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升學優待措施對原住民學生文化認同及社會健康之影響

The Impact of Special Educational Measures on Taiwanese
Indigenous Students' Cultural Identity and Social Health

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and Social Health

本論文係 Omorose Aighewi R11853005 在國立臺灣大學全球衛生博士學位學程完成之博士學位論文，於民國 2024 年 07 月 29 日承下列考試委員審查通過及口試及格，特此證明。

The undersigned, appointed by the Doctoral Degree in Global Health Program On 29/07/2024, have examined a Doctoral Dissertation entitled above presented by Omorose Aighewi R11853005 candidate and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

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摘要



這項研究探討台灣特殊教育措施對原住民學生文化認同和社會健康的影響。它探討台灣原住民教育特殊措施的歷史背景，受殖民和壓迫性教育體制影響，如何導致原住民之間的社會經濟差距。作為台灣重要的少數族群，目前關於教育特殊措施的議題，包括污名化和歧視，凸顯了原住民學生在當今社會中的脆弱性。社會健康作為整體幸福感的重要元素，在研究教育特殊措施對原住民學生影響的研究中一直被忽視。這項研究顯示原住民學生所承受的污名和歧視對他們生活中不同關係的影響。研究發現，獲得法定原住民姓名、家庭壓力和影響、以及支持系統都可以顯著影響原住民學生的文化認同和社會健康。

關鍵詞:原住民學生、特殊教育措施、教育政策

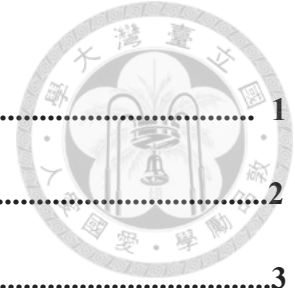
ABSTRACT



This study investigates the impact of Taiwan's special educational measures on the cultural identity and social health of Indigenous students. It explores how Taiwan's historical context of Indigenous education special measures, influenced by colonial and oppressive education systems, contributes to the socioeconomic disparities among Indigenous people. As a significant minority group in Taiwan, the current issues surrounding educational special measures, including stigmatization and discrimination, highlight the vulnerability of Indigenous students in today's society. Social health, a crucial element of overall well-being, is an area that has been largely overlooked in research on the influence of educational special measures on Indigenous students. This study shows the impact of stigma and discrimination endured by Indigenous students and how it affects the different kinds of relationships in their lives. It was found that gaining a legal Indigenous name, familial stressors and influence, and support systems can significantly impact Indigenous students' cultural identity and social health.

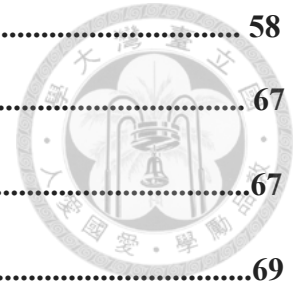
Keywords: *Indigenous students, special education measures, education policies*

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Acknowledgment.....	1
Abstract (in Chinese).....	2
Abstract (in English).....	3
List of Abbreviations.....	6
List of Figures/Tables.....	7
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	9
The History of Taiwan’s Special Educational Measures.....	9
Current Issues with Special Educational Measures in Education.....	12
Social health.....	14
Cultural Identity.....	17
Relevant research.....	18
Significance of Taiwanese Indigenous Students’ Social Health.....	22
Chapter 3: Research Methods and Design.....	27
Sampling of Participants and Data Collection.....	28
Inclusion Criteria.....	29
Participants.....	29
Chapter 4: Reflexivity and Positionality.....	30
Chapter 5: Results.....	37
Relationship with Self.....	37
Relationship with Intimate Connections.....	47

Relationship with Casual Connections.....	58
Chapter 6: Discussion.....	67
Conceptualization of Social Health.....	67
Determinants of Social Health.....	69
Definition of Social Health	70
Cultural Identity Axis.....	71
Educational Measures Impact on Indigenous Identity.....	73
Identity and its Impact on Relationships.....	74
Chapter 7: Conclusion	79
Recommendations.....	81
Contributions.....	84
Reflections.....	85
Limitations.....	88
References.....	89
Appendix 1: IRB Approval.....	95
Appendix 2: Participant Recruitment Poster.....	96
Appendix 3: Interview Questions.....	97



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ATA – Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines

BIPOC – Black Indigenous People of Color

HBCU – Historically Black College/University

IRB – Institutional Review Board

KMT – Kuo-Ming Tang

NTU – National Taiwan University



LIST OF FIGURES



Figure 1 Socio-ecological model of factors affecting health behaviors	15
Figure 2 Social health model.....	16
Figure 3 Cultural identity axis.....	17
Figure 4 Factors affecting Indigenous student social health	67
Figure 5 Social health model of Indigenous student health	69
Figure 6 Adapted cultural identity axis of Taiwanese Indigenous students	71

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION



How do Indigenous students' experiences with special educational measures affect their cultural identity and social health? Indigenous Taiwanese have a long history of educational measures in education. Starting from the Qing dynasty, then followed by the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, Mainland Chinese and Japan used education as a method of assimilation for colonial purposes. For industrialization, the Japanese sought Indigenous Taiwanese to be teachers and physicians (Jao & McKeever, 2006). Following Japan's ceding control of Taiwan in 1945, the Kuo Ming Tang (KMT) took over and continued a forced assimilation method like their predecessors.

In 1987, when the martial law ended, social movements promoting Indigenous rights started taking place in Taiwan. The Education Act for Indigenous people and The Basic Law of Indigenous Peoples are legislation developed to do so. In 2006, an "additional quota" was allotted to Indigenous students in schools ("National Taiwan University Statement Clarification of Regulations for the Guaranteed Admissions and Government-Funded Overseas Study Programs of Indigenous Students," 2023). Special education measures, such as extra points on entrance exams, were also part of the Education Act. Similar to affirmative action in the US, preferential treatment is very stigmatized (Deshpande, 2019; 周惠民, 2012). As Indigenous Taiwanese are an already stigmatized group in Taiwan, benefiting from these special educational measures attracts even more discrimination against Indigenous students. Stigma and discrimination are major influences on one's socialization and, thus, social health. Social health encompasses an individual's relationships within their family, romantic partnerships, friendships, and society, reflecting their level of comfort and satisfaction in these interactions. Not only are interpersonal interactions regarded, but so is the integration of a broader social network (Cho et

al., 2020). These two components make up one's social health, which can affect physical and mental health and play a role in the movement of one's social class and economic roles.

