

# **An exploration of Chinese identity in a South African context: negotiating interactions arising from guanxi and mianzi in business relationships**

by  
David William Ball

*Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in Intercultural Communications at the  
University of Stellenbosch*



Supervisor: Mrs Erica George  
Faculty of Arts and Social Science  
Department of General Linguistics

March 2015

## **Declaration**

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Signature:

Date:

## **Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the identity of Chinese businesspeople in a South African context. This is to determine whether their knowledge of and application of the traditional Confucian concepts of ‘guanxi’ (relationships) and ‘mianzi’ (face) offer that community any tangible benefits to negotiating and maintaining business relationships. While much has been written of the group’s early history, more could be done to determine their contribution toward South African society today. Bilateral trade with China and domestic job creation are just two areas where more research could develop our mutual understanding, given our unique relationship with China. South Africa is the only African country to invest in China and is also home to the largest and longest standing Chinese community in Africa.

A self-administered questionnaire was disseminated to previously identified groups of Chinese businesspeople located within the metropolitan Cape Town area. The purpose was to collect data that would provide practical assistance to inform local South African business people on how to tailor their approach to interact in commercial enterprises with their Chinese counterparts. The prospect was that better understanding of Chinese culture and historical traditions may prove a meaningful tool to bolster intercultural relationships. This could then lead to enhanced business relationships and a better understanding of this misunderstood and marginalised community.

## Opsomming

Hierdie studie beoog om die identiteit van Sjinese besigheidsmense binne 'n Suid-Afrikaanse konteks te ondersoek. Dit is om te bepaal of hulle kennis asook die toepassing van hulle tradisionele Konfusiaanse konsepte van 'guanxi' (verhoudings) en 'mianzi' (aansien) hulle gemeenskap enige tasbare voordele ten op sigte van die onderhandeling en instandhouding van besigheidsverhoudings bekom. Terwyl daar alreeds redelike skrywe omtrent hierdie groep se vroeë geskiedenis bestaan, kan daar baie meer gedoen word om vas te stel wat hulle bydrae tot vandag se Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap is. Bilaterale handel met Sjina en plaaslike werkskepping is slegs twee areas waar verdere navorsing wedersydse begrip kan bevorder, siende ons unieke verhouding met Sjina. Suid-Afrika is die enigste land in Afrika om in Sjina te investeer en is ook die tuiste van die grootste asook die mees lank bestaande Sjinese gemeenskap in Afrika.

'n Selftoegediende vraelys was versprei onder voorafgeïdentifiseerde groepe van Sjinese besigheidsmense wat in die Kaapstadse metropool gevestig is. Die doel was om data te versamel wat doelmatige bystand kan lewer vir die Suid-Afrikaanse besigheidsgemeenskap om hulle 'n pasgemaakte benadering tot interaksie met handelsondernemings met hulle Sjinese eweknieë te kan gee. Die vooruitsig was dat beter kennis van die Sjinese kultuur en hulle historiese tradisies 'n betekenisvolle instrument sal wees wat interkulturele verhoudings sal versterk. Dit kan dan aanleiding gee tot verbeterde besigheidsverhoudings en 'n beter begrip van hierdie misverstande asook gemarginaliseerde gemeenskap.

## Acknowledgements

John Ortberg wrote, **“Gratitude is the ability to experience life as a gift. It liberates us from the prison of self-preoccupation.”**

My passion for English was kindled at high school and I owe so much to my teachers, those unsung heroes, who laboured tirelessly, often without seeing the harvest. My passion for life and the journey shared with other pilgrims owes everything to the guidance, fortitude and grace granted to me by my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Grace has been described as undeserved or unmerited favour that ennoble the recipient. How different from the ‘guanxi’ discussed in this paper that stresses reciprocity and the ‘mianzi’ that requires an outward adherence to societal standards.

The pursuit of excellence which I’ve come to adopt has been imbued, often subliminally, from the direction, advice and encouragement of fellow sojourners, some of whom I may forget to name here – please know your contribution has been part of my equipping and motivation to attain a measure of influence and in turn, to become a model to others.

To start with, I wish to convey my heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation to:

- My supervisor, Erica George, for accepting me as her Master’s student, for her encouragement and support and for all the work she did behind the scenes and against all odds, considering the material she had to work on – I’m grateful to you. Thanks, too, to Mrs Christine Smit, for her wise council, patience and sound practical advice; also, to Stellenbosch University, for the privilege of attending and studying through this venerable institution;

I am exceedingly thankful to the following, who have walked that extra mile to assist:

- Richard and Bernice Anderson, the pastoral couple from Kommetjie who opened the way for me to engage with the Chinese church on their territory;
- Pastors Andrew Chen and Susanne Chen Hsu, of the BOL church, for allowing me to address their congregants and for encouraging them to volunteer to participate in and assist with this study;

- Principal Liu of the Chinese Language School in Observatory, Cape Town for granting me access to approach the parents of her students to participate similarly in the survey; and to Treasurer Chuan of the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce for endorsing my research project;
- All the respondents who voluntarily participated in the survey, without whose cooperation and input the research would not have been possible – thank you for returning your questionnaires timeously – may your businesses flourish and provide abundantly for the futures of your families;
- Emma Lichia Lee and Michael Xaoyi Zhu, for participating in the pilot study – thank you for your helpful insights that contributed to the final survey questions; for acting as facilitators (gatekeepers) to the respective respondent groups, and when the occasion demanded, for being able and willing translators;
- Dr Dave Walker who proofread and gave insightful comments on the Literature Review chapter – bless you and thanks for your time.

Special thanks to:

- The King of Kings Baptist Church in Sun Valley, for their ongoing support and encouragement over many years and to all those sponsors and well-wishers who sowed financially and prayerfully into the future harvest;
- To family and friends whose intercessory prayers carried me and sustained me through the darker times of anxiety, doubt and discouragement;
- Finally, to Xi'an Medical University for the opportunity to teach in China, to my learned colleagues and the students who inspire me to rise above the ordinary, to seek the exemplary: thank you.

*The Lord bless you and Keep you.*

## **Dedication**

To Ross and Christine Paterson, who have exemplified the finest examples of servant leadership – I salute you and hope to emulate your integrity, humility and passion for the people you seek to serve, for the standards you have set and the legacy you have built for those who would choose to follow.

## Table of Contents

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Declaration.....   | ii       |
| Abstract.....  | iii      |
| Opsomming.....   | iv       |
| Acknowledgements.....  | v        |
| Dedication.....  | vii      |
| List of Figures.....   | xiii     |
| List of Tables.....  | xv       |
| List of Abbreviations.....                                       | xvi      |
| Writing Conventions.....   | xvii     |
| <br>   |          |
| <b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM... 1</b> |          |
| <b>1.1 Research Statement .....</b>                              | <b>2</b> |
| <b>1.2 Research Question .....</b>                               | <b>3</b> |
| 1.2.1 The Primary research question.....                         | 3        |
| 1.2.2 Secondary questions.....                                   | 3        |
| <b>1.3 Research Objectives .....</b>                             | <b>4</b> |
| 1.3.1 Understand reasons .....                                   | 4        |
| 1.3.2 Provide insights.....                                      | 4        |
| 1.3.3 Uncover trends .....                                       | 4        |
| 1.3.4 Extend corpus.....   | 4        |
| <b>1.4 Significance of the study.....</b>                        | <b>4</b> |
| <b>1.5 Delineation of the research design.....</b>               | <b>5</b> |
| 1.5.1 Innocuous .....  | 6        |
| 1.5.2 Efficient .....  | 6        |
| 1.5.3 Utilitarian .....  | 6        |
| 1.5.4 Inconspicuous .....  | 6        |
| <b>1.6 Assumptions .....</b>                                     | <b>6</b> |
| 1.6.1 Knowledge .....  | 7        |
| 1.6.2 Understanding .....  | 7        |



|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1.6.3 Interest .....  | 7         |
| <b>1.7 Chapter overview .....</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>                                    | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>2.1 Introduction.....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>2.2 The Sociocultural Chasm .....</b>                                    | <b>9</b>  |
| 2.2.1 Identifying the chasm .....   | 9         |
| 2.2.2 Bridging the chasm.....   | 12        |
| <b>2.3 The Chinese in Africa .....</b>                                      | <b>14</b> |
| <b>2.4 The Chinese in South Africa .....</b>                                | <b>15</b> |
| <b>2.5 Chinese Identity in South Africa .....</b>                           | <b>20</b> |
| 2.5.1 Exogenous Influences on Identity .....                                | 21        |
| 2.5.2 Endogenous Influences on Identity .....                               | 23        |
| 2.5.2.1 <i>Asian Origins of Guanxi and Mianzi</i> .....                     | 25        |
| 2.5.2.2 <i>Apparent Western Parallels</i> .....                             | 28        |
| 2.5.2.3 <i>Impact on business relationships in China</i> .....              | 29        |
| 2.5.2.4 <i>Chinese Business Activities in Africa and South Africa</i> ..... | 30        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....</b>                       | <b>33</b> |
| <b>3.1 Introduction.....</b>  | <b>33</b> |
| <b>3.2 Questionnaire .....</b>  | <b>34</b> |
| 3.2.1 Questionnaire Justification .....                                     | 34        |
| 3.2.2 Questionnaire Design .....  | 36        |
| 3.2.3 Questionnaire Outline .....   | 39        |
| 3.2.4 Questionnaire Receptiveness .....                                     | 41        |
| 3.2.4.1 <i>Manual Distribution</i> .....                                    | 41        |
| 3.2.4.2 <i>Email Distribution</i> .....                                     | 41        |
| <b>3.3 Data Collection Procedures.....</b>                                  | <b>42</b> |
| 3.3.1 Data Collection Time-frame.....                                       | 44        |
| 3.3.2 Data Collection Stages .....  | 45        |
| 3.3.3 Preliminaries.....  | 47        |
| 3.3.3.1 <i>Negotiating Access</i> .....                                     | 47        |
| 3.3.3.2 <i>Pre-Survey Briefing</i> .....                                    | 47        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>3.4 Assumptions, Delimitations and Limitations .....</b>  | <b>48</b> |
| 3.4.1 Assumptions .....                                      | 48        |
| 3.4.2 Delimitations .....                                    | 49        |
| 3.4.3 Limitations .....                                      | 50        |
| <b>3.5 Pilot Study.....</b>                                  | <b>51</b> |
| 3.5.1 Pilot Study Objectives .....                           | 52        |
| 3.5.2 Amendments Approved.....                               | 52        |
| 3.5.3 Pilot Study Participant Feedback .....                 | 53        |
| 3.5.4 Pilot Study Evaluation .....                           | 53        |
| 3.5.5 Administering the Questionnaire .....                  | 54        |
| <b>3.6 Validity and Reliability .....</b>                    | <b>54</b> |
| <b>3.7 Population Sampling.....</b>                          | <b>56</b> |
| 3.7.1 Sample Strategy.....                                   | 56        |
| 3.7.2 Sample Profile .....                                   | 58        |
| 3.7.3 Sample Background .....                                | 58        |
| 3.7.4 Sample Group(s) .....                                  | 60        |
| 3.7.5 Sample Size .....                                      | 62        |
| <b>3.8 Data Analysis .....</b>                               | <b>62</b> |
| <b>3.9 Ethical Considerations .....</b>                      | <b>63</b> |
| <b>3.10 Conclusions.....</b>                                 | <b>64</b> |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS .....</b> | <b>65</b> |
| <b>4.1 Introduction .....</b>                                | <b>65</b> |
| <b>4.2 Respondents' Demographic Profiles .....</b>           | <b>65</b> |
| <b>4.3 Employment.....</b>                                   | <b>71</b> |
| <b>4.4 Questions relating to Guanxi .....</b>                | <b>74</b> |
| 4.4.1 Descriptions of Guanxi.....                            | 75        |
| 4.4.2 Perceptions of Guanxi .....                            | 77        |
| 4.4.3 Advice to South African Businesspeople.....            | 79        |
| <b>4.5 Questions relating to Mianzi .....</b>                | <b>80</b> |
| 4.5.1 Giving and Receiving Face or Mianzi .....              | 80        |
| 4.5.2 Smoothing the Way for Business .....                   | 81        |
| 4.5.3 Giving Face Equally to Non-Chinese and Chinese.....    | 82        |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>4.6 Helpfulness of the Survey .....</b>                          | <b>84</b>  |
| <b>CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS .....</b>                   | <b>86</b>  |
| <b>5.1 Introduction.....</b>  | <b>86</b>  |
| <b>5.2 Synopsis of the Study .....</b>                              | <b>86</b>  |
| <b>5.3 Key Findings.....</b>  | <b>87</b>  |
| 5.3.1 Demographics and Identity .....                               | 87         |
| 5.3.2 Observation of Traditional Values .....                       | 87         |
| 5.3.3 Observation of Traditional Concepts .....                     | 90         |
| 5.3.4 Observation of Business related issues .....                  | 91         |
| <b>5.4 The Validity of the Findings.....</b>                        | <b>93</b>  |
| <b>CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION.....</b>                                    | <b>95</b>  |
| <b>6.1 Significance and Implications of the Findings.....</b>       | <b>95</b>  |
| <b>6.2 Summary of the Findings .....</b>                            | <b>99</b>  |
| 6.2.1 Numerical Gender Inequality .....                             | 99         |
| 6.2.2 High Marriage statistics .....                                | 99         |
| 6.2.3 Value of Education.....                                       | 99         |
| 6.2.4 Equal Opportunity Employer .....                              | 99         |
| 6.2.5 Persistence of Tradition.....                                 | 99         |
| 6.2.6 Polarisation Property of Guanxi.....                          | 100        |
| 6.2.7 Personal and Professional Courtesy .....                      | 100        |
| 6.2.8 Innate Civility.....  | 100        |
| 6.2.9 Business Advice .....   | 100        |
| <b>6.3 Recommendations and Directions for future Research .....</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 6.3.1 Expanding the local Geo-footprint.....                        | 100        |
| 6.3.2 Expanding the National Geo-footprint.....                     | 100        |
| 6.3.3 A Longitudinal or Ethnographic Study .....                    | 100        |
| 6.3.4 A Comparative study conducted in China (PRC) .....            | 101        |
| 6.3.5 A Comparative Needs-based study .....                         | 101        |
| <b>6.4 Summary of the Study .....</b>                               | <b>101</b> |
| <b>6.5 Final Word.....</b>  | <b>103</b> |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>REFERENCES.....</b>                                      | <b>104</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES .....</b>                                     | <b>121</b> |
| APPENDIX A: COVER PAGE.....                                 | 122        |
| APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM .....                              | 124        |
| APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE.....                              | 126        |
| APPENDIX D: FIELD NOTES.....                                | 131        |
| APPENDIX E: DATA COLLECTION RECORD & CODEBOOK .....         | 136        |
| APPENDIX F: P.ID PARTICIPANT IDENTITY SHEET.....            | 141        |
| APPENDIX G: INFORMATION BROCHURE .....                      | 143        |
| APPENDIX H: MISCELLANEOUS FINDINGS (Figures 4.22-4.25)..... | 145        |

~\*~

## List of Figures

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 4.1: Place of origin and gender of respondents.....  | 66 |
| Figure 4.2: Range of participant ages according to gender.....  | 67 |
| Figure 4.3: Residency in South Africa according to gender.....  | 68 |
| Figure 4.4: Highest education level attained according to gender.....   | 69 |
| Figure 4.5: Highest education according to place of origin.....   | 70 |
| Figure 4.6: Highest education according to age.....   | 71 |
| Figure 4.7: Employer status according to place of origin.....   | 72 |
| Figure 4.8: Employee ethnicity selection by employer's place of origin.....   | 73 |
| Figure 4.9: Employee selection by owner's place of origin and gender.....   | 74 |
| Figure 4.10: Description of guanxi according to place of origin.....  | 75 |
| Figure 4.11: Description of guanxi according to gender.....   | 76 |
| Figure 4.12: Description of guanxi according to age of participants.....  | 76 |
| Figure 4.13: Description of guanxi by residence time in South Africa.....   | 77 |
| Figure 4.14: Perceptions of guanxi by place of origin and gender.....   | 78 |
| Figure 4.15 Perceptions of guanxi by age and residency in South Africa.....   | 79 |
| Figure 4.16: Top advice given to non-Chinese businesspeople by Chinese.....   | 80 |
| Figure 4.17: Important to give and receive face according to place of origin<br>and gender.....                     | 81 |
| Figure 4.18: Belief that giving face smooths the way for business.....  | 82 |
| Figure 4.19: Giving face equally to non-Chinese and Chinese.....  | 83 |
| Figure 4.20: Giving face equally to non-Chinese and Chinese, according to<br>age and residency in South Africa..... | 84 |
| Figure 4.21: Results of opinion poll to ascertain its usefulness.....   | 85 |

## APPENDIX H

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Figure 4.22: Comparisons of religious affiliations by place of origin.....          | 147 |
| Figure 4.23 Comparison of age and residency to determine effect<br>of religion..... | 148 |
| Figure 4.24: Business sector breakdown.....   | 149 |
| Figure 4.25: Descriptions and perceptions of guanxi by<br>religious groupings.....  | 150 |

~\*~

## List of Tables

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 3.1: Technical details relating to printed materials.....        | 37 |
| Table 3.2: Data collection time frame.....                             | 45 |
| Table 4.1: Marital status according to place of origin and gender..... | 67 |

~\*~

## List of Abbreviations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| BOL   | Bread of Life (Church)                             |
| C/S   | Chinese (Language) School                          |
| FDI   | Foreign Direct Investment                          |
| FOCAC | Forum on China-Africa Cooperation                  |
| HC    | High Context                                       |
| HCC   | High Context Culture                               |
| LC    | Low Context  |
| LCC   | Low Context Culture                                |
| P.ID  | Participant's Identity (Number)                    |
| PRC   | People's Republic of China (Mainland China)        |
| ROC   | Republic of China (Taiwan, historically 'Formosa') |
| SABC  | South African born Chinese                         |
| SAIIA | South African Institute for International Affairs  |
| SA    | South Africa                                       |
| SAQs  | Self-Administered Questionnaires                   |
| SASOL | South Africa Synthetic Oil Liquid                  |
| SOEs  | State Owned Enterprises                            |
| SL    | Second-Language (speakers)                         |
| SNT   | Social Network Theory                              |

~\*~



## Writing Conventions

This paper adopts the guidelines applied by and conforming to British Standard English (BrSE) to ensure consistency throughout. This is especially relevant to spelling usage (see Swan, 1995:39, 51 for details).

Writing conventions adopted in this study comply with:

- The abbreviated Harvard method of referencing, for example: Swan (2005:39) signifies ‘Swan, page 39.’
- Graphic representations of findings in the form of figures and tables are all presented as Tables 4.1, and as Figures 4.1 – 4.21, according to chronological progression.
- Pinyin is used to represent Chinese characters to assist Western readers. Pinyin is described as the standard system of Romanised spelling for transliterating Chinese, and accords with the Beijing pronunciation of standard Northern Chinese, also known as Mandarin Chinese. It originated in the 1960s, and the term is derived from Chinese *pīn-yīn*, literally ‘spell-sound’. Terms such as ‘guanxi’ and mianzi’ have been written in this format to allow for ease of usage in this paper. (For more details on pinyin, see <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Pinyin>)
- Two tenets, central to this study are the terms ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’. They are transliterations of Chinese characters (or script) and in normal application would be enclosed within single quotation marks (as above), or written in italics, to indicate foreign terms. However, owing to their frequent usage in this paper, this practice will be discontinued after the first introductory chapter, as repeated usage may distract from the context.

~\*~

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Emotive allegations depicting China as a “Manichaeian binary” (Mills and Thompson, 2009:56) have been levelled by many countries concerned about China’s increasing geopolitical hegemony. Sandwiched between the USA’s self-designation as ‘world-policeman and the new heavyweight, previous historic allegiances are being tested. China has been welcomed as a friend, a comrade and a liberator (cf. Le Pere, 2006) or more controversially, shunned as a rapacious opportunist. Whichever view one takes, one fact is clear: China is an inescapable presence that influences global markets and has impacted the political arena over the decades.

Endowed or burdened with 20% of the total global population, her presence in the global economy cannot be ignored. Phenomenal industrial growth has elevated hundreds of millions of her people into the middleclass, and their influence is being felt domestically and abroad via tourism and increasing luxury-goods consumerism. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the accuracy of China’s portrayal as harbouring neo-colonial ambitions towards Africa (Zheng, 2010) or whether the relationship is mutually beneficial, as public opinion is often shaped by political agendas, as suggested by Michael Foucault’s 1979 treatise (cf. Mumby & Clair, 1977:191). What is of interest to this study is the increasing number of Chinese migrants abroad and the impact they exert on the development of local economies. This movement abroad driven by economics has been loosely termed the ‘Chinese diaspora’ (Mohon, 2002).

South Africa, too, is a “popular destination for Chinese relocating to the continent” (Park 2012), and researchers have noted that it is the terminus for the majority of Chinese migrants *en route* to Africa, indicative perhaps of why the country boasts the continent’s largest permanent Chinese community (Park, 2010). This paper seeks to investigate the identity of the Chinese community in South Africa, particularly those

engaged in commerce, to determine whether traditional cultural values influence or are employed in day-to-day business interactions.

This chapter began with a brief preview surveying the historical and social heritage of the Chinese community in SA. It now looks at the statement of the problem providing justifiable cause for the purpose of the study and its significance before directing attention to the research question(s). The Research Design is outlined, along with the sample group and the measuring instrument, and their utilisation in the data collection process and analysis is described. Assumptions, limitations/delimitations and scope are touched upon and the chapter ends with a summary.

## **1.1. RESEARCH STATEMENT**

The Chinese in South African have lived in our midst for generations, yet viewed by most of the population they appear as an unknown entity, even culturally parochial, adding to their marginalisation to the periphery of society. Unobtrusively they have surmounted language barriers, overcome prejudice and navigated the legalities of petty officialdom to strive and thrive as small traders and business people.

The topic of this thesis is, “An exploration of Chinese identity in a South African context: negotiating interactions arising from guanxi and mianzi in business relationships”.

To ‘negotiate’ means to obtain or bring about by discussion, or to find a way through an obstacle or difficult route. All of this is applicable to the migrants who came to this country and, against all odds, are carving out a living for themselves and their children.

Wilhelm (2006:351) notes, “South Africa is the only country in Africa with a longstanding Chinese community.” In an exhaustive study of Chinese traders in five African countries, findings indicate, “only in South Africa did traders express any sense of belonging or attachment to the country” (McNamee, Mills, Manoeli,

Milaudzi, Doran & Chen, 2012:42). These findings are indicative of the opportunities that exist in South Africa, and one, who is a realist rather than merely a patriot, might strongly suggest that the citizens of this country embrace the differences of our fellow countrymen and learn from them to share in the potential economic bounty of the future.

## **1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION**

This study directly seeks to target an area of the South African business community, a small segment in which a minority group interacts both locally in South Africa and on an international stage. The research problem is approached rather as a question.

It is posited that the primary question will generate further secondary research questions, which will assist in building relational background knowledge of the ‘other’ interactants. Managing intercultural business relationships will always be a dynamic process due to the constant flux of new participants entering the arena, the shifting environment of government policy changes, and new trade agreements.

### **1.2.1. The Primary Research Question**

“How do Chinese businesspeople in South Africa make use of or benefit from their knowledge of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ in their business interactions?”

### **1.2.2. Secondary Questions**

- (i) Is ‘guanxi’ usage in South Africa different than from use abroad, for example, in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan?
- (ii) Is there any benefit or business advantage to be gained from an understanding of the concepts of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’?
- (iii) With whom are Chinese people in South Africa primarily doing business?  
(Other local Chinese or foreign nationals?)
- (iv) What benefits does understanding these two concepts have for local (South African) and Chinese employers?

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives and the aims of this study are to:

#### **1.3.1 Understand reasons**

To gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations of/for the concepts of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ and the nature of their impact on socioeconomic activities;

#### **1.3.2 Provide Insights**

To provide insights into the setting of the thesis problem, generating ideas and/or hypotheses for possible further quantitative research;

#### **1.3.3 Uncover trends**

To uncover prevalent trends in thought and opinion; and

#### **1.3.4 Extend corpus**

To extend the corpus of knowledge related to Chinese business relationships in South Africa in order to foster intercultural understanding.

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is envisaged that greater exposure to and awareness of the underlying sociocultural conceptual elements within Chinese societies will provide fresh insights into the seemingly complex negotiations that underpin and influence decisions related to bilateral trade with China, possibly helping to inform future discussions in this area. South Africa is the newest nation and the smallest, as rated by GDP (Gross Domestic Product) numbers, of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) trading bloc, which represent 40% of the world’s population, and was set up to counter the hegemony of the EU and the USA (Liu, 2002). Sensitivity to China’s economic expansionist modus operandi may assist in high-level policy planning on a macroeconomic scale by politicians and corporate CEOs (chief executive officers) alike, while entrepreneurs and small traders could leverage their newly acquired knowledge domestically to secure better terms when entering into contracts with their Chinese counterparts. Improved business opportunities should drive growth, which in turn should lead to reduced unemployment and increased prosperity for local communities.

Currently, prejudice and misunderstandings, ethnocentric beliefs, and language barriers appear to hinder freedom of social discourse between the Chinese community and other South Africans. Eliminating or even reducing the barriers would create space to promote greater interaction on multiple levels, benefiting society at large as we learn more about the minority group living among us.

If “knowledge is power” (Bacon, 1597), then it follows that we should all strive to become ‘knowledge workers’, a term ascribed to business guru, Peter Drucker (1959).

## **1.5 DELINEATION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research was conducted, primarily in the Cape Town metropolitan surrounds, located in the Western Cape of South Africa, among Chinese business people. Two locations, one a faith-based organisation and the other a Chinese language school, were identified, whereby access to the sample groups could be obtained.

It was envisaged that within the narrow confines of a relatively small sample group, the mixture of genders, ages and nationalities encountered would provide a suitable blend to address adequately the qualitative survey conducted. A questionnaire was disseminated to volunteers, who were informed of their rights and obligations if they participated in the survey, and the purpose of the study was outlined. Other ethical considerations of the participants’ rights were strictly adhered to as laid down by Stellenbosch University, namely that: (i) participation was voluntary (according to eligibility criteria); and (ii) their privacy and anonymity were assured both during and after completion of the study.

A structured approach was adopted, with the study conducted in the form of a questionnaire presented to previously identified Chinese businesspeople at the two above-mentioned locations. Upon completion, questionnaires were returned directly to the researcher. Data analysis was non-statistical: the initial stage comprised the transcription and organisation of data. Systematic analysis of the transcripts ensued to locate themes or patterns, by interpreting them, to draw conclusions, which would shed light on the research questions.

The adoption of this type of approach is justified by the fact that it is:

- (i) **Innocuous:** the study is non-threatening and the respondent's anonymity is guaranteed;
- (ii) **Efficient:** it is time efficient for researcher and respondent, as minimum time is invested by the respondent for maximum returns to the researcher;
- (iii) **Utilitarian:** data is easily transcribed and collated;
- (iv) **Inconspicuous:** the study is unobtrusive; hence, the researcher will not influence the outcome of the survey.

As the selected methodology is exploratory and investigative, no presuppositions or expectations have been set; it is anticipated that some open-ended responses to survey questions will be received, although every effort will be made to reduce that possibility.

Findings should not be interpreted as conclusive and should not be used to make generalisations about the community of interest. Rather, it should be seen as a departure point for developing an initial understanding and sound base for further decision-making, which may conceivably provoke future quantitative studies by other researchers.

## **1.6 ASSUMPTIONS**

Assumptions are a necessary departure point in a paper of this nature, which inquires into cultural identities. Roberts (1998:109-110) points out the conflictual flux between dominant knowledge and interaction within society, manifesting as a 'culture brought in' and 'culture brought about' convergence (Roth & Roth, 1999:210)

A brief outline is provided of the assumptions made, which are elaborated on in more detail in the Methodology Section 3.4. It is assumed that all the participants will respond with integrity, exhibiting:

- (i) **Knowledge:** Participants will have knowledge of the two central concepts of 'guanxi' and 'mianzi';

- (ii) **Understanding:** Participants have understood the requirements and questions and responded truthfully to the best of their ability; and
- (iii) **Interest:** Participants will display an interest in the outcome of the project, and the perceived potential benefits to their community as they contribute to a correlation-mix of gender/age/origins to produce a study that would be of value to the researcher.

## **1.7 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

Chapter 1 serves the prefatorial role of addressing the study's purpose of the research, articulating the research question(s) to be explored, the systematic administration of the study, and the research methodology enlisted to resolve the issues.

Chapter 2 reviews the current literature, exploring the somewhat limited scope available. Although the output is small, it is not without quality, emphasising the scarcity of data in particular areas and the need for further scholarship. Within this chapter, the conceptual scaffold of this study is examined and the employment of the same is looked at through the local Chinese community. An overview of the South African Chinese identity is sought.

Chapter 3 exposts the methodology deployed and the research design enlisted. It rationalises the population sample selection and the data collection method adopted. Moreover, it asserts that the questionnaire construct employed and the data analysis strategy espoused, will attest to the safeguards erected to safeguard the validity and the reliability of the study.

Chapter 4 graphically exemplifies the findings of the research by employing graphs, charts and tables, juxtaposed against a contextual background. The visual portrayal allows for the easy identification of themes and patterns.

Chapter 5 discusses and summarises the major findings that emerge from the study, relating them to the research question and their place within the current literature before recommending possible further areas of study. It further comments on how the



investigation of the research problems was accomplished. It summarises the attainment (or otherwise) of the aims and goals of the study; it comments on the adequacy of the research methodology, elaborates on the limitations after which it presents final thoughts on the findings, draws conclusions and suggests recommendations for further research.

~\*~

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter commences by establishing broadly the distinctions between Western and Asian cultural systems before moving on to explore the notion of Chinese identity, including ancient to modern perceptions thereof. It looks at the rise of China's economic capacity, and the corresponding influence and hegemony it brings to bear. The focus shifts to how history and origins have shaped the Chinese community and how influences, both endogenous and exogenous, have impacted their development. Attention is then directed to the business relationships developed and maintained by the Chinese community in South Africa.

### **2.2. THE SOCIOCULTURAL CHASM**

Intercultural communication as a focal point within sociolinguistics exists due to our cognisance that our communication manner is intrinsically concomitant with our own cultural realities. Ronowicz (1995:5) asserts that a panoramic view of culture must include an all-encompassing perspective of that culture's history. Ergo, such a history is inclusive of all it means to be either Chinese or African as it encompasses aspects of culture that are visible (national costumes) and undetected (customs). An exploration of the Chinese identity (Collier, 2003:419) within a South African context is consequently a juxtaposition of two very divergent cultures.

#### **2.2.1. Identifying the Chasm**

This preliminary section seeks to identify and demarcate the dissimilarities accounting for the sociocultural chasm posited, and to determine if and how that chasm may be bridged. Earlier academic studies have provided empirical evidence for perceived cultural differences between Western and Asian value systems. Two such pioneering studies include Hofstede's (1981) "cultural dimensions" and Hall's (1976) "high-context/low-context" cultures (HC/LC). The former, according to Bennett (1998:24) employed inductive statistical analysis to rank-order the various cultures he

surveyed. In Hofstede's (1981) initial dimensional model, intercultural differences were categorised according to their levels or degrees of "individualism/collectivism, power distance index, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity/femininity" (Guirdham, 1999:69-72). This framework was constructed on certain assumptions that differentiated the perceived characteristics of each category, namely:

- (i) Individualism in Western cultures, in the form of self-reliance or self-sufficiency ostensibly is viewed as an admirable quality, in stark contrast to Asian cultural collectivism views, in which interdependency and group obligations (see section 2.5.2.1 on 'guanxi') hold greater value (Bennett, 1998:24; Guirdham, 1999:52-53);
- (ii) A 'power distance index, ' alluded to the assumption of status differences (Bennett, 1998:24; Ting-Toomey, 1999: 69; Gudykunst, 2003:19) or hierarchical social disparities in families, institutions and organisations. Distances between groups would be less or more distant, dependent on the relationship;
- (iii) 'Uncertainty avoidance' denotes the intolerance towards the existence of ambiguity in society and the manner in which that ambiguity and insecurity is resolved. "High-context cultures prefer rules and set procedures to contain the uncertainty, whilst low-context cultures accept greater ambiguity and prefer more flexibility in their responses" (Ting-Toomey, 1999:71), as endorsed by Gudykunst (2003:18).
- (iv) Finally, the contention that cultures are imbued with either 'masculine or feminine' attributes, whereby the more 'masculine' cultures endorsed assertiveness, competitiveness and aggressive success, and the 'feminine' cultures espoused modesty, compromise and cooperative success (Bennett, 1998:24; Ting-Toomey, 1999:72; Gudykunst, 2003:20).

Hofstede's (1981) analysis consigned each national culture to a specific rank-order, in terms of each dimension and, by statistically combining factors was able to map clusters of culture in several dimensions, the results of which indicated consistent divergences between Asian and Western cultures (Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1988).

These conclusions were subsequently verified by Trompenaars (1993) and Merritt (2000) and observed by Guirdham (1999:56, 57).

