



Chinese Private Schools as a Viable Route to Secondary Education in Malaysia: A Case Study

LOW Ming Jia*

Abstract

Chinese Independent High Schools (CIHS) in Malaysia are private secondary schools set up by the Chinese community and use Mandarin as the medium of instruction. The operation of these schools as non-profit institutions faces many challenges especially in terms of funding as they do not receive regular financial assistance from the government. It is notable that they are not only able to sustain themselves until now but have been able to accommodate the increasing demands for admission. This is despite the fact that, unlike national schools which provide free education, they charge substantial tuition fees. In 2014, the 60 CIHS in Malaysia have a total enrolment of approximately 80,000. As new schools cannot be established without official permission, Chinese schools have to turn away thousands of potential students each year for lack of classrooms.

Few studies have been conducted on student perceptions and decisions to enrol in CIHS. This study will examine this issue from the perspective of a sample of 200 students in the Confucian Private Secondary School in Kuala Lumpur. Conducted in 2013, the sample was drawn from selected classes and the findings showed that the perceived good quality education, cultural and language factors, and attractive prospects of Chinese school graduates were the major reasons that swayed the decisions of students and their parents to enrol in this school.

Key words: Chinese Independent High Schools, student perceptions and choice of school, quality education, language factors, future prospects

Introduction

Secondary education in Malaysia may be pursued in different schools. In effect, there are four types of secondary schools that a student may choose to enrol in. The first type comprises the national schools, some of which used to provide instruction in English. They have now become known as Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK or National Secondary Schools). The

* Ms. LOW Ming Jia (刘明佳) is a master's degree holder from the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). E-mail: jia25293@hotmail.com.

The author wishes to thank Professor Dr. Abdul Rahman Embong and Associate Professor Dr. HELEN Ting Mu Hung of the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), UKM, for their useful comments and guidance in the preparation of this study.

next are national schools converted from former Chinese secondary schools known as Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan (SMJK or National-type Secondary Schools). In both cases, the official medium of instruction is Malay. In the SMJK, the Chinese language is given a certain degree of emphasis as part of the school syllabus. The third are private schools which offer the national curriculum and conduct classes in English and Malay. Most of these are run on a commercial basis, including international schools which are now open to Malaysian students. The last are the privately-run “independent” Chinese schools most of which boast a history dating back to the early part of the last century.

The private Chinese secondary schools in Malaysia are known as Chinese Independent High Schools (CIHS) and are established by the Chinese community. Using Mandarin as the medium of instruction, the CIHS are run on a non-profit basis to serve as a conduit to preserve and promote Chinese education and culture. Operating outside the national educational system, these schools are not eligible for government financial assistance and their certificates are not recognized for entry into public institutions of higher learning. Despite the many challenges that they face especially in funding, they have nevertheless survived and sustained themselves. Indeed, the demand for admission has increased steadily in recent years despite the burden to bear high tuition fees in contrast with free education in national schools. In 2014, the 60 CIHS in Malaysia boast a total enrolment of 79,308 students, representing an increase of 25,906 persons or 48.5 per cent over that of 2005 (叶新田/Yap Sin Tian, 2014). New Chinese schools are rarely approved by the government except under special circumstances. As the demand grows, some of the more popular schools are compelled to turn away thousands of applicants because of the lack of classrooms.

The increased demand for admission into Chinese secondary schools is reflective of the interplay of complex socio-cultural and political forces that influence the evolution of education in Malaysia. The emergence of this trend for Chinese education has received little attention in research. The mechanics that drive this trend may indicate how the process takes place and show the broad pattern of the future development of Chinese secondary education in Malaysia.