This study aims to understand how Indigenous students' social health has been impacted by minority stress derived from navigating their academic careers as a member of a minority community. It also looks at how this stress has been internalized or externalized to influence their cultural identity. Lastly, the study investigates how their cultural identity affects their interpersonal relationships, social integration, and perception of social health.

Chapter 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

The History of Taiwan's Special Educational Measures

Successive colonial powers have significantly shaped Taiwan's current indigenous society. Taiwan's colonial occupancy regime history started with the Portuguese in the 1500s (In the Days of the Dutch, 1968). Following the Portuguese were the Dutch, the Spanish, the Qing Dynasty of China, the Japanese, and the currently the Kuo-Ming Tang. The Indigenous people occupying East Taiwan were mostly self governing during the different occupancies until the Japanese gained control in 1915 (Friedman, 2017).

These oppressive rulings have contributed to a disparity in modern Indigenous peoples' health, wealth, and education. Compared to Han Chinese, Indigenous Taiwanese have a shorter life expectancy of 8.6 years (Juan et al., 2016). Their high mortality is said to be mostly linked to suicide or homicides and death from motor vehicle crashes. These health outcomes could be related to their economic gap, which is three hundred ninety-six dollars below the Han Chinese

salary in Taiwan (Chang, 2020). Their economic gap could be related to the historically oppressive education system from which the Indigenous people have suffered.

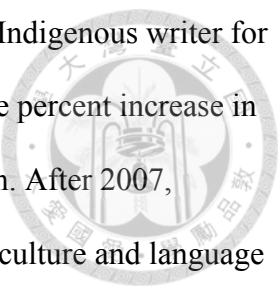
Taiwan's Indigenous people have a lower higher education enrollment rate coupled with a higher dropout rate (Zhenwei, 2021; 周惠民, 2012). Indigenous students also make up a higher percentage of private school enrollment, which is perceived as less prestigious. Nursing schools are known to be dedicated to Indigenous students, which is motivated by scholarships offered to Indigenous students. Public official positions such as those of teachers, military officials, and medical staff are more common among Indigenous people due to the attractive benefits (Zhenwei, 2021).

Starting in the 1980s, the Indigenous social movement started gaining traction. Although this was still during the regime of the KMT, some Indigenous student leaders formed allies with the opposing political group of the KMT called the Dangwai. The Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines (ATA) was formed, and almost every Indigenous group was represented. In 1987, with the lifting of martial law, Indigenous communities started gaining autonomy and expressing democratic freedoms (Druluan, 2019). The Declaration of Rights of Taiwan Aborigines was written in the same year. These were then emphasized through ATA-led protests where they demanded specific rights and opposed Han Chinese domination (Yang, 2021). AbsoundTrack, an Indigenous student club, was created to mobilize Indigenous students in Taiwan during that movement (Liu, 2014).

The Education Act for Indigenous People was passed in 1998. This started the acknowledgment of the educational inequalities between indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on a national level. The policy was meant to promote Indigenous language and culture ("National Taiwan University Statement Clarification of Regulations for the Guaranteed Admissions and Government-Funded Overseas Study Programs of Indigenous Students," 2023).

Still, Indigenous student's higher education enrollment is 31.9% lower than non-Indigenous students (Chang, 2020). The history of forceful assimilation through education spans decades for the Indigenous Taiwanese. For example, the Qing Dynasty taught their curriculum, *Proverbs for the Instruction of Savages* (*Xunfan Liyan* 訓番俚言), which only focused on language and Confucianism (Friedman, 2017). The Japanese taught the Japanese language through police schools, but poor attendance was a common issue, just like during the Qing. In the 1950s, the KMT implemented policies aimed at promoting nationalism by prohibiting the use of any language other than Mandarin and enforcing Han cultural practices. This was the Shandi Pingdihua Policy or “make the mountains like the plains” (“National Taiwan University Statement Clarification of Regulations for the Guaranteed Admissions and Government-Funded Overseas Study Programs of Indigenous Students,” 2023; Simon & Mona, 2023). If an individual were to speak another language besides Mandarin, they were publicly shamed by wearing a sign stating, “I don't speak in mother tongues” (Ciwang Teyra et al., 2022). The limitations of schools conducted in foreign languages significantly contribute to the low education rates for Indigenous Taiwanese (Friedman, 2017).

The current Education Act includes policy goals aimed to counteract the years of colonial education systems by promoting Indigenous languages and cultures, creating more Indigenous teachers, and creating more opportunities for the community (“Program on Developing Indigenous Education [2021-2025],” 2020). According to the Ministry of Education, Indigenous students scored fifty-five to sixty-three points lower than their non-Indigenous counterparts on the “basic competency test for junior high school students” (周, 2012). The Indigenous students' disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds contributed to the wide score gap. Education advancement benefits for Indigenous students were implemented to decrease the gap between



Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. According to (Druluan, 2019), an Indigenous writer for Indigenous Sight, in 2001, Indigenous students were given up to a thirty-five percent increase in their school admission test scores for high school and their tertiary education. After 2007, Indigenous students could receive up to thirty-five percent after obtaining a culture and language certificate. Other benefits include scholarships, tuition waivers, specific admission quotas, and medical and teacher training programs. It's important to note Indigenous students' admission does not affect other students' admission as they have their quota separate from the others. Even with the special educational measures, Indigenous students' admission to higher education is still lower than Han Chinese, even if at a record high of 53.9%. The special educational measures were implemented to address systematic colonization effects that hindered Indigenous students' education. Alleviating the inaccessibility of education positively contributes to people's overall health. There is a correlation between education, longevity, and better health. Economic, health behavioral, socio-psychological, and access to healthcare factors are all seen to impact one's education and health (Zajacova & Lawrence, 2018). Socio-psychological factors such as social support to handle daily stressors were seen to be a pathway between education and health. No studies show how special educational measures affect Taiwan's Indigenous students' social health.