Adding to the East-West cultural divide narrative, Hall's (1976) HC/LC cultural model depicted the former as communicating meaning through implicit, inferential non-verbal cues to convey social status, especially in role-orientated, formal and ritualistic contexts (Guirdham, 1999:60,61). In contrast, LC cultures communicate explicitly through the spoken word and personal identity is emphasised above social status, allowing for less formal and more intimate communications. Cognisance of these two models is enormously helpful in ascertaining a suitable research methodology and appropriate selection of measuring instruments. In a later study, Hofstede (1981) introduced 'Confucian dynamism' as a separate cultural value (Bond, 1991; 1996). Ting-Toomey concurs (1999:74, 75) asserting that an explanation of the distinctive behavioural patterns in East Asian cultures is entirely due to the persistence of Confucianism as the "fundamental philosophy underlying Chinese values, attributes and behaviours" and "reflective of the collectivism and large power distance dimensions". Hence, we already see a polarisation of values and beliefs between West and East beginning to emerge.

A derivative of Confucian philosophy is the Chinese concept of 'face' (面子 *mianzi*), contextualised as projected public image and self-respect. Toa (2008) points out the markedly contrasting understandings of self-image in Western cultures and Asian views. The latter lean toward honour, a sense of shame, or prestige and dignity. Bennett (1998:99) adds that this self-image is mostly constituted by the consensual norms and scripts developed by members of that culture. ('Mianzi' is addressed more fully in section 2.5.2.1.)

The Asian consensus focuses on "group belonging, proper place occupancy, and acceptance by the group" (Kasper, 1990:195; Matsumoto, 1988:415). All interactions are aimed at the "maintenance of the relative position of others rather than preservation of an individual's proper territory" (Matsumoto, 1988:405). Individuals develop verbal and nonverbal socialisation techniques, known as "facework", early in their life to project public image optimally (Ting-Toomey, 1999:197). Lim and Choi

(1996 and Ting-Toomey, 1999:75) attest to its pervasive influence in Asian cultures, impacting business relationships. Maintaining face and avoiding its loss promote a harmonious society and interdependence (Ting-Toomey, 1999:75). The latter gives rise to our second concept of ‘relationship’ (关系, *guanxi*) or informal social networks. Pye (1982) depicts ‘*guanxi*’ as “friendship with an exchange of favours” or a series of social obligations entered into either willingly or through circumstances to ensure survival, physical or economic. (An in-depth look at ‘*guanxi*’ can be found in section 2.5.2.1.)

Milliot (2008:15), a professor of business administration, contends that ‘*guanxi*’ is a “necessary formality, or even a *sine qua non* condition to develop efficient economic interactions in China” (Andrejevic, 2011:284). This is in accordance with the academic view taken by several scholars (Gold, Guthrie & Wank, 2002) who postulate that ‘*guanxi*’, as it exists in China, has emerged from a particular set of social institutions closely paralleling those in other societies. In Middle Eastern countries, there is *wasta* (loosely translated as ‘who you know’) and in African countries, including South Africa, we find *ubuntu* (Mbigi & Maree, 1995).

Given that this paper is exploring Chinese cultural identity within an African environment it is apposite to discover *ubuntu* closely resembles ‘*guanxi*’ as its basis too is contingent on an “extended family system” (Broodryk, 1997a:4, 11, 13-14; 1997b:38, 70; Lukhele, 1990). By extension, then, the implication is that the ‘value’ of individuals is measured in proportion to “their relationships with others; and as these relationships change, so do the characters of the individuals” (Shutte, 1993:46).

### **2.2.2. Bridging the Chasm**

A dichotomy of views thus exists between Western and Asian cultures with none so apparent as the contrasting perceptions of ‘face’ and ‘*guanxi*’. The two concepts will be examined in more detail to gain insights into their functionality within the South African-Chinese business sphere. A brief summary is provided of the two contrasting worldviews, remembering that if reality, or at least one’s perception of reality, is fashioned by one’s worldview, then it follows that behaviour is grounded in one’s worldview from which develops one’s self perception and identity.

- (i) To the Western observer, Louw (1997:3) asserts that “individualism often translates into an impetuous competitiveness,” and extremist positions would hold that individual interest is foremost, adopting a utilitarian wherewithal approach to attain their objectives (cf. Khoza, 1994:4, 5, 7; Prinsloo, 1996:2). A critic may respond by labelling these individualists as self-centred and egocentric, and often the quest for autonomy seen to meet the needs of privacy and personal space is off-balance, and at the cost of relational connectedness (Ting-Toomey, 1999:184).
- (ii) Yum (2007) contends that Confucianism “created the philosophical emphasis on collectivism, hierarchy and social harmony” in Asian societies. Echoing the *ubuntu* mantra, the Confucian discourse system stresses, “people are people through the other people” and “the very existence and identity of an individual depends on his/her relationships with others” (Yum, 2007:16). He elaborates further, claiming that Asian collectivism and “social relationships are conducive to cooperation, warm, relaxed human relations, consideration of others, and group harmony”. This (Asian) ideological polarization is baldly portrayed against the Western distinctiveness that espouses “equality, fairness, and justice” (Yum, 1988:386).

CHINA’S PRESENCE ON THE WORLD STAGE: Mainland China, also known as The People’s Republic of China (PRC), has, since the 1979 government’s ‘Open Door Policy’ (see Kim 2013:6) ascended rapidly to prominence as a world economic power. The subsequent economic boom, apart from being fuelled by cheap domestic labour, has also generated huge demand for raw materials. Hence, the previously unexploited natural resources of African countries such as Angola, Sudan, Chad, etc. (Lafargue, 2009:80), have attracted China’s attention. This heightened interest has in turn stimulated previous subsistence economies by the newly attracted foreign direct investment and infrastructure development (Milliot, 2008). Countries participating in the oil boom in particular have hosted increasing numbers of high-level Chinese diplomatic visits, conferences and agreements, a phenomenon that King (2006) terms ‘resource diplomacy’.

World Bank economists, Wang and Yao (2001) cite *The Economist's* (2001:23) description of China's prodigious economic growth since it opened up (1979). It claims that the Chinese economy grew fivefold; incomes quadrupled and 270 million people have risen above 'breadline' poverty. Even more optimistically, they assert that future growth might supersede that of the past in the world's most populous country as momentum gathers. The World Trade Organisation's Rumbaugh and Blancher (2004:3, 4) claim "China's integration with the world economy as a landmark event with implications for global and regional economies", with benefits generated for most partner countries. Thus far, we have presented the benefits of China's marketing prowess and reach.

### **2.3. THE CHINESE IN AFRICA**

In many countries, including South Africa, Confucius Institutes have been set up, to spread China's 'soft power' (Bodomo, 2009) with language teaching (Mandarin), "T'ai chi ch'uan" (martial arts), dance, painting arts and culture being showcased. South Africa has responded with a Mandela Institute in Beijing. American (USA) protest at the growing rise of Chinese soft power through these institutes and other cultural outlets has seemingly resulted from amnesia as to their own replica in the form of the Peace Corps, set up in 1961 to serve overseas for similar purposes.

Ali Zafar (2007), a macroeconomist associated with the World Bank's Africa Region states China's "search for natural resources to satisfy the demands of industrialisation has led it to Sub-Saharan Africa. Trade between China and Africa in 2006 totalled more than \$50 billion, with Chinese companies importing oil from Angola and Sudan, timber from Central Africa, and copper from Zambia" (cf. Sautman & Hairong, 2008:24). While rising metal and oil prices have boosted GDP in sub-Saharan Africa, imports from China, especially of low-cost textiles, are threatening to supplant local production. Many conservatives see China's asymmetrical investment in poor African countries as a form of neo-colonialism and "a challenge to good governance and sound macroeconomic management" (Norberg, 2006; Wu, 2013:1).

Zafar (2007) writes that whatever stance you take, "China presents both an opportunity for Africa to reduce its marginalisation from the global economy and a

challenge for it to effectively harness the influx of resources to promote poverty-reducing economic development at home” (see Draper & le Pere, 2005; Cockayne, 2005).

China has thus a clearly established footprint on the African continent, and more specifically her interest has extended to South Africa. Our attention focuses now on the Chinese who are living almost unseen amongst us or as Park (2012) puts it, “Living in between”.

#### **2.4. THE CHINESE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Two decades ago, Harris (1994) wrote that “no comprehensive history of the Chinese in South Africa” existed on record, adding that the “more recent historiographical publications had completely ignored the topic”. This was partially rectified by Yap and Man’s (1996) extensive research that retraced the movements of this minority group and established a verifiable timeline, further corroborated by other prominent scholars, such as Harris above (2007, 1994) and Park (2012, 2010).

The earliest Sino-African links were ostensibly formed in 1415 when Chinese Admiral Zheng visited over thirty African countries (Waldron, 2009: vi, 4). However, the earliest documented contact between Chinese ‘visitors’ and South Africa was the result of the slave trade, which brought a group of Chinese convict-artisans to the Cape in mid-to-late 1700s under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company (Park, 2009:114) According to historians, there were never more than fifty at a time (Armstrong 1997). As they were all men and constituted such a small group, they intermarried and were absorbed into the growing ‘mixed-race’ or ‘coloured’ group as they were called; and Park (2006) firmly asserts that they did not give rise to the current Chinese community.

Harris (2007) describes their beginnings as unassuming, arising from free individuals who either intentionally migrated or inadvertently came ashore from passing ships. They established themselves as small, commodity traders vending the likes of “tea, chinaware and fabrics”, (Harris, 2007) or as grocers, ship chandlers or running eating-houses. A number of these early arrivals were relatively wealthy. However, their



economic success resulted in jealousy, prompting the settlers to petition the government of the day against their competition, and legislation was introduced to prohibit or confine their economic activities (Harris, 1994) the beginning of a pattern of prejudice.

It was during the period of British occupation of the Cape (1795-1803; 1806-1910) that several Chinese merchants and various artisans began to arrive. However, their numbers were still minuscule, and it was only after the discovery of mineral wealth in South Africa that the numbers began to increase. Attracted by the discovery of diamonds in 1860, followed by gold in 1886 (see Wentzel, 2003), free Chinese settlers began to arrive in small groups, originating primarily from the Guangdong province (known by the British at that time as Canton). It is these settlers that Park (2012) adamantly contends are the forebears of today's South African-born Chinese community (or SABCs); they did not descend from convicts, slaves or indentured workers, but were independent migrants that began arriving in small numbers and continued to do so through to the mid-twentieth century.

Richardson's 1982 study documents a contentious period of labour relations in South Africa, which was labelled the Transvaal Experiment (1904-1910). Responding to critical labour shortages on the Witwatersrand gold mines, the British authorities imported 63 695 indentured Chinese labourers to supplement the miners' workforce. The British imposed exceptionally severe regulations that restricted their place of residence to mining compounds and hampered their freedom of movement (travel restrictions) and the capacities in which they were allowed to be employed, i.e., only for unskilled work in specified occupations (Harris, 2007). It was at that time that the new government, bowing to political pressure resulting from racial fears of the 'Chinese peril', repatriated all of them. Thus, for the second time, prejudice and fear won out. These indentured labourers were mainly from northern China, while the small trickle of free Chinese who arrived during this period of the early nineteenth century were mostly southern Chinese emigrants (Huynh, Park & Chen, 2010). They came in pursuit of the newly discovered mineral bonanza. However, the law prohibited them from working on the mines, and hence they turned to providing service industries for the mines and engaged in trade.

Over the succeeding years, (South African) government policy effectively closed the door to significant Chinese immigration (*Transvaal Immigration Restriction Act of 1902* and *Cape Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904*).<sup>1</sup> Park (2012) enumerates further discriminatory legislation that “denied citizenship, prohibited land ownership and restricted trade for the Chinese”. It should be noted, however, that at that time, similar draconian legislation was also enforced in many other Western countries, including the United States.

It would appear, then, that the ‘protectionist’ mindset held by Western governments ostensibly seeking to pander to the fears of the electorate was based on discrimination and racism. Park (2012) asserts that another further obstacle to Chinese immigration was the implementation of the *Immigrants Regulation Amendment Act of 1953*, which ran contemporaneously to the increasingly stringent decrees in China that barred emigration. Those Chinese caught in South Africa felt the brunt of the apartheid apparatus. This artificial status quo was maintained for many years until political expediency necessitated a new approach. At that time, in the 1950s, due to increasing political isolation caused by its odorous racial policies, the South African apartheid government entered into negotiations with the Taiwanese Nationalist (Kuomintang) government in a bid to attract foreign direct investment to boost its ailing economy.

The South African Nationalist Government, in order to implement the ‘Grand Apartheid’ schema (Louw, 2004:63) as envisaged by its architect, Hendrik Verwoerd, developed a strategy to prevent an influx of rural Blacks from urbanising and ‘invading’ the ‘White’ cities. They conceived a plan whereby they incentivised Taiwanese industrialists and businesspeople with very favourable conditions to open businesses in South Africa. Some of the inducements included wage subsidies, tax concessions and cheap land to build factories in rural areas close to the African tribal centres. A special monetary exchange mechanism was created, the FinRand (or Financial Rand), which provided generous exchange rates for foreign capital brought

---

<sup>1</sup> Statutes of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1902, Act no. 47, The Immigration Act. A subsequent amendment, which barred Indians and Jews entrance, too was adopted by the Transvaal legislature. Statutes of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1904, Act no. 37, The Chinese Exclusion Act.

into South Africa (Roux, 2005:124). It lasted from June 1961 to mid-1995. Political pragmatism had overruled the internal social engineering structure imposed by apartheid South Africa on her people, in recognition of the growing ostracism and negative sentiment gathering against her racist policies. At the apex, some 33 000 Taiwanese resided in South Africa, arriving over time to set up businesses in rural areas, close to the borders of the once ‘homelands’, which provided a ready source of cheap labour. By all appearances, the two nationalist governments had created a symbiotic win-win economic situation.

Following the industrialists, the 1990s saw many more immigrants arriving from Taiwan and Hong Kong, comprising both entrepreneurs and students. Unlike the industrialists that preceded them, the new arrivals settled into South Africa’s cities. Yap and Man (1996:423) calculated that by the end of 1994, there were 300 businesses, and Chinese students numbered in the hundreds.

Meanwhile, in China (PRC), after independence in 1949, her people and economy suffered under Mao’s social engineering forays, with the ‘Great Leap Forward’ (see Kim 2013:6) and the ‘Cultural Revolution’ shaking the very structure of Chinese society and resulting in a widespread diaspora of people across the nation. When Deng Xiaoping rose to power in 1976, succeeding Mao, this all began to change as he implemented an “Open Door policy” (Kim, 2013:6) to encourage foreign direct investment (FDI) to industrialise, to catch up with the West. As Mainland China’s economic and industrial power began to expand, so too did the old political allegiances begin to shift. In South Africa, the lustre of the Taiwanese business connections began to wane in favour of the bigger northern neighbour.

In South Africa, when the African National Congress (ANC) finally achieved political power in 1994 and formed a majority government, the ‘floor-crossing’ became decisive, with China (PRC) officially recognised in the United Nations and by the South African government, as the only representative of the Chinese people. This Rubicon event triggered the departure of the Taiwanese industrialists, as they began to disinvest from the economy and depart with their families. Today there are approximately only six thousand remaining, mostly in the main urban centres in SA (Park, 2009:115).

Another later group of migrants (perhaps ‘moneyed refugees’ would be an appropriate term) began arriving from Hong Kong pre-1997. Fearing the worst, this smaller group anticipated the time when the British colony would be returned to China in accordance with the terms of the *Nanjing Treaty* (Kasaba, 1993). Some wealthy industrialists and businesspeople began looking for a suitable country in which to settle to protect their capital and their political freedoms from the threat of impending Communist dominion. Proven wealth and/or business acumen and proposals predisposed the South African government to welcome them with the offer of citizenship.

In the wake of the Taiwanese departure from South Africa, another wave of new PRC migrants began arriving in significant numbers. Park (2009:115) notes that prior to the 1998 official recognition of the PRC by the South African government significant numbers of Mainland Chinese entered South Africa, both legal, and illegal, overshadowing the current South African-born Chinese (SABC) community and the Taiwanese settlers. Population numbers continued to increase as employees of Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) arrived to fill positions, together with managers, trade delegations embassy officials, diplomats and cultural officers. While many of those associated with the state (China) have professional credentials, links with business networks and some overseas experience, they may also have capital, and they often choose to start up a business after their state-contracts have expired, seeing South Africa as a land of opportunity.

Later arrivals, especially from Fujian province (South-East of China) of mostly peasants and the relatively uneducated, have flocked to Africa and to South Africa. They set up as small traders, hoping to find economic prosperity and to create better lives for their children. Their sheer numbers outstrip all previous groups at least tenfold. Larabee (2008:358, 367) points to the many remote rural towns dotted across the countryside that can boast the presence of a Chinese shop selling cheap goods to local communities often thriving owing to their work ethic and perseverance.

The number of illegal immigrants in South Africa is unknown. Porous borders allow entry from neighbouring countries like Lesotho; corrupt Home Affairs officials (Park,

2009:2014) and a dearth of accurate population statistics for the Chinese in South Africa all contribute to an administrative headache. Although total numbers of Chinese are challenging to determine, scholars (Park & Rugunanan, 2010:11; Huynh, Park & Chen, 2010:289) would concur that “there are currently fewer than 10,000 Chinese South Africans (South African-born or local Chinese) and approximately 6,000 Taiwanese in the country” legally. The Chinese embassy in South Africa (although devoid of verification) estimates a possible population of 200 000 Chinese in South Africa. However, the Chinese state sponsored news broadcaster, CCTV (China Central Television) along with other news agencies (Park & Chen, 2009:30), asserts that this figure is closer to 300,000. In 2005, Park raised her estimate to between 300 000 and 350 000 (Park, 2005). However, in a later paper she (Park, 2012) concedes that “research conducted in 2010 indicates that this number may be in excess of 500 000.”

Previous government censuses have not distinguished among ‘Asiatics’, i.e. the Indian, Chinese, Pakistani and others of Asian descent (SA Census 2012:34; Poston, Mao and Yu, 1994).

## **2.5. CHINESE IDENTITY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

To bring the identity of the Chinese in South Africa into focus the endogenous and exogenous influences that have shaped and impacted them must be examined. These two terms convey the notion of ‘brought with’ and ‘brought about’ cultural characteristics, expressed by Hinnenkamp (1991; cf. Auer, 1992). Originally these terms referred to contextualisation distinctions between aspects of speakers’ identities, exemplified by static versus dynamic conversational constructs. It is adapted and offered here as an analogy for revealing the ‘voice’ of the people as their interactions are explored and extrapolated.

### **2.5.1. Exogenous Influences on Identity**

Park (2008) emphasises that the influence of the state – both that of China and of South Africa – had an enormous role in formulating the elements of “Chinese identity” in South Africa. Broadly speaking, the distant influences of China upon the South African Chinese have fluctuated over time. Domestically though, the

“construction of a Chinese South African identity” (Park, 2008) has in part been impacted and shaped by several extraneous factors, including regional internecine conflicts resulting in an influx of refugees to South Africa, financial crises arising from stock market instability and worryingly, the rapidly growing politicisation of South African youth. The volatile mix has aided in creating a uniquely blended identity.

Harris (1994) points out that only once have the Chinese “ever been listed as a separate ethnic group” (Cape of Good Hope Census, 1865). Generally, they have been categorised as ‘mixed’ or ‘other’ or ‘Asian,’ a fact attested to by Park and Rugunanan (2009) and confirmed by the last South African Census records of 2011. They have accordingly, occupied a marginalised position in South African society, which Harris describes as a “no man’s land between White and Black” and Park (2012) calls, “Living in between”.

Harris (2010:159) writes that unlike previous ‘disadvantaged’ South African groups marginalised by apartheid policies their situation under the new dispensation remained unchanged, convincing the South African Chinese community to legally “contest the their exclusion from the *Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998* and the *Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No. 35 of 2003*”.<sup>2</sup> They contested the ruling and won;<sup>3</sup> but judging by the negative publicity generated it was a Pyrrhic victory at best. The negative press was largely unfair because for the first time in over a hundred years South African Chinese had successfully cast off the shackles of political discrimination. Other issues the settlers had to deal with included culture shock (that sense of foreignness and difference), contending with the language barrier in the marketplace, and navigating the legal system. Resentments flared because their work

---

<sup>2</sup> Harris (2010:159) references these two acts in her study as follows: Government Gazette, 400, 19370, No. 55 of 1998: Employment Equity Act, 1998; Government Gazette, 463, 25899, No. 53 of 2003: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 2003. BBEE can be seen as the South African governments attempts to redress the apartheid legacy by implementing an affirmative action policy. Details can be found here: <http://www.southafrica.info/business/trends/empowerment/bee.htm>

<sup>3</sup> On June 17, 2008, the Pretoria High Court decreed that Chinese South Africans be recognised as previously disadvantaged South African and thus fall within the definition of ‘black people’ as contained with the BEE legislation. See court ruling at: <http://www.parcsa.co.za/documents/ChineesBlackCourtRuling.pdf>

ethnic displaced (according to some), the 'local' less industrious traders. The settlers incited further hatred when China was accused of dumping cheap goods in the form of clothes and shoes on the local markets so that textile factories, long unproductive, began restructuring, shedding many jobs in the process.

Reduced to a minority group (0.04% of the population), it is hardly surprising that an ingroup/outgroup (Ting-Toomey, 1999:28) mentality developed, which has unsurprisingly preserved the Chinese from being assimilated completely. Instead, they sought to preserve their 'Chineseness' (cf. Park, 2009; Wang, 1993) by clinging to the traditions and values of the land that gave them birth. Dirlik (1999) criticises this viewpoint, regarding this as an obsession, naming it reification. However, Park (2006) makes the observation that racial prejudice and discrimination often compel ethnic minorities to cling to their ethnic culture. Unity to a degree springs from shared adversity.

Within the South African Chinese community there are third-and-fourth generation Chinese who have all but forgotten the language of their forefathers and retain only a diluted memory of the traditions of the past; hence, their 'Chineseness' competes with their 'South Africaness' (Park, 2013:121). Another issue just glossed over till now is that of political ideologies, where the fiercely independent Taiwanese are suspicious of the Mainland's incursion into their democracy, and those raised in the Beijing rhetoric are equally adamant as to the 'one China' policy, hence the simmering subsurface tensions. 'Hong Kongers', forced to accept Mainland control, are equally unwilling after a century of democracy under British administration to relinquish any of their perceived rights and benefits to Beijing.

Their previous political marginalisation and ethnic distinctiveness have realistically drawn them closer to that conflated Chinese identity that individually they would dispute. To some degree it has contributed to a preservation of traditions, values and concepts like 'guanxi' and 'mianzi.'

In the feudal systems of the past, the Chinese people were forced, due to limited resources and restricted access, to find methods to survive and thrive. They became dependent on developing networks of reciprocity. Likewise, the Chinese in South Africa, given the vast challenges faced by the new arrivals, adapted to their



circumstances and built new networks, establishing friendships and business relationships, as was their custom. These networks in ancient times bypassed 'restrictive' legislation and 'opened doors', hence the term 'backdoor' (后门) negotiation. Similar tactics today have resulted in numerous charges of corruption levelled at government officials in China as they continue to act complicitly in the age-old practices of 'facilitating' business, often acting as the gatekeepers, to unlock state-resources and allow access to the well connected.

### **2.5.2. Endogenous Influences on Identity**

Accone (2007:6) adumbrates well the disunity within the South African Chinese communities, separated as they are "by time, geography, national and regional-cultural affiliations", and more compellingly along ideological, religious positions and an assumed common language of Chinese.

Each province or district may employ a local dialect in its daily interactions, but Mandarin Chinese (Putonghua, as it is called) is the standard *lingua franca*, used at all levels of government, academia and trade. It is considered by some as the 'northern' or 'Beijing' dialect, as in the south of China and Hong Kong, Cantonese (or Guangdonghua) is commonly spoken. In the tradition of north-south divides (Smith, 1994:19), this language division has taken on political undertones (Park, 2010:9; 2009:153).

A second divisive factor is the Chinese script or mode of writing, which in its earliest form, existed for centuries. However, even there differences exist, indicative of the deep divisions between north and south. The earlier extant Chinese script or form of writing was adapted by the PRC after the Communists came to power. The classical or 'traditional' script was changed to one that uses fewer 'strokes'; hence, it is termed the 'simplified' or modern script. Originally posited as a means to raise national literacy levels, this claim remains unsubstantiated, while higher education investment is thought to be the causal agent. The traditional script is still used in Hong Kong and Taiwan today, while the simplified form is used in the PRC (Norman, 1988).

Setting aside the divisive factors for now and focusing on the shared commonalities is quite revealing. Most, if not all, Chinese share a belief in the superiority of their



culture and civilisation, declares Park (2006:107), due to its longevity through the ages and the myth of the ‘great China’ (Park, 2008; Wang, 2002:603) perpetuated by dynastic and political rulers alike. Tu (1994:18) endorses this view, commenting on how this notion is prevalent in the “psychocultural constructs” and thinking of the diasporic Chinese.

A concomitant philosophy, steeped in centuries of Confucian dynamism has imbued the Chinese with a respect for authority, a strong work ethic, a belief in the value of education, and a responsibility for maintaining harmony in society (Chen & Starosta, 1997), often manifested as filial piety and respect for parents and authority figures. This worldview is intrinsically linked to the development of high culture contextual and collectivistic sociocultural behaviour. Some of these cultural practices include the widespread commemoration of festivals, veneration for the aged and the dead and links to religious practices that include animism, Buddhism and to a much lesser degree Christianity and Islam. Distinctive cuisines are attendant to geographic locations, and cultural aspects include calligraphy and crafts, music and dance.

Ethnicity in the PRC is highly visible: the majority ethnic group is the Han, which makes up 96% of the population. The other 4% comprise over 56 minority groups, with the largest just on 20 million. While this may appear to be a large number, it is insubstantial alongside 1.4 billion people.

The previous section examined and discussed factors that were brought to bear upon Chinese arrivals in South Africa that shaped and impacted these communities. The present section looked at the endogenous factors that all Chinese bring with them, like baggage, when they emigrate. Some of these elements may unite communities together as an ‘ingroup’, seeking refuge from the challenges of the so-called ‘outgroup’, and may include language, ethnicity and regional affiliations.

These shared traditions and culture have been touched on, yet this paper would be lacking without a closer examination of the two cultural concepts least understood by Westerners, namely ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi.’ It would be helpful to examine the cultural origins of these terms and their entrenched effect within the Asian psyche before drawing comparisons with its closest perceived Western counterparts. There follows

hereafter a scrutiny of the pervasive legacy (Pablos, 2006) these Confucian concepts have induced on Chinese business relationships, and of how Western business has responded.

#### 2.5.2.1. ASIAN ORIGINS OF GUANXI AND MIANZI

Many scholars (Chen & Chen, 2004:307; Han, 2009:20; Wang, 2012) point to ‘guanxi’ being deeply embedded in Confucian practice, so it would be expedient to examine this guiding principle. In essence, Confucianism is not a religion (Vihakara, 2006:93); it is both a moral philosophy and a complex politico-sociocultural system that seeks to impose ethical prescriptions on the populace, based on filial piety, family ties, loyalty and virtue. The system has a well-defined hierarchical structure within which individuals know and understand their role, governed by tacit rules and obligations; the latter value tradition, venerating rank and age. Park and Luo (2001) attest to this system dominating every aspect of “personal and organisational interactions”, perpetuating high power-distance hierarchies (Hofstede 1987), collectivist values (Sandahl, Pan & Rask, 2012) and uncertainty avoidance (Hay, Adnan & Staden, 2010). This is almost diametrically opposite to most Western low-context cultures.<sup>4</sup>

GUANXI: In China’s distant past of feudalism and dynastic rule (Hammond & Glenn, 2004:29), the ability to access limited and disproportionately distributed resources, largely determined whether a person or family lived and prospered. Often admission to patronage was seen as the only way to ensure survival of the family unit, and loyalty to the authority figure was offered in its place (Lee & Dawes, 2005). Long-standing mutually beneficial relationships were established on this premise. These reciprocal social exchanges of favours later evolved into a complex network that today is transferable (Park & Luo, 2001) and which may span generations, individuals and organisations.

---

<sup>4</sup> Note: Many papers have been written on this topic and it is not the intention of this study to present an in-depth analysis of guanxi and its many permutations; rather the aim is to show its influence on the perceptions of its modern-day practitioners in South Africa.

‘Guanxi’ (*guan-shee*) (literally “relationship” or “connections”) has been succinctly explicated by Anderson and Lee (2008:776, 778) as “a network of personal relationships emerging from the fundamentals of Chinese culture, traditions and social organisation”, which Davies (1995) depicts as “involving reciprocal obligations to exchange favours”. Han (2009:16) delivers further insights by analysing the ‘word’ structure, which comprises two Chinese characters, as depicted: 关系.

“The first word (‘guan’) is a noun that literally means “gate (a pass or barrier)”, expositing Han (2009:17), and “the second word (‘xi’), employed as a verb means to ‘connect’ or link”. Dunfee and Warren (2001) concur, adding that ‘guanxi’ is a “gate” or a passage”, and one gets connected by “passing the gate” (Lee and Dawes, 2005).

As in any society, when agendas are driven by self-interest, relationships have the potential to be abused. Backdoor ‘guanxi’, is a term employed to describe using one’s social and political connections to circumvent onerous red tape or official regulations (Bedford, 2011) by gift-giving (Yang, 1994) in order to gain preferential treatment. Needless to say this guanxi-related behaviour has resulted in Westerners commonly construing that guanxi is “unethical or related to unethical behaviour linked to corruption” (Chan, Cheng & Szeto, 2002), a view that Zhai (1994) appears to endorse. He observes that calling on favours through an established ‘guanxi’ relationship is often construed as an easier, more efficient method to achieve individual goals as opposed to hard work and talent (Zhai, 1994).

Han (2009:23) too accedes that Westerners often view ‘guanxi’ as an Asian shortcut to gain preferential treatment and intervention from others, which judged by Western standards, is immoral. However, the Chinese mind views this differently, seeing the use of guanxi as having created a reciprocal obligation to repay the favour sometime in the future, so in a sense they have ‘indebted’ themselves. Han (2009:24) further postulates that longstanding instilled social norms and practices compel the Asian people to “voluntarily follow certain rules” and observe “standards for a harmonious society”, thus self-policing the system.

MIANZI: (mee-yen-zer) (面子) has a dovetailing relationship with ‘guanxi’, loosely translated as ‘face’. Brown and Levinson (1987:61) offer the definition of “public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself”. Confucian nuances extend to the retention of social status, the correct maintenance of hierarchy and the avoidance of giving offence in social interactions (Hwang, Ang & Francesco, 2002). Thus Matsumoto (1988: 405) could conjecture that in any interaction the agenda of the people involved is to uphold the “relative position of others rather than preservation of an individual’s proper territory”.

Social harmony is promoted by ‘giving face’, or respecting another’s societal status and reputation. Maintaining face, by contrast, means to “stay trustworthy and to honour obligations in one’s social interactions” (Wang, Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005:318).

Buttery and Leung (1998) delineate the significance of preferentially giving face to others above seeking one’s own face as demonstrating largesse to subordinates. The action of ‘superiors’ conspicuously demonstrates their greater capacities, and through their actions, they gain face. This is especially true when returning a favour in a reciprocal (‘guanxi’) relationship, regardless of whether its commission may damage the actor’s social standing or face (Luo, 1997; Su & Littlefield, 2001). Hence, the superior party (by rank, position or status) conveys patronage to the weaker and in return gains his loyalty. Jacobs (1979) astutely points out that in Chinese society an “individual’s social connections (guanxi) are mirrored and judged by one’s social status” (mianzi).

Tsang (1998), as cited by Sandahl, Pan and Rask (2012:7) restated this notion by delineating ‘guanxi’ as the “social lubricant dominating most Chinese people’s daily social lives, while ‘mianzi’ functions as a key element for maintaining and sharing a positive correlation with ‘guanxi’ - the stronger one’s ‘guanxi’ network is, the more ‘mianzi’ he or she possesses.”

#### 2.5.2.2. APPARENT WESTERN PARALLELS

NETWORKS: Differing views are held as to how robust the correlations of ‘guanxi’ networks with Western parallels are. Zhang and Zhang (2006) claim certain shared

characteristics with modern Western networking, with Hammond and Glenn (2004) positing several overlapping areas. Another proponent for commonalities between ‘guanxi’ and social network theory (SNT) is Bourdieu (1986), who traces a parallel to the Western concept of ‘social capital’. Others are more cautious in their assessment, viewing the link as more tenuous. Among them is Blau (1964), who asserts that in Western societies interpersonal relationships are generally developed by the mutual exchange of favours in which the social exchange is determined by corresponding value, thereby returning the balance to neutral. In contrast, Powell (1990) testifies that the Chinese system often escalates the stakes by returning double (or more) the received favour value, thereby raising the ante in their favour (Hwang and Hu 2004), with the hope of some future bigger ‘payoff’.

