown the government's keen intention to reform and renew the education system when there is a strong need (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2002).

Due to the increasing transnational mobility of people over these years, the government also hopes to attract more foreign talents to the country in a bid to increase its population from the current four millions to six millions in the future so as to add boost to its society and economy. To attain this objective, national schools, the four universities, private commercial schools and foreign system schools in the country have been increasing their intakes of foreign students. This was also one of the factors that led to the setting up of the two local private international schools that aim to have 50% of its student population made up of foreigners (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2002).

Thus full privatization of mainstream secondary education in Singapore only came about in year 2005 when the board of management of one of the two local popular schools, set up a separate international school (in addition to its existing fraternal school) with the approval and endorsement of the government. (The term 'Mainstream Education' in the thesis refers to education that is provided by full-fledged educational institutions that are fully and officially endorsed by the government. It therefore does not include private commercial institutions, which though comply with governmental regulation, do not possess the official status of a full fledged educational institution). This new school is supposed to be an

international secondary school managed by a Singaporean management board. Before 2005, international schools in Singapore were basically ‘foreign system schools’ and they were run by foreign management boards (such as United World College, Canadian International School, Australian International School, etc) and they primarily admit non-Singaporeans. For political reasons, locals are generally not permitted to study in these international schools so that they must go through the national education system in national schools as part of their citizenship development. As part of the government’s effort to provide more choices in education and to make Singapore an education hub in the region, this locally managed international school is allowed to admit Singaporean students.

The school where the research was conducted officially started in 2005. Its other fraternal school is a missionary school that has a founding history of 111 years and one that places a stress on academic pursuits and character development. As one of the top schools in Singapore, it has a strong tradition in both academic excellence and sport achievement. As part of the same family of schools, so the case study school was founded upon a similar ethos of both academic and sport excellence. The school has a 40% foreign student population, comprising mainly South Koreans, Vietnamese, PRC Chinese, Taiwanese, Indonesians, Malaysians, Hongkongers, Japanese and Burmese (Lau & Teo, 2007). Greater detail of the school will be covered in Chapter 4.

In the next chapter I begin that research journey by reflecting on the literature around social-psychology, socialization and sport.

Chapter 2- Literature Review

This chapter covers the review of literature related to the study and two main areas are discussed- primarily from a social-psychological perspective- and these are 'Socialization' and 'Sport in Socialization'.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, instead of looking at the social behaviour of large groups of people at a broad based level, the study focuses on the inter-national socializing experiences of six individuals as they participate in sporting activities within their respective sports clubs. Thus the theories of socialization which will be discussed are primarily social-psychological in nature. The emphasis on the 'social-psychological' is made because in the context of this study they enable an analytical engagement with the social dynamics which occur in the relationship between individuals and their environment.

Socialization

In terms of social-psychological theories relevant to the discussion, I classify them under the 'Developmental' perspective (Durkin, 1995; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Hutchinson, 2008), and the 'Humanistic-Social Constructionist' perspective (Hutchinson & Charlesworth, 2008). The term 'perspective' here refers to a particular way of viewing and explaining the phenomena, as well as to a category of theories which share certain characteristics.

Developmental Perspective

In the 'developmental' perspective, the 'time' element in socialization and identity development is stressed in that a person grows and develops social-psychologically in stages or over a period of time (Durkin, 1995; Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain the different stages of socialization in one's growing up process, as that of 'primary' stage and 'secondary' stage. They define socialization as the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 47). Primary socialization is the first socialization individuals undergo in childhood, where they acquire values and attitudes from their immediate surroundings such as primary caregivers and family members, through which they are subject to 'habitualization' where they learn to love repeating operating procedures that win approval from their surrounding family members (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 130-131). Habitualization provides a person with direction and convenience in one's activity and socializes one early into the social world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 131-134). Secondary socialization is any subsequent process that inducts already socialized individuals into new sectors of the objective world of their society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 138-139). Here, the process of 'institutionalization' takes place as the person learns to respect institutions and internalize institutional values and to also acquire appropriate social behaviour and role-specific knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 139, 142). In both primary and secondary socializations, to internalize values is to integrate them into one's system of values and once they are part of the system, they become extremely resistant to change. The motivation behind internalization is to be 'morally right' or 'socially accepted', and it is a powerful and self-sustaining force that is intrinsic and may not depend on reward/punishment or peer pressure (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 173, 182-183; Aronson, 2004: 30-31). The degree of successful socialization is dependent on the existence of 'shared reality' between men and women; that is whether they share common values and attitudes (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 165). Both habitualization and institutionalization regulate human conduct and

socialize an individual as a member of society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 53-55). In the whole process, one's identity is formed through social processes such as social expectations and social relations as he or she maintains and modifies his/her identity through the continuous struggle between expectation of one's role and one's inherent biological-psychological tendencies (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 182-183).

Berger & Luckmann (1966) generally categorize one's socialization process into both primary and secondary stages, or simply primary socialization and secondary socialization. It seems that secondary socialization forms a tremendously large part of one's life as it probably starts when one begins schooling. However Berger & Luckmann's theory may not be explicit in accounting for the complex timeline of one's socialization in their lifetime, as it basically puts all socializing experience that occurs after the primary stage under secondary socialization without explicitly illuminating the different stages of socialization that can occur within the secondary stage. That is to say within the long period of secondary socialization, a person may experience a complex struggle with their identity and the value-systems they identify with and perhaps experiences re-socialization. For example upon entering school, they experience the early stage of secondary socialization through their encounter with institutionalization and identify with certain values/systems and acquire their identity as a law abiding patriotic citizen. But in later years, their encounter with different groups of people and disappointment with the government may cause them to change their value system where they slowly become skeptical about the government and its policy in citizenship education which they feel is just political 'brainwashing'. They may gradually develop an antipathy towards the notion of being a patriotic citizen and hence experience 're-socialization'. Such complexities

related to re-socialization and alteration of self-identity may not be clearly explained in Berger & Luckmann (1966).

Berger & Luckman (1966) theorize that habituation and institutionalization are two important tools of socialization without which it will not be effective. While habituation usually occurs at home in primary socialization, institutionalization usually takes place outside home such as schools in secondary socialization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 131, 138). Both tools share a common element, and that is the importance of 'gaining the acceptance of others'. Indeed Berger & Luckmann (1966) are right to point out that a feature of successful socialization is conforming to social expectations in both character and ability as after all a well educated person with good manners is definitely better accepted in society than one who is boorish and rude. However, a problem arises when a person goes all out to just make himself or herself 'accepted' in the community without having a firm value system of what is morally right or wrong. Institutionalization can help to socialize one into society, but more importantly it should educate a person to be morally correct about social justice and influence him to be proactive in remedying social problems. An example will be in fascist Germany in the 1930s and 40s when everyone seemed to support the aggression policy; a successfully socialized individual in the German society then would be one who supported the war as they would conform to social expectations of a nationalistic patriot, but from the moral perspective this kind of socialization is undesirable as they and many others' value system would cause damage and suffering to the world community (Miller, 2002:10).

While the key features in Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) developmental perspective lies in the two main stages of socialization, that of primary and secondary, Durkin (1995: 2) offers another way of explaining the developmental perspective by

establishing the term 'developmental social psychology' which is defined as the study of changes in human social-psychological behaviour and capacities over time. In the early years of a person's growth, they have strong attachment to primary caregivers such as parents who have great influence on their early establishment of feelings, values and personality, which are hard to change (Durkin, 1995:108). This is quite similar to the 'primary socialization' that is coined by Berger & Luckmann (1966) whereby one acquires deeply ingrained values and attitudes from immediate family members. While Berger & Luckmann (1966) espouse mainly on the general development of one's socialization process by dividing them into both 'primary' and 'secondary' socialization, Durkin (1995) talks about the specific features and the changes in one's growing up process such as bodily behaviours, mental processes and speech habits.

Durkin (1995: 13) defines socialization as a process whereby people acquire the rules of behaviour and the systems of beliefs and attitudes that equip them to function effectively as a member of a society. He introduces the term 'social cognition' which is the interpretation and understanding of the social world through human interactions. According to him, a socially competent individual is expected to be able communicate effectively, understand self and others, observe moral order of their community and regulate emotions; that individual is able to use his/her knowledge and skills in ways which take into account of his/her relations with others and promote positive aspects to those relations (Durkin, 1995: 149). To some extent, this is similar to the notion of institutionalization that is propounded in Berger & Luckmann (1966), whereby people internalize institutional values in the process of socialization.

Durkin (1995: 13) also explains the development of self identity by using the term 'individuation' which is a process in which people develop a concept of self through knowing their existence and individual uniqueness. Here Durkin (1995) seems to emphasize the importance of developing one's unique identity as compared to Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) notion of gaining social acceptance which may be done at the expense of developing one's unique identity. Compared to Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) proposition of conforming to social norms and expectations as part of socialization, Durkin (1995) stresses more on the element of 'individuation', a process of developing unique self-identity which enables one to function effectively and morally in society. This may imply that unlike Berger & Luckmann (1966), conforming to social norms may not be that critical in Durkin (1995). Durkin's (1995: 289-290) emphasis on 'social cognition' which enables one to understand the human world, socialize well and promote better relations among people, can also imply that Durkin (1995) stresses on the importance of one taking proactive actions as a member of society, in promoting society's well-being.

While Durkin (1995) illustrates the specific features of development of one's socialization process, in a not very different manner, Hutchinson (2008: 9-23) explains the developmental perspective in socialization by using the 'life course' paradigm which looks at how chronological age, relationships, life transitions and social change shape people's behaviour from birth to death. Similar to Durkin (1995) to some extent, she illustrates the specific details of the various stages of one's growing up process, by discussing a person's socializing process as they engage with the human, physical and social environments through adaptation, meaning making, affiliation and moral evaluation (Hutchinson, 2008: 9-23; 117-380). One unique feature however in Hutchinson (2008) is the discussion of 'play' as an important tool

for socialization, an element that is not widely discussed in Berger & Luckmann (1966) and Durkin (1995). Woody & Woody in Hutchinson (2008: 147, 154-155) illustrate the importance of 'play' in growing childhood as through play, children develop the motor skills essential for physical development, learn problem solving skills and acquire communication skills important for cognitive development; and through imaginary (pretend) play, they explore reality and gain self-confidence that enables them to gain control over their lives. Indeed playing games serves as a shared experience and an opportunity to develop social competence through peer acceptance and rejection, and in the process they develop self-concept, self-esteem, self identity, teamwork and develop close friendship with some people (Woody & Woody in Hutchinson, 2008: 155).

Woody & Woody (Hutchinson, 2008) illustrate the role of play as a means to acquire basic life skills and social competence, which could form part of the basis for growing up, but they do not explicitly explain how the learning acquired from play can contribute to one's later stages of socialization. An example is the teamwork children learn could foster attitudes such as loyalty and responsibility, which are important values in one's adult life, and how play can lead on to such essential values when they become adults is not clearly explained by Woody & Woody. Eventually a reader is left with the impression that 'play' only enables a child acquire basic skills and confidence, but how it can help a child to socialize later in life and develop his/her future identity is not explicitly explained.

If Woody's & Woody's (Hutchinson, 2008) perspective on play seems short of explaining fully the development of a person's socialization and identity, then Kroger (2000) can offer another useful perspective in the understanding of identity development. Kroger (2000: 8-9) uses Erikson's theory of 'tripartite nature of ego

identity' to explain the formation of identity in a person's growing up process though she places emphasis on the adolescent period which is the main period where one actively seeks to develop and define his/her identity. From age 13 onwards, one undergoes the growth spurt and develops various needs, such as that for affiliation, achievement, pride in accomplishment and independence from family (Kroger, 2000: 33-38). For example, between ages 13-15, a person has the needs for positive body image and good self-esteem for physical or athletic capability, and age 16-18 is a period of career contemplation (Kroger, 2000: 33-37, 72). According to the theory of 'tripartite nature of ego identity', a person's sense of ego identity is shaped by three interacting elements and they are their 'physiological needs'; 'psychological needs'; and the 'social-cultural milieu' in which they reside (Kroger, 2000: 8-10). Under 'physiological needs', physiological characteristics such as physical appearance and physical capacities/limitation provide the sense of 'bodily self' which contributes partly to identity development as one's sense of identity alters in accordance with physical changes including growing bigger/stronger and aging (Kroger, 2000: 9). The 'social-cultural milieus' that the person resides in provide opportunities for the expression and recognition of both their 'physiological needs' and 'psychological needs/interests' (Kroger, 2000: 9). Optimal identity development therefore involves finding social roles and niches that provide a good 'fit' for one's physiological and psychological capacities and interests (Kroger, 2000: 10). Kroger's (2000) use of the three interacting realm of needs offers a concise overview of the various needs in socialization, and these needs are also illustrated in detail by both Durkin (1995) and Hutchinson (2008). Her discussion of the 'physiological needs' provides an important point to consider in one's growing up process, a factor which is not conspicuously

illustrated by Berger & Luckmann (1966) who tend to stress more on the behavioural aspects and talk less on the needs for bodily needs and image.

Unlike Berger & Luckmann (1966), Durkin (1995), and Hutchinson (2008), who illustrate the socialization process of almost the whole of a person's life, Kroger's (2000) discussion centers mainly on the adolescent period from the age of 13. The lack of discussion of one's childhood years may render Kroger's (2000) perspective to be limited in providing a more holistic understanding of a person's socialization. Indeed, Kroger's (2000) concept of one's needs/interests 'fitting' the three interacting elements in identity development applies well in real life as most people experience this, but her theory can be more complete if she adds one more element and that is the 'spiritual' element for people who are religious or are 'religiously' faithful to a certain philosophy of living.

Kroger's (2000) notion of 'physiological' and 'psychological' needs are well exemplified in Kroger's (1989) emphasis on satisfaction needs in one's love and work life as important factors in one's socialization. Kroger (1989: 1-9) illustrates the development of self-identity as one navigates through life and develops a sense of who they are and how they can find personal satisfaction in the adult worlds of love and work. Kroger (1989) argues that the development and formation of identity involves the reorganization of feelings, opinions and social reality in order to be socially acceptable and effective; and to a certain extent, her perspective shares some similarities with Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) notion of 'institutionalization' in which one has to adapt to social norms by internalizing institutional values and acquiring appropriate behaviour in order to attain social acceptance. Kroger's (1989) perspective also supports and complements Durkin's (1995) notion of 'social

cognition' in which one has to understand the social world well in order to socialize effectively.

Kroger (1989: 8) quotes Loevinger in explaining that as one matures from childhood to adolescence, the degree of social conformity and co-operation increases. Individuals begin to discard certain childhood identifications that were formed with some exemplary figures/heroes, as their own unique identity evolves in the midst of interacting with others who are recognized as agents for their own growth and change (Kroger, 1989: 15). To Kroger (1989: 18), the process of identity formation entails many elements such as sense of inferiority, diligence, competence, role playing, wisdom and integrity, and the process goes on into late adolescence.

Kroger (1989) gives a general overview of one's identity development as they grow from childhood to adulthood. However, the theory again does not explain clearly identity development in childhood and Kroger only mentions that as a child grows into adolescence, they discard the heroes they used to identify with and reorganize their identification. Kroger (1989) seems to suggest that identity development in childhood is only occupied with identifying with comic or television 'heroes', which is not simply the case as a growing child in fact receives multifarious influences from family members and friends too. This in a way therefore limits Kroger's (1989) ability in providing a good overall analysis of identity development in one's life.

If Kroger's (1989) theory has limitations in explaining satisfactorily one's process of socialization, particularly the childhood phase, then McCarter (Hutchinson, 2008: 245) can offer another perspective that can provide a more comprehensive explanation. He gives a viable overview of a person's identity development by illustrating the four ways in identity formation; they are 'future orientation' where

people consider potential future self and use it to guide their process of identity development; 'role experimentation' where they experiment membership in different groups and build relationships with different people in the process of searching for or defining identity; 'exploration' where they try and experiment new things to discover their identity; and 'self-evaluation' where a person's identity involves a process of evaluating against peers through personal reflection and observation. These four ways of identity formation offer another way of explaining Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) concepts of 'habitualization' and 'institutionalization' as people undergo the processes of 'role experimentation' and 'self evaluation' in which they acquire values essential for social interaction. Durkin's (1995) concept of 'individuation' in which one develops unique self identity can also be further illustrated by McCarter's (Hutchinson, 2008) notions of both 'future orientation' where one utilizes potential future self, and 'exploration' where one experiments new things in life; all of which can help elucidate the process of identity development in one's socialization.

However McCarter's theory is basically a general overview of identity development and therefore lacks the clarity in terms of specific development for different periods as exemplified by Durkin (1995); for example, the particular type of identity development that occurs in each stage of childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

All in all, the 'developmental' perspective offers various theoretical viewpoints on the understanding of the meaning of socialization and the factors that are involved throughout the various stages of one's life. The problems and limitations associated with these views having been considered, the discussion now turns to the humanistic-social constructive perspective.

Humanistic-Social Constructionist Perspective

The 'humanistic-social constructionist' perspective is comprised of two sub perspectives, namely that of 'humanistic' and 'social constructionist'. From the 'humanistic' perspective, an individual possesses the freedom to deliberate on their socialization experience; they can choose who they want to socialize with and can choose the meanings they want to create in their socializing experience, depending on their value system and personality (Hutchinson & Charlesworth in Hutchinson, 2008: 71). Through such personal deliberation, the individual is able to attain personal growth and fulfillment, having satisfied their need for belonging and self esteem (Hutchinson & Charlesworth in Hutchinson, 2008: 71-72).

However, the freedom for individual deliberation is seldom the only factor where a socializing experience is concerned as every individual is subject to social environmental forces and one has to be able to adapt accordingly to social circumstances in order to socialize effectively from the perspective of the 'social-constructionist'. The perspective from the 'social-constructionist' point of view is hence one which complements the 'humanistic' perspective in the discourse of socialization, whereby the negotiation between the freedom for individual deliberation and the need to adapt to social environment can be attained. From the 'social-constructionist' perspective, though individuals have the freedom to deliberate on their socializing experience, they are also subject to social forces in that they are still social beings whose character, personality and behaviour are influenced by the social environment (Hutchinson & Charlesworth in Hutchinson, 2008: 43-44). In other words, people are social beings who interact with one another and the physical world based on the shared meanings or shared understanding of the world. There exists shared multiple subjective social and cultural realities that are created as people

interact. The interactive relationship between persons and environments is a two-way dynamic process in which the two parties mutually influence each other. Humans can shape and be shaped by the environment as they develop their own interpretation of the world of interactions (Hutchinson & Charlesworth in Hutchinson, 2008: 57). According to Mead (Hutchinson & Charleworth in Hutchinson, 2008: 57), a person only functions as a 'self' when they are in a community and the self's development is based on their interpretation of the generalized other or the attitude of the entire community. In reality, from the 'social-constructionist' perspective, a person's development in socialization process is very much a product of the dynamic interactive process between one's personal deliberation and environmental influence (Hutchinson & Charleworth in Hutchinson, 2008).

Based on the explanation above, both the 'humanistic' and 'social-constructionist' perspectives complement each other, and hence they are merged to form the 'humanistic-social constructionist' perspective which will be used in the study. The following is the illustration of the various relevant theories on socialization and identity development, which can be classified under the 'humanistic-social constructionist' perspective.

Martens (1975: 3) defines social psychology as one which includes socialization, and seeks to understand the 'how' and 'why' of human behaviour through investigating the influences that act on social behaviour. It is concerned with an individual's relationship with the environment and how the inherent identity and behavioural disposition interact with the social elements in the environment. In a general context, a person is both a creator and product of social influences and forces as they play both active and reactive roles while engaging with the environment (Martens, 1975: 4). In the process, they develop their own identity and acquire social

competence that enables them to function effectively in a society. Such social competence is based upon self-confidence, self-belief, mastery of practical skills as well as intellect and social skills, which facilitate one's survival in a group and community; a process that entails continuous adjustments to changes as their social and personal identities evolve throughout the years (Martens, 1975: 4-5). Martens (1975) explains socialization in a general and straightforward way that is easily understood as he lists the qualities required of social competence in one's process of establishing and refining their identity.

Martens' (1975) theory provides for a good overview of a person's identity development and, essential individual and social elements of socialization are presented. However, Martens seems to imply that successful socialization largely means to survive well in society. The question is, people who survive well may be leading a plain life without any higher aspirations such as attaining higher levels of excellence in their endeavours, helping the needy or working for social justice; or they may also be living a life of treachery and are not guided by strong moral reasoning but who can still prevail in society through their crafty maneuverings. In both cases, they can still be deemed to have experienced successful socialization since they would still survive well in society anyway. This then makes us ponder the meaning of successful socialization and the true meaning of life in general, both of which if explicitly defined would make Martens' theory more complete and meaningful.

Similar to Martens (1975) to some extent, Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995) provide an overview of the meaning of socialization, but they tend to stress the importance of social forces in one's socializing process.

Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995: 4-5) offer another way of explaining socialization by emphasizing the great impact social influence has on human

development. According to Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995: 4-5), we are being situated in a cultural environment and in a community with others; our intellectual powers are nurtured and sustained in that cultural environment and derive characters from it. We are beings who live in consort with others and whose lives are structured by our ties to each other, where we could feel and express the joys and sufferings we experience. We can read in each human face a story composed in a social world and we can read it only because we are members of such a human world. Thus we are socially constructed beings as our identities are significantly shaped by social and cultural influences. The particular mental states of individuals and the disposition of our characters are formed in social interaction. All of us undergo a complex process of education and socialization; we learn the science and myth of our time and space, and we internalize social values and norms. All this makes us who we are. Of course, we are not totally constructed by social forces only, we are also participants in our own construction and exercise some autonomy in the midst of socialization. Nevertheless, the influence of social forces is the paramount determinant in the shaping of our identity (Bakhurst & Sypnowich, 1995: 4-5).

Unlike Martens (1995), Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995) give primary importance to social environmental forces in effecting a person's socialization, and tend to downplay an individual's own ability in deciding one's course of socialization. While Martens (1975) presents a more balanced account of the influence exerted by both the environment and the individual, Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995) tend to believe that environmental influence is more decisive than individual deliberation.

Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995) give a viable general analysis of a person's socialization experience, but as it is a general overview, there is little detailed illustration of the different types of social and cultural influences that help shape

one's identity. For instance, types of social influence can include family, schools, religion, recreation groups and social groups; all of which are not explicitly presented by Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995). The lack of explaining in detail how the various types of social factors and influences contribute to socialization makes the theory look less complete and convincing. Eventually, Bakhurst's & Sypnowich's (1995) theory seems more like a summarized proposition of what socialization is all about.

If Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995) provide a perspective that is too general and one that lacks clear account of specific factors influencing socialization, then Radley's (1991) proposition on group dynamics as an important factor can be a useful point for study.

Radley (1991: 1-5) explains that social interaction is the way in which people form, maintain and change their relationships with each other, and the states of the relationships alter between two persons when there are new members in the group and changing situations. This change in the state of relationships is termed as group dynamics. According to him, in studying relationships, it is not advisable to use scientific theories to replace common sense, as social interaction essentially involves bodily conduct and it is a very daily real thing (Radley, 1991: 6). Radley (1991: 30) also introduces the elements of external system and internal system which affect a person's way or degree of socializing. External system refers to the physical environment and internal system includes sentiments, activity and interactions within a group. Radley (1991) focuses on the role social interaction plays in the development of human relationship and discusses the dynamics involved. As he explores human relationship at a 'person to person' level, that is, the usual interaction between people that you would normally expect to take place daily, his theory is very much about group dynamics (Radley, 1991: 5). To put it simply, he talks about how people

conduct themselves in relationships in different circumstances, such as husband and wife behaving differently in the presence of friends and relatives.

Unlike Martens (1975) who provides a larger theoretical proposition of one's socialization as he theorizes the relationship between man and environment, and the dynamics involved in influencing socialization and identity development, Radley (1991) focuses on the details such as verbal and body languages of the basic person to person interaction. Radley's (1991) theory however does not say much about a larger identity development and acquisition of values which other theories do. His theory therefore is more of a study of daily interaction and its dynamics, and may be limited in providing deeper insights on how a person grows through these interactions in terms of a larger identity development.

If Radley's (1991) perspective is short of offering deeper insights in the realm of socialization, then Hamachek's (1992) use of the 'psycho dynamic' theory offers a theoretical perspective which can be useful for a fuller understanding of one's socialization experience.

Hamachek (1992: vi) explains socialization using the 'psycho dynamic' theory which explains the development of human identity as an interactive process that involves the person, perception and environment; the greater our self-knowledge of who we are, how we became a person we are, the more choices we have in life. The self is the component of our consciousness that gives us a sense of personal existence and identity. The self contains our total subjective and intrapersonal world which is made up of our basic system of belief, attitudes and values; and the evolution of self is a complex process that involves an ongoing engagement between our genetic potentials and environmental experiences (Hamachek, 1992: 4). Social expectation of roles in the community influences the way we behave as feedback shape our conduct

and reinforces how we feel about ourselves (Hamachek, 1992: 20). By developing an awareness of our possible qualities, we channel our energies and direct our motivation towards goals that are reachable, hence improving our self-concept and establishing our self-identity (Hamachek, 1992: 31). Hamachek (1992: 22) adds in the element of 'social expectation' and highlights its importance in influencing our opinion on ourselves, which motivates us to do certain things to establish our self-identity that can earn respect from others. Hamachek (1992: 22-27) presents a viable theoretical proposition on both identity development and socialization, which theorizes how individuals develop their existential identity in the human world through their ability to connect self-knowledge and energy with the social world in a two-way relationship between self and environment, and are therefore able to function effectively in society.

In a way, due to its stronger theoretical basis, Hamachek (1992) is definitely more able than Radley (1991) in providing deeper insights in socialization as the former is able to present a theoretical proposition wider than that of Radley's by expanding the discourse into the greater area of one's socialization and identity development. Hamachek's (1992) proposition of the 'psycho-dynamic' theory that espouses the interactive process between the self and the environment in the course of a person's socialization and development of identity is in line with Martens' (1975) perspective of the interactive relationship between the individual and environment, where both environment and self exert relatively equal degree of impact in influencing the process of socialization. Compared to Martens (1975) however, Hamachek (1992) seems to place greater emphasis on the deliberate ability of the self in directing the development of one's identity in the course of socialization as he mentions about the importance of greater self-knowledge for more choices in life.

Although the 'psycho dynamic' theory can be seen as quite an empowering human centered theory as it proposes that greater knowledge of one's self and qualities will enable a person to have more choices in life and enable him/her to work towards his/her goals, it does not mention whether the goals are humanistic or not. For example, producing weapons of mass destruction can also be a goal but it is morally inhumanistic. Therefore the 'psycho dynamic' theory though empowering to human beings, there is a possibility that it may be misused by individuals without moral supervision.

If Hamachek (1992) tends to give greater importance to one's own ability than social forces in charting the course of socialization, then Ashworth (1979) provides a perspective that seems to imply that social environmental forces exert a greater influence.

Ashworth (1979: 1) explains socialization as a form of social interaction in which the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others; as human beings are essentially social, their thoughts and actions are the products of social experience. A theory that can be used to explain all phenomena is 'symbolic interactionism', which states that human beings constantly do reflection through internalizing language and gesture communications, and other forms of symbolically meaningful interaction (Ashworth, 1979: 5). People act with a purpose that they hope will lead to some meaningful responses from others and meaningful change in situation. They act in accordance with a generalized set of expectations and views of themselves which they have internalized, and adopt an overall general image or identity of themselves; over time they slowly build a stable, consistent self-concept acquiring more information and modifying their identity (Ashworth, 1979: 8-9). The self-concept is strongly related to the attitudes of others,

and they and others are formed into reference groups which are used to gauge one's conduct and performance (Ashworth, 1979: 98). Because of the existence of social institutions, one's behaviour is controlled as one has to fit social norms, leading to a person having multi-personalities where they display different behaviours when alone and in the company of others (Ashworth, 1979: 100).

There are some similarities between Ashworth's and Hamachek's theories as both agree that individuals' thought and behaviour are very much influenced by 'social expectation' and 'social norms'; and the forming and formation of self identity is a long process of internalizing social experiences and factors. In comparison, Ashworth (1979) and Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995) tend to agree more on the greater impact exerted by social influence than Hamachek (1992) who tends to attach greater importance to self effort, though all of them agree that effective socialization involves the negotiated engagement between the person/self and the environment.

However, Ashworth's stress on the need to 'fit social norms' if taken to the extreme seems to imply that human beings are constantly conscious of fitting others' expectations and may lack the autonomy to decide for themselves who and what they should be. This could lead to individuals not being able to live up to their desired fulfillment in life and hence not being able to lead a truly meaningful life as well. Similar to some extent to Martens (1975), Ashworth's (1979) proposition on fitting the social norms may mean just another way to survive well in society but not necessarily living with meaningful purposes and goals.

Compared to Ashworth (1979), Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995) and Hamachek (1992), Hewitt (2003) presents a perspective which stresses the importance of balancing the needs of both the individual and group in one's socialization. In other

words, socialization involves a great deal of personal deliberate effort. Such effort is subject to social forces which influence the person to channel their effort towards producing a socialized individual who is autonomous and yet socially appropriate in their conduct.

According to Hewitt (2003: 2-4), the establishment of personal identity is facilitated through the workings of 'self-schema' which is a cognitive generalization of the self, derived from past experiences. The self-schema creates a theory of the self that combines categories, abstract ideas and propositions about how things are related to one another; the person makes meaning out of all this and creates their own personal identity (Hewitt, 2003: 114). One's personality is also shaped by social and cultural forces in the process of socialization where they select and interpret various influences, and internalize its meanings as they establish their own identity (Hewitt, 2003: 259). Identification with others is a major driving force in human conduct; it encompasses feelings of attachment to others, common interest and positive affective responses to others and situations (Hewitt, 2003: 105). As members of a common shared experience work in unison and grow together, social bonding ensues, which facilitates the development and establishment of social identity (Hewitt, 2003: 105). Human actions are premised upon the maintenance of intact, healthy social bonds which hold a society together and connect human beings who need it in order to feel a sense of belonging and attachment; but a healthy social bond is one that balances the needs of the individual and those of the group, and due to the autonomous nature of the person, individuals may not always conform to social norms and there is always a potential state of tension between the individual and society (Hewitt, 2003: 200).

Unique from others, Hewitt (2003) introduces a new concept, 'tension between individual and society', which is caused by the conflict between individual

needs and group needs/expectation. This leads one to think that socialization is not always comfortable as one has to constantly struggle to find one's own identity. Hewitt's concept of 'tension between individual and society' is perhaps a healthy element in one's socialization for without which, human beings would solely be concerned with identifying with others in order to fit social norms to gain social acceptance, as mentioned by Ashworth (1979), and that would have undesirable consequences. It is indeed natural that human beings being social animals, would want to identify with others so as to feel belonged; the question is 'belonged to what kind of people?' Take the previous example on fascist Germany mentioned in the critique of Berger & Luckmann (1966), if an individual feels it is important to identify with the ultra-nationalistic Germans of those days, then their life would be filled with xenophobic hatred and geared towards xenophobic aggression, in order to attain a social bond with the majority in German society. But when a person with a firm value system who believes in humanitarian peace feels that there is a conflict between their personal belief and the belief preached by the nationalistic public, they feel a 'tension between themselves and society' and seek to establish their own identity different from the majority.

Hewitt's (2003) notion of 'tension between oneself and society' necessitates the fact that the course of socialization always entails a process of a person struggling hard to assimilate themselves into society or a group whereby they have to negotiate between the needs of both the individual and the group. Indeed a major part of socialization is the development of a person's identity which is comprised of two parts: individual identity of a private person; and identity as a member of a society/group or social/group identity. In the humanistic-social constructive

perspective of socialization, there are several theories that explain the element of 'social/group identity'.

According to Turner's (1982: 15) 'social identification model', when two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves or perceive themselves to be members of the same category come together and form a 'social group', a kind of 'social identity' soon forms; for example people of the same trade (such as professional footballers and engineers), or people who believe in the same ideals for the environment. The group has people who are in some ways socially or psychologically interdependent for the satisfaction of needs and attainment of goals, or they share certain attitude and values. Such interdependence leads to co-operative social interaction, communication, mutual attraction and mutual influence between individuals (Turner, 1982: 15). From the perspective of social identification, such a social group is based on some social categories and the group members internalize these categories as aspects of self-concepts, and as a result, they share certain philosophy or orientation (Turner, 1982: 16-20). An example will be a group of environmental friendly people who believe in a philosophy that espouses the protection of environment and will naturally orientate themselves towards habits and actions linked to recycling and energy conservation. From the perspective of 'social identity' which is a further development of the 'social identification model', Turner's (1987: 1) view on socialization highlights the formation of social group identity that is based on common interest and aspiration. Turner explains that social psychology is a continuous reciprocal interaction and functional interdependence between the psychological processes of individuals, their activity, relations and products of society (Turner, 1987: 20). Individuals are both socially and psychologically creative in the evolution and making of a community. Turner (1987: 42, 67) writes about the self-

categorization theory, a form of social identity theory that explains the formation of a group in which members relate to one another psychologically through common interests and disposition. Not merely a membership group, it is a positive reference group that is formed as a result of differentiating itself from others through having developed its own norms and values (Turner, 1987: 92). As a result, a form of social identity is formed. Both the individual and social identities are mediated by many individual and social factors through mutual learning, compromise and adaptation, through which a form of social character is developed (Turner, 1987: 92-93). Social identity is a 'socially structured field' within the individual mind; it is a mechanism whereby society forms the psychology of its members to pursue collective goals; it provides group members with a shared psychological field, shared cognitive representations of themselves and their own identity (Turner, 1987: 92-95). In the process, individuals regulate and co-ordinate their behaviours and bring the whole community into objective existence, and social identity is that 'psychological representation' of the whole (Turner, 1987: 207).

Turner's (1982 & 1987) social identity theory accounts strongly for the gathering of people of common interests and psychological orientation. It can have very potent effect in assembling like-minded people to fight for a common cause. At a very high level, the group members can be very politically motivated and hence possess an exceptionally strong sense of mission and stay very united with one another based on a common social identity. Such strong unity may also mean that different opinions are not tolerated as this can be seen as dissent, and as such there can be exclusiveness and discrimination against people who have different perspectives even though they share the group's ultimate aspirations.

Deschamps & Deros (1998: 2) offer further explanation of 'social identity' by saying that every individual is characterised by some social features which reflect his/her membership of a group or category of similar background and orientation. To have a social identity means that one belongs to a particular social group or category, which is underlined by a process termed as 'social categorization' (Deschamps & Deros, 1998: 4). Social categorization refers to human psychological processes which tend to organize the environment into categories or groups of persons, according to their similar actions, intentions and behaviours. Deschamps & Deros (1998: 4) quote Doise in further explaining that categorization is a psychological process that simplifies the perception of both physical and social worlds, and also simplifies the way individuals organize the subjective perception of their environment. Quoting Tajfel, "Social identity is conceptualized as being connected to the individual's knowledge of belonging to a certain social group with emotional and evaluation significance" (Deschamps & Deros, 1998: 5). Moghaddam (2006: 157) proposes that as a form of social identity, individuals are assumed to have a preference for group membership that supports their proposed need for a positive and distinct identity. The preference is learned through socialization processes as they are taught that belonging to groups with positive and distinct identities is more rewarding in ways related to emotional support and social acceptance. Moghaddam (2006: 160) defines 'social identity' as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". Both Deschamps & Deros (1998) and Moghaddam (2006) propose that a person usually socially identifies with a group of people who share certain similar disposition, and membership in this group is desired because it is able to satisfy their needs for emotional support and social acceptance.

There is however a question of whether that members are too dependant on emotional support from this group and if there is, then there is a possibility that they may not be open to other groups which can also have positive influence on them and hence enrich their mind and thinking. Solely dependant on one group (because of some unexplained bond between them and the group) may spell the possibility of them not being able to view things correctly sometimes as that group may provide distorted views.

Tyler & Blader (2000: 147) offer another explanation of the social identity theory, by explicating that people define themselves through the group they belong to in the process of social categorization and term the group identity the 'social self'. If one is proud of the group identity, they will be motivated to behave in a certain way and co-operate in order to maintain self-esteem (Tyler & Blader, 2000: 147). In social identity theory, people create their sense of self and evaluate their self-worth by combining personal identity and group identity such that there is positive 'psychological engagement with the group' in which they attain pride and sense of belonging through group membership that has some emotional and value significance to them (Tyler & Blader, 2000: 179). In 'psychological engagement with the group', one is also motivated to be a member of the group if the group is accorded the right respect, as the positive social identity of the group leads to positive self image and positive personal identity (Tyler & Blader, 2000: 179). There is a difference between positive 'psychological engagement' and positive 'behavioural engagement'. While positive 'psychological engagement' entails full loyalty and commitment to the group where members are not driven by material gain and are intrinsically motivated by both the desire to contribute and pride as a member; in positive 'behavioural

engagement' however one may not identify fully with the group though he/she will still commit great effort out of a sense of responsibility (Tyler & Blader, 2000: 180).