Few studies have been conducted on student perceptions of Chinese schools and how they influence their choice of schools to enrol in. This study was conducted in the Confucian Private Secondary School (CPSS), Kuala Lumpur. It is a sample study to examine the factors that have determined students’ choice of this school to continue their secondary education. The study is not so much about the choice of a particular school, but more about the choice between instruction in the mother tongue and in another language. Malaysia is one of the few countries in the world where the national education system at the primary level is allowed to run in three major streams, that is, in Malay, Chinese and Tamil. Although the national secondary education is conducted only in Malay and is officially funded and recognized, private schools in Chinese or other languages are permitted. This is in keeping with the fact that mother-tongue education is enshrined in the Constitution. CPSS is one of 60 such private Chinese secondary schools in the country that is “independent” of government jurisdiction.

The significance of CPSS in this study is its role as a symbol of Chinese education. Being enrolled here is not so much an indication of personal preference for this school but rather a vote of approval for education in the Chinese language. This study is hence an examination of the choice between mother-tongue education and education using Malay as the medium of instruction. It must be noted that the Malay and English languages are also taught in Chinese schools. In contrast, the national secondary schools conduct all classes, except the English subject, in Malay. Under special circumstances or upon the request by a sufficient number of parents, Chinese language or Mandarin may be taught.

A field study was carried out at CPSS in 2013 comprising a sample of 200 questionnaires completed by Chinese students from the sciences, commerce, Food and Beverage Management from vocational studies, and Art and Design in Senior Middle 2 and 3 classes (equivalent to years 11 and 12). Nine school teachers and five parents were interviewed to supplement information gathered from the questionnaire survey. In addition, two group discussions were held comprising five students each from Senior Middle 2 and 3 for their personal views. The findings showed that the perceived good quality education, cultural and language factors, and attractive prospects of CIHS graduates were the major reasons that determined the decisions of students and their parents on the choice to enrol in this school.

The Origins of Chinese Independent High Schools

Chinese secondary schools in Malaysia were established by local Chinese communities during the period of British colonial rule. These schools were set up practically in all the towns throughout the country, with some boasting a history of more than 100 years (see 郑良树/Tay Lian Soo, 1999). Several such schools were started in Kuala Lumpur, and CPSS which traces its origins to 1906 is a proud monument to the remarkable foresight of the Chinese pioneers (see 尊孔独立中学/Confucian Private Secondary School, 2012).

Through the active support of local Chinese communities, Chinese schools in British Malaya developed rapidly under the influence of the 1911 revolution in China which also indirectly promoted the importance of education. A lot of Chinese schools were forcefully shut down during the Japanese Occupation between 1942 and 1945. Many soon resumed their operation in the immediate post-war period when British rule was re-imposed (Tan, L.E., 1984: 285-286). This was a period of flux and heightened social expectations as different ethnic communities tussled for their rights and interests. To the Chinese, nothing was more sacred than their access to education in the mother tongue. To safeguard the interests of Chinese education and language, the United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaya (now Malaysia), also known as Jiao Zong (教总) was established in 1951. This was soon followed by the setting up of the United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaya (now Malaysia), also known as Dong Zong (董总) in 1954 (see 郑良树/Tay Lian Soo, 2001). Commonly identified as Dong Jiao Zong,¹ these two organizations work together to promote the development of Chinese

education and to safeguard its overall interests.

With the formation of the Federation of Malaya in 1948 and working towards possible independence from the British, attempts were made to formulate a unified education policy for the purpose of uniting the various ethnic communities in the country. These attempts resulted in the publications of the *Barnes Report* and *Fenn-Wu Report* in 1951. The *Barnes Report* proposed a single system of national schools teaching in English and Malay, the two official languages of the country (Tan, 1988: 35). Advocates of Chinese education opposed to the *Barnes Report* on the grounds that it ignored the legitimate rights of the Chinese as a major component in a multi-ethnic society and they claimed that loyalty and allegiance to a state are not necessarily won through the adoption of one or two national languages or by the adoption of a single culture (Tan, 1988: 36). Following these objections, the subsequent *Fenn-Wu Report* advocated a liberal approach to the issue of languages and cultures of the ethnic groups, arguing that restricting the medium of instruction to English and/or Malay would instead hamper inter-ethnic harmony and national unity (Tan, 1988: 35).