MIANZI: Mavrides (2008) laments that a Westerner cannot possibly discern the all-embracing significance that ‘face’ plays in the daily lives of Asian people. Face has been characterized “as a Chinese businessperson’s most precious possession” (Brunner & Wang, 1988). Most foreigners cannot fathom (nor accept) that in the Chinese worldview, “lying” to save face or to give face is not perceived as dishonest when the inherent intent or rationale is to preserve harmony and not to deceive; thus the motive is the determinant, not the manner. Ting-Toomey (1988:215) points out that, while there may be differences between Western and Asian cultural perceptions “in the intention and function of face-saving strategies, all Westerners use face-saving strategies as ‘narcissistic’ defences, to protect themselves from humiliation, social embarrassment and, to some extent, personal accountability.” A closer inspection reveals these issues are related to the contrasts between ‘individualistic’ cultures and ‘collectivistic’ cultures (see Hofstede, 1987). Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998:137) suggest that the former culture uses ‘mianzi’ to reinforce non-inclusivity and the creation of individual identity, and the latter focuses on group or collective identity and inclusivity. Hence Western face-saving is utilised to protect the individual from “narcissistic injury, irrespective of social context” (Ting-Toomey 1988:215), whereas Asian cultures seek preservation, social harmony or strong social relationships in ‘giving face’.

#### 2.5.2.3. IMPACT ON BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS IN CHINA

Some economists have warned that Western countries who engage in regular trade with China “should improve their cultural competency in regards to practices such as *guanxi*, to avoid financial fallout due to lack of cultural awareness” (Smart, 2012:12); the inference being that successful business activities are built on sound personal relationships. Lee and Humphreys (2006) highlight the dissonant approach by Western companies to Chinese business, which focus on a short-term, contract-based ‘transactional strategy’ with the supplier organisations. The end of the contract signals the end of the relationship and the termination of obligations. In the Western view, legal contracts are easier to track, with penalties and benefits clearly outlined for all the stakeholders. A legally enforced contract is seen as a way to build trust between partners. However, the Chinese perspective sees the relationship first being built over time to establish trust, and when that is forthcoming then the business arrangements are entered into. Cultural interpretations of trust are at variance too; for instance, Western-based corporates are reluctant to initiate business deals when the terms of the social debt are not quantifiable upfront. In contrast, their Chinese counterparts view the Western firms’ apparent reluctance to engage in long-term relationships with suspicion, as it implies a concomitant untrustworthiness.

Within the context of ethics and morality the trust differential is further amplified. For one, *guanxi* smooths the way when obstacles appear, allowing an “alternate dispute resolution mechanism” for aggrieved parties to mediate through intermediaries (Lee et al., 2006). In contrast, although the Western system is more rigid, based on contracts and legal obligations, they perceive ‘*guanxi*’ networks as “widespread unfairness and unbalance in social exchange and social relationships” (Vanhonacker, 2004).

Several criticisms can be levelled at this bifurcated approach. Tsang (1998) proposes that Western interpersonal relationships are mirrored mainly by linear transactional dealings, while *guanxi* is contingent upon protracted “orientation and mutual trust”; furthermore it is “heterogeneous” and, the author alleges, far more complex than its Western counterpart.

Viewed objectively, *guanxi* has both its proponents and opponents, and is mutually reciprocal. The benefits generate economic optimisation, while the shortcomings

usually exposes dubious business ethics. Zhang and Pimpa (2010) urge Western managers to put aside their misgivings about the apparent informal business relationship structures in China and to examine the evidence that supports its successful application.

#### 2.5.2.4. CHINESE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICA

It could be said that China and South Africa share a unique relationship. Over the past two decades, the Sino-South African relationship has grown appreciably, permeating the broader politico-economic and cultural arenas. Kabemba (2012) notes that while “South Africa is the only African country to invest in China”, utilising the former’s advanced ‘gas-from-coal’ technologies (SASOL)<sup>5</sup> in that country, the trade balance is asymmetrical. Kalembe (2012) voices the concerns of many who see the imbalance as typifying a “colonial relationship” with South Africa’s raw materials exchanged for Chinese manufactured products. Hence, the perspective of many South Africans towards the Chinese living within their borders is often one of hostility and suspicion, fed by prejudice. For those Chinese who were born within South Africa, that belligerent attitude reinforces their isolation and marginalisation, often instilling the ‘laager-mentality’ (defensive, inward-looking attitudes) that perpetuates intermarriage and inter-business connections. The evidence shows, however, that Chinese businesses provide employment for local people and, while the latter may be critical of what they perceive as low wages, they are fortunate, given the high unemployment prevalent in South Africa (SA Census, 2012), to have work.

Matondo (2012:40, 44) observes that if Chinese employers were to gain broader understanding of the local cultural traits, traditions and languages, intercultural barriers and the accompanying misunderstandings could be surmounted, and attitudes of their local customers changed.

China’s economic growth and propensity for trade expansion have not gone unnoticed by local South African Chinese business people, who have had a presence in the country since the late 1800s (Park, 2012). Laribee (2008) claims that the 1990s “wave

---

<sup>5</sup> Sasol Ltd is an international integrated energy and chemical company, founded at Sasolburg, in 1950, in South Africa to generate synthetic fuels from coal-to-liquids (CTL). See: <http://www.sasol.co.za/about-sasol/company-profile/historical-milestones> for background details.

of newcomers within the Chinese Diaspora” has setup and dominated an import supply trade line linking Chinese ports to the shops of South Africans and their millions of consumers. Initially beginning as small shopkeepers, many have seen their educated offspring (along with new immigrants) graduate to becoming entrepreneurs and industrialists.

Historically, the South African Chinese originated from various locations, including Taiwan, Hong Kong and increasingly Mainland China. Educational, ideological, vernacular and religious differences often separate these groups, resulting in mistrust and misunderstanding (Hofstede & Bond, 1988); yet all are ethnically Chinese and all share in a rich cultural heritage spanning four thousand years (Park, 2012; Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 1998:116; Yamazaki, 1996:110).

A legacy of their Chinese cultural heritage is an understanding of the special relationship of *guanxi* that exists between individuals and families, sometimes spanning generations. Together with their grasp of *mianzi*, familiarity with the type of respect or honour given and received, which exists between superior and inferior, young and old, it would suggest they have a significant advantage in developing bilateral trade links with overseas Chinese (Larabee, 2008:361; Tung & Worm, 2001).

Both of these concepts impact the nature of business in Chinese communities in Asia and abroad, and the aim of this paper is to understand what effects these concepts have on Chinese business people in a South African context. The Brenthurst Foundation, after conducting an extensive study across five South African nations to determine the identity of the Chinese trader, concluded that they remain “largely unknown, scarcely understood and rarely examined” (McNamee et al, 2012). Harris (1994), alluding to parochial studies analysing Chinese culture and religion, goes on record as stating, “relatively little has been published about the Chinese community” *per se*. Thus, it would appear a gap in the literature exists for further research into the local (South African) communities’ practices, and especially into the perception and application of cultural inherited values on their business behaviour and mores.

Immersion in South African lifestyles and Western ideologies may have resulted in acculturation, total or partial (Park, 2009:16; 2012; Berry, 1980; Bourhis, Moise,



Pereault & Senecal, 1997), by Chinese businesspeople. It could be possible that living in South Africa has eroded their historical ‘guanxi’ connections abroad.

Given the increasing bilateral trade between China and South Africa (Bodomo, 2009:175; Cissé, 2012:1), expanding cultural ties and growing number of Chinese tourists visiting our South African shores, it would be expedient to promote a study of Chinese culture and language (Huynh, Park & Chen, 2010:303; Wenping, 2007:28). After all, Chinese children study English from primary school, granting them access to all the acquired knowledge of the West.

Recognising our cultural differences with this small but industrious community allows us the freedom to respond mindfully by raising our awareness of and sensitivity to, the Chinese traditional concepts of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi,’ and developing our own intercultural communication competence will promote a mutually beneficial outcome (Kim, 1991:259; Ting-Toomey, 1999: 270,271). Emulating their ability to withstand hardships and to endure sacrifices, often long separation from their families, has allowed them to succeed where many others have drawn back (McNamee et al., 2015:5).

The Chinese people in South Africa as a group (or groups) have established numerous business interests across the African continent. The difference between South Africa and their continental neighbours is that South Africa is home to the oldest and the largest Chinese populations in Africa (Park, 2010:9). Across the African continent, it is only in South Africa that Chinese own fixed property, an indication of stability and permanency. McNamee et al (2012:29, 42) adds, that “only in South Africa do they express any sense of attachment or belonging” to the host country.

~\*~

## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a detailed account of the research process adopted in conjunction with the selected methodology to achieve the goals and objectives of this study as expressed in section 1.3.

This study was qualitative in nature, as this was determined to best support the objective of the study (see 1.3), which was to gain an emic perspective of the informants. In so doing, it would be providing a thick description of the meanings they attach to the interrelationships and interactions encountered in business relationships.

However, Denzin and Lincoln (2005:11) contend that any qualitative research comprises three co-dependent processes, namely ontology, epistemology and methodology, which impact the choice of methodology. Hence, prior to expounding methodology, it would be fitting to elaborate on the other two.

This ‘triangle’ of interlaced universal activities effectively defines the qualitative research practice. The terminological umbrella covers ‘theory, method and analysis’ as well as ontology, epistemology and methodology.

While it is not within the framework of this study to explicate significance or elaborate in detail on philosophy, it was considered significant enough to present the researcher’s perspective or worldview, given that the methodology flows from the stance taken on ontology and epistemology. The latter duo generated a framework (ontology) suggesting a series of questions (epistemology), which are then investigated (methodology) in specific ways. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:11) exposit this issue at length. Moreover, the data uncovered relating to the question was collected, collated, analysed and recorded, all according to the researcher’s worldview.

The interpretive bias of this research has been influenced by the view that this exploratory study seeks to investigate an area that has been under-researched, namely the behaviour, meaning and subjective experiences (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988) exhibited by a minority group. The data garnered is preliminary data that may assist and shape the direction of future research.

The next section presents the measuring instrument, a questionnaire adopted for the purposes of this study, and derived from the apparent deficits revealed in the Literature (see Chapter 2). A justification for this option is provided before examining the design and format, in which an outline of the questions is provided.

## **3.2. QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **3.2.1. Questionnaire Justification**

This section addresses why this particular instrument was selected to inform the research. Given that every measuring instrument embraces both strengths and weaknesses, and given the time constraints for this study, this researcher selected the questionnaire format as most likely to fulfil the objectives of this study, driven by one critical factor: the sample group were members of a high-context culture (HCC), whilst the researcher originated from a low-context cultural (LCC) group. Any considerations for a designing strategy relating to second-language English speakers needed to assess the ramifications of the intercultural information-seeking investigation judiciously before proceeding. Guirdham (2005:198) points out the potential for conflict and misunderstanding by asserting that LCC speakers fail to grasp the nuances and implicatures of the HCC speech, whilst the latter may be affronted by the directness of the LCC interviewer. Bennett (1998:18) explains that in the former ‘implicit’ speech type, context is critical, whereas in the latter ‘explicit’ style, the information is directly encoded in the message.

In weighing up the choice of questionnaire versus interviews, a major predisposing factor was that the absence of an interviewer eliminated the possibility of interviewer/researcher bias (Eiselen, Uys & Potgieter, 2005:2) or of unduly influencing participants, which according to Walsh (2001) improves the study’s

reliability and validity. Kvale (1996) cautions that even subliminally, “tone of voice and body language” can skewer participant responses, introducing random error.

Within this study, the terms ‘questionnaire’ and ‘survey’ are used reciprocally. An explanation for this is that ‘survey’ is a term that can be used to define any research endeavour in which the researcher harvests or mines data from an pre-identified population segment to determine the “characteristics, opinions or intentions of that population” (Couchman & Dawson, 1995: 70; Polit & Beck, 2004:234).

It has been recognised that questionnaires “form an integral part of descriptive and opinion-related surveys” (Eiselen & Uys, 2005:1), which raises the question: how to administer them? Mailing (by post or electronically) or physically distributing them were the options considered. The second decision was to implement self-administered structured questionnaires (SAQs). A brief perusal of the advantages of this method follows below:

- (i) Reduced administration costs render it more economically viable than face-to-face interviews;
- (ii) Ease of analysis and administration;
- (iii) Perceived to be less intrusive than face-to-face (or telephone) interviews where response bias can mislead; hence participants are more inclined to respond truthfully to sensitive questions;
- (iv) Provides convenience as respondents can complete the questionnaire at their own pace and in their own environment;
- (v) Familiarity to most adults, who have probably completed something similar at some time in the past;
- (vi) Permits anonymity, said to increase the response rate;
- (vii) Standardisation of questionnaires allows highly structured questions to be promulgated.

The disadvantages of SAQs, include:

- (i) Manually disseminated, posted or emailed surveys historically have a low/slow response rate, particularly if the questionnaire is overly lengthy or complicated,

- holds little interest for the respondent, or is considered too personal, or is offensive;
- (ii) Little (or no) control over who completes the survey despite it being intended for a specific participant;
  - (iii) No strong motivation for respondents to respond;
  - (iv) Poor design can be misleading to participants.

The positive factors for implementing the questionnaire as a data collection tool were judged to far outweigh the disadvantages, and the commitment was made to locate or design such an instrument.

Corbetta (2003:145) indicates that the primary benefit of self-administered questionnaires is same-day completion, which eliminates the need for a follow up, hence saving time. A secondary advantage of this method is that the response rate is usually high. (Comparisons between Group 1 and Group 2's response rates can be seen 3.2.4.1).

### **3.2.2. Questionnaire Design**

This section outlines and provides motivation for the questionnaire design, an integral part of which is the aesthetically pleasing qualities or attractive appearance of the questionnaire, supplied in part by the choice of technical specifications listed below:

#### **TECHNICAL DETAILS**

On the next page, Table 3.1 presents an illustration of the material aspects relating to the questionnaire package, including a breakdown of the costs involved to print one survey unit. Details regarding the printing elements such as typeface and ink colours are also provided. Header size was 14 pt. and text size at 12 pt.

(The weight of the paper is measured in gsm (grams per square metre), reflecting the density measurement, which relates to the thickness of the paper).<sup>6</sup> The questionnaire package comprised five single-sided pages in total and a copy of the same can be found in Appendix A, B and C.

**TABLE 3.1: TECHNICAL DETAILS RELATING TO PRINTED MATERIALS**

| PAPER |        |        |       | PRINTING         |                  |           | COSTS             |                 |
|-------|--------|--------|-------|------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Size  | Weight | Finish | Ink   | Font             | Layout           | Breakdown |                   |                 |
| A4    | 90gsm  | Matte  | black | TimesNew Roman   | 1.5 line spacing | 5 pages   | colour page       | R1, 85 each     |
|       |        |        | teal  |                  |                  |           | black only        | R1. 10 each     |
|       |        |        |       |                  |                  |           |                   | R7/survey       |
|       |        |        |       | 30 pages printed |                  |           | <b>Total cost</b> | <b>R210. 00</b> |

Mouton (2013:100) argues that there are two choices of gathering data available once the questionnaire has been determined as the measuring instrument of choice: to utilise an existing instrument – or to purpose-design and construct another.

After scrutinising the available choices, the following conclusions were reached: Option one was invalidated for two reasons: existing copyrights on the design and the estimated time it would take to receive confirmation for usage (costs aside) should a suitable instrument be located; and secondly, an apposite model that would adequately encompass the research question appeared unavailable. Hence, option two, to design a questionnaire loosely based on an existing model was selected. The format of the questionnaire's structure used in this study is loosely based on the 'Questionnaire Design' exemplified by Eiselen and Uys (2005:18-22), itself an adaption of an existing University of Johannesburg document.

Although the majority of the sample group hailed from a distinctly Chinese linguistic and cultural background, the questionnaire was presented only in the English language at the time, as the onus of translating the questionnaire into Chinese was

<sup>6</sup> Various factors relating to purpose of the project will determine the quality and grammage of the paper employed. More details can be found at: <http://info.universalprinting.com/blog/bid/59674/Understanding-Paper-Weight-Mysteries-Revealed>

deemed excessive.<sup>7</sup> (To maintain questionnaire validity then, the translation would need to be checked by a second Chinese language speaker for accuracy). A further justification for a monolingual bias is that the sample group, in order to conduct business in South Africa, would be required for the most part to use English as a *lingua franca*.

The following section contains an exhaustive breakdown of the questionnaire that was presented to the respondents.

The questionnaire document contained five single-sided printed pages, with three divisions: the front or cover page (see APPENDIX A), displaying Stellenbosch University's letterhead with teal green horizontal band as a background. This page denotes the academic oversight for the study. The second division presented a cover (consent) letter (APPENDIX B) informing participants of their rights to privacy, and of the voluntary nature and value of their participation. De Vos (1998:157) underscores the critical role played by the cover letter for the protection of both the researcher and the respondent. Finally, the *de facto* questionnaire (see APPENDIX C) concludes the document.

Note: To personalise the study, the researcher's signature was appended to the 'Letter of consent' (where respondents sign their agreement to the conditions of the study) along with a brief word of thanks to respondents, for participating in the study.

The questionnaire was composed of three sections: In Section A, questions 1-10 solicited personal and demographic details (see breakdown below). Section B (questions 11-15) and Section C (questions 16-21) investigated the core concepts of 'guanxi' and 'mianzi'. Although predominantly closed questions were used, several open questions were inserted to gauge participants' perceptions, views and opinions that might not have been accessible in answering the structured questions.

---

<sup>7</sup> The decision to present the questionnaire only in English was taken in consultation with my supervisor and related to directly costs and time.

A deliberate choice was made to restrict the length questionnaire to a maximum of twenty-one questions, which it was calculated would take a respondent approximately ten minutes to complete. Thus, depth and detail was sacrificed for practicality, as it was believed a shorter questionnaire would be appealing to participants and more likely to encourage their participation.

### **3.2.3. Questionnaire Outline**

PROFILE: The survey was presented in the following format: (1) demographic data and type of employment/educational status and number of employees; (2) the participants view on ‘guanxi’ and its effects or influence on doing business in South Africa; and (3), the participants’ perception of ‘mianzi’ and its effects or impact in business relationships, new and incumbent.

SECTION A comprises questions 1-10, with the first seven questions covering basic demographics and personal details, requesting participants to volunteer details relating to: gender, age, marital status, number of years living in South Africa, place of birth, highest level of education and employment status.

Question 8 follows on to enquire ‘whom they employ’, i.e., is it only Chinese/only non-Chinese/both Chinese and non-Chinese. Question 9 asks participants to indicate the sector of business in which they are involved and offers a designated area (lined space) where any non-listed response may be inserted. Finally, question 10 asks whether respondents have any religious affiliation (check box provided) and if so what that may be, offering space for any non-listed answer outside of Christian, Buddhist or Taoist.

SECTION B comprises questions 11-15 and relates to the first core concept of ‘guanxi,’ with each of the check boxes offering multiple options. The questions begin by enquiring as to how participants see ‘guanxi;’ as connections/relations or a ‘back door’ (to bypass conventional routes) or a combination of the two. The following question attempts to ascertain whether participants perceive ‘guanxi’ as a positive or negative influence, as both or as neither of the two.



Subsequently, the survey inquires whether ‘guanxi’ is useful for doing business with other Chinese in South Africa. The survey enquires whom they would select if the participants were employers. Respondents select their replies from a specified list. The latter offers the following options: Chinese first / non-Chinese first / best person for the job / politically motivated (BEE). Question 15 concludes this section with seven statements, requiring participants to select the top five that they would perceive as being the most important if they had to advise someone (in South Africa and Africa) how to do business with the Chinese community. Hence a ranking is required, from 1-5, with 1 being most important and 5 the least important.

SECTION C comprises the final section of the survey, with questions 16-21. The first four questions (16-20) are closed, with only two check box options (yes/no) each. This section looks at how the participants perceive the second core concept of ‘mianzi’.

Participants are asked to ascertain and respond whether it is important for them to receive and give face in their business relationships. The next question enquires whether (in their opinion) ‘giving face’ make getting business easier. The questioning takes on a cross-cultural perspective and asks if participants would give equal face to a non-Chinese business partner as to a Chinese business partner, then follows up by enquiring whether participants believe non-Chinese people attach equal importance to face as do the Chinese. (Note: ‘face’ has been used interchangeably in this section with ‘mianzi’).

Question 20 seeks a broader context and opinion and asks if participants think the survey they just completed and, by extension, the results of this study would be helpful to non-Chinese people in providing information about Chinese society, or community and culture. The final question is open-ended and enquires whether participants can offer any suggestions relating to ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ that may have been overlooked in this survey that they would like this study to consider. Space was provided on the questionnaire for participants to respond (several lines were inserted for a written answer to be penned).

The question concluded with a brief expression of gratitude to the respondent for their participation. As previously mentioned, a copy of the questionnaire proper is available under APPENDIX C.

### **3.2.4. Questionnaire Receptiveness**

For expediency, this section has been subdivided into manual distribution and email distribution. The latter method proved to be a disappointment (3.4.2).

#### **3.2.4.1. MANUAL DISTRIBUTION**

The data collection response for Group 1 was slow and low, necessitating several verbal reminders to the group and a regular monthly visual presence by the researcher at their location to induce returns. Two of the questionnaires distributed to participants were lost, *en route* to or at their homes or places of business. Replacement questionnaires were provided upon notification, but unfortunately, this delay compounded their deferred return date and increased the response period. Thus, sample attrition (see 3.7.1 for explanation) in Group 1 resulted in extending the location parameters to ensure a reasonably sized sample was attained.

In contrast, Group 2 had a very high response rate with the majority of those who were enquired of responding to the call for volunteers (see exceptions below) once the intermediary informed them of the purpose of the study. This group comprised mostly older participants, who displayed some curiosity as to the envisaged benefits of the study and offered verbal comments (preferring not to write them) on some of the open questions, which were recorded in field notes (APPENDIX D).

#### **3.2.4.2. EMAIL DISTRIBUTION**

It should be noted that, contrary to the better judgement of this researcher, two questionnaires were emailed to prospective participants, who indicated verbally to this researcher that they were willing to participate but were too busy to do so at that time. The questionnaires were duly submitted to the email addresses depicted on the business cards supplied. Both failed to produce a response. No follow-up email was dispatched as it was deemed unlikely to generate a positive response when the study was dependent on the goodwill of volunteers.

A possible explanation posited for this failure is that the added administrative burden imposed on the respondent may have proved too onerous. It would have necessitated the scanning of the consent letter with their appended signature, and of the completed questionnaire, both of which would need to be emailed back to the researcher. (This added imposition was explained to both prospective participants at the time.) In mitigation, it should be stated that the singular purpose for this questionnaire did not foresee its dissemination in an electronic format; otherwise, a format more conducive to online response and administration would have been promulgated.

### **3.3. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

Data collection broadly refers to deploying the measuring instrument to the designated sample under investigation. Mouton (2002:67) elaborates, if correctly constructed and corroborated over time, data collected by the same will tend to be reliable.

The process of data collection encompasses several stages, beginning with the presentation of the measuring instrument to the targeted sample group, and concluding with the subsequent administration and collating of the raw data. In this study, a questionnaire was disseminated in several controlled phases, in accordance with the sampling frame (see 3.7.1).

Bhattacharyya (2006:390) describes a questionnaire as a “structured technique for gathering data”, which in this was self-administered. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2008:174, 175) in their *Research Methodology* note that careful planning is required to design a questionnaire that allows for effective administration. They suggest the following guidelines: open-ended questions in SAQs should be initiated to allow respondents to convey their own thoughts on an issue freely without undue influence from the researcher. The ensuing unfettered respondent feedback potentially offers an untapped source of new thought. In comparison, the close-ended questions provide an array of options from which respondents can select.

The Literature Review performed an integral role in the design and development of the questionnaire’s construct validity (see Section 3.6), which Hamilton (2012) points

out, deals with the challenge of attempting to assess a non-tangible trait (the influences of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’) that is dependent upon “deductive reasoning from observation”.

A pilot study phase (see 3.5) was initiated ten days before the launch of the main programme, referred to henceforth as the data collection phase(s). Polit and Hungler (1999) strongly advocate running a pilot test, considering it an essential instrument by which to implement any required redactions or refinements, to exclude or diminish potential problems, and thereby to validate the effectiveness of the instrument (see 3.6 for more on validation).

Data was obtained by distributing self-administered surveys consisting predominantly of structured questions to preselected groups of Chinese businesspeople in the Cape Town metropolitan area in South Africa. These sample groups were located predominantly in two outlying Cape Town suburbs (see 3.7.4). The main criterion for selecting these particular groups was ease of access via intermediaries (see 3.4.3) known to the researcher prior to starting this study. Thus in a sense a relationship of sorts existed, which parallels the ‘guanxi’ being studied.

Other selection criteria were applied to ensure participants complied with the eligibility profile required to pursue the research objectives. The methodology determined for the data collection process was as follows:

Once the location of the first sample group, designated Group 1 (see 3.7.4), was ascertained, an arrangement was made via a third party intermediary (3.4.3), with the permission of the leaders, to address the assembly, to outline the research goals and objectives, and to call for volunteers. This was the first phase, which laid the groundwork in preparation for the launch phase of the questionnaire, and was seen as a critical prerequisite to establishing a baseline assessment for further dialogue and social interaction.

Compelled by the poor response rate (see sample attrition, 3.7.4) encountered by Group 1, it became increasingly obvious to the researcher that the sample group needed to be expanded quickly to justify and validate the study. In response to a broad

verbal request and a focused email query for assistance directed to Chinese acquaintances amongst the researcher's collaborative network, a second intermediary (3.4.3) volunteered to assist in making the necessary introductions, this time to an official at the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce, a business oversight organization, located in Cape Town. After the formalities had been completed, he granted his permission to approach members affiliated to this group, all long-standing businesspeople in the community. The most strategic location to encounter this second group, labelled Group 2 (see 3.7.4), was purportedly at the Chinese Language School, in Observatory, a suburb to the south of Cape Town. (See 3.7.4 for more details on locations).

Access to both groups was facilitated by the intervention of intermediaries (see 3.4.3), without whose assistance this study would not have been possible due to the closed nature of the South African Chinese community. Both groups, although differing ideologically in political views, shared similar traditions, language and cultural roots and even, in some instances, religious affiliations.

### **3.3.1. Data Collection Time-frame**

Table 3.2, shown on the following page provides an illustration of the period from early May to the end of June 2014, during which time the sample group was identified and accessed was granted with the aid of intermediaries.

There were nine salient dates in this survey. Two groups (1 and 2) were selected from the available volunteers at two different venues, namely BOL (Bread of Life church) and CLS (Chinese Language School).

Records were kept of observations and visits were logged to the two locations. A copy of these field notes is available in APPENDIX D, for more details.

References are made to the relevant sections pertaining to the event recorded.

**TABLE 3.2: DATA COLLECTION TIME FRAME**

| DATE      | No. | PLACE | DETAILS OF EVENT   | REFERENCE  |                            |
|-----------|-----|-------|--|--|----------------------------|
| May 11    | 1   | BOL   | Introduction to group by intermediary                      | 3.3.3.2  |                            |
|           |     |       | presentation of credentials via group leadership;          | 3.3.2  |                            |
|           |     |       | addressed members en masse; explained purpose              | 3.4.2  |                            |
|           |     |       | of study and eligibility criteria; request for volunteers. |  |                            |
| May 28    |     | SU    | Approval stage one: questionnaire design stage;            | 3.2.2  |                            |
|           |     |       | submitted to supervisor for comments & approval;           |  |                            |
|           |     |       | implemeted suggestions into questionaire design            |  |                            |
|           |     |       | Awaiting supervisor approval for:                          |  |                            |
|           |     |       | Cover page/consent letter recommendations                  |  |                            |
|           |     |       |  |  |                            |
| May 29-31 | 1   | BOL   | Pilot test-two approved volunteers                         | 3.5  |                            |
|           |     |       | survey assessed for weaknesses/limitations;                | 3.5.3  |                            |
|           |     |       | Pilot surveys surveys returned with suggestions;           |  |                            |
|           |     |       | suggestions reviewed and adopted.                          |  |                            |
| June 02   |     | SU    | Approval stage two: updated survey sent to supervisor      | 3.3.2  |                            |
|           |     |       | Awaiting final approval before launching programme         |  |                            |
|           |     |       | cover page and consent letter finalised                    |  |                            |
|           |     |       |  |  |                            |
| June 03   |     | CPT   | Outsourced bulk-printing of questionnaire package;         |  |                            |
|           |     |       | Thirty copies printed at total cost of R 210.00            |  |                            |
| June 08   | 1   | BOL   | Launch of Questionnaire -manual dissemination              | 3.2.4.1  |                            |
|           |     |       | to volunteers meeting the eligibilty criteria.             |  |                            |
| June 14   | 2   | CLS   | Access gained to new group via intermediary;               | 3.4.3  |                            |
|           |     |       | BOL  | Questionnaire disseminated manually                | 3.7.4                      |
|           |     |       |  | Completed questionnaires obtained same day.        |                            |
|           | 1   |       | Verbal appeal to group to return completed forms.          |  |                            |
|           |     |       |  |  |                            |
| June 21   | 2   | CLS   | Revisit/ approach vendors & business people                | 3.7.4  |                            |
|           |     |       | BOL  |  | Reiterated appeal to Group |
|           |     |       |  | to return outstanding surveys before cut-off date. |                            |
|           |     |       |  |  |                            |
| June 28   | 1   | BOL   | Cut-off date   | 3.3.2  |                            |
|           |     |       | several stragglers return completed questionnaires         |  |                            |

**LEGEND:**

BOL = Bread of Life church

CLS = Chinese Language School

CPT = Cape Town

SU = Stellenbosch University

**3.3.2. Data Collection Stages**

Planning and preparation were critical to advise and inform this series of stages.

STAGE ONE: Once the research question had been established and the sample group identified, it was necessary to:

- (i) Determine how to gain access to the group;

- (ii) Persuade intermediaries who were in good standing with the group of the researcher's intentions and integrity;
- (iii) Follow through on introductions to the gatekeepers in each group;
- (iv) Ensure that the volunteer-participants met the research profile (eligibility criteria);
- (v) Confirm respondents understood the requirements and their rights, according to the ethical guidelines of the study; self-administered surveys were distributed.

Note: 'Secondary' intermediaries for Group 1 were two pastors from that faith-based institution; for Group 2 were initially the Treasurer of the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce and thereafter the principal of the Chinese Language School.

STAGE TWO: As the data was being collected and assimilated:

- (i) A database was established wherein each participant was assigned a sequential PID (participant identity number - see APPENDIX F) from 1 to 30, according to the order in which they returned the completed questionnaires;
- (ii) Responses were numerically encoded and entered into the database;
- (iii) Data cleaning or filtering occurred as data was transcribed;
- (iv) Once all the questionnaires received at the cut-off date, the database was deemed 'complete';
- (v) Two audit checks were undertaken, one week apart, to confirm the accuracy of the data entered, and several small errors were corrected.

Once this segment of the study was completed, the data was judged ready for analysis. The following sections outline some of the preliminary challenges, the objectives, data collection instruments, participants and procedures for the pilot study, as well as the data analysis phase and the ethics involved.

### 3.3.3. Preliminaries

#### 3.3.3.1. NEGOTIATING ACCESS

In a 2007 review of studies related to “access negotiation”, Matthiesen and Richter identify a host of obstacles that may hinder or prevent access to the designated sample group. These include: gatekeepers, ethical considerations obtaining informed access, spatiotemporal constraints, lack of personal contact (with participants), limited comprehension of sociocultural context and distrust of bureaucracy. They add that good planning, linked to foresight and proactiveness increases the chances of success.

In this study, the researcher gained access to both groups of participants via personal contacts (see 3.4.3 for details on intermediaries), confirming assertions of their efficacy by other researchers (Matthiesen & Richter, 2007; Winkler, 2008). These personal contacts were the ‘primary’ intermediaries who expedited access to the Chinese community and facilitated all the preliminary introductions.

#### 3.3.3.2. PRE-SURVEY BRIEFING

Sample Group 1: At the researcher’s first meeting with and introduction to the congregation of BOL church the pastor explained to the members the nature and purpose of the research being conducted. This researcher then addressed the group *en masse*, restated his credentials as a research student at Stellenbosch University, and then reiterated the requirements for volunteers willing to participate, emphasising their rights to anonymity and confidentiality. The briefing was concluded with a statement regarding the purported and expected benefits to the Chinese business community as envisaged by this researcher. The time frame was the two months prior to the estimated date that the questionnaire was due to be launched.

At that time, a small printed brochure (Appendix G) was distributed to prospective participants, containing the name of the researcher, his cell number and contact information, plus brief details of the study and a note to call/email if they required more details before committing themselves to participate in the study. A second verbal reminder was given to the same group one month later when this researcher again attended the BOL church meeting. The same details were repeated for the



benefit of any members who might have missed the first announcement, and to reaffirm the soon-to-be announced commencement of the survey.

Once the questions had been drafted, tested and finalised, the documents were reviewed by the researcher's supervisor and prepared for the pilot study.