Tyler's & Blader's use of the concept 'psychological engagement' is useful in understanding members' commitment and loyalty to group goals, based on their strong conviction. However one can also question how strong the 'psychological engagement' is actually in ensuring loyal commitment in reality under different circumstances. As mentioned by Tyler & Blader (2000), 'psychological engagement' also involves positive public image of the group, that is, members feel more proud or more committed to the group if it has a strong positive public image. So assuming if an environmental friendly group is not so welcome in a particular society because their agenda may pose a threat to big profiteering corporations which carry out hostile propaganda against the group, the not so positive public image of the group may affect members' loyalty and commitment to its goals even though these goals are beneficial to humanity. In this case then, members' degree of 'psychological engagement' with the group and their strength of commitment to the group are tested.

While Turner (1987), Deschamps & Deros (1998) and Moghaddam (2006) offer the more traditional view of social identity theories, Tal (1998: 101) goes beyond that by introducing the notion of 'group belief' and says that social identity is not based merely on the categorization process, but also on strong group beliefs which provide the rationale for the group's existence. According to him, a social group has their own group norms, values, beliefs and ideology as part of social identity, and members usually hold them with great confidence. The power of group beliefs is derived from the sense of unity and communality which is based on common goals and destiny (Tal, 1998: 111). Group beliefs serve as goals and justifications for group

behaviour and they are the guiding force that may determine the direction, intensity and persistence of group behaviour (Tal, 1998: 112).

Tal's (1998) concept of 'group beliefs' is useful for the understanding of members' loyalty and passion for group goals as they internalize these beliefs so strongly that it becomes a major part of their lives and they spend a sizeable part of their life time fighting for these beliefs. However, one would question how healthy these group beliefs are in reality. These group beliefs may be extreme in nature and not relevant to current needs and if taken to the extreme without vigilant moral supervision, it may lead to overzealousness that could lead to undesirable consequences such as discrimination and violence.

Indeed if the 'group beliefs' as mentioned by Tal (1998) are inappropriately used by certain groups and pushed to the extreme, then a strong social/group identity may turn out to be counter-productive in reality as group members may become overzealous over group ideals and fail to use their own discretion to decide whether their goals are well-justified for the optimal good of society. In a group, the ability of individuals to use their own discretion to modify thinking and actions, and implement measures that are deemed to be constructive for the optimal good of the group or society is important, in order for group goals to stay relevant to humanity. This kind of individual discretion can only exist if individuality and individual identity exist in the group. In the humanistic-social constructionist perspective of socialization, there are several theories that explain the element of 'individual or personal identity'.

Belonging to a group contributes to the development of a positive social identity only if the characteristics of that group can be compared favourably to other groups, and a positive social identity will contribute to positive self-esteem and self-concept. However, the existence of social identity does not necessarily negate the

importance of individual personal identity which is typified by a person having his own unique individual characteristics despite being a member of a group. Personal identity and social identity should not be assumed to be in opposition with each other, and empirical studies have shown that one can still establish a unique personal identity while possessing a social identity as a member of a group; which is a matter of personal choice (Deschamps & Deros, 1998: 11). However, Postmes, Baray, Haslam, Morton & Swaab (2006: 226-227) propose that this personal choice of establishing one's personal/individual identity in a group is not always that easy as it depends on the group's level of acceptance, where personal identity is also shaped by the social identity of the group in a process of dynamic interaction between personal and social identities. Individuality can only emerge in an enduring and co-operating group whose members have developed organized patterns of relationships through interaction with one another. Postmes, et al. (2006: 228) explain that social identity is derived when the cognitive representations of in group stereotypes or social norms are grounded in a social consensus before they can be effective guides for in group behaviour. These social constructs inevitably depend on a system of social validation and social interaction to define and perpetuate them. It is through social interaction that social identities become social realities which members can identify with and act upon. The formation of personal identity goes through a similar process where how one successfully differentiates oneself from others and expresses personal identity is dependant on the tacit consent of the group members, and dependant on one's identification with the group identity or social identity of the group. You can only know yourself through a process of actual and symbolic interaction with others. Even the private sense of personal identity requires some social consensus that allows one to legitimately differentiate oneself from others (Postmes, et al. 2006: 228). But

contents of personal identity and social identity can be mutually reinforcing and not antagonistic such that the display of individual distinctiveness can be signs of collective trust, which then strengthens group's ability for coordinated action and enhances feelings of collective power (Postmes, et al. 2006: 232). Diversity in a group through 'diversity in unity' can therefore make both the group and the group identity stronger.

Allowing individual distinctiveness to flourish in a group where unity is maintained satisfies the needs for both collective cohesion and individual fulfillment as that means individuality is not suppressed and yet is given the space to develop. This will add more dimensions and enrich the group, hence making it more inclusive, but Postmes, et al. (2006) propose that the development of individuality or individual identity is also subject to the tacit consent of the group members. This is understandable if group members consider as far as whether that individual expression of distinctiveness is congruent with the goals or mission of the group; for example a football team can accept a player displaying creative skills unique from the rest as long as he can contribute to the team's victory. The problem arises when group members are too pre-occupied with strict traditions and lose focus on the ultimate goal of the group, and therefore refuse to allow the development of certain individual identity. This can occur in religious groups where older members find it uncomfortable to accept younger members' ways of doing things even though they are sensible and more efficient. When the majority of the group loses focus of its original purpose and act to suppress individual expression of uniqueness, it may kill spontaneous creativity among members and the group may become authoritarian and exclusive.

In a different way, Morales , Saez & Vega (1998: 199) explain the rationale for the existence of social or group identity by using the concept of ‘individualism’. Quoting Dumont, individualism is defined as a “moral, independent, autonomous being, who is a bearer of our supreme value” (Morales, et al. 1998: 200). However, there is a paradox in individualism in society as it implies selfish interest at the expense of others, so an alternative arose in that individual interests must be achieved in a way that protects everyone at the same time. If individual interests are achieved at the expense of others, individualism is equivalent to inequality and insensitivity, which are detrimental to the ideals of society. There is therefore a need for human consciousness for group interest, which leads to the formation of social or group identity which can help individuals achieve their goals while protecting the interests of others (Morales, et al. 1998: 200). This leads to the co-existence of both individual identity and collective identity in a group. Compared to Postmes, et al. (2006), Morales, et al. (1998) illustrate the need to strike a balance between individual and group/social needs. While Postmes (et al. 2006) and the others stress on the importance of fulfilling the individual need for expression and identity in order to ensure individual fulfillment for the sake of the group, Morales (et al. 2006) say that excessive individualism or allowing the individual too much freedom is a form of selfishness that would have damaging effects on the group as a whole. Both Morales, et al. (2006) and Postmes, et al. (2006) look at the issue from different angles but one can see that they are not contradictory and in fact complement each other. While the former warn against ‘excessive individualism’, the latter warn against ‘unhealthy suppression on individual identity’, both of which are detrimental to group goals. Both do not deny the importance of individual needs and identity but its development must gear towards the good of the group or larger society.

As mentioned above, one can still be a member of a group holding a group identity while retaining his unique individuality. Turner, Reynolds, Haslam & Veenstra (2006: 30) explain that individuality is the product of a subtle, complex, creative, contemporary and social psychological process, rather than a set of fixed and abstract traits acquired in the past. The 'self-categorization' theory postulates the existence of unique individuality in a group or society (Prentice, 2006: 45); and individual personality is part of an active and current process of self-categorization by which people are defined and act in relation to social life and the reality of their specific social location, and therefore personal conduct is not fixed and can vary according to social change and changes in group identities (Turner, et al. 2006: 31). A person can display individual differences among group members under some conditions and can also display collective similarities under others (Turner, et al., 2006). To Prentice (2006: 49), individuality connotes a sense of self-awareness of themselves as active agents in the immediate environment and there exists self-experience which is highly individualizing. For example, a person who goes out with a group, wants to be a part of the group but may not indulge in all of his/her friends' behaviours (such as heavy drinking and getting drunk). This 'experienced individuality' which is a perceived difference between the internal states that direct one's behaviour and those that presumably direct his/her friends' behaviour, means that there exists individual autonomy among people in a group due to different personalities. Individuality is after all influenced by the complex inter-play of individual and contextual factors such as the processes of self-regulation and self-reflection. There is therefore a balance between being conscious as a group member and as a unique individual (Prentice, 2006).

Both Turner, et al. (2006) and Prentice (2006) agree that unique individuality and individual autonomy exist in a group, which is a result of the interplay of self-awareness and contextual factors. Under different circumstances, a person can display their identity as a member of the group or as an individual. This is understandable from the perspective of human nature, but if one were to view it critically, that person may be seen as one who may not be firmly committed to the group or its cause; they can be judged as a fickle-minded opportunist who would display group or individual identity as and when there is an advantage to be gained. Despite such disadvantages individual autonomy may pose to a group, it is however still crucial for individual identity to exist for the reasons discussed above.

Pickett & Leonardelli (2006) add further justification on the importance of individual identity by elucidating the perspective of 'optimal balance' between individual identity and group identity. Pickett & Leonardelli (2006: 57) explain that humans have a strong desire to feel included in social groups and put in effort to maintain and establish interpersonal bonds or social bonds which are important for survival and reproduction. The sense of belonging (to a group) represents a core human need and individuals tend to seek social acceptance and inclusion through interpersonal attachments and social groups. Joining a group often entails an assimilation process where new members alter their characteristics and behaviours to fit the norms of the group. At the same time however, humans also need to have their own unique individuality. In group membership, the question is how individuals are able to negotiate between these two powerful motives- the desire for inclusion and belonging on one hand, and the desire for individual distinctiveness on the other (Pickett & Leonardelli, 2006: 58). According to the 'optimal distinctiveness' theory, identification with a group is motivated by the needs for assimilation and

differentiation with other groups, and group loyalty and satisfaction should be greatest for those group identities that optimize the satisfaction of both the needs for group belonging and individual identity, through inter-group and intra-group comparisons (Pickett & Leonardelli, 2006: 59). Based on the 'optimal distinctiveness' theory, if an optimal balance is achieved between satisfying both the needs for group belonging and individual identity, group loyalty would be maximized because individuality is not suppressed and individual members feel more motivated to contribute and serve the group (Pickett & Leonardelli, 2006: 59). In this context, there is adequate room for individual expression which adds on to the richness of the group culture which is seen as beneficial to the group, so long this individual expression and uniqueness does not in any way deter the group's development. Additionally, individuals feel respected and highly valued for their unique ability, who would also benefit from the advantages of group dynamics which will not occur when a person works alone. Hence in such an ideal situation, both the group and the individual enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship.

However, the problem arises in a not so ideal situation where the group does not facilitate adequate room for individual expression and coupled with the fact that the need for assimilation and group belonging among individuals becomes too strong, which results in the loss of the 'optimal balance' mentioned above. In this case, the individual may have a strong desire for group acceptance and would choose to suppress one's individual creativity and uniqueness in order to be accepted as a member. The loss of the 'optimal balance' between group and individual needs would lead to the group becoming identical or homogenous in opinion and orientation, and if taken to the extreme, the group may become undemocratic since individual voices that are seen as divergent from the group's practices and goals are now suppressed.

The above arguments have pointed to the notion that unique individuality and individual identity always exist significantly within a collective group identity. This individuality is critical for the healthy functioning of a group, such that an optimal balance between both individual identification and group/social identification is crucial for the maintenance of a strong group identity. One can argue that a strong group identity to some significant extent means that there is a strong sense of belonging and loyalty among group members. According to the 'social role' theory, one way to strengthen group identity through nurturing the sense of belonging and connectedness is to offer its members social roles and responsibilities, where roles have the capacity to satisfy needs for connectedness and authentic self-expression, which lead to the positive well-being of the members through satisfying both individual and group needs (Bettencourt, Molix, Talley & Sheldon, 2006: 199). As social roles require group members to interact, it can facilitate positive relations between role players. When members contribute to the group through their roles, they can experience a sense of being valued by, and being connected to the group (Bettencourt, et al., 2006: 200-201). Stryker in Bettencourt, et al. (2006: 199) proposes that people are motivated to carry out role-related duties as they provide rewarding social interactions and mutual exchanges of support. Empirical studies have shown that when group members perform desired roles, they feel empowered and are most likely to derive feelings of competence as these roles evoke a greater sense of responsibility and motivate stronger effort on their part, especially when there is positive appraisal and support from others (Bettencourt, et al., 2006: 202-204). Through social-role enactment, the individual needs for autonomy, self-empowerment and self-competency, and sense of connectedness to the group can be simultaneously satisfied; all of which satisfy the needs for both the individual and the group and

therefore help strengthen intra-group relations and group identity as a whole (Bettencourt, et al., 2006: 204-207).

Indeed based on the 'social role' theory, by allowing members to perform their desired roles, it satisfies individual needs for self-empowerment and achievement, which fosters members' affiliation to the group and hence strengthens loyalty. However there could be a problem in certain groups which are profit-driven where members are encouraged to put in utmost effort to increase sales. If they are not well trained to conduct commercial activities in a professional way, allowing them to perform their desired roles could result in them using all ways and means (irregardless of whether they are morally right or not) to market their products and services.

All in all, the 'humanistic-social constructive' perspective offers various theoretical viewpoints on the understanding of the meaning of socialization and the factors that are involved. The humanistic-social constructive perspective centers around the negotiation between the individual and social environment in the course of socialization and identity development. Some theories tend to stress on the individual playing a more pivotal role while others attach greater pivotal importance to the social environment. As far as identity development is concerned, the various theories acknowledge the crucial existence of both individual and social/group identities, both of which complement each other, which ultimately strengthens the group as a whole.

With both the 'developmental' and 'humanistic-social constructive' perspectives and their theories of socialization discussed above, we will now explore the relationship between socialization and sport. Socialization usually occurs in or through a particular medium that offers a platform for a gathering of individuals, where mutual communication and exchange take place (Hutchinson, 2000: 10). One such medium is sport, where the playing of games involves a gathering of participants

who engage themselves in teamwork, competition, communication of feelings, and mutual exchange of skills and ability. As an important socializing agent, it is claimed that sport enables participants to acquire values in order to function effectively in a community, as well as to communicate and bond with fellow beings (Arnold, 1997: 1-2).

A purpose of this study is to consider and reflect back on the social-psychological theories related to socialization and consider them in relation to sport participation. In the following sections, the significance of sport in socialization will be discussed from a social-psychological perspective.

Sport in Socialization

Involvement in sport and physical activity is part of a continued and interactive process of socialization which entails a range of complex skills and competencies (Scheerder, Thomis, Vanreusel, Lefevre, Renson, Eynde, & Beunen, 2006: 426). Martens (1975: 87) explains the act of socializing and socialization through sport participation as a social-psychological process of becoming communally competent where one learns and acquires values to effectively interact with the physical and social environment through a process of reinforcement, observational learning, accommodation, assimilation and finally identity formation; a process which aptly exists in the realm of sport with its wide range of functions.

Martens (1975: 87-91) explicates sport's role in socialization from a social-psychological perspective by advocating the point that it offers a communion of activity whereby a high degree of socializing interaction takes place, which cultivates both 'personal competence' and 'social competence'. 'Personal competence' refers to the notion that participating in sport offers an opportunity for participants to acquire both a 'sense of enjoyment' and 'values' that are constructive for personal fulfillment

and development (Martens, 1975: 89), while 'social competence' refers to a person's holistic capability in both cultivating positive human relationships and functioning effectively in social life (Martens, 1975: 92).

Sport and Personal Competence in Socialization

One essential characteristic which enables sport activity in cultivating personal competence and fulfillment in socialization is the element of recreation and the 'sense of enjoyment' derived from it (Nugent, 1982: 1-6). Huizinga (1949: 4-9) acknowledges the powerful potential recreation in sport has on people by saying that in the playing process filled with 'tension and excitement', where they attempt a task with full commitment and sincerity, they discover and feel the source of their creative powers. Sport and games essentially enable one to express their whole being freely through manifesting their physical, mental and spiritual potentials (Huizinga, 1949: 11). Huizinga's point is underlined by Kant's words, "Free play (in sport) is the unconstrained synthesis and harmonization of the mental powers of imagination and understanding" (Fink, 1988: 127). It is alleged that through sports and physical activities, humans experience a liberating ecstasy as they totally commit themselves to a situation and freely express desires as well as experience various possibilities. This satisfies their imaginations, nurtures emotions and enriches senses (Fink, 1988: 125-127).

This is further supported by Carvalho's (2000: 2) point that part of people's meaningful lives involves partaking in sporting activities that serve to contribute to a wholesome and joyful existence through enriching the well-beings of both individuals and society. In accord with this view, Arnold (1997: ix) asserts that sport's ability to induce excitement and joy is one human activity to be valued as a form of human aspiration towards a great life.

In relation to the cultivation of personal competence in sport participation, Arnold (1997: vii) believes that traditionally sport is an essential avenue through which desirable and powerful 'values' can be cultivated and transmitted, as he quotes the words of Rousseau, "Give his body constant exercise, make it strong and healthy in order to make him good and wise" (Arnold, 1997: 44). This is further supported by Shields and Bredemier (1994: 1) who espouse that values acquired from sport participation play an indispensable central role in an affective and motivational life of an individual as they become the driving force that supports human needs and social concerns. Sport therefore can play the essential role of socializing individuals into a community through the values it imparts (Arnold, 1997: 4). Part of this cultivation of values or value system is also related to the development of personal identity and self-affirmation in sport participation where sport participants have to negotiate between their interest and social expectation by utilizing various identity strategies throughout the process of affirming their identity as a male or female practitioner of a particular sport (Chimot & Louveau, 2010: 436-456; Scraton, Caudwell & Holland 2005: 71-88). To further elucidate, Guerandel & Mennesson (2007: 168) acknowledge that personal identity-role and self-affirmation evolve from the social construction of value system, whereby males and females are socialized by traditional masculine and feminine value systems into their roles and behaviours of a male or female sport participant. For example, a male participant would tend to display masculine qualities, which include 'highly competitive against opponents', 'very protective of teammates' and 'sense of chivalry' (Guerandel & Mennesson, 2007: 168-170).

To further elaborate, Mihalich (1982: 3-5) espouses that sport, as an essential feature in human existence and experience, socializes individuals by making them effectively functioning persons through the values such as 'diligence' and the 'spirit

of excellence' it imparts. Mihalich (1982: 8) quotes Johan Huizinga, "Sports are involved in the very foundation of society". This is supported by Jeziorski's (1994: viii) claim that sport enables the nurturing of fine values and fine character such as inculcating the value of striving for one's improvement while being concerned with the good of one's community, which are indispensable for the fostering of the spirit of communalism as well as human solidarity. Hyland (2001: 20) contends that in sport, there exist definitive goals and purposes that can only be fulfilled through personal and communal experiences, and according to Mihalich (1982: 35), sport enriches life and culture as well as creates vibrant families and societies.

From another perspective, Michael Novak declares (Mihalich, 1982: 14), "Sport is a joyful and inspirational expression of the human spirit". The sporting endeavour portrays the highest ideals of dedicated striving as well as heroic and extraordinary accomplishment, for the sake of achieving 'excellence' (Dixon, 2001: 50). In concurrence, Delattre (2001: 72) expresses that mankind has diverse needs and desires suited to our existence in the physical world, of which one of the most distinctive ones is the challenge of the human spirit, whereby humans can transcend limitations and thereafter seek to work towards improvement and perfection by accomplishing physical feats and setting records through intelligence, vision and effort. This requires the exercise of virtues such as courage and perseverance (Delattre, 2001: 72). The sporting enterprise ensures its longevity as a nourishing and boosting agent in the world of mankind by inspiring human beings to heights of excellence (Mihalich, 1982: 7). Fraleigh (1984: 10) agrees with Mihalich by saying that sport helps human beings realize their desire to be complete through the extension and testing of the body. The historic human consciousness for the need to improve and excel, has made sport an indispensable activity that offers deep satisfaction and

fulfillment as the feeling of self-efficacy and positive self-esteem gives one a sense of achievement (Roberts, 2001: 6-7). Through intense training and competition, participation in sport promotes self-confidence and self-empowerment, which makes participants resilient and able to adapt to life changes and effect desired outcomes (Keating, 2001: 11-12; Jeziorski, 1994: 43, 47). Indeed in many countries with established educational and social systems, it is widely believed that youth and school sports, and community sports in general contribute significantly in helping people acquire positive values in a healthy process of growing up as well as inculcate self-discipline that motivates them to perform well academically and in life (Sadlik & Kim, 2007: 36; Jeziorski, 1994: 5).

So far a review of literature in relation to the development of 'personal competence' in sport participation has been done. Certainly, through inculcating the sense of enjoyment, as well as the values of self-improvement, self-identity & affirmation and excellence as exemplified above, it is claimed that participating in sport does help facilitate the development of personal competence, which is a critical part of socialization (Jeziorski, 1994: 43-52). Beyond that, Martens (1975: 87-91) alleges that participation in sport also facilitates the developing of one's ability to interact and socialize, and thereby enables him/her to experience positive human relationships so as to acquire 'social competence'. Therefore apart from developing 'personal competence', participation in sport also engenders the development of 'social competence'.

Sport and Social Competence in Socialization

'Social competence' refers to a person's holistic capability in both cultivating positive human relationships and functioning effectively in social life (Martens, 1975: 92).

In Atkinson's view (1980: 20), playing sport is a creative energy and a form of synergy that brings people together; in other words, sport provides an avenue whereby participants have the opportunity to develop social competence. Fink (1988: 101) also expresses that games and sports offer a 'bonding effect' through which human beings are no longer imprisoned and isolated in their own individuality but seek for social contact of particular intensity, which enables self-transcendence where one enters a communion with others and merges with social reality, and hence experiences great joy. This is further supported by Hoffman's (1992: 20-25) notion that playing sport, an activity with great potential for spontaneity and creativity, have been an essential factor in the development of human society, as it enriches communal life. In sum, it is claimed that the elements of 'need for belonging' and 'bonding effect' enable sport to become an activity where a high degree of socializing takes place, which therefore engenders the development of social competence (Fink, 1988: 100-101).

Being a sport participant and member of a sport group necessitates the development of both the personal identity as an athletic person and the social identity as a member of a team or sporting community. As a form of liberal education, sport constitutes a meaningful pattern of life in which individuals can both find and challenge themselves not only in personal development but also in human relationships. It is alleged that participation in sport helps one to socialize through the cultivation of human relationship, which requires virtues such as integrity, humility, empathy and compassion (Arnold, 1997: 4-6). Jeziorski (1994: 17), and Shield & Bredemier (1994: 15) advocate that sport helps foster essential values such as spirit of compassion and resilience as it provides a myriad range of challenges and opportunities for people to develop interpersonal skills of co-operation and empathy. It is claimed that sport integrates participants from diverse backgrounds by breaking

down barriers of diversity and promotes democratic principles such as rights, freedom, equality and protection of the common good (Lumpkin, Stoll & Beller, 2003: 14; Jeziorski, 1994: vii). It offers opportunities for one to confront problems that require one to exercise moral decision through resolving conflicts and fulfilling responsibilities, as a member of a sport team or community (Butcher & Schneider, 2001: 30).

Pertaining to socialization in relationship with team mates and peers, Ong's (2006: 70-79) study shows that sporting activity that offers experiential learning which is based on free exchange of ideas and empowering team members with responsibility, helps instill teamwork, trust and confidence in self and others, which contributes to high team productivity as the team work towards goals. It is believed that good intra-team relationship with strong bonding which is based on trust, mutual respect, effective communication and empathetic support indeed helps to keep members focused and motivated throughout. This is able to rally them towards a common purpose and enable them to enjoy the common experience of struggle, making it all a pleasing experience to participants (Quek, 1997: 128; Carron, Eys, & Burke, 2007: 93, 99; Valentine, 2006: 179).

White (2007: 142) asserts that a person's perception and interpretation of the group environment as being friendly and motivational does contribute to one's continual involvement and sustained level of achievement in the activity. This is supported by both Jeziorski (1994: 21-25) and Quek (1997: 150) who express that a sport team or group that is seen as promoting self-efficacy and sense of group identity, provides participants a sense of belonging and social identity as they feel proud of being a member of a sport group, which hence prevents them from dropping out of the activity and suffering from identity crisis. This sense of identity as both a sport

participant and a member of a sport group or community does not come by automatically but is socially constructed by a community of participants who exert mutual influences among themselves (Chimot & Louveau, 2010: 437). Cratty (1981: 116) and Ntoumanis, Vazou, & Duda (2007: 146) propose that in a sport group that has strong affiliation among members whereby all are valued and respected as in a family, and where there is a high degree of co-operation, sense of belonging, tolerance, emotional support as well as high level of enjoyment in the activity, socialization will be highly successful and group cohesion will be strong. As a result, there is a strong sense of group identity and social bonding within the group, which helps sustain participation in sport (Smith, 2007: 48). Through such a sporting environment, mutually supportive relationships and positive socialization among team mates develop and hence instill meaning in their participative life.

Socialization with team mates and peers has been discussed above but human relationship in socialization also includes that with coaches and educators who are critical participants in sport as they set the norms of the sport group, which (norms) influence a person's perception of the group, which will in turn affect a person's participation and socializing experience (Kavussanu, 2007: 270). Quek (1977: 82, 93), Riemer (2007: 58-62) and Valentine (2006: 169) believe that athletes who sustain and enjoy participation in sport are those who develop good relationship with their coaches and educators who motivate them with individualized attention, empathetic understanding, praises, encouragement, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and rewards, as well as provide essential support in various forms which help the former focus well on sport. In order to have a positive socializing experience with coaches, a trusting relationship between the two parties must develop over time, a relationship that is built upon effective communication through which knowledge, skills and

concerns are transmitted, and coach-athlete conflicts are resolved (Jowett & Poczwadowski, 2007: 4; Lavoie, 2007: 30, 34). Duda & Balaguer (2007: 118) believe that a good relationship between the coach and the sport participant should not be based on mere narrow goals of winning competitions, but is one that is educational and empowering such that he/she will be able to stay self-motivated and self-determined even when he/she is down. Socialization in sport participation can therefore be deemed as wholly successful if one has good socializing experience with coaches as well.

The literature suggests that besides socialization with team mates and coaches, an important element in human relationships in sport participation is one's relationship with parents who play critical role in socializing the child into the realm of sport through influencing him/her in various ways which include regular family sporting activities and getting the child enrolled in junior sport clubs (Valentine, 2006: 128; Shakib & Dunbar, 2004: 27). Sadlik & Kim (2007: 36) suggest that participants in sports do receive earlier influences from family members such as parents in their involvement with sports, as parents believe that sport activities help foster qualities such as teamwork, fair play, discipline, responsibility and self-confidence the child needs in order to be successful, well adjusted and respectable members of society. Indeed active parents in doing regular physical activity with children set examples and reinforce values related to sportsmanship through encouraging and commending when the children do the right things, and disapproving and reprimanding when they do wrong (Sadlink & Kim, 2007: 39, 49). The influence exacted by home environment on young sport participants' ability in sustaining participation is shown in Quek's (1997: 46-52) study where parents supportive of their child's involvement in sport are known to stress discipline and positive work habits. White (2007: 135, 139),

Wylleman, Knop, Verdet, & Erpic (2007: 236-237), and Valentine (2006: 162) assert that parents play a critical role in socializing children into sport as they want to pass on this athletic desire to their off springs, and their belief and attitude can influence a child's effort. They contend that when parents are more involved and concerned with the child's sport activities by providing emotional support, the child becomes more motivated. At the same time, studies have also shown that when parents offer children more opportunities for self-determination and self-control in their participation in sport, the latter tend to develop greater feeling of autonomy and motivation which can lead to greater success in sport and studies (White, 2007: 134; Vallerand & Miquelon, 2007: 262). The dynamic interactive relationship between sport participants and parents is also a two-way relationship as apart from parents motivating the child, the child's positive enthusiasm can also influence the parents to be more enthusiastic in supporting the child's involvement in sport, as they make sacrifices to provide the child with the best possible youth sport experience (Dorsch, Smith & McDonough, 2009: 454). In the process, parents gain greater understanding and appreciation of their child's involvement and can become emotionally involved, which leads to increased communication with the child and better parent-child relationship (Dorsch, Smith & McDonough, 2009: 457-458).

The alleged importance of human relationships sport participants form with team mates, coaches and parents, and their role in socialization have been discussed above. The cultivation of essential human relationships as part of the socialization process for sport participants seemingly plays a critical role in sustaining a person's enthusiasm and motivation in sport. Moreover, through the dynamics of these relationships participants are claimed to acquire important values that help them socialize into the sporting community.

Cratty (1981: 47) and Roberts (2001: 7) profess the notion of ‘the needs for achievement’ as one of the factors that drive individuals to socialize into a sport group or sporting community. Achievement needs include the pride and identity one has when one plays for a club or varsity team (Valentine, 2006: 179). However to play for a team, one must be able to demonstrate competence in sporting ability, which will facilitate one’s acceptance in a group (Smith, 2007: 48). But just possessing competence in sport skills may not be enough, as one must also possess the right attitude and values of a respectable sportsman/woman in order to be accepted in the team and the sport community. Participation in sport serves to inculcate values that are crucial for a person’s socialization in human relationships and the human community (Arnold, 1997: 2-3).

Arnold (1997: 6) offers a perspective on how participation in sport can help build group-social identity by developing morals, which nurture human relationships based on common humanistic values. In the communion of sport practice, participants see one another as mutual guardians of the integrity of sport and this provides an experience of generosity and friendly engagement that cultivates excellent human relationships. Sport embodies mutual understanding that is based on universal ethical principles and conduct in a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play (Arnold, 1997: 15; Butcher & Schneider: 31, 2001). When one engages in sport, the individual becomes a member of a community of practice and therefore becomes obligated to its inherent moral demands. Arnold (1997: 15) quotes A.C McIntyre, “I need those around me to reinforce my moral strength and assist me in rectifying my moral weakness. It is in general, only within a community that individuals become capable of morality and are sustained in their morality”. Both Arnold (1997) and Shields & Bredemier (1994) contend that only by living in a form of social life can one learn and

acquire certain consciousness, common values and habits of action as the society socializes each individual of a unique history and experience to appreciate certain modes of conduct and behaviour that are deemed as common good. Therefore participation in sport allows the development of a shared vision of moral culture, where everyone is guided by a common code of conduct and goals (Jeziorski, 1994: 88).

Arnold (1997: 36) further elaborates that a form of social culture evolves in a community of sport which can exist in schools, public spheres and competition fraternity, where an individual undergoes a process of self-formation, self-reformation and self-cultivation, and eventually develops into a better human being. Sport therefore contains what is worthwhile and should be passed on to future generations for it has the ability to change and cultivate society (Arnold, 1997: 36-40). Part of the social culture of sport mentioned by Arnold (1997) is manifested in the forms of sports contests played at various levels. Powell (1994: 82) quotes the case of the modern Olympics as a kind of sport contest which was geared towards establishing a foundation of human morality and solidarity through the cultivation of mutual respect among sport participants. Nugent (1982: 120) asserts that in a sporting situation, body movement becomes a 'language of communication' that expresses not only self-mastery and aesthetic beauty but also facilitates mutual exchange of ideas as well as cultivates fellowship. Koechler (2002: 1) further elaborates Nugent's notion of 'language of communication' by claiming that sport festivals are a venue where dialogue between participants from civilisational communities takes place as they are symbolic representations of a non-military form of competition between people. Hyland (2001: 85) further explains that in a sport contest, a process of interaction based on self-reflection, mutual empathy and moral reasoning occurs, which helps

cultivate common values such as tolerance and mutual respect, which facilitate human solidarity and remove misleading prejudice. Koechler (2002: 2) alleges that the significance of the various sports contests is underlined by its potential in contributing to human progress and common good as they foster the spirit of dialogue and co-operation as well as unite different peoples and cultures in the pursuit of both shared interests and common goals. As expressed in the motto of Olympism, “to place sport at the service of a harmonious development of man, with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity” (Arnold, 1997:14). Powell (1994: 164) sums up the notion of using sport to promote human solidarity by expressing the hope that every human being through sport will develop himself/herself to be physically, mentally and morally strong so as to achieve a complete personhood, which is utmost crucial to the fostering of amity in humanity.

So far, the literatures above on sport in socialization predominantly express largely positivistic views on sport and its contribution to positive socialization, and do not adequately address the problems associated with sport socialization. Indeed sport socialization has frequently been problematized with the following issues which exert impact both socially and psychologically, and therefore have social-psychological bearing.

Problems of Sport in Socialization

Aided by media, sport has become an important source of entertainment. Through media broadcast and other efficient forms of media, access to entertaining sporting events and top level sport is now popular for many people (Coakley, 2007: 406). However, media content of sport which are presented have always been carefully selected for the purpose of appealing to public sentiments based on

stereotyped notions, which have morally controversial effect on the minds of the audience (Mackay & Dallaire, 2009: 26; Lee, 2009: 193). It is gathered that the presentation of top level performances by world class sportsmen and sportswomen to audiences around the world can be a positive thing as it stimulates and enriches one's imagination about the greatness of human endeavour, but the telecast of aggressive sporting behaviours such as swearing, physical violence and other unsporting behaviours for the sake of sensational effect may have undesirable impact on the audience who may think that it is permissible to behave in such a way since the top athletes are doing it any way (Coakley, 2007: 405). Some of the unsporting behaviours and conduct as portrayed by these athletes have ill effect on young spectators who may pick up undesirable habits (Jarvie, 2006: 35).

Deliberately presenting violent behaviours of athletes and making it sensational, commentators glorifying the importance of winning and overt aggression, and advertising health-detriment products such as cigarettes and alcohol, are examples of media sending controversial messages to the audience (Coakley, 2007: 401). Media can present exemplary sport personalities such as Michael Jordan and Roberto Baggio as inspirational icons to young people but it can also mislead viewers by associating masculinity with overt aggression (Lines, 2002: 196-197). It is deduced that media can have adverse effect by inculcating wrong values in sport participants and hence affect positive socialization (Jarvie, 2006: 197).

The portrayal of entertaining intense competition by media does of course inject excitement and vigour into society, and the popular emphasis of competitiveness and hard training is nevertheless positive for the growth and development of the human spirit (Mihalich, 1982: 5). It is claimed that this positivistic view can only be appreciated when participants are guided by moral values and

supervision (Coakley, 2007: 113). However Coakley (2007: 164) expresses concerns that problems arise when winning is over-emphasized and participation in sport is becoming overly competitive. It is surmised that extremely competitive sport could be responsible for the development of extreme aggressive mentality among athletes, who are driven by their strong desire to win, which has resulted in the display of overt aggression and intimidating behaviour on the field that threaten the safety of fellow athletes (Coakley, 2007: 164). It is alleged that athletes also resort to unsporting methods of cheating and deliberate provocation in order to gain unfair advantage (Coakley, 2007: 113). It is claimed that coaches are partly to blame for such deviant behaviours as a number of them are guilty of teaching athletes such unsporting methods (Coakley, 2007: 164). Driven by the desire to win, coaches and athletes also partake in training programmes that are considered to be too tough for the human body, which results in over-training and injuries that threaten the health and well being of athletes (Coakley, 2007: 170).

There are indeed potential damages that are involved in the participation in sports, which are caused by 'excessive aggression' in competition and also 'exclusion'. As discussed above, 'excessive aggression' refers to high degree physical aggression in competitive games due to the strong desire to win, which can lead to rough play and other types of intimidation. 'Exclusion' refers to discrimination against certain groups of people in sport participation due to prejudice, historical factors and lack of empathy; all of which affects the socialization experience of people participating in sport (Lumpkin, et. al, 2003: 60). It is deduced that the problem of exclusion arises in competitive sport teams where every player earnestly wants to be in the first team and goes all out to win their place, hence creating unhealthy competition and intense rivalry, leading to intra-team conflict (Lumpkin, et.

al, 2003: 60). In addition, the forming of cliques within a sport group which are based on ethnic identity and personality also results in the lack of integration and healthy socialization among participants (Jarvie, 2006: 31-32).

These are some practices and examples in present-day sports that threaten traditional values associated with sportsmanship. Be it at professional or amateur level, the upholding of sportsmanship ideals is crucial for the healthy functioning and development of sport (Arnold, 1997: viii). Furthermore it is believed that sport plays critical roles in human society and in order to retain its imperative status as an important socializing arena, good values and practices must be consciously maintained (Jarvie, 2006: 49). After all, it is claimed that sport began as a great activity that has contributed to the blossoming of human culture and hence has an important mission in producing healthy and vibrant communities (Delattre, 2001: 74).

Countering the ills of sport practice requires the effort of the sporting fraternity which includes sport educators, coaches, administrators and the media, to guide both sport participants and enthusiasts appropriately. It is imperative for sport educators and coaches to note the importance of training young sport participants to be a whole person. Instead of just being 'sport skill efficiency experts', coaches should also stress on holistic human development such that they become skilled sport persons with good character who can socialize well with fellow beings and hence enjoy the sporting experience (Coakley, 2007: 113).

Conclusion & Research Questions

All in all in this chapter, the review of literature has offered an understanding of socialization and the relationship between socialization and sport from a mainly social-psychological perspective.

The review of literature related to ‘sport in socialization’ in particular centers mainly on the socialization experiences between individuals (in different forms of human relationships), and I feel that research which specifically explores international socialization experiences of young students in sport participation, and one that uses social-psychological theories to explain such socialization is limited, and therefore deserves further attention. This leads me to establish the following research questions:

- How do the selected students socialize inter-nationally in sport participation?;
- What are the factors and experiences involved in their processes of socialization?; and
- To what extent can a theoretical understanding of their experiences be derived from social-psychological perspectives and theories?