In 1961, Chinese schools were given an option to become part of the national education system and would receive official financial assistance on condition that they switch their medium of instruction to English or Malay. Chinese secondary schools that opted to maintain the *status quo* would continue to operate as private schools and survive on their own resources. Among the 71 Chinese secondary schools then, considerations on financial constraints persuaded 54 to accept the offer and switch over to adopting English as the medium of instruction. These “converted” schools became known as Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan (SMJK) or “National-type Secondary Schools”. The remaining 17 schools maintained their independence and became known as Chinese Independent High Schools or *duli zhongxue* (独立中学) or simply Du Zhong (陈绿漪/Tan Liok Ee, 1984: 299-300). The board of directors established a private wing in some of these schools to operate an afternoon session to accommodate students who had failed to gain admission to the SMJK for being over age² or obtaining poor results in their primary six qualifying examinations. Students who failed the Lower Certificate of Education examinations in Secondary Three could also be absorbed into the private wing. These developments resulted in the emergence of 60 private Chinese secondary schools which are now collectively known as CIHS in Malaysia (see Appendix; 郑良树/Tay Lian Soo, 2003: 159).

Without government assistance, the board of directors of individual schools has to bear the brunt of raising funds to pay for the teachers’ salaries, administrative and sundry expenses as well as all renovation and extension works. Despite grave financial constraints, these schools have been sufficiently resilient to play a useful role in maintaining Chinese as the language of instruction and meeting the demand of those who wish to continue their education in Chinese. Students with poor results are also given the opportunity to continue their studies (陈绿漪/Tan Liok Ee, 1984).

In 1965, the primary six examination for entry into secondary education was repealed. All primary school pupils would continue their secondary school education regardless of their academic performance. This policy change led to the closure of a number of the Chinese secondary schools due to the decline in student number. This prompted Dong Zong to organise a seminar to devise ways to confront this situation. At the same time, several Chinese education leaders in Perak launched a donation campaign and collected a million ringgit to help the nine CIHS in the state. This action inspired the Chinese communities in other states to follow suit.

Beginning from the mid-1970s, Dong Zong successively established five committees and four units to raise the standard of education of CIHS. The five committees are the Unified Examination Committee, Unified Curriculum Committee, Du Zhong Development Fund Committee, College Students Loans Committee, and Teacher Education Committee; the four units consist of Higher Education Extension Unit, Publications Unit, Information Unit, and the Vocational and Technical Education Unit (see 郑良树/Tay Lian Soo, 2003: 167). The outcome was the adoption of a common curriculum and textbooks by all the CIHS. These schools implement a standardized examination for the award of the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC). A programme was also launched to facilitate teacher education to increase the ratio of professionally trained teachers in CIHS (see Wong, 2015). By the 1980s and 1990s, many of the schools have extended their buildings and upgraded their infrastructure to accommodate the increased demand for enrolment. Between 2001 and 2012, the student number in CIHS increased by 31 per cent from 53,635 to 70,266 (Table 1).

Table 1. Enrolment in Chinese Independent High Schools, 2001-2012

Year	Number of students	Net Increase/Decrease	
		Number	Percentage
2001	53,635	-	-
2002	54,048	413	0.77
2003	52,850	-1,198	-2.22
2004	53,005	155	0.29
2005	53,402	397	0.75
2006	54,755	1,063	1.99
2007	55,818	2,394	4.37
2008	58,212	2,278	4.08
2009	60,490	3,275	5.63
2010	63,765	3,203	5.30
2011	66,968	3,203	5.02
2012	70,266	3,298	4.92

Source: Unpublished data from Dong Jiao Zong

The Appeal of Chinese Independent High Schools

The perceptions of students on Chinese schools are examined from the perspective of their own views and opinions. This sample is drawn from students who were already in their senior years of study in CPSS rather than those who were still searching for the right school. In other words, the opinions are collected from students who were already studying in the school, and not from those who were fresh from their primary six examination. Hence, the responses to questions in the questionnaire might be bias. However, this fact does not compromise the validity of the study as it deals with a subject which involved the students personally.