Current Issues with Special Educational Measures in Taiwan

In May 2023, National Taiwan University (NTU) had its "Freedom of Speech Month". During the month, a banner was hung on the main campus gate stating "火冒4.05丈" "原住民特權是政府對平地人的暴政" or "Furious 4.05 feet" Indigenous privilege is the government's tyranny over plain people." This banner was meant to express some students' anger over the

educational special measures given to Indigenous students (Brian Hioe, 2023). The phrase “火冒4.05丈” uses an old Chinese idiom that conveys extreme anger. The creators of this banner believe the government’s special educational measures, such as the extra points, to be oppressive to non-Indigenous people. It sparked a discussion about discrimination towards Indigenous students and how the special educational measures are an excuse for discrimination against them. Specially, non-Indigenous students believe that Indigenous students did not earn their acceptance in the school and that they take non-Indigenous student’s positions in the school. Most are unaware that Indigenous students have their own acceptance quota and only compete with other Indigenous students. The non-Indigenous students that do know about this quota, may still be upset because they think it’s unfair that Indigenous students can be accepted into the same university without “working hard”. Overall, discrimination against Indigenous students entering university using special education measures shows the lack of awareness of the history of Indigenous peoples in Taiwan and the lack of awareness of contemporary Indigenous issues (Ciwang Teyra et al., 2022). This incident has adverse effects on the implementation of special education measures. Such perspectives can counteract the intended effects of the policy.

There is a stigma linked with the preferential treatment of Indigenous students over non-Indigenous students. The banner at NTU shows that stigma is actualized in reality.

Deshpande (2019) states special education measures can further stigmatize a minority group by labeling them incompetent due to implications they could not get accepted into the school without preferential treatment. “Externalization “ and “internalization” are two possible outcomes of stigmatization posed by the “stereotype content model,” where externalization means the people who didn’t receive preferential treatment discredit the positive work from the individuals. Internalization would result from internalizing the doubts, which would lower the

performance of the individual. Also, in Deshpande's study, the different caste groups' beneficiaries of the special educational measures experienced significant stigma presented as externalization from the upper class, but not so much internalization. The study then goes on to say microaggressions or "everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely on their marginalized group membership" are the more pressing issue for the stigmatized group (Deshpande, 2019, pg.59). The "furious 4.05 feet" banner is an example of a microaggression that Indigenous students can and have faced in Taiwan. These microaggressions should be given serious attention, as they are one of the negative social factors that have the potential to inflict serious harm.

Social health

How social factors impact our health can be seen within the socio-ecological model. The model theorizes that factors outside the control of the individual significantly impact one's health. Figure 1 (Waterworth et al., 2015) uses the socio-ecological model to analyze their findings on factors affecting Indigenous health behaviors. It links social factors to affect one's decision-making and health behaviors. They show common elements the participants mentioned and separate them from broad social factors like history and culture to personal factors such as identity.

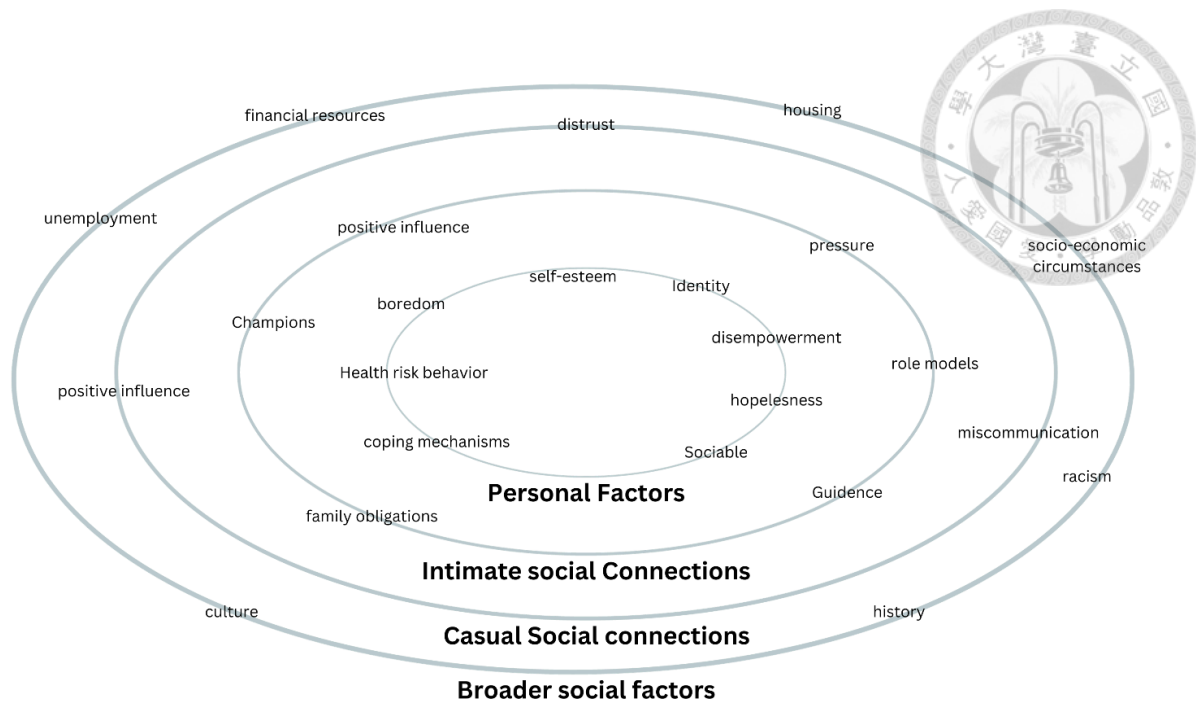


Figure 1. (Remade by author) Common factors seen to influence the health behaviors of Indigenous people seen by supporting people using the Socio-ecological model (Waterworth et al., 2015).

These factors were found to play a role in the decisions Indigenous people make that can have substantial effects on their health behaviors. The discourse surrounding Taiwan’s Indigenous health typically focuses on physical and mental health (Cheng & Hsu, 1992; Hong, 2023; Lai & Teyra, 2023; Wen, 1990). Rarely is social health discussed as a major contributing factor in their health. Social health is the “quality of social relationships and the capacity to manage social life in individuals, and one’s social cohesion and resilience capacity in the society.” Social relationships have a major impact on health, where the quality of relationships and social networks play a vital role in one’s everyday lived experience. In Figure 2, Cho et al. (2020) separate social health into micro and macro levels. On the micro level, social health measures individual relationships’ quality and capacity to navigate their social world.