With regard to the purpose of answering these research questions, the topic of the study ‘Foreign Students’ Experience in Socialization through Participation in Sports in a Singapore International School” will therefore be useful. The research shall study foreign students’ experiential process of socialization within a sport context or environment as they participate in the various sporting activities of the school concerned and seek to relate the findings to the literature expounded in this chapter.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the adopted research methodology in the study which was conducted over a one and a half year period. The application of the multi-dimensional approach to the method is first explained. This is followed by a discussion of the rationale of the selected research methodology and a discussion of the study's specific methods including details of the design of the study, data collection, analysis, and procedures to ensure credibility of the study.

The Multi-Dimension Approach

The multi-dimension model designed by Hutchinson (2008) is adopted as its social- psychological standpoint covers both personal and social factors, which can provide a more all-round explanation of a person's socialization. As mentioned in Chapter 1 the multi-dimension perspective is one that approaches a topic by investigating several related areas which will be presented from Chapters 4-8. These areas cover the 'personal dimension', 'environmental dimension' and 'time dimension', and are explored in order to gain a fuller qualitative understanding of the students' experience (Hutchinson, 2008: 11-16). The three dimensions interact with each other in the socialization experience. The various positive and negative aspects a person encounters in these three dimensions will affect an individual's socializing experience (Hutchinson, 2008: 9-10).

The Qualitative Case Study Method

A qualitative case study method focusing on six students, which is based on a multi-dimensional approach was used as I sought to understand one social phenomena of real life events in which complex contextual conditions and factors were involved (Gomm, Hammersly, & Foster, 2000: 5; Boyd, 2001: 93-122). A good case study can be revelatory in that it is able to challenge traditional stereotyped opinion and notions

as to the existing order of things. It can offer an insight into people's lives to better understand issues and concerns (Gillham, 2000: 11). A qualitative case study is used when 'why' and 'how' questions are being posed, when the researcher has relatively little control over events, and the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context. It is utilized to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group and organizational related phenomenon through researching a unit of human activity embedded in the real world (Gillham, 2000: 1; Yin, 2003: 1). A qualitative case study inquiry copes with technically distinctive situations in which there are many variables of interest, and utilizes a comprehensive research strategy that relies on multiple sources of evidence and the use of theories to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 1989: 13; Yin, 2003: 31). In this case social psychologically derived theories are selectively used in the writing and analysis in the thesis, to explain what goes on within a case in terms of its wider context (Gomm et al, 2000: 6).

A qualitative case study is designed to investigate causal processes in the real world, and not in artificially created settings (Gomm et al., 2000: 5). Authenticity of the case study is based on the need to amplify the unique voices of those whose experience in and perspective on the world are unknown or neglected (Gomm et al., 2000: 67). In it, rich data and information about true personal experience are presented to help one understand the social and personal experiences of others (i.e research participants). In the words of Robert Stake (Gomm et al., 2000: 67):

Case study needs be framed in such that everyday experience through which they learn about the world first hand is critical. The great strength in case studies is that they provide vicarious experience in the form of 'full and thorough knowledge of the particular'.

Its purpose is to build up a body of real tacit knowledge as the basis upon which people's actions are understood (Stake, 2000: 20). According to Stake (2000: 19), case studies are useful in the study of human affairs because they are down to earth and attention holding. They help people understand social phenomenon and problems by writing about the natural experience acquired in ordinary personal involvement. In qualitative case study, intentionality, empathy, episodic and holistic information are central to the comprehension of social problems, which are important for the 'experiential understanding' in the study of human affairs (Stake, 2000: 24). This 'experiential knowledge' is gained through the very rich experiences that vary from one context to another through a process of making meaning out of them (Donmoyer, 2000: 58). Eventually a qualitative case study through the sharing of experiences, thoughts and sentiments between the students, researcher and reader, as well as through logical analysis and inference, is able to produce 'empathetic understanding' on the researched issue (Gomm et al., 2000: 6-7).

One argument against qualitative case study is that as the research focuses on only a case or few cases, its findings has limited scientific 'generalization' in that it may not relate substantially to a broader environmental or social context, as the strength of the study to generalize has to do with whether it is too case specific and narrow, and therefore relevant only to certain phenomena and not readily applicable in other contexts (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 29). There is also a debate of whether the sample population is an accurate representation of other populations in society for the findings to be useful (Jankowski, 2002: 254). Validity of qualitative research also depends on the length and intensity of observation and interviews, which if inadequate will not be able to generate sufficient data for good objective analysis and hence affects its external generalizability and usefulness (Jankowski, 2002: 254). In

contrast, findings from quantitative research that utilizes huge amount of data from standard forms of survey are deemed to be able to provide a higher degree of generalizability through using 'variable analysis' to derive patterns and trends from these data which are usually responses from questionnaires provided by a large number of participants who can represent a substantial segment of the population.

Another problem that is associated with qualitative case study is that of 'biasness'. Among social science research methods, qualitative case study has often been stereotyped as one that has inadequate quantifiable precision, objectivity and vigour (Yin, 2003: xiii). One argument is that it tends to allow biased views from participants' data or researcher's personal mindset, to influence the direction of findings and analysis. This results in the limited ability to report evidence fairly, as for example, a researcher may be motivated by a desire for championing the rights of minority groups, and will therefore gear himself to prove certain points which may or may not be objectively derived (Hammersley, 2008: 132). The existence of biases in any qualitative study has often prompted argument about the vigour that is required in a research. Bias will affect the degree of research validity due to the researcher's inclination to collect, interpret and present data which support results that are congruous with his own prejudgements or ideology (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 21). Since research works are produced in particular contexts, via particular resources, by particular people and for particular purposes, bias can arise from the selection of samples, types of interviews, report writing or the use of research design and strategy that favour the generation of particular results (Hammersley, 2008: 132; Bloor & Wood, 2006: 21). Since all researchers are part of the social world they study, it is inevitable that their own values and biographical experiences may influence their perception. Researchers affiliated to a particular organization may also unconsciously

or subconsciously gear their studies towards certain directions that are deemed favourable to the organization (Bloor & Wood, 2006). All this contribute to the existence of biases which make presentation of findings problematic as they are captured and created in particular social contexts, which entails the problematic issue of writing from ‘who’s perspective?’; all of which can affect the degree of validity in qualitative case study research (Adkins, 2002: 333).

Biases can also come from participants involved in the research, who may not provide the most truthful responses in interviews due to their respect for the researcher, their relationships with the researcher or any other personal reasons; all of which can influence their willingness to speak the truth. The complex two-way dynamics involved has impact on the research process, which enables the existence of a certain degree of subjectivity that makes qualitative studies open to criticism on the lack of scientific objectivity.

In order to minimize problems related to biasness from researcher, it is hence important that reflexivity is always considered in the research process, where there is constant reflecting upon ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research (Hammersley, 2008: 42). There is therefore a strong need for a researcher to be rigorous and produce authentic representations of the world based on rigorous overall analysis of data, as well as the need to present data and findings in an open-minded way to provoke readers rather than to convey some closed messages (Hammersley, 2008: 133).

As for bias from participants, in order to justify the qualitative research method, it should be noted that the qualitative researcher is not a ‘detached’ scientist but an observer who acknowledges both his/her role in the process of investigation

and discovery, and his/her effect on the participants. He/she tries his/her best to minimize these undesirable effects through making them feel comfortable about providing honest data, based on a trusting relationship. Nevertheless, owing to the nature and demands of such an inquiry method, it must be recognized that he/she will still have to be present asking questions and collecting data in order to make a good qualitative research (Gilham, 2000: 7).

Another way to reduce biasness is to ensure there is data triangulation in which multiple sources of data are used to strengthen the validity of data, so as to ensure a high degree of internal validity.

Pertaining to the problems of limited generalization, it should be noted that qualitative studies aim at uncovering truth that are hidden under long held assumption and attaining a high degree of external generalization may not be its main priority (Walford, 2001: 16). Though research findings attained from quantitative studies can provide a higher degree of external generalization, which can offer factual knowledge and understanding of an issue, it is still however not a perfect research tool in understanding certain complexities in human affairs. To attach absolute importance to 'generalization' to the extent whereby people begin to believe so much in the research findings that they derive certain absolute laws of prediction can be misleading at times (Hammersly, 2008: 24). After all, social life is very much a contingent and emergent process rather than involving the repetition of law-like patterns; typical quantitative research can make too many assumptions and fail to recognize unique qualities that qualitative research can uncover. The use of surveys in quantitative research tends to assume that the world appears the same way to everyone and societies operate on the basis of a widespread consensus such that most or all people share the same values. In contrast, qualitative research stresses the need to understand

subjective experience and the issues involved from different people's perspectives, and the use of data collection methods such as observations and interviews allow them to talk and act freely in ways that can reveal the distinctiveness and complexities of their perspectives (Hammersley, 2008: 24; Rain, 2009: 302).

To further explain how qualitative research can help discover truths despite the limited generalizability of its findings, researchers argue that human behaviour does not remain stable throughout and therefore the use of 'variable analysis' in quantitative research to predict behaviour or outcome would not always be accurate as the number of variables used will always be limited in covering all aspects of human qualities, and as such, a quantitative study that derives a particular theory, would not be able to uncover uniqueness and complexities that are always present in human environment as the world is too complex and diverse for a single theory to account for everything. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding particular social phenomenon in the complex socio-historical context; that is, studying the constantly changing human behaviours, thought and feelings that are partly determined by their context, through knowing their world rather than discovering universal scientific laws (Gillham, 2000: 11; Hammersley, 2008: 23; Byrne, 2009: 1). By grounding themselves in real experiences of ongoing activities such as living, breathing and interacting with people, they strive to study human behaviour and thought, and learn the social organization of everyday life including the culture and system (Prus, 1991: 129; Gubrium, 1991:131). In other words, they search for its essence, ambience and meanings in things and experiences that cannot be meaningfully expressed by numbers alone. Such research is complex and they are not linear models that simply sum up the relevant causal vectors in order to make predictions regarding a social system's behaviour. Complex social systems are connected internally of interrelated

aspects that can be understood as mutually reciprocal influences that together constitute the complex whole. This is important for formulating good social policy which should be grounded in case-oriented knowledge of specific cases, rather than quantitative methods that estimate the net effect of causal variables. Qualitative case studies therefore offer different ways of seeing the same body of evidence and allow one to perceive the underlying processes which are the central focus of any social science that seeks to go beyond the obvious (Ragin, 2009: 533).

By going beyond the obvious and long held assumption, qualitative research is driven by the needs for both 'advocacy', that is to advocate social justice by addressing problems in unique cases, as well as 'enlightenment', that is to enlighten us to new perspectives (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 174). To further elaborate, qualitative research can provide a more informative picture of culturally based processes and give depth to context-based explanation of events, processes and outcome; all of which ultimately affects future policy and practice. The qualitative approach focuses on accounts of the origins, progress of events and hence the complexity and multidimensionality of the local contexts and relationships which include the historical-socio-economical background of research participants as well as their personal qualities, and the physical setting of the research; through it all the researcher appreciates and understands the causal mechanism in social processes (McKie, 2002: 261; Stake, 2008: 120; Byrne, 2009: 101). Due to the qualitative researcher's human connection with participants, it also ensures a degree of participation among the participants who provide the authentic voices or the voices of the 'silent', which may not be possible in quantitative research (Walford, 2001: 16; McKie, 2002: 260-264). By giving voices to the normally 'silenced' and collecting data from diverse sources, it illuminates what is usually masked and throws new light into the issue (McKie,

2002: 264). This therefore allows the researcher to gain a holistic overview and deep understanding, and not a merely mechanistic interpretation, by locating accounts in a context of a wider social, political and economic structures through inter-connecting data from the 'on ground' participants and linking them to policies and overall reality (Walford, 2001: 9; McKie, 2002: 263-264).

Through working with the on ground participants and having the insider's point of view, qualitative researchers are more interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures and social roles (Gartan, 2000: 406; Berg, 2001: 6-7). In turn, researchers make meaning of the living world, construct these meanings through understanding, interpretation and analysis of people's behaviours and events (Brizuela, Stewart, Carrilo & Berger, 2000: xi). Through interacting with people, qualitative procedures provide a means of accessing these unquantifiable facts, which allow researchers to share in the understanding and subjective perceptions of others and explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. This enables the researcher to discuss in detail the various social contours and processes human beings use to create and maintain their social realities which are forged by social structures and various cultural understandings that surround it (Metz, 2000: 40; Berg, 2001: 7). Qualitative research methods are essentially descriptive and inferential in character, and inference is important as raw facts need to be interpreted as facts do not speak for themselves, and therefore someone such as the researcher has to speak for them (Gillham, 2000: 10). Although a qualitative researcher also comes up with ways to explain the pattern of things, he/she does not do it in a rigid way as he/she allows exceptions and unique outcomes and pulls all evidences together, as well as evaluates them holistically so as to offer a

holistic and coherent explanation of issues (Gilham, 2000: 10; Gartan, 2000: 406; Hammersley, 2008: 44). Qualitative researchers adopt certain value perspectives in their investigation but do not claim that the ones they adopt are the only legitimate ones. Despite having done that much, it may still be impossible for a qualitative researcher to capture the entire reality in any research but as long as one answers some specific set of questions as rigorously and correctly as possible, and constructs new paradigms to explicate positive change, then it is still a good, viable piece of research (Gartan, 2000: 406; Hammersley, 2008: 135).

To conclude the proposition of the qualitative case study research methodology, it has to be acknowledged that no research is perfect for there are always limitations. The usefulness of qualitative case study research depends on the reader's ability in understanding, evaluating and applying research findings in other contexts with discretion and flexibility, based on one's background knowledge (Hammersley, 2008: 165). Unlike a typical scientific lab based study which aims at generalizable findings, complex issues such as human behaviours, feelings, perceptions and experiences in qualitative studies which are beyond the scope of more 'controlled' approaches, cannot be generalized due to the high degree of unique specificity. The purpose of qualitative case studies is after all not to produce generalizable findings, but to provide depth and richness of data in order to illuminate some issues which are critical to social sciences (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 30). Qualitative case studies use naturalistic research methods that utilize inductive reasoning; that is making sense and meaning of what one finds in a case and applying them in a wider context (Gillham, 2000: 6). Generalizing, though important is not indispensable as generalizing is not equivalent to universalizing, and we can never

establish universal homothetic laws in social sciences and would therefore need to specify the limits of generalization (Byrnes, 2009: 1).

Though it is impossible for qualitative case study research to allow for complete external generalization, a limited form of moderate generalization can still be utilized if the reader reflects deeply on the findings and uses them discretionally (Williams, 2002: 131). To make good use of research findings in a qualitative case study, such as applying a particular case's knowledge to another case, or extrapolating a case to a wider population, logical inference should be used on the basis that there must be a strong theoretical or logical connection between two cases. In qualitative case studies, complete generalization need not be the goal and usually a case is chosen because they are unique, intrinsically interesting and important. It is important because the case has the potential to reveal new insights that have been masked under long held assumptions, and also because the research findings can apply in other cases that share somewhat similar situations or contexts. In order to make good use of a qualitative case study, one has to recognize essential components that can be applicable in new contexts by identifying similar or almost similar contextual elements before he/she can transfer the findings from one case to another case or extrapolate, based on logical and thoughtful considerations and analysis (Patton, 2002: 582-584). Only then will the research have greater meaning beyond the particular researched case (Walford, 2001: 16).

By presenting and discussing the above proposition, I hope I have justified my choice for the qualitative case study research methodology which I think is useful for the topic of study. In relation to the adopted research methodology, I will henceforth discuss the actual specific methods employed in the case study concerned.

The Specific Methods Employed in the Case Study of ‘Foreign Students’ Socialization through Participation in Sports in a Singapore International School’

This is a qualitative single case study with multiple units of analysis as I sought to understand the process of socialization in the various sports activities of six foreign students (multiple units) in an international school (single case). It is hence an embedded case study (Yin, 2003: 40). According to Yin (1989: 1), a rationale for a case study is its revelatory potential. As the sample chosen for the study was small, the qualitative case study approach helped me understand a unique case in great depth since it provided detailed rich information, which enabled the investigation to provide an in-depth understanding of the issue. Due to the small sample, the intent of the study is not to provide a great degree of generalization, but its revelatory nature will provide insights on foreign students’ process of socialization in sport participation in a Singapore international school, in which related factors and problems were illustrated and discussed in depth, all of which would lend credibility to the study (Patton, 2002: 241). The collection of data was done over a one and a half-year period.

Sample

According to Boyd (2001: 93-122), in a qualitative study, six research subjects are sufficient to generate rich data for both a constructive analysis and a good understanding of researched issues. As such the study involves a sample size of six students.

The sample that was chosen for the study had to be able to represent the research interests (Sanger, 1996:62). They were seen as appropriate for the study as they were able to provide rich relevant data that are crucial for the understanding of the researched issues, and they were also accessible which made it feasible for me to

study them (Berg, 2001: 29). In this study, purposive sampling was adopted in which the choice of sample was based on my knowledge of a group of individuals who possess certain attributes, whom I thought were relevant to the topic of research (Berg, 2001: 32). In purposive sampling, the sample is seen as unique and having the potential to reveal rich information which can illuminate the issues under study and they are therefore purposely selected (Patton, 2002: 230-231). The main participants in this study were six foreign students (non-Singaporeans) who were actively involved in the various sports and they were two PRC Chinese, one Korean, one Thai, one Malaysian and one Indonesian. They were purposefully chosen as samples for the study as they met the following criteria and for the following reasons:

- they are foreigners and came from various countries;
- they participated actively in sports and were members of the school's various sports clubs/teams;
- they were willing to take part in the study.

Through conducting a case study on the students, I sought to understand the factors and conditions that facilitated their socialization processes in both formal and informal sport activities. In qualitative research, great importance is attached to the element of 'authenticity' or the truthfulness of the study. It is therefore argued that research can have more than one social reality or conclusion that is independent of the researcher and they are reached only through rigorous investigative methods. Usually a 'relativist' position is advocated, from which one believes that there are multiple perspectives of the social world which are constructed in the research process (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 149). The six selected students of different nationalities who play different sports therefore provided a range of perspectives that were needed for me to derive a conclusion that can present as true as possible a picture which can illuminate

different realities for the sake of authenticity. In addition, the problem of biasness that could arise from the choice of sampling was greatly reduced as they were of different nationalities, and would therefore provide different perspectives on the researched issues.

Research is also a systematic and reflexive way of questioning and qualitative researchers search for meaning as they grapple with ‘multiple pluralities’ of the world (Brizuela, Stewart, Carrilo, & Garvey, 2000: xxi). Qualitative research involves the use of inductive analysis or induction, which involves inferring general conclusions from particular instances (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 13). It is a procedure for analyzing data which requires the analyst to work systematically and aim to ensure that the theoretical conclusions cover the wide range of the available data (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 13). The selected sample of these six students was deemed suitable for my study as they were from different countries and play different sports, and would therefore offer a range of data which could enrich my understanding of their particular socialization experiences and to some extent allow me to infer general conclusion on the socializing experience of foreign students in sport participation.

Ethical Considerations

Since the study was going to involve people, I therefore had to attend to ethical considerations which would protect the interests and well being of the student participants, such as attending to any circumstances in the research setting that could harm them in ways which include frightening, embarrassing or negatively affecting them in other ways (Thomas & Nelson, 1996: 84). I had attended to the following points with regard to that. Before any data collection took place, the consent of both the students and their guardians to participate in the study were obtained as they were minors. The purpose and procedure of the study were explained to them. Informed

consent slips which contained the research procedures were signed by them and were securely kept for the sake of confidentiality (Berg, 2001: 57). By expressing genuine interest in the topic of study, the students were assured that the study was going to produce benefits for the community, and the entire research process, data from interviews and observations, together with their identities and those of other participants involved in the study would be kept strictly confidential, and that only I would have access to these research information (McKie, 2002: 283; Kaplan, 1991: 235-236). Being sensitive to any sense of discomfort and unease on their part, I tried to ensure that the research proceedings which included interviews and observations must not be seen as interfering with their lives by meeting them in their most preferred time and making the interview sessions relaxing and interesting (Bar-On, 1996: 9-19). To assure students of confidentiality and psychological comfort, pseudonyms were used and I also allowed them to peruse and verify the interview transcript after interviews as a form of courtesy (Webster, 1996: 198). All in all, I tried my best to evaluate any potential inconvenience that might have occurred to the students, which helped ensure their motivation and co-operation in the long run (Berg, 2001: 62).

The students and guardians were informed that they had the right to privacy and non-participation, and were free to withdraw from the study as and when they felt necessary (Thomas & Nelson, 1996: 84). I also assured them that the content in the thesis would contain only objective data relevant to the topic and would not contain personal remarks and unnecessary information that might cause embarrassment, misunderstanding or make them feel vulnerable in anyway (Chase, 1996: 47). Based on my fine working ties with the students, I established a relationship of trust and

confidence with them, in order that the project would be an enjoyable one for all parties.

Ethical consideration was also involved in the fostering of a fine working relationship between the foreign students, other participants and the researcher. To facilitate any research process, it was important that there was a good trusting and co-operative relationship between the six selected students, participants and me (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991: 4). Gaining access to a research site was not a one-off event, it was a social process typified by such a relationship that was nurtured over a period, which helped facilitate the entire research process (Burgess, 1991: 52). A good relationship improved the trust between two parties, based on my personal and professional integrity and social skills which had been developed in my many years in the teaching profession (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 5-6). In this study, I as the researcher was not a stranger to the students and participants as I was a pioneer member of the staff, who initiated the sport programme when the school first started. I therefore knew them and had gained their trust, which had offered a basic condition for the study to take place (Kaplan, 1991: 235-236). As the research proceeded, new and more trusting relationships evolved as mutual understanding grew, which enabled the students to be more open and frank in providing data (Shaffir, 1991: 80). When there was trust between both parties, there would be a sense of reciprocity where the students were able to share at a basic level the researcher's interpretive framework of objects, events and collectivities, which would facilitate the research process (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 174). On the other hand, I had to always constantly reflect and examine the effects this relationship had on the research as well as to maintain a high degree of rigour that was required, which I will elaborate more when I discuss the issue of reflexivity later (Brizuela, et al. 2000: xvii). I therefore tried my utmost best to present a most

authentic account of phenomena through the use of research methods such as in-depth interviews, conversations, frequent observations and triangulation of data, so that credibility of the study could be ensured. As ethical considerations were applied throughout the period of study, other aspects related to ethical issues will also be highlighted and discussed in the following sections as I move into the specifics of the research methods.

Multiple Methods & Triangulation

Qualitative research is about understanding of the interpretive process that shapes and guides human behaviours. In order to understand the experience of the students, I had to think with empathy for them, and hence data had to be collected within the experienced worlds which had meanings to them. Therefore participating in the daily life, observing daily occurrences and being able to appreciate how the local culture was defined and organized was essential (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991: 83). This then required the use of research techniques such as interview, usual conversation and natural observation to collect rich and adequate data, as well as for the purpose of both data and methodological triangulations. The triangulation of both methods and data work towards internal validity as it allows cross-data validity checks by having different data sources which can be illuminative, which hence enriches information and offers deeper insight into the phenomenon (Patton, 2002: 248; Sanger, 1996: 40).

The data collection process required me to have a blend of science as well as humanistic compassion and understanding in my approach. I therefore needed curiosity, a commitment to learning, patience, sincerity and honesty in my dealing with both the research work and participants (Fetterman, 1991: 87).

In qualitative studies, researchers choose methods that best fit their theoretical concerns and personal strengths and of course must also be able to address ethical

concerns. Once a method is chosen, they strive to enact it as carefully as possible. Several research strategies are employed to enrich their work and hence they often contemplate a range of methods that can be utilized to achieve the goals of the research. The 'best' methods are the ones that are well-conceived and carefully executed and the eventual findings and analysis in qualitative work will be rich in theoretical and revelatory potential (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002: 214, 221). An important aspect in the employment of methods is 'triangulation' where more than one method is used to complement one another, so as to gather richer data and make them more informative for a more complete analysis (Stake, 2008: 133). The use of multiple methods for data collection such as interview, observation and documentary method is common in qualitative research (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 28). In my study, every method revealed slightly different facets of the same symbolic reality. Each method was a different line of sight directed toward the same point and in the end enabled me to obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality (Berg, 2001: 4). Triangulation displays multiple, refracted realities, which aims at exploring competing visions of the context and the reader is immersed in new realities in order to comprehend issues. The resulting interpretive structure of the work was a sequence of representations connecting the parts of the whole issue under study. Eventually, my research was committed to a naturalistic perspective and interpretive understanding of human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 8-10).

In order to apply the triangulation of methods and data for research purposes as illustrated above, one form of research method, interviewing the main student subjects and other participants was utilized.

Interview

Interview is one main data collection tool and an important source of evidence. As a form of naturalistic inquiry, it is a way to understand how people behave in context as its flexibility and negotiability allow them to express freely and honestly, which enables a range of multifarious data that are rich and informative to be collected (Sanger, 1996: 60-61; Gilham, 2000: Vii). The purpose of using the interview method is to acquire a holistic understanding of how people are embedded in larger social and cultural contexts and how they actively participate in shaping the world they inhabit, whose conduct are also influenced and shaped by the cultural and social environment (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002: 203). In-depth interview especially is a good way of discovering the subjective meanings and interpretations that people give to their experiences as it allows aspects of social life such as social processes and negotiated interactions to be studied, which may not be feasibly studied in other ways (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005: 71). For example, I as a researcher would not be able to observe everything and things that are outside observational schedules. Certain things such as feeling, thought and intention would be hard to observe and therefore interview has to be used in order for me to enter the other person's perspectives which are meaningful for research (Patton, 2002: 341). The openness in qualitative interview allowed the students to express freely, which enabled me to capture the complexities of individual perception and experiences, and hence I was able to acquire both a rich variation of human experience and adequate understanding of the students' experience (Patton, 2002: 341-348).

Interview is therefore a good tool as it is one of the most effective ways in getting data right from the participants at the ground, and it is able to direct focus on the topic and provide insightful data through finding out personal beliefs, behaviour,

feelings and perception by linking interview content to a broader context through academic analysis (Chase, 1996: 56).

As the research is a study on human socialization, interview data should be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees who can provide important insights into a situation, which can challenge stereotyped view. As a researcher I listened to the students and participants intently and avoided making assumptions and premature judgement in order to make objective evaluation, and also corroborated the students' interview data with other sources such as observation and conversations with other participants which include teachers, coaches, teammates and the school principal in order to avoid one-sided biasness (Yin, 2003: 92; Gerson & Horowitz, 2002: 210). This allowed information to be collected from multiple sources so that data triangulation could be obtained, which enabled a more holistic and authentic analysis in the study.

In the study, I gave the six students and other participants utmost respect through the show of appreciation and courtesy, and presented myself to them as one who was sincere about the purpose of the study as I gathered data for a better understanding of their experiences in socialization, which could contribute to an improvement in schooling experience; all of which would make them feel motivated to take part in the study (Berg, 2001: 99; Gilham, 2000: 41-42). Interviews were conducted in English as all subjects were proficient in the language. One to one in-depth interview was utilized as the students and participants would tend to be more willing to talk as there was no pressure from the presence of others, and would find the experience more rewarding as they were allowed to express their thoughts freely (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005: 71-72). Semi-structured interviews were also used. This avoids the restricted findings of a structured interview and the unfocused information

of an unstructured one. The use of semi-structured interview was also preferred as it allowed the students and participants to participate proactively in the generation of data (Sanger, 1996: 63). Its more informal, conversational character allowed them to talk more spontaneously and enabled me to imaginatively share their social world and grasp more fully its related social meanings, and hence was able to acquire adequate data for a rich understanding (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 104; Sanger, 1996: 63).

Based on the multi-dimensional approach, the study focuses on the students' socialization experiences in the four areas which are their profiles (Chapter 5), perception of the school (Chapter 6), socialization experience with their schoolmates (Chapter 7), and socialization experience with their teacher in-charge/coach of the sport team/club (Chapter 8). As such, interview questions were purposively constructed to obtain information and data which relate specifically to the various aspects of socialization in these four areas. The types of questions asked in the interview include 'experience and behaviour' questions and 'opinion and value' questions (Patton, 2002: 350). General information was obtained at the start of each interview and followed by specific information or complicated ones. This allowed me to develop rapport with the students and participants, and as the interview conversations proceeded, more complex and sensitive issues were discussed (Berg, 2001: 79). It was basically a conversation with a purpose of obtaining rich information, but yet flexible and fluid. The purpose was achieved through active engagement by both the interviewer and interviewee around relevant issues and experiences, in which effective communication was ensured through the use of non-complicated phrasing so that interviewees understood the questions (Berg, 2001: 77). The right probing and prompting were also utilized when there was a stalemate in the conversation or when I wanted them to clarify or expand certain points (Berg, 2001:

77). Throughout the process, verbal and non-verbal language and expression were taken account; it was hence an interactive, situational and generative approach to the acquisition of rich and detailed data for the sake of adequate understanding (Mason, 2002: 225). All interview questions were non invasive and were confined to the topic of research and I ensured the questions stay relevant to their interests so as to motivate them to provide more information (Berg, 2001: 81).

The six students were approached to talk about their social lives in school, particularly their activities in sport which are mainly formal sport activity which include trainings and inter-school competitions done in their respective sports teams/clubs, and followed by informal sports activity which were done during their free time in school. They were asked to identify both the good and bad experiences they had, and were encouraged to talk about their experiences in great detail including opinions on both these experiences and socialization issues in the school (Chase, 1996: 56). Other participants such as their teammates, coaches and teachers in-charge were approached to talk about the students' socializing experiences in the school for the purpose of data triangulation.

The six students and other participants were given options on the venue for the interviews, and I would ensure that the venue selected would be conducive. Each interview lasted between one and a half to two hours during which I listened closely to what they said and how they expressed themselves by looking out for body-facial language, which allowed me to capture the real mood and intention of the interviewee (Yin, 2003: 92). As the students and other participants had not given consent for tape-recording as all of them felt intimidated by it, I transcribed all details of the interviews through note taking only and recorded in writing the students' verbal content and non-verbal language including facial expression and speaking tone. Two sessions of

formal interview with each student were conducted over the period of study, during which both inter-school and intra-school sport activities were held. One session of interview with the teacher in-charge of the sport club each student belongs to, and one session with each student's teammates were conducted for the purpose of data triangulation. In consideration of the students' and participants' availability of time, a total of 24 interviews were conducted with the students, teachers and students' teammates. This allowed me to trace the students' process of socialization and it would allow for a more accurate analysis and presentation of the research findings.

I adopted an open-minded mindset while conducting interviews. I asked relevant questions and tried to be an attentive and thorough listener and not be trapped by my ideologies and preconceptions. I got them to provide data relevant to their socialization experiences which include their interactive experiences as well as opinions related to the issue. I was adaptive, flexible and responded sensibly to contradictory evidence, and saw new situations as opportunities for breaking new grounds (Yin, 2003: 59).

The problems I encountered with the interviews included the students' hesitation to provide more data due to perceived worry of embarrassment and also due to less expressive personality. I also bore in mind that due to the teacher-student relationship between the students and me, they might not always conduct themselves in the most natural way, and might not be totally frank and open, which is unavoidably a limitation in the study (Gilham, 2000: 94). Due to that, the students might not always provide the most honest information for fear of embarrassment, and reflexivity could make them provide opinions that are 'adjusted' to sound fair. Even though the students had agreed to take part in the research, one to one interview might still be seen as an intrusion into his or her privacy of the mind, and they might not be

fully willing to provide the most honest data. The presence of the interviewer/researcher definitely had some effect on the nature of response from the interviewee. As the interviewer I was not just a neutral information gatherer, but rather an active co-participant with the interviewee in the social construction of the research data, which rendered debate over the full authenticity of interviewee's responses (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 145). The other problem pertains to the fact that the six students and other participants objected to the use of tape-recording, which hence compelled me to be very attentive in taking down all verbal content and non-verbal expression. This also means that I could not use recording devices to verify some interview content if I wanted to, which was a limitation in the study.

Although I could not use tape-recording with respect for the students' and participants' wishes, it also meant that through note-taking I had to be extra attentive and vigilant to their non-verbal expression such as their facial expression and speaking tone, which enabled me to capture their real intentions when they talked (Sanger, 1996: 61). By paying attention to the way they talked, it also allowed me to interpret the meaning expressed implicitly in their use of languages and narrative habits. The reliance on tape-recording might have made me take things for granted and could have reduced my attentiveness for such details and besides, tape-recording records only the sound and verbal content and would not be able to capture the mood, body gesture and expression of the interviewees when they talked, which would therefore under-represent the communication or would not necessarily provide accurate representations of what occurred in the interview (Yin, 2003: 92; Sanger, 1996: 68-71). In addition, as I wanted them to freely express themselves in order to get as much essential data as possible, the use of tape-recording would have an intimidating effect on the young students and participants and would make them feel

more restricted in providing information (Webster, 1996: 197-198; Sanger, 1996: 61). Tape- recording also contains the risk of accidental revelation of data, which hence compromises the ethic of confidentiality (Sanger, 1996: 68). On the whole, note-taking possesses several advantages over tape-recording in the following ways:

- it was not intimidating and allowed them to express freely without excessive concern for their words being sound-recorded;
- the attentive communicating involved drew both the students and participants, and me closer in the mutuality of the event in that I was able to capture the essence of the conversation through the reflexive acts of interpretation of both explicit and implicit meanings in their words, and the notes becomes a meaningful symbol of the interview;
- due to the time saved from transcribing data from tape record, I managed to have a 'hot storage' of data which I could quickly process right after interviews and the transcription from note-taking could be quickly produced for the students and participants to correct and verify which therefore ensured swift feedback and clarification , as opposed to trying to analyse and transcribe tape-recorded content some time after interviews through constructing discrete pieces of 'cold' data, which would be done at a temporal distance and it would be difficult for me to remember the actual feelings the respondents had when they provided the data, hence making it difficult to capture the essence of the interview (Sanger, 1996: 61-71).

In view of the advantages of note-taking in interviews which have been discussed above, note-taking was hence adopted and in order to ensure content validity and accuracy, I therefore asked the students and other participants to read the interview

transcripts shortly after each interview for the sake of content correction and verification (Berg, 2001: 105).

To minimize the other problems related to the effect posed by the presence of the interviewer on the students, it is therefore important that I was able to build a trusting, co-operative relationship with them such that they were comfortable enough to participate fully in the study and provide as much honest data as possible. This trusting relationship was possibly built as I had known the students before the study commenced, and had been working with them in various school activities such as event organizing, teaching physical education lessons and providing them logistical support in activities, though I did not coach them in their respective sports; all of which helped in making them feel at ease in participating in the study. I also reassured them that the data they provided would be helpful to the understanding of both the topic of research and related issues. One has to accept the fact that empathetic understanding and inter-subjectivity is indispensable in such research, and because of that, the students rather than giving instinctive response without deeper consideration, tended to try to give fair and objective answers in interviews, which in a way helped add more validity in the data (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 107). The important point is through my constant assurance and encouragement, the students tried their best to share as much as possible both positive and negative aspects of their experiences, and that would have helped strengthen the authenticity of the data and the validity of the research.

The other related problem is the language issue. Although the six foreign students were conversant in the use of English, there were one or two of them who required me to re-phrase some interview questions several times in the course of

eliciting relevant response from them, which was however a minor problem in the study.

As part of qualitative research, the interview method was essentially employed in the study as its flexibility, negotiability and convenience make it useful in gathering many kinds of data (Sanger, 1996: 61). However, the relationship between personal belief, opinion that are expressed in interviews and actual behaviour is not always that straightforward, which means that data from interviews may not provide the whole picture for adequate holistic understanding (Gilham, 2000: 94). Therefore for the purpose of data verification and triangulation, another research method, observation was thus utilized in order to complement the data from interviews (Sanger, 1996: 60).

Observation

In the study, the 'non-obtrusive' direct observation is another tool used for data collection. Observing is perceiving upon seeing and one observes with meaningful and objective perception as one searches for the fundamental truth of the phenomenon through observing for significance for the sake of clearing biases, confirming and denying assumption (Sanger, 1996: 3-6). Through first hand experience of direct observation, one is able to understand and capture the context within which people interact, and this understanding coupled with reflection and introspection is essential for a holistic analysis (Patton, 2002: 262-264). As it might not be possible for interviews to provide all data as the respondent might have only provided limited information because he/she was not aware of certain things, or he/she tended to provide information based on selective perceptions. Through observation, I had the opportunity to see things that might have escaped my awareness,

to acquire information not available from interviews and to verify data from interviews as well (Patton, 2002: 262-264).

By observing the students at sport trainings, sport competitions and other informal sporting activities, much data obtained from interviews could be verified. This enriched the data and offered more width and depth to the study. Direct observation was utilized as it is non-intrusive in nature and the students could carry out their usual activities without being disturbed by me. The natural way it was being done offered a more realistic picture by providing contextual data in real situations, which explains the high face validity that is accorded to the method of direct observation (Drury, 1992: 33). Due to the fact that it is non-invasive, inexpensive and does not require visual technological aid, the convenience provided by observation makes it a useful data gathering technique, which explains why I utilized it for the study (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005: 121). Data from observations provided useful evidence and additional information that helped me to derive accurate researcher's perspective, which offered new dimensions in the overall analysis of the study (Yin, 2003: 93). In the study, the observations were conducted periodically and included both their regular trainings and competitions. The amount of observations to be done depended on the availability of my time and the students' training and competition schedules, and it was therefore planned in a way that could maximize the gathering of data (Patton, 2002: 267). As I was the coordinator of the school's sport programme, it was mandatory for me to survey the sport complex and the activities regularly and I therefore made use of these surveying trips to conduct observations of their trainings at least once a week, and observed their competitions at least twice during the active season.

