Daughters of China: An Examination of the Home, School, and Community Experiences of Adolescent and Young Adult Chinese Adoptees

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of adolescent and young adult Chinese adoptees raised in the United States. The researcher was interested in understanding the development of identity, the experiences of academic life, and the quality of family, peer, and community relationships.

PREVIOUS WORK
Previous research conducted with Chinese adoptees had predominantly relied upon the parents’ perspectives, simply because most of the children had not been old enough to speak for themselves. As a result, the voices of these young women were missing from the research.

METHODS
Using a multiple case study design, data were gathered from a sample of 11 cases. Each case consisted of three participants—one female Chinese adoptive child between 16 and 21 years of age, one parent, and one educator who worked with the adoptee. The maximum variation sampling of participants was recruited through snowball sampling and snowball interviewing.

QUALITATIVE DATA
Qualitative analyses yielded nine overarching themes: good fortune and specialness, family bonding and appreciation, self-confidence, strong work ethic, Asian stereotypes, resilience, a sense of belonging, an interest in a variety of cultures, and a fluctuating appreciation of origins.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. How do adolescent and young adult Chinese adoptees perceive their experiences in different sociological contexts: at home, with peers, at school, and in the community?
2. Retrospectively, how do Chinese adoptees perceive their life experiences at different stages of development: during childhood, during adolescence, and at present?
3. How do parents view their child’s family, social, and academic experiences?
4. Do educational work with the adoptees view their academic progress and overall adjustment?
5. How do the perspectives of the adoptees compare to those of their parents and educators?

DATA ANALYSES
A multiple case study qualitative research design was utilized in this study. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) define a multi-case study as involving two or more participants in order to provide a detailed examination of a particular event. The researcher desired to study the characteristics of Chinese adoptees between 16 and 21 years of age. The unit of analysis was the adoptee. Each case consisted of the adoptee’s interview and 2007–2009 PASCI self-concept instrument (Fleming, 2007). Participants were recruited through networking, posting announcements in adoptive-related newsletters, on adoptive Listservs and websites, and through snowball sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). A total of 11 cases participated in this study with the following demographics:

- Adoptees: 16-20 years old (M = 17.4), all female
- Age of adoptee at time of data collected: 4 years
- 6 from the Northeast, 3 from the Southeast, 1 from the Mid-Atlantic, and 1 from the Midwest
- All Caucasian
- 7 married, 2 single, 1 divorced, 1 widowed
- Educators: M = 29.8 years of experience in education
- 9 female, 2 male
- 9 Caucasian, 2 African American
- Educators included 1 academic principal, 2 teachers, coaches, advisors or counselors, and 1 administrator

RESULTS
The researcher analyzed the data from the interview transcripts and PASCI self-concept instrument by performing the following steps:
1. Reviewed and edited professionally transcribed interviews and pre-coded by hand (Saldaña, 2009).
2. Created a provisional start list of 39 codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2009).
4. Performed inter-coded NVivo 9 both within and across cases.

RESEARCHER ORGANIZED, reviewed, and examined the code list for relevance to research questions. Themes emerged intuitively from within the data analyses (Bernard & Ryan, 2015; King & Horrocks, 2015).

1. Strong work ethic
2. Good fortune and specialness
3. Family bonding and appreciation
4. Sense of belonging
5. Resilience
6. Interest in a variety of cultures
7. Appreciation of origins
8. Self-confidence
9. Academic progress

Limitations
Possible researcher bias.

REFERENCES