### **3.4. ASSUMPTIONS, DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

#### **3.4.1. Assumptions**

Certain assumptions regarded to be self-evident truths were made without which this study would not have been possible, in agreement with Leedy and Ormrod's (2010:62) simplistic assertion that without assumptions "the research problem itself could not exist".

- (i) Regardless of their geographic origins, Chinese everywhere have been socialised by their cultural upbringing to an awareness of, or an exposure to, or have experienced and/or continue to experience the concepts of 'guanxi' and 'mianzi' as it is understood in Chinese sociocultural traditions.
- (ii) All the participants surveyed who volunteered their services clearly understood the questions upon reading them.
- (iii) Due to the non-invasive character of the survey, it is further assumed that participants would respond truthfully and accurately to the questions based on their personal experience.
- (iv) In a notation to the above: several of the respondents were members of a faith-based organisation, ergo the expectation was that higher levels of integrity and ethical business practises would be found.
- (v) Given the relatively small size of the community an assumption was made that accountability within Group 1 would be a motivating factor to return the questionnaires timeously.
- (vi) The sample groups' English reading competence was deemed adequate to comprehend and accurately answer the questions, based on the pilot-test feedback

- (vii) The acculturation of younger respondents (Ho, 2010) into the South African cultural framework may have diluted the traditional Chinese culture of Confucian dynamism and filial obligations, related to perceptions of ‘guanxi.’
- (viii) The measuring instrument (questionnaire) implemented has proven validity.

### **3.4.2. Delimitations**

Firstly, the study was confined to ethnically Chinese people, born in either South Africa or immigrants. Secondly, a further imposition restricted the location of the target population to the Cape Town metropolitan surrounds. The reasons for this decision included: (i) a desire to contain travel costs and times; and (ii) to shed some light on Chinese communities living beyond the industrial hub of Johannesburg, (and home to the largest Chinese community(s) in South Africa) towards which most of the research on the history and socioeconomic movements of the Chinese had mostly been aligned.

Thirdly, by further restricting the range of potential respondents to only one segment of the Chinese population, namely the business community, the primary research question could be more fully explored. This narrow focus would meet one of the aims of this study: to determine whether increased understanding of this minority group and their perceived interrelationships could potentially contribute toward raising employment by providing a narrative for future joint ventures and increased commercial interactions between business people from other ethnic or cultural groups within the greater South African area.

Given the small size of the Cape Town Chinese community, inclusive of Mainlanders (PRC), Taiwanese and those originating from Hong Kong, this study may have only limited generalisability to the rest of South Africa, where local factors may impose a stronger influence in determining the reasons for people settling in Cape Town and conducting business in that area or district.

Fourthly, the questionnaire length was deliberately curtailed to a maximum of 21 questions in a bid to enhance the appeal to prospective participants by reducing the time commitment. The time for respondents to complete the questionnaire was calculated at approximately 10-15 minutes. Thus, depth and detail were sacrificed for

practicality, as it was believed a shorter questionnaire would be appealing to participants. As one study succinctly put it, “length is inversely proportional to response rate” (Eiselen, Uys & Potgieter, 2005:3).

### **3.4.3. Limitations**

**ACCESS:** Access to the Chinese community proved more challenging than initially anticipated, for a number of reasons. Past-perceived injustices produced misunderstandings, marginalisation and alienation of the Chinese, culminating in a consequential suspicion of the motives of ‘strangers’ (see Gudykunst & Kim, 1995:429-442), resulting in ‘boundary-drawing’ that perpetuated an ingroup-outgroup differentiation (Billig, 1989; Brewer & Miller, 1996; Ting-Toomy, 1999:14). The obstacle of access in data collection is relatively common, elaborates Bryman (1988), and was in this study facilitated by an intermediary who was known to the researcher, who ‘smoothed the way’ by making the necessary introductions.

**TIME:** A general tardiness with regard to completing and returning the questionnaires to the researcher was exhibited by many of the Group 1 participants, exacerbating the already tight time constraints for data collection. Due to the voluntary nature of their contributions, it was difficult to inject a sense of urgency without potentially hamstringing the collection process. This element of uncertainty motivated the researcher to seek alternative sources. A similar introductory procedure was required to gain access to Group 2. By contrast, surveys conducted at the second location of Group 2 proved to be less onerous in data collection terms and more efficient; having participants complete the questionnaire *in situ* reduced the time-expenditure factor considerably.

The short time frame available within which the data collection was managed, and the comparatively small population size of the Chinese community residing in the Cape Town area, constrained the selection and recruitment of available participants for this study.

LANGUAGE: A limited command of Mandarin Chinese (known as Putonghua in Chinese) by the researcher restricted first-language communication by the sample group(s), necessitating at times the intervention and support of an intermediary.

BUDGET: Financial constraints conspired with the access and time to impose limits on travel and the related costs. Were this not so, a similar survey conducted in another part of the country that was home to another Chinese community might possibly have yielded results that were more diverse; however, access and time could again negatively impact even an unrestrained purse.

Both the linguistic and spatiotemporal factors (access and time) were ‘known’ before the study commenced; however, the degree of difficulties encountered was underestimated in both instances

### **3.5. PILOT STUDY**

The term ‘pilot study’ refers to a trial run or scaled-down version of the survey carried out prior in preparation for the primary research work (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001). Faulty instrument design, inappropriate questions or overly complicated language leading to incorrectly interpreting instructions (Struwig & Stead 2004:89) is avoided. Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) pragmatically append the rider that while conducting a pilot study may not guarantee a successful study it does enhance that likelihood.

Two respondents were selected to participate in the pilot study. They represented the two principal ‘sending’ nations involved, namely Mainland China (PRC) and Taiwan (ROC). One male and one female were requested to participate, the former from the PRC and the latter from Taiwan. The male is thirty-five years old, is currently studying Ancient Languages at Stellenbosch University and has lived in South Africa for almost ten years. His female counterpart is forty and is likewise a student; she is studying Theology and has lived in South Africa for over four years. Both have good levels of English competence in reading and speaking. Both participants had previous corporate employment experience in South Africa prior to taking up their studies.

The pilot study phase was initiated ten days before the launch of the main programme, referred to henceforth as the data collection phase(s).

### **3.5.1. Pilot Study Objectives**

As the questionnaire was researcher-designed, the pilot study preceded the main survey launch to allow potential problems with regard to clarity of language to be addressed timeously before commencement of the data collection phase. In essence, the justification for the pilot phase was to ascertain:

- (i) The “feasibility and validity” (Brink & Wood, 1998:259) of the “particular research instrument” (Baker, 1994:182-3), as well as the effectiveness of the questionnaire;
- (ii) Neither the tone and attitude conveyed by the English (language) employed in the questionnaire were appropriate to the cultural sensitivities of the general community;
- (iii) That the comprehensibility of the standard of language would be within the English proficiency of the sample group, given that many are second-language (SL) English speakers. It was acknowledged that this criterion is a subjective judgement based on the pilot - group participants’ knowledge of and familiarity with this community, given its small size;
- (iv) The questionnaire’s capacity to yield decisive, meaningful and useful responses to the research question on the usage of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ in the Chinese business community;
- (v) Suggestions as to the adoption (if necessary) of possible refinements or amendments to ensure that the main respondents (in the identified sample groups) would encounter no difficulties in answering the questions, and to avert potential problems in recording the data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 1997:26).

### **3.5.2. Amendments Approved**

Several suggestions were made and incorporated into the body of the survey, which was proofread, and then adopted as the final revision and printed. These were:

- (i) In Question A5 (see APPENDIX C), ‘country of birth’ was replaced by ‘place of birth’, given the political sensitivities over the ‘One China’ dictum expressed by the Beijing (PRC) government (Anthony, Grimm & Kim, 2013). A contrary, equally fierce view is taken by Taiwanese nationals, who see themselves as being distinct from the former, as do those born in Hong Kong. Thus, at the risk of alienating the majority of the sample group, this amendment was critical.
- (ii) In Question A9, ‘self-employed’ was added to the ‘sector of business’ question.

### **3.5.3. Pilot Study Participant Feedback**

The two student participants were deemed diligent in their perusal of the draft questionnaire. Their helpful suggestions were integrated into the final questionnaire design. Further advice from this researcher’s supervisor to add a final open question to the survey was taken; the purpose of the final question was to tease out any insights or opinions that the sample group may have construed as helpful to this research.

It has been noted that the advice and suggestions received from both participants was subjective, influenced by their backgrounds, environment and experience. As this study is qualitative in nature, subjectivity will enter the diagnostic framework; the researcher seeks to consistently maintain a balance between objectivity and experiential knowledge. Nevertheless, the report-back was regarded as affirmation to proceed to the next phase of the data collection process. (More details on validity and reliability of the study are covered in section 3.6).

### **3.5.4. Pilot Study evaluation**

In accordance with Mouton’s (2013:102, 103) directives, the value of the pilot study was in eliminating vagaries of language, ambiguities and double-barrelled questions.

He (Mouton 2013:102) further cautions against:

- (i) Fictitious (cultural) constructs;
- (ii) Asking leading questions;

- (iii) Negatively phrased questions; and
- (iv) The avoidance of threatening or sensitive questions.

The questionnaire layout and design should be open and simple, with clear, easy-to-follow instructions to ensure response accuracy. Lengthiness should be avoided so as to encourage respondent participation (Mouton, 2013:101,102). Mouton's advice was strictly adhered to, as can be seen in 3.2, which deals more thoroughly with questionnaire layout, design and length of survey, the accompanying documentation and language usage, and incorporates a breakdown of questions. Furthermore, the instrument should be clear and unbiased and elicit the desired response for the research (Parahoo, 1997).

A clear audit trail is evidenced by meticulous data records along with field notes (APPENDIX D) to ensure availability and future access to fellow researchers interested to build on this study. The pilot test also suggested that the instrument was appropriate for the task of searching out the research objectives and that the study was ready to commence to the next level, the main launch and distribution of questionnaire to Group 1 (see 3.7.4).

### **3.5.5. Administering the Questionnaire**

Subsequent to the questionnaires being designed, pilot tested and amended, they were utilised by researcher to collect data. Two methods of questionnaire administration were employed, namely physical distribution (manually delivered) and email questionnaires (see 3.2.4.2).

However, to safeguard the accuracy, dependability and credibility of the data collected, the following section examines how the reliability and validity of the study were determined.

## **3.6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

This section examines the two concepts named in the rubric, and discusses how meaningful they are to researchers in general and to this study in particular.

**RELIABILITY:** Lunt and Livingstone (1996) make the claim that “the notions of reliability and validity are inextricably linked to quantitative methods and so are irrelevant to qualitative work”. In quantitative research, reliability alludes to the ability to reproduce the study’s results, while qualitative research has no such expectations. In the latter paradigm, some scholars (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Stenbacka, 2001) contend that it is more common to apply the terms ‘quality, rigour or trustworthiness’ in place of validity, and to substitute ‘dependability’ for reliability, while Guba and Lincoln (1985) recommend the alternative constructs of ‘credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability’.

Read and Marsh (2002) are quick to point out that the “false dichotomy” employed in the researcher’s argumentation is largely dependent on one’s ontological and epistemological position; differences between quantitative and qualitative methods may often be exaggerated.

**VALIDITY:** “Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring” (Polit & Beck, 2004:422). From a social interpretivist perspective, validation is the process of evaluating “the ‘trustworthiness’ [dependability] of reported observations, interpretations, and generalizations” (Mishler, 1990:419).

Prior to commencement of this study, the questionnaire was trialled in a pilot scheme to certify stringent standards of validity. “Face validity and content validity” were assessed according to guidelines proposed by Polit and Beck (2004:423). An appraisal was made by the researcher to determine whether the instrument measured what it was intended to, and content validity (also called logical or rational validity) broadly embodied all the facets that are required to be considered in the survey.

The purpose of these value judgements is to eliminate bias and error from the data and resulting conclusions. To that end, the instrument (in this paper a questionnaire) must be purpose-designed for the object for which it is intended, to permit an accurate assessment, from which we derive the term, ‘construct validity’. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2008) in their ‘Research Methodology’, elaborate further, asserting,



“*construct* validity involves applying a measuring ‘instrument’ to a theoretical framework”; its primary purpose to support measurement validity (Du Plooy, 2002:125). For the purpose of this study therefore, it could be inferred that *construct* validity was effected to design the survey-instrument, based on the apparent ‘knowledge-gap’ disclosed by the literature review.

The validity and reliability of this study are illustrative of how it is conducted and reported, and should align with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 1.

### **3.7. POPULATION SAMPLING**

Researchers such as Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2008:52-55) carefully distinguish between the population and the sample (group), defining ‘population’ as the broad reference to an entire group of potential respondents to which this researcher seeks to apply the products of the study. Narrowing the focus, Polit and Hungler (1994:714) define a “sample as a subset of that population [above] from which participants are selected to participate in a research study”; hence ‘sampling’ is simply selecting a portion of that population in one’s research domain as an exemplification of the greater population. Selection of a small sample according to strict predetermined criteria, were judged sufficiently robust to contribute to the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon/concepts under investigation, whilst the unit of analysis (Mouton, 2001:154) is the individual participant. It should be noted that one of the main criteria for selecting these particular groups was their propinquity to the researcher (budget-related) and, critically, ease of access facilitated via intermediaries (see 3.7.4) known to the researcher prior to starting this study. Thus, in a sense, a relationship of sorts pre-existed between the researcher and the intermediaries, which parallels the ‘*guanxi*’ being studied.

#### **3.7.1. Sample strategy**

The sampling strategy refers to the approach chosen to ensure that the sample (or target group) is illustrative of the population from which the sample is drawn. Definitions for other terms referred to in this subsection have been extrapolated from Salkind’s (2009) *Exploring Research*, and include:

- (i) Sampling frame – a list of the items or people forming a population from which a sample is taken;
- (ii) Eligibility criteria – the match or correlation between participant and desired characteristics being tested for;
- (iii) Sampling error – the lack of correlation between sample and population; and
- (iv) Sample attrition – failure on the part of certain participants to complete and return the survey instruments, for whatever reasons (see 3.7.4). Other terms employed, such as sample size and sample criteria are self-explanatory.

Identification of the sample group(s) allowed the questionnaire to be disseminated as part of the data collection process, the results of which were collated, encoded and transcribed into a database and then analysed.

The method adopted was non-probability purposive sampling as, despite the community differences revealed below, the sample was believed to have more commonalities than differences, and this method was determined to be faster, easier, and cheaper than probability sampling. Other influencing factors were:

- (i) Inaccuracies in population size due to inadequate data negated the option of and need for locating a statistically representative group, as proportionality is not a priority;
- (ii) The sample size is less important than the criteria used to select them, hence sample selection process was adjudicated according to strict conformity of individuals matching a series of predetermined criteria (demographic profiling) to determine their suitability for this study (see 3.7.3 eligibility criteria);
- (iii) Time and resource constraints further dictated the suitability for employing a purposive method.

Although initially a purposive sample from one source (see Group 1 – 3.7.4) was selected, the sample proved inadequate to meet the size requirements and a snowball (or chain-referral, see Bierbacki & Waldorf, 1981) method was adopted from that point onwards (see 3.7.4).

### **3.7.2. Sample Profile**

An accurate measurement of the size of the Chinese population, both permanent residents and itinerants in South Africa is unlikely, in view of the dearth of information available from the official government census offices. Only a rough approximation can be speculated given the poor record keeping, porous country borders and corruption amongst cupidinous officials (Park, 2005, 2009). Official Census figures for 1996, 2001, 2007, and 2011 have made no distinction between Indian and Asian –hence no Chinese designation either (Census, 2011:17).

Notwithstanding the lack of data, it is estimated by scholars and economists alike that population numbers varied between 200 000 (Naidu 2008:185) and one million (Burke & Corkin, 2007) Chinese living within South Africa's borders. Overlooked, uncounted and almost invisible amidst the potpourri of population groups, this numerically insignificant minority have over many generations contributed to the development of the economy, supported their families, educated their children and continued to play a role in South African society. The research questions formulated (see 1.2) were conveyed by means of a questionnaire (discussed elsewhere) and put to volunteers who met the eligibility criteria (Polit & Beck, 2004:290).

### **3.7.3. Sample Background**

The sample group(s) were required to meet the following (eligibility) standards: (i) Ethnically Chinese men and women who were gainfully employed in business activities and (ii) who resided in the Western Cape, South Africa, primarily in the Cape Town metropolitan surrounds. No distinction was made in the selection process as to whether they were SABCs (South African-Born Chinese) or recent arrivals / immigrants. The questionnaire addressed these issues for analytical purposes.

It should be noted that as physical appearances are deceptive, the Western (South African) eye often conflates all the Chinese within our South African borders into a single identity due to their 'Chineseness' (Park, 2009:158, 159; Wang, 1994:128). Looking a little beyond the superficial, it becomes apparent that several divisions separate the Chinese communities in South Africa. These include:

- (i) **Place of Origin:** To the outsider this may seem to be mere geography, but it exposes both political beliefs and linguistic differences. Traditions, festivals and even culinary preferences differ between north and south. To name one example, in the drier north of China (PRC), noodles are the food of choice, while in the wetter south (better growing conditions) rice is eaten with almost every meal.
- (ii) **Politics:** The Chinese community in South Africa has in fact three primary origins, namely Taiwan (ROC), Mainland China (PRC) and Hong Kong, now part of the Mainland since reunification in 1997 and the subsequent adoption of the “one country, two systems” policy (Williamson, 1989:153; Chao, 1987:107). Divergent ideologies pre-dating WWII in the form of nationalism and communism have left bitter roots. Today, despite residing in their new host country, South Africa with its own peculiar brand of politics, historical ideologies remain unbridged. This is especially true for new arrivals in South Africa who may retain some sense of loyalty to their homelands, as tensions continue to simmer abroad on the international scene.
- (iii) **Language:** The sample group comprised of a mixture of Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese and one individual from Hong Kong. Different geographical locations mean differing ‘home’ languages too. In the southern provinces of China, and specifically in Guangdong province (previously known as Canton), the spoken language is Cantonese, despite Mainland China’s *lingua franca* being Mandarin (known locally as Putonghua, or standard speech). In some areas, provincial dialects are also commonly used. In Taiwan, Mandarin is spoken for the most part, but indigenous dialects are also spoken. Hence, it can be seen that although the population is ethnically Chinese their spoken Chinese may be linguistically different.
- (iv) **Religion** – the right to worship freely is restricted and often compromised in Mainland China, despite official policy to the contrary. Christianity is often seen as being in ideological opposition to the Communist Party, while Islam is feared as a hotbed of terrorism and Buddhism is tolerated. Ironically, with the increase of Western tourism in China, temples and places of worship previously destroyed or damaged in the PRC’s Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) are being restored, as they are perceived as income generators.

Other distinguishing factors in the sample group(s) are representative of anticipated variances common to all population demographics, namely educational levels, variety of commercial activities and interests (both local and abroad), preferred choice of employee, and further subjective choices and personal preferences.

#### **3.7.4. Sample Group(s)**

**LOCATION:** The study was to be geographically clustered around the Cape Town area and its surrounds, owing to the propinquity of the researcher to this urban centre and a desire to reduce travel costs, both financial and temporal.

**SELECTION:** Initially, only one sample group had been identified and owing to its comparative size, was believed to be adequate for the purposes of this study in recruiting volunteer participants. Introductions to this group were gained through the personal friendship between this researcher and a Chinese man who was a member of a Chinese faith-based organisation situated in the northern suburbs of Cape Town.

This first sample group is titled ‘Group 1’ (or ‘BOL’ in the database). The non-probability purposive method employed led to the first sample group being identified at a faith-based organisation in Monte Vista, a northern suburb of Cape Town. The researcher was allowed to gain access to the members through the intercession of a Chinese friend. After satisfying themselves as to the validity and the credentials of the study, the researcher was invited to address the group prior to a meeting. During that time, some two months prior to the distribution of questionnaires and some six-weeks before the pilot scheme was launched, a pre-survey briefing was given to all the members present, outlining the purpose of the study, the need for volunteers to participate who met the eligibility criteria, and the anticipated potential benefits to the Chinese community.

Leaflets were distributed, containing the researcher’s contact details and this University’s name, indicating their patronage and support. Several in the audience came forward afterwards indicating their willingness to participate as they met all the criteria. This group was labelled ‘BOL’ after the initials of their faith-based organisation, namely Bread of Life church.

Subsequent to the pilot scheme and the launch of the questionnaire, the response rate of Group 1 was extremely slow and low. The self-administered questionnaire had been given to the participants to take home and to complete at their leisure, with the understanding that it should be returned to the place of origin (the meeting place of that organisation) as soon as possible.

Tardiness and the diminishing time-window within which to gather data stimulated a resolution to seek further locations where other eligible members of the Chinese community could be located who would be willing participants in the study. Enquiries were directed to several members of the BOL group in this regard. A young Taiwanese lady, who had previously taught Chinese at a local language school, offered her services to act as an intermediary by making introductions, in order to promote this study. Thus, the second sample group was located, and the necessary steps were taken to ensure the proper introductions were made to the management of the school. They were informed of the purpose of the research paper and the academic institution under whose auspices the researcher would fall to ensure their approval was gained before proceeding. This step was accomplished with minimum fuss as the intermediary had left that institution with a good reputation.

This second group is titled 'Group 2' (or 'C/S' in the database). An introduction to the treasurer of the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce led to two visits to the Chinese Language School (C/S) in Observatory, a suburb bordering the Cape Town city centre. The treasurer is an influential man and, as the Taiwanese government subsidises the school, it was important to secure his endorsement of the study. This was duly effected after a meeting with that dignitary. The Chinese Language School was established to serve the needs of the community in response to appeals from Chinese parents. They regarded the geospatial-cultural distance as a detrimental to their SABC children's ability to communicate in the native tongue of their parents and forefathers, increasing the risk of losing their cultural heritage through irrelevancy. Every Saturday parents brought their children, who attend local schools during the week, to be instructed in Mandarin Chinese. Among these parents are those who are small traders or businesspeople. After ascertaining their identity (via the intermediary), these businesspeople were approached and asked to participate in the survey; most agreed to complete the questionnaire upon hearing the purpose of the

study. Thereafter a ‘Snowball’ sample method (Hardon, Hodgkin & Fresle, 2004:58-9) ensued, where referrals from one respondent led to another and so on. (The identical screening process was followed here as for Group 1 to ascertain eligible participants).

Two benefits immediately became apparent from this data collection method:

- (i) Any questions the respondents may have had could immediately be resolved with the assistance of the Chinese intermediary who had accompanied the researcher to that location;
- (ii) The waiting period for the return of the completed questionnaire averaged twenty minutes from first approach to the return of the completed survey, ready for transcription.

### **3.7.5. Sample Size**

For this study, a relatively small sample size of sixteen participants was used. Anticipating the questions that might be raised regarding small sample sizes, Cochran (1963) offers the defence that if the phenomena under study are homogenous (the two concepts of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ and their usage), a small sample is sufficient. Derek (1997:41) concurs that there is no definitive sample size; rather a decision is required whereby feasibility, cost and representativeness are balanced. Oliver (2004:127) weighs in, pointing out that if the sample is population-representative, then the same results will be obtained for a small sample as for a larger one. The latter point would remain inconclusive until the findings were analysed.

## **3.8. DATA ANALYSIS**

To assist the establishment of the aims and objectives of this study, respondents after receiving a verbal description of the purpose of the study, were required to read and comprehend the manner in which they were to respond. For the most cases, this was in the form of selecting the appropriate check box for closed questions, or by writing a few words in response to the open questions where required.

A review of the literature to determine a suitable data analysis method, given the relatively small sample numbers, led to Bailey's (2007:5) explanation of data analysis as trying to impose sense on the raw data by meaningful categorisations, comparisons and juxtapositions. In addition, the data is generally encoded to preserve participant anonymity and to enhance ease of use for analysis by reducing clutter and removing ambiguity by recording "data in elements that are as explicit and as discrete as possible" (Salkind, 2009:153).

Meanings and relationships were sought between the various categories, and to this end data was encoded into an MS EXCEL spreadsheet (APPENDIX E), from which visual images and illustrations were extrapolated in the shape of tables, charts and graphs. Lincoln and Guba (1985:241) caution against making any premature claims before the analysis is complete.

### **3.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The undertaking of any research is an ethical enterprise (Struwig & Stead, 2004:66), and as such, there were a number of ethical considerations to be evaluated in the design of the instrument. Priorities were to ensure in that it would not be invasive, that anonymity and confidentiality of all participants would be respected and that participation would not subject them to any discomfort either during the participation process or in the future.

Another overriding requirement was to ensure that participants who volunteered to assist in the study did so willingly and without coercion, and that they were wholly informed of the parameters of the study, the researcher's credentials and those of the sponsoring institution, namely Stellenbosch University.

To overcome any potential misinterpretations by second-language (SL) English speakers when reading the letter of consent that accompanied the survey, a verbal assurance that the participants' privacy and anonymity would be protected during and after the study was reiterated. Participants were requested to sign and provide their personal details on the letters of consent form (see APPENDIX B) that accompanied the survey-questionnaire.



On the administration side, the completed questionnaire data was numerically encoded and a three-digit participant identification (PID) was assigned to each individual. Henceforth, once the data was entered into the data collection sheet, the participants' identities were to all intents and purposes anonymous and invisible.

Moreover, raw data collected would be directly encoded into a database, to further ensure no possible link back to their individual names and that none of the data collected would be shared with any third - party, governmental or private, nor used for marketing purposes, etc.

The researcher is duty-bound firstly by his own personal integrity to ensure and maintain confidentiality and anonymity of respondents' data, and secondly to uphold and apply the ethical standards of Stellenbosch University's policy in this regard.

### **3.10. CONCLUSION**

In the Methodology section, the author has outlined the qualitative research design approach and elaborated on the procedures employed in meeting the objectives of the study. The selection of the questionnaire as the investigative instrument was judged consistent with the purposive non-probability sampling method implemented. Participant selection was implemented by following strict eligibility criteria, whilst specifics of the data collection methods and data analysis are presented. In the subsequent section, the reader is led through the findings by means of a graphic rendition of the data and a written commentary.

~\*~

## **CHAPTER 4      PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research findings of the sixteen self-administered questionnaires in accordance with the methodology explicated in chapter three, employed to assess both the open- and close-ended questions. Unless otherwise stated, it should be assumed that all sixteen participants are included in the data presented. The term ‘residency’ is used in this chapter to signify ‘time spent/lived’ in South Africa. It bears no relation to the participant’s legal status to remain in the country indefinitely nor does it reflect official government approval.

Data was collected from participants of assorted ages, both males and females, who it was established were all engaged in business. All participants were ethnically Chinese but had origins in PRC, Taiwan or Hong Kong. All were thus by default members of the Chinese community in South Africa, but more specifically were located in the Cape Town metropolitan area of the Western Cape. The data was collected in the form of self-administered questionnaires, disseminated in English alone.

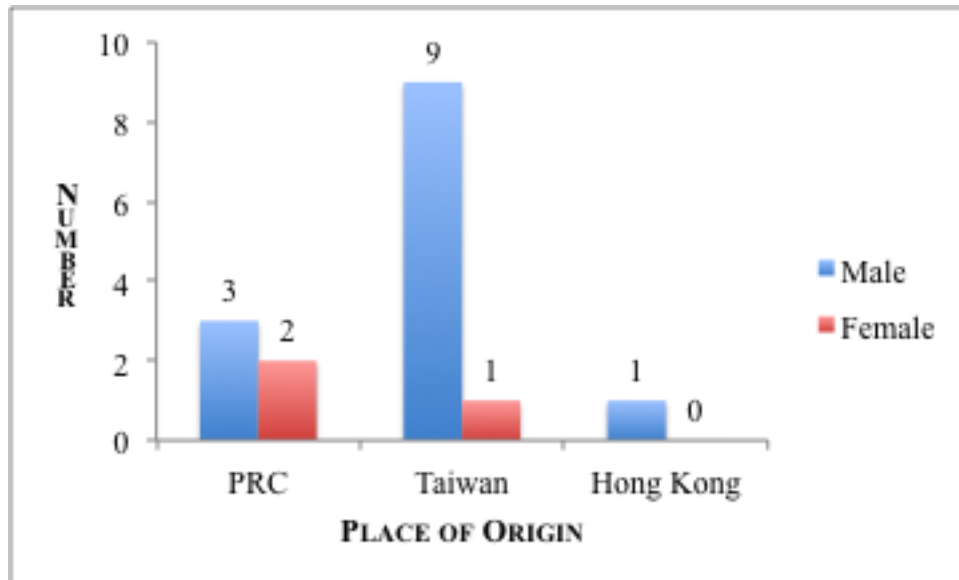
The findings are presented according to the sectional breakdown reflected in the questionnaire; hence, the demographic details of the participant are illustrated firstly, then findings relating to the two concepts of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ are offered.

### **4.2. RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES**

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE RESPONDENTS**

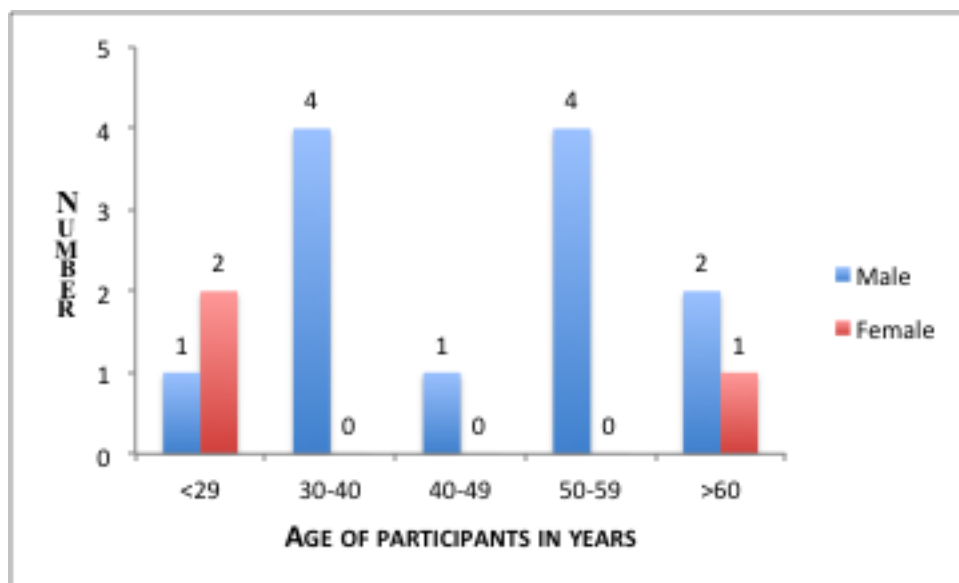
The following section provides general biographical characteristics of the respondents who participated in this study. Figure 4.1 portrays one aspect of the demographic profile of the sample group(s) in terms of place of origin and gender, in accordance with section A of the questionnaire. The total sample group of sixteen who met the eligibility criteria set is represented. The majority of respondents are from Taiwan

(62.5%), followed by the PRC (31.25%) and Hong Kong (6.25%). The gender relationship is also clearly depicted, with sample group composition predominantly male (81.25%), outnumbering the females (18.75%) almost 4:1.



**FIGURE 4.1: PLACE OF ORIGIN AND GENDER OF RESPONDENTS**

Figure 4.2 (on the next page) highlights breakdown of the sample group(s) by gender and age. The two largest age groups fall into the 30-40 years category (26.5%) and an equivalent distribution in the 50-59 years category (26.5%). The three smaller groups are younger than 29 years (20%), older than 60 (20%) and the middle-aged 40-49 years (7%).



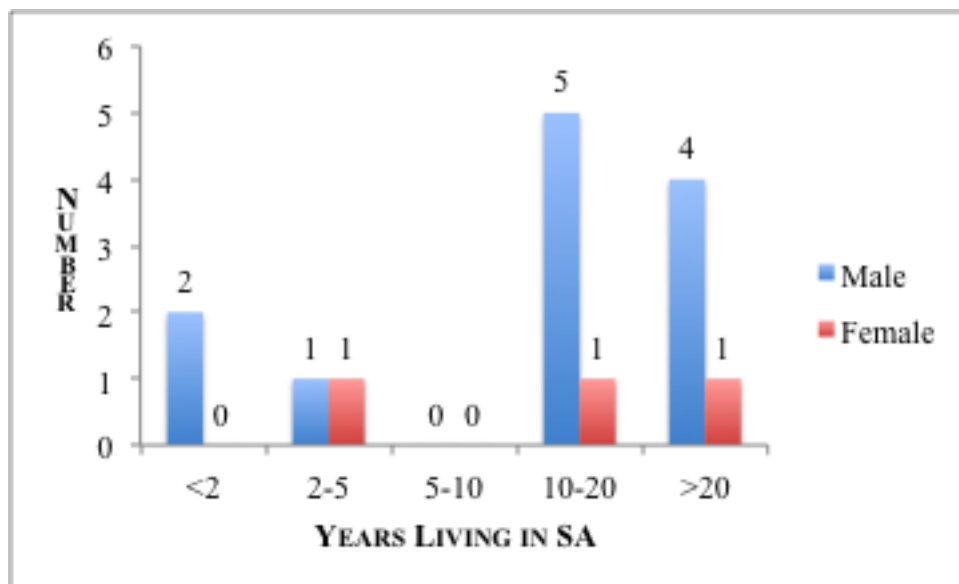
**FIGURE 4.2: RANGE OF PARTICIPANT AGES ACCORDING TO GENDER**

**MARITAL STATUS:** Table 1 (below) depicts the relationship between the Place of Origin according to gender and marital status. Although 16 respondents participated in the survey, data from 15 is represented in the table. One questionnaire was excluded from this range owing to incomplete data, reducing the total number in the range to 12 men and 3 women. It can be observed that all the men are married, while 66.6% of the women are single; the married woman originates from the PRC.