By being attentive to relevant details, I observed with meaningful perspectives their conduct in school sport activities, which relate specifically to the various aspects of socialization in the four areas as mentioned in the interview method. The observational content includes all data that could possibly relate to the study of socialization and socialization in sport participation in the school, and it consists of the ways they communicated with the teacher in-charge, coach and teammates and the ways they were involved in games and training (Sanger, 1996: 21, 100; Patton, 2002: 262). I also specifically looked out for the characteristic ways in which the students behaved, such as amicability, proactiveness, hostility, joviality, aggression, and competitiveness (Paton, 2002: 283). Note taking was done during and after observation to ensure accuracy and objectivity (Jankowski, 2002: 148).

The usual problems associated with observation is that of limited coverage of the students' activities and hence limited volume of observational data, which is a practical problem since it was impossible for me to observe them round the clock due to constraints related to time and work. Certain aspects that were not observed might have resulted in providing a less than complete picture, which hence might have affected the accuracy of interpretation and analysis (Yin, 2003: 86; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005: 122). As an observer, I was also perceiving things from my perspective and might not have included certain aspects and elements which I could have missed out due to oversight or selective bias (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005: 122). I have to acknowledge that in observations, the data collection process was an interpretive process in which certain aspects were stressed and others were given less attention, due to the stronger relevance and meaning attached to the former, which is understandable in observational research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 94). However the existence of selective bias could be problematic as those aspects that were given

less attention might sometimes turn out to be important as well upon retrospection. Additionally, due to the ‘hawthorne effect’, the students might not always behave in the most natural way if they knew that the researcher was present, which would affect the authenticity of the data gathered (Jankowski, 2002: 147).

To minimize the problem of limited volume of observational data, I tried to be as regular as possible in my schedule of observation and tried my best to acquire as much observed information as possible by observing a reasonably long period each time. To attend to the problem of selection bias and oversight, I tried to be conscientiously attentive to as much relevant details as possible and undertook the role of a detached observer by constantly reminding myself to be aware of selection bias and stay objective; all of which would help me to ensure data credibility and holistic authenticity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 95). As for the problem of the ‘hawthorne’ effect, I attempted to make my presence as inconspicuous as possible when I did observations so as not to add unnecessary pressure on the students.

With both the research methods of interview and observation discussed, I will now discuss the analysis of data and writing of the thesis.

Analysis of Data

The analysis of data and writing of the thesis was based on empathetic understanding so as to uncover patterns and meaning of human activity and thought, and as a result critical description, interpretation and analysis are produced in the thesis (Berg, 2001: 239-242). The substantial description and critical analysis provide readers opportunity for vicarious experience, and readers can further extend their perception and interpretation of things to make their own personal conclusions of the research. The whole attempt was about researching on a social process in which these foreign students lived together with local Singaporeans and enriched one another’s

experiences. The knowledge gained from the research work was socially constructed through my experiential and contextual accounts, which assist readers in that construction of knowledge. As for me, doing the research was a personal experience as I was given ample time to become personally knowledgeable, and experientially acquainted with the case. A good research is the conception of the most naturalistic and holistic work that possesses accurate description and subjective yet disciplined interpretation and analysis. In dealing with the students and participants who came from a variety of social-cultural background and had varying experiences in the school concerned, there existed a respect for both culturally different perceptions of phenomena and empathetic representations of local settings (Stake, 2008: 135).

The analysis of data was an on-going process that took place throughout the duration of data collection and writing of the thesis. In order to produce a good analysis, I had to appreciate the element of subjectivity in such a qualitative study and I needed to ground assertions in various forms of evidence and reflect constantly (McKie, 2002: 283). There was hence a need on my part to be vigilant and not to be assumptuous as I addressed important issues related to the topic of study and all evidences were taken into account so as to derive an accurate interpretation (Yin, 2003: 137; Brizuela, et al. 2000: xix). The information obtained from collected data helped to answer research questions and also generated more questions. Such collection and analysis of data were repeated several times to ensure internal validity. In doing the analysis and presentation of the findings in the writing of the thesis, I identified significant data and constantly searched for meaningful patterns through fair and logical induction so as to communicate the essence of the data (Brizuela, et al. 2000: xvii; Jankowski, 2002: 15; Patton, 2002: 432). To obtain authenticity, I ensured that the thesis displays both positive and negative aspects in the students' socialization

and therefore provides a balanced account based on constructive analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 142-155). In writing the thesis, I utilized a considerable amount of relevant interview and observational data which are significantly representational of multiple perspectives and realities, in order to present a balanced representation of the whole reality which reflects both positive and negative aspects, one that is authentic and trustworthy. (Gilham, 2000: 76-79; Sanger, 1996: 124; Patton, 2002: 575). This is done with the intent of providing rich data for the purpose of holistic and adequate understanding of the students' experiences in socialization in sport participation.

This case study thesis is both an exploratory and explanatory one that aims at critically explaining phenomena by establishing some causal links through the use of both descriptive and theoretical analyses (Yin, 2003: 31). The writing of the thesis employs both the descriptive and analytic methods in which description is balanced by interpretation and analysis. Description provides the skeletal frame for analysis that leads into interpretation and therefore the thesis provides sufficient description to allow the reader understand the basis for interpretation and sufficient interpretation to allow the reader appreciate the description (Patton, 2002: 503).

I treated social action and human activity as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning and relied greatly on subjective data which were gathered from interviews and observations. Except for the omission of some non-relevant details, much of the raw data from both interviews and observations were considered to be relevant to the study and were utilized in the thesis for discussion and analysis.

To provide a framework for understanding the experiences of the students' socialization, a descriptive and analytical discussion of the school's environment is provided in Chapter 4. In Chapters 5-8, the findings are presented and discussed in

accordance with topics arising from an analysis of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). For example in Chapter 5 (students' profiles), the topic of 'perspective and attitude towards sport' is used for the discussion of each student; in Chapter 6 (students' perception of the school), the topics of 'academic programme', 'overall school philosophy' and 'sport and ECA programmes' are used; in Chapter 7 (students' socialization experience with schoolmates in sport participation), the topics of 'sociability' and 'team affiliation' are used; and in Chapter 8 (students' socialization experience with the teacher in-charge and coach of their sport activity/club), the topics of 'interactive experience with the teacher and coach' and 'response to training' are used. An attempt is also made to relate the five areas of study in Chapters 4-8 to one another so as to explore for any meaningful relations between them.

In the conclusion Chapter 9, I provide a comprehensive summation of both the overall socialization experiences and related issues of the six foreign students in their sport participation in the context of this study. They are further analyzed from both the developmental and humanistic-social constructionist perspectives using relevant social-psychological theories, through which I seek to explain their socialization experience in a meaningful way. A discussion of some limitations some of these theories have in explaining the research outcome is also done. Lastly in Chapter 9, based on the findings discussed, several theoretical, methodological and practical implications with regard to the research are presented as well.

Reflexivity

Having said all this, due to the element of subjectivity in a qualitative case study, research has never been an easy process. In qualitative studies, there is usually an attempt to pull together different elements of interactions where there is a focus on subjective understanding and perception about people, objects and symbols. Meanings

are formed through the social process of interacting, human experiences and interpretation of these experiences (Berg, 2001: 7-8). According to Schulz (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008: 176), people use their common sense knowledge to objectify the world and individuals approach life with a stock of knowledge composed of what they acquire in their life time, all of which enable them to give meaning to objects and events. The purpose of research is to present these constructed or derived meanings in the most authentic manner which allows for good comprehension of human affairs. In order to present them well however, requires the researcher to constantly re-examine himself/herself and the research participants for any biases that may affect the authenticity of the research; an activity called 'reflexivity'. It is an activity in which both the researcher and participants acknowledge the fact that their social background, belief, value system and personality could affect their perception of things, and hence the authenticity of the accounts (Carter & Sealy, 2009: 70). In the words of Bloor & Woods, "reflexivity is an awareness of the self in the situation of action and the role of the self in constructing that situation" (Glesne, 2006: 150). It involves the critical reflection on how the researcher and the research participants interact and influence one another. We discuss reflexivity by inquiring into our own biases, subjectivity, value-laden perspectives and data interpretation in order to make the research more accurate, valid and legitimate (Glesne, 2006: 151).

As the researcher, I possessed a certain socio-cultural background and was therefore a product of some form of socialization that oriented me to think and conduct in a certain manner, and would have certain biases I had to guard against and be aware of (Fetterman, 1991: 92; Berg, 2001: 140). Reflexivity was hence an active process in which I continuously conversed with myself to define what I believed and contemplated how it could affect my perception, and then made conscious effort to

remain truthful (Carter & Sealy, 2009: 70). It means that I had to be aware of my own emotion at work, which could make me too optimistic and assumptuous that the students' socializing experiences in sport participation were more likely to be positive. To be aware of such emotion enabled me to be more alert and attentive to details and information which included data that indicated negative socialization experiences in the students' sport participation (Glesne, 2006: 154-155). In addition, reflexivity also entailed the need for me be aware of 'positionality', that is to be aware of my position as a sport participant and PE teacher in the school, and as someone who have experienced generally positive socialization in sport participation (Glesne, 2006: 157). This awareness prevented me in assuming all socialization experiences in sport participation had to be good and enabled me to enter the research setting with a mindset of openness, curiosity and willingness to learn as much as possible in my interaction with the students (Glesne, 2006: 157).

By virtue of my personal background, my position in the school and my relationship with the six students and other participants, objectivity is inevitably a problem in this qualitative research. The issue of researcher objectivity in qualitative study is a difficult one, as it is almost impossible to enter into any situation without any preconceived notions, and as the researcher, I am aware of reflexivity and hence understand that the content in the thesis is a piece of socially constructed knowledge; that is, a product that has the potential to be influenced by my own background and disposition (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 145). According to Becker (Bloor & Wood, 2006:185), it is therefore impossible for anyone to undertake research that is totally 'unaffected' by personal disposition and values. One of the issues related to reflexivity in the context of this piece of research is that of my personal background and my position in the school; as someone who had personally benefited from youth

sport programme when I was schooling, and as a PE teacher organizing the school's sport programme, I would tend to hold the view that most organized youth sport activities would provide more positive than negative experiences. This could have oriented me into assuming that the students would be more likely to enjoy positive socialization experience in their sport participation before I started my investigation. The second issue pertains to my teacher-student relationship with the students, in which I already knew them before the study began. Although I did not coach them in their sports, their regard of me as a teacher in the school would somehow affect their willingness to provide the most honest and authentic data in interviews, which they were afraid might disappoint me. The two issues mentioned could have affected the degree of authenticity in the study, which I was constantly aware of.

Nonetheless, as part of the endeavour to make the study as authentic as possible, there had always been a conscious effort on my part to be a truthful investigator. I had constantly encouraged the students to be frank in interviews and I had attempted to my best ability to be truthful at the highest possible standard by not imposing my own views and being sensitive and open to alternate views and insights which included negative aspects of socialization in sport participation, when I was interviewing, conversing, observing, analyzing and writing. The several years of working in the school and interacting with its students who could be quite different from me in their perspectives of things also helped to develop in me a more open-minded and unprejudiced mentality, which was essential in my work as a researcher in the study. This series of reflexive acts allowed me to understand issues from the viewpoints of the students and participants, which assisted me in the research and when it came to the presentation of the findings and the writing of the thesis, other than just using the voice of a researcher who confidently presents research results, the

reflexive stance also involved me honestly considering my position and its impact in the research setting (Glesne, 2006: 159). Eventually the research product was co-constructed by the six students, participants and me, as I had attended to all this awareness of reflexivity and had tried my best to present the most accurate and authentic representation of the students' experiences through actively constructing interpretation of their experiences in a fair and meaningful way, and not just producing a piece of write-up that merely contains plainly reported facts (Hertz, 1997: viii, xiii; Glesne, 2006: 159; Kleinman & Copp, 1993: 19).

Conclusion

Thesis writing is a process of reflection, communication and presentation of the research findings and knowledge. Knowledge writing is hence a method of enquiry, the means by which we come to know about the social world and our relationship to it (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 187). In the thesis, I sought to humanize the research in emphatically understanding the students' socialization experiences in sport participation by getting into the core of their experiences and acquiring a constructed understanding of the insiders' experience (Kleinman & Copp, 1993: 13, 19, 49). It is therefore hoped that the study will help us better understand the socialization process of these foreign students in sport participation and that the outcome of the research can also help us comprehend the experiences foreign students have in adapting to school environment in Singapore. In the following Chapter 4, the first set of findings will be illustrated as I discuss the general human-social environment of the school where the study was conducted.

Chapter 4- Findings & Discussion: The School

This chapter essentially illustrates the school's human-social environment which includes its philosophy, curriculum, students, principals, teachers, extra-curricular programme, parents and school ethos on sport. Based on the multi-dimensional approach adopted in the research, it is important to illustrate its human-social environment as they are part of the environmental dimension (Hutchinson, 2008: 14). This allows us to understand its critical role in affecting the students' socialization experience in sport participation.

School Philosophy

The school in which the study is undertaken is a Singaporean managed international school located in an urban area in the central part of the country. As one of Singapore's first privatized mainstream schools, it is entirely self-financed and receives no funding from the government. It therefore has the freedom to design its curriculum and create the schooling environment it desires. Its good transport links makes the school a popular choice among both Singaporeans and foreigners due to its accessibility. The school is made up of students from more than 20 nationalities and has existed since 2005. Linked to a prestigious fraternal school in Singapore, which enjoys a 130 year old history, the international school is founded upon the ethos of academic achievement and character building and is focused on the development of future leaders with an international vision and deep compassion for humanity, based on Christian belief and values. (Lau & Teo, 2007).

Its mission was identified as nurturing the academic, physical, social, cultural and spiritual growth of future leaders through:

- Creating a strong, vibrant, international community in which young men and young women feel valued and nurture understanding, mutual respect, cooperation, friendship and compassion;
- Having a strong academic focus with a broad-ranging international curriculum;
- Developing leadership skills, teamwork, fair play through sports and other activities;
- Encouraging initiative, an entrepreneurial spirit, self-reliance and resourcefulness within individuals in the context of the whole community; and
- Nurturing the development of Christian belief and values and encouraging the spiritual growth of all members of the community (Lau & Teo, 2007: 292).

To provide further expression of the school's international philosophy the principal issued a statement:

We believe that we are all created...(with a purpose). We are therefore committed to a holistic education- the education of the whole person, body, mind and spirit...We believe that many of the most important truths are learned in community. We aim that in our community each will feel valued and accepted, and encouraged to fulfill their...given potential.

As an international school, we welcome into our community those of all races, all cultures, all religions and all social backgrounds. We respect the integrity of all and will not consciously do anything that

denigrates another person's race, culture, religion or social background or would lead to disharmony.

...(For the daily morning assembly) Since we are in Singapore it is appropriate that we recognise daily the values that are central to our host country- through honouring the Singapore flag, and standing alongside Singaporeans as they sing the National Anthem and say the Pledge. But we shall also each day recognize one another's nationality, honour its flag and share its anthem. In this way we shall remind ourselves that we are different nationalities learning to work together towards a world order where there is justice, freedom and peace for all (Lau & Teo, 2007:292).

From this statement, one can postulate that the principal and the management desire to create a school ethos which stresses on the respect for all members of the school and the larger human community. They also value each person's talent and ability and believe that education should serve to maximize individual ability.

Curriculum

The school offers a six-year secondary education programme. At the end of year 4, students sit for the Cambridge IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education), and the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) at the end of year 6 (though the first 2 batches of graduands did the 'A' levels). A student should attain a minimum of 3 Bs and 3 Cs to qualify for the IB programme in year 5. The IB programme focuses on international perspectives of learning and teaching and in the core component encourages an all-round education, requiring students to participate in creative experiences, a wide range of physical activities and in community service. Teaching staff began preparing for the delivery of the IB by taking residential training

courses. As the school's policy of admitting Singaporean students is endorsed by the local government, in conforming to the regulatory policy, all Singaporean students are required to study their Mother Tongue language (depending on the ethnic group they belong to).

In addition, in the daily morning assembly, the school is also required to observe the daily practice of playing the Singapore National Anthem and saying the Pledge, but in this school, the practice of observing the national anthems and flags of other nationalities is also observed on the first day of every new week (Lau & Teo, 2007). Once in an academic year in the morning assembly, each form class will take turn to present a topic that touches on global issues such as war, poverty and environment. This arrangement to start the day's routine serves to inculcate in them awareness of world issues and values an international citizen should have.

In addition to the international curriculum, the international community and co-education, the school has small classes (normal maximum 25), and instituted the home room system to enable teachers to establish their own environment and resources. It has also installed a campus-wide LAN requiring students to have their own lap-top to enable teaching and learning using modern technology and the internet. Each student belongs to a tutor group with a teacher responsible for overall pastoral care. Religious and moral studies is part of the core curriculum for all students in the lower classes, introducing them to the Bible and a study of the life and teachings of Jesus, helping them understand the reasons for religious faith and enabling them to reconcile their beliefs with their scientific knowledge. Daily assembly with a Christian devotion and a longer worship service on Friday are regular features (Lau & Teo, 2007).

To reinforce the commitment to all-round education, the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (known in Singapore as the National Youth Achievement Award) is included in the broad curriculum for all students.

To encourage students to show self-discipline and be responsible for organizing their school life, school prefects are appointed by the principal from amongst the senior students to help in the organisation and discipline of the school. This is complemented by the institution of a student-elected Student Council which is given the responsibility in representing student views, developing student welfare and arranging social and cultural events.

An important feature of the school is its policy of rewarding 'effort' for students' work. Students are graded each half-term for 'effort' as well as 'achievement', using a seven-point scale. Those who achieve three or more high 'effort' grade and no very low grades, receive certificates of commendation. As a result, it has been observed there has been a marked improvement in students' performance over time (Principal, personal communication, February 1, 2007). Continuing education is emphasized from the start to move parents and students away from a 'test culture' (which is prevalent in many national schools in Singapore). Test dates are not announced too early beforehand, since the school wants to emphasize that education is a continuing process and not just a series of test. Students are expected to work hard all the time, not just when a test is approaching. There are, of course, end-of-year exams, dates of which are published, to consolidate the work of the year and to give examination practice (Lau & Teo, 2007). At the end of the year, best performing students in each subject from various levels will receive academic prizes.

Students

Students in the school are expected to take up an extra-curricular activity and are encouraged to live an enriching school life through academic and non-academic activities. They are offered opportunities for leadership and community roles through which they are able to socialize with one another.

The school places a particularly strong emphasis on participation in sport among its students. It has an active physical education and sport programme and has participated in various inter-school sport competitions and attained varying success. 30% of the school's population is involved in sport extra-curricular activities which serve as an outlet for students of different nationalities to socialize with one another. Such participation in sport also allows for the inculcation of a sense of belonging and pride for the school, a task that is not easy to accomplish in a new international school where students of diverse nationalities do not necessarily communicate with each other with ease. 58% of the school's population are Singaporeans and the others hail from regional countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Taiwan and Korea. The school is at its pioneering stage and is in the process of establishing a more interactive international community. The principals, teachers and parents understand that the international school is the first of its kind in Singapore and its founding signifies an important breakthrough in the 46 year history of the education system since the nation's self-government and independence. The staff of the school shares the same mission of adopting a student-centered approach to education that emphasizes creativity, spontaneity and character building, with the hope of shaping students into citizens who can face the world with confidence and make a contribution to society (Senior Director, personal communication, January 15, 2005).

The Principals

The founding principal, a pastor, is one who believes in an all-rounded education in which students are given abundant opportunities to experience all facets of education, which include academic studies, sport, arts and service learning. Having substantial experience in managing schools in the UK, observations and personal discussions with him suggests he has a deep belief in an all-rounded education in order to ensure the nurturing of a complete human being. In practice, the principal is amicable and visionary and puts in onerous efforts to realize a learning environment where students learn freely and can socialize with ease. Observations suggest that in part through his leadership qualities the general morale in the school is high with academic staff seemingly motivated to work long hours over and above those required to make the schooling programme work. Assisting the principal is the vice-principal who is in charge of pastoral matters and other administrative business, and shares the principal's mission and vision for the school.

Under the leadership and management of these two key individuals, the school has performed well in the last three years in terms of academic performance and extra-curricular activity. The principal believes this success has helped to inculcate a sense of pride and belonging for the school among students (Principal, personal communication, March 1, 2008).

Teachers

There are about 80 full time and part time teachers, of which 20% are expatriates. All possess a bachelor degree qualification or higher qualifications. There are seven Heads of Departments (HODs) who report directly to the Principal. In terms of workload, HODs and other teachers are expected to teach 16 and 20-24 periods respectively a week and have to be in charge of one extra-curricular activity. HODs

are also the coordinators of major school events. 35 teachers are form tutors (form teachers) who are under the supervision of level tutors (one for one year level; there are 6 level tutors altogether). Form tutors and level tutors are responsible for discipline and administrative matters of students in their respective form class and level. 15 teachers are subject or project coordinators.

Informal conversations with staff over the years suggest that many non-expatriates had taught in local national schools and perceiving the weaknesses in the Singapore national education system had decided to join the privately run international school with the desire to experiment with a student-centered system of education, found lacking in many local schools. In addition, conversations suggested that they also wanted to experience teaching in an environment made up of students from various nationalities. From my observation and experience of working in the school, teachers are generally amicable and the principal's democratic approach of management seems to provide them with ample room to implement their desired educational plans that are in line with the school's philosophy.

Extra-Curricular Programme

The school offers an all-rounded education that seeks to maximize the development of every individual in the personal and social spheres. The school places high value on students' involvement in extra-curricular programme (ECA) as it believes that ECA has great impact on one's character and social skills. In the words of the ECA Coordinator:

Extra-Curricular activity (ECA) is an essential part of a holistic educational programme through which students can enjoy an enriching schooling experience for personal growth. Such meaningful experience also serves to cultivate one's character and ability through active participation in sport, arts

and service. The Sport ECA programme provides students opportunities to participate in activities they like and it serves to develop in them teamwork, ruggedness, discipline and a love for physical training and adventure. Students will be given appropriate amount of training so as to prepare them for competitions. Students are encouraged to pursue greater levels of excellence in their activities. Regular training and practices are conducted and all ECAs will participate in competitions. It is hoped that teachers, coaches and students will work joyously in unison and try their best in reaching the desired level of excellence in all activities.

(Personal Communication, April 1, 2005)

The ECA programme is designed in such a way that it can enable students to attain the requirements for both the Duke of Edinburg Award and the IB diploma. Years 1-4 students are expected to obtain at least a bronze for the Duke of Edinburg Award, and more motivated students are encouraged to go for the silver and gold awards. As part of the IB requirement, years 5-6 students are expected to fulfill a total 150 hours in their extra-curricular activities, in the three areas of Creativity, Action (sport & adventure) and Service. The school offers around 40 types of extra-curricular activities. As all teachers are obliged to be in charge of one ECA, they are expected to perform the following duties:

- ECA Teachers-in-charge have an important role in the successful management of the school's extra-curricular activity programme. They act as a manager, advisor, mentor and coach who are responsible for the overall functioning of the activity. All ECAs should have at least one activity session in a week, so as to ensure all ECAs are kept active

and purposeful. They will monitor the progress of the activity through recruitment, keeping track of attendance and trainings/practices.

- They will work closely with the instructor/coach, student leaders and students on how to conduct activities and programmes in the best way possible.
- They will motivate students to reach higher levels of excellence in their activities.
- They will establish student leadership structure within the ECA group and develop and cultivate a sense of ownership, commitment and pride among students towards their ECA. They will nurture students' responsibility and leadership through the appointment of student committees.
- They will write assessment of each student's performance at year end.
- They will evaluate instructor/coach's performance regularly or half yearly with feedback from students.
- They will perform basic functions such as arranging for payment of instructor/coach; monitoring safety and cleanliness; arranging for logistics & transport; and writing a year-end report of their ECA for publication and administrative purposes. They have to ensure that activity avenues are well taken care of. They should be present at the start of the activity and remains contactable while the activity is going on, so as to ensure safety and cleanliness of the venue at the end of the activity.
- They will prepare sport teams for competitions where possible and accompany them as manager or coach. They will prepare arts/ cultural

and service clubs for school's performances/events and competitions where possible.

- They will assist in organising intra-institution and inter-institution competitions (Tan, 2007).

Usually, each ECA club is managed by both a teacher in-charge and a coach/instructor. While the former takes care of the logistics and sometimes does co-coaching, the latter does most of the technical coaching. Both complement one another in the running of club activities and work together on the overall strategic development of the club.

Student leaders who contribute or participate actively, or achieve top placings in extra-curricular activity and competitions are commended with awards at the end of the year. All the sports teams participate in inter-school competitions for various age-levels and competing standards. Typically, years 1 & 2 compete in the under-14 category, years 1-4 are eligible for the under-17 category and years 5 & 6 compete in the under-20 category. Clubs and societies are also actively involved in performances and competitions. Motivated students train and practise hard to achieve their aims, and many clubs are experiencing varying degrees of successes these days.

Students are also expected to take part in the school's inter-house events, especially in sport, for the purposes of building team spirit and the spirit of competitiveness that is essential in one's growing up process, as well as developing one's potential in leadership in the process of contributing in group work. House activities are basically student centered with the aim of having student leadership as the foundation for its operation but teachers are also appointed as house masters who play an important role in the overall functioning by being an advisor and mentor to student leaders and students who will in turn rally and lead house members in events.

House masters will also work with student leaders and students to ensure desired level of participation in sport activities in the best way possible and to develop a sense of pride and ownership among students. Points will be awarded to the various houses for the competitions, which will be aggregated at year end to decide the champion house. A merit system is also installed to reward students for their good performance and contribution in any way as a member of the school community. The merit points for all students will too be totaled up at the end of the year, which will decide the house merit award. Winners of inter-house competitions receive prizes, and at the end of the year the champion house will be awarded with the Champion Shield and house leaders who contribute actively will also be commended with awards. The house that has the most number of merit points will also receive the House Merit Shield. All academic and non-academic prizes will be presented during the annual Speech & Graduation Night on the very last day of the academic year.

In addition, throughout the year, several commemorative events are being staged in school. They include the Lunar New Year celebration, Founder's Day, International Friendship Day, Racial Harmony Day, Singapore National Day and Teacher's Day. The holding of these events serve to impart educational values as well as to build school community spirit through the celebration. At the year end Speech Night, one or two outstanding senior students from years 5 and 6 will also receive the Social Contribution Award for their effort in these events.

To fulfill the requirements for both the Duke of Edinburgh Award and IB Diploma, students in years 2, 3 & 6 are expected to participate in outdoor adventure programmes of progressive degree of challenge. All students are also obliged to take part in some form of activities related to voluntary service in each of their six-year stay in the school. In the junior years, they perform simpler tasks such as washing of

cars, cleaning the school compound and selling of food and goods to raise fund. At year 5, they would have to perform more challenging community service overseas at developing countries in South East Asia where they would be exposed to other aspects of the world and learn to take up initiatives in completing tasks and establishing international friendships. It is hoped that this would help imbue in them a spirit of compassion and contribution (Tan, 2007).

Eventually, all extra-curricular and house activities aim at fostering character, student leadership, students' active involvement-contribution and the school spirit, which are essential for a new aspiring school where all will partake in a fruitful and meaningful six-year learning journey. It is hoped that through these extra-curricular activities, students will imbue in them sound character and strong social skills as global citizens (Tan, 2007).

Parents

As a private school, parents pay the full tuition fee which is 30 times that of local national schools. A number of parents play an active role in the school's parents support group which assists in organizing enrichment programmes for the students. For example, they participate in various orientation programmes aimed at inducting international students into school life. These include carnival fairs, tea parties, tours and talks. Arguably the parents support group functions as another cultural mechanism that aids the school in strengthening the solidarity of the students' community through proactively nurturing cross-national relations (Principal, personal communication, May 3, 2007). In the words of the Principal, the Parents Support Group fulfills the following roles:

- To encourage parents to support and be involved in school activities.

- To act as channel for parents to voice opinions and provide feedback to the school.
- To provide a channel for explaining school decisions and policies.
- To foster better rapport and support among parents.
- To foster better parent-child relationships.
- To promote the general well-being of the students.

School Ethos on Sport

Although the school compound is not big, it presently has basic facilities that are adequate for the provision of the curricular programme. Apart from classrooms which are essential for lesson teaching, the school has a library, a multiple purpose hall for concerts and indoor sport, a basketball court, two tennis courts and a football field. A much bigger multi-purpose sport hall will be built in two year's time to cater to more students and more sport activities. The school has an emphasis on sport as part of the extra-curricular programme and hopes to see the sport programme being utilized as an avenue through which students can receive health and character education. The provision of a range of sports offers students a range of choices for their extra-curricular activities. All sports clubs welcome students' participation as long as they are keen and are committed to the club's expectations in trainings. Trials are not required for anyone who is interested in joining the club, as the school believes that everyone should be given the opportunity to learn a sport, but of course the better ones will receive more intensive training for competitions while the others can undergo rudimentary trainings to facilitate ability progression. As such, all sports clubs have both 'competitive' teams and 'developmental' teams (i.e. the less competitive). This practice is different from what is done in other government/national schools where students have to go through selection trials in

order to be accepted by a sport club and there is no provision of training programme for the less athletically talented students even if they are keen.

In addition, the school's emphasis on teacher's pastoral responsibilities in managing sports clubs, which are shown in the close working relationships between students and teachers in-charge of the clubs can also help facilitate an enjoyable sporting experience for students. Hence the school's sport philosophy and ethos in embracing anyone who is enthusiastic and committed somehow encourages students to take up sport as an extra-curricular activity and as part of personal development.

General Analysis & Conclusion

Based on the multi-dimensional approach, in terms of the 'environmental' dimension (Hutchinson, 2008), the school has both a positive human-social environment and physical environment that are conducive for students' socialization for the following reasons.

The school curriculum provides avenues and opportunities for students to be involved in learning activities which support an educational philosophy that encourages the acquisition of knowledge and development of moral character which can enable individuals to socialize effectively and morally. Both the principals and teachers believe in student centered education and encourage amicability and hospitality among students. Its rigorous extra-curricular programme encourages participation and socialization, and it has a supportive parents' network that helps both local and foreign students to socialize with one another. In terms of physical environment, the school's small campus area actually provides a conducive condition for students to intermingle and its facilities help engender participation and involvement in activities, which is important for socialization. As explained by Hutchinson's & Charlesworth's (2008) concept of shared social reality in human

interaction, the positive human-social environment could also facilitate socialization as students are encouraged to interact with one another based on a shared understanding which is made possible by the exemplary conduct of both teachers and principals who have been encouraging them to appreciate each other's culture so as to cultivate interactive relationships that are typified by a two-way dynamic process wherein all parties mutually influence each other in a positive direction.

In particular, the school's ethos on sport which stresses character education tends to make the various sports clubs highly accommodative and non-discriminatory in terms of membership. In turn this may encourage students who might have previously done so in a more competitive environment to participate in sport programmes, and thereby affording the programmes an increased potential as a means by which to facilitate socialization due to the interactive nature of sport activity, a notion well supported by both Arnold's (1997) view that participation in sport helps one to socialize through the cultivation of human relationship and Shield's and Bredemier's (1994) advocacy that sport helps foster inter-personal values and skills of co-operation and empathy.

The degree of socialization depends on the amount of influence exerted by the social environmental forces in shaping the mentality and attitude of the students. The type of ethos created by both the staff and the student community will become a major part of the overall school cultural environment, which will influence students in the way they interact with one another, as advocated by Bakhurst & Sypnowich (1995). Based on the humanistic educational philosophy as espoused by the school's principal and teachers, which promotes an amicable atmosphere, the overall school cultural environment seems potentially conducive in promoting positive socializing experiences and socialization in general.

However a major factor in influencing the course and degree of socialization rests on the students themselves and the degree of successful socialization is dependant on the existence of 'shared reality' among students in the international school. As understood from Berger & Luckmann (1966), this 'shared reality' can include shared personal interest, language and personality, which may or may not exist among students who come from various national and cultural backgrounds, and if there is very little shared reality among them then socialization, especially cross-national socialization would not occur to a high degree. As explained by Bakhurst's and Sypnowich's (1995) concept of the paramount influence of environmental force (that is derived from students' action) in the development of this shared reality, a lot relies on students themselves who play a critical role in taking initiatives to reach out to others and to participate in activities, and if they are not motivated enough to do so then the environmental force in influencing the community to socialize to a high degree would also be weak.

As the international school faces the challenge of establishing an integrated international community where there is high degree of socialization among students, its humanistic educational philosophy, policy and practice as officially held by the principals, teachers and parents could help facilitate the development of such an international community where students can comfortably socialize with one another in various aspects of schooling life. One way to realize the aim of building the desired school community is through the positive ethos of the school's sport programme, which could promote active participation in sport activities, where students through shared activities and goals, and hence a shared reality, can develop a spirit of camaraderie and therefore socialize and integrate into a cohesive community. But before this can be achieved, it is important to know the process of socialization

foreign students experience in their participation in the various sports, which is the main topic of the study. In the following Chapters 5-8, the findings on the socialization experiences in sport participation of the six foreign students will be presented and discussed. Based on the multi-dimensional approach, the discussion of each student's experience will be illustrated over four areas and they are:

- 1) Students' profiles (Chapter 5);
- 2) Students' perception of the school (Chapter 6);
- 3) Students' socialization experience with schoolmates in sport participation (Chapter 7); and
- 4) Students' socialization experience with the teacher in-charge and coach of their sport activity/club (Chapter 8).

Chapter 5- Findings and Discussion: Students' Profiles

This chapter essentially discusses the students' profiles which include their backgrounds, perspectives and attitudes towards sport. Possessing a knowledge of their profiles and relating it to their socialization experiences enable me to have a more comprehensive understanding of their mind-sets, behaviours and actions in their process of socialization in sport participation.

In order to obtain an in-depth understanding, data are derived from interviews with the six students, key individuals in the school (such as schoolmates, teachers & coaches), and school-based observations. The data was collected at the early phase of the study period. The chapter considers individual student profiles, followed by a more general analysis.

Lee (Indonesian)

Lee is a 15-year old boy from Indonesia who has been studying in the school since 2006.

Lee gives the impression that he is an amicable, optimistic and energetic boy; this can be seen from his frequent interaction with fellow schoolmates. According to a teacher who teaches him, "*Lee is a very jovial and friendly person and is well liked by his peers*". Observations of Lee's interaction within the school confirm this view. He is polite to teachers, giving a nod or smile upon meeting one, and takes a positive approach to school activities, demonstrating great enthusiasm in extra-curricular activities such as hip-hop dancing and basketball. A sociable person, in school he interacts well with fellow schoolmates as he is often seen chatting or doing work and activities with his friends. He often performs hip-hop dancing at important school events and enjoys contributing to school activities such as setting up game stalls for his class and basketball club in carnival fairs.

Perspective and Attitude towards Sport

Lee's liking for sport allows him more opportunities to socialize and enjoy school life. His enthusiasm in sport is very much linked to his Indonesian home town; the place he comes from offers plenty of venues for sports such as badminton, table tennis and football, and public facilities are readily available for recreational activities. As he says,

"In Indonesia, it's not difficult to find places for recreational activities. My hometown has plenty of public open fields and courts where people play football and basketball. Everyone in Indonesia loves badminton and plays it at home where open spaces are not hard to find".

Moreover, he comments, *"...My parents and uncles do several sports and since young, I have been influenced by them in my inclination towards sport..."* Evidently, Lee comes from a family where members are much involved in sport where his father and uncles play rugby, basketball and boxing while his mum swims regularly, and he admits that having such a family background does exert influence on developing his interest in sport. According to him,

"My parents do want me to do well in studies, but on the other hand, they also allow me to develop my psycho-motor skills in a natural way by giving me lots of freedom to play games with neighbours and friends."

From the above, one might gather that his parents generally adopted a liberal method in educating him and his parents' non-restrictive approach allowed him the freedom and opportunities to be exposed to a few sports and games. This phenomenon is further supported by his parents' reported open mindset and their belief that Lee should be able to make sound independent decision about his life. As Lee comments,

“...they are not that kind of parents that expect you to score As in every subject; the important thing is you would need to set your own target for academic performance as long as it is reasonable and work hard towards it.... but they also expect me to be able to make independent decisions as far as my personal life and future are concerned. I think their liberal way of parenting to a large extent enables me to pursue my own interests such as sport with great enthusiasm.”

One gathers that his parents believe in giving him the freedom to plan for his future and lead a life that is most enriching to him. Such positive parental support could have influenced him to develop a liking for sport (Valentine, 2006).

Apart from emotive support, Lee's parents also provide realistic tangible support as in Lee's own words,

“They (i.e. parents) support me financially in my sporting activities when I need any sports equipment as they feel the importance of me having an enriched life...”

Lee's parents are proactively supportive of his participation in sport, which is evidenced in them supporting him financially and logistically in his pursuit of sporting interests.

