REVIEW ESSAY


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*Language, Culture, and Identity among Minority Students in China: The Case of the Hui* is written by Yuxiang Wang, a curriculum scholar, who builds on the history of curriculum studies with his post-colonial multicultural study of the minority Chinese - Hui. Wang’s study is an excellent example in response to UNESCO policy, which encourages countries to protect the rights of ethnic minority populations and their languages. Wang’s work also has a huge contribution to engagement in international cross-cultural work in fields of education and curriculum studies.

This book consists of 10 chapters. The first one, *Introduction*, paints a big picture of the Hui people in China. Several reasons why the author is interested in the Hui people in Central China and his justification for the Hui students’ family environment, community and school are also presented. The second chapter, *Historical context and the Hui in China*, is presented to readers with the status of different cultures in China, the domination of Han culture and ideology, and adaptation of Hui people to Muslims in China. In chapter 3, *Minority policy and practice in China*, the author reviews minority policy and practice in China. The gap between minority policy and practice and how the laws and policies implemented also presented. Chapter 4, *Curricular context*, is about the state-mandated school curriculum. Using elementary school texts books in China, the author examines in details of how minority culture and knowledge presented. Also issues such as ethnicity, gender, and images are also reviewed. In chapter 5, *Theoretical perspectives*, the author provides theoretical perspectives of the study such as post-colonial theory, a discussion of how European literature misrepresented the East and incorrectly constructed the identity of the East, and an overview of multicultural education in North America and some European countries. Chapter 6, *Community, school, and home*, summarizes the author’s findings about
Hui students’ experiences in school, the community, and at home based on his interviews with the participants. Chapter 7, Teachers’ perspective: “I treat them as Han students”, presents how Han teachers construct and interpret Hui students’ culture and identity through daily school practice and Han curriculum. In chapter 8, Students’ perspective: “We are the same”, the author discusses the findings of two elementary Hui students- Lingling and Lanlan, using their voices to clarify the author’s views. Chapter 9, Parent’s perspective: “We want them to study the required curriculum as the Han students do”, discusses the reasons why parents of the two elementary Hui students expect their children to learn the required curriculum as the Han students do. Finally, in chapter 10, Conclusion: Where does this study lead?, the author presents his contribution of the study to post-colonial theories in the research literature on Hui students in Central China and minority students around the globe.

In conclusion, Language, Culture, and Identity among Minority Students in China: The Case of the Hui is a great source of reference for educational policy-makers, curriculum-makers, scholars, teachers in multilingual contexts in general and minority language teachers in particular to consider embedding minority culture and knowledge in the curriculum in order to protect, nurture, and preserve minority group’s language and culture. Moreover, this book contributes further to international cross-cultural research on social justice in international contexts.

I greatly appreciate the author’s effort to convey a great message to equitable quality education in a clear format. However, I feel that there are a few things the researcher could have done to increase the trustworthiness of his findings. Even though there is a rich and deep description of the participants in this case study, I am left wondering whether or not the sample was truly representative of Hui people since the coding process was not clearly presented. This unclear process does not help increase the validity of the findings. In other words, the authors did not actively use validity strategies in their research called intercoder agreement “to determine the level of consistency of coding, which “enhance the researcher’s ability to access the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy” (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). Anyway, Wang’s work is a good reference source for me to consider in my practice as a language teacher in a multilingual context.

REFERENCES