**TABLE 4.1: MARITAL STATUS ACCORDING TO PLACE OF ORIGIN AND GENDER**

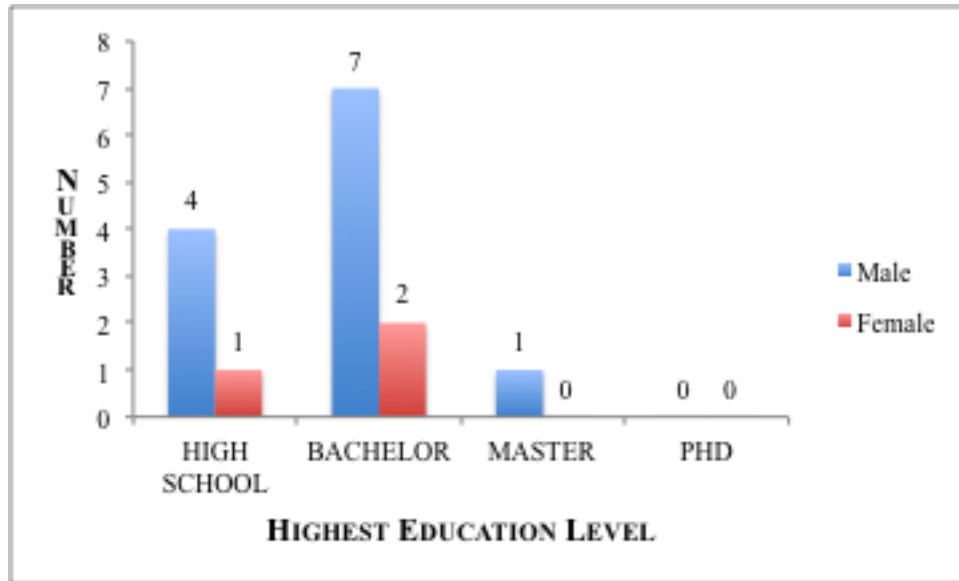
| PLACE OF ORIGIN | Married |     |       |     | Unmarried |     |       |    |
|-----------------|---------|-----|-------|-----|-----------|-----|-------|----|
|                 | MEN     | %   | WOMEN | %   | MEN       | %   | WOMEN | %  |
| PRC             | 0       | 0   | 1     | 50  | 2         | 100 | 1     | 50 |
| Taiwan          | 9       | 100 | 1     | 100 | 0         | 0   | 0     | 0  |
| Hong Kong       | 1       | 100 | 0     | 0   | 0         | 0   | 0     | 0  |

SA RESIDENCY: Figure 4.3 illustrates the duration of time (by groupings), according to gender, that the participants have spent living in South Africa. This does not imply a contiguous period on South Africa as most respondents indicated that they had returned to visit their Place of Origin at some stage in the past. (It was judged to be outside the scope of this study to record these details). Respondents were required to select which grouping they believed they slotted into. It is apparent from the figure that the majority (40%) have resided in South Africa for 10-20 years with the second biggest group in residence for twenty years (33 ⅓ %) or more. The third largest group have been in the country for less than 2 years, and between 2-5 years (13⅓ %), while there is a hiatus for the period 5-10 years.



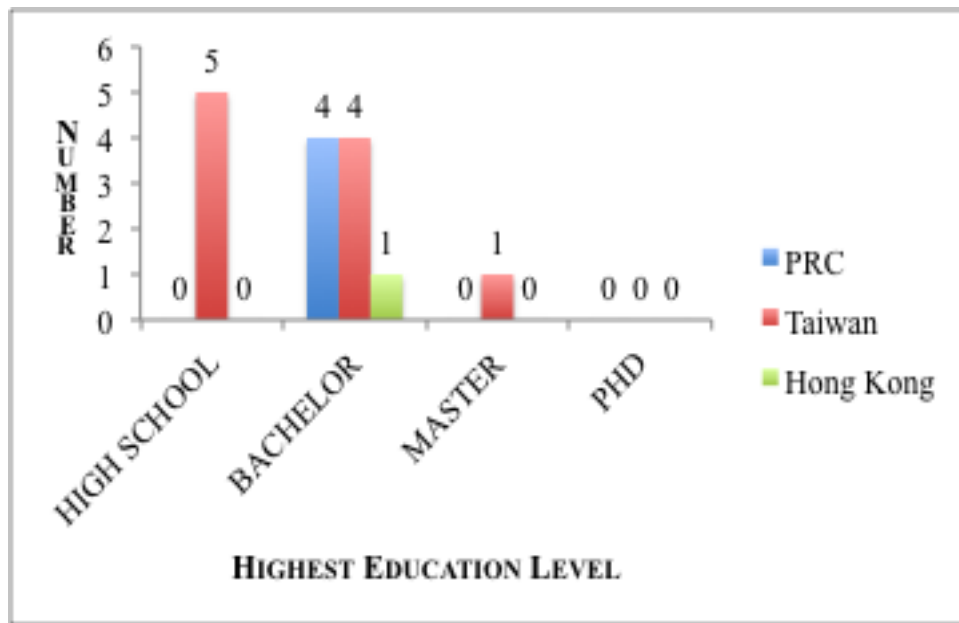
**FIGURE 4.3: RESIDENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA ACCORDING TO GENDER**

EDUCATION LEVELS: Figure 4.4 reveals the wide range of educational levels present in the sample group surveyed. Only data from 15 respondents was used, as one questionnaire was incomplete. The majority of the respondents had attained a bachelor's degree (60%), while 6.5% held a master's degree. An equivalent (33⅓ %) had graduated with a high school diploma. Although not indicated here, 66.6% of the men had attained a tertiary education level, bachelors or master's degree, while 2 women held a bachelor's degree. Note: the ratio of men to women here was 4:1.



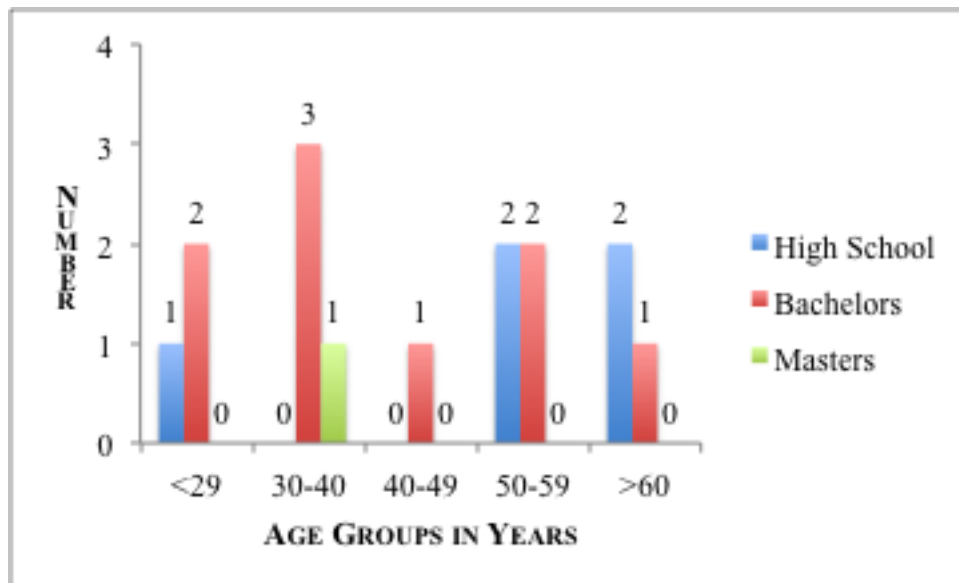
**FIGURE 4.4: HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL ATTAINED ACCORDING TO GENDER**

On the next page, in Figure 4.5, the educational levels are again indicated, but this time they are contrasted with the participants Places of Origin. (Again, data from 15 respondents was used owing to one incomplete questionnaire.) It is worth noting that the PRC and Taiwanese respondents each hold an equal number of bachelor's degrees (4); with one other bachelor degree held by the Hong Kong participant. The highest group with only a high school diploma is the Taiwanese (33.5%).



**FIGURE 4.5: HIGHEST EDUCATION ACCORDING TO PLACE OF ORIGIN**

The final chart examining educational levels is Figure 4.6, and relates education with age of the participants. The largest group is the 30-40 years (26.33%), which comprises three bachelor's and one master's degree, while the 50-59 (20%) has two bachelor-degrees holders, as does the under 29-year olds.



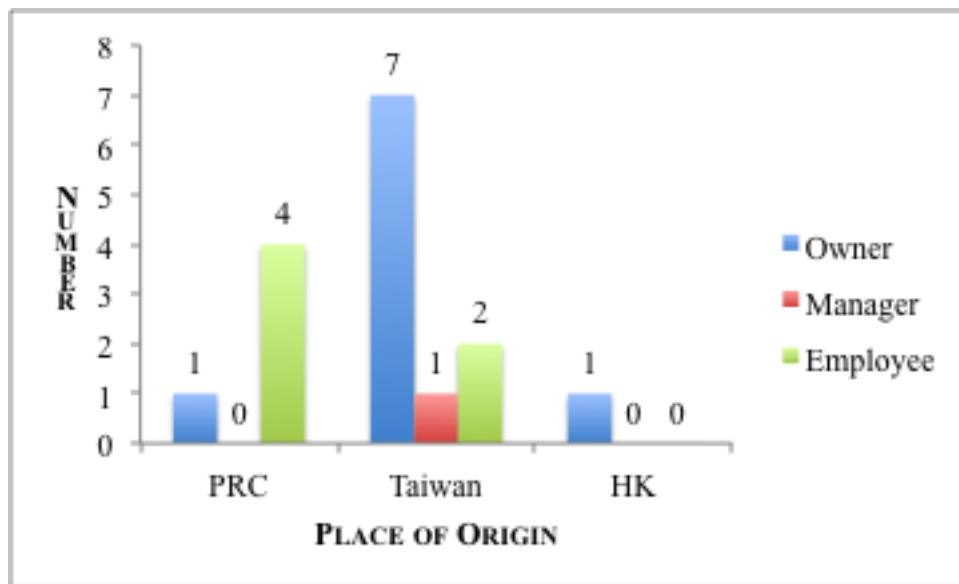
**FIGURE 4.6: HIGHEST EDUCATION ACCORDING TO AGE**

The next section looks at employment from the perspective of the employer, according to gender, place of origin and contrasts these with their employment choices.

### 4.3. EMPLOYMENT

**EMPLOYER STATUS OR ROLE:** All 16 respondents surveyed were included in this section, which depicts employer status according to place of origin. The breakdown is as follows: of the 9 owners, 7 are from Taiwan (77.8%), 1 is from PRC (11.1%) and 1 from Hong Kong (11.1%); only 1 manager originating from Taiwan (100%, was found amongst the sample group; the remaining 6 are employees, with 4 from the PRC (80%), and 1 from Taiwan (20%) in response to Research question 1.



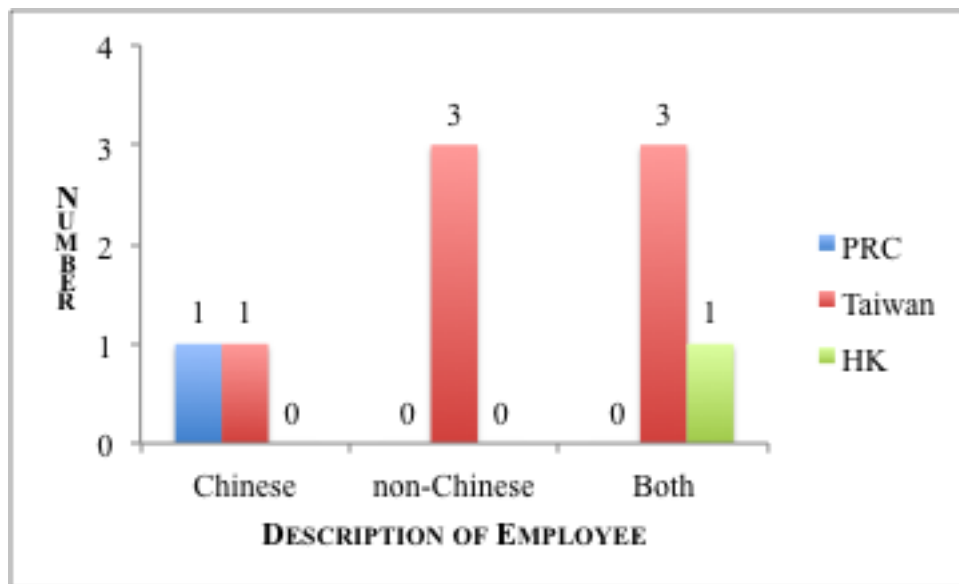


**FIGURE 4.7: EMPLOYER STATUS ACCORDING TO PLACE OF ORIGIN**

**EMPLOYEE SELECTION:** This subsection looks at the type of employee selected by Chinese employers based on various criteria and reflects these ratings according to the participants' Place of Origin firstly (Figure 4.8), and secondly, according to employer Gender (Figure 4.9). None of the employers indicated that their employee selection was based on political correctness, according to BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) codes.

Note: For further details of the Business sectors in which the participants are currently engaged see APPENDIX H (Figure 4.24)

The next section examines the choices made by employers when taking on new staff. Firstly, Figure 4.8 illustrates the choice of selection of either Chinese or non-Chinese employees of the employer by place of origin. Of the total employers (9), the majority (44.5%) indicated they would employ both Chinese and non-Chinese according to the needs of their business and the skills required. The second-biggest group (33.1/3 %) said they would employ only non-Chinese, while the smallest group (22.2%) indicated they would only employ Chinese. (Note this chart excludes the managers and employees who have authority to hire new personnel).

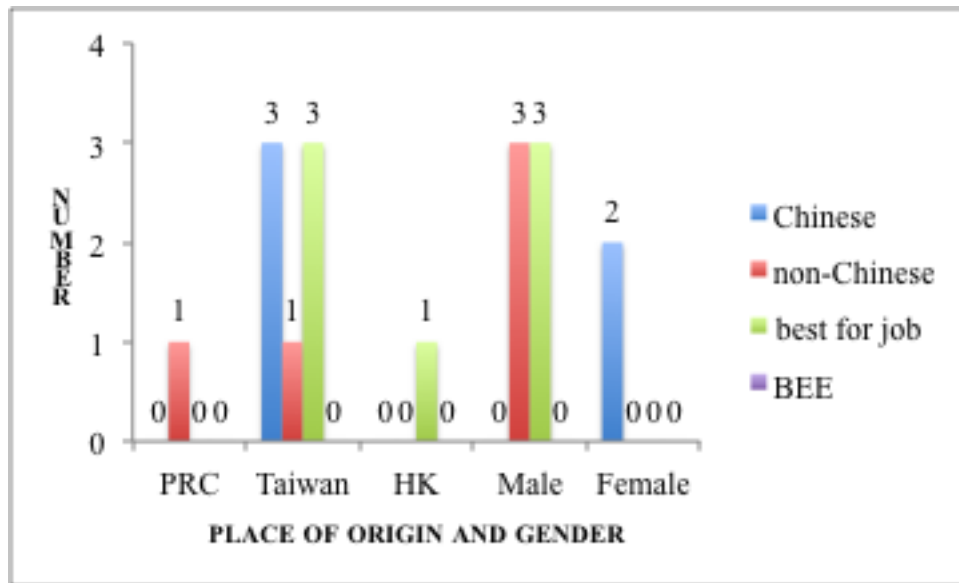


**FIGURE 4.8: EMPLOYEE ETHNICITY SELECTION BY EMPLOYER'S PLACE OF ORIGIN**

Secondly, Figure 4.9 depicts the same employee ethnicity selection options, but this time in relation to employer/owner's place of origin and gender.

Of the nine owners identified, seven originated from Taiwan and one each from the PRC and Hong Kong. The majority either opted to employ non-Chinese only or both Chinese and non-Chinese, according to the 'best for the job'. None opted for BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) appointments.

Examining the breakdown according to gender, it is apparent that only eight participants included, due to one incomplete questionnaire. A breakdown of the numbers indicates that of the male business owners, there is an equal split with 50% employing only non-Chinese and 50% employing both, or whoever is best for the job. Both female owners preferred to employ only Chinese. It is worth mentioning that one is married and under 29 years in age, while the other is over sixty and widowed.



**FIGURE 4.9: EMPLOYEE SELECTION BY OWNER'S PLACE OF ORIGIN AND GENDER**

See APPENDIX H (Figure 4.25) for findings relating to Religious Affiliations, which reveal no salience for this study.

Details of the analysis and implications of the demographic section illustrated above can be found in the next chapter (Chapter 5). The ensuing subsection is related to data extrapolated from section B of the questionnaire.

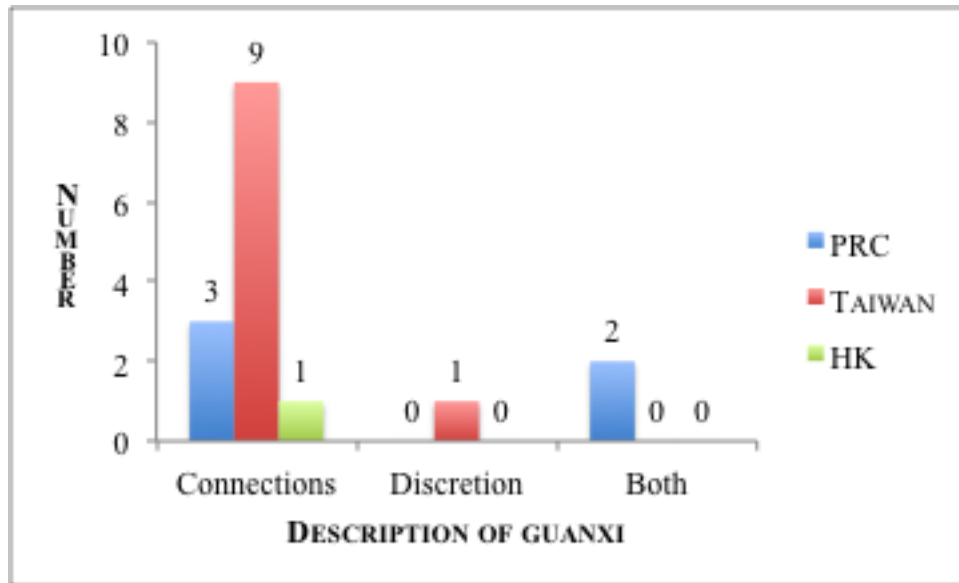
#### **4.4. QUESTIONS RELATING TO GUANXI**

Section B of the questionnaire examined how the participants responded to questions (B. 11-16) relating to 'guanxi'. In this subsection, several categories of illustrations are presented according to the participants' descriptions of 'guanxi', their perceptions of 'guanxi' and their interpretation of the value for conducting business in South Africa.

The following illustrations are presented according to (i) gender Figure 4.10; (ii) time spent in SA; (iii) age of participants Figure 4.12; and (iv) place of origin Figure 4.13.

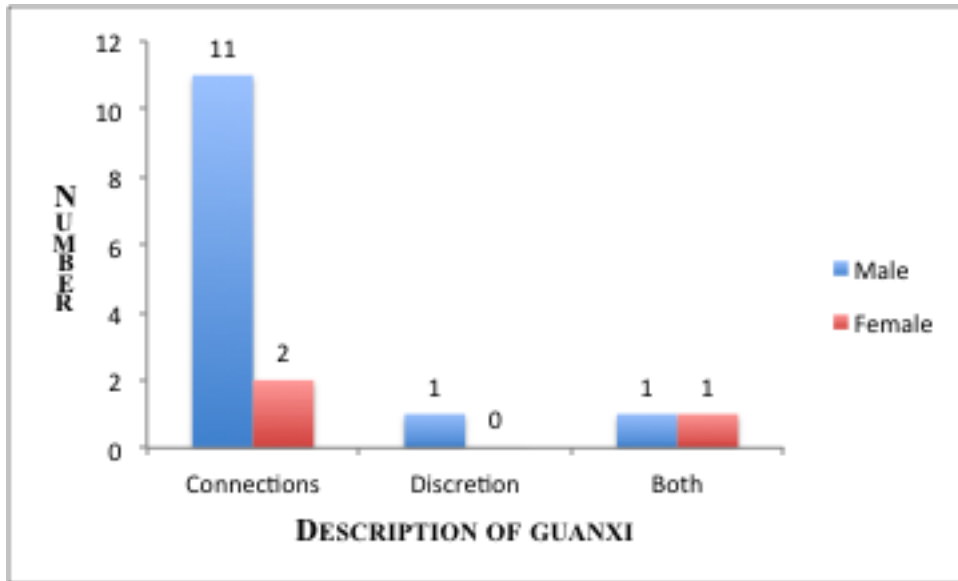
#### 4.4.1. Descriptions of Guanxi

Figure 4.10 presents the respondents' descriptions of 'guanxi' as connections, discretion or both. Given the male-female ratio is 4:1, the vast majority (81.25%) described 'guanxi' as connections, with the second group (12.5%) considering it both as connections and as discretion.



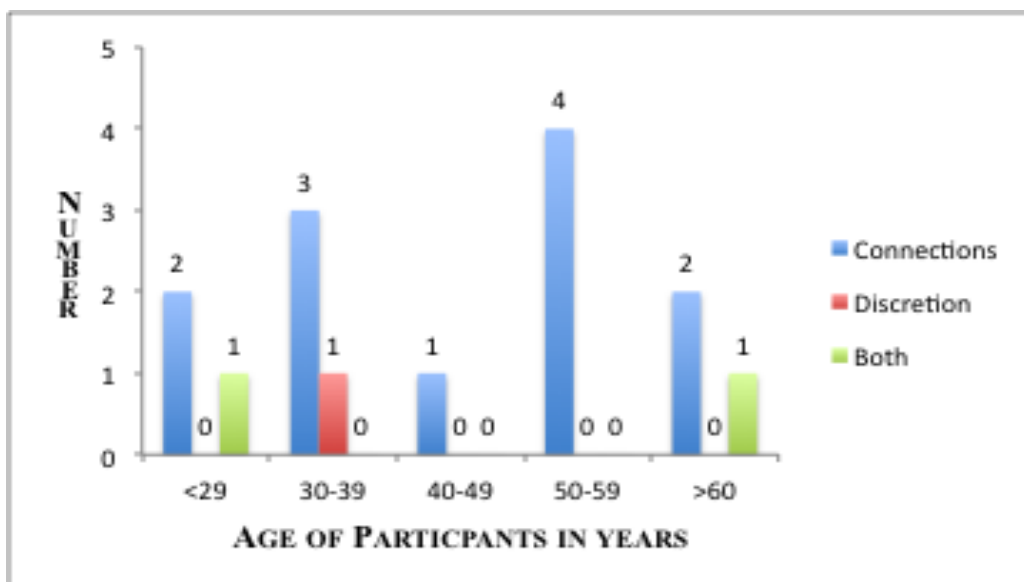
**FIGURE 4.10: DESCRIPTION OF GUANXI ACCORDING TO PLACE OF ORIGIN**

In the next figure, Figure 4.11, the same 3 descriptions are weighed according to gender. By far the highest total, 68.75% of the males opted for connections, followed by 12.5% representing the female vote. A very meagre 6.25% each opted for both. It is important to remember that males dominated 4:1; thus in essence, as a percentage of the female vote, 66.6% of females voted for connections.



**FIGURE 4.11: DESCRIPTION OF GUANXI ACCORDING TO GENDER**

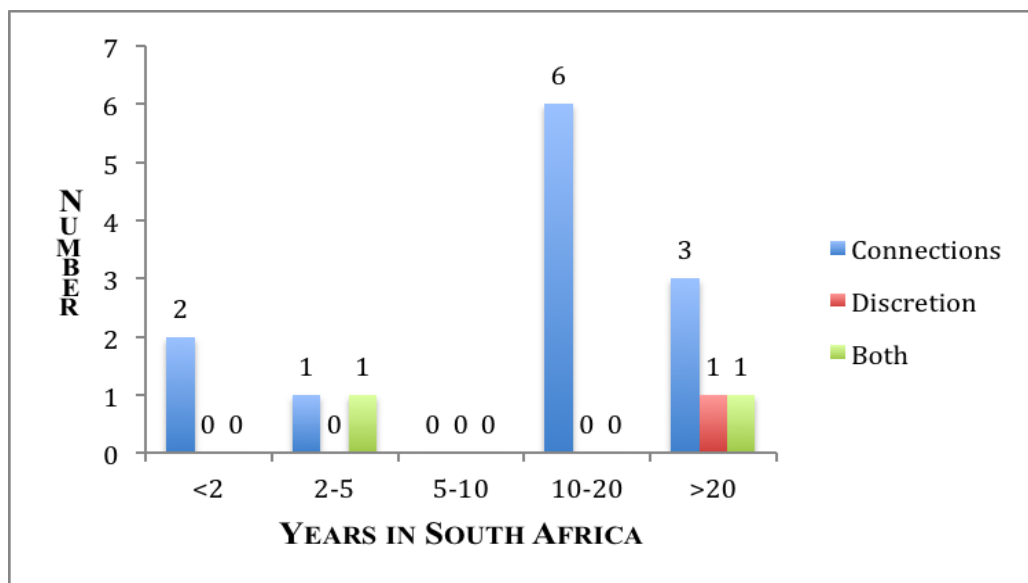
Another description of guanxi according to the age of the participants is provided. Figure 4.12 displays the breakdown. Regardless of age distinctions, 80% viewed guanxi as connections, 6.5% viewed it as discretion and 13.5% as both connections and discretion. (See chart on following page).



**FIGURE 4.12: DESCRIPTION OF GUANXI ACCORDING TO AGE OF PARTICIPANTS**

The following figure, Figure 4.13 depicts the description of ‘guanxi’ categorised according to the number of years (or residency) the participants have spent or lived in South Africa.

Data from 15 participants was used, as one questionnaire was incomplete. The largest group (40%) have lived in South Africa for 10-20 years, with the second largest group (20%) having 20 years or more of residence. Both groups believed ‘connections’ is the best description for ‘guanxi’.



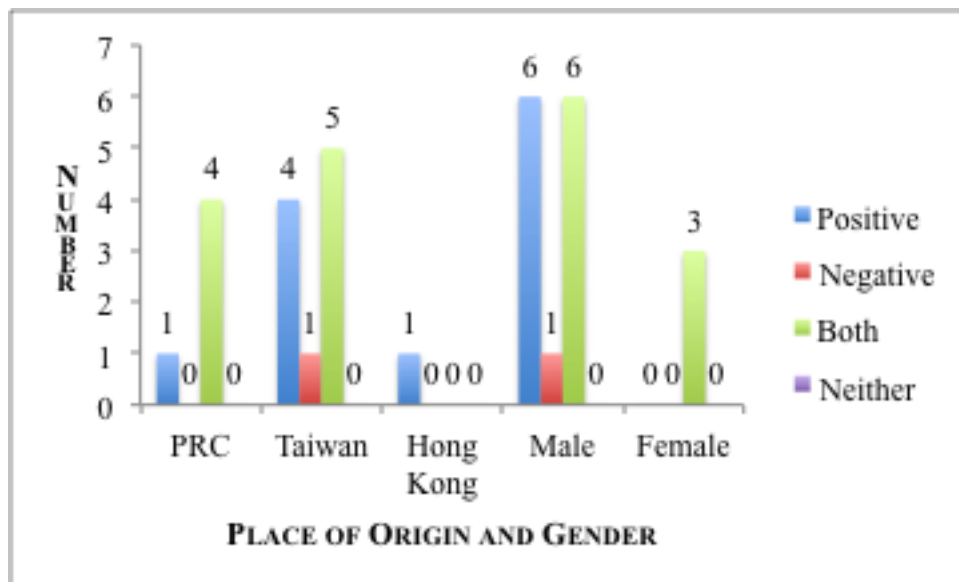
**FIGURE 4.13 DESCRIPTION OF GUANXI BY RESIDENCE TIME IN SOUTH AFRICA**

APPENDIX H, (Figure 4.25) depicts descriptions of guanxi based on religious affiliation.

#### 4.4.2. Perceptions of Guanxi

The following charts examine the perceptions or value judgements that participants attribute ‘guanxi’, according to Place of Origin, Gender, Age and Residence in South Africa.

Figure 4.14 asks whether ‘guanxi’ is perceived as positive, negative as neither positive nor negative, or as both (according to situations and circumstances). The next chart combines Place of Origin and Gender. Participants’ responses indicated their ratings as follows: 37.5% in total perceived ‘guanxi’ as positive, while 56.25% perceived it as both positive and negative. The PRC recorded 6.25% as positive and 25% as both, while 25% of Taiwanese saw ‘guanxi’ as positive and 31.25% saw it as both. The breakdown by gender had males with an equal number (37.5%) tending to positive and to both, while all the females unequivocally saw it as both. No one perceived ‘guanxi’ as neutral, i.e., neither positive nor negative.



**FIGURE 4.14: PERCEPTIONS OF GUANXI BY PLACE OF ORIGIN AND GENDER**

Figure 4.15 similarly displays the relationship between the age of participants and their perception of ‘guanxi’ and relates it to their time in residence in South Africa. The left of the chart indicates the age of the participants in groupings. The highest total (53.3%) perceived ‘guanxi’ as positive and a slightly smaller group (40%) saw it as both positive and negative.

The right side of the graph indicates duration of residence in South Africa and indicates the following perceptions: The highest total (53.3%) perceived ‘guanxi’ as positive and a slightly smaller group (40%) saw it as both positive and negative.

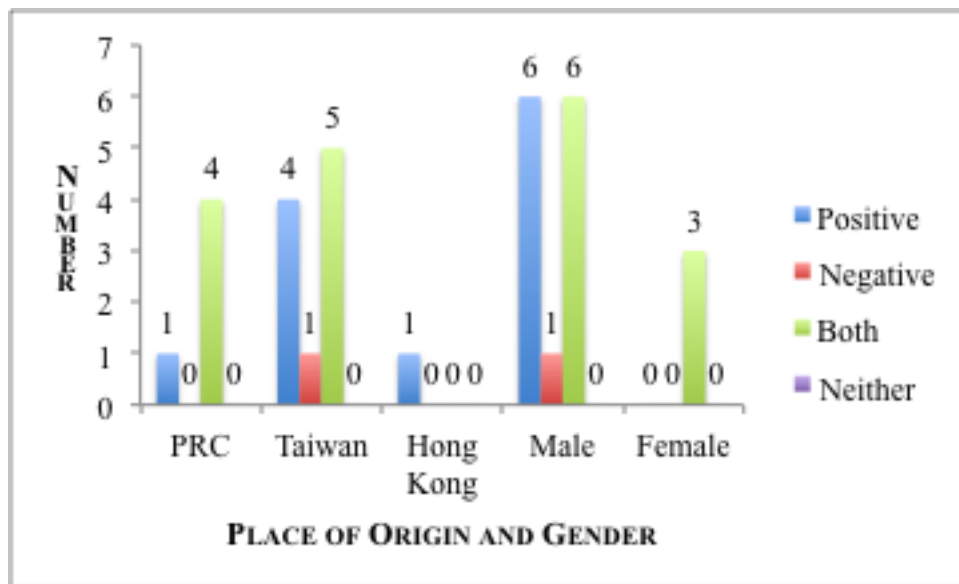


FIGURE 4.15 PERCEPTIONS OF GUANXI BY AGE AND RESIDENCY TIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

#### 4.4.3. Advice to South African Businesspeople

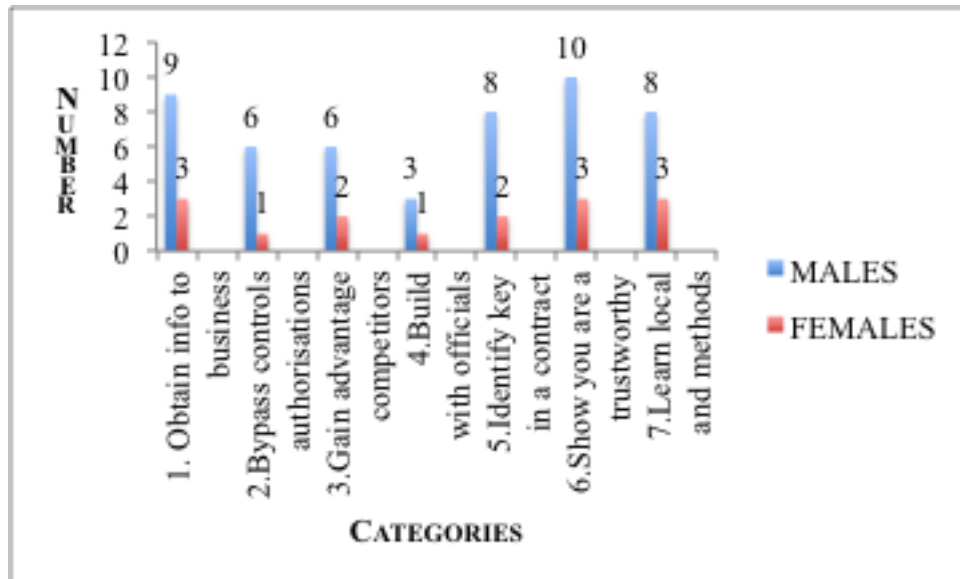
The final question in this section asked the participants to rank-select the most important factors they deemed essential for non-Chinese businesspeople to do business with their Chinese counterparts in South Africa. A list of seven factors deemed essential to conducting business was presented and participants were asked to select the top five in order of importance. (Only 13 respondents' data, 10 male and 3 female, was considered in this instance, as 3 were disqualified owing to incomplete or incorrectly answered questions. Figure 4.16 displays the top five selections that the sample group judged as important business considerations.