Clearly in familial and cultural terms Lee has been strongly exposed to a strong sporting environment since young where he readily picked up games such as basketball and soccer, and subsequently developed a strong liking and appreciation of the value for sport participation. As he states,

“I think sport helps train will power and makes one a better person in various aspects such as character and fitness, and through sport I've become stronger

mentally and physically. It helps to build in me tolerance and patience through things like tough training and aggression in competition.”

Lee likes sport for several reasons such as character building and fitness. He also appreciates sport for its ability in nurturing team bonding and spirit, which can be attained through the process of working out, training and competition,

“I remember how we usually push ourselves to perform our best when we play other schools as we fight in unison and determination; and when we win, the joy is simply overwhelming for our effort has paid off with everyone feeling great satisfaction. Even if we lose, the memories of us struggling hard together will always be unforgettable”.

From the words of the teacher in-charge of basketball,

“He is often seen enjoying basketball games with friends during breaks and will not fail to relate how well the team do in competitions and how he contributes to the team.”

Lee seemingly takes great pride and is intrinsically motivated in sport involvement as he rarely misses training, plays his best in competitions and works hard for the sake of the team.

Lee likes sport for several reasons such as it gives him a sense of achievement upon mastering the skills and winning; it makes him mentally and physically stronger, especially when he tries hard to achieve results; and it gives him the good feeling of struggling together with teammates. Indeed, the joyful spirit of endeavor that is found in sport skill mastery and games, for the sake of excelling and excitement, enables Lee to enjoy sport; and sport’s ability to foster spirit of co-operation and empathy also facilitates Lee’s enjoying the process of playing sport with his teammates and friends (Mihalich, 1982; Shield & Bredemier, 1994).

Lee's amicable personality could also be a result of the type of upbringing he has received at home. From the interview response, one gathers that his parents were strict but kind enough to allow him to interact with friends and neighbours in his growing up process. Such interaction would have nurtured his amicable personality which is important for him to experience fruitful interaction. Additionally, the fact that his parents are serious about him having a fruitful growing up process could well mean that he has probably received strict guidance on how to conduct himself while interacting with friends. All this therefore could have helped nurtured his sociable personality (Sadlik & Kim, 2007).

All in all, one can gather that Lee's intrinsic love for physical activity and his early exposure to it could have led to him becoming an ardent enthusiast in sport, and also due to his amicable personality, he uses sport to both live an active and sociable life as well.

Tron (Thai)

Tron is a 19 year old Thai who has been studying in the school since 2006. He has an amicable personality and gets along well with friends and peers. This is observed by one of his teachers who comments that *"Tron has a friendly disposition. He is matured and conducts himself in a way that easily wins him friends and trust"*.

From school-based observations Tron appears to be a pleasant person who socializes easily with people through sport and other activities, as he is often seen playing games with his friends and involving himself in formal and informal group activities. As a prefect of the school, he performs his duties faithfully and works well with both teachers and students, as he has an easy temperament and does not appear imposing or intimidating. There was an incident when he assisted the vice-principal in

stopping a brawl by pulling the students away from each other, and using kind words to pacify them; this greatly diffused the incident and his actions won commendation.

As an athlete, he exhibits good athletic fitness and ability, and impresses others with his humility and team mentality. As he is two years older than his peers, he comes across as a mature person who patiently encourages his weaker and younger teammates, a behaviour that is borne out of his ability to empathize with others as he told me that he had also gone through the difficult times his peers are experiencing. He appears helpful to friends who are also non-Singaporeans and frequently offers help such as loaning them equipment, locating staff members and giving them directions. In sport trainings, he co-operates fully with the coach and never loses temper with his teammates but leads the way with his physical ability and diligence which is expressed in his hard running style of playing in the football field, a feature that is commonly seen whenever he plays.

Pertaining to the type of parenting he receives at home, Tron says,

“My parents have always taught me to be independent, especially when I am the only son and elder child in the family. They expect me to make my own decisions and be responsible for them. Although they have high expectations of me, they do not prescribe a career path for me. What they do is teach me the right values and expect me to decide my path and future. As such, their way of parenting also allows me lots of opportunities to get involved in sport, which they are happy about as long as I don’t get into drugs and smoking.

From the interview response, one gathers that Tron grew up in a non-restrictive type of environment where his parents offer him the freedom to deliberate on his plans and future but also consciously teach him the correct values. As a result, he turned out to be an independent and mature person who has clear view of his goals.

Perspective and Attitude towards Sport

In Tron's words,

“Back in Thailand, most of the young people play sport. As I came from an all boys school where the students there are naturally very active and spontaneous, under peers' influence, it is very natural for one to pick up a game or two in school and play them recreationally or competitively. It is not unusual to see 50 boys at the school's sports ground at one time playing football or basketball. So you can see that the play culture back at my home town is very strong indeed. In sum, I really enjoy my schooling life...”

From the interview response and observation, it is not difficult to believe that Tron himself is very much engaged in sport as he possesses both an athletic body and fine sporting skills, and is fast and fit. He has been involved in sport since childhood; his home in Thailand where he comes from plays an important role in connecting him to several sports. Back in his hometown, the people participate in a wide range of recreational and sporting activities such as football and basketball. He participated in sport at a young age when he attended schools, primarily due to the strong influence from his peers. In school, he did football and basketball and started playing competitive football for the school when he arrived in Singapore two years ago.

Due to the environment he grew up in, he had abundant opportunities to play sport and liked it for several reasons. He likes sport as it gives him a sense of satisfaction upon working out, as expressed in his words,

“I love sport as I simply feel great with the work out feeling. There's a sense of satisfaction when you get the adrenaline rushing through the body”.

Moreover he remarks,

“I also feel that sport helps to train will power and self-improvement. It is

definitely useful in character development as it helps to develop in you the mental quest for perfection in any endeavours.”

Tron believes participating in sport helps character development, has a capacity to help team building and development of friendships.

“Just as important, sport allows one the opportunity to make friends and build up team spirit. As a key player of the football team, I enjoy leading the team and motivating the players to do their best. Back in Thailand, I may not have the opportunity to do so as getting into the school team requires one to undergo a competitive process. As a Thai, I also want to prove to people that I can be as good as others by setting a good example and play well for the school. I definitely enjoy playing football now with my friends of various nationalities and I hope that the team will expand and become better”.

From his interview response and his spirited expression in the interview, one can gather that Tron is indeed a person that makes sport participation a crucial part of his life as he takes pride in both being a Thai and an enthusiastic football player who can socialize well and can motivate and inspire his peers. A naturally amicable person, Tron is readily popular in the school as a mature leader who leads by example with the right attitude.

This is testified by his coach who says:

“Tron displays serious attitude and is focused on tasks. He takes up leadership responsibility and executes his tasks with dedication. In training he always shows patience and commitment as he takes the players through the drills over and over again. His perseverance and enthusiasm certainly rally the players together and help build strong team spirit as he makes himself a role model who is well respected by his peers and juniors.”

All in all, Tron's parents' liberal yet serious way of raising him has helped teach him to be independent, responsible and has allowed him to participate actively in sport since young, a point supported by White (2007) and Vallerand & Miquelon (2007). Coupled with the strong 'sport playing' culture in his Thai hometown, he has thus developed a strong inclination towards sport.

Mihalich's (1982) view that sport enables joyful participation through physically working out to attain excellence and enhance character, and Shield's & Bredemier's (1994) view that sport allows one to establish friendship through co-operation can also account for Tron's motivation for sporting activities.

In the interview, he expresses pride of being a Thai, which shows that though he is proud of his nationality, it has not hindered his ability to socialize with students of other nationalities. His amicable and sociable personality could be a result of the type of upbringing he has received from his parents who have always taught him proper values (Sadlik & Kim, 2007) and the importance of developing network of friendship for his future.

On the whole, Tron has an optimistic disposition and enjoys what he is doing. His natural amicable personality and his leadership ability also allow him to socialize with fellow schoolmates with ease as he lives his school life fully by engaging himself with football and student activities by being a member of both the football club and the student council.

Ying (PRC Chinese)

Ying is a 16-year old girl from China and has been studying in the school since 2006. She is amicable and gets along well with friends and teachers, a feature observed by one of her teachers who expresses,

“She is focused in her work and is helpful and polite. Although an international student, she is one of the few who take part enthusiastically in activities and tries her best in socializing into the school community.”

From her usual conversations with me I gather that Ying has clear ideas she wants to accomplish as she expresses her desires for personal development in both studies and sport,

“I really wish to perform well in my studies and hope to get into a good Japanese university in the future...I am currently working hard to improve my tennis skills.”

Perspective and Attitude towards Sport

An active person, Ying loves physical activity and especially enjoys tennis and badminton. According to her,

“The people there (in Shanghai) participate in various kinds of physical activity such as exercise dance and taiji. Young people are very much keen on badminton and basketball, which are accessible as there are plenty of courts in the city.”

Her parents love dancing and her father plays badminton and tennis too. Her love for sport is very much linked to the school she attended in Shanghai, where there were many periods for physical activity and she had abundant opportunities to play various kinds of games; as expressed in her words,

“I really enjoyed my schooling days in Shanghai. Apart from studying, I had so much fun playing games and participating in activities in quizzes and festive celebration. On athletics sports day, I would participate in races and liked playing ball games in PE lessons.”

Due to her early exposure to sport and games, Ying has liked sport since

childhood for several reasons,

“I simply love sport for the sake of fun and excitement. I just enjoy being physically active and getting to know friends. Sport makes my life enjoyable and helps raise my confidence as I try to improve my playing ability. Currently, I am very much into tennis and the regular practice routine allows me to challenge myself to pick up new skills and techniques, and it simply makes me work harder and harder so that I can improve my skills and be a better player”.

Ying gives the impression that participation in sport is a natural and indispensable part of her life as she simply loves it for its own sake, and enjoys playing tennis in the company of friends, which is supported by the words of her first tennis coach,

“Ying is a talented tennis player. She picks up skills fast and shows great enthusiasm in the game. A polite and humble person, she mixes well with people through her helpfulness and friendly character. Generally she does her best and enjoys playing the sport with dedication.”

Observation suggest that she is determined to do her best in the activities and applies the coach’s teaching points diligently as she spars with her teammates. She appears to get along well with the first coach and enjoys training under him.

In terms of her wider social interaction Ying was at times observed to be reserved even a bit uncomfortable with some Singaporeans in her class, choosing only to mingle with those who are able to converse in Mandarin well. In the tennis team, she has two close teammates and they happen to come from the same country as her, but she does not seem close to the others. Indeed, it would appear that her stay in the tennis club is very much motivated by her love for tennis as an activity, rather than any opportunity it affords from developing friendships.

Ying likes sport for reasons such as fun and excitement, knowing close friends and raising self-confidence. Indeed her participation in sports and physical activity for the above reasons can be explained by the meaning attached to the notion of 'play' which is a means of rejuvenating one's inner vitality and which enables one to experience feeling of pleasure, a concept theorized by Fink (1988). In addition, playing sport also offers a bonding effect through which she can enter a communion with some people through the activity (Fink, 1988).

Ying also gives one the impression that she is polite and cordial, and that could be the result of her upbringing at home where both parents are educated professionals. However, unlike Lee and Tron, Ying does not appear as enthusiastic about the school. She does not seem to socialize much with students who do not speak Mandarin, even though her own ability to speak English is good. Differences in personality could be the reason as according to her,

“Due to the fact that we came from different cultural backgrounds, I suppose we develop different personalities and topics of interests and therefore I find it difficult to socialize with Singaporean students with ease.”

Fei (PRC Chinese)

Fei is a 18 year-old student from Guangzhou, China, who has been studying since 2006. He is athletically gifted, polite and mature for his age, with clear independent ideas on issues and his purpose of studying in Singapore. First impressions suggest him to be shy and not so sociable, but someone who needs to interact over a period of time before he becomes more open and communicable. Fei appears hardworking, task focused, and intelligent, and someone who grasps concepts well and is willing to learn. Observation of Fei's social interaction within the school suggests a reluctance on his part to interact very much with Singaporean students. The

occasions when this is less in evidence is through his participation and passion for football as he tries to make more friends through the sport. In sport trainings, he is committed and works hard on his skills though he experiences difficulty in bonding with fellow team mates who are mostly Singaporeans probably due more to differences in personality than language. For example, he does not join them in casual conversations and prefers to do drills with his closer teammates than with the rest. He seems to be on closer terms with the two or three foreign members of the team, as according to him, *“...we face the same problem in our relationships with Singaporean students and have common issues to talk about.”*

Perspective and Attitude towards Sport

A physically active person, Fei is very much a sport lover. According to him, *“Back in my hometown Guangzhou, there is a strong culture for exercise and sport where people have ample time for recreational activities such as jogging, football and basketball, and the school’s physical education programme in Guangzhou also promotes sport participation.”*

Due to the easy accessibility to sport facilities, Fei believes the people in Guangzhou tend to take up physical activity as past time after daily work. He believes that growing up under the influence of such a pro-sport macro environment means he has been socialized into sport in his home country since a young age. As he remarks,

“People in Guangzhou participate in sporting activities as part of their lifestyle due to the fact that life there is slower and they have ample time for social and recreational activities. This is all thanks to the government which has been actively promoting healthy lifestyle all these years, especially in Guangzhou where the standard of living is higher and sport facilities are abundant. I cannot deny that I am a product of such a lifestyle culture and in

the school I attended, the physical education programme further influenced me in my enthusiasm for sport.”

Fei’s enthusiasm in sport was also very much inspired by his older brother who is a good athlete. He says:

“I am also influenced by my older brother as well. His great ability in athletics impressed me a lot and I was inspired to do well in sport too. In fact, when I was a child, my mum used to make me play games with him and so I guess I acquired a lot from him. I have always looked up to him as a role model.”

Due to the kind of environment Fei grew up in, where opportunities to play sport were abundant, he naturally developed a liking for sport and does so for several reasons including the excitement involved, friendships nurtured, and the development of confidence and courage. As he comments,

“I like sport because it’s fun and exciting. Besides, it allows you to know more friends and build relationships. For instance, after a football game, all the rumble and tumble somehow provide good memorable experiences and be it your teammates or opponents, all will mingle together after a match for a drink, and through it establish new friendships. At a higher level, I think sport does make one mentally and spiritually stronger through all the hard physical endeavours and from it one can acquire confidence and courage.”

Fei is particularly proud to be a member of the school’s football team and subsequently works hard in training to demonstrate positive participation. According to the teacher in-charge of football,

“Fei is very keen in the game and tries his best. He is earnest by nature and always seeks advice on improving his playing ability and fitness. He is aware

of his strengths and weaknesses and is willing to accept criticisms. He is also a friendly person and though a bit shy, gets along well with me and some players. In fact, he gives lots of moral support to the team by volunteering to accompany the team to matches even when he is injured and offers helpful opinions on matches and training. All in all he is a good natured and co-operative member of the team....”

The strong sport environment back home exerted great influence on Fei developing a strong interest in sport, and his close contact with his athletic older brother to a significant extent inspired and influenced him to take up sport as well; a point well supported by Valentine’s (2006) concept of critical familial influence in socializing one into sport. Broadly speaking, Fei likes sporting activities for reasons such as fun and excitement, cultivating friendships and having good memories. This can be understood from Shield’s & Bredemier’s (1994) notion which espouses that sport helps to foster essential values such as spirit of co-operation and camaraderie, which can account for Fei’s strong interest in sport.

On the whole, Fei has a reserved personality and although he finds it difficult to socialize cross-nationally possibly due to factors related to communication and personality differences, he is generally a optimistic person and is focused on utilizing his stay in Singapore by trying to do well in both studies and extra-curricular activities as well as being a valuable member of the football team.

Gin (Korean)

Gin is a 16-year old boy from South Korea, who has been studying in the school since 2005.

I observed that Gin is an amicable and polite person and his helpful nature allows him to socialize into the school community with ease. He is very keen on sport

especially basketball and spends a great deal of his time helping to build the school team. He is often seen playing basketball with friends and is popular among the sport active community. There are several instances where he offers help to friends and teachers and they have a good impression of him. He never misses training and takes the lead and initiatives to get activities going, be it in class or basketball. As he is two years older than his peers, he appears more mature and sensible in resolving problems and has a calming effect on the basketball team when there are internal conflicts or when the team morale is low. For example, in a particular match, the team did not do well and lost, and the players were really down and out, but he picked it up and rallied the players. In inter-house games, he impresses with his proactive habit of organizing players and leading the teams. However in comparison to his sporting prowess, Gin tends to struggle with his studies, which he strives hard to improve.

Perspective and Attitude towards Sport

Gin is also an avid sport lover. He accounts for this in part in the following terms,

“...in Korea, many young people tend to be involved in a range of sports. The school’s physical education programme instills in us great enthusiasm for physical activity. This enthusiasm is also very much inspired by the country’s success in international sporting contests and the government’s drive in promoting sport across the country. Korean kids tend to be independent and hence have the opportunities to experience various sports. Team sports such as basketball and football are very popular.”

From this, one gathers that back in his Korean hometown, participation in sport among his peers are very popular and facilities are readily available, a result of both the government’s effort in promoting sport and physical education, and the country’s

achievement in the international sport scene which has inspired the wider society.

He believes his participation in sport also relates to his family upbringing and friendships.

“I myself grew up in an environment where my parents encouraged me to be independent as they were busy with work, and therefore since young, I have learnt to spend my time fruitfully through playing games with friends. My father himself also did lots of sports when he was younger and I guess I acquired quite a bit from him. But I think the greatest influence came from my bunch of friends I hanged out with, who always called me out for games of basketball and football whenever we had time.”

Evidently, his parents’ non-restrictive way of parenting allowed him the freedom to be independent and have the opportunity to explore sporting recreational activities with his friends.

Gin claims to love sport for several reasons,

“I simply love sport because it’s fun and exciting. You see, I am very energetic by nature and I suppose it is one of the best ways to expend all excess energy I have. Besides, it allows me to make friends and makes life interesting and meaningful. But what I love most is the chance to compete and it forces me to do my best. I think it’s a good avenue in which I can push myself to the limit and grow from there. Ultimately, all the trainings and competitions somehow make you stronger. I cannot imagine a life without some kind of an intense physical activity, I will go crazy. After all, life is to be enjoyed, isn’t it?”

For Gin sport is very much part of his life as it allows him to expend his energy and develop friendships. In particular he enjoys training and competing, which makes him

stronger, and provides a sense of fulfillment.

According to the teacher in-charge of basketball,

“Gin is a talented player. He is hardworking and also exhibits leadership qualities due to his friendliness and maturity. As the team’s captain, he is able to motivate his team mates and his presence is one critical factor in the team’s successes in recent competitions. He also has an earnest personality which makes him willing to learn. In matches, he always gives his best and shows intense resilience and fighting spirit, which inspire the whole team to greater levels of endeavours. Responsible and dedicated, he is well liked by his team mates who look up to him as their model player.”

All in all, the strong sport culture in Gin’s hometown coupled with the type of non-restrictive upbringing he received at home had significant impact in influencing him to take up sport, which he has passionately made part of his life; a point aptly explained by Valentine’s (2006) concept of the critical role played by family members in socializing one into sport. He likes sport for reasons such as excitement, developing friendships, making one mentally and physically stronger, and having a sense of fulfillment. The notion that sport through joyful endeavour enables one to go beyond one’s limitations and reach for excellence, whilst enriching human relationships may explain Gin’s deep liking for sport (Mihalich,1982; Shield & Bredemier, 1994).

On the whole, Gin gets along well with people in school and displays a positive attitude as a student-athlete. Respectful of schoolmates and teachers, he socializes well into the community without great difficulty and reaps the benefits of his education here by giving his best in sport participation.

Koe (Malaysian)

Koe is a 17-year old boy from Malaysia, who has been studying in the school since 2006. He gets along fine with fellow schoolmates and displays enthusiasm and diligence in activities he takes part in. According to one of his teachers,

“Koe puts in conscientious effort in school work and activities and seems to fully make full use of his education here. He is very self motivated and seeks to attain the best in things he does.”

I observed that Koe to be clear on what he wants to accomplish and will put his heart into achieving those goals. As a prefect in the school, he is responsible and takes the initiatives in undertaking school-based activities such as ceremonial duties and logistics. A very conscientious person, he is diligent and does well in studies. As a student-athlete, there are also occasions where he will spend hours perfecting his techniques alone. He plays hard in the field with dedication and commitment without worrying about his opponents. He is also a team player who whilst quiet generally can be quite vocal when there is a need to speak up. Possibly due to his relatively quiet nature, he usually only interacts with his bunch of Singaporean friends and is not seen to socialize much with other foreign students. Koe socializes more with his rugby team mates during training or matches, otherwise, he is most likely found attending to his own activity and work assignments.

Perspective and Attitude towards Sport

Koe plays rugby actively for the school and has participated in sport since a young age. Back in his Malaysian hometown in Kuala Lumpur, sports such as football, badminton and basketball are popular and there are many public facilities available for recreational activities. His parents have also been very supportive of his involvement in sport as revealed in his own words,

“As my parents are members of a club, I therefore play for the club’s football team which is more willing to accept players who are keen and enthusiastic. My parents have always been very supportive of my involvement in sport and are often present to cheer me on whenever I play in competitions. As my dad plays tennis regularly, I guess he feels the importance of me taking up a few sports as part of my life so that I will become all-rounded. Indeed they exposed me to all kinds of games when I was young and I naturally developed a liking for physical activity.”

Koe’s father’s strong personal belief in sport clearly helped to facilitate an environment in which Koe grew up liking sport.

A further factor that may have influenced his liking for sport is the private school that he attended in Malaysia where there were good sport facilities and he had the chance to play for the school. He disclosed the fact that many ethnic Chinese in Malaysia study in private schools nowadays due to what he considered racial discrimination,

“It is even much tougher to get into a team in a non-private national school as ethnic Malays are favoured over other ethnic groups such as the Chinese and Indians. Due to such discriminations in national schools, many ethnic Chinese over there study in private schools where there are better academic programmes, teachers and facilities.”

Koe expresses his love for sport for several reasons,

“I think apart from the fun and excitement, sport allows one to socialize and build friendships, especially in team sports where you learn about co-operation and the spirit of putting the team before

oneself. I especially like training to be tough and love competing. I think competition makes me work hard towards a goal and through the process helps build up team spirit and pride. The joy of excelling and achieving simply drives you on and on with a purpose. That is what makes life interesting. I'd like to contribute my most in helping the school team do well."

According to the teacher in-charge of rugby who comments on his enthusiasm in sport,

"Koe is passionate about his game.... He is dedicated in training and works hard in competition. He would spend hours perfecting his skills and as such he is always improving and remains as one of my top players. In games, he is always one of the most diligent players and his performance is indispensable to the team."

All in all, Koe, having come from a family which is wholly supportive of his engagement in sport and a hometown that provides the infrastructural support of a sport active lifestyle, had developed his interest in sport before he came to Singapore (Valentine, 2006).

Koe likes sport for reasons such as excitement, opportunities to socialize and experience team spirit, as well as the joy of achieving and excelling. All reasons which may be understood from Mihalic's (1982) standpoint that sport enriches life and relationships through joyful struggle towards goals in personal and communal experiences.

On the whole, the school that Koe is in now also provides a conducive environment for his continual involvement in sport activities, which enables him to make conscientious effort in extra-curricular activities.

General Analysis & Conclusion

All six students enjoy the benefit of hailing from a home environment where sporting opportunities are readily available. All come from cities/towns where sport facilities are available and sporting culture is relatively strong. In particular as the school is a private school and school fees are high, so all students come from generally wealthy families. This affluent background means that their parents could afford to support them in their pursuit of sporting interests, and provide ready access to sport and recreation; an opportunity which made it possible for them to be socialized into sport from a young age. The critical role played by strong family support in sustaining their participation in sport is echoed by Dorsch, Smith & McDonough (2009) who advocate the importance of parents' enthusiasm in supporting the child's involvement in sport in various ways.

The students also came from families where they were encouraged and motivated to play sport at a young age, with their parents or family members themselves often being sport enthusiasts. All the students believe that the attitudes of their parents towards them had allowed and encouraged them to explore their hobbies and had instilled confidence in making choices. This is well supported by Valentine (2006), White (2007), Vallerand & Miquelon (2007), Shakib & Dunbar (2007), and Wyllerman, et al. (2007) who advocate that parents play critical role in socializing children into sport as they want to pass on this athletic desire to their off springs, and their belief and attitude can influence a child's effort. Additionally, as explained by Sadlik & Lim (2007), some of their parents also believe that participation in sport also helps foster qualities such as teamwork and self-discipline which are essential for developing the students into decent members of society.

All six students appear to see an intrinsic value in participating in sport simply for the pleasure and enjoyment of doing it, as well as the sense of achievement when they excel; all of which can be referred to as intrinsic motivation as espoused by Mihalic (1982). Indeed, one of the impetuses was the 'play' element contained within the physical activity. According to Fink (1988), play is a vital impulse, and is a means of rejuvenating one's inner vitality as it offers a feeling of pleasure and ecstasy. Playing sport and physical activity is also a voluntary activity which by being an integral part of human activity, enriches life through its expressive values. The excitement and uncertainty associated with it tests a person in prowess, courage, intelligence and spiritual powers (Huizinga, 1949). In addition, the opportunities in socializing with friends and nurturing friendships are also factors in their liking for sport, as espoused by Shields & Bredemier (1994). According to Fink (1988), through playing sport, one is no longer imprisoned and isolated in one's own individuality as one is assured of a social contact with others, which helps satisfy the need for affiliation and belonging; a point also supported by Atkinson's (1980) view that playing sport is a creative energy and a form of synergy that brings people together. Arguably, it is a range of these qualities associated with playing sport that to some extent may account for the six students' desire to participate in sport for the sake of pleasure, excitement, ability testing and social affiliation with fellow participants.

With the profile of the six students having provided a basic knowledge and understanding of their background, perspectives and attitudes towards sport, the next chapter considers their perception of the school, which plays an essential role in affecting their experiential processes in socialization.

Chapter 6- Findings & Discussion: Students' Perception of the School

In this chapter, based on the multi-dimensional approach, the general perception of the student subjects on the school's broad environment is discussed and explored (Hutchinson, 2008). This serves to illustrate their views on the school's environment with regard to its 'academic programme', the 'overall school's philosophy' as well as its 'sport and ECA programmes' in terms of both positive and negative aspects. The data from interviews were collected at the early phase of the study period. Studying their general perception of the school allows me to understand how it relates to their socialization experiences in sport participation. In order to provide a detailed insight the following discussion focuses on the students individually before concluding with a general analysis of the findings.

Lee (Indonesian)

Academic Programme

In terms of the academic programme Lee states,

"I like the academic programme here in this school as there's a good spread of subject choices and I get to do what I like. The workload here can be quite heavy and Math is a tough subject for me...which is not that difficult as I have friendly schoolmates and teachers who are always there to assist me if I need help."

Lee enjoys the flexible and rich academic programme offered by the school and the support provided by his schoolmates and teachers, despite the fact that he finds the programme to be quite challenging.

During the interviews he makes a comparison between the education he receives in the school and that in Indonesia,

"I am fortunate compared to my peers in Indonesia,... who have more

difficulties in studies. They often complain that teachers there (Indonesia) do not give very clear direction which makes the whole (IGCSE) programme not well organized....”

He feels that the academic programme in the school is better organized and better taught than that in Indonesia.

Overall School Philosophy; Sport and ECA Programmes

Lee is impressed by the educational philosophy that is espoused by the school, with its stress on the development of good character, generosity and altruism. This is supported by the many community service and fund-raising activities organized in the school, which seeks to instill in students a sense of compassion and the spirit of giving back to society. Lee comments on this in the following terms,

“...the school hopes to produce all-rounded people with good character, who can empathize with the less fortunate....after having spent a couple of years in this school, I am somewhat influenced by the Principal’s constant urging to be a person of compassion and heart, who can offer a helping hand to the needy. We are also obliged to take part in community service activities throughout our stay here, which I think is really good as it helps us understand the plight of the unfortunate and makes us realize that the world is not that fine as we thought and all of us have a part to play in making this earth a better place to live on. I am glad to have come to this school as having come from a well to do family, I might not have the opportunity to learn that much.”

Lee strongly appreciates his involvement in altruistic service activities that are afforded by the school, which have enabled him to be more empathetic to less fortunate people.

In terms of the sport programme offered by the school, Lee once again

compares his experiences in the school with those in Indonesia.

“...the school in Indonesia does not offer well structured sport programme as this school does. Back in the Indonesian school, we have only a field and it is often used as a car park, which means that we have limited facilities for sports. What I like about this school is its open environment where the school supports and encourages participants in sporting activities. The school’s philosophy in holistic education means that the schooling programme is geared towards producing all rounded individuals who are both academically proficient and active in sport participation. I think the school really wants us to have a robust and fulfilling schooling life so that we can develop our fullest potential in all areas.”

From the above it seems that although public sport facilities are available in Indonesia, the facilities provided by the Indonesian school he studied was disappointing. It is clear that Lee appreciates the school’s philosophy in producing all-rounded individuals equipped with both intellectual and fine physical-sporting capabilities. He feels that the ‘work hard, play hard’ ethos allows students to live a balanced life as they can both study and play. His opinion is supported by the fact that a range of sport activities are provided in the school’s physical education and sport extra-curricular activity, and students get to participate in inter-school competitions with some sports such as basketball, rugby and tennis achieving some success, which according to Lee enables him to further develop his sporting potential. Additionally the school’s ECA programme also allows him to uncover his hidden potential in dancing as he is also actively involved in hip-hop dancing and has performed for the school several times. In his words, *“It is in this school that I managed to discover my talent in sports and dance.”* Lee also appreciates the effort the school makes in encouraging students

through announcing sport's achievements in public and rewarding them with awards, and sees this as having inspirational effect on him and his teammates.

All in all, Lee enjoys the sport programme in the school and feels strongly attached to the school,

“I really enjoy the company of my basketball team mates and friends.... My basketball coach is also friendly and supportive who adopts a student centered approach. All in all, I have a strong sense of affiliation towards the school”

However he does feel that the school is not perfect in certain ways. According to him, one problem is the inadequacy in sport facility. He feels that presently, the school offers a basic level of facility that are barely enough for the current sport programme, and only one basketball court will not be adequate if there are more people joining basketball or if a girls' team is to be set up.

He also experiences some problems in interacting with some people of different personalities, who appear to him to be selfish and immature (i.e not being graceful according to him) and at times affect his mood for the day,

“Although I have many good friends here, I cannot deny that there are indeed schoolmates who can be quite immature and inconsiderate. They can really spoil your day. But I guess in any school, there is bound to have such people around and I just got to know how to handle them”.

Tron (Thai)

Academic Programme

Compared to Thailand where the academic programme is less flexible, Tron likes the IGCSE and IB programmes that are offered in this school due to its flexibility and wider range of choices, *“they allow me to choose the subjects of my choice, which is quite unlike Thailand where there is less choice as many subjects are*

compulsory.”

He finds that the more challenging IB programme here in comparison to the Thai national curriculum and the classroom environment somehow prompt him to work harder due to the positive attitudes shown by both students and teachers, which have an motivational impact on him,

“...in Thailand the motivation to excel in studies is not that strong as all of us over there would just continue our education in the university anyway. But over here, students think more about their future and work towards their goals. As such, I also got influenced by their attitude and became more motivated in my studies, even though I have not really maximized my effort yet. I am still trying hard and will do my best. I kind of appreciate the teachers here in the sense that they treat you like adults who are responsible for your own results. They are generally helpful but do not breathe down your neck as they expect you be independent.”

From here, one gathers that he feels that the serious attitude displayed by the students in the school gives him the positive peer pressure to make greater efforts in his studies, and as a result he feels more self-motivated, a phenomenon that is further enhanced by the teachers’ attitude which encourages independent learning.

Overall School Philosophy; Sport and ECA Programmes

Tron appreciates the school’s philosophy in offering students’ opportunities in fulfilling their potential and maximizing their abilities of becoming a leader, which he had not thought was possible back in Thailand,

“Back in Thailand, I never thought I would be a prefect and student councilor, and doing so many things and being so involved in events. My father was very impressed and happy when he learnt that I am so involved in school

activities.”

Tron notices the differences in the way sport activities are being conducted in both Singapore and Thailand.

“I also like the (sport) co-curricular programme here, which is well structured and planned.... which makes it disciplined and goal oriented. Back in Thailand, I would not have the opportunity to play for the school as the school usually recruits good players from the countryside through sport scholarships. But here in Singapore, the sport programme has clear aims and seeks to get students to train hard for competition. Honestly speaking, I felt a bit uneasy at first because back home, my schoolmates and I just played football as and when we liked and I never had systematic training until I came to this school. And through it, I have grown to be more disciplined as a result, which I think is good for my personal development.”

One gathers Tron appreciates the structured sport programme in which there is systematic training with clear goals and objectives, which are not available in the school he attended in Thailand. Moreover, school players there are usually specially recruited, which did not offer others like him much opportunity to play competitively. Being given the opportunity to train and play for the school in Singapore has enabled him to be more disciplined.

Generally Tron enjoys the ECA programme here and through it lives a fulfilling school life, as he expresses,

“...I enjoy the company of my friends and the members of the staff are generally friendly. I have always looked upon the school as my second home, now that I am away from Thailand. I always believe that it is one’s choice how he wants to make the best out of his life in any circumstances. I do not want to

be a bookworm in this school. I want to live out my fullest potential and contribute my best to the school. This school provides the environment whereby everyone has the opportunity to express his potential, be it in sports, arts and service. Over the months, I have been able to both play the sports I love and contribute to the school community as a prefect and student councilor.... Without their (i.e. teaching staff) patience and support, I would not have been able to achieve so much as a school athlete, student leader and a house captain. I have grown a lot in my three years' stay here. My school mates here are also friendly towards me, which allows me to adapt to the environment easily. They are open and readily accept me as part of the family without any prejudice.”

Tron feels embraced and well accepted in the school community and has adapted well.

Despite the good opinions Tron has for the school, he feels that some students tend to display unpleasant attitudes of impoliteness towards teachers, a phenomenon he does not appreciate as he is used to the culture in Thailand where students are respectful of teachers.

He also feels that there is much to improve in the school community. He observes that some foreign students do not integrate into the student community. In his words,

“I count myself lucky to be one of the few foreign students who socialize well into the community. However, this type of integration is not happening among some foreign students, who find it difficult or are not willing to interact with local students. I suppose you need two hands to clap. Socialization is a two-way thing. I personally think that most Singaporeans are friendly but foreign students still need to make an effort to connect with them”.

From Tron's interview response, one gathers that he feels that an amicable international culture is yet to be established, and he is of the opinion that both foreign and Singaporean students would have to take the initiatives to build up friendships and make their social lives more interesting. He hopes that things will improve and he seeks to use his action to set an example for others to follow.

Ying (PRC Chinese)

Academic Programme

In terms of the academic programme, Ying feels that the school places a great stress on projects where students have to do research that requires critical analysis, and apply theoretical knowledge to practical use. In her viewpoint, this means that students are allowed to learn at their own pace and the more motivated ones will work harder. In this aspect, she feels that it is better than the academic programmes in China where teachers teach fast in order to finish the syllabus and students are made to do lots of drill questions, and where in her own words, *"Almost everyday, I have homework (in China)"*.

Ying appreciates the qualities of the education programme provided by the school, which she thinks nurtures students' critical thinking and is one that places less emphasis on doing 'lots of homework'.

She however notices that teachers here do not pressurize students that hard as those in China, and she feels that there are both advantages and disadvantages to this, *"The good thing is students are treated like adults and they should self motivate themselves to go for better results. The down side to it is that students may not have the incentives to work that hard since teachers and the teaching style here do not encourage stiff competition amongst themselves"*.

Ying seemingly preferred some aspects of the education system in China where

competition amongst students for grades is promoted to learning.

Overall School Philosophy; Sport and ECA Programmes

In terms of sport and extra-curricular programmes, Ying appreciates the school's emphasis on character development and its offering of a range of sporting activities which give her the opportunity to experience them and discover her potential. She is particularly appreciative of the school's belief and support in allowing students to be exposed to different activities so as to enable them to discover and nurture hidden ability, which is to some extent similar to the school she attended in Shanghai, China.

“... I have tried out both tennis and badminton but I still find that I like tennis more as I am better at it. Thanks to the school for that as back in China, opportunity to play tennis is not widely available as there are not that many (tennis) courts in schools. If I like an activity, I will spend a great deal of time doing it and work towards a high level of mastery. Till now, I have been attending tennis practice regularly and I hope to play for the school one day. I am thankful to the previous teacher and coach who had been patient in guiding me....and my skills improved remarkably under him.”

Ying appreciates the opportunity to learn and play tennis in this school, something that is not easy to do back in China as tennis courts are not widely available though facilities for other forms of exercise and games are, and she is appreciative of the previous tennis coach and teacher in-charge who had been supportive in helping her to adapt to school life here.

Ying however is disappointed with the current new management of the tennis club as both a new coach and a teacher in-charge have taken over with whom she has less rapport. Additionally the expanded membership of the club means that courts are

no longer enough for fruitful playing time, and she does not enjoy the company of the new members as she observes,

“Many (new) members are younger than me and the boys can be quite mischievous, which disrupts effective learning. The current coach seems to talk a bit too much and we have less time for practice. I am not so close to the current teacher in-charge too. This could be due to the fact that there are now so many members that teacher-student bond is not as strong as previously”.