A key concern of the questionnaire survey is to inquire into the perceptions of the sample population on three reasons for their decision to study in CPSS. Each student was required to rank, in the order of importance, three factors that determined their choice of enrolling in this school. In all, 13 different reasons were stated by the students. The reasons may be grouped into four broad categories, namely quality of education offered by CPSS, cultural and language factors, the influence of family members and friends, and perceived prospects after graduation (Table 2).

Quality of Education

The quality of education was accorded the highest priority by students in their choice of schools to enrol in. CPSS was seen to be associated with the high quality of education that they so desired. Among the 200 respondents, 92 or 46 per cent were attracted by the perceived quality of education of the school. This quality was seen to manifest itself in seven different aspects. The most appealing was the perceived excellence of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities of the school (25 first choices), followed by school discipline (22), school administration (11), advantages over national schools (10), highly committed teachers (9), good student performance (9), and conducive learning environment (6). Emphasis on the quality of education also accounted for 49 of the second choice of the respondents and 45 per cent of their third choice.

Curriculum and Extra-curricular Activities

Up to 12.5 per cent of students opted to study in CPSS because they believed that the school offered a curriculum of good educational standard and various types of extra-curricular activities. This was based on their perception that the curriculum met the needs of the community locally and internationally. Compulsory subjects such as history and current issues were taught and discussed freely in an atmosphere that encouraged students to be analytical and critical. Some respondents claimed that the curriculum in national schools lacked creativity and insufficient attention was given to the inculcation of critical thinking skills. Additionally, there was a belief among some respondents that the curricular contents especially of mathematics, the sciences and English subjects were superior to those of the national schools. Mathematics in

Table 2. First Three Reasons Listed in the Order of Importance in Enrolling in CPSS, 2013

Reasons affecting students' choice of CPSS	First choice		Second choice		Third choice		Total	
	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%
(A) Quality of education in CPSS								
1 Good curriculum and extra-curricular activities	25	12.5	24	12.0	21	10.5	70	11.7
2 Good school discipline	22	11.0	29	14.5	23	11.5	74	12.3
3 Good school administration	11	5.5	6	3.0	5	2.5	22	3.7
4 Advantages over national schools	10	5.0	9	4.5	9	4.5	28	4.7
5 Highly committed teachers	9	4.5	13	6.5	13	6.5	35	5.8
6 Good student performance	9	4.5	10	5.0	13	6.5	32	5.3
7 Conducive learning environment	6	3.0	7	3.5	6	3.0	19	3.2
Sub-Total	92	46	98	49	90	45	280	46.7
(B) Cultural and language factors								
1 Language factor	35	17.5	20	10.0	9	4.5	64	10.7
2 Cultural factor	25	12.5	24	12.0	25	12.5	74	12.3
Sub-Total	60	30.0	44	22.0	34	17.0	138	23.0
(C) Brighter prospects								
1 Recognition of the UEC certificate	15	7.5	20	10.0	26	13.0	61	10.2
2 CIHS offers both the UEC and national examinations	2	1.0	4	2.0	4	2.0	10	1.7
Sub-Total	17	8.5	24	12.0	30	15.0	71	11.8
(D) Friends and family influence								
	27	13.5	22	11.0	29	14.5	78	13.0
(E) Other considerations								
1 Suitable location of the school	2	1.0	3	1.5	5	2.5	10	1.7
2 Miscellaneous	2	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.3
3 Not Available	0	0.0	9	4.5	12	6.0	21	3.5
Total	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0	600	100.0

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2013

CPSS was seen as a good preparation for business studies at the university level. The assumption was that a more demanding curriculum would prepare them to cope with the challenges of university education. In terms of the extra-curricular activities, it was the variety that appealed to some respondents. They believed that the school offered many opportunities for students to organize activities which will help to stimulate them to be creative.