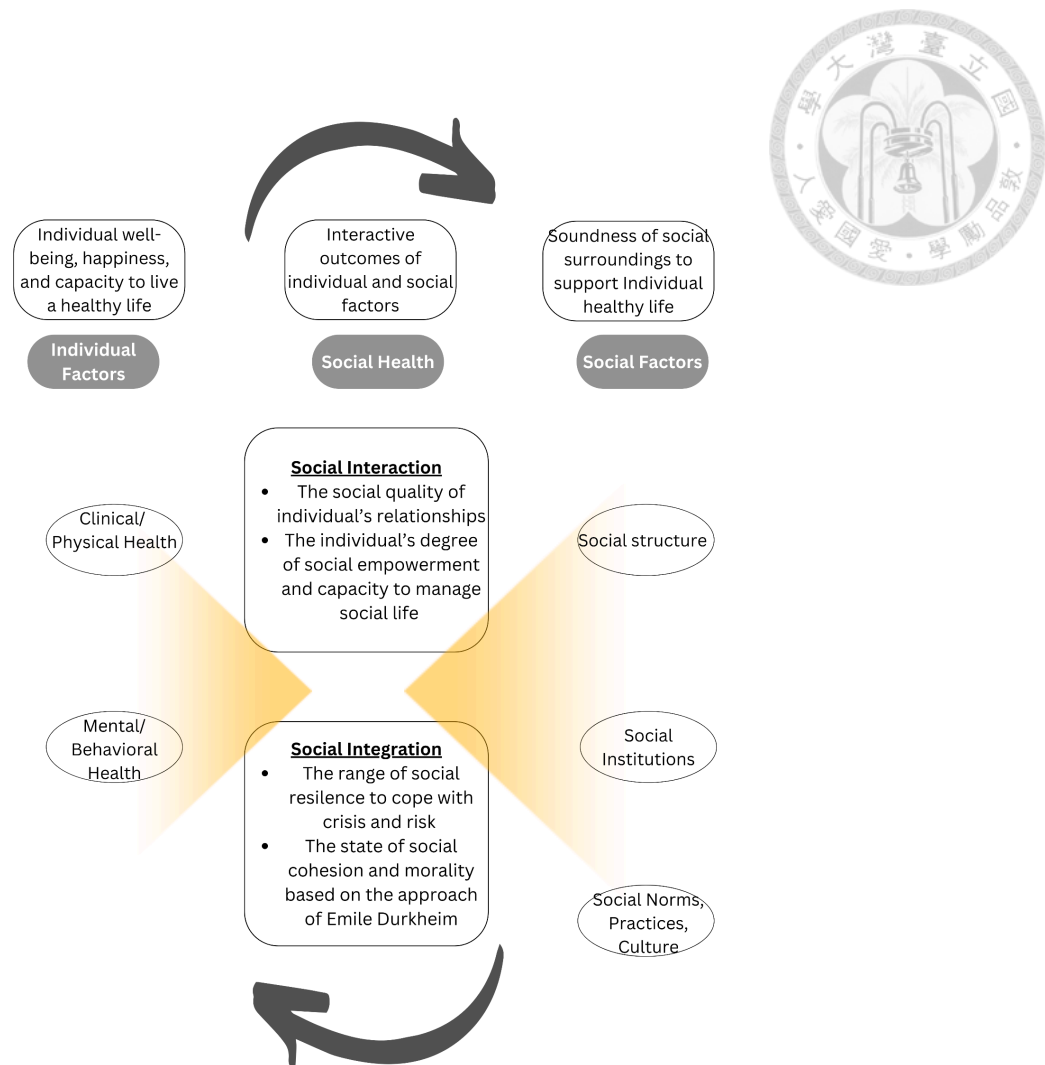


Figure 2. (Remade by author) Cho et al. (2020) delineate the concept of social health by dissecting it into micro and macro levels. At the micro level, the emphasis is on an individual's ability to manage their social relationships. In contrast, the macro level focuses on the societal factors that shape an individual's social well-being.

Alternatively, the macro level examines the cohesiveness and resilience of the people around the individual. The model proposes that individual factors, such as mental and physical health, and social factors, such as social structures, all contribute to one's social health. Other studies show that social ties influence health behaviors, affecting health, mortality, and morbidity (Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010).

Cultural Identity

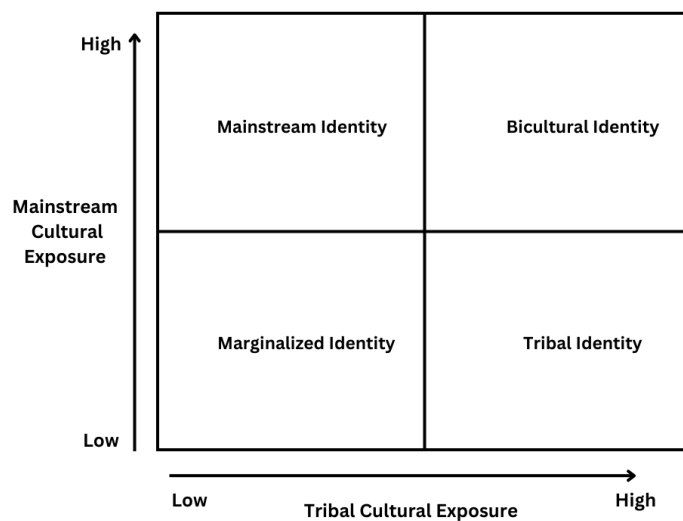


Figure 3. (Remade by author) Cultural identity axis

Cheng & Jacob (2008) created the cultural identity axis shown in Figure 3, where they grouped their participants, Indigenous high school students from Los Angeles, USA, and Taipei City, Taiwan, into four identity quadrants according to their exposure and attitude towards mainstream and tribe culture. Strong or weak Indigenous identity was gauged by factors seen such as being raised by an Indigenous parent, using tribal language, visiting the tribe frequently, joining traditional ceremonies, and viewing themselves as Indigenous. Mainstream values are the values in the students' "curriculum, pedagogy, and peer interaction of their school life (pg. 244)". Students who had weak Indigenous identities and accepted mainstream values are considered mainstream. The marginalized identity would be someone with a weak Indigenous identity but still adopted some mainstream values. A bicultural identity is an individual with a strong Indigenous identity but seeks to follow mainstream values. Tribal identity would then be

someone with a strong Indigenous identity and is against mainstream values. Cheng & Jacob (2008) found that students with bicultural identities generally perform well academically. The opposite is true for students with culturally marginalized identities, who were seen to be more likely to drop out of school. Students with tribal identities did not perform well academically but had a strong motivation to help their tribes and Indigenous people. Students with mainstream identities tended to announce their Indigenous identity when using the extra points, and some would disguise their identities after the entrance exam. Overall, this paper highlights the importance of family influence in forming Indigenous students' cultural identity. Since the factors depend greatly on the caretakers' accessibility and frequency to the different factors, the Indigenous parents must maintain a close connection to their tribe.