For Ying, the expanded membership of the tennis club has affected both the quality of playing and the experience in teacher-student interaction.

Ying feels that she still prefers her schooling in China as student life there is more exciting and holistic, a result that is made possible as the private schools there do not place students under too much pressure to excel in exams for the sake of vying for limited places in prestigious Chinese universities as wealthy privately educated Chinese can afford to attend overseas universities (if they are not able to qualify for these local universities) and therefore have a wider range of choices for university education. Ying is also disappointed that in Singapore she does not enjoy the kind of exciting student life she used to have in China,

“...in this international school, I am disappointed that I do not make as many friends as I would like to and do not enjoy myself that much here even though I am doing just fine... As you know, I did not really like the feeling of leaving my friends in China as coming to Singapore was actually my parents’ decision. Back home, the private boarding school I attended had lots more activities such as reading competition, festive celebration, concerts, dance, science quizzes and sports which I thoroughly enjoyed participating. You have some of that here as well but because it is all conducted in English and participants

usually do not speak Chinese, which makes it difficult for me to feel motivated joining them”.

Ying seemingly was not looking forward coming to Singapore to study as it was her parents’ decision. Moreover, she feels the limited range of activities coupled with language differences affects her quality of participation in school life.

According to her, establishing friendship in this international school is a problem as students tend to associate with people of similar nationalities or language background,

“Although I do make some friends here, most of them are from China and Taiwan, and one or two from Japan. I do find it a challenge to break into the Singaporean circle due to language and personality differences even though I do not get into any trouble with them”.

Ying also feels that the school’s canteen is not very well equipped as it is small. She is also critical of the students here in that they are generally not disciplined in keeping the classroom and campus tidy and clean unlike in China, where every class has a duty roster and all are expected to perform cleaning duties. In addition, she cites “students’ lack of maturity” (i.e. lack a sense of responsibility according to her) as one reason why she has problems interacting with them .

Fei (PRC Chinese)

Academic Programme

Fei likes the academic programme offered here due to its reputable status and the fact that it is an English language based education. He appreciates the fact that the International Baccalaureate diploma is internationally recognized, which he can use to gain access to universities in the US or UK. He also feels that the rigour of the IB programme in some ways encourages students to think more thoroughly and produce

quality work. The wider range of subject choices offered here than in China also motivates him to study as he can read subjects pertaining to his interests.

Compared to Singapore, he feels that there is too much rote learning over in China and teachers there are solely interested in getting students to do well for university entrance exams. Consequently, workload in China is heavier as students there simply spend their time practising questions for exams and do not enjoy the educational benefit of critical thinking and practical application of knowledge which he experiences in Singapore.

In terms of the quality of teachers, Fei feels that the teachers in Singapore teach better and they expect students to be independent thinkers, which allows him to learn at his own pace and have more time to internalize and digest knowledge. As Fei states,

“Learning is therefore based on self motivation, which decides how much one wants to achieve. To achieve more, you simply have to work harder. Whereas in China, just simply working hard may not get you a place in the university as competition is too stiff... Eventually, I prefer to study here as the education system prepares one more thoroughly and helps to inculcate a love for learning”.

In terms of students’ attitude towards learning, Fei somehow feels that students in Singapore are more easy-going than those in China where due to the stiff competition for grades, students in China can be quite calculative for reasons of self interests. An approach which can make them not as sincere one would like them to be as he comments,

“I suppose it is the reality of society that makes them so, but here in this school, students are more sincere with one another as they are not so obsessed with grades and getting to university is not a problem for them since local

universities are not their only choice (unlike China), and all can afford to study in an overseas university”.

Overall School Philosophy; Sport and ECA Programmes

Fei appreciates the school’s educational philosophy with its stress on all-round development through extra-curricular activities, and thereby producing students of academic proficiency and good character .

Fei equally appreciates the school’s sport programme where everyone is given the opportunity to participate in a sport or two of their choice, and acknowledges the fact that through the programme, he has been able to discover his talent and develop his skills in football,

“I used to play basketball more than football back home, but here I decided to take up football as my main sport due to the greater excitement and challenge it has to offer. Indeed, through this school, I somehow realized that football is actually my favourite game. Thanks to the teacher and coach who have been guiding me all this while, I have been able to improve on my playing ability and have scored several goals for the school in matches”.

Here, one gathers that he recognizes the importance of the sport programme in helping him discover his potential.

Fei appreciates the school’s ECA philosophy that encourages the development of one’s potential in several areas with everyone having the right to participate in any activity of their choice and to discover his/her strengths. Indeed his current involvement in competitive sport ECA in this school would almost certainly not have been possible back in China,

“... this school gives me the opportunity to play in the inter-school tournament from which I have learnt a lot. In my home (China), it will be almost

impossible to have such an opportunity, but here I am, playing for the school team as a striker, a key position. Back in China, it is very difficult to get into the school team as half of the team are usually good players recruited from the local sports school, which makes it even more competitive for us to make up the other half. Additionally, the sport extra-curricular programme over there is not so well-structured as unless you are in the school team, there isn't really any proper training given to the other members of the sport club".

Moreover according to him, due to the intense pressure of the academic programme in China, graduating students in high schools do not have much time for intensive structured sport ECA (except PE lessons) as they will be busy preparing for the university entrance exams. Further, the problem may be compounded as teachers may even interfere with a student's private life by discouraging them from doing sports or travelling abroad, in case this hinders their preparation for exams. Fei therefore sees himself as fortunate enough to be able to study in Singapore and experience a more holistic educational experience.

Like some of the foreign students here, Fei also feels that sometimes he finds it difficult to enter the social circles of local Singaporean students and that most of his closer friends are foreigners as they are more mature and amicable, as he explains,

"I think due to our different (cultural) backgrounds, it will take some time for us to thaw the ice and start mingling with one another with ease. I do however feel that some Singaporeans are a bit immature in their thinking, which I find quite a 'turn off' when I interact with them. This inevitably creates a kind of barrier between foreigners and them in social interaction. I suppose a good relationship is a result of effort made by two parties and I may not be totally correct in my view of them. After one year of training and competition, I have

somehow been able to assimilate into the football team but I am still trying to integrate better.”

Gin (Korean)

Academic Programme

Gin enjoys studying in Singapore due to its better environment in terms of its rounded education and he particularly likes the academic programme offered at the school. In particular he likes the programme structure and the fact that the schooling environment is not as competitive as in Korea where it can be stressful. Although university education is widely available in Korea, many high school students vie for a place in prestigious colleges (universities), which makes studying highly pressurized. He feels that the IGCSE and International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes that he is reading here will allow him access to good universities outside Korea and he does not have to burden himself competing with his peers at home for prestigious Korean universities. He hopes to study in National University of Singapore (NUS) or a university in the UK.

One point he appreciates about the academic programme is that he gets to read wide range of subjects of his interests, ranging from languages, humanities to sciences and business courses. Moreover he values the opportunity to study both English and Chinese, which according to him are two important languages in the current world. In his own words *“I hope to study medicine in the university and want to contribute to humanity by healing the sick and poor as I have a desire to help the unfortunate”*.

In terms of the quality of teachers, he appreciates the point that they are dedicated and are willing to share their knowledge and experiences with students. He also feels that teachers are generally amicable and have a close rapport

with students. This is unlike those in Korea, where teachers tend to maintain a position of authority and are not close to students. He also appreciates the quality of the academic results produced by the school. As he states,

“Due to their (Singaporean teachers) kind guidance, I have been able to learn at my own pace with greater motivation than before. I have no regret studying in this school as official results from the last two graduating cohorts have shown that it performs better than other international schools in Singapore. I guess in terms of the schooling programme, this school has the best of both the Singapore and international systems of education” .

Overall School Philosophy; Sport and ECA Programmes

Gin understands and appreciates the school ethos in seeking to produce students who are technically competent and of sound character. He thinks the school’s emphasis on extra curricular activity and sport is positive as he believes it encourages character development.

Gin likes the fact that the school provides a good environment where both students and teachers can freely interact with one another in various activities. The process of interaction enables students to acquire social skills, leadership ability and appreciate different cultures. This is not necessarily the case in Korea which he perceives as a more homogenous country with relatively fewer international students, and therefore limited in the opportunities it provides for inter-cultural mingling. Gin also appreciates the generally amicable staff in this school, especially the lab assistant *“...whom I find very approachable and kind as she likes conversing with me”* .

Indeed both supportive teachers and fellow students have made his stay in the school a pleasant one,

“They (teachers) really show me the care and concern when I am having

difficulty in life and studies, for without them, I might have quit school long time ago. I also have a bunch of very good friends who always encourage me when I am down and they are the ones that make my stay here pleasant”.

Gin enjoys the extra-curricular programme , which offers a variety of activities to individuals’ interests. He appreciates the fact that students are given opportunities to participate in a range of sports to enable them to discover their own strengths and work on them. An approach which he applies to his own experience,

“In the process, I gain confidence and find meaning in life. The school recognizes this and therefore makes participation in extra-curricular activity accessible to all. Eventually, one can do what he loves and along the way, motivates himself in improving his ability and excelling in it. I definitely enjoy the sport I am playing and there is specialized training which makes me a better player these days. Indeed my shooting has improved a lot these days. All this is also made possible by the dedicated teachers we have here.”

In fact, Gin is one of those few foreign students in the school who fully engage in school activities. He admits that cross-national socializing is a problem,

“I realize that not many non-Singaporeans are like me. I suppose it is due to my personality and the fact that I have stayed in Singapore for a longer period than them. I guess being young people and coming from different cultural backgrounds, students here are generally shy in socializing with others. But really, it is up to individuals to open up and extend his hand of friendship. I think it takes time for such a culture to evolve. It is quite natural for them to stick to their own national groups for a start, but by getting them involved in activities, it would help them to socialize and integrate better.”

Gin understands the problems some foreign students face in cross-national socialization, and feels the importance of all parties taking the initiatives in developing friendships and believes in the usefulness of extra-curricular activity.

Koe (Malaysian)

Academic Programme

To Koe, studying in Singapore is a natural choice for him as Singapore's English language based education programme will prepare him for studying overseas. In terms of educational standards, he does not feel there is much difference between Singapore and Malaysia, in Singapore, he reads fewer subjects than what he would have done in Malaysia for IGCSE. This allows him the space to excel in both his studies and activities, in which he did very well in IGCSE the previous year. He decided to continue with the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme in this school as he did not really appreciate the way 'A' levels was taught in Malaysia, which he feels lacked the personal attention the IB programme provides as it is being taught in smaller classes. He does however feel that the IB is much tougher than IGCSE.

Overall School Philosophy; Sport and ECA Programmes

Koe supports the choice of school *“as it provides a suitable environment for a person like me, who always desires to lead a very enriching school life”*.

Koe appreciates the fact that the school believes in developing one's potential to the fullest, and as such he enjoys being able to have the opportunity to do what he feels he is good at. In Koe's opinion, schooling should not be confined to just the classroom as one should also be actively involved in extra-curricular activity in order to develop a good personality. This is reflected in Koe's performance in school where he does well academically, plays sport and is a student leader too.

Koe also enjoys the company of his rugby friends who make his schooling life pleasurable as they study, train and compete together and have developed strong friendship. Koe appreciates the current rugby team and according to him team morale has improved a lot over the last two years. Further, Koe acknowledges that his relationship with his peers has improved significantly, as he says, “... *I have learnt to open up more and hence am more able to appreciate schooling here nowadays*”. He thinks that as a Malaysian, he does not have much problems socializing with local Singaporeans due to the relatively similar lifestyle, mentality and culture of the two peoples.

Despite the fact that Koe generally enjoys school life, he also feels that some students lack certain levels of discipline and are not adequately proactive and self-motivated, be it in studies or extra-curricular activities. He feels that the inadequate level of discipline, self-motivation and diligence can hinder some of the sport teams from competing well in inter-school competitions.

Koe is also disappointed with the inadequate sport facilities at the school, a problem he feels should be attended to if the school wants to really achieve brilliant results in sport. As a minimum he thinks a fully equipped multi-purpose sport hall is necessary for the enhancement of the sport programme.

Koe acknowledges the fact being a non-Singaporean he is fortunate he can easily interact with the local Singaporeans. He has however noticed that not all foreign students are able to socialize cross-nationally as he does. He feels that it is human nature for young people to interact with schoolmates of their own nationalities, and in such an international school, cross national integration requires time and effort from all parties involved. As he observes,

“...*it is really up to individuals from all parties, including myself, to take the*

initiative in extending that hand of friendship. Really, I feel that such a matter takes two hands to clap. On one hand, Singaporeans must show empathy and understanding, on the other hand, foreigners also have to open up. Things are not that bad though, I mean at present, the human environment here is generally friendly and we do not have an ambience of hostility. It is just that foreign students are not socializing with locals as much as we would like to see.”

He also thinks that part of the educational programme in the school pertaining to language training may play a part in the lack of cross-national socialization as he feels that the English language bridging class prevents them from socializing with the locals as it is separately conducted,

“...some foreign students due to their inadequacy in English, have to study in language bridging class first before they can cross over to the main stream class; this in a way prevents them from mixing with the locals as they can spend up to a year in bridging class where there are no locals. But again, whether they can interact well with locals when they join the main stream class is hard to say.”

General Analysis & Conclusion

Academic Programme

Based on the data gathered from interviews and observations, the six students generally find the experience of studying in Singapore positive as the school offers a good range of subjects, which suit their interests and needs, and the academic rigour they get from the course is able to stimulate their thinking and intellectual pursuit at the right level. As most of them are interested in studying in US or UK universities,

they appreciate the usefulness of the English language based education they receive here.

All of them feel that the academic programme or some aspects of it offered in this school are better than that of their home countries, and they find the programme useful in preparing them for future university education and even careers; for example, Tron appreciates the inculcation of self-motivated learning; Gin appreciates the learning of both English and Chinese, two important languages which are useful for his future education and career; and Fei appreciates the teaching of critical thinking, which is not stressed in his home country where rote learning is more prominent. In addition, all six students acknowledge the good support offered by the teachers, and some of them such as Lee, Tron and Gin appreciate the support offered by schoolmates in their studies, all of which help to motivate them. This phenomenon finds resonance in White's (2007) findings that a person's perception and interpretation of the environment as being friendly and motivational contributes to their continual involvement and sustained level of achievement in the activity.

Their overall positive impression of the school's academic programme can be understood in terms of its relation to the school's provision of a holistic and rigorous academic programme which is discussed in Chapter 4.

Overall School Philosophy; Sport and ECA Programmes

All six students appreciate the holistic approach in education adopted in which students are taught to be active in participating in sport and extra-curricular activities. As all of them identify with the school's mission of producing all-rounded individuals who are knowledgeable and of good character, they understand that participation in activities is widely encouraged and made accessible, for the purpose of accomplishing the mission. Most of them such as Lee, Tron, Gin and Koe also enjoy their

socialization with members of the school community in varying degree. Tron for instance enjoys schooling greatly that he likens the school to his second home in Singapore.

They feel that the teachers here are generally amicable and adopt a student-centered approach, and hence students feel accepted and empowered to contribute their part in extra-curricular activities. As all the six students enjoy sport, they like the active sport programme here, where a wide range of sporting activities including individual and team games are offered for both recreation and competition. They appreciate the fact that the school's sports teams participate actively in competitions and that such participation is highly encouraged. Most of them such as Lee, Tron, Fei and Gin appreciate the structured trainings they receive and especially for Lee, Tron and Fei, it is something they do not have back in their own countries as structured sport programmes are given a lower priority. Or else students are so pre-occupied with preparation for university entrance exams that they do not have time for structured sport activities as pointed out by Fei. All in all, this phenomena resonate with Jeziorski's (1994), Quek's (1997) and White's (2007) findings that sport groups that are perceived as promoting participation and self-efficacy tend to be able to maintain members' continual involvement in the sport activity.

The students' general positive impression of the school philosophy, and its sport and ECA programmes, can be understood in relation to their sport backgrounds which are discussed in Chapter 5. As all of them were already involved in various sports before they came into this school, it is well understood that they would have a positive view of its extra-curricular programme which promotes participation in sport. This positive impression can also be understood in relation to the school's provision of a rich and vibrant extra-curricular programme which is discussed in Chapter 4.

All six students also express their opinions on some negative aspects in the school, and the following are the most commonly expressed by them. They are 'inadequacy of facility' and 'difficulty in cross-national socialization between students'.

In terms of 'inadequacy of facility', almost all feel that the current sport facility is inadequate for expanded membership of the sports clubs as well as for the purpose of sport development and excelling in competition.

In terms of 'difficulty in cross-national socialization between students', most of them think that foreign students in general still find it difficult to integrate very well with local students. Foreign students tend to form their own cliques that are based on language habits, cultural background and personality. In the opinion of the students, a truly strong embracing 'international' culture is yet to be established. Tron and Gin feel that although they experience fruitful socialization in the school, there are not many foreigners who are able to experience relatively similar socialization.

Koe offers a unique opinion that the English Language training classes for foreign students tend to separate them from the locals and hence inhibits the development of greater cross-national socialization. This raises the dilemmatic issue of choosing between language proficiency and socialization, which inevitably is a perennial issue in schools generally. From the perspective of education, foreign students will still find it difficult to socialize with the locals if they cannot communicate in good English. Consequently, the school thinks that it is still worth the effort in putting foreign students through the language training at the expense of wider class interaction. The school's intention is that having completed the bridging programme, students will have achieved a level of English language proficiency that enables them to communicate and socialize better.

Generally, the six students feel optimistic studying in this school where they benefit a great deal academically and occupy themselves fruitfully in various sports activities. From the data, one may deduce that compared to the other four, Ying shows less enthusiasm for her current schooling. This is due to her difficulty in interacting with the locals. Fei also experiences difficulty but is seen as more positive in attitude and is perceived as making effort to socialize better with the locals.

Most of them do feel that the main factors involved in the difficulty of achieving cross-national socialization are differences in language habits and personality. For example, Ying and Fei feel that the lack of maturity in personality (i.e. the lack of gracefulness and understanding) among some Singaporeans is one main obstacle in their experience of socializing. Some of them also feel that the inability of both local and foreign students to initiate interaction is another factor responsible for the difficulty in cross-national socialization. This phenomenon can be explained by Cratty (1998) and Ntoumanis, Vazou & Duda (2007) who conceptualize that socialization tends to be less successful if a high degree of mutual understanding and emotional support is lacking.

Pertaining to the fact that most of them feel in varying degree of the negative aspects in cross-national socialization among students in the school, it can be understood in relation to their various personalities and backgrounds which are discussed in Chapter 5, where all had experienced substantial amount of positive socialization in their previous schools and therefore they are disappointed in varying extent to find that the desired level of socialization among students that they wish to see does not occur in this school.

In relation to Chapter 4 where the school's educational philosophy is discussed, it is surprising to note that despite the international school's emphasis on

developing students' ability in all-round socialization, some students do not experience a good level of cross-national socialization. This reflects that there is a gap between what the school envisions and what the students are experiencing, and the gap can be explained to some extent by the above discussion of the difficulty in cross-national socialization in which several contributing factors are highlighted and they include differences in personality, language habits, cultural background, and the inadequate ability of both foreign and local students to initiate interaction.

The discussion of the students' perception of the school has offered a basis upon which its relationship with their socialization experiences can be understood. In the next two chapters, their socialization experiences with both their schoolmates and teachers/coaches shall be discussed.

Chapter 7- Findings & Discussion: Students' Socialization Experience with Schoolmates in Sport Participation

This study is essentially concerned with the foreign students' processes of socialization with both the schoolmates in sports activity, and the teacher in-charge and coach of the sport activity/club they belong to. As part of the multidimensional approach, this chapter will essentially illustrate and discuss the students' experiences of their socialization with their schoolmates in sport activities over time. 'Socialization experience' here includes the experiences of their interaction with schoolmates, their interrelationships and their opinions on socialization in sport participation. These schoolmates include friends from the school's sport club/team each student belongs to, and friends in the school who share common sporting interests.

A discussion of each student, based on the data from interviews and observation will be undertaken first. This is followed by a more general analysis of the findings. For the purpose of analyzing the students' socialization experiences in sport participation with their schoolmates, two topics, 'sociability' and 'team affiliation' are used for discussion. 'Sociability' refers to general qualities of being sociable, amicable, helpful and other aspects of personality that enable the students to interact well with others and develop friendship. 'Team affiliation' refers to how strongly the students feel for the sport's club and team, and whether they appreciate the club/team, expressed through how team oriented and cooperative they are with the club/team. Both the positive and negative experiences the students undergo or witness in the process are discussed.

Lee (Indonesian)

Sociability

From observation and interviews, one gathers that Lee, a basketballer, is a sociable and amicable person who interacts well with schoolmates and participates actively in school activities. Although an Indonesian, his familiarity with the culture in Singapore, coupled with his easy going personality, enable him to enjoy school life generally. He is amicable and tends to get along well with people who have common sporting interests, as he is often seen playing basketball with his friends during leisure time as a means of interaction and developing new friendships. He also displays his helpful personality in his offering of assistance in getting refreshment, providing logistics and coaching friends.

Part of his amicable personality is displayed through the humorous side of his character, which is supported by his teammate's view that he frequently brings in fun and laughter,

“It is always nice to have him around as he is such a sporting guy who always knows how to make training sessions fun and enjoyable. No matter how tough the training can be, he will somehow manage to offer some light moments through his jokes and comical behaviour. All this makes training more relaxing and motivating”.

Team Affiliation

Lee is also known for his great enthusiasm and effort in basketball, which is acknowledged by the teacher in-charge of the team who explains in his words,

“Lee has very high energy level, which is easily translated into great enthusiasm for the game.... I will always remember his intense excitement when the team wins. He simply behaves like an innocent child who has just

received a long desired gift. This goes to show that he is really keen and serious about doing well in the game. Although he takes defeat in a light mood, I can see that he will try his best for the team to secure a win”.

His seriousness and intense effort in basketball training is also noted in his coach’s words,

“Despite Lee’s somewhat frivolous personality, he is serious in training and gives his best no matter how tired he is. In fact, he is one of the fittest in the team and is able to take hard physical conditioning and training better than some of his teammates” .

From the way Lee conducts himself, he is noted to be strongly attached to the basketball team as he spends a great time training and playing with his basketball team, and going out with them; all of which have strengthened the bond between team members. His strong relationship with the team members is reflected in his own words,

“...Team spirit is really strong nowadays, as we come together with a purpose; that is to play good basketball. As we train hard and play hard, we go through the same process of struggle and joy, whether we win or lose in competitions. ...As for me, although I would very much like to play in the first team, I will not feel jealous if one of them takes my place, for I will acknowledge that he is better than me.... Just being able to play and train is already a great thing to me.... One of the best memories I have is the International Schools’ Basketball League where we won second place. Of course I love winning, but even if we lose, we will pick ourselves up and look forward to the next game. If we lose, we will not blame anyone but simply bear through the process as a team. After all these years, I have grown to be very

co-operative and we have learnt to stick together”

Lee’s relationship with the team is cordial to the extent that he does not bear ill feelings towards his teammates over competing for first team position, and he seems to place the interest of the team above his own. For example, he is willing to work closely with them irrespective of whether the team win or lose.

Moreover, allegiances go beyond sport in that team members help each other in school work and look out for one another when they infringe on school rules. Such strong ties are further strengthened by other social activities such as going out for meals and to the movies.

Though Lee gives the impression that he enjoys his school life, he does admit that not everything is perfect and sometimes conflict arises with other students not in the team. As he comments,

“I suppose not everyone in the school is the same, in the sense that you do not expect all of them to be that friendly. Generally I get along fine with my basketball team mates. I also play basketball with some schoolmates who are not from the basketball club and occasionally I do get into some heated arguments over our games when one party feels that the other has taken unfair advantage. Naturally, there would be some exchange of words which can be quite nasty. I suppose being young and impulsive, we feel very strongly for our ego when we clash. Nowadays, however, I am more calm and sensible and am able to control myself better when things get tense .”

According to him, such conflicts were usually resolved either amicably with both sides exerting self-control and restraint to prevent further escalation and continue with the game, or both sides deciding to stop the game when they felt that it just could not be continued. In all situations, a physical fight would never ensue.

All in all Lee appears to be generally cordial and sociable in nature and has a fruitful time socializing with his schoolmates in basketball, and has built a very strong friendship within the basketball club over time. His helpful and humorous nature enables him to socialize and inject fun into training sessions. Lee's enthusiasm for the game is further evident from the way he talks about trainings and matches, and the effort he puts in. In terms of cooperativeness and team mentality, he has a very close relationship with his basketball team mates, trains hard with them, and the strong team spirit is a possible factor enabling them to do well in inter-school competition. His ability to cooperate for the team's interests, coupled with his amicable disposition, make him a popular member in the basketball club.

Tron (Thai)

Sociability

Tron plays football for the school and is also a student leader undertaking responsibilities of both a student councilor and prefect; both of which require him to interact well with schoolmates, which he appears from observation to do in an amicable, helpful and polite way. Tron seems to be generally well-liked in the school community with friends who support his roles.

Tron himself appreciates the cordial school environment and finds little problem adapting to the social life of the school. Being a student leader back home in Thailand is almost unthinkable as the school population over there was big and one had to go through very stiff competition to be elected.

According to Tron, he finds Singaporean including his classmates to be quite friendly, which is different from the impression he was given by people before he came to the school. As he observes, *"That is why I think it is important to experience living in the country before coming to any conclusion so that we will not easily*

stereotype people". Tron appears to have an open mind, to experience things before jumping to premature conclusions, a possible trait that could make him more accepting and willing to socialize with different kinds of people.

Notwithstanding his athletic ability, Tron's amicable personality and humble nature is appreciated by his football teammates and the teacher in-charge of the football club who all feel that his cordial personality allows him to develop friendship and acquaintanceship with people easily.

Team Affiliation

Tron displays a sense of empathetic understanding in his view that Singapore's small territorial size and lack of natural resources have caused the people to always have a sense of urgency and stay competitive. As a consequence, according to him, "*Singaporean students can be more serious and competitive in studies*"; an attitude which he supports and which in turn motivates him to work harder. Tron's empathetic understanding suggests that he could have the ability to learn from others' strengths and improve himself in sporting endeavours. Certainly through his intense effort as a key player of the school team, he sets very good example as an industrious player and inspires his teammates to do their best.

Tron is very close to the members of the school team as they spend a lot of time training and competing, a fact which helps to strengthen their bond. As he explains,

"There are many memorable experiences such as having a good dinner after a hard session of training, travelling and playing matches. The struggles we went through in defeats and victories give us great memories of our time in school. Having won two matches and drawn against the defending champions is a testimonial of our creditable performance as first time participants in the

national schools' tournament."

Tron feels that it is through all this competition that they have been able to build up team spirit and strengthen their bond of friendship. Although it had been a long and tiring season, he feels that the team felt a sense of accomplishment in having represented the school and performed well in the high standard inter-school tournament.

Tron's strong appreciation of the football team and his ardent team oriented mentality is also reflected in the ways he treats his teammates. He is observed being helpful to non-Singaporeans, empathizing with their difficult situation in adapting to the team and makes an effort to make life better for them by offering useful advice and words of encouragement. For example, there were occasions in trainings where some non-Singaporeans were being criticized for their play, which resulted in some emotional upset and Tron would step in to resolve issues between students and try to exert a calming influence on a heated situation.

In training and competition, Tron contributes to the team in terms of using appropriate words to motivate teammates and win their respect. He also seeks to set a good example to his teammates through his commitment and ability on the field. In essence, Tron is perceived to be a team player whose athleticism, sportsmanship, humility and sociability help to rally the team towards its goals.

On the problem of cross-national socialization between students in the football club, Tron notices that some foreign students tend to receive the blame from Singaporean players when the team does not do well. To him this is a reflection of the *"lack of graciousness of some Singaporeans in not being accommodating enough"* (Tron). He also feels that some Singaporeans may have received an upbringing in

which *“their parents were not strict enough in teaching them to show appropriate level of respect to others”* (Tron).

On the other hand, he also feels that foreign students do not interact readily with Singaporeans. He believes this phenomenon could probably be caused by the fact that foreign students came from well to do families, and may be too overly protected, and are not used to interacting with people of different cultural backgrounds. But he also thinks that a good level of cross-national socialization can only result if one is sincere and takes initiatives, such as undertaken by himself.

Ying (PRC Chinese)

Sociability

School-based observations reveal Ying to be polite by nature with her own company of friends, most of them are from her home country China. In the tennis club, she has a few close Chinese and Japanese friends who find her helpful, cordial and patient in teaching and playing tennis with. As her Japanese teammate reports, *“...cheerful in nature, she is a nice person to be with and is patient and generous....Her keenness on the Japanese language and pop culture also strengthens our friendship....”*

Team Affiliation

Ying’s enthusiasm and earnestness in tennis is supported by the first teacher in-charge who feels that Ying practised diligently under him and possesses talent and the desired level of aggression to be a competitive player. Nevertheless these qualities alone are not sufficient to enable her to socialize well in the tennis club.

Ying admits that she has some problems socializing with Singaporeans and teammates of other nationalities, due to linguistic differences, feeling that although

she speaks English, other students are probably not used to her accent and as she observes, *“not many Singaporeans can speak Chinese well.”*

Moreover, she finds some of the younger male students childish and disruptive to training activities; a situation made worse due to the limited number of courts. As she states,

“I do not really like the company of the current members as many are younger boys who are not mature and disruptive....there are not enough courts and all this affects my learning, which is really frustrating!”

Due to these problems, she plays tennis mainly with her closer Chinese and Japanese teammates, which hence limits and affects her socialization experience in the tennis club. Ying’s limited socializing experience in the tennis club is compounded by the fact that if her close friends do not turn up for training sessions, she does her own drills without talking to other teammates. A situation which could make others view her as aloof and not sociable. Due to Ying’s lack of close rapport and communication with many members of the tennis club, she also missed some trainings and a selection trial which were conducted outside the school. This resulted in her exclusion from the school tennis team in one tournament.

From observations and interviews it would appear that Ying does not possess a strong sense of affiliation to the club or its members.

Fei (PRC Chinese)

Sociability

Generally, Fei is observed to be polite and has his company of friends in school who are mostly PRC Chinese. In the football team, he is closer to non-Singaporean players from Korea and Thailand as according to Fei, they are *“more mature and more understanding”*. In particular he feels a degree of social and cultural

affinity with these students as they are in quite a similar situation, being non-Singaporeans and new to the local culture. Whenever Fei faces some problems or appears to be emotionally down, he is more likely to seek support and comfort from them.

Fei admits that though he is able to adapt to the social life in the school and football team, he still finds it a challenge to interact with some Singaporean players especially in the beginning due to differences in personality. Nevertheless because of his love for the sport, over time, and the effort of others he feels that he has been able to gradually build closer ties with them, as he says,

“Over the months, I have managed to adapt to the social life in school....Thanks to the teacher’s and captain’s efforts in rallying the team together, gradually, I was able to build bonds with them.”

Team Affiliation

Fei feels that in the football team, Singaporean players tend to form their own cliques and it is difficult for foreign students to socialize much with them coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Fei feels that some Singaporeans are less mature in accepting certain foreigners into their circle comfortably but he also feels that being young, it is quite natural for them to associate with people of the same nationality due to greater familiarity. He also admits that he himself also has the tendency to do the same as interacting with people of the same nationality tends to offer a sense of security. The suggestion here is that cross-national socialization could to some extent be a matter of how willing both parties are able to open up and embrace each other; a challenging task for young people who may feel shy or fear rejection.

Fei however feels the excitement and demands of the inter-school tournament

have helped rally the team towards a common goal. The regular training sessions and matches have helped improve his relationship with team members. As he observes,

“I find that the team spirit of the football team has grown stronger throughout the national inter-school tournament this year, as all players train towards a common goal. I have also learned the true meaning of team unity in the process. Back in China, I might never have the opportunity to experience that as I had never played competitive football for my school. I am really glad that here I have the opportunity to experience serious competition, and the tournament is really exciting with three officials refereeing every game and the atmosphere is very much lighted up by the supporters and the ambience....I am glad that I have improved in my playing ability and am contributing to the team.”

Fei admits that throughout the whole process of training and competing, he got to understand his teammates better and began to talk more in school and even went out for dinner occasionally after training. He feels that he has grown more mature and learnt to be less individualistic as the training in football has taught him a lot on co-operation and team work. He has also learnt to be more tolerant of differences, to downplay his prejudices towards others and look at things more optimistically.

Fei's gradually improving relationship with his teammates is supported by the captain and teacher in-charge of the team who feel that when Fei first joined the team, he was not that well liked as he was quite individualistic and appeared to others as aloof, though he got on quite well with the non-Singaporeans. In the beginning, Fei also did not have a good opinion of the overall team's strength in the tournament as they were considered the underdogs and the players in his view did not possess the resilience required.

However over time the situation became better as according to the captain, the team can see that he tries to build up friendships with other team members by communicating more with them in both football sessions and outside. Gradually, he is being accepted as part of the team, partly because of his fine playing and scoring ability as a striker, and the fact that he has made an effort to help the team play different formations in order to accommodate the line-up and strategy. All this impressed others that he did his part as a member of the team. Moreover, the captain also feels that compared to some other players, he is more mature and disciplined and is able to focus on tasks better, which to some extent helps improve others' impression of him.

Gin (Korean)

Sociability

Gin is the captain of the basketball team. He is good-natured and helpful and is well liked by his teammates, who very much respect him as the leader of the squad. Due to the fact that he came to Singapore to study much earlier than his Korean peers, he seems to be more comfortable interacting with Singaporeans than his Korean friends, a phenomenon that is further strengthened by his cordial personality.

Team Affiliation and Effort

Gin has great passion for basketball and is dedicated to the team. It is usual to see him arranging training sessions, rallying and recruiting players and conducting practice sessions when the coach is not around. He exhibits his leadership ability as captain of the team through his passion for the game and his ability to motivate his teammates in trainings and tough fitness workouts. A fit athlete, he will always be in the front leading the players in grueling sessions. In matches, he displays great playing ability with his aggression and skills, and is able to urge the team on.

In Gin's opinion, the basketballers are a group of friendly people who train and play hard for the shared passion of the game and winning for the school. He feels that the team is united as individuals contribute to their roles in different ways and motivate one another towards the goal. He believes basketball activity has taught him about friendship, discipline and team effort where players are embraced and accepted irregardless of skill level and background. He also feels that the team building has improved where in the past players used to form cliques which were detrimental to team unity, but the situation has become better as players are now affable with one another. As Gin states, "*All of us contribute in our own roles...and motivate one another towards the goal. ...basketball has taught me about friendship, discipline and team effort.*"

As the leader and captain of the basketball team Gin admits that the process has helped him to be more disciplined in his academic studies too. His dedication to the team is shown by the fact that he and his teammates managed to build up a club that only started with four members and is now capable of playing any opponents. Their success in an international schools' basketball league as runners up is a testimony of the team's strength and unity. Both his teammate and teacher in-charge agree that Gin played a pivotal role in the transformation of the basketball team. His maturity, sense of responsibility and ability to lead by example naturally made him well-received by his both Singaporean and non-Singaporean teammates as he is able to inspire and command respect. "*Because of his exemplary conduct and enthusiasm, players look up to him and he is able to lead them in competitions.*" (Teacher in-Charge of the basketball club).

Gin's ability to lead is based on his earnestness and dedication, and his style of leadership is not authoritarian but one that is humanistic and motivational, which is

seen from the way he consoles and encourages players when they are down. In a way, partly due to his earnest style of leadership, the basketball team does not have the unhealthy culture of 'blaming someone' when things do not turn out well. Possibly in part due to this culture basketball remains as one of the most popular sports clubs in the school.

However Gin also notes and understands the problems foreign students face in socializing and integrating into the school community which is predominantly Singaporeans. He too had difficulties in the beginning as Korean students were not well liked and perceived as quite a vocal group, which Singaporean students found annoying. As he had started schooling in Singapore earlier than other Korean students, so he is able to speak the way Singaporeans do. He understands that it is quite natural for a person to keep their social interactions with friends of the same nationality since they speak the same language and may share similar interest. But he also feels that cross-national socializing ultimately depends on one's ability to open up and accept the other person. He feels that school activity such as sport helps develop bonds among students as Singaporeans are generally approachable and therefore not difficult to interact with if one really tries.

Koe (Malaysian)

Sociability

Koe plays rugby for the school and is also a student leader as both a student councilor and prefect, which requires him to interact with students. Koe admits that he does not find it difficult to socialize with Singaporeans due to the quite similar socio-cultural background between Singapore and Malaysia. He does many activities with them including playing sports, studying and participating in other school activities and functions.

Team Affiliation

Koe feels that one of his closest groups of friends are his rugby teammates, bonded together by a common interest in the sport which has solidified and strengthened over time. He is delighted at the fact that the team did well in championships, a result which he attributes to the team's strong team spirit by which they motivate and encourage one another, train hard together and play their parts in leading the team. As Koe states,

“I think this is the best rugby team we have ever had. Generally, I am happy with the progress of the team. It only has a short three year history and I would say that we have made good progress in most aspects.”

Koe's strong sense of team commitment can be seen in his strong focus on tasks and willingness to commit time to training. He is a co-operative member in the school team and apart from playing, fulfils his other roles responsibly in preparing the logistics and getting involved in recruitment activities. Though not a dominant leader in the team, he plays with dogged determination and is never deterred by bigger and stronger opponents despite being small built, and has been known at times to play games until the pain of injury forces him to stop.