School Discipline

The fact that school discipline was considered an important factor in the choice of school is an indictment of the commonly perceived indiscipline in many schools. Students would naturally avoid schools that are plagued by disciplinary problems or infested with trouble-making behaviour. Many of the respondents valued the sense of security arising from strict adherence to discipline which will help to curb bullying and other unhealthy activities. Maintenance of discipline was seen as an essential condition in fostering an atmosphere that was conducive to learning. The perception was that strict discipline was applied not only within the CPSS compound but also outside the school. The parents too appreciated the efforts of the school in being firm with its students and felt reassured that their children would stay out of trouble in school.

School Administration

Good administration was seen as inseparable from the overall picture of efficiency that ensured the smooth running of the school. It was also related to issues of student discipline, the commitment of the teaching staff, and the promotion of learning. All these would in turn raise the general academic performance of students.

Advantages Over National Schools

An interesting point raised by some of the respondents was that CPSS was perceived in a more positive light than the average national school. This perception was based on considerations of school discipline, the commitment of teachers, student performance, and better overall school administration as well as teaching facilities. A senior staff of CPSS felt that the administration of CPSS was more efficient in comparison with many national schools. The feedback from interviews of selected senior teachers, parents and alumni of some national schools largely confirmed that the perception was accurate. The argument was that the national schools tended to neglect the weak students. Some parents appreciated the special classes organized by CPSS and these were seen as more effective and practical than the “Remove Class” (Kelas Peralihan) in the national schools.³ Reports in newspapers and social media often commented on the disciplinary matters in the national schools concerning issues such as truancy, gangsterism, vandalism or fighting. These comments had, to some extent, dampened the faith and caused anxieties among parents over the safety of their children in the national schools.

Student Performance

Intertwined with the idea of quality education was the perception that CPSS could nurture students who excelled in academic studies. The general opinion was that the students were independent, courteous, and ready to endure hardship. Participation in the fundraising activities of the school also prepared students to sharpen their interactive skills with members of various Chinese associations and people from all walks of life. Apart from this, students from the Chinese independent schools are generally perceived to be more versatile. Many are not only academically inclined, but they perform equally well in activities such as calligraphy, painting, and playing musical instruments.

Dedicated Teachers

The dedication of the teaching staff in CPSS had also made an impression on some of the respondents. The consensus was that the teachers were responsible, caring, knowledgeable and possessed higher educational qualifications and were enthusiastic in performing their duties. They would ensure that the students completed their school assignments and were ready to sacrifice their time for the benefits of the students. The CPSS teachers regularly monitored student performance and always communicated with parents. This fact was noted by parents who felt that CPSS teachers were more caring and committed in their profession than teachers in the national schools.

Language and Cultural Factors

The study confirms that considerations of language and culture were important in students' choice of schools to continue their secondary education. These factors were cited by 60 of the respondents in their first choice, representing 30 per cent of the sample. However, these two considerations lost much of their significance in the students' second and third choices, dropping to 22 and 17 per cent respectively.

Language

The language factor was the principal consideration of 17.5 per cent of the respondents in enrolling in a Chinese school. Reasons cited included cultural pride and the love of the Chinese language (9.5%), the desire to receive an education in the mother tongue (4%), and the opportunity of learning the Chinese language as well as Malay and English (2.5%). Related to language too was the inadequacy of some respondents in the Malay language or their failure in the primary six examination (1.5%).

The emphasis placed on literacy in Chinese was a primary determinant in the decision to study in a Chinese independent secondary school. This accords well with the traditional idea among the Chinese that to be considered "well-educated", one has to be highly literate in the Chinese language. The love of and the urge to acquire a good knowledge of Chinese were

well answered by the perceived excellence of CPSS in the teaching of this language. Students whose mother tongue is Chinese are naturally most familiar with and confident in this language. Many respondents regarded literacy in Chinese as a precious possession and the major medium by which to acquire knowledge of other subjects. In this respect, CPSS was recognised as a school where one would likely be able to master the language than in other schools. This was confirmed by some parents who said that their children loved the Chinese language and CPSS was seen as the school to study in.