The following findings were determined:

Males: The top choice was unanimous, with number 6 (100%), 'show you are a trustworthy partner', selected. The second highest selected was number 1 (92.3%), as their first choice, 'obtain information to do business,' followed by number 7 (84.6%), 'learn local customs and methods'.



Females: Identical responses were obtained from the three female respondents. Their choices of number 6 (90%), followed by number 1 (80%), then number 7 (80%), were identified by all respondents as being critical to doing business.



**FIGURE 4.16: TOP ADVICE GIVEN TO NON-CHINESE BUSINESSPEOPLE BY CHINESE**

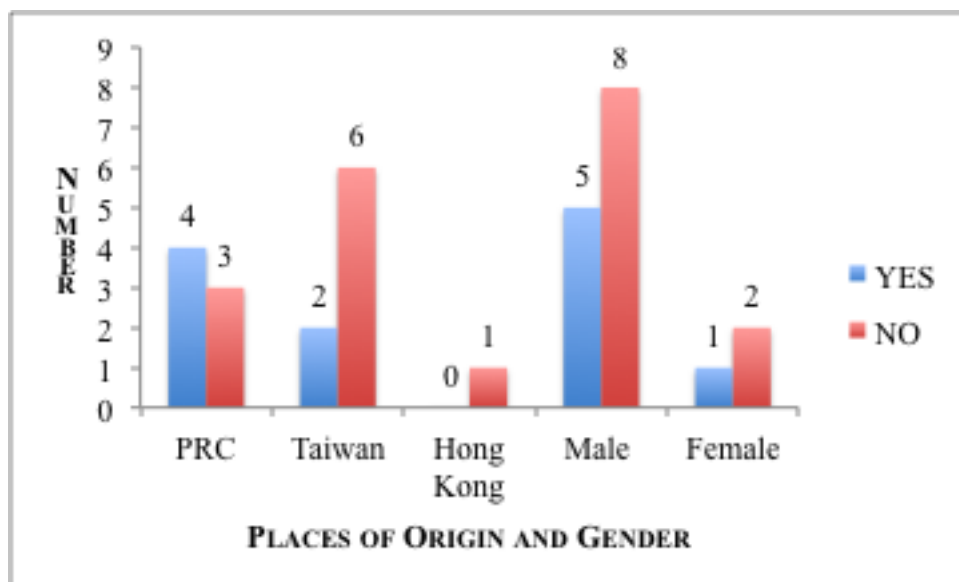
Although not indicated here, the same results were obtained across the board when broken down according to religious affiliations. Identical selections for top positions were observed with a strong correlation to the percentages related above.

## 4.5. QUESTIONS RELATING TO MIANZI

### 4.5.1. Giving and Receiving Face or Mianzi

Section C of the questionnaire examines the second concept of ‘mianzi’. Comparisons are drawn between Place of Origin and Gender. When all the participants’ data is available for use the ratio of males to females increases from 4:1 to 13:3. Figure 4.17 exhibits some interesting traits, notably that in response to the question as to whether it was deemed necessary ‘to give and receive face’ (‘Yes’) or not (‘No’) the breakdown shows the ‘yes’ vote garnering 37.5% support and the ‘no’ vote securing 62.5%.

Similarly, the male support in favour of the ‘Yes’ vote was 38.5%, and against, ‘No’ was 61.5%. The female breakdown was: 33.3% said ‘Yes’, while 66.6% said ‘No’.



**FIGURE 4.17: IMPORTANT TO GIVE AND RECEIVE FACE ACCORDING TO PLACE OF ORIGIN AND GENDER**

#### 4.5.2. Smoothing the Way for Business

Does giving ‘face’ to a potential business partner smooth the way? Figure 4.18 displays the participants’ opinions according to Place of Origin and gender. In total 68% believed that it did smooth the way and 32% disagreed.

Regionally, this translates to a split vote by the PRC (50%), 80% in Taiwan and 100% disagreement from the single Hong Kong respondent. The gender breakdown depicts a consistency, with two-thirds (66%) in favour and one third (33%) against for both male and female.

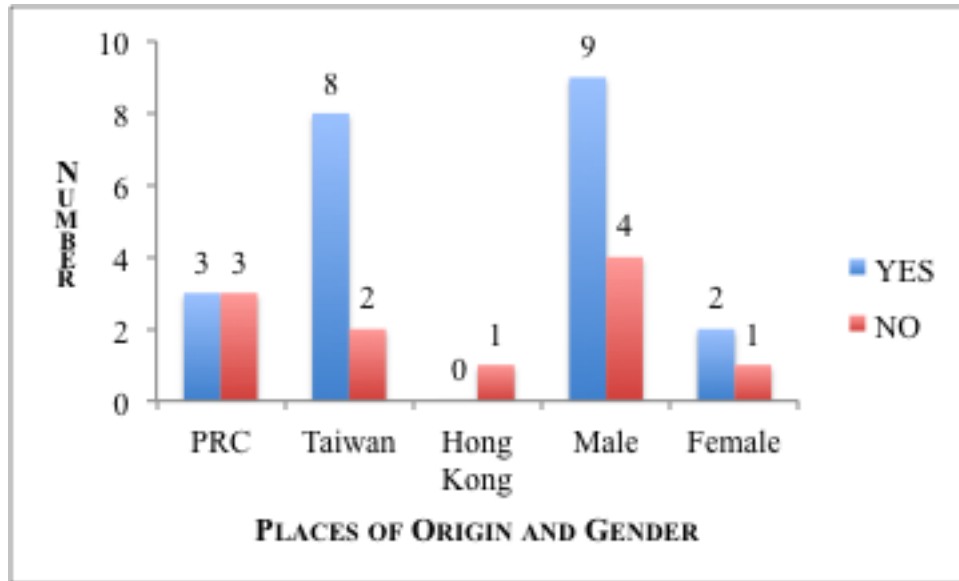
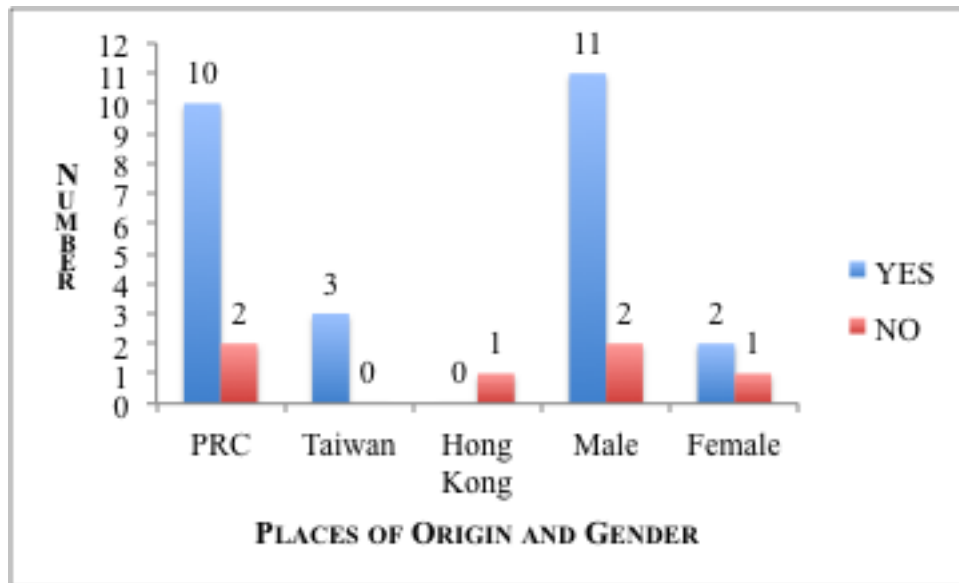


FIGURE 4.18 BELIEF THAT GIVING FACE SMOOTHS THE WAY FOR BUSINESS

#### 4.5.3. Giving Face Equally to Non-Chinese and Chinese

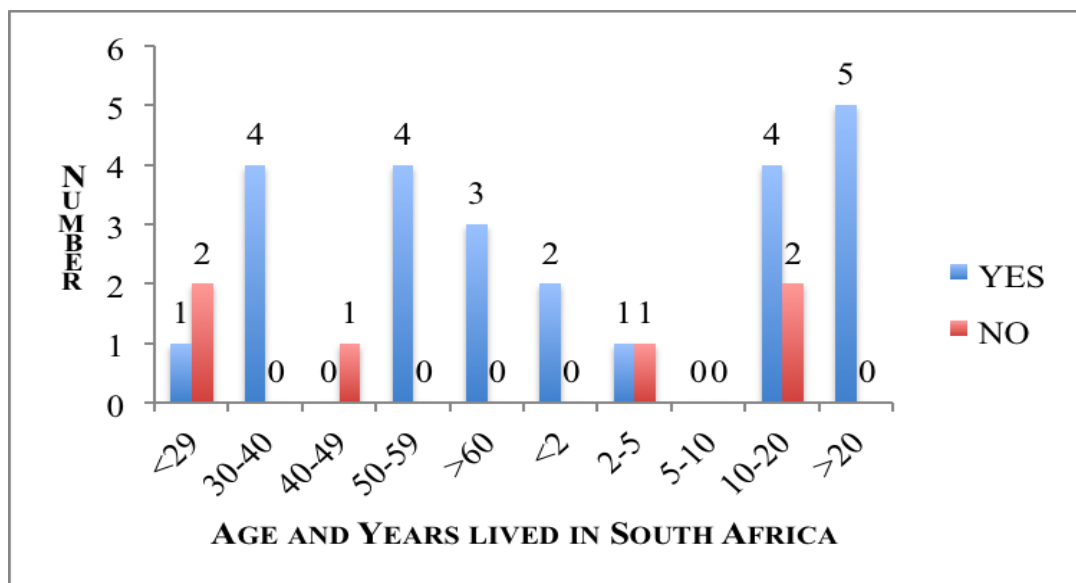
Following on directly from the above, Figure 4.19 addresses the question (C. 18) as to whether one should give face equally to non-Chinese as to Chinese. As a group, 81.25% agreed and 18.75% disagreed.

Regional breakdowns indicated that PRC overwhelmingly said yes (83.5%), Taiwan concurred unanimously (100%) and Hong Kong disagreed (100%). This latter should be viewed as an outlier as there is only one member. The further breakdown by gender indicates 81.5 % of males agreed as did and 66.6% of females. Readers are reminded of the smaller number of females in the sample group, which may lead to a distorted interpretation of the chart that follows on the next page.



**FIGURE 4.19: GIVING FACE EQUALLY TO NON-CHINESE AND CHINESE**

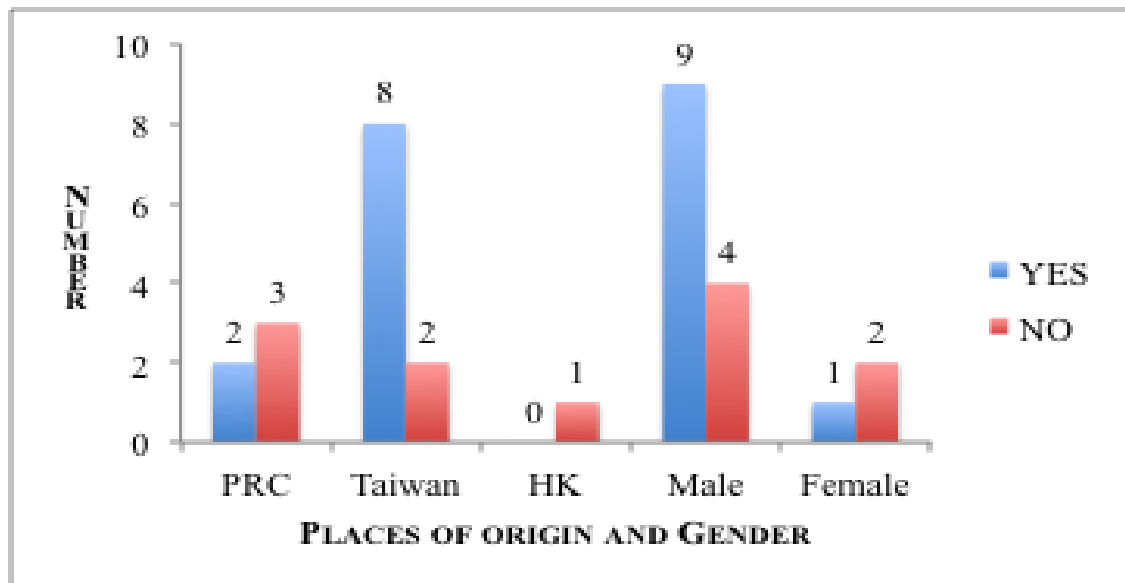
Viewed from other perspectives, Figure 4.20 on the following page, answers the same question (C. 18) according to 'Age' and according to 'Time in South Africa'. The figures are identical: the 'Yes' votes for both show 80% consensus. (Data was based on 15 participants).



**FIGURE 4.20: GIVING FACE EQUALLY TO NON-CHINESE AND CHINESE, ACCORDING TO AGE AND RESIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **4.6. HELPFULNESS OF THE SURVEY**

The last question addressed (C. 20) in the survey was by way of an open-ended opinion poll, whereby respondents were free to offer their opinions as to whether they thought a businessperson reading this paper would find it helpful or not. The ‘yes’ vote scored 62.5% overall, with 56.5 % of males signifying agreement as opposed to only 30.3% of women. Regional breakdowns for ‘yes’ votes show the PRC with 12.5%, and Taiwan with 62.5%.



**FIGURE 4.21: RESULTS OF OPINION POLL TO ASCERTAIN ITS USEFULNESS**

The above presented the findings according to the data collected from the sample groups. Not all the data has been included, but only that which was considered pertinent for the study.

In the next chapter, the findings of this study are discussed and appraised, and juxtaposed against the literature review in chapter two, to determine their significance and their relevance for further research.

~\*~

## **CHAPTER 5      DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This penultimate chapter provides an analysis and in-depth discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapter in an attempt to provide meaning and gain understanding of the possible implications of the study. Moreover, the findings are related back to the current literature, which may offer support for or refute some of the findings.

The chapter begins by providing a synopsis of the study, and then discusses the key findings. Observations are delineated under the rubrics of traditional values and concepts and business-related issues, underscoring the critical elements of this study. The chapter concludes by revisiting the validity of the findings (in compliance with 3.6), in alignment with the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 1.

### **5.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study was foremost to gain an understanding of the South African Chinese community's perception of guanxi and mianzi, as a marker of identity and a driver of socioeconomic activity. Secondary aims related to fostering intercultural understanding by promoting commercial activity between Chinese and non-Chinese.

The focus of the study was the Chinese community in and around Cape Town where research was conducted in March to June 2014, although data was collected only in the last two months of this period.

A qualitative study was adopted to achieve an emic perspective of the respondents, and an interpretivist bias was pursued. Self-administered questionnaires deemed to be consistent with the purposive non-probability sampling method were manually distributed. Participants were identified according to a predetermined profile. Data was collected, filtered and recorded, and thereafter graphically presented as findings, along with textual commentary.

## 5.3 KEY FINDINGS

### 5.3.1. Demographics and Identity

In Park's 2009 study, she categorised the Chinese community for practical purposes into several distinctions according to "generation, culture and ethnicity, language, legal status, education, residential space, class, occupation and identity" (2009b:153), and in this paper several of those distinctions have also been applied to test the validity and usefulness of this study.

The research question, the *raison d'être* for the study is restated to assist the discussion: "How do Chinese businesspeople in South Africa make use of or benefit from their knowledge of 'guanxi' and 'mianzi' in their business interactions?"

Of equal importance, this discussion chapter seeks to ascertain whether the aims and objectives of this study have been met. For ease of use they are reiterated briefly here:

To comprehend by investigating the underlying cultural concepts that possibly motivate and impact Chinese business interactions, and to assess their nature; to build on acquired insights by further research; to add to the corpus of knowledge in this field; and ultimately to provide a means to nurture better intercultural relations.

While wary of falling prey to apophenia (seeing patterns where none may exist), several themes emerged from the research, which will be discussed in the next section. Briefly, they are the observance of conservative family values, such as marriage; the embracing of education as a means to personal upliftment; and a tendency to hold to longstanding cultural concepts that, because they are widely recognised within the Chinese community, ensure each knows his position, role and obligations.

### 5.3.2. Observation of Traditional Values

This section will provide confirmation of the Chinese community's adherence to traditional values, to build the case for why the concepts of guanxi and mianzi are still relevant today, despite the distance in time and geography from their places of origin.



OBSERVATION ONE: Sixteen participants from two locations were surveyed; all were business people who met the eligibility criteria. The breakdown (Figure 4.1) revealed thirteen were men and three were women. It was hoped more women would be found to assist in this study, to provide balanced viewpoint; but this proved difficult in practice. Mao Zedong is famously attributed with proclaiming that “Women hold up fifty percent of the sky”. It may well be true that in modern Chinese thought women’s social status and employment opportunities are promoted; however, in South Africa, it may be that a cultural chauvinism, in the guise of a protective mindset by their menfolk, has kept Chinese women from rising in South African society to play meaningful roles in business, politics and other public arenas. Jaroslaw (2009:415) however would impugn this attitude towards women, denouncing it as subordination to “Confucian patriarchal regulations”.

Crime and personal safety are emotive issues in South Africa, and government has faced ongoing challenges in combating the rising criminal element since the advent of democracy in 1984, not least due in part perhaps to the influx of refugees from neighbouring war-torn states. Evidence of this security awareness is suggested by examining the employment selection numbers (see Figure 4.9), where female employers indicated that they would chose only Chinese workers. The Chinese community in Cape Town is small, and the networks are widespread; thus, it is assumed that women would feel safer amongst people with whom they are familiar and with whom they share a similar culture and language. The accountability factor is higher, in that acquaintances, friends or family and the extended ‘guanxi’ network would likely know the worker’s history and background.

OBSERVATION TWO: In a more conservative era, in the wake of World War II, marriage in the West was considered one of the pillars of society, supporting as it did the family unit. Similarly, with China’s late emergence into industrialisation some three decades ago, traditional values, strongly influenced by the culture and background of Confucian dynamics as outlined in the Literature Review, have held that the preservation and unity of family are foremost in Chinese community. Strong evidence is provided (see Table 4.1) which shows that all the men bar two are

married, and of the three women, the two under twenty-nine are married, too, while the older woman (over sixty) is a widow.

Questions relating to size of family and income were not included in the survey as they were considered to add too much extraneous detail, while queries on the latter were omitted as they could be construed as intrusive, especially if the participants were not tax compliant. In that case, they may have declined to participate in the survey.

**OBSERVATION THREE:** The importance and value that Chinese people place on education cannot be minimised. Huang and Gove (2012:10) propound the traditional Chinese view for self-improvement and achievement through education, as being associated with a person's social class, which Lien (2006) infers as an indication of moral character. Of the fifteen completed surveys, ten participants have a bachelor degree or higher. The most educated group (by numbers) is the 30-40 year-olds, followed by joint second place going to the 50-60-year-old group and the under-29 year-olds. Hence, there is a broad spread across the age spectrum.

**OBSERVATION FOUR:** It is very informative to note (Figure 4.9) that a high percentage of Chinese employers (more specifically business owners) opted to employ both Chinese and non-Chinese workers, according to the skills required for the job. None indicated any need for BEE appointments since the court case victory recognising Chinese as a 'previously disadvantaged' group under the apartheid system (see section 2.5 for details on the court case).

Given the high levels of unemployment prevalent amongst low-skilled and semi-skilled South Africans, due in part to poor educational levels, it is evident that the Chinese are providing employment to 'local' people, meaning those of African ethnicity (cf. McNamee et al, 2012:29).<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> (It may be difficult to establish compliance to this politically imposed affirmative legislation prior to this court case, given the community member's reluctance to speak to strangers on issues relating to officialdom, i.e., legal compliance.)

Many of the employers are involved in diverse commercial activities (see APPENDIX H, Figure 4.25), they include an owner of a petrol station and automobile spares centre, an owner of a signage/printing/branding company, a solar panel manufacturer, a retailer, an optometrist, a general supplier to the mining and oil industry plus an employee at a travel agency. Several participants identified as employees, not owners, are represented in the IT sector too.

OBSERVATION FIVE: As one of the locations was a faith-based organisation, the expectation was that the findings would perhaps differ markedly from those recorded at the second, secular location, especially with regard to the employment of ‘guanxi’ and ‘face’ within the community. Interestingly this was disproved (see APPENDIX H, Figure 4.25). The data in this study indicates that religious affiliation is subservient to traditional cultural observation. This is readily apparent with regard to ‘guanxi’ descriptions and perceptions and in the choice of workers (employees). A strong correlation exists between those of a spiritual persuasion and their secular brethren, disconfirming previous expectations of nonconformity.

### **5.3.3. Observation of Traditional Concepts**

OBSERVATION SIX: In relation to ‘guanxi’, participants were asked first to describe ‘guanxi’ (Figures 4.10 – 4.14), and given the choice of ‘connections, discretion, or both’. Second, they were asked how they perceived ‘guanxi’ (Figures 4.14 through 4.15) a more subjective approach, and were asked to select from ‘positive or negative, both or neither.’

‘Both’ implied a combination of factors that could vary according to circumstances, and ‘neither’ referred to a neutral view, that it exerted no influence on events. In the first instance, the choices by gender revealed a high number choosing ‘connections’ followed by ‘both’. The selection was equally high for males as for females. Regardless of place of origin, gender, age, and residence time in South Africa, an overwhelming majority described ‘guanxi’ as connections.

In the second instance, most participants favoured ‘positive’ or ‘both’, as they understood the nature of ‘guanxi’ to equate to benefits gained but with obligations

incurred. Nobody perceived ‘guanxi’ as being neutral (neither positive, nor negative), as all understood the cost of maintaining and developing reciprocal relationships (Figure 4.15). As previously discussed in the Literatures review (see Anderson & Lee, 2008:776, 778), this finding relates back to research among business executives in the PRC who perceive their interpersonal connections as critical for business (Xin & Pearce, 1996: 1642).

**OBSERVATION SEVEN:** The second cultural concept is mianzi, or ‘face’, as has been employed interchangeably throughout this paper. First, participants were asked whether they thought it equally important to give and to receive face (Figure 4.17), and second, they were asked whether they thought equal face should be given to non-Chinese as to Chinese (Figure 4.19).

The response to the first question was a unanimous ‘No’ vote from all participants. While they held the view that it was very important to give face and to receive it, most hastened to (verbally) assure the researcher that politeness and respect were a part of Chinese culture if harmony were to prevail. Thus, this was not a conscious decision in their minds to show or withhold face; rather it was part of their behavioural heritage. Commenting on this cultural socialisation aspect, Ting-Toomey (1999:199, 200) has written widely on the influence and expectations of high-context cultures (HCC) towards their employment of an indirect verbal style to circumvent offending or disappointing.

The second question produced a resounding affirmative. More than 80%, regardless of gender, age or place of origin indicated that it was necessary, not just in business but also in one’s personal relationships, to give equal face to non-Chinese. This reinforces the conclusion reached to the previous question, as discussed above. It is suggested that parallels can be drawn with corporate image or product branding. In the business world, public perception is critical, whether it be maintaining customer loyalty, assuring clients of one’s professional ethics, or establishing a reputation for sound business practices. A tarnished image is to be avoided at all costs, and the adage ‘short term gain is long term pain’ is applicable.

#### 5.3.4. Observation of Business-related issues

Two questions are addressed in this section, one concerning ‘mianzi’ and the other related to ‘guanxi’. Both will give insights for prospective South African businesspeople into Chinese thinking regarding creating and maintaining business relationships.

OBSERVATION EIGHT: The question was asked whether ‘giving face’ could smooth the way for business (Figure 4.18). It was envisaged that for some this could take the form of flattery; for others it could be complimenting the prospective partner on their business operation, asking intelligent questions or by showing deference for the opinion of their counterpart.

Two thirds of those surveyed agreed that giving face would predispose better business relationships by creating conditions conducive for interacting.

OBSERVATION NINE: The second question related to ‘guanxi’ (Figure 4.16). Respondents were provided with a list of seven statements relating to good business practices and asked to select the five they deemed most critical to doing business, and to rank them. This was a subjective process in that they would give advice to non-Chinese businesspeople who might wish to initiate a business relationship. The top response, “show you are a trustworthy partner”, speaks volumes about business ethics and integrity. This was the choice of every male (100%), and of 90% of the females.

These abovementioned observations should assist in dispelling some of the doubts non-Chinese businesspeople may have about the nature of their potential business relationship with the Chinese counterparts.

OBSERVATION TEN: The closing question in the survey (C-21) asked participants for their opinion regarding the effectiveness of the survey (see Figure 4.21), to determine its potential helpfulness in cultural awareness. Very little of value was forthcoming as written comment. However, several participants were keen to engage verbally after the questionnaire was returned. They were from Group 2. They suggested that the study might yield ‘better’ results with regard to ‘guanxi’ if it had been conducted in Johannesburg. The implication is that the increased numbers of

wholesalers in Johannesburg are more dependent upon their overseas links to source and import products cost-effectively. This confirms Laribee's (2008:259) observation of the investment in "social capital" by Chinese importers in home-country (e.g. PRC) suppliers to "help keep end prices at lower friendship levels." She adds that not only do Chinese wholesalers interact with other local wholesalers, but also often, these business partners are family members or long term friends, and effectively, together, they gain control over the entire supply chain (Laribee: 2008:361,399).

Park (2009b: 156) concurs, noting that the research indicates the majority of Chinese new arrivals are "linked by both family and other close social networks to factories in China. With these resources and competitive advantages, their first business choice is import, wholesale, and distribution."

#### **5.4 THE VALIDITY OF THE FINDINGS**

The research design had several strengths, which are listed epexegetically: primary data was obtained by investigating the participants' perspective and interpretation of phenomena within their natural settings, bounded within the individual's experiential framework (Altieno 2009:14, 16). Thus, a realism and richness is added to the phenomena (Miles and Huberman 1994:288), which places it within context.

This emic perspective was readily apparent, in that once the introductions between the researcher and the respondent had occurred, it exemplified as a natural curiosity from the latter, promoting the establishment of a rapport for the duration of the survey. This connection was especially noticeable at the second location where, once the participants had completed the questionnaire and returned it to the researcher, they were often eager to ask questions relating to the study itself, and to the researcher's background. It was during this 'post-questionnaire' time that verbal suggestions were made, alluding to the bigger picture of bilateral trade and Sino-South African cultural relations that had not been volunteered in the questionnaire.

Brief ethnographic observations recorded in field notes yielded (subjective) data that, contrary to ethnocentric expectations, revealed a community exhibiting warmth of character, a quiet dignity interspaced with a subtle humour, and a desire to please.

Despite the small sample size and low number of female participants, the study was significant in that it provided insights into the thoughts and perceptions of this minority group, of which little is known. It provided this researcher with opportunities to discuss cultural differences and enquire from the participants suggested ways of overcoming the same.

Data collection was rigorous and accurate; the assumption being that the responses provided were honest. This is an area that every researcher enters on faith, relying on instincts and personal experience to deflect potential untruths. However, given that no sensitive questions were raised in this survey such as issues of political affiliations, legal residence and tax compliance, it is believed that this survey has validity for future research along similar grounds for replication. It makes the claim of being representative of the larger Chinese South African population, as far as adherence to the cultural concepts is concerned. Hence, it is asserted that other researchers could replicate this study, provided they had the means to access the relevant communities.

During the course of collecting the data, an interesting example of cultural distinctiveness surfaced. From a Western perspective, what manifested as tardiness by Group 1, in the late return of completed questionnaires, could be interpreted differently, as an adherence to polychronic time (P-time), as discussed by Hall and Hall (1987:17-18) and expounded by Guirdham (1999:58). This alternative “temporal regulation” view is held by high-context cultures (HCC), ergo Chinese, which Ting-Toomey (1999:137) expounds as displaying less commitment to schedules and more to relationships. It is another attribute of collectivistic cultures.

This chapter presented observations suggested by the findings and offered analyses thereof. The next chapter focuses on the overall picture that has emerged from this study and its placement within the corpus.

~\*~

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

This final chapter presents an evaluative view on the significance of the findings. It ascertains whether those findings provided answers to the research questions(s) (1.2) and whether the aims and objectives of this study (1.3) have been met. In so doing, it attempts to place this study into the current literature prior to making recommendations for future research. It concludes with a final word.

### 6.1 SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The study has so far revealed several significant elements that point to the unique relationship shared by China and South Africa:

- (i) Historical links: Historians assert the lengthy duration of Sino-South African relations that extend back to the mid-1600s, and Park (2009a:13) writes that the South African Chinese hold the singular position as both the longest-established and the largest Chinese community in Africa;
- (ii) Bilateral Trade: The existing bilateral trading alliance advances China as South Africa's biggest trading partner by monetary value;
- (iii) Market Access: China views South Africa as her gateway to the African continent (Park 2009b:156);
- (iv) Reciprocal FDI: South Africa is the only African country to invest in China (Foreign Direct Investment, see Kabemba, 2012); and
- (v) Domestic Employment: Perhaps most importantly, the spread of the Chinese shops across the rural landscape has created of many jobs for unskilled and semiskilled workers.

These factors have been long established. The interpretivist bias and investigative nature of this study sought to gain insights and understanding into the Chinese culture and to highlight these differences. Collier's cultural identity theory (2003:419,420,423-424) ascribes norms and meanings, shared by ascription as determining behaviour and fostering expectations between insider and outsider groups. The investigative process sought to uncover the scope and depth of the purported differences and by examining the data, to discover and offer possible



solutions that would build bridges across the cultural divides. The research question was developed with this aim in mind.

In reverse order, then, we will examine the secondary questions (see 1.2) first, as they provide a broad context in which to place the study, before focusing on the primary question. The former are restated below, for convenience:

(i) *Is guanxi usage in South Africa different from use, in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan?*

Guanxi usage in South Africa appears to be similar to the manner it is employed in the participants' places of origin, with older people tending to have stronger views than do the younger. None of the participants surveyed was born in South Africa; however some have children, and these cultural concepts are only theoretical constructs to them and not realistic in the world they were born into and inhabit. Their outlook and perspective is South African first, and Chinese second.

(ii) *Does an understanding of guanxi and mianzi confer any benefit or business advantage?*

Although it is difficult to quantify this intangible item without more in-depth research and without the aid of a custom designed measuring instrument, in this researcher's opinion there are always benefits to be gained by understanding another's culture. The display of such knowledge is interpreted as a sign of respect by the other (giving face), creating the space for a friendly rapport to be established. Mindfulness, once learned can be practised as a tool to link knowledge with pragmatism. Ting-Toomey (1999:268, 269) alludes to mindfulness as an "attentive consideration of the potential consequences of any action." Hence having an awareness of these concepts, which play a substantial role in the other's culture, creates the necessary openness for bridge building. Langer (1997:11) urged attending to "the context and the person." Evaluating and restating this advice: Each person then, regardless of nationality, ethnicity or creed should be approached on a personal level.

(iii) *Is the Chinese South Africans primary business partners other local Chinese or foreign nationals?*

Responses differ widely in that business is location-dependent (where is the business being run from) as well as market-dependent (with whom do they trade) in

accordance to the type of business in which the participants are engaged. In Cape Town, as a small trader, they are dealing with the general public from all walks of life. Some interaction takes place amongst other Chinese as they share suppliers and networks. Other business sectors have dealings with South African suppliers as required. There were no importers or exporters amongst the participants surveyed in this study, so perhaps there is scope here, too, for another researcher to follow up. McNamee et al (2012:31) comments that “Johannesburg is a major hub of Chinese wholesaler activity” in Southern Africa, not just to Chinese retailers but to a host of other nationalities from many neighbouring nations seeking to source cheap products.

(iv) *What benefits does understanding these two concepts have for local (South African) and Chinese employers?*

Business relationships with strangers can be fraught with risks ranging from unreliability of deliveries to inferior goods, uncommunicative partners, even dishonesty and fraud. Hence, ‘guanxi’ relationships, once established, provide stability, built as they are upon past successes and future expectations.