Koe however feels as the only non-Singaporean in the current rugby team, that other non-Singaporean members have left the club as they find it difficult to socialize. A fact which he in part relates to differences in culture and language. He acknowledges the difficulty foreigners face in interacting closely with Singaporeans as the former tend to keep to themselves, which somehow makes their stay in the rugby club not enjoyable and difficult to sustain. As Koe observes,

“I think that has to do with the human nature of associating with friends who share similar language habits. For instance, as I am not conversant in

Mandarin, I too find it difficult to interact with the Mandarin speaking students from China and Taiwan. Non-Singaporean students tend to form their own cliques and do not interact with Singaporeans that much”.

Although Koe socializes well in the rugby team, he somehow feels that some players need to be more disciplined and conscientious in training in order for the team to progress to a higher standard of performance. He feels that without the required level of team discipline, it will be difficult for them to challenge the other traditional elite schools in competition.

General Analysis

Generally speaking, of the six students, one can say that Lee, Tron, Gin and Koe experience largely positive socialization experience with their schoolmates in sport participation. Fei though experiencing difficulty in the beginning, is able to gradually overcome this through his persistence, encouragement from the captain and the teacher in-charge, and his love for the sport, which have provided him with the feeling of both self-efficacy and positive self-esteem. In effect the ‘shared reality’ which refers to the common love for the sport that he has with the team members exerts an influence that is strong enough to make him stay on in the football club (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). These five students however all express concern on the various difficulties associated with cross-national socialization in the sports clubs and activities they are involved in. In this regard they list differences particularly in language, but also cultural background and personality as possible causes. Most of them feel the importance of both local and foreign students trying to understand and accept each other, and point out the need for foreign students to initiate interaction with local Singaporeans in order to develop better opportunities for socialization.

The phenomenon experienced by these five students (Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe) can be understood in relation to both their generally sociable personalities as mentioned in this chapter, and their previous active sport backgrounds which are discussed in Chapter 5; both factors enabling them to socialize and interact fruitfully with schoolmates through sport activity. This can be appreciated from Scheerder's et al. (2006) assertion that individuals who actively participated in sport when they were younger tend to continue doing so when they move into a new environment, which is shown by these students who continue playing sport with their schoolmates in the school.

In relation to their perception of the school's sport programme as discussed in chapter 6, their generally positive perception right from the beginning may have prepared them well mentally for sport participation, which enables them to work hard to adapt to their teammates and experience positive socialization.

Of the six students, Ying does not seem to experience fruitful socialization with schoolmates in sport participation. In relation to her active sport background as discussed in Chapter 5, her inherent liking for sport does not seem to enable her to interact with the current members of the tennis club; differences in personality and linguistic habits exerting influence on her socializing behaviour than the influence derived from any shared reality (i.e. common love for tennis) she has with them.

In relation to the perception of the school's sport programme as discussed in Chapter 6, although she had a positive opinion of the programme initially (at the early phase of the study period), in reality along the way she experiences more problems than she had thought of in the beginning. The mismatch between the initial perception and the actual reality probably causes her disappointment and coupled with the problems she faces, negatively affect her socialization.

Conclusion

In general, of the six students, five of them except Ying do have varying extent of positive experiences in their socialization with their schoolmates in sport participation and generally enjoy their schooling here. Lee, Tron, Gin and Koe enjoy their days in school as an active member of the sport community. Fei, though experienced more difficulties than Lee, Tron, Gin and Koe initially, has been able to overcome the initial discomfort caused by differences in personality. All five of them feel happy or satisfied to be a member of the school and are especially proud to be a member of their respective sports team as they strive hard in training and competitions. Tron, Gin and Koe particularly enjoy a full schooling life as they not only participate in sport but play the role of student leaders as well. All three of them play active roles in their engagement with the social environment by taking the initiative to go beyond the role of a mere participant in the student community, by living an active life as a student leader. Gin for instance is the captain of the basketball team, Tron and Koe are both student councilors. By taking up leadership responsibility, they maximize their potential and also seek to set examples to show that foreign students can also live an active student life if they want and try to. As explained by Guerandel & Mennesson (2007), their positive acceptance of their roles and identities is a result of the process of social construction whereby they adapt constructively to the members of their sports clubs in the course of interaction and acquire the values as well as behaviours required of a member or leader of the club.

The sense of achievement and positive self-esteem are seemingly main factors that make a person stay in a sport group. By being part of the respective school teams' success in competition, Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe acquire the sense of achievement and self-efficacy which motivate them to train hard and participate actively in their

games. This phenomenon finds resonance in Cratty's (1981) and Roberts' (2001) notion of achievement needs as one critical factor that drive one to socialize well in a sport group. Moreover the strong enthusiasm expressed by Lee, Tron, Gin and Koe for their sports clubs can be understood from Cratty's (1981) and Ntoumanis', Vazou's & Duda's (2006) perspectives that a sport group usually has strong affiliation among members if they are valued and respected and there is a high degree of tolerance, emotional support and high level of enjoyment of the activity. Based on Smith's (2007) view that one's ability to demonstrate sporting capability is able to facilitate one's acceptance in a group, it can help explain why Fei continues his participation in football despite having some initial problems with his Singaporean teammates as his improved playing ability and his contribution to the team have impressed his teammates who have come to accept him as part of the team and this enables him to acquire a sense of belonging to the football team. All in all, in essence Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe do experience positive socialization experience with their schoolmates in sport as they possess a social/group identity as a member of the sport club/team, which is based on common interest and aspiration that lead on to cooperative interaction and communication; all of which strengthens their sense of affiliation to the team (Turner, 1982 & 1987).

Ying has also undergone the process of secondary socialization, though it has not been a very fruitful one. One reason for the less fruitful socialization is that she meets a 'reality' which is different from that of her primary and earlier secondary socializations that she had in China (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). For instance, in her earlier secondary socialization experience in China, her friends were more amicable and more mature than those in Singapore, and her school life was more exciting there. The clear difference between the two realities (China's and Singapore's) affects her

current socializing experience. Although she also experiences 'shared reality' (which is the common interest in tennis activity) in Singapore with her schoolmates, it is not strong enough to overcome the contrasting difference of the two realities, and the negative effect from her negative socializing experience. Based on her expectation, this makes her socialization experience less fruitful and less than desired. As explained by Hewitt (2003), there is a state of tension between the group and her as she cannot conform to the social norms of the current tennis club members, either because they are younger and immature or she and the others do not enjoy communicating with one another. Eventually due to her lack of strong emotive attachment to the club members, she has not been quite able to establish a strong group identity with them.

Having discussed the students' socialization experiences with their schoolmates, in the next chapter, their socialization experiences with the teacher in-charge and coach of their respective sports activity and clubs will be discussed.

Chapter 8- Findings & Discussion: Students' Socialization Experience with the Teacher In-Charge and Coach of their Sport Activity/ Club

Based on the multi-dimensional approach, this chapter essentially discusses the foreign students' socialization experiences with both the teacher in-charge and coach of their respective sport activity/club over time. The term 'socialization experience' here includes the students' interaction process with the teacher in-charge and coach, their interrelationships and students' opinions on them. In this school, the various sports clubs are usually managed by both the teacher in-charge and coach (for simplicity, the term 'teacher' will also be used in place of 'teacher in-charge' in this chapter). The teacher is the overall manager of the club; he/she manages the logistics and also helps to co-coach the team. The coach does most of the technical coaching, and also discusses with the teacher matters pertaining to overall strategical development of the club and tactics to be used in competition. Both the teacher and coach complement each other and co-operate in the functioning of the club and the running of its activities.

A discussion of each student, based on the data from interviews and observation will first be done. This is followed by a more general analysis of the six students in the final part. Two topics are identified for discussion under each student and they are: 'student's interactive experience with the teacher and coach' which refers to the general socializing experience the students have with them, particularly in occasions other than training sessions and matches; and 'training style and student's response to training' which refers particularly to the students' attitude and performance in training and matches, as well as their opinion on training in general.

Lee (Indonesian)**Interactive Experience with the Teacher and the Coach**

The basketball team has been handled by one teacher and two coaches so far. The first coach was with the team for two years before the current coach took over. Both coaches have quite different personalities and styles of coaching, though both are equally task focused and goal driven. The teacher of the team is dedicated in his management and puts in great effort in effectively building the team to where it is now.

As an active member of the school's basketball team, Lee attends training regularly and therefore has close contact with the two coaches and the teacher. Generally, he has a positive opinion on all of them and gets along fine with them as he particularly grants credit to the first coach for bringing the team to second place in the international schools' league that year, and he is the first coach with whom Lee experiences such a level of success in sport competition. Lee's impression of the first coach is that he was strict in training, but a humorous person who managed to build close rapport with players through other socializing activities such as going out for dinner and having light conversations after training. Lee is disappointed that the coach had to leave them in order to undergo an operation. This is supported by his words,

"I think we have very good coaches....Despite the tough training, all of us enjoyed it as the (first) coach was good at motivating us to do our best. We had close rapport with the (first) coach and though he was strict with us in training, he is actually a humorous guy....he would tell jokes and share with us tips on sport trainings."

Lee also appreciates the teacher in-charge whom he feels spends lots of time guiding the players and bringing the team to higher level of excellence. According to

Lee,

“Our teacher in-charge is also a great teacher.... He really made effort in connecting with us.... I will always remember him treating us to ice-cream after training.” Lee feels that as a manager of the team, the teacher is able to inspire them and boost their morale through his words and effort such as setting up a blog site to facilitate closer communication, providing them help in studies, and treating them to refreshment after training. In Lee’s opinion, under his care, there is strong motivation in them to play against strong teams and he feels that both the teacher and the first coach are largely responsible for the team’s success.

Training Style and Lee’s Response to Training

Lee feels that the rigorous training regime by the first coach had left a very visible mark in his life. He remembers the tough physically demanding workouts that wore him out for the whole day, such as the many months of cardio workouts and running drills needed to make them fit enough to play a fast attacking game to defeat their opponents. Due to the strong rapport the coach had with him, Lee participated actively in trainings no matter how tough they could be. Although Lee has a frivolous side in his personality, he was always serious about training and competition. There were also instances where he voluntarily helped the coach with the equipment and getting the players ready for workout; an indication of his enthusiasm in his training.

Although Lee enjoyed training under the first coach, he feels that sometimes he was a bit harsh in pushing them real hard during workouts and instilling strong discipline in the team. To illustrate, Lee says that very severe words were used in training, and in matches the first coach could be quite temperamental and often used tough language to drive them on. Strict scolding and reprimanding were common for mistakes committed or if the team did not play the way he wanted. This occurred even

if the team won as the first coach felt that the team had not played to his expectation. According to Lee, the first coach also stressed fair play and good conduct and it was a must for the team to give opponents a handshake and say 'thank you' to the opponents' coach after a game.

In Lee's opinion, he can understand that the coach's demanding expectation stems from the fact that he was very emotional about the game and he simply wanted them to do well; indeed he admits that the team did benefit from his coaching as they performed well in the international schools' league.

Although currently the team has a new coach who is older than the previous one, Lee feels that he is very experienced and handles the players well through a more pastoral style of coaching. In addition he teaches them lots of useful techniques for games. Under the new coach, Lee displays the same kind of enthusiasm, representing team requests to the coach on training methods and schedules. Though Lee may not be as casual in his approach with the new coach, he still attends trainings regularly and consults the current coach for ideas and advice.

Tron (Thai)

Interactive Experience with the Teacher and the Coach

The school's football team has been handled by both the teacher and the coach. While the coach does most of the technical coaching, the teacher manages the logistics and co-coaches the team as well; both of them are dedicated to the development of the sport. The teacher in particular has made huge effort in building the game of football in the school, and with the help of his very dedicated coach, has produced a team that is capable of playing strong opponents despite its short history.

As a key player of the school's senior football team, Tron participates actively in the sport and has played frequently for the school. Humble in nature, he interacts

well with both the teacher and coach and enjoys a positive relationship with them. As Tron states,

“...I would like to thank the teacher in-charge of football and the coach for giving me the opportunities to play for the school.... Both he and the coach are helpful, friendly and supportive.... I look up to him (the teacher) as a role model as he is fit and skilful and I respect him as a mentor who patiently guides us...”

Tron appreciates both of them for granting him the opportunity to play competitively for the school, which he has never done before. He appreciates the teacher for devoting much of his time to the sport, and Tron feels that the teacher’s great enthusiasm and the coach’s dedication have inspired him and the team to commit themselves fully.

Tron looks up to the teacher for his knowledge and experience, who imparts in him values of sportsmanship. In particular, Tron is impressed by his pastoral style of guiding the team as he says,

“I remember once I was having a lack of confidence and failed to turn up for a game. Instead of scolding me, he encouraged me by saying that I am one of the best players he has seen and that I should be courageous in taking up the challenge. That really instilled lots of confidence in me and from then on I have played with lots of guts and determination so as not to let him and the team down.”

Tron feels that the teacher’s style of managing and faith in the team empower and motivate them to feel that they have the potential to be the best that they can be. Tron treasures the valuable experience he gains in the football club through the national inter-school tournament, which has made him understand the significance of all those

trainings. The whole experience has also allowed him to discover his potential in the sport and make many friends in the process.

Tron's fine relationship with both the teacher and the coach is also testified by his teammate who thinks that his humility in learning from them, maturity and ability in playing his best effort give them good impression of him as a distinctive valuable player in the team. He seems to be on closer terms with the teacher, who has known him longer than the coach. According to Tron, one reason for his better relationship with the teacher is that the coach's occasional bad temper makes him feel awkward in approaching him, and hence he prefers talking to the teacher. Apart from football, he can be seen talking to the teacher on matters related to studies and career.

Training Style and Tron's Response to Training

As football is a physically demanding game, training and competition requires players to undergo intensive and rigorous workouts in which Tron appears to excel. Tron impresses with his athletic prowess as he is fit and fast and in the coach's view *'any coach would love to have him in the football team due to his strength and aggressiveness in the field'*. The teacher is also impressed by his earnestness in learning as he will seek advice when he is unsure of any training and tactical issues. As someone who only started playing football two years ago Tron occasionally suffers from a lack of confidence, at which point he turns to the teacher for support and reassurance.

Apart from being a good player, Tron is also known to be helpful and is often seen helping out with the logistics in training. He takes training seriously and does not utter a word of complaint no matter how tough the training can be. Even when some players complain about the training methods, Tron just focuses on practising and playing.

Ying (PRC Chinese)

Interactive Experience with the Teacher and the Coach

The school's tennis team, just like the other sport clubs, has all this while been managed by both a teacher and a coach. So far the tennis club has gone through the hands of two teachers and two coaches. All four of them have done much in the development of tennis activity and the team have experienced some successes in recent years. Currently the team is managed by its second teacher in-charge and second coach.

Ying is a talented tennis player but has not had the chance to play for the school as she missed the last selection trial. In her words,

“I really enjoyed those days when the previous coach was around. I find that he was more attentive and I benefited a lot from his coaching.... I was also close to the previous teacher in-charge as he was friendly and liked to interact with players...”

Ying prefers working with both the first teacher and first coach and has slight problems interacting with the current ones. She feels that the first coach who is about 60 years old seemed more keen in building rapport with the players. He was just like a kind elderly relative to her as he would buy the players refreshment and drive them to purchase rackets. Ying was also close to the previous teacher in-charge as he was amicable and liked to interact with players, especially non-Singaporeans. One of the reasons for their closer working relationship was his good Mandarin-speaking ability, and as such they were able to communicate with each other effectively on ECA matters as well as issues relating to personal development. Ying appreciates him for his caring and understanding personality.

Most of Ying's good memories in the tennis club come from her contact with

the first teacher and first coach. The club currently has both a new teacher and coach and she feels that her interaction with them has not been so fruitful so far. She feels that unlike previously where the first teacher could give adequate attention to most members, currently due to more members in the club, the current teacher and coach may not be able to offer that much attention to individuals. One possible reason for the lack of adequate attention is also the fact that this coach unlike the previous coach, has also been coaching other schools and hence spends less time with her. She also feels that the current teacher tends to pay more attention to Singaporean students as she maybe more comfortable interacting with the locals.

On the whole, Ying is disappointed that she has not been able to socialize very well with both the current teacher and coach and due to that, she missed some vital information on the last selection trial for the national inter-school competition, which led to her not being included in the school team even though she was good enough to play.

Training Style and Ying's Response to Training

According to her first teacher, Ying showed greater enthusiasm and effort under the first coach and displayed humility and earnestness to learn. As a result she showed remarkable improvement which was shown in her being more confident and courageous in making powerful shots and going to the net. This is supported by Ying who feels that the first coach was more attentive and her skills improved a lot under him as he was able to provide very practical useful pointers on techniques due to his vast experience as a former national player. Indeed Ying's disappointing experience with the current coach is also affecting her tennis activity as she has not been attending practice for a period of time under him.

Fei (PRC Chinese)

Interactive Experience with the Teacher and the Coach

Compared to his Singaporean teammates, Fei faces more problems in socializing and interacting with members of the team as a PRC Chinese national adapting to a different culture. However, Fei is comfortable interacting with both the teacher and coach of the football team, particularly the teacher as he feels that he is one of those teachers in the school who communicates well with him.

“...I have very good relationship with the teacher in-charge.... He really has the passion for the game and sees in us the potential of achieving something.”

Fei is impressed by the passion the teacher has for the game and his confidence in the players in achieving something, which is reflected in his ability in organizing the team and rallying them together towards goals. For example, although they were seen as underdogs in the national under-20 inter-school tournament, due to the teacher's persistent effort in training, the team prepared well and managed to come up with two wins, and a draw against the defending champions.

Fei feels that the teacher provides good pastoral care to his student athletes. He is able to advise on things including sport, social issues and matters related to studies. Fei acknowledges that under his pastoral guidance, he has matured, learnt to be less self centered and has become more able to analyse matters from a wider perspective before arriving at conclusion.

Training Style and Fei's response to Training

Although Fei respects the coach, he does have a little problem with the way the coach handles the team sometimes. Fei feels that the coach *“spends a bit too much time on tactics and strategies at the expense of developing the individual skills of some players”*. He also feels that the coach should spend more time improving their

fitness level as the national competition is a physically demanding tournament. Fei is also not happy in that he feels in certain matches the coach “*makes questionable decisions in his choice of substitutions*”.

Whilst Fei is prepared to share these criticisms in the interview, in public he seems co-operative, takes training instructions well, and has never been seen arguing with the coach.

Gin (Korean)

Interactive Experience with the Teacher and the Coach

A key player in the school’s basketball team, Gin captains the team and has been instrumental in its success in the last three years. He interacts well with both the teacher and the coach of the basketball team. In Gin’s words,

“He (the teacher) has great enthusiasm and really motivates us to do our best....I feel that he is a great motivator who always gives the team a pep talk after every match.”

Gin feels that the teacher takes good care of the team with great enthusiasm and is able to greatly motivate them to do their best. Apart from being enthusiastic about their performance in basketball, in Gin’s opinion, the teacher has a strong sense of responsibility and is also concerned with their studies and providing them with help. The teacher makes an effort to build a personal rapport with the players and makes time to join them for meals after training.

According to Gin, “*He (the teacher) is one who handles us in a democratic manner.*” In other words the teacher uses a democratic style of management in handling the team by allowing them to voice their opinions. Indeed he has set up a blog site. Gin feels that this helps to facilitate communication a great deal, as it allows a free flow of ideas, which ultimately strengthens the team’s unity. Gin appreciates

his effort in regularly giving the team a morale boosting talk after every match. Gin feels that the teacher's dedication played a part in the team winning second place in the international schools' league.

Gin's good relationship with the teacher is a mutual one. The teacher is also impressed by Gin's politeness and dedication to the basketball club, promoting the game and building the club that started with only four players.

Training Style and Gin's Response to Training

Gin is impressed by the first coach's enthusiasm and high level of fitness, in teaching them to play a fast attacking game. Gin feels that this kind of regimental training though harsh, helps improve the team's discipline and aggression, which contributed to the team's success in tournaments.

In comparison, Gin feels that the current coach is more experienced generally and he uses a different coaching style that is more pastoral and understanding. Gin feels that his training is more balanced; in the sense that instead of focusing too much on fitness training, he also teaches the players lots of techniques and tactical movements. Unlike the first coach who stressed on fast attacking game at the expense of good defence, the current coach guides them to play a more complete game. He makes them think deeper and they learn to play a more tactically sound game, which enables the team to feel confident training under him.

Gin is often seen helping the coaches with logistics. With the first coach, he seemed very motivated and made great effort to prove himself by leading the team in many ways such as motivating his players, managing logistics and arranging for trainings. Gin enjoyed training under the first coach who somehow managed to inspire him to do his best. Both the first and second coaches seem to have lots of faith in Gin as a captain as information is usually relayed to him, and he has not let them

down in fulfilling his duties. The coach is always giving him instructions in games; an indication of much reliance on him in leading the team.

Koe (Malaysian)

Interactive Experience with the Teacher and the Coach

The school's rugby team has been managed by a teacher in-charge who is a qualified coach himself, and he is assisted by another coach. The rugby team has gone through the hands of two coaches so far. The teacher has been instrumental in building up the rugby team and it has done well in competition, particularly in the last two years.

One of the key players in the team, Koe participates actively in rugby activity. In Koe's opinion, the teacher is passionate about the game as he is a rugby player himself and who has been instrumental in developing the rugby club progressively. In Koe's words, "*...we have a very dedicated teacher in-charge.... Because of his constant urging, the team is able to reach the current state of development.*" Koe thinks that the teacher is approachable and because of this is popular among the rugby players including the touch rugby girls. However, Koe feels that there are times when the teacher feels very upset when some players do not attend training, which results in his emotional outbursts which in turn affects the morale of the players in a negative way.

Koe's cordial working relationship with the teacher and the coach is supported by the fact that the teacher feels that Koe is motivated and responsible. Koe, assists in managing logistics and does his best in competition, though he is not seen by the teacher as a distinct leader who can lead and rally the players well.

Being a quiet person by nature, Koe's relationship with the teacher and the coaches is more based on a formal student-teacher format, which means that he does

not have the kind of relationship whereby they can talk more about personal issues. He is seldom seen having long conversations with them and most of the conversations are related to rugby.

Training Style and Koe's Response to Training

The rugby team have had two coaches so far and in Koe's opinion they possess different coaching styles. "*Our first coach...was more focused on developing basic playing ability than winning.*" This is possibly understandable as the team was new then and many of the players did not have good foundation in rugby to begin with. Koe feels that he was keen on guiding them on sportsmanship and discipline so that they could acquire values for character building.

The current coach is considered less amicable and less personal but he is more interested in winning. Koe feels that because he is so focused on winning, not all players had the chance to play, which made them unhappy.

In Koe's opinion, an ideal coach should have an amicable personality, at the same time as being able to focus on getting results. Koe feels that the first coach is amicable and his coaching method is beneficial for inculcating good values in students. The second coach, though good at getting results, somehow is less friendly, and his overly strong focus on winning may sometimes impart incorrect values to players as they would try to win at all costs, including cheating.

General Analysis

All six students experience varying degrees of socialization with their respective teachers in-charge and coaches of the various sports clubs. Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe have experienced largely fruitful socialization and interaction. They enjoy their interactional processes with them and are appreciative for their mentoring; all of which encourage them to continue participation in their sports. This

phenomenon finds resonance in the findings of Quek (1997), Riemer (2007), and Valentine (2006), who advocate that student athletes who sustain and enjoy participation in sport are those who develop good relationship with their coaches and teachers who motivate them with empathetic understanding and encouragement. In particular, Tron's and Fei's strong relationships with the teacher are supported by Jowett & Poczwadowski (2007), Lavoie (2007), and Duda & Balaguer (2007) in that over time a trusting relationship is built upon effective communication through which knowledge and values are transmitted, and such relationship is one that is educational and empowering to students.

Lee, Fei, Gin and Koe also express critical personal opinions on coaching styles and methods of their respective coaches and teachers. Lee feels that the first basketball coach was a bit too harsh with his training regime and language at times, even though he understands the latter's intention in trying to bring them to higher standards. Gin feels that the current basketball coach is more experienced than the first one as he teaches them to play a more complete game. Both Lee and Gin are however very much inspired and motivated by their teacher in-charge, who is very dedicated to the team.

Fei is very close to the teacher in-charge of the football team, whom he feels is one who inspires them with his enthusiasm and care for students. Though Fei gets along fine with the coach, he feels that sometimes he made unusual decisions in games. He also feels that the coach should spend a little more time on skill development with some players.

Koe is motivated by his dedicated teacher but sees the difference in coaching styles between the two rugby coaches. He feels that though the current coach is

effective in producing a winning team, he is not as amicable as the first one and his overly strong focus on winning may impart wrong values to students.

These students' offering of opinion of their coaches and teachers can be explained by Hamachek's (1992) 'psycho-dynamic' theory which explains that the development of a person's thinking is an engaging interactive process involving the person, perception and environment. This process of engagement between the self and environment shapes their own belief and opinion. In the process of interacting and exchanging of ideas with their coaches and teachers over a period, the students use their own belief-value system to evaluate them and their actions consciously and subconsciously, and eventually develop their attitude and opinion towards them (Hamachek, 1992).

Of the six students, Ying's experience in socializing with teachers and coaches may not be as fruitful as the other five. Ying admits that she enjoys interacting with both the first teacher in-charge and first coach of the tennis club. They seem to have closer rapport and more mutual understanding with her and are friendlier. There is not much close interaction with the current teacher and coach, due to the lack of close mutual understanding, which is reflected in the fact that she does not feel very much valued even though she is generally a good player. All this therefore leads to a phenomenon whereby she does not have a strong sense of affiliation to both the current teacher and coach, and the tennis club on the whole. Ying's situation can be explained by Kavussanu's (2007) findings in that a person's relationship with the teacher and coach can influence her perception of the group as accommodative or not, which will in turn affect her experience of participation in the sport.

Five of the six students, Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe generally experience overall positive socialization with the teacher and the coach. In relation to the

students' perception of the school, which is discussed in Chapter 6 where generally all students have positive perception of the school's philosophy and the sport programme, this findings is not difficult to understand as due to the positive perception of the school right from the beginning, it is highly probable that these five students would have prepared themselves mentally that they are going to have a fruitful experience interacting with the teacher and the coach, and hence have worked hard in adapting to them right from the start. The only exception is Ying, who though perceived the school's sport programme positively in the beginning, is not able to experience fruitful socialization with the second teacher and second coach of the tennis club at the later period, and must have felt disappointed at the disparity between her earlier perception and actual reality.

In relation to Chapter 7 where socialization experience with schoolmates and teammates in sport participation is discussed, four of them, Lee, Tron, Gin and Koe experience overall positive socialization with their schoolmates, and therefore their overall positive socialization experiences with the teacher and the coach should not be too surprising since their sociable personalities as discussed in Chapter 7 could have made them sociable as well with the teacher and the coach. The exceptions are Fei and Ying. In the case of Fei, although he experiences some problems socializing with his teammates, this does not prevent him from socializing positively with the teacher and the coach, particularly the teacher. In fact, he has a close rapport with the teacher and sees him as a mentor. In the case of Ying, her problematic relationship with the tennis club members also does not prevent her from socializing positively with the first teacher and first coach. These two exceptional cases indicate the fact that the teacher in-charge of a sport club has a very important role to play in positively

socializing students in the club even if these students are experiencing socializing problems with their teammates.

Conclusion

These foreign students' experiences in socializing with teachers and coaches of their respective sports clubs can be explained by Hewitt's (2003) theory of 'symbolic interactionism', which explains that human beings live in a world of interaction, which is made meaningful by symbols such as activity and values. Their experiences of interaction and opinions on the teachers and coaches are very much influenced by the activities and values they share with the latter. All six students have experienced some degree of good socialization process with them since both parties share common interests and a firm bond, and experience a sense of 'shared reality' in their respective sport activity (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), but their overall experience will also be very much influenced by the types of values they acquire from the interaction. According to Kroger (1989), if these students are able to recognize them as agents for their own growth and change in the process of socialization, and acquire values such as discipline, diligence, team spirit, empathy, respect, amicability and leadership, which have some impact on them, they will view this socializing process positively and express positive opinions on these teachers and coaches.

From the view point of Arnold (1997), the relationship between the students and the teacher/coach involves the communication of positive humanistic values between the two parties. The students see their teacher/coach as their mentors to the extent that they look up to them as exemplary figures who can guide them along; therefore in the communion of sport practice, they see each other as mutual guardians of moral values in sport and this offers an experience of friendly engagement that cultivates good human relationships. In such an engagement, all parties undergo a

process of self-reflection and self-cultivation, which can help all to become better human beings (Arnold, 1997)

Having discussed the five essential areas that cover the students' socialization experiences in Chapters 4-8, the conclusive discussion of the case study will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 9- Conclusion

Summary of the Main Findings & Their Implications

As mentioned in Chapter 1, ‘socialization’ or the act of ‘socializing’ is defined as a person’s process of interaction, and in the process becomes socially competent where one learns and acquires ways and values to effectively interact with the physical and social environments (Martens, 1975). In this chapter, a summative discussion of the six students’ experiential processes of socialization in sport participation in the school is done. This is followed by a theoretical discussion through the theories from both the ‘developmental’ and ‘humanistic-social constructionist’ perspectives. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), the term ‘perspective’ here refers to a particular way of viewing and explaining the phenomena as well as to a category of theories which share certain characteristics.

All in all, one can say that Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe on the whole experience predominantly positive socialization with their schoolmates, teachers and coaches in their participation in the various sports, and generally profess good experiences studying and interacting in the school. This is especially true in the case of Tron, Koe and Gin, who go beyond the role of an ordinary participant in the school community taking up leadership roles such as a student councilor, a prefect and a team captain respectively. This sends an optimistic message that in a Singapore school, foreign students who are willing to open up and reach out could be able to live an active and fulfilling student life. Fei though having had problems initially with his teammates, was also able to overcome initial difficulties due to the encouragement from his teacher and team captain, and also due to his love for the sport. The findings on these students’ positive socializing experiences may not come as a huge surprise when one considers that they enjoy sports and are generally by nature amicable in

terms of personality and would therefore tend to be sociable. The students' generally positive perception of the school's academic, sports & ECA programme, teachers and principals including the teacher in-charge and coach of their sports clubs could also have encouraged them to some extent to be more positive and proactive in interacting cross-nationally with other students. Additionally, the school's conducive human environment as manifested in its educational philosophy and generally amicable staff, which promote interaction among students, could also be responsible for their positive socialization experiences in sport participation as well.

Of the six, one would say that Ying's socialization experience in the tennis club is not as rewarding as the other five, and her positive socializing experience is confined only with the first teacher and coach, and a couple of close friends. The main cause of the problem is the limited ability of students of different cultures in interacting with one another with ease and comfort. The lack of empathetic understanding among these young people is probably one of the biggest obstacles to the formation of a more integrated international community in the school. These problems are commonly highlighted by the other five students as well. From here, one can see the importance of having a conducive general human environment that can facilitate active interaction in the community as well as having good teachers in-charge of the sports clubs to guide students and help develop good relations among the members through plenty of communication and pastoral care. This can be seen from the examples of Tron, Fei and Gin who have all expressed how the teachers have helped them in several ways in socializing them into the team, and arguably it could be due to the lack of the right teacher to guide Ying that she is now experiencing problems with the current tennis team.

From the social-psychological standpoint adopted by the research key theories from both the developmental and humanistic-social constructionist perspectives will be utilized for explaining the students' socialization in sport participation in the following sections.

Socialization of Students in Sport Participation: Developmental Perspective

From the 'developmental' perspective which entails the element of 'time' and enables one to look at a person's development over a passage of time or a person's development at certain periods in one's growth, several relevant theories can be used to account for the socialization of the six students. Key concepts from Berger & Luckmann (1966), Durkin (1995), Koger (2000) and McCarter (2008) will be utilized for a meaningful and better theoretical understanding of the phenomena.

Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) theory of primary and secondary stages of socialization can be used to understand the students' development in their socializing processes in their growing up years. Primary socialization is the first stage of socialization an individual undergoes in childhood, where they acquire values and attitudes from their immediate surroundings such as primary caregivers and family members. Secondary socialization is any subsequent process that inducts an individual into new sectors (other than one's own family) of the objective world of their society.

In applying Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) viewpoint as a means of explanation, the students' primary socialization process in which they acquired values and attitudes from their immediate surroundings back home could have influenced them significantly in instilling in them deep interest for sport, which helped induct them into the world of physical activity. For example, their family members' love for sport and their parents' way of upbringing that encouraged them to be physically

active, and the popularity and accessibility in sport participation back home would have orientated them towards participation in sport.

One common element that played a pivotal role in their early socialization experiences was that of 'habitualization' which was a process where they learnt to repeat their operating procedures that won approval from immediate family members with whom they had strong attachments (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 131-134). All of them were able to develop a liking for sport when they were young because they had positive experiences of habitualization. This process of habitualization provided them the direction and convenience that socialized them into sport (before they started schooling), where their participation was encouraged by parents and family members who had great influence on their early establishments of feelings and values. But in habitualization, a young child is mainly motivated to do things for the sake of winning approval and praise from others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This could mean that a large part of the students' motivation when they first participated in sport when they were younger, could be linked to their desire to win approval from others.

However, the theory of 'habitualization' alone would not be able to holistically account for the appreciation the students have for sports, as when they grew older, their growing ability to make autonomous decisions played a major role in explaining their participation in sport, and gaining approval from family members might not be that important as a motivating factor by then. To offer a more holistic explanation for their sport participation from the developmental perspective, human conduct is shaped by the knowledge, skills, values and beliefs of the society they come from as they choose to establish their own identity by maintaining certain meaning in life which satisfies their physiological, psychological and social needs

(Kroger, 2000). Kroger's (2000) theory of 'tripartite nature of ego identity' in one's adolescent period can also account for their love for sport where the physical nature of sporting activity is able to satisfy their 'physiological needs', 'psychological needs' and 'social needs'. In terms of physiological needs, the students feel satisfied because they are able to experience certain levels of working intensity their bodies undergo; in terms of psychological needs, they feel mentally enhanced and rejuvenated through a physical and sporting activity; and in terms of social needs, participating in sport allows them to establish friendships with fellow players. Therefore based on Kroger's (2000) theoretical explanation, one gathers that as the students grew older they chose to play sports for it offered them several meanings in life such as personal quest for excellence, personal well-being and fitness, as well as developing friendships, other than just winning approval from family members.

In applying Kroger's (2000) concept as a means of understanding, all of them, in their growing up process, are able to receive and select influences from the surroundings that satisfy both their physiological and psychological needs and engage with them actively and choose to develop and establish their own self identity as someone who loves playing sport. The development of such a self-identity in the midst of engaging with these influences and stimulus can also be understood from Durkin's (1995) concept of 'individuation', a process whereby they develop a concept of self and self-esteem through knowing their existence and individual uniqueness as a sport enthusiast, and by channeling their energies towards goals in sport participation, they finally construct their identity that gives them meaning in life as a sport participant.

According to Berger & Luckmann (1966), secondary socialization is any subsequent process after primary socialization that inducts people into new sectors of

their objective world, and for the case of the six students, the availability of sport facilities and participation back home means that they experienced a form of secondary socialization in which they were motivated and encouraged to continue doing sports due to the availability of facilities and friends whom they could play sports with. This form of secondary socialization continued when they entered the international school in Singapore where they have the opportunities to continue playing sports with their current schoolmates through extra-curricular activities. Due to the more structured sport programme in the school which offers systematic training and competition, the students experience a process of what Berger & Luckmann (1966) termed as 'institutionalization' in which they learn to respect the institution and internalize institutional values such as discipline, diligent training and respecting teammates, teacher in-charge and coach of the sport team. Through it all, they acquire appropriate social behaviour as a member of the team and role specific knowledge such as sport related technical knowledge and knowledge related to their duty in the team. Indeed all of them participate actively in school sport and experience socialization in sport participation, a result that is made possible through the process of institutionalization where they internalize institutional values by being willing to partake in the school's sport programme and learning how to socialize with members of their sports clubs, and in the process develop their sense of identity as a sport participant or a sport player of the school. Being able to internalize institutional values also means that they would have to acquire appropriate social behaviour that is indispensable in their daily interaction with school mates, teachers in-charge and coaches and therefore certain behavioural norms are expected of them in order for them to experience positive socialization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Throughout the process of both primary and secondary socialization, both habituation and institutionalization regulate their conduct in their interaction with teammates and teacher/coach and socialize them as member of a team or community and through it all, their identity as a sport player and member or captain of the sport team, is formed through a social process which involves social expectations (i.e. expectation of a school athlete) and social relations with teammates and teacher/coach. However all six students experience varying degree of such socialization, which depends on the 'shared reality' between them and their teammates and teachers/coaches. That shared reality can include compatible interests, attitudes, values and the ability to communicate with each other (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and in the context of this study, 'shared reality' primarily refers to the common interest/love of a sport and its related activities they share with their teammates. Students such as Lee, Tron, Gin, Koe and Fei are able to socialize positively because such shared reality exists and exerts strong positive influence on their interactional relationships with their teammates, though Fei had some problems initially. As for Ying, the shared reality exists mainly between her and a couple of her tennis friends as well as the first teacher and coach of the tennis club, and she thus experiences more positive socialization with them than with other tennis club members and the current teacher and coach.