Relevant Research

Ciwang Teyra et al. (2022) discuss discrimination that urban Indigenous youth encounter living in mainstream society and how it affects them internally and externally. Most participants faced discrimination while they were students relating to receiving extra points from the special education measure. The paper saw that dealing with mainstream society's discrimination upon using the extra points caused self-esteem issues and hesitancy in interpersonal interactions. This hesitancy is due to the lack of trust from being hypervigilant and on guard with the people around them.

Discrimination, whether it is a subtle insult or microaggression, can lead to physical and mental health issues. Participants often deal with subtle insults that are well-intentioned but are derived from stereotypes. The ignorance of Indigenous culture and its history in Taiwan is primarily the reason for such insults. Urban Indigenous students, in return, are led to feel guilty

about their Indigenous identity and internalize not being “Indigenous enough”. Subtle and often unintentional insults can be difficult for Indigenous students to navigate socially. Often, because the insults are not presented with obvious malice, it can be difficult to refute them. Subtle insults are comments that a speaker may understand as a compliment but are actually insulting due to their racist undertones. For example, complementing an Indigenous person on how well they do in class because Indigenous students do not often excel academically. A response to a comment like this can be uncomfortable for an Indigenous person to formulate. In many cases, if an Indigenous person states their discomfort, the blame is shifted onto the Indigenous person by deeming them too sensitive. These reactions to discrimination make it difficult for an Indigenous person to respond and resist, which contributes to the harm of the insult itself.

Discrimination is not only isolated in mainstream society but also in indigenous communities. Ciwang Teyra et al.’s (2022) paper shows the extra burden that urban Indigenous students face when it comes to being raised in urban areas. Urban Indigenous students’ identities are challenged by Indigenous community members, which participants explain as being even more hurtful than the discrimination from mainstream society. Their identities can be dismissed, and when an urban Indigenous student is searching for community within their tribe, this can be impactful.

Zhenwei (2021) also delves into Taiwanese Indigenous students’ educational challenges. Indigenous students who pursue higher education within the mainstream society system have to adapt to cultural differences in a new environment, which is more tense due to racial discrimination. The “cultural disharmony” that the paper touches on is due to different world views and expectations around success, and can lead to students dropping out of school or an inability to pursue career goals fully.

Another challenge Zhenwei poses is the learning differences between Indigenous students and Han-Chinese students in Taiwan's mainstream society education. Oftentimes, the majority attributes the higher amount of Indigenous students dropping out of school compared to Han-Chinese students to be from cultural "deficiencies". Instead, the learning barriers can be due to the curriculum catering to the Han-majority learning style, history, and content. Without adapting teaching methods to Indigenous students, Indigenous students are more likely to feel frustrated, which can affect the effectiveness of their education.

The university experience can have a significant impact on an Indigenous student's ethnic identity. Zhenwei emphasizes how necessary self-confidence is for effective learning and self-realization. A strong cultural identity is achieved through the intentionality and hard work of the Indigenous people, as stated by those who have become considered "academic elites." With the extra burdens that Indigenous students have to endure, the first year of university is a particularly sensitive time. Students struggle with academic pressure and may be unprepared for their previous education settings.

Zhenwei suggests improving academic readiness, strengthening the sense of belonging, developing strong relationships between faculty and Indigenous students, catering to Indigenous students' needs in the curriculum, and providing supportive services. This support is highly emphasized due to the increasing numbers of Indigenous students on university campuses, who are still heavily underrepresented. Furthermore, in their classes, adapting to the new environment can lead to learning difficulties, impacting their ability to graduate successfully.

You Zonghui (2019) explores the influences on Taiwanese Indigenous mental health. It hypothesized that higher education, occupational status, income, and social support meant better

mental health. They measure higher education with the number of years in education. Social support is gauged by the interactions that provide emotional and financial/material support. Whilst comparing urban and rural Indigenous peoples' mental health, this paper highlights the complexities that come from both environments. The social support of rural Indigenous people was higher compared to urban Indigenous people because they are in closer proximity to their community. On the other hand, some who live in the tribe may stay because of their inability to leave, resulting in poor mental health. Urban Indigenous people have lower occupational status because many go to urban areas and obtain manual labor jobs but may have a higher capacity to adapt due to migration. Those manual labor jobs can be unstable and lead to high stress. Since there are many positive and negative effects to each factor on mental health, Zhonghui found that education was the only factor that significantly impacted the mental health of indigenous peoples. With a higher education, Indigenous people have more resources that can help mitigate their mental health. This also highlights the importance of education felt by Indigenous people in Taiwan.

While there are existing studies on Taiwan's special education measures and their effectiveness concerning Indigenous populations (周惠民, 2012); [Cheng & Jacob, 2008](#)), there is a lack of research on the impact of these policies on their health and social health. (周惠民, 2012) posits that these measures aim to achieve numerical equality rather than genuine educational equity that ensures equal educational opportunities and effective learning. Also, although there is relevant research on how education and social support affect Indigenous students' mental health ([You Zonghui, 2019](#)) and how discrimination affects urban Indigenous students ([Ciwang Teyra et al., 2022](#)), there are few studies that focus primarily on how the educational measures affect the relationships of Indigenous students. (Cheng & Jacob, 2008) then explore the impact of cultural

identity and how it affects Indigenous students in the US and Taiwan. Their characterization of ‘bicultural identity’ or those who hold a strong Indigenous identity and try to follow mainstream perspectives tend to be more academically successful than the other cultural identities they identified. Further exploration of these cultural identities and their social health could give a health perspective on the impact of stigma and cultural identity for Taiwanese Indigenous students.