One of the aims for this study (1.3) was to raise awareness of and to ascertain what socioeconomic benefits may be derived from utilising the traditional Chinese concepts of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’. The fruit of these endeavours suggests enriched intercultural understanding, the removal of racial prejudice, suspicion and animosity rooted in ignorance. It is hoped that businesspeople outside of the Chinese community would avail themselves of the literature presented by researchers to enter into mutually satisfactory commercial operations. Each group would contribute from their strengths. The burgeoning, potentially symbiotic relationship would allow locals (non-Chinese) to bring their knowledge of legislation, officialdom and local market expertise to bear. In turn, their Chinese counterparts’ connections would provide access to source products from suppliers abroad at preferential rates. Ergo, it follows that each party stands to gain more from an inclusive partnership than acting independently.

The resultant ‘transcultural’ payback could be significant to all parties and stimulate a struggling domestic South African economy by providing products at affordable prices and creating sustainable employment as demand grows and companies expand.

At the heart of the issue is effective communications; that is, “signalling to the other party that we are willing to adopt their behaviours in a culturally sensitive manner” (Ting-Toomey 199:263).

Finally, to address the primary question:

*How do Chinese businesspeople in South Africa make use of or benefit from their knowledge of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ in their business interactions?*

There is no clear cut-and-dried answer, as those surveyed were of the opinion that these cultural concepts were an inseparable part of their identity, and thus, by their definition, indistinguishable from what it means to be Chinese. It appeared to this researcher that, just as some people have an innate politeness due to their upbringing and nurturing environment, so too were these characteristics displayed through ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’. To expand this idea further, that means an individual gives face or respect to others because it has been inculcated from youth. That respect may be to a parent, elder or authority figure, and in turn, the giver receives (to varying degrees) protection, direction and guidance, such as any child may reasonably expect within a functional family. ‘Guanxi’ and, by extension, the reciprocal obligations, are created and maintained through familiarity, by experience and with time. The supposition of this researcher is that, while application may vary in Western cultures and across African cultures, these traditions are passed down where culture is still remembered and respected, as providing continuity across generations.

The Chinese have a long history. It is speculated that owing to their large population dwelling in close proximity, the exercise of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ has for the most part kept societal conflicts and demands in check by deferring to intergroup harmony.

None of the participants surveyed gave any indications that ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ had any covert utilitarian aspect that they could be employed to influence people. Rather, like any friendship that develops with time, there is a constant searching for the boundaries and an earnest desire to assist one another in the furtherance of their business plans and arrangements.

This could be construed as a limitation of this study then, since none of the participants was employed in influential positions, whereas a longitudinal or ethnographic study could be carried out to investigate whether the exercise of power would be used wisely or for self-benefit.

## **6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

This section offers a condensed version of the Key Findings (5.2), derived from the observations.

### **6.2.1 Numerical Gender Inequality**

There appear to be fewer Chinese women than men (only about 20%) engaged in business activities, according to the data. It is uncertain whether this is a consequence of the traditional, out-dated Western view (apparently shared by the Confucian ideal) that the woman is the homemaker and should therefore leave that role to the men, or whether the high crime statistics have resulted in a protectionist mindset.

### **6.2.2 High Marriage statistics**

Almost all the participants were married or had been married. Of the sixteen participants, thirteen were married, one was widowed and only two were single.

### **6.2.3 Value of Education**

The role of education is given high status in Chinese society not only in the light of academic achievement but also of moral upliftment brought about by striving for a goal.

### **6.2.4 Equal Opportunity Employer**

A definite proclivity exists towards hiring the best person for the job, regardless of ethnicity. This bodes well for the domestic job market.

### **6.2.5 Persistence of Tradition**

As far as the cultural issues discussed in this paper are concerned, tradition subsumes religion as no differences were observed between the responses of the religious and the secular.

### **6.2.6 Polarisation Property of Guanxi**

Everyone has an opinion or view about the role of ‘guanxi’. It is not a neutral phenomenon.

### **6.2.7 Personal and Professional Courtesy**

Non-Chinese should receive equal face to Chinese. This courtesy should be extended to all, regardless of ethnicity or background.

### **6.2.8 Innate Civility**

Giving face to a prospective business partner will smooth the way forward, creating an amicable workspace for discussions.

### **6.2.9 Business Advice**

All participants advocated similar advice to non-Chinese potential business partners.

## **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **6.3.1 Expanding the Local Geo-footprint**

On a small scale with an extended budget and longer time frame it would be possible to expand this study into other suburbs of Cape Town thereby achieving increased gender parity with a view toward ratifying the findings of this study.

### **6.3.2 Expanding the National Geo-footprint**

It is envisaged that conducting a comparison study in Johannesburg would yield more data toward understanding whether the strength of (or adherence to) ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ is dependent upon closer links by Chinese traders and businesspeople to their home countries. This proposed study would act on the assumption that the Chinese business community in Johannesburg has stronger trade links with China owing to the requirement for larger import quantities, and the resultant need for better networking. How much would such a study reveal about the cultural aspect of their business practices, both interethnic and intercultural?

### **6.3.3 A Longitudinal or Ethnographic study**

A proposed longitudinal or ethnographic study in greater Cape Town should be carried out to determine whether the data collected in this study accurately reflects long-term observations of Chinese South African individuals who may be exercising

authority (power over others, such as CEOs (Chief Executive Officers), parliamentarians or others in positions of authority).

#### **6.3.4 A Comparative study conducted in China (PRC)**

A comparative study should be conducted in China (PRC). The availability of a larger sample group to draw on, composed equally of men and women would provide interesting insights into this cultural phenomenon, because it may well be that Chinese living in South Africa have become acculturated (Park 2009a:16) with time, and their traditional cultural values suppressed or diluted. Guirdham (1999:59) challenges this view that extended exposure by a minority group leads to cultural convergence. She propounds compliance to local custom rather is merely superficial, a peripheral adoption of food, dress and contemporary language.

#### **6.3.5 A Comparative Needs-based Study**

Conduct an investigation of Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' (Maslow, 1970:25) within the Chinese community. Initially propounded for Western cultures, and claiming a universalism, Maslow's 'needs-based' theory would seek to locate parallels within Confucian dynamism, which aligns with Hofstede's (1994) dimension of collectivism. The latter depicts a moral society, with "all the resultant authority adherence, group orientation and importance of relationships and face" (Loh, Wrathall, & Schapper, 2000).

### **6.4 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

This section offers an overall view of the study, by providing a brief chapter-by-chapter analysis.

Chapter 1 served as the introductory chapter and dealt with the purpose of the study. It presented the problems that were investigated, the organisation of the study, and the research methodology executed to find solutions to the problems.

Chapter 2 reviewed the current literature, exploring the somewhat limited scope available on this topic. Although the output is small, it is not without quality, emphasising the scarcity of data in particular areas and the need for further scholarship. Within this chapter, the conceptual framework of this study was

examined and the deployment of the same was investigated, through the local Chinese community. An overview of the South African Chinese identity was sought. The review began with a panoramic global view introducing cultural differences between East and West, before narrowing the focus slightly to China's rising presence on the world stage. It homed in further to China in Africa and finally China's presence in South Africa. Of particular interest was the development of Chinese identity in their new host country and the influences endogenous and exogenous that shaped this identity.

Chapter 3 provided an account of the qualitative research process, and how it was conducted. It explicated the methodology employed, the research design adopted, and the selection of the population sample. The necessary process of gaining access to the participants via intermediaries was also discussed and commented upon. It expounded on the data collection method, which was to distribute self-administered questionnaires. It elaborated on the questionnaire design, data analysis procedures and the reliability and validity of the study by implementing a pilot scheme before the main launch. Finally, it pointed out assumptions made and the limitations of the study, both those self-imposed and the anticipated spatiotemporal constraints.

Chapter four presented the findings of the study from the data recorded and extrapolated from the sixteen participants by using figures and tables to illustrate the data graphically, categorised by themes according to the questionnaire. The chapter first established the demographic breakdown and then moved on to examine the respondents' employment status and choices of employee. Thereafter it presented the findings relating to 'guanxi' and 'mianzi' and concluded by showing a visual representation of the participants' view on the helpfulness of the survey overall.

Chapter 5 provided a summary of the study, followed by a discussion of the key findings by means of observations. It commented on the outcome of the research question(s) investigation, whether the aims and objectives of the study were achieved and the adequacy of the methodology for addressing the study. It reaffirmed the validity of the findings and discussed their significance and implications prior to making recommendations regarding area of further study. A summary of the findings was presented.

This paper would be incomplete without a summation.

## **6.5 FINAL WORD**

This paper set out to investigate the identity of the South African Chinese community, in a sense to determine ‘who they are’, and if their adherence to and application of traditional cultural values furnished them with some intangible advantage in business practices over their non-Chinese peers.

It achieved its objective in that it established that the community holds to an innate collective view of ‘respectfulness’ to others, borne out by the evidence of treating others (as in non-Chinese) with similar deference to their own community. Their work ethic is displayed by the value given to education and their general resourcefulness by the manner in which they are prepared to leverage familial connections in the pursuit of business. Of course, as in any study it opens they way to many more questions regarding the depth and quality of ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ displayed in other similar communities both in South Africa and abroad.

It is hoped that despite the shortcoming and limitations of this study, that the findings of this paper may encourage researchers to look anew at this culture-rich, untapped people group in our midst. Likewise, for the local businessperson, to be encouraged to engage with their Chinese counterparts, for with sufficient patience and motivation it is possible to clarify previous areas of misunderstanding, to modify preconceptions and dispel past prejudices. In so doing, they can integrate with the previous ‘strangers in our midst’ who yet live alongside us, dealing with the same daily issues. Creating new social capital across the cultures is a sure and sound investment for the people of this country, producing a bountiful harvest for future generations.

~\*~



## REFERENCES

- Accone, D. 2007. Chinese Communities in South Africa. *The China Monitor* 21: 6-8.
- Atieno, O. P. 2009. An analysis of the strengths and limitation of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. *Problems of Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 13:13-18.
- Anderson A. R. & Lee, E. Y. 2008. From tradition to modern: attitudes and applications of *guanxi* in Chinese entrepreneurship. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 15(4): 775-787.
- Andrejevic, T. K. 2011. Understanding the Chinese mentality - some basic hints. International Symposium Engineering Management and Competitiveness. June 24-25, 2011, Zrenjanin, Serbia. Available at: <http://www.tfzr.uns.ac.rs/emc/emc2011/Files/D%2004.pdf> [Accessed: 30 June 2014].
- Anthony, R., Grimm, S. & Kim, Y. 2013. *South Africa's relations with China and Taiwan: economic realism and the 'One China' doctrine*. Policy briefing. Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch University. Available at: [http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CCS-policy-brief\\_One-China\\_RA-SG-YK.pdf](http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CCS-policy-brief_One-China_RA-SG-YK.pdf) [Accessed: 5 August 2014].
- Armstrong, J. 1997. The Chinese at the Cape in the Dutch East India Company period 1652 - 1795. Unpublished paper presented to the UNESCO Slave Route Project Conference, Robben Island, Cape Town, South Africa, October 24-26
- Auer, P. 1992. Introduction: John Gumperz' approach to contextualization, in P. Auer & A. di Luzio (eds.). *The Contextualization of Language*. 1-37. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: J. Benjamins.
- Bacon, F. 1597. Religious meditations, of heresies, in B. Vickers (ed). *Frances Bacon: The major works*. 2008. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, C.A. 2007. *A guide to qualitative field research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. United States: Sage Publications.
- Baker, T. L. 1994. *Doing Social research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Bennett, M. J. 1998. Intercultural communication: a current perspective, in M. J. Bennett (ed.). *Basic concepts of intercultural communication*. 35-53. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.
- Berry, J. W. 1980. Acculturation as varieties of adaptation, in A. Padilla (ed.). *Acculturation: theory, models, and some new findings*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Bhattacharyya, D. K. 2006. *Research methodology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Delhi: Excel Books.
- Billig, M. 1987. *Arguing and thinking*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University.
- Blancher, N. R & Rumbaugh, T. (eds.). 2004. China: International Trade and WTO Accession, in *Working Paper, International Monetary Fund*. (WP/04/36). IMF publication.
- Blau, P. 1964, *Exchange and power in social life*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Bodomo, A. 2009. Africa - China Relations: symmetry, soft power and South Africa. *China Review* 9 (2): 169-178.
- Bond, M.E. (ed.). 1996. *The handbook of Chinese psychology*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Bond, M.E. 1991. *Beyond the Chinese face*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1986. The Forms of Capital, in J. Richardson (ed.). *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. 214-258. New York: Greenwood.
- Bourhis, R.Y., Moise, L.C., Perreault, S. & Senecal, S. 1997. Towards an interactive acculturation model: a social psychological approach. *International Journal of Psychology*, 32: 369–386.
- Brewer, M. & Miller, N. 1996. *Intergroup relations*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks.
- Brink, H. I. L. 2000. *Fundamentals of research methodology for health care professionals*. Juta.

- Brink, P. J. & Wood, M. J. A. 1998. *Advanced designs in nursing research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Broodryk, J. 1997a. *Ubuntu management and motivation*. Johannesburg: Gauteng Department of Welfare and Pretoria: Ubuntu School of Philosophy.
- Broodryk, J. 1997b. *Ubuntuism as a doctrine for the ordering of society*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. 1987. *Politeness: some universals in language usage*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Brunner, J. A. & Wang, Y. 1988. Chinese negotiation and the concept of face. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 1 (1): 27-43.
- Bryman, A. (ed.). 1988. *Doing research in organisations*. London: Routledge.
- Bryman, A. 2008. *Social Research Methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burke, C. & Corkin, L. 2007. *China's engagement of Africa preliminary scoping of African case studies*. Stellenbosch: Centre for Chinese Studies.
- Buttery, E. A. & Leung, T. K. P. 1998. The difference between Chinese and Western negotiations. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32(3-4): 374-89.
- Chan, R. Y. K., Cheng, L. T. W. & Szeto, R. W. F. 2002. The dynamics of guanxi and ethics for Chinese executives. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 41(4), 327-336.
- Chao, C-M. 1987. One country, two systems: a theoretical analysis. *Asian Affairs*, 14(2): 107-124.
- Chen, G. M. & Starosta, W. J. 1997. Chinese conflict management and resolution: Overview and implications. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 7:1-16.
- Cissé, D. 2012. FOCAC: trade, investments and aid in China–Africa relations. Centre for Chinese Studies, Policy Briefing, May 2012. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.
- Cochran, W. G. 1963. *Sampling techniques*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: John Wiley.

- Cockayne, R. 2005. SACU needs free trade agreement with the US. June 12.  
Available at: [www.tralac.org/scripts/content.php?id=4324](http://www.tralac.org/scripts/content.php?id=4324)  
[Accessed on 30 August 2014].
- Collier, M. J. 2003. Understanding cultural identities in intercultural communication: a ten-step inventory, in L. A. Samovar & R. E. Porter (eds.). *Intercultural communication: a reader*. 10<sup>th</sup> edition. Wadsworth: Thomson.
- Cook, T. D. & Campbell, D. T. 1979. *Quasi-Experimentation: design & analysis issues for field settings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Corbetta, P. 2003. *Social research: theory, methods and techniques*. London: Sage Publications.
- Couchman, W. & Dawson, J. 1995. *Nursing and healthcare: a practical guide*. London: Balliere Tindall in Association with the Royal College of Nursing.
- Davies, H. 1995. Small business as a supplement in the People's Republic of China. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 37(3): 76-80.
- Davies, D. & Dodd, J. 2002. Qualitative research and the questions of rigor. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(2): 279-289.
- De Vos, A. S. 1998. *Research at grass roots: a primer for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. 2005. Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research in N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1-32. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Derek, S. 1997. *Writing your dissertation: how to plan, prepare and present your work successfully*. London: The Cromwell Press.
- Dirlik, A. 1999. Asians on the Rim: transnational capital and local community in the making of contemporary Asian America. In E. Hu-de Hart (ed.). *Across the Pacific: Asian American and globalisation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Draper, P. & le Pere, G. (eds.). 2005. *Enter the dragon: towards a free trade agreement between China and the Southern African Customs Union*. Johannesburg: SAIIA.
- Drucker, P. F. 1959. *Landmarks of Tomorrow*. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Dunfee, T. W. & Warren, D. E. 2001. Is guanxi ethical? A normative analysis of doing business in China. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 32 (3): 191-204.
- Du Plooy, G. M. 2002. *Communication research techniques, methods and applications*. Lansdowne: Juta.
- Eiselen, R., Uys, T. & Potgieter, N. 2005. *Analysing survey data using SPSS13: a workbook*. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Gao, G. & Ting-Toomey, S. 1998. *Communicating Effectively with the Chinese*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.
- Gold, T., Guthrie D. & Wank, D. (eds.) 2002. *Social connections in China: institutions, culture and the changing nature of guanxi*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Gudykunst, W. 2003. *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gudykunst, W. & Kim, Y.Y. 1995. Communicating with strangers: an approach to intercultural communication, in J. Stewart (ed.). *Bridges Not Walls*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. 429-442.
- Guirdham, M. 2005. *Communicating across cultures at work*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Guirdham, M. 1999. *Communicating across cultures*. London: MacMillan Press.
- Hall, E. T. 1976. *Beyond Culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hamilton, P. 2012 (ed.). Reliability, validity and usefulness, *in Crisis*. Online Behavioral Screening & Reports. Available at: <http://www.steponeforparents.org/Articles/ReliabilityValidityUseful.htm> [Accessed 15 September 2014].
- Hammond, S.C. & Glenn, L. M. 2004. The ancient practice of Chinese social networking: Guanxi and social network theory. *E:CO*, 6 (1-2): 24-31.

- Han Y. 2009. The stakeholder view with guanxi: a case study of managers in Chinese Aquatic Product Industry. Master's thesis in Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Economics. The Norwegian College of Fishery Science, University of Tromsø, Norway & Nha Trang University, Vietnam.
- Hardon, A., Hodgkin, C. & Fresle, D. 2004. How to investigate the use of medicines by consumers, in *promoting rational drug use in the community*. Geneva: WHO & University of Amsterdam.
- Harris, K. L. 2010. En route to "Dignity Day": the South African Chinese and historical commemorations. *Historia*, 55 (2): 147-162.
- Harris, K. L. 2007. Waves of migration: a brief outline of the history of Chinese in South Africa. *The China Monitor*, 21: 4-5.
- Harris, K. L. 1994. The Chinese in South Africa: a preliminary overview to 1910. *Kleoi*, 26: 9-26.
- Hay, D., Adnan, S. M. & Staden, C. 2010. Culture, governance structure and corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting: evidence from China, India, Malaysia and the United Kingdom. Paper presented at the 2010 AFAANZ (Accounting and Finance Association of Australia and New Zealand) Conference, Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Hinnenkamp, V. 1991. Talking a person into interethnic distinction: a discourse analytic case study, in J. Blommaert & J. Verschueren (eds.). *The Pragmatics of intercultural and international communication*. 91-111. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ho, J. 2010. Acculturation gaps in Vietnamese immigrant families: impact on family relationships. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34: 22-33.
- Hofstede, G. 1991. *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Hofstede, G. 1981. *Cultures and Organisations: software of the Mind*. London: HarperCollins.
- Hofstede, G. & Bond, M. H. 1988. The Confucius connection: from cultural roots to economic growth. *Organizational Dynamics*, 16 (4): 5-21.

- Huang, G. H-C. & Gove, M. 2012. Confucianism and Chinese families: values and practices in education. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(3): 10-14.
- Hudson, L. A. & Ozanne J. L. 1998. Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research. *Journal of consumer research*, 14: 508-521.
- Huynh, T. T., Park. Y. J. & Chen A.Y. 2010. Faces of China: new Chinese migrants in South Africa, 1980s to present. *African and Asian Studies*, 9:286-306.
- Hwang, A., Ang, S. & Francesco, A. M. 2002. The silent Chinese: the influence of face and kiasuism on student feedback-seeking behaviors. *Journal of Management Education*, 26 (1): 70–98.
- Hwang, K-K, and Hu X. 2004. *Mianzi power game of Chinese people*. Beijing: Renmin University Press.
- Jaroslaw, J. 2009. Changes in women's social status and eating-related interactions in metropolitan China. *Polish Sociological Review*, 3 (167): 415-426.
- Kabemba, C. 2012. *Chinese involvement in South Africa*. Available at <http://www.osisa.org/books/regional/chinese-involvement-south-africa> [Accessed: 13th September 2014/9/12].
- Kasaba, R. 1993. Treaties and friendships: British imperialism, the Ottoman Empire, and China in the nineteenth century. *Journal of World History*, 4(2): 215-241.
- Kasper, G. 1990. Linguistic politeness: current research issues. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14: 193-218.
- Khoza, R. 1994. The need for an Afrocentric approach to management, in P. Christie, R. Lessem & L. Mbigi (eds.). *African management: Philosophies, concepts, and applications*. 117-124.
- Kim, Y. 2013. *Chinese-Led SEZs in Africa: are they a driving force of China's soft power?* Discussion Paper, February 2013. Stellenbosch: Centre for Chinese Studies.
- Kim Y. 1991. Intercultural communication competence: a systems-theoretic view, in S. Ting-Toomey & F. Korzenny (eds.). *Cross-cultural interpersonal communication*. 259-275. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- King, K. 2006. 'China's partnership discourse with Africa'. Paper to conference on 'China in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: preparing for the forum on China-Africa cooperation', 16-17 October 2006, Muldersdrift, South Africa.
- Kvale, S. 1996. *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviews*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lafargue, F. 2009. China in Africa: a limited conquest. Translated by P. Brown. *China Perspectives*, 2009 (1): 80-86.
- Laribee, R. 2008. The China shop phenomenon: trade supply within the Chinese diaspora in South Africa. *Afrika Spectrum*, 43(3): 353-370.
- Le Pere, G. (ed.). 2006. *China in Africa: mercantilist predator, or partner in development?* Midrand, South Africa: The Institute for Global Dialogue.
- Lee, D.Y. & Dawes, P.L. 2005. *Guanxi*, trust, and long-term orientation in Chinese business markets. *Journal of International Marketing*, 13(2): 28-56.
- Lee, K. C. P. & Humphreys, K. P. 2006. The role of guanxi in supply chain practises. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 450-467.
- Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J. E. 2010. *Practical research: planning and design*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Merrill.
- Lien, L.Y. 2006. Creating a successful educational path for children: the experience of Taiwanese mothers. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations, Minneapolis, MN.
- Lim, T. S. & Choi, S. 1976. Interpersonal relationships in Korea, in W.B. Gudykunst, S Ting-Toomey & T. Nishida (eds.), *Communication in interpersonal relationships across cultures*. 122-136. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lincoln, Y.S and Guba, E.G 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. London: Sage Publications.
- Liu, H. C. K. 2002. US Dollar hegemony has got to go. Asia Times online. April 2002. <http://www.atimes.com/global-econ/DD11Dj01.html> [Accessed 10 September 2014].



- Loh, D., Wrathall, J. & Schapper, J. 2000. *The Maslow Revival: Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a motivational theory*. Working paper 78/00. Melbourne, Australia: Monash University Faculty of Business and Economics.
- Louw, D. J. 1997. *Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other*. South Africa: University of the North. Available at [www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Afri/AfriLouw.htm](http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Afri/AfriLouw.htm) [Accessed 1 October 2014].
- Louw, P.E. 2004. *The rise, fall and legacy of apartheid*. Cape Town: Praeger Publishers.
- Lukhele, A.K. 1990. *Stokvels in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Amagi Books.
- Lunt, P. & Livingstone, S. 1996. Rethinking the focus group in media and communications research. *Journal of Communication*, 46 (2): 79-98.
- Luo, Y. D. 1997. Guanxi: principles, philosophies, and implications. *Human Systems Management*, 16: 43-51.
- Maslow, A.H. 1970. *Motivation and personality*. USA: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Matondo, J. P. M. 2012. Cross-cultural values comparison between Chinese and Sub-Saharan Africans. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3 (11): 38- 44.
- Matsumoto, Y. 1988. Re-examination of the universality of face: politeness phenomena in Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12: 403-426.
- Matthiesen, J. K. & Richter, A. W. 2007. Negotiating access: foot in the door... or door in the face. *The Psychologist*, 20 (3): 144-147.
- Mavrides, G. 2008. Keeping face in China. Understanding the effects of mianzi and guanxi in day-to-day Chinese life. *Transitions Abroad Webzine*, 28.
- Mbigi, L. & Maree, J. 1995. *Ubuntu. The Spirit of African Transformation Management*. Randburg: Knowledge Resources.
- McNamee, T., Mills, G., Manoeli, S., Mulaudzi, M., Doran, S. & Chen, E. 2012. *Africa in their words: a study of Chinese traders in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia and Angola*. Discussion Paper 2012/03. Johannesburg: Brenthurst Foundation.

- Merritt, A. 2000. Culture in the cockpit: do Hofstede's dimensions replicate? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 31(3): 283-301.
- Miles, MB. & Huberman, AM. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Milliot, E. 2008. The Pivotal role of guanxi for business intelligence in the People's Republic of China, in *Managing Global Business Competition - at 14th International Euro-Asia Research Conference and 3rd International Conference on Business and Management Research*. Bali, Indonesia, 27-29 August 2008. Available at:  
<http://lib.thanglong.edu.vn/uploads/files/1305881921.pdf>  
[Accessed on 4 August 2014].
- Mills, G. & Thompson, C. 2009. Partners or predators? China in Africa, in A. Waldron (ed.). *China in Africa*. 55-60. Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation.
- Mishler, F. G. 1990. Validation in inquiry-guided research: the role of examples in narrative studies. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60 (4): 415-441.
- Mohan, G. 2002. Diaspora and development: the Black Atlantic and African transformation, in J. Robinson (ed.). *Development and Displacement*. 77-139. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mouton, J. 2002. *Understanding social research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Mumby, D.K. & Clair, R.P. 1997. Organizational discourse, in T. A. van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse as social interaction*. 181-205. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Naidu, S. 2008. Balancing a strategic partnership? South Africa-China relations, in K. Ampiah and S. Naidu (eds.). *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon? African and China*. 167-191. Scottsville, KY: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Norberg, J. 2006. China paranoia derails free trade. *Far Eastern Economic Review* 169 (1): 46-49.
- Norman, J. 1988. *Chinese: Cambridge Language Surveys*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Oliver, P. 2004. *Writing your thesis*. London: Sage Publications.

- Pablos, P. 2006. Western and Eastern views on social networks. *The Learning Organization*, 12(5): 436-456.
- Parahoo K. 1997. *Nursing research*. London: Macmillan.
- Park, Y. J. 2013. Chinese South Africans now Black! Race and belonging in the “new” South Africa, in M. Fois & A. Pes (eds.). *Nova Collectanea Africana: Politics and Minorities in Africa*, 2 (1): 101-123.
- Park, Y. J. 2012. Living In Between: the Chinese in South Africa, in *Migration Information Source*. Washington, USA: Migration Policy Institute. Available at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/living-between-chinese-south-africa/>  
[Accessed: 5 May 2014].
- Park, Y. J. 2010. The Chinese Diaspora in Africa: An Introduction. *The China Monitor*, 53: 9-13.
- Park, Y. J. 2009a. Chinese Migration in Africa. Occasional Paper No. 24, China in Africa Programme, South African Institute for International Affairs. Johannesburg: SAIIA.
- Park, Y. J. 2009b. Recent Chinese Migrations to South Africa. New Intersections of Race, Class and Ethnicity. In Rahimy, T. (ed.). *Representation, Expression and Identity: Interdisciplinary Insights on Multiculturalism, Conflict and Belonging*. 153-168. Oxford, United Kingdom: Inter-Disciplinary Press.
- Park, Y. J. 2008. State, myth, and agency in the construction of Chinese South African identities, 1948-1994. *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 4 (1): 69-90.
- Park, Y. J. 2006. Sojourners to settlers: early constructions of Chinese identity in South Africa. *African Studies*, 65 (2): 201-231.
- Park, Y. J. 2005. Shifting Chinese South African Identities in Post-apartheid South Africa. Unpublished PhD thesis. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.
- Park, Y. J and Chen A. Y. 2009. Recent Chinese Migrants in small Towns of Post-apartheid South Africa. *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, 25(1): 25-44.

- Park, S. & Luo, D. 2001. Guanxi and organizational dynamics: organizational networking in Chinese firms. *Strategic Management Journal*, 22(5): 455-477.
- Park, Y.P. and Rugunanan, P. 2009. “Visible and Vulnerable: Asian migrant communities in South Africa”. Johannesburg: Centre for Sociological Research, University of Johannesburg.
- Polit, D.F. & Beck, C. T. 2004. Nursing research: appraising evidence for nursing practice. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Wolters Klower.
- Polit, D. F., Beck, C. T. & Hungler, B. P. 2001. *Essentials of nursing research: methods, appraisal and utilization*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Polit D. F. & Hungler, B. P. 1999. *Nursing research: principles and methods*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Poston Jr. D., Mao, M. X. & Yu, M-Y. 1994. The global distribution of the overseas Chinese around 1990. *Population and Development Review*, 20 (3): 631-645.
- Powell, W. M. 1990. Hybrid organizational arrangements: new form of transitional development? *California Management Review*, 30 (1): 67-87.
- Prinsloo, E. 1996. The ubuntu style of participatory management, in J.G. Malherbe (ed.). *Decolonizing the mind: proceedings of the second colloquium on African philosophy*. 112-127. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Pye, L 1982. *Chinese commercial negotiating style*. Cambridge: Oelgeschlager, Gunnand Hain.
- Richardson, P. 1982. *Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Roberts, C. 1998. Awareness in intercultural communication. *Language Awareness*, 7 (2): 109-127.
- Ronowicz, E. 1995. *Poland. A Handbook in intercultural communication*. Sydney: NCELTR Publications.
- Roth, K. & Roth, J. 1999. Intercultural communication as applied ethnology and folklore. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 36 (2/3): 206-215.

- Roux, A. 2005. *Everyone's guide to the South African economy*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Cape Town: Zebra Press.
- SA Census. 2012. *Census 2011 Statistical release - P0301.4 / Statistics South Africa*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- Salkind, N. J. 2009. *Exploring Research*. (7th edition). University of Kansas: Pearson Education International.
- Samovar, L. A., Porter, E., & Stefani, L.A. 1998. *Communication between cultures*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company
- Sandahl, E. N., Pan, K. D. & Rask, H. 2012. *Dealing with guanxi and mianzi - challenging the traditional unifying approach towards culture*. Jönköping, Sweden: Jönköping International Business School.
- Sautman, B. & Hairong, Y. 2008. The Forest for the trees: trade, investment and the China-in-Africa discourse. *Pacific Affairs*, 81(1): 9-29.
- Shutte, A. 1993. *Philosophy for Africa*. Rondebosch, South Africa: UCT Press.
- Smart, J. 2012. Dancing with the Dragon: Canadian Investment in China and Chinese Investment in Canada. *SPP Research Papers*, 5(27): 1-21. Available at: <http://www.policyschool.ucalgary.ca/?q=content/dancing-dragon-canadian-investment-china-and-chinese-investment-canada> [Accessed on 3 October 2014].
- Smith, R. J. 1994. *China's cultural heritage: the Qing dynasty, 1644–1912*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Stenbacka, C. 2001. Qualitative research requires concepts of its own. *Management Decision*, 39 (7): 551-555.
- Struwig, F. & Stead, G. 2004. *Planning, designing and reporting research*. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Su, C. T. & Littlefield, J. E. 2001. Entering guanxi: a business ethical dilemma in Mainland China? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 33:199-210.
- Tao, L. 2008. Face: Comparison of the Concepts "Mianzi" in Chinese and "Face" in English. *Journal of Language and Culture*, 12: 49-75.
- The Economist*. 2001. 10 March: 23

- Ting-Toomey, S. 1999. *Communicating across cultures*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Ting-Toomey, S. 1988. Intercultural conflict styles: a face negotiation theory, in Y.Y. Kim & W.B. Gudykunst (eds.). *Theories in Intercultural Communication*. 213-235. Newbury Park: Sage Press.
- Triandis, H. 1988. Collectivism vs. Individualism: A reconceptualization of a basic concept in cross-cultural psychology, in G. Verma & C. Bagley (eds.). *Cross-cultural studies of personality, attitudes and cognition*. London: Macmillan.
- Trompenaars, F. 1993. *Riding the waves of culture*. London: Nicholas Brealey.
- Tsang, E. W. K. 1998. Can guanxi be a source of sustained competitive advantage for doing business in China? *Academy of Management Executive*, 12 (2): 64-73.
- Tu, W.M. 1994. Cultural China: the periphery as the centre, in W. M. Tu (ed.). *The Living tree: The changing meaning of being Chinese today*. 1-34. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Tung, R. & Worm, V. 2001. Network capitalism: the role of human resources in penetrating the China market. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(4): 517-534.
- Van Teijlingen, E. R. & Hundley, V. 2001. The importance of pilot studies, in N. Gilbert (ed.). *Social Research Update*, 35: 1-4. Guildford, UK: University of Surrey.
- Vanhonacker, W. R. 2004. Guanxi networks in China. *The China Business Review*, 31 (3): 48-53.
- Vihakara, A. 2006. *Patience and understanding. A narrative approach to managerial communication in a Sino-Finnish joint venture*. Tampere, Finland: Turku School of Economics and Business Administration.
- Waldron, A. (ed.). 2009. *China in Africa*. Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation.
- Walsh, M. 2001. *Research made real – a guide for students*. Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes.