From Durkin's (1995) theoretical viewpoint, all six students have undergone a process of socialization through participating in training and competition over a period of time and in the midst of it acquire rules of behaviour and values that equip them to function effectively as a member of the team or sport community through promoting positive aspects in human relations, and this process is defined as 'social cognition' in which they interpret and understand the social world through human

interactions. The process of 'social cognition' is also known as 'institutionalization' as defined by Berger & Luckmann (1966).

Indeed to some extent both Durkin's (1995) and Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) viewpoints of socialization carry a notion of individuals having to conform to the behavioural norms of the group they belong to in order to socialize effectively. For instance, the students would need to be able to communicate in ways that are acceptable to their team members for them to experience positive socialization, and possessing personal attributes such as being friendly, easy going and humble are essential criteria for them to be accepted into the group. But one has to be careful in interpreting Durkin's (1995) 'social cognition' and Berger & Luckmann's (1966) 'institutionalization' as these theories tend to assume that a person has to conform to the norms of the group in everything in order to experience positive or effective socialization. In reality this is not the case with the six students who in fact display individual qualities in their personalities which are unique from their team members. Despite being members of a sport team or club, they nevertheless possess their own self-identity which is developed through a process theorized by Durkin (1995) as 'individuation' in which they develop a concept of self through knowing their existence and individual uniqueness. Indeed all six students through the processes of 'individuation' as well as 'social cognition' have managed to develop their own identity by socializing and working with teammates, teachers in-charge and coaches, and contributing in group work, and in the process discover their unique worth and self (Durkin, 1995). The existence of self-identity can be seen in their offering of opinions on several issues and the ways they perceive and conduct themselves. Everyone expresses independent personal opinions on the teachers' and coaches' coaching and management styles, and has a clear purpose of why they are in a

particular sport team. They understand their unique roles and how they can contribute individually to the team either as a player (such as Lee, Tron, Ying, Fei and Koe), a captain (such as Gin) or someone who can help to make another person comfortable in the team (such as Tron). Even though Ying may have problems socializing well, at least she knows that she joins tennis for the love of it and desires to play for the school if there is opportunity. Of the six, Ying and Fei appear to have more difficulty in socializing in their sports teams due to differences in personality but they are able to stay involved in their sports due to their passion for the activity. From the perspective of 'shared reality' as defined by Berger & Luckmann (1966), the existence of shared reality can affect one's degree of socialization and in the case of the students, the shared reality can be the common passion for the sport they share with their teammates. It is therefore this common passion that sustains their involvement in their sports.

Indeed from the viewpoint of McCarter (2008), the development of one's identity goes through a process of 'role experimentation' and 'self-evaluation', where they experience role membership and build relationship with people such as teammates, coaches and teachers in-charge, and undergo a process of evaluating themselves against their peers through observation and reflection, in order to define their identity. Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe all experienced working and playing with teammates before discovering how well they can play and in which position or how they can contribute to the team in other ways. For example, Gin realizes his leadership potential as a captain through playing and working actively with his basketball teammates; Fei enjoys the game of football, knows he has speed and wants to play well for the team as a striker; Tron knows he can contribute to the team's success with his hard running style of playing and matured friendliness; Lee knows he can inject

fun into the team with his humour and enthusiasm; and Koe knows he can offer much support in logistics and as a hardworking player generally. Through such interactions and mutual influences, the development of their identity over time is also a process of them evaluating themselves against their peers. This is achieved through observation and personal reflection in which they adapt their behaviours accordingly to the opinions of their teammates, and if they perceive general acceptance, they feel motivated to carry on with their behaviours in the process of socialization (McCarter, 2008).

Apart from socializing with teammates, through the process of 'role experimentation' all six students also experience working with their teachers in-charge and coaches who can have a different impact on their development. Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe acknowledge that they benefit from their mentoring even though most of them offer some critical opinions on their coaches' training methods. They acknowledge the crucial roles played by their teachers in-charge in their socialization experiences; for example, Fei had some problems socializing with his teammates initially, his later ability to bond better with the team could be partly due to the teacher's effort in valuing his quality and allowing him to contribute. From the developmental perspective in McCarter's (2008) theory of 'role experimentation', his difficult relationship with his teammates is compensated by his fine ties with the teacher who offers him substantial confidence that is crucial for his participation in the football team as he adapts to the role of a team player who shows both enthusiasm and good playing ability in the sport. Ying also goes through the process of 'role experimentation' where she experiences socialization with two teachers in-charge and two coaches, and seems to enjoy the experience with the first teacher and the first coach by adapting to the role of a tennis player who is keen in the sport. With the

second teacher and coach, she also tries to adapt to the same role as a member of the tennis club but finds the socializing experience with them less fruitful due to the lack of close mutual understanding as they do not seem to communicate much with her and do not make adequate effort in developing a stronger rapport with her as well.

From another developmental perspective in the theory of 'tripartite nature of ego identity' as illustrated by Kroger (2000), a person's sense of identity in the adolescent period is shaped by three interacting elements: his/her 'physiological needs', 'psychological needs' and the 'social-cultural milieu' in which he/she resides. In the case of the six students, sport and physical activity are able to satisfy both their physiological and psychological needs to varying extent as all enjoy sports. The school and the sports clubs they join provide the social-cultural milieu which provides opportunities for the satisfaction, expression and recognition of both their physiological and psychological needs since sport participation is available and made possible by the sport facilities and the company of teammates, teachers and coaches who share common sporting interests. As a result, over time their sense of identity as a particular form of sport participant or athlete (such as a footballer, basketball, rugby and tennis player) and their identity as a member of the school sport team or club, somehow develops to varying extent through the process of the three elements interacting with one another (Kroger, 2000). All six students experience different identity development to different extent: Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe are deemed to feel a stronger sense of belonging to their sports teams as they socialize well. In short they enjoy their membership of their sports teams and are proud to be members of the school team as the school's sport programme and their sports clubs are able to provide the social-cultural milieu that can satisfy both their physiological and psychological needs. In comparison, Ying who experiences a less positive socialization experience

generally, may not feel strongly attached to the tennis club and therefore may not have developed a strong identity as a member of the club, as the social-milieu the tennis club provides generally does not meet her physiological and psychological needs as much as she desires.

Indeed, positive socialization and development of identity entails whether individuals' needs for self-expression and self-esteem are met. From the perspective of Kroger (1989), this sense of individual identity involves the students' organization of feelings, opinions and social reality over time in order to find personal satisfaction while they are in the midst of interacting with members of their sports clubs. Over a period of time, their unique identities evolve in the midst of interacting with others who are recognized as agents for their own growth and change. For example, all them have a certain way of behaving and certain style of playing, which evolve as a result of self-diligence, comparing with others, learning from others and social acceptance. Through interacting with teammates and teachers/coaches in sport activities, they engage themselves in mutual exchanges and influences, all of which help them to develop and establish their own identities (Kroger, 1989). For example, Fei's choice of confiding in the teacher in-charge of the football club implies that he recognizes that the teacher can guide him and therefore sees the latter as an agent for his own growth and change. In other words, due to Fei's ability to communicate well with the teacher, their interaction is based on a shared understanding whereby the teacher understands Fei's problems with his teammates and appreciates his qualities, and Fei is willing to discuss and listen to the advice from the teacher (Jowett & Poczwadowski, 2007). In the case of Ying, who has a greater sense of shared understanding with the first teacher and first coach, which is based on a common interest in tennis and a sense of mutual understanding of each other, she is able to

communicate and socialize with them comfortably. As such she also sees them as positive agents for her growth and benefits from their coaching and guidance, and hence enjoys her socialization with both the first teacher and coach more than with the current ones (Kroger, 1989; Valentine, 2006). Generally the students express positive socialization experiences with the teacher and coach, and manage to learn things from the latter which are crucial for their own growth, although Ying expresses disappointment with her current teacher and coach in this aspect as compared to her previous ones.

Theoretical Implications of the Developmental Perspective

Generally the theories from the developmental perspective offer viable theoretical explanation of the studied phenomena and therefore lend credibility. For example, Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) 'shared reality' and McCarter's (2008) 'role experimentation' and 'self-evaluation' are credible theoretical concepts in elucidating and understanding the students' experiential process of socialization in sport participation.

However the outcome of the research also indicates that some of these theories are limited in its ability to offer complete explanation of the phenomena, which therefore require other theories to complement them. For example, Durkin's (1995) theory of 'individuation' complementing Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) theory of 'institutionalization' in explaining a person's acquisition of institutional norms in sport socialization, and Kroger's (2000) theory of 'tripartite nature of ego identity' complementing Berger's & Luckmann's (1966) theory of 'habitualization' in explaining a person's continued participation in sport in the growing up years.

So far a theoretical explanation based on the developmental perspective of the students' socialization experience with various groups of people has been done. In the

following section, a theoretical explanation based on the humanistic-social constructionist perspective will be made.

Socialization of Students in Sport Participation: Humanistic-Social Constructionist Perspective

From the humanistic-social constructionist perspective which entails personal and environmental factors whereby individuals are able to negotiate their actions with the environment and adapt themselves in their socialization process, key concepts from Martens (1975), Ashworth (1979), Hutchinson & Charlesworth (2008), Hamachek (1992), Hewitt (2003), Turner (1982), Turner (1987), Moghaddam (2006), Tyler & Blader (2000), Deschamps & Deros (1998), and Pickett & Leonardelli (2006) are used for a meaningful and better theoretical understanding of the phenomena.

From Martens' (1975) perspective, the students' liking for sport can be understood from the notion that their relationship with the environment they grew up in had been well managed and this relationship had developed in a way which made them comfortable with sport. In the process, the students played both active and reactive roles while engaging with the environment through dealing with the influence and stimulus from their families and communities back home, which encouraged and motivated them to take up sport as part of their lifestyles (Martens, 1975). To illustrate, reactive roles refer to their ability to respond to opportunities in playing sports when family members taught them or neighbours invited them for a game. Active roles refer to their ability in initiating sporting activity through organizing a game or offering to join a team in competition. In both situations, influence and stimulus exist in various forms which include encouragement and inspiration from friends and family, as well as the fun, excitement and thrill; all of which could have induced them to participate in sport.

In analyzing the six students from the data gathered from interviews and observations, one can find that home influence had substantial impact in developing their liking for sport. All of them grew up in an environment where sporting culture was strong and they were therefore shaped by such social and cultural forces and had gone through a type of primary socialization or early secondary socialization which had inducted them into the world of physical activity and sport from young (Hewitt, 2003).

Ashworth's (1979) theoretical viewpoint espouses that socialization is a form of social interaction in which the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the presence of others. As human beings are essentially social creatures, their thoughts and actions are the products of social experience in which they constantly do reflection through internalizing language, body and gesture communications, and other forms of symbolically meaningful interaction. They act in accordance with a generalized set of expectations and views of themselves which they have internalized, and adopt an overall image or identity of themselves, and over time they slowly build a stable, consistent self-concept as they acquire more information and modify their identity (Ashworth, 1979). Indeed the six students have undergone the above process of socialization since they were young and their self concept/identity which includes their thoughts and behaviour, is constantly influenced by and developed in their interaction with family members, friends in their hometown, friends and teachers/coaches in the school. Through internalizing symbolically meaningful contacts such as playing sports, training and competing with teammates and interacting with teachers/coaches, they develop general expectations of themselves and based on it, they build a stable and consistent self-identity which meets social expectation of themselves as a sport player. For example, if they are

positively appraised as a good sport player or a capable leader (such as Gin), they will put in effort to develop their skills and conduct in order to meet that expectation.

Ashworth's (1979) theory has a particular stress on the importance of 'social expectation' in influencing socialization, and may be interpreted such that a person's conduct is primarily driven by the need to conform to social expectation and demands. This therefore would have negated the importance of a person living a life that is based on making autonomous decision and personal aspirations. In reality however, conforming to social expectation is not the only motivating factor in socialization for most people (including the six students) who usually possess personal freedom in their course of socialization.

If Ashworth's (1979) perspective seems to stress the importance of social or others' expectation in influencing socialization and developing one's identity, then Hutchinson's & Charlesworth's (2008) perspective can offer another view that places a heavier emphasis on one's self-initiative in one's socialization. From this perspective, one can say that all the students can choose who they want to socialize with and choose the type of value they want to create in the experience. Through this personal deliberation, they are able to satisfy their needs for belonging and self-esteem and attain personal growth and fulfillment. At the same time, they are also subject to social forces in that they are still social beings whose personality and behaviour are influenced by the social environment. Therefore the six students are social beings who interact with their teammates and teachers/coaches, and the interaction is based on shared meanings or shared understandings which include the love for sport, the perceived importance of training and doing well in competitions, the importance of team spirit, respect and discipline, as well as other qualities essential for any sport team/club. This interactive relationship is a two-way dynamic

process in which two parties mutually influence each other as they develop their interpretation of the world of interactions. The whole process of socialization is hence a product of the dynamic interactive process between their personal deliberation and environmental influence (Hutchinson & Charlesworth, 2008). In the case of the six students, all of them voluntarily choose to join the sport club they want and naturally tend to choose to associate with people of similar sporting interests, disposition and compatible personalities, and are able to create value from it. Apart from Lee, Tron, Gin and Koe who bond well with their teammates and are able to satisfy their needs for belonging and self-esteem, Fei though experienced problems initially, is able to stay on in the team and create his own positive value due to his love for the game, and his choice of interacting with a handful of foreign players and the teacher in-charge who offer him encouragement and confidence; all of which help to develop both his feeling of attachment to the team and his ability to interact with other teammates over time. Their socialization in the sport team is based on shared meanings that are related to qualities of a team, and through the dynamic interactive process between them and their teammates where there is lots of mutual influencing, all experience socialization in their own way and undergo different degree of positive experience. Though of all the students, one can say that Ying's positive experience is very much confined to her few closer friends and the first coach and teacher in-charge of the tennis club and therefore she probably creates the most value in her socializing experience with them.

From the perspective of Martens' (1975) viewpoint, the students' socialization can also be explained by how their individual inherent identity and behavioural disposition interact with the social elements in the environment such that each one is both a creator and product of social influences and they play both active and reactive roles while engaging with the human environment that is made up of their teammates

and teacher/coach. Being a creator of social influences and playing an active role means that they take the initiative to attend training, interact and help the team in various ways. Equally, being a product of social influences and playing reactive roles means that they receive influences from the team activities and teammates' actions/behaviours, and respond to them in some ways. Through a process of internalizing these influences initiated by others, they develop their own identity and acquire social competence that enables them to function effectively in a group. Such social competence is based upon self-confidence, self-belief, mastery of practical skills (such as sport and organizing skills), intellect, and social skills, which facilitate one's survival in a group/team (Martens, 1975). All six students have undergone this process of adapting to and internalizing environmental influences in their sports teams in their own ways and to varying degree have acquired a certain level of social competence which enables them to stay on in the team/club.

Apart from acquiring social competence, one element in the process of socialization is the development of self-identity. From the perspective of Hamachek's (1992) 'psycho dynamic' theory, the development of human identity is defined as an interactive process that involves the person, perception and environment, and the greater one's self-knowledge of who he/she is and his/her potential/ability, the more choices he/she has. The self is the component of one's consciousness that gives one a sense of personal existence and identity, which is made up of a person's basic system of belief, attitudes and values. The evolution and development of self and self-identity is a complex process that involves an ongoing engagement between one's genetic potentials and environmental experiences. One such engagement is the way expectation and feedback from people influences their conduct and reinforces how individuals feel about themselves. By developing an awareness of one's possible

qualities (such as certain aspects of personality, general capability and sporting ability), they channel their energies and motivation towards self-defined goals, which hence develop their self concept and establish their self-identity (Hamachek, 1992). For example, Lee's humorous personality and enthusiasm in basketball wins approval from his teammates, which encourage him to continue his usual way of behaviour and his commitment in the game. Likewise Tron's highly approved matured and amicable personality, Gin's well-liked energetic leadership qualities and Koe's much respected diligence also make them feel motivated to continue socializing with their teammates and continue playing their sports enthusiastically. Although Fei has some difficulties in interacting with some of his teammates, the encouragement he receives from his captain and closer friends in the team motivate him to continue developing his skills and playing in different team formations, and his actions are appreciated by his teammates, which further encourages him to continue building closer rapport with them. The same can be said of Ying who though experiences difficulty in her socialization in the tennis club, could still be motivated by one or two closer teammates' appreciation of her personality and tennis skills to continue playing the sport in the school. The six students have certainly acquired their own self-concept and developed their own identity in their course of growing up through an interactive process between them and the environment, which involves self-perception of it and engagement with it. This interactive process started in their younger years back in their hometowns and since then they have acquired knowledge of their own disposition and potential-ability and have made their own choices regarding their activities. Due to their exposure and immersion in a sporting environment since they were young, they have already had a basic system of belief and attitude that endears them to sport. Moreover, their continual engagement with sport-related environmental

experiences in the school further developed their self-identity as someone who enjoys participating or competing in sport. In the midst of their interacting with teammates, schoolmates and teachers/coaches who share sporting interests, the students obtain feedback and expectations that influence the way they conduct themselves and reinforce how they feel about themselves as a sport player who displays qualities such as being hardworking, skillful, responsible, fit and being a leader. In this interactive process, the students also develop an awareness of their possible qualities and they in turn are motivated to channel their energies towards meaningful goals which help develop and establish their self-identities. To illustrate, students such as Gin and Tron feel empowered and more motivated in sport participation as they are tasked by their teachers in-charge or coach with certain roles. For example, by offering Gin the role of captaincy, it helps to satisfy his needs for connectedness and authentic self-expression such that when he contributes as a leader, he experiences a sense of being valued by both the coaches and teammates; this sense of competence makes him empowered, which evokes a greater sense of responsibility and motivates stronger effort. In another example, Tron's positive relationship with the teacher offers a strong influence that shapes his conduct and reinforces how he feels about himself. This helps develop Tron's awareness of his possible qualities in terms of his physical strength and personality, and he is able to channel his energies towards goals within his means, which are shown in his improved playing ability and contribution to the football team. Additionally being more mature in terms of personality, Tron displays the desired level of amicability and helpfulness in assisting foreign players to assimilate into the team. The teacher in-charge's and coach's recognition of his role

can therefore make him feel empowered and motivated to contribute his best (Bettencourt et. Al, 2006).

However, this does not mean that their socialization with the teachers in-charge and coaches is unproblematic. From the viewpoint of Hamachek's (1992) 'psycho-dynamic' theory, the interactive processes that are involved in their socialization may also help them develop self-knowledge and self-identity to the extent that they are able to provide some critical opinions on their coaches, especially in the cases of Ying, Fei, Lee, Koe and Gin.

Indeed socialization is a process of one's constant engagement with environmental experiences and from the perspective of Hewitt (2003), the development and establishment of one's personal identity is facilitated through the workings of the 'self-schema' which is a cognitive generalization of the self, derived from engaging with both past and present experiences. In the process, an individual selects and interprets various influences, makes meaning out of all this engagement, internalizes them and through working, socializing with others and social bonding, he/she creates his/her own identity as both a member of a team and an individual person (Hewitt, 2003). Indeed all six students have gone through this process of socialization since young, as their self-concept and identity have been developing through the self-schema as they actively participate in sports they like and interact with friends, schoolmates, teammates and teachers/coaches. In the interactional process where the students learn sport skills and knowledge, they receive, interpret and internalize various influences, and acquire values such as co-operation and team spirit. Eventually all of them to a varying degree develop their identity as both a sport player and a member of the sport team/club, though one can say that Ying's sense of identity as a member of the tennis team may not be as strong as the other five.

As mentioned above, the development and establishment of a person's identity is a crucial factor in socialization and this identity is developed through a process of interaction and bonding with fellow human beings. Socialization in the human world usually entails the element of 'human bond' and it is this social bond that holds a society together and connects human beings who need it in order to feel the sense of belonging and attachment; but a healthy social bond is one that balances the needs of both the individual and the group as a whole, and due to the autonomous nature of the person, individuals may not always conform to social/group norms and therefore there is always a potential state of tension between the individual and society or group (Hewitt, 2003). From the humanistic-social constructionist perspective, Hewitt's (2003) concept of 'tension between individual and group' helps explain the issue that socialization in a group is not always that comfortable and how well individuals are able to socialize depends on their ability to negotiate between the needs of both themselves and the group. This therefore brings out the issue of the roles of both individual identity and group identity in socialization.

Indeed experiencing the identity as a member of a group/team or group identity is a phenomenon which the students have gone through to varying degree. From the perspective of Turner (1982 & 1987), when two more individuals perceive themselves to be members of the same category who have common interest and aspiration, and are in some ways socially or psychologically interdependent for the satisfaction of needs, attainment of goals or sharing of attitude and values, they form a kind of social group identity or social identity. Such interdependence among members of the group leads to co-operative social interaction, communication, mutual attraction and mutual influence (Turner, 1982 & 1987). The six students do experience this form of social identity as they perceive themselves, their teammates and teachers/coaches

to be members of the same category in terms of sporting interests and aspirations as all want to play well in the sport and do well in competition. As they train, compete and interact along the way, their relationships become stronger and they become interdependent in the sense that they share the same attitudes of wanting to excel in games, train hard and help each other improve individual skills and team play through communication and mutual influence. Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe especially can feel a strong sense of such social group identity since they are in team sports, which require a great amount of co-operative team effort. Even Ying who plays tennis, which is an individual sport, is able to experience the social group identity as a member of the tennis club especially under her first coach when she had a good time training with her closer teammates.

From the humanistic-social constructionist perspective of Moghaddam's (2006) social identity theory, individuals are assumed to have a preference for group membership that supports their need for emotional support and social acceptance. The preference is learned through the socialization process as they are taught that belonging to a particular group can help satisfy their needs for social emotional support and belonging (Moghaddam, 2006). Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe do experience this form of socialization as they stay on in their sports teams because they like the company of their friends and enjoy doing activities with them. Though Fei had some problems socializing with his teammates initially, the constant encouragement from the teacher in-charge and the captain somehow managed to make him change his individualistic mindset to become more of a team player who is more willing to adapt himself to team plans. Of the six students, one can say that basketballers Lee and Gin seem to possess very great emotional attachment to the team as they have expressed and demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm for the sport

and the team; and from the perspective of Tyler and Blader (2000), they have a very strong sense of social group identity as members of the basketball team such that there is a kind of positive 'psychological engagement with the team' in which they attain pride and sense of belonging through the group membership which has high emotional and value significance to them. In short they can be said to be very staunch members of the team.

By belonging to a group/team, members develop a sense of a social/group identity, but as mentioned, any socialization does entail the functioning of both individual and group identities, without which socialization will not be realistic. From the humanistic-social constructionist perspective of Deschamps & Deros (1998), the existence of social/group identity does not negate the importance of personal individual identity which is typified by a person having his/her own unique individual characteristics despite being a member of a group. Therefore personal identity and social/group identity should not be assumed to be in opposition with each other, and empirical studies have shown that one can still establish a unique individual identity while possessing a social identity as a member of a group, which is a matter of personal choice (Deschamps & Deros, 1998). From another humanistic-social constructionist perspective of Pickett & Leonardelli (2006), the sense of belonging to a group represents a core human need and individuals tend to seek social acceptance and inclusion through interpersonal attachments and social groups. Joining a group often entails an assimilation process where new members alter their characteristics and behaviours to fit the norms of the group. At the same time, humans also need to have their own unique individuality. Therefore in group membership, individuals often have to negotiate between these two powerful motives, which are the desire for inclusion and belonging on one hand, and the desire for individual distinctiveness on

the other. Based on the 'optimal distinctiveness' theory, social identification with a group and group commitment/loyalty should be the greatest for those groups that are able to achieve an optimal balance between satisfying the need for group belonging and the need for expression of individual identity (Pickett & Leonardelli, 2006). Five of the six students, Lee, Tron, Fei, Gin and Koe can be said to have experienced such optimal distinctiveness as members of their sports teams as all feel committed to the team and participate actively in training and competition, and all are allowed to express their individuality without being ostracized. For example, Lee is exceptionally humorous and his humour is appreciated by his teammates; Tron is particularly fit and hardworking and his contribution is valued by the team; Gin exhibits leadership ability and is passionate, which is well regarded by the team; Koe is task-focused and diligent, which is well received; Fei's individualistic nature though was not well accepted by his teammates in the beginning, his improved playing and scoring ability at the later stages, and his improved ability in co-operating, interacting with them, eventually made him a player that is appreciated in the team. All five stay committed to their teams, judging from the way they express and demonstrate their enthusiasm and one reason could be that their individuality is not suppressed and as such, they feel respected and are motivated to use this individuality and individual ability to contribute to the team in ways that are not detrimental to the team objectives. As for Ying, her individual uniqueness is not well appreciated in the tennis team currently and she is not experiencing very positive socialization, she therefore does not experience that kind of optimal distinctiveness as a member and hence does not feel strongly attached to the tennis club.

Theoretical Implications of the Humanistic-Social Constructionist Perspective

Generally theoretical concepts from the humanistic-social constructionist perspective offer credible explanation of the students' experiential process of socialization in sport participation, which is a product of the dynamic interactive process between their personal deliberation and environment. In the process they interpret various influences, make meaning out of the engagement with the environment and mould their sense of identity.

Just like the 'developmental' perspective, some theories from the 'humanistic-social constructionist' perspective also have limited ability in offering complete explanation of the studied phenomena and therefore require other theories to complement them. For example, Hewitt (2003), Deschamps & Deros (1998) and Pickett & Leonardelli (2006) are able to complement Turner (1982 & 19987), Moghadam (2006) and Tyler & Blader (2000) in elucidating issues relating to individual and group identities in students' socialization in sport participation.

All in all the above discussion of the students' socialization through the various theories from both the developmental and humanistic-social constructionist perspectives has offered a theory based understanding which would allow one to gain a deeper understanding of the issues involved.

In the following, implications with regards to research methodology, practice and the contribution of the study to knowledge will be illustrated.

Research Methodological Implications of the Study

The research methodology adopted is well suited for this detailed qualitative study. The use of the multi-dimension model as the basic premise, the choice and range of the sample as well as the methods for data collection and analysis are all able

to provide the required level of richness in information. This facilitates the rigorous analysis of the phenomena required by the study.

Implications for Practice and Contribution of the Study to Knowledge

One piece of knowledge gained from the study is that ‘an individual who enjoys a sport does not necessarily mean that they will enjoy it with anybody else’. As the six students are members of the various sports clubs, there could be a tendency to assume that all of them would experience solely positive experience of socialization since they are participating in sport activities they are fond of. However, the results of the study have shown that all of them experience various problems or difficulties to a varying extent in their processes of socialization. This raises a point that a person enjoying the sport, and playing the sport with a group of people are two different issues; we should not assume that in sport participation individuals will attain the same level of enjoyment with a different group of people, and the experiential process of socialization is dependent on the various factors discussed in the thesis.

Based on the study, one can acquire some insights and think of several implications pertaining to the practice in educational programmes in schools with regard to socialization in sport participation, which contribute to existing knowledge. These include: establishing a conducive school environment, the importance of ‘shared reality’, the critical role of students in influencing socialization, the critical role of the teacher in influencing socialization, and the importance of foreign and local students initiating socialization; all of which shall be illustrated below.

Conducive School Environment

One of the things one can learn from this study is the need for both a conducive school environment and sport ethos, which can encourage greater degree of socialization among young students in sport participation. This is congruent with

White's (2007) perspective which espouses that a person's perception and interpretation of the environment as being friendly and motivational will contribute to his/her continual involvement in the selected activity.

In terms of establishing school culture, it would be important to learn from the humanistic educational philosophy and practice that are officially espoused by the school's management, which theoretically tend to promote and encourage cross-national socialization and socialization in general among students. One way to realize this aim is through the positive ethos of the school's sport programme, which promotes active participation in sport activities, where students through shared activities and goals, can socialize and develop stronger interpersonal bond. This could then help facilitate the building up of a desirable international community where students can comfortably socialize with one another in all aspects of schooling life.

The Importance of 'Shared Reality' in Socialization

All students have experienced both negative and positive aspects in their socialization process. One critical factor is the existence of 'shared reality' which in this study mainly refers to the common interest or passion in the sport activities the students share with their teammates. Those students who experience predominantly positive and enjoyable socialization are able to do so because the 'shared reality' exerts strong influence which enables them to continue participating actively in their sport activities with their teammates. Therefore in the area of implementing schooling programme, it is important to offer a rich and vibrant sport extra-curricular programme that caters to the needs and interests of the students, so as to allow for a stronger level of 'shared reality' among them to be created. The provision of rich sporting activities and adequate sporting facilities which can help satisfy students' enthusiasm for sport is hence imperative for the development of this 'shared reality'.

The Critical Role of Students in the Sport Club in Influencing the Process of Socialization

Another practical implication pertains to the importance of having students who can help socialize foreign students into the group. Only then can foreign students feel comfortable and confident in moving toward closer and more fruitful socialization with the larger membership. This also implies that in managing a sport club, it is important to identify and train student leaders in the role of mediating relations among members. This phenomenon finds resonance in Quek (1997); Carron, Eys & Burke (2007); and Valentine (2007), who all profess that sport groups that possess elements of good intra-group relationship based on trust, mutual respect and empathetic support help keep members focused and motivated throughout. Such groups are able to rally them towards a common purpose and enable them to enjoy the socializing experience (Quek, 1997; Carron, Eys & Burke, 2007; Valentine, 2007).

The Critical Role of the Teacher In-Charge of the Sport Club in Influencing the Process of Socialization

One implication pertains to the role of the teacher in-charge of a sport club. The findings have shown that the teacher plays a significant role in socializing students into the sport club community through efforts in encouraging them and mediating relations between foreign students and the majority made up of locals. This experience is supported by research findings in Kavussanu (2007) who espouses that teachers in-charge or teachers of sport groups play significant roles in setting the desirable norms that will influence members' perception of their socialization experience in the group. The experience is further supported by the views of Quek (1997), Riemer (2007), and Valentine (2006), who believe that student athletes who sustain and enjoy participation in sport are those who develop good relationship with

their coaches and teachers who motivate them with individualized attention, empathetic understanding, encouragement and other forms of support which help them focus well on the sport.

Therefore one can say that the role played by the teacher in-charge and coach of the sport club in mediating relations among students and strengthening team unity is utmost important in helping foreign students to experience positive socialization. It is hence important to assign a teacher with the right passion to be in charge of a sport club. Because the teacher in-charge has to be very keen in managing the sport, he/she should be specialized in physical education and sport management in terms of job responsibility so as to allow him/her to concentrate well in the task. It is hence desirable for a school to employ physical education trained teachers who are tasked to teach and manage only physical education and sports so as to allow better job specialization. However this has not been fully implemented in schools in Singapore as many PE teachers are still tasked to teach both PE and another subject.

The Importance of both Foreign and Local Students Initiating Interaction and Socialization

Through the study, one can learn from the interviews and observations that cross-national interaction and socialization in general is ultimately a two-way form of communication where there must be a sense of willingness from two parties to open up to each other based on mutual empathy and understanding, which is a point the students strongly identify with. This can be partially explained by Kroger's (1989) theory that in the world of interaction, a person has to recognize people around as agents for his/her change and growth, and seeks to proactively engage with them in order to experience some degree of socialization and therefore derive some value from the engagement.

A practical implication would be the need for the school management to constantly educate students the importance of inter-national interaction and understanding one another's culture through a range of educational activities that involve students of different nationalities working and interacting together.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, research that particularly explores inter-national socializing experiences of young students in sport participation in schools is limited, it is therefore hoped that this case study which is a discourse on the inter-national socialization process of young sport participants of different nationalities in an international setting will be able to contribute further in the knowledge of socialization and sport. This I hope has been well illustrated in the thesis, especially from Chapters 4 to 9.

Recommendation for Further Research

Further research in this area can be extended to other schools in Singapore for the purpose of investigating comparison between national schools and private schools. This can include a study to compare socialization experiences between different groups of foreigners and Singaporeans. For example, in a school, compare the socializing experience of PRC Chinese with Singaporeans, and that of Taiwan Chinese or Hong Kong Chinese with Singaporeans. It can also be extended to schools in other parts of Asia where there has been a notable increase of international schools in recent years, so that comparative studies between these schools of different countries can be conducted. A similar study of Singaporean students' socialization in international schools abroad (such as Thailand or China) can be considered for future research as well.

Further research in the area of socialization can be extended to non-sport extra-curricular activities wherein students' experience can be investigated. A

comparison between students' processes of socialization in both sport and non-sport extra-curricular activities can also be done in order to find out the dynamics involved in the two different types of activities.

Concluding Remarks

All in all, the experience of conducting the study has been enjoyable. It has helped me gain a richer understanding of the students and the human environment in the school as well through the observations, interviews and conversations with students, teachers and coaches. Although difficulties were encountered, the general willingness and enthusiasm the students and various teachers/coaches displayed in participating in the study has given me a very memorable experience.

As the human world moves into the new millennium, the new world economy has sped up market liberalization which has resulted in the need for people to be innovative, flexible, adaptable, creative, empathetic, entrepreneurial and committed to lifelong learning. One must therefore learn to have an inter-national perspective and be capable of handling the diversity of peoples (Tan, Gopinathan & Ho, 2001). It is finally hoped that the study will be able to highlight the need to educate young people and people in general of the importance of socializing well in the widely diversified world of human interaction.

Appendix A**Consent Form for Research Participant/Subject**

Title of Research Project: _____

Have you been thoroughly explained on the Participant information and the research itself? Yes/NO

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study? Yes/No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions? Yes/No

Have you received enough information about the study? Yes/No

Who have you spoken to? _____

Do you consent to participate in the study? Yes/No

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Interview Questions Used in the Study

Chapter 5- Profiles of Students

Personal Background:

- Which country do you come from?
- What types of sport activities the people from your country like doing?
- What's your family background like (such as number of members, types of family activities)?
- Do your own upbringing and types of sports activities done in your family influence your growing up, personality and preferences for sport activities?
- What are your aspirations?
- What is sport to you? What sports do you like?
- What do you like about sports?
- What do you gain from sports?
- Does sport help you to socialize and make you a better person in certain aspects?

Good and Bad Experiences in the School in Singapore:

- Why do you want to leave your own country? What draws you to this school in Singapore?
- What are the good things you experience in this school?
- What are the bad things you experience in this school?
- What do you hope to achieve in this school?

Chapter 6- Students' Perception of the School

Academic Programme:

- Does the academic suit your interest? Offer the subjects of your interest? Allow you to reach your potential?
- Is the workload demanding?
- Do you like the way the teachers teach and their ways of management?

School Ethos/Environment:

- What's your impression on the school ethos/philosophy and the Principal?
- Are the students and your peers in the school friendly? Is there a high degree of socialization and integration?
- Are the staff here friendly and helpful?
- Do you like the physical environment (facilities) of the school?

CCA/Sports Programme:

- Do you like the Sports ECA or CCA programme?
- Are they interesting and Challenging? Does it allow one to maximize his/her potential through training and competition?

- Are the sports programmes and sport clubs well managed by the teachers and coaches?

Appendix B

Interview Questions Used in the Study

Chapter 7- Students' Socialization Experience with Schoolmates in Sport Participation

- Are activities in your sport club enjoyable, tough?
- Are you able to socialize with team mates?
- Why do you think you can socialize with some and can't do so with others?
- Is the degree of cross-national socialization in your sport club generally high or low, and what are the factors?
- Is cultural background/language a problem? Why?
- Is personality a factor? Why? What other factors can you think of?
- Is training in your sport enjoyable, tough?
- Do you like to compete?
- Can training and competition build team bond and socialization? How do you think it can do so?
- Have team bonding and intra-club socialization become better from the time you just joined the sport club? Has the team spirit got stronger over the period?
- How has participation in sport ECA influenced you on your social skills and views on friendship, team bonding and socialization?
- Have your peers motivated you to be better in playing skills, perception on things, character and other areas that you can think of? In what ways have they done so?
- Does being a member of the sport team/club make you feel proud and belonged to be a member of the team and school? How have your team mates influenced you in this area?

Chapter 8- Students' Socialization Experience with the Teacher in-charge and Coach of their Sport Activity/Club.

- Are you able to socialize with the teacher and coach? Are they helpful, friendly and supportive?
- Give examples of their qualities that facilitate your relationship with them? What are some problems in your relationship with them?
- How does training and competition over the period influence, build up your relationship with them?
- Has the bond and socialization between you and them got better and stronger from the time you just joined the sport club?
- Have the teacher or coach motivated you to be better in playing skills, perception of things, character and other areas? In what ways have they done so?
- How have they influenced you to feel belonged to the sport club or feel proud to be a member of the sport club/team?

Appendix C

List of Interview Sessions

No.	Interviewee
1	Lee (Indonesian)
2	Tron (Thai)
3	Ying (PRC Chinese)
4	Fei (PRC Chinese)
5	Gin (Korean)
6	Koe (Malaysian)
7	Lee's Teacher in-charge of basketball
8	Tron's Teacher in-charge of football
9	Ying's First Teacher in-charge of Tennis
10	Fei's Teacher in-charge of football
11	Gin's Teacher in-charge of basketball
12	Koe's Teacher in-charge of rugby
13	Lee
14	Tron
15	Ying
16	Fei
17	Gin
18	Koe
19	Lee's teammate
20	Tron's teammate
21	Ying's teammates
22	Fei's teammate
23	Gin's teammate
24	Koe's teammate

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