Significance of Taiwanese Indigenous ‘Students’ Social Health

Urbanization → Stress, Identity issues, Vulnerability

About 50% of the indigenous population in Taiwan has moved from their native land to pursue more job opportunities. More than half of Indigenous students in Taiwan who receive education below vocational high school attend Han-dominated schools. Indigenous students attend schools in areas outside of their communities rather than within their communities (周惠民, 2012).

Migration from rural to urban areas can make individuals vulnerable, leading to high stress levels. It can also lead to identity issues. Stronger Indigenous identity is linked to the parent’s identity that raised them, usage of tribal language, participation in cultural traditions, and challenging mainstream media (Cheng & Jacob, 2008). Typically, separating from one’s community can lead to a weaker sense of identity as they may have fewer opportunities to speak and learn their tribe’s language, participate in tribal ceremonies, and interact with other Indigenous people frequently.

Indigeneity → Stigmatization

Taiwan's Indigenous population has remained marginalized socially and economically. They are subjected to discrimination as there is a sizable socioeconomic disparity between them and non-indigenous people. According to the study by Huang and Liu (2016), hierarchical social groups emerge based on particularism or the dominant group in power when minority and majority groups coexist. The existence of structural stratifications due to historical, economic, cultural, and political factors inherently leads to discrimination, stigmatization, the formation of stereotypes, and prejudices at both individual and group levels.

Stigmatized minority → Minority stress

Minority stress results from the stress caused by stigma and prejudice against the minority group to which the individual belongs. Meyer (2007) proposes two kinds of minority stress: distal and proximal. Distal stress comes from people and institutions, including discriminatory laws and regulations, microaggressions, chronic stressors, and significant life events. Proximal stress is derived from the internalization of the discrimination shown and expected upon the individual and the minority group. This can manifest as internalized racism through the concealment of one's identity, rejection of certain aspects of identity, and anticipation of discrimination. These stressors can be chronic and can have psychological and physiological impacts. The psychological impacts may translate into maladaptive coping strategies or refraining from engaging in healthy behaviors. It can also provoke physiological responses like high blood pressure, which can create physical health issues over time (Flentje et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2019). The externalization or internalization of stigma and discrimination related to preferential treatment, along with being part of a stigmatized minority group, can be seen to contribute to minority stress, as defined by Ng et al. and Meyer.



Educational Measure Stigma → Minority stress

This type of discrimination was seen recently at NTU, where a banner was created stating “furious 4.5 feet,” a play on a Chinese idiom meant to convey anger on the special measures placed by the Ministry of Education. This act was one of the many derogatory expressions of Free Speech Month at NTU. One could argue that this situation arose from a lack of awareness regarding Indigenous people’s history and a misunderstanding of current policies related to special education measures. The competitive and unwelcoming school environment at NTU, attributed to its prestige, poses challenges for Indigenous students. As a result, some of NTU’s Indigenous students and members of the anti-discriminatory group protested to spread awareness of the on-campus discrimination shown to Indigenous students. This blatant act of discrimination can significantly affect the targeted group, as one of the students stated how both have negatively impacted his self-worth (Chih-Chung & Lin, 2023).

Minority Stress, Identity and Decision-Making

Meyer (2007) and Waterworth et al. (2015) state that racism and discrimination can distort one’s cultural identity. Using the in-group/out-group theory suggests the homophilic behavior of groups to create connections with people they identify with and to form a prejudice against other groups. When it comes to Indigenous group experiences, prejudices against Indigenous people can polarize individuals within the community in terms of their perspectives and engagement with their culture. Tension can often be created if an individual holds differing views on their cultural practices and norms compared to the majority. Individuals who seek to be in or out of the group may adopt or refuse certain behaviors exemplified by the group they want to be a part of.

Some behaviors can result in poor health outcomes but may be socially expected from the group. On the other hand, some behaviors may be healthier for the individual but may not be socially accepted by the group. Waterworth also highlights the significance of cultural identity in shaping the formation of social networks and how an individual's position within their social network can reinforce specific behaviors.

Identity, Decision-Making and Social Health

The decision-making influenced by one's identity can affect social health. Identity is complex and the formation of identity can be impacted by others perception in combination with one's perception of self. Identity is a combination of many things, such as appearance, behavior, understanding, and lineage. The many different combinations of factors all contribute to forming one's identity. The perception of depth of connection within one's identified group can be impacted by how others perceive you. This perception influences behavior. Ultimately, the group an individual decides to belong to has social rules and expectations. The motivation to maintain certain cultural practices or cultural preservation, which marginalized groups can seek out, can affect decision-making (Waterworth et al., 2015). Decision-making to participate in cultural norms or not, such as family obligations and expectations and maintaining or creating Indigenous connections, can positively contribute to one's ability to form relationships with people in their in-group and the potential to form or maintain quality relationships.

On the other hand, a weaker cultural identity can come with struggles to maintain one's culture. If some behaviors can be linked to out-group culture, it can impact one's identity if they conduct such behaviors. For example, if an individual of a minority group adheres to a behavior done mostly by the majority, members of the minority group may disregard the individuals'

cultural identity. This disregard could manifest into doubt and confusion for the individual. It could also negatively affect one's ability to form relationships with people in their in-group.



Stigma, Minority Stress, Identity, and Social Health

This study seeks to explore how microaggressions affect the responses of Taiwan's Indigenous students, who experience stigma from both using special educational measures and belonging to a minority group. The focus is on understanding how these experiences influence the formation of their self-identity and subsequently manifest in their relationships.

A stigmatized minority whose environment is made of by the dominant group is vulnerable. Stigmatization from the dominant group can propel an individual towards or away from their culture and group. I want to understand how Indigenous students navigate their academic careers with these challenges and how they influence their Indigenous identity and, consequently, their relationships: the relationship with themselves and with intimate and casual connections. These relationships show an individual's social health strength. Relationships play a significant role in socioeconomic class mobility and resource utilization within society (Huang Yizhi, Zhang Yinghua, 2005). Additionally, relationships influence an individual's decision-making processes and health behaviors. Given their importance in shaping our daily experiences, relationships are crucial factors that impact the trajectory of our lives. Therefore, prioritizing social health and nurturing strong relationships is essential.