- Wang, G. 2002. The Chinese overseas: from earthbound China to the quest for autonomy, in R. A. Brown (ed.). *Chinese Big Business and the Wealth of Asian Nations*. Reviewed by D. Faure. *The Journal of Economic History*, 62 (2): 603-605.
- Wang, G. 1994. Among non-Chinese, in W. Tu (ed.). *The Living Tree: The changing meaning of being Chinese today*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.
- Wang, G. 1993. Greater China and the Chinese Overseas. *The China Quarterly*, 136: 926-948.
- Wang, J., Wang, G. G., Ruona, W. E. A. & Rojewski, J. W. 2005. Confucian values and the implications for international HRD. *Human Resource Development International*, 8 (3): 311-326.
- Wang, Y. & Yao Y. 2001. *Sources of China's Economic Growth, 1952-99: Incorporating Human Capital Accumulation*. World Bank publication.
- Welman, J. C., Kruger, S. J., & Mitchell, B. C. 2008. *Research Methodology*. 3rd ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Wenping, H. 2007. The balancing act of China's Africa policy, in E. Hagt (ed.) *China Security*, 3(3): 23-40. World Security Institute.
- Wentzel, M.E. 2003. Historical and contemporary dimensions of migration between South Africa and its neighbouring countries. Unpublished paper delivered at HSRC migration workshops Pretoria 17-20 March 2003.
- Wilhelm J. 2006. The Chinese communities in South Africa, in S. Buhlungu, J. Daniel, R. Southall & J. Lutchman (eds.). *State of the Nation: South Africa, 2005–2006*. Johannesburg: HSRC Press.
- Williamson, C. J. 1989. A One-country, Two-system formula in the China of 1999. *International Social Science Review*, 64(4): 153-157.
- Winkler, J. T. 1987. The fly on the wall of the inner sanctum: observing company directors at work, in G. Moyser, & M. Wagstaffe, (eds). *Research methods for elite studies*. 129-146. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Wu, Y. S. 2013. The role of public sentiment and social media in the evolving China–Africa relationship. Occasional paper No 134, January 2013: SAIIA .

- Xin, K. R. & Pearce, J. L. 1996. Guanxi: connections as substitutes for formal institutional support. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(6): 1641-1658.
- Yamazaki, M. 1996. Asia, a civilization in the making. *Foreign Affairs*, 75 (4): 106-118.
- Yap, M. & Man D. L. 1996. *Colour, confusion and concessions. The history of the Chinese in South Africa*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Yum, J. 2007. Confucianism and communication: Jen, Li, and Ubuntu. *China Media Research*, 3(4): 15-22.
- Yum, J. 1988. The impact of Confucianism on interpersonal relationships and communication patterns in East Asia. *Communication Monographs*, 55(4): 374.
- Zafar, A. 2007. The growing relationship between China and Sub-Saharan Africa: macroeconomic, trade, investment, and aid links. *The World Bank Research Observer* 22 (1): 103-130.
- Zhai, X. 1994. *Mianzi, renqing, guanxi: Chinese social psychology and behavioral trait*. China: Henan Press.
- Zhang, J. & Pimpa, N. 2010. Embracing guanxi: the literature review. *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management*, 1(1): 23-31.
- Zhang, Y & Zhang, Z. 2006. Guanxi and organizational dynamics in China: a link between individual and organizational levels. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 67:375-392.
- Zheng, L. 2010. Neo-colonialism, ideology, or just business? China's perception of Africa. *Global Media and Communication*, 6(3): 271-276.

~\*~



## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A: COVER PAGE**



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

AN EXPLORATION OF CHINESE IDENTITY IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT:  
NEGOTIATING INTERACTIONS ARISING FROM GUANXI AND MIANZI IN  
BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS.  
QUESTIONNAIRE

6/1/2014

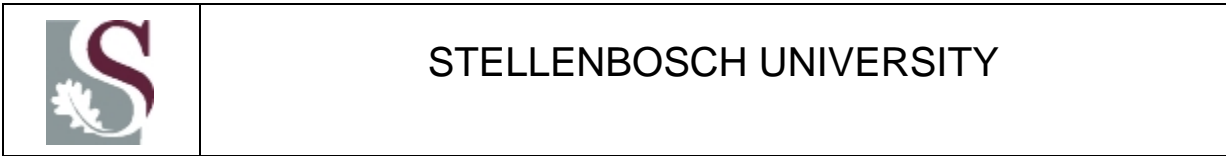
DAVID BALL

This survey should take no more than TEN MINUTES to complete. It has three sections, A, B and C, with twenty-one questions in total. They are mostly multiple choice questions. Please select and check ONLY one block for your choice. See the following example below of where to put your X:

Example: Were you born in South Africa?

Yes |x| No ||

## **APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM**



**Participant Consent Form**

I have been given an explanation and I understand what the research project “*An exploration of Chinese identity in a South African context: negotiating guanxi and mianzi in business relationships and social interactions*” is about. I hereby give permission for the researchers to use the material I have given them in the way that has been suggested – thus, without my personal identity and for the purposes of this research project only.

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential.
- I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary.
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Witness:.....

Place: ..... Date: .....

Thank you for your participation in this survey.  
Sincerely,

David W. Ball

(NOTE: *the appended signature was removed for this Appendix*)

## **APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SECTION A – Questions 1- 10**

**Please place an X into the correct box. Check ONE box only, unless otherwise instructed.**

**1. GENDER:**Male Female **2. MARITAL STATUS:**Married Unmarried **3. AGE:** younger than 29 30 – 40 41 – 49 50 – 59 older than 60 **4. NUMBER OF YEARS LIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA: please check ONE box only**Less than 2 years 2 -5 years 5-10 years more than 10 years more than 20 years **5. PLACE OF BIRTH:**Mainland China PRC Hong Kong Taiwan Singapore Malaysia South Africa Other **6. HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION. Please check ONE box only**Graduate high school

- Bachelor's degree/diploma
- Master's degree
- Doctorate/PhD

**7. EMPLOYMENT STATUS.** Please choose ONE only.

- Business owner
- Manager/ Director
- Employee

**8. IF YOU ARE AN EMPLOYER, DO YOU EMPLOY:**

- Only Chinese people
- Only non-Chinese people
- Both Chinese & non-Chinese

**9. SECTOR OF BUSINESS, E.G.,**

- banking/finance
- import/export
- education/ media
- IT
- general trading
- self-employed/ other
- (please give brief description below)

.....

.....

.....

**10. DO YOU HAVE ANY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION?** Yes  No

If you answered 'yes', please give affiliation (e.g., Christian, Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, etc.)

.....

.....

.....

---



**SECTION B – Questions 11-15**

- 11.** Which description below do you think best describes guanxi?
- Connections (relations or networks)
- Discretion (back door / 后门)
- Connections and discretion?
- 12.** What influence do you think guanxi has in business relationships generally?
- Positive
- Negative
- Both positive & negative
- Neither positive nor negative?
- 13.** Is guanxi useful for doing business with other Chinese people in South Africa?
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- 14.** If you are an employer/business owner: does guanxi influence your choice of whom you employ?
- Chinese first
- Non- Chinese first
- Best person for the job
- Politically motivated (e.g. BEE)
- 15.** What advice would you give to someone in South Africa (and Africa) who wanted to do business with the Chinese business community in South Africa? Please rank the following (from 1-5) in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.
- Obtain information required to do business
- Bypass controls to get authorisations/permits etc.
- To gain an advantage over competitors
- Building beneficial relationships with officials
- Identify key people in a contract
- Show that you are a trustworthy partner
- Learn local customs and methods

Please note: there are SEVEN statements. Choose only FIVE that you think are important and number them, from 1-5, with 1= most important and 5 = least important.

---

**SECTION C - Questions 16-21**

- 16. Is it important to you to receive and give face or mianzi in your business relationships?                      Yes                       No
- 17. In your opinion, does giving face to a potential business partner make getting business easier?                      Yes                       No
- 18. Would you give equal face to a non-Chinese business partner as to a Chinese business partner?                      Yes                       No
- 19. Do you think non-Chinese people attach the same importance to ‘face’ as do Chinese people?                      Yes                       No
- 20. Do you think this survey may help non-Chinese people to learn about Chinese society (or community) and culture?    Yes                       No
- 21. If you have any further information about ‘guanxi’ and ‘ mianzi’ that you would like us to consider, please share the details in the space provided below. Thank you!

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

MAY PEACE, HARMONY AND PROSPERITY FOLLOW YOUR BUSINESS.



## **APPENDIX D: FIELD NOTES**

Notes to Appendix: The field notes below were transcribed verbatim from the researcher's rough notes. Events depicted are in reverse chronological order.

.....  
**Fieldnotes:** Su study Dates: May – July 2014

THE CHINESE LANGUAGE-SCHOOL (Group Two)

Second visit to Chinese School, Observatory

**21<sup>st</sup> June 2014:** Feedback from two Chinese (Taiwanese) businessmen – they don't depend on guanxi very much because all their business is local. They added that Johannesburg (in their opinion) is different as there are more goods imported, hence, more trade with China and thus more guanxi required.

*Five questionnaires completed and received.*

First visit to Chinese School, Observatory

**14<sup>th</sup> June 2014:** Feedback from Mr Shen, a small (food) trader at the school after completing the questionnaire made the following comments:

1. Wrt mianzi (face), he asserted that Chinese people show a universal respect to all people all the time. It should be noted that Mr Shen is a 60 (plus) year old Taiwanese man, thus apt to hold a more traditional view.
2. The guanxi questions didn't sufficiently address or allow for in-depth answers
3. Referring to the question on religion, he opined that many Chinese read and studied a variety of different spiritual sources and thus don't hold to one belief system.

Background: My two assistants for the afternoon were Arthur and Emma; the latter introduced me to Mr Chuan, a director at the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce. After a fairly lengthy discussion of my background and interest in Chinese people and the topic of my research, he influenced two other men to complete questionnaires.

- Heavy rain virtually the entire afternoon restricted our movements and probably limited the turnout by parents bringing their children to the school and small food vendors, both potential candidates for the project.

- As a gesture of goodwill and thanks for their assistance, I purchased some small oddments (desserts) from one of the food vendors at the school.
- Upon returning to the pastors' house in Monte Vista, I met a young lady (engaged in business) who was visiting, who completed a questionnaire, the first woman to do so.

*To date: six questionnaires completed and received*

Method:

- Self-administered - researcher assistance given upon request.
- Benefits: quick turnaround and potential misunderstandings cleared up on location.
- Weakness/limitations: Time consuming, conversing/instructing one/two respondents and waiting for completion - possible biased influences by the researcher on the volunteer. Check.

.....  
 BOL CHURCH (Group one)

**29<sup>th</sup> June-2104:** Brief visit to BOL church to collect three outstanding questionnaires, given by Emma (intermediary) to three young ladies. Unfortunately, it was a no-show. Jasmine requested another questionnaire as she had lost hers – so that reduces the potential maximum total to 29. At least this will ensure another woman to the respondent group. She said she'd return it the next weekend.

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2014:** At the second visit to BOL, the congregation was reminded again of the research/study and asked to participate. Only four people took questionnaires, disappointingly. Several members who were present at the first meeting were absent at that time.

*Two questionnaires received back, three outstanding*

Method:

- Self-administered. Survey distributed to volunteer, who completed the questionnaire at home and returned it some weeks later when the researcher visited the institute again.
- Weakness/limitations: lack of urgency for participant to return the survey to the researcher once they had the questionnaire in their possession, no control of who

in the household completed the questionnaire thus ‘lack of integrity of evidence’ (forensic science), extended (data) retrieval time frame.

NOTE: Two questionnaires were emailed to prospective participants, both who indicated verbally to this researcher that they were willing to participate. But to date, neither has responded. It could be that the necessity of scanning their documents, the consent form with their appended signature, and the completed questionnaire proved too onerous. It should be stated that this questionnaire was never designed for, nor intended, to be submitted electronically via email; else, a format more conducive to online response and administration would’ve been designed.

#### PILOT STUDY:

29<sup>th</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup> May: two students identified and were requested to assist. They readily agreed to participate in the pilot study.

Once the Questionnaire was approved (by the thesis supervisor), it was then given to the two Chinese students to test and comment on the following areas:

1. Language usage/difficulties: check for any possible problems in understanding, comprehensibility and clarity (no ambiguity);
2. Tone: correct level of respect (nothing to offend sensitive readers that may disqualify them from participating);
3. Face value: Aesthetic appearance of the layout/format of the questionnaire to determine ease of following instructions, readability (font size and style);
4. Content: type of questions – whether it would ‘unpack’ the sought after data/information concerning the two concepts (guanxi and mianzi), does it go far enough or is it too superficial? (Subjective);
5. Time taken to complete survey: how long did it take? (Add 5 minutes for less fluent 2<sup>nd</sup> language English readers)

#### FIRST ENCOUNTER

**11<sup>th</sup> May-2014:** Received an invitation to address the congregation, to explain the purpose of the research and to invite volunteers to participate at a future date; I

mingled with members after the meeting; met with and chatted to several business people and was assured of their assistance by some.

.....

**Extras:** Six questionnaires left with R&B: 10<sup>th</sup> June 22, 2014 (BOL)

One questionnaire given to Arthur: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2014 (BOL)

Three questionnaires given to Emma: 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2014/6/22

.....

**TOTAL NUMBER COMPLETED: 13**

Plus 3 outstanding @ 21<sup>st</sup> June 3

Cut off date = 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

Total returned SAQs expected: 16

**Lost:**

BOL 2

**Non-replies**

Emails 2



## **APPENDIX E: DATA COLLECTION RECORD & CODEBOOK**

**DATA COLLECTION RECORD**

**PID NUMBERS ALLOCATED TO SAMPLE SURVEYED**

| SECTION  | QUESTIONS            | 001   | 002   | 003   | 004   | 005   | 006   | 007   | 008   | 009   | 010   | 011   | 012   | 013   | 014   | 015   | 016   |
|----------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| A1       | Gender               | 1     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     |
| A2       | Marital status       | 1     | 1     | 1     | -     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     |
| A3       | Age                  | 2     | 1     | 5     | -     | 2     | 4     | 4     | 1     | 2     | 5     | 3     | 4     | 2     | 4     | 1     | 5     |
| A4       | Years in SA          | 5     | 2     | 4     | -     | 4     | 4     | 5     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 4     | 4     | 5     | 5     | 4     | 5     |
| A5       | Place of birth       | 3     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 1     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 3     | 2     | 3     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 1     |
| A6       | Edu. Level           | 2     | 1     | 1     | -     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 3     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 2     |
| A7       | Employ status        | 1     | 1     | 1     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 1     | 3     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 1     |
| A8       | Who you employ       | 2     | 1     | 2     | -     | -     | -     | 3     | -     | 3     | 2     | 3     | -     | 2     | 3     | -     | 1     |
| A9       | Business sector      | 6     | 5     | 6     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 6     | 6     | 6     | 5     | 6     | 2     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 4     |
| A10a     | Religion             | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     |
| A10b     | which one            | 3     | 3     | -     | 3     | 3     | 4     | -     | -     | -     | 4     | -     | -     | -     | 3     | 3     | 3     |
| B11      | Com/Discret/both     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 3     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 3     |
| B12      | Pos/Neg/both         | 3     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 3     | 3     |
| B13      | Useful;/n/some       | 1     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 3     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 3     | 3     |
| B14      | employ show first    | 3     | 3     | 3     | -     | -     | 1     | 3     | 1     | 3     | 2     | 2     | 3     | 2     | 3     | 3     | 1     |
| B15      | factor ranking       | -     | 76128 | 76612 | 46741 | -     | 67182 | 61376 | 16246 | 71632 | 67213 | 76543 | 13662 | 4...  | 67513 | 41367 | 67135 |
| C16      | Face-give/receive    | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 2     |
| C17      | Face-easier business | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 1     |
| C18      | Equal F to non C     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     |
| C19      | Opinion-equal o/nC   | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     |
| C20      | helpful to non C     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 2     | 1     |
| C21      | comments to add      | 3     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 2     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     |
| Location |                      | B     | B     | C     | C     | C     | C     | C     | C     | C     | C     | C     | C     | C     | B     | B     | B     |
| Date     |                      | 08.06 | 14.06 | 14.06 | 14.06 | 14.06 | 14.06 | 14.06 | 14.06 | 21.06 | 21.06 | 21.06 | 21.06 | 21.06 | 06.07 | 06.07 | 21.07 |
| Comment  |                      | 1     | -     | -     | -     | -     | E     | E     | E     | E     | E     | E     | E     | E     | E     | E     | E     |

(comments appended to Participants' identity (numbered) record sheet)

## CODEBOOK FOR 'CHINESE STUDY' DATA COLLECTION

*(Numerical values were assigned to each answer and entered into the preceding Data Collection Record to attain anonymity for participants)*

### SECTION A – DEMOGRAPHICS Questions 1- 10

- 1. GENDER:**
  - Male = 1
  - Female = 2
- 2. MARITAL STATUS (MS):**
  - Married = 1
  - Unmarried = 2
- 3. AGE:**
  - < 29 = 1
  - 30 – 40 = 2
  - 41 – 49 = 3
  - 50 – 59 = 4
  - > 60 = 5
- 4. YEARS LIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA (RESIDENCY):**
  - Less than 2 years = 1
  - 2 -5 years = 2
  - 5-10 years = 3
  - > 10 years = 4
  - > 20 years = 5
- 5. PLACE OF BIRTH (POB):**
  - Mainland China PRC = 1
  - Hong Kong = 2
  - Taiwan = 3
  - Singapore = 4
  - Malaysia = 5
  - South Africa = 6
  - Other = 7
- 6. HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (HEL):**
  - Graduate high school = 1
  - Bachelor degree /diploma = 2
  - Master's degree = 3
  - Doctorate/PhD = 4
- 7. EMPLOYMENT STATUS (ES):**
  - Business owner = 1
  - Manager/ Director = 2
  - Employee = 3

- 8. IF AN EMPLOYER, DO YOU EMPLOY (BOSS):**
- Only Chinese people = 1
  - Only non-Chinese = 2
  - Chinese & non-Chinese = 3
- 9. SECTOR OF BUSINESS (BUS):**
- Banking/finance, = 1
  - Import/export = 2
  - Education/ media = 3
  - IT = 4
  - General trading = 5
  - Other = 6
  - RECORD description of above, if any given
- 10. DO YOU HAVE ANY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (RA)?**
- Yes = 1
  - No = 2
  - Affiliation: Christian = 3
  - Buddhist = 4
  - Taoist = 5
  - Muslim = 6
  - Other = 7
- 

**SECTION B – 1st CONCEPT OF ‘GUANXI’ Questions 11-15**

- 11. Which description below do you think best describes guanxi?**
- Connections (relations or networks) = 1
  - Discretion (back door / 后门) = 2
  - Connections & discretion = 3
- 12. What influence do you think guanxi has in business relationships generally?**
- Positive = 1
  - Negative = 2
  - Both positive & negative = 3
  - Neither positive or negative = 4
- 13. Is guanxi useful for doing business with other Chinese people in South Africa?**
- Yes = 1
  - No = 2
  - Sometimes = 3
- 14. As an employer owner: does guanxi influence your choice of whom you employ?**
- Chinese first = 1
  - Non- Chinese first = 2
  - Best person for the job = 3
  - Politically motivated (e.g. BEE) = 4
- 15. Rank (from 1-5) the advice you’d give to someone in South Africa (and Africa) who wanted to do business with the Chinese business community in South Africa. 1 = most important; 5 = the least important.**
- Obtain information required to do business = 1

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Bypass controls to get authorisations/permits etc. | = 2 |
| To gain an advantage over competitors              | = 3 |
| Building beneficial relationships with officials   | = 4 |
| Identify key people in a contract                  | = 5 |
| Show that you are a trustworthy partner            | = 6 |
| Learn local customs and methods                    | = 7 |

SEVEN statements are provided. Participants choose the top FIVE they think are important and number them, from 1-5.

**SECTION C – 2<sup>nd</sup> CONCEPT OF ‘MIANZI’**      Questions 16-21

- 16.** Is it important to you to receive and give face or mianzi in your business relationships?
- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | = 1 |
| No  | = 2 |
- 17.** In your opinion, does giving face to a potential business partner make getting business easier?
- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | = 1 |
| No  | = 2 |
- 18.** Would you give equal face to a non-Chinese business partner as to a Chinese business partner?
- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | = 1 |
| No  | = 2 |
- 19.** Do you think non-Chinese people attach the same importance to ‘face’ as do Chinese people?
- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | = 1 |
| No  | = 2 |
- 20.** Do you think this survey may help non-Chinese people to learn about Chinese traditions and culture?
- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | = 1 |
| No  | = 2 |
- 21.** If you think you may have some useful or interesting information about ‘guanxi’ and ‘mianzi’ that this research hasn’t looked at, please share the details in the space provided below. Thank you!

Categories:

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Nil/ no comment | = 1 |
| Verbal comment  | = 2 |
| Written comment | = 3 |

(Record verbal or written comments)

~\*~

## **APPENDIX F: P.ID PARTICIPANT IDENTITY RECORD**

## PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TEMPLATE

**P.ID:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant identification number)

| <b>A: DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONS</b> |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1.                               |  |
| 2.                               |  |
| 3.                               |  |
| 4.                               |  |
| 5.                               |  |
| 6.                               |  |
| 7.                               |  |
| 8.                               |  |
| 9.                               |  |
| 10.                              |  |
| RA:                              |  |

| <b>B: ‘GUANXI’ CONCEPT QUESTIONS</b> |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 11.                                  |  |
| 12.                                  |  |
| 13.                                  |  |
| 14.                                  |  |
| 15.                                  |  |

| <b>C: ‘MIANZI’ CONCEPT QUESTIONS</b> |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 16.                                  |  |
| 17.                                  |  |
| 18.                                  |  |
| 19.                                  |  |
| 20.                                  |  |
| 21.                                  |  |

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

BOL = Bread of Life church

C/S = Chinese School

Notes:

## **APPENDIX G: INFORMATION BROCHURE**



*If you have any questions about completing this questionnaire then  
please contact me:*

**David W. Ball**      **Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx**

MA (ICC) student at Stellenbosch University, South Africa (2014)

~ English teacher at Xi'an Medical University, China ~

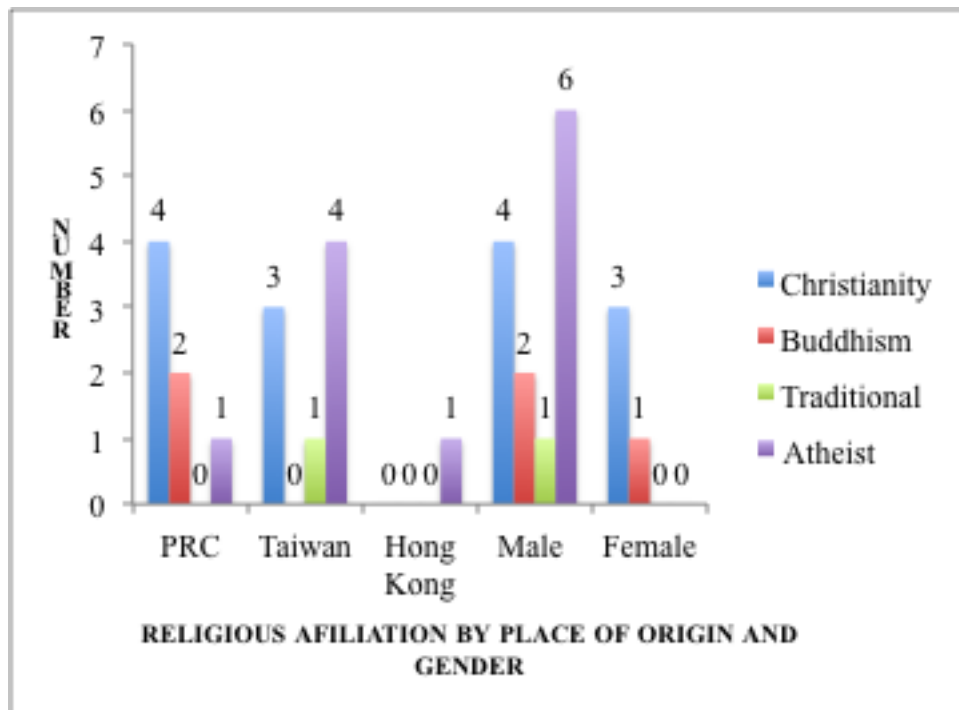
**e-mail:** [Chinesesurvey@gmail.com](mailto:Chinesesurvey@gmail.com)

**QQ: xxx-xxx-xxx**

**APPENDIX H: MISCELLANEOUS FINDINGS**  
**(FIGURES 4.22-4.25)**

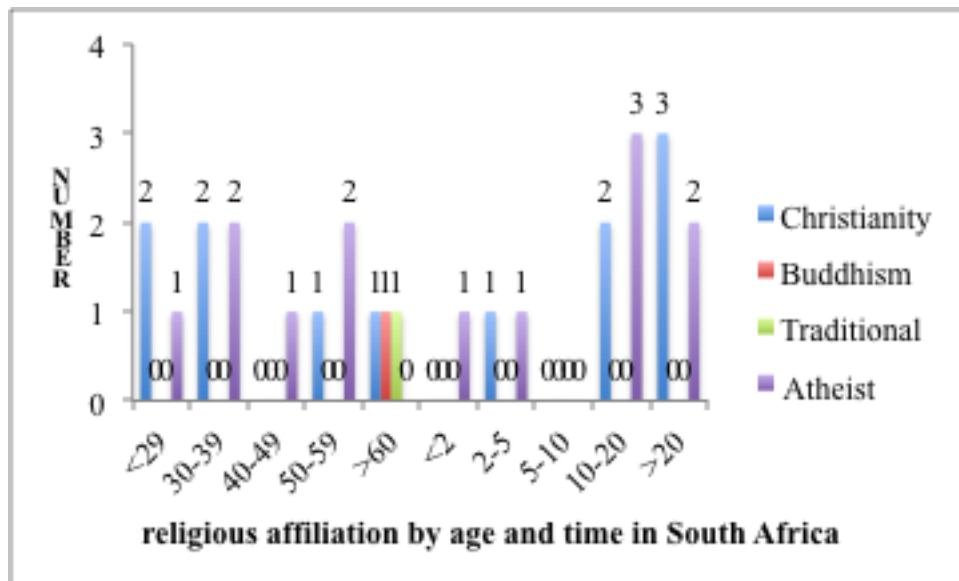
### MISCELLANEOUS FINDINGS (FIGURES 4.22-4.25)

Figure 4.22 illustrates the relationship between the participants' religious affiliations with regard to their place of origin and gender. The highest grouping is 37% atheist and male, mostly from Taiwan, with the second largest grouping Christian males (25%) from PRC. Buddhism makes up only a small portion (12.5%) comprising males from the PRC. Buddhism makes up only a small portion (12.5%) comprising males from the PRC.



**FIGURE 4.22 COMPARISONS OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS BY PLACE OF ORIGIN**

In Figure 4.23, the chart examines whether Age or Time (also called residency) in South Africa may have influenced the religious convictions of the participants. Identical numbers of confessing Atheists (20%) as Christians (20%) appear as the largest groups for participants of long residence in South Africa. An examination of the various age groupings indicates an equal spread across the sectors for Atheism and Christianity, with Buddhism coming in as a low value third group (6.7%). Only one person professed to follow traditional Chinese religion.



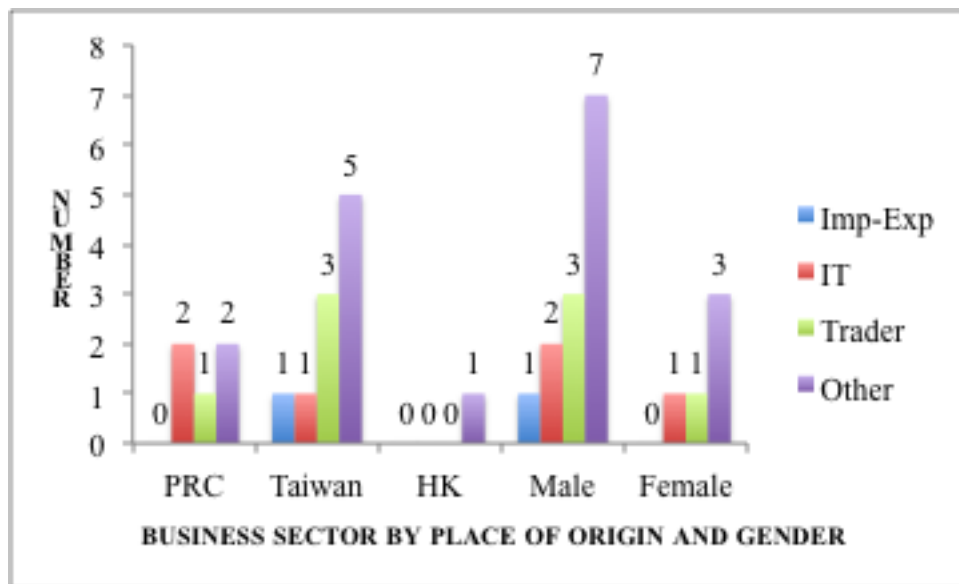
**FIGURE 4.23 COMPARISON OF AGE AND RESIDENCY TO DETERMINE EFFECT OF RELIGION**

No significant inferences can be made from these two charts, hence their appearing in the Appendices.

The following figure (Figure 4.24) illustrates the business sectors referred to by preceding figures in this study (see Figures 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9).

Of the 15 participants' data presented in the chart below, they are represented by Place of Origin and by Gender. By Place of Origin, the largest grouping is from Taiwan (also the largest group of business owners – see Figure 4.7). While small traders are common, their activities cover a wide range of business products. By far the largest group is 'Other', which comprises the following (as recorded on individual participant identity data sheets or PIDs) and are included here for general interest. They include:

An owner of a petrol station and automobile spares centre; an owner of a signage/printing/branding company; a solar panel manufacturer; a retailer; an optometrist and a general supplier to the mining and oil industry, plus an employee at a travel agency. The IT sector would appear to be represented by employees in that industry and not business owners.



**FIGURE 4.24 BUSINESS SECTOR BREAKDOWN**

The following chart (Figure 4.25) indicates the correlation between the religious affiliations of the participants and the effect (or not) it has upon two issues, firstly their description of guanxi (see Figures 4.10; 4.11; 4.12; and 4.13) as ‘connections, discretion, or both’ and secondly, how guanxi is perceived (Figures 4.14 and 4.15). The categories utilised are positive/negative or both of neither of the two, essentially neutral.

On the bottom left of figure 4.25, we can see the ‘descriptions’ given with the majority Christians asserting that guanxi is a combination of both connections and discretion (43.75%). The second biggest group consists of Atheists, who claim guanxi as connections (12.5%).

‘Perceptions’ of guanxi range from positive to negative or both. None of the participants viewed this concept as neutral (or neither positive nor negative). This is in line with Figure 4.15.

The Christian group rated guanxi the highest as both positive and negative (31.25%), with the Atheist group coming in at a much lower second place (18.75%).

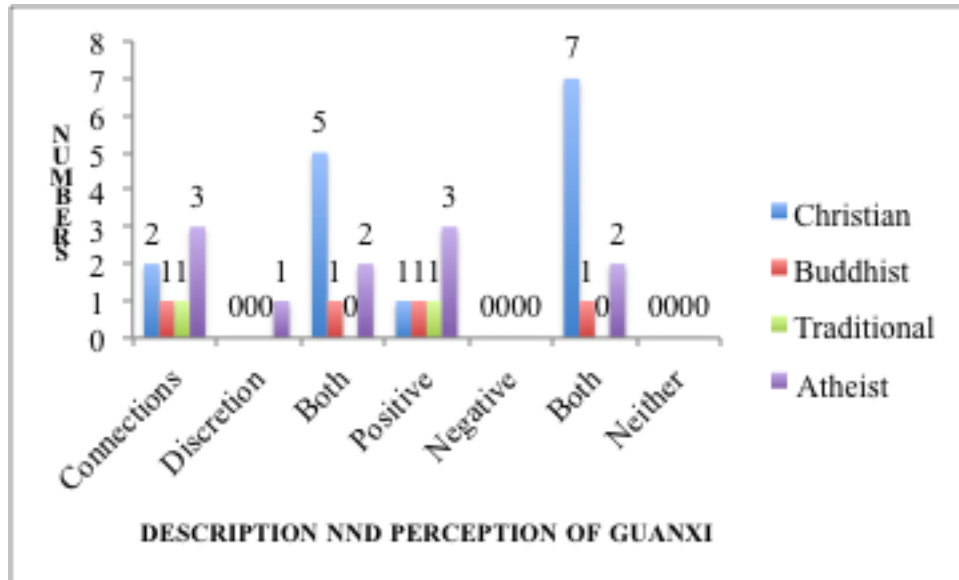


FIGURE 4.25 DESCRIPTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF GUANXI BY RELIGIOUS GROUPINGS

~\*~