The desire to receive a “Chinese education” was next in importance to that of literacy in the language. CPSS was seen as a bastion of Chinese education with a history and tradition of teaching in the Chinese language for more than a hundred years. Students would be exposed on a full-time basis to the learning of Chinese either as a language or a medium of instruction in various subjects. In contrast, the national secondary schools offered limited time for the teaching of the Chinese language. Some parents felt that the time allocated for Chinese lessons had been reduced in recent years. Another concern among parents was that the level of the Malay language taught in the national schools was rising and becoming increasingly difficult for students to master.

Some respondents (2.5%) chose to enrol in CPSS because it also taught the Malay and English languages. A minority of the students who had failed the Malay language test in primary six have little choice but to enter a non-government school. The poor command of English too might have the same impact on parental choice. The worry among students was their inability to cope with the high standard of Malay in the national schools or that of English in private institutions where English is the medium of instruction. This limitation, however, could be overcome by opting to study in a Chinese school such as CPSS. Students would be able to skip the “Remove Class” to complete their secondary education in a Chinese school.

Culture

Slightly more than a tenth of the respondents picked CPSS as their school of choice because of their affinity to Chinese culture. Having studied in Chinese primary schools, many would continue their secondary education in a Chinese school. They perceived certain cultural differences between a Chinese school and a SMJK and even more so in a SMK. These differences are manifested in the general language used in schools and the learning environment, and the emphasis on the practice of cultural values such as respect for teachers and peers. The respondents were confident of adapting well to the environment and would feel more comfortable among students sharing a similar educational experience.

Another 1.5 per cent of the respondents expressed an interest in taking part in extra-curricular activities associated with cultural events of the Chinese. The Chinese name of CPSS means “Respect for Confucius” and reflects the importance of core cultural values passed down by this universally esteemed philosopher and teacher among the Chinese. The word “Confucius”

also connotes an intense respect for learning, upholding of moral and ethical values as well as the importance of filial duties to one's parents and elders. Some parents were alumni of CPSS and wanted their children to benefit from Confucian teachings as much as they did in the past. The belief was that students of CPSS would be mindful of maintaining family ties. To them, emphasis on moral values was as important as the achievement of good academic results.

The Influence of Friends and Family

More than 13 per cent of the respondents had enrolled in CPSS as a result of the influence of family members and friends. The choice of CPSS was often a matter of parental preference. Some of the respondents would follow the footsteps of their elder siblings who had been students of CPSS and also to minimize cost by inheriting the used textbooks from siblings. In a few cases, the recommendations of relatives and friends were decisive as they compared the advantages of studying in CPSS and in the national schools.

Perceived Future Prospects

More than 7 per cent of the respondents were attracted by the prospects of acquiring the UEC certificate as a "passport" to gain entry to many institutions of higher learning both locally and abroad. The certificate is equivalent to the A-level or matriculation and is gaining recognition for entry into private universities in Malaysia and those in several countries in Asia and the West. Many alumni of Chinese schools have excelled in foreign universities and have boosted the value of the UEC certificate as an alternative to the A-level or other equivalent qualifications from the national schools. Moreover, it was also possible for students in many Chinese secondary schools to take both the UEC and national examinations. This would widen their options to study in local or foreign colleges or universities. It takes six years to complete the Chinese secondary education leading to the UEC certificate compared with seven years in the national schools to reach the A-level qualification.⁴ Apart from gaining entry to a university immediately upon completing their secondary education, students may also improve their access to better opportunities in the job market. Students were quite certain that the UEC certificate, which is as good as the SPM certificate, could also help them gain entry into foreign universities and later remain abroad after completing their studies.