Chapter 3:

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN



My proposed research methods include participant observation, in-depth individual interviews, and group interviews. To familiarize myself with relevant Indigenous culture, I attended cultural events like an Amis harvest festival and Indigenous club meetings and events. Participatory and non-participatory observations were made depending on the situation. These observations and interactions contributed to understanding Indigenous groups, current Indigenous issues, and meeting Indigenous students.

Pertaining to the research design, ethical approval was obtained from the National Taiwan University Research Ethics Committee (NTU-REC No.: 202311HS020) to ensure the prevention and mitigation of any potential harm to the research participants. Interviews were conducted with current and former university students who were currently living in Taipei City. Interview questions were based on the cultural identity axis (Cheng & Jacob, 2008) and the social functioning questionnaire (Tyrer et al., 2011). An Indigenous sociology research assistant was present and translated for interviews that needed Mandarin to English translation. The ethics committee and the translator reviewed the questions to guarantee sensitivity to the participants. A mitigation process was in place in case of any negative impacts from the interviews.

All the interviews were voice-recorded for transcription purposes. The one-on-one interviews took place with two group interviews made up of around four or five interviewees. The group interviews are meant to use a homogenous group dynamic and interaction to elicit conversation about special education measures. Funding from the Student Research Scholarship

on Indigenous Cultural Safety and Health Care Services was acquired and used to pay for the translator and interviewees' transportation and food for the interviews.

The in-depth one-on-one interviews give the interviewees space and time to reflect on the group discussion and then delve deeper into their own experiences. These semi-structured interviews used open-ended and survey-like questions ranging from two to five hours. Interviews are the most common method for collecting data on a new study. Since the social health of Taiwan's Indigenous people has not been explored yet, an in-depth understanding is beneficial. This qualitative approach of using in-depth interviews can be most helpful (Jamshed, 2014).

Interviews in English were transcribed through an AI transcription website, revoldiv.com, and then edited by me. The interviews conducted in Mandarin were transcribed using an AI transcription website but were selectively edited by a Han-Chinese translator. This means that specific quotes were revised by the translator.

Sampling of Participants and Data Collection

Data was collected from observations, individual interviews, and group interviews. Due to the nature of the topic, convenience and snowball sampling methods were used to find the participants for this study. Convenience sampling is based on the researcher's accessibility and proximity; therefore, as a student at NTU, resources and people from NTU will be the first option. This method can be biased as it may not be a true representation of the population. NTU, a prestigious school in Taiwan, may also skew the findings. Snowball sampling finds participants by first finding a few who then refer others. This has limitations in creating similar findings among the participants if they belong to the same social groups or demographics.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Individuals who identify as Indigenous
- Individuals who are currently enrolled in a university or attended a university



Participants

Code	Mother Ethnicity	Father Ethnicity	Gender	*Urban/Tribe	Urban Setting	University Location
Participant 1	Paiwan	Paiwan and Han Chinese	Woman	Tribe	N/A	Kaohsiung
Participant 2	Hakka*	Paiwan	Woman (transgender)	Tribe	N/A	Kaohsiung
Participant 3	Paiwan and Pinpu	Paiwan and Waisheng*	Man	Urban	2nd generation	Taitung
Participant 4	Atayal	Han Chinese	Man	Urban	2nd generation	Taipei City
Participant 5	Truku	Truku	Woman	Urban	2nd generation	Taipei City
Participant 6	Paiwan	Paiwan	Woman	Tribe	N/A	Kaohsiung and Taipei City
Participant 7	Puyuma	Han Chinese	Man	Urban	1st generation	Taipei City
Participant 8	Han Chinese and Hakka*	Atayal	Man	Tribe	N/A	Taipei City
Participant 9	Han Chinese	Han Chinese (mother adopted by Seeduku family)	Man	Urban	3rd generation	Taipei
Participant 10	Paiwan	Paiwan	Woman	Urban	1st generation	Tainan

*Waisheng-Taiwanese citizens born in Mainland China who came to Taiwan with the Kuo-Ming Tang party (KMT) party

*Hakka—A minority group of Han Chinese in Taiwan

*Urban or Tribe was decided based on if the participants grew up majorly in the tribe or in a city.

Chapter 4:
REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY



REFLEXIVITY

I am a 29-year-old Nigerian, Thai, Chinese, and American female who has lived in Taipei City, Taiwan, for almost two years. Most of my education has occurred in the United States, and I am now a graduate student in Taiwan. I have limited experience and knowledge of the lived experiences of the Indigenous peoples in Taiwan. Over the past year, I have joined various events and meetings held by Indigenous groups at NTU, but most of my historical and health knowledge of Taiwan is from the Han–Chinese Taiwanese perspective. Formally, I took a one-week cultural competency course in Hualien, where I learned about Indigenous policies and issues from three Taiwanese professors who have worked on or are currently working on, such as language ritualization, cultural competency, social inclusion, and the effects of displacement. Two of the three professors are male Indigenous Taiwanese. One of the professors is Taiwanese, female, and an ally to Indigenous peoples. Their identity and sex are significant influences in their lived experiences and perspectives.

Indigenous members of the Kiwit Tribe of the Pangcah people curated a week-long class, from the food and housing to the activities. Their teaching was translated to me from Pangcah to English. The lack of first-hand interactions with Indigenous people is a major gap in my understanding and perspective. These facts acknowledge the limitations and biases in the experiences and information I have received.

Sex, age, race, language, and culture are all significant factors shaping my perspective and how I conducted this study. I consistently communicated with my advisors and Indigenous translator to decrease bias.

My experiences as a Thai, Chinese, Nigerian, and American female 29-year-old who is a first-generation American and has lived abroad for about eight years prompted my curiosity for this study. I have lived in Brazil, Thailand, Lesotho, South Korea, and Taiwan since 2016. My time in these countries has taught me more about my identity. Living outside the US, I recognize and connect with my American identity. This is my strongest identity when I meet people due to my accent and personality. It has also allowed me to learn about shared experiences and struggles with people from other countries. Some people come from countries where affirmative action plays a big role in their environment, such as Malaysia and South Africa. I realized that the people who are left out of affirmative action say similar things, such as there is a preference for the other group even when they are not as qualified. There is never any acknowledgment of the impact of history, and most dismiss the history as a “long time ago.” When I moved to Taiwan, I also had a similar conversation, which sparked my interest in this study. How do the other groups of people who don’t use the special measures impact the everyday social interactions of those who use them?