Conclusion

This study is an attempt to assess the popularity of Chinese secondary schools which operate outside the national educational system. This is carried out by means of a sample study in a questionnaire survey and personal interviews with selected students, teachers and their parents in CPSS. The results obtained point to four broad categories which reveal the perceptions of the respondents and the reasons behind their decisions to enrol in this school.

The study shows that there was a cluster of reasons which had a decisive influence on the choice of the respondents for enrolling in CPSS. This cluster was intimately linked to the perception that this school was able to deliver a high quality education to students. This idea revolved around crucial considerations such as strict discipline, the substance of the teaching contents, dedication of teachers, and efficient administration. These factors fostered a good learning environment that was essential to motivate students to perform well. Overall, this school was seen to offer many good features and advantages that were better than those of the national schools.

The reasons connected with language and culture were next in importance in the decision to enrol in a Chinese secondary school. These factors had drawn the respondents to an education in Chinese based on such considerations as ethnicity and identity. The respondents would be immersed in an environment where moral values and the teachings of Confucius would be imparted. Of relevance too were the counsel and advice of parents and family members as well as those of friends or alumni. Lastly, the belief in the bright prospects that the school could offer through the UEC certificate as a recognized entry qualification to an increasing number of local and foreign institutions of higher learning was also an important factor. Together, these four broad categories of reasons cited by the respondents clearly explained the popularity of Chinese schools in general and this was exemplified by the sample of students from CPSS.

The common view that the choice of schools is ethnically biased is unjustified. This study shows that, at least in the case of CPSS, both students and parents viewed the quality of education as a principal consideration. In the study, it is also shown that the respondents, like other students and parents, arrived at their decisions based more on the quality of the school rather than its being a Chinese school. In the case of language, most of the respondents were influenced by some practical considerations such as familiarity with the Chinese language, greater confidence in relying on it as a medium to acquire more knowledge, and the opportunity to learn English and Malay as well.

The study also shows that the respondents tended to use the national schools as a benchmark when choosing which secondary school to further their studies. They opted for CPSS because it was perceived to have certain advantages over the national schools. Nevertheless, this study is based on a single Chinese private school out of 60 in the country. The findings and conclusions could be much improved if samples were drawn from more schools. Moreover, Chinese private schools are scattered throughout the country and come in different sizes and administrative efficiency. To get a more reliable and valid conclusion on the choice of schools by potential students, it would be necessary to conduct more studies by including schools of different sizes in different locations in the country.

Appendix

Distribution of Chinese Independent High Schools in Malaysia, 1963

State	Type 1 CIHS	Type 2 CIHS
Kedah		1. Sin Min High School (Sungai Petani) 2. Sekolah Menengah Sin Min (Alor Setar) 3. Keat Hwa High School
Penang	1. Han Chiang High School	1. Chung Ling (PTE) High School 2. Penang Chinese Girls' Private High School 3. Phor Tay Private High School 4. Jit Sin Independent High School
Perak	1. Shen Jai High School 2. Yik Ching High School	1. Yuk Choy High School 2. Poi Lam High School 3. Tsung Wah (Private) Secondary School 4. Sekolah Tinggi Nan Hwa 5. Pei Yuan High School 6. Sekolah Menengah San Min 7. Hua Lian High School
Selangor	1. Tsun Jin High School 2. Kuen Cheng High School 3. Pin Hwa High School 4. Hin Hua High School	1. Confucian Private Secondary School 2. Chung Hwa Independent High School (KL) 3. Kwang Hua (Private) High School 4. Chung Hua Independent High School (Klang)
Negeri Sembilan	1. Chung Hua High School (Seremban) 2. Chung Hua Middle School (Port Dickson)	
Melaka	1. Pay Fong High School	
Johor	1. Chung Hwa High School (Muar) 2. Chong Hwa High School (Kluang) 3. Yong Peng High School 4. Chinese High School 5. Chong Hwa High School (Batu Pahat) 6. Foon Yew High School 7. Foon Yew High School (Kulai Branch)	1. Pei Hwa High School 2. Pei Chun High School
Kelantan		1. Chung Hwa Independent High School
Sabah		1. Sabah Tshung Tsin Secondary School 2. Kian Kok Middle School 3. Papar Middle School 4. Beaufort Middle School 5. Tenom Tshung Tsin Secondary School 6. Sabah Chinese High School 7. Pei Tsin High School 8. Lahad Datu Middle School 9. Yu Yuan Secondary School

Sarawak	1. Chung Hua Middle School No. 1	1. Batu Kawa Min Lit Secondary School
	2. Chung Hua Middle School No. 3	2. Serian Public Secondary School
	3. Chung Hua Middle School No. 4	3. Wong Nai Siong Secondary School
	4. Kiang Hin Middle School	4. Catholic High School
	5. Guong Ming Middle School	5. Citizen Middle School
	6. Kai Dee Middle School	6. Pei Min Middle School
		7. Riam Road Middle School
		8. Ming Lik Secondary School

Source: Adapted from 郑良树/Tay Lian Soo, 2003

Notes

- 1 Dong Jiao Zong is the leading organization in the Malaysian Chinese education movement. It is collective name of the United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia and The United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia.
- 2 Among the conditions for receiving full support from the government was that students above the age of 23 were not prohibited to remain in Chinese secondary schools. The number of these students would be reduced gradually to conform to the requirement set out in the *Razak Report*, that is, ages 7 to 12 in primary schools and 13 to 18 in secondary schools.
- 3 Students who failed Malay in the primary six examination have to attend an extra year in a "Remove Class" to improve their language proficiency before being admitted to Form One (Secondary One).
- 4 Chinese secondary education consists of three years each at the junior and senior levels, compared with five years of secondary education and two years of pre-university studies at the national schools. However, an increasingly popular option to tertiary education is through a one-year matriculation course as entry to full-time degree courses of three years in the humanities and social sciences and four or more years for courses in the sciences, dentistry and medicine.

References

- TAN Liok Ee 1988. *The Rhetoric of Bangsa and Minzu: Community and Nation in Tension, The Malay Peninsula, 1900-1955*. Monash University: The Centre of Southeast Asian Studies.
- WONG Shwu Huey 2015. In-service teacher training in Malaysian Chinese High Schools: current situation, characteristics, and issues, *Malaysian Journal of Chinese Studies*, 4 (1): 31-45.
- 陈绿漪 1984.〈大马半岛华文教育的发展〉, 林水椽、骆静山合编:《马来西亚华人史》, 八打灵: 马来西亚留台校友会联合总会, 页283-325 (TAN Liok Ee 1984. The development of Chinese education in Peninsular Malaysia. In *The History of Chinese in Malaysia*, edited by LIM Chooi Kwa and LOH Cheng Sun, Petaling Jaya: The Federation of Alumni Associations of Taiwan Universities, Malaysia: 283-325).
- 叶新田 2014.〈新春佳节号召支持董总签名运动〉(YAP Sin Tian 2014. Call for support for Dong Zong's signature campaign during Chinese New Year, Malaysiakini, 29 January 2014).
- 郑良树 1999.《马来西亚华文教育发展史》(第二册), 吉隆坡: 马来西亚华校教师会总会(TAY Lian Soo 1999. *The History of Development of Chinese Education in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: The United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia).

- 2001. 《马来西亚华文教育发展史》(第三册), 吉隆坡: 马来西亚华校教师会总会(TAY Lian Soo 2001. *The History of Development of Chinese Education in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: The United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia).
- 2003. 《马来西亚华文教育发展史》(第四册), 吉隆坡: 马来西亚华校教师会总会(TAY Lian Soo 2003. *The History of Development of Chinese Education in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: The United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia).
- 尊孔独立中学2012. 《尊孔独立中学校刊暨高中第六十九届、初中第八十五届毕业特刊》(Confucian Private Secondary School 2012. *The History of Confucian Private Secondary School*, Kuala Lumpur.