My mother left Nigeria to give birth to me, her last born, in the US. Shortly after my birth, we moved back to Nigeria to reunite with the remainder of my family. After first grade, I moved back to the United States. My parents are educated, with my mother holding a master’s degree and my father holding a PhD. My parents highly regard education and have always pushed my siblings and me to excel academically. Both of them migrated to the States around eighteen and nineteen years old. My father has a strong Nigerian identity, whereas my mother

has a weak Thai/Chinese identity. In the house, my father's culture dominated my mother's. My father enforced speaking certain phrases of respect in his language, but with Thai, we didn't hear the language at all. I have many Nigerian cousins, aunts, and uncles living in the US, and we saw them every year until high school. My mother only had a sister living in the US, which we only started to see in high school. I have three older siblings, but my eldest brother passed away when I was five years old, living in Nigeria. My sister is seven years older than me, and my brother is just two years older.

My siblings and I all have different cultural identities. My sister aligns more with our Nigerian culture. My brother aligns more with American culture, and I align more with Thai culture. I believe our parents' connection with their culture, societal pressures and stigma, and the physical moving of our family had major impacts on these differing identities. My oldest sister had more time living in Nigeria than my brother and me. She formed her identity before returning to the US at age twelve. On the other hand, my brother and I started forming our identities in the US. From the start, we struggled with fitting in with societal standards and expectations. My brother was pushed back on grade and forced to take English as a second language (ESL) classes. The teachers at my sister's school gave her a hard time with her classes. I also had an accent and struggled to make friends. My parents had high expectations for us to succeed academically but were unaware of the American school system. Fortunately, we had teachers in our school who vouched for my brother and me to be pushed into the more academically rigorous classes. Where we lived, the normal classes were not well equipped. My siblings and I have undergraduate degrees in chemistry, biochemistry, and engineering. All three of us struggled to obtain our degrees.

My sister started her modeling career while in university, and my brother pursued a corporate job in finance after university. Both of these industries are dominated by white Americans. My sister has more experience with black Americans than my brother and I because she went to a historically black university (HBCU). As her time in the modeling industry persisted, she pushed her racially diverse background; I saw as she became more anti-American and more rooted in Nigerian culture. My brother, on the other hand, went to a predominantly white university in South Carolina and then has been in corporate America ever since. To succeed in corporate America as a male, you have to embody what the leaders in the corporations are, which are upper-middle-class white males. I have seen my brother lean further into American values and an American identity than anyone else in the family. Both of their industries are full of overt and subtle racism.

On the other hand, I moved away from the United States after graduating. I have lived mostly away from the US for three main reasons: my parents no longer reside in the US, my lifestyle values do not align with American values, and I had never felt American when I lived there. Since I moved to the US when I was six years old, my sense of identity has started to form, and I am highly aware that I am not similar to my classmates. I did not fit the standard of beauty, familial standards, and social class standards. I have felt different since I could remember, but eventually, I felt like I fit in at the end of high school. When I went to college in South Carolina, I did feel more at ease with my identity because I was surrounded by more diverse people. Still, most are white Americans, but they are from different classes and different states. In university, I studied biochemistry, and I was one of the few BIPOC (black Indigenous people of color) in the program. My whole university career, I felt unqualified to study biochemistry and constantly doubted my abilities. I was a student who did well in school before university, but I never felt

particularly great at science and math. Growing up with high stress and pressure from my parents, I felt the immense weight of it when I started doing poorly in my core subject classes. I felt ashamed and felt that I contributed to the stereotype that black people were not as smart as their white counterparts. I had always been a poor test taker, and I would attribute it to low self-esteem and anxiety. I also was undiagnosed with attention-deficient hyperactive disorder (ADHD).

All these negative feelings eventually led me to discontinue my career in biochemistry and have kept me living abroad. I do not have a community in the US and do not want to obtain a job with my undergraduate degree. My struggle with community comes from the innate belief that I am not truly understood by the people I am connected with, but while I have lived abroad, I have not felt the same intensity of loneliness as I did in the US. Maybe it's because I have grown a lot since living abroad, or maybe it's because there are fewer expectations to be understood when living abroad since everyone is different from you. There are fewer people to connect with due to language barriers, and physical distance can be rationalized more than emotional distance. I have also been able to explore my identity without the expectations and fears of American society around me.

POSITIONALITY

I started the interview process with limited awareness of the social intricacies that Indigenous students have to go through in Thailand. I was also still understanding the policies that affect the lives of Indigenous people. At the beginning of the process, I had a general idea of how young Han people perceived the Indigenous community and the knowledge they had of the community. What was surprising was the simultaneous benefits and disadvantages of being able to pass as Han. It was also surprising how easy it was for your classmates to be unaware of your

cultural identity, even when your main caretaker was Indigenous. It showed me how it could be advantageous to not tell people your identity as it would prevent discrimination. On the opposite side, I think the lack of acknowledgment contributes to or could be the reason for a weak cultural identity. This was surprising because I never felt like I had a choice about my identity. In the US, the one-drop rule is where any amount of blackness would define you as being black. Also, in the black community, denying or not acknowledging your blackness is very frowned upon and is not empathized.

I also saw the impact of the law on the participant's perception of themselves. It confirmed how the power dynamics of the government and people in power hold so much weight in Taiwan's society. I was surprised to see that although Indigenous status can't really be seen through the last name as most people have Han last names, without the acknowledgment by the government, there can still be doubt of one's identity. Personally, both my first and last names are Nigerian, but I have never felt like my Thai culture was invalid because of this.

As a researcher, I found myself weary of how much I could dig from the stories of the participants. I am around the same age as many of them and most of the participants are currently on their journey in figuring out their cultural identity. This means that they have thought a lot about identity, just like I have. I never wanted to lead the participants into agreeing with what I have come up with, so trying to be aware of the cultural, language, and personality differences was tricky. I had hoped that within these conversations, I would spark some new thoughts on dealing with the complexities of identity, social health, and being a minority. This proved to be difficult as Taiwan's society has brought its own complicated and nuanced circumstances to the participants. I feel like if I had interviewed Indigenous people further in their careers and cultural

journey, I may have been able to create new ideas and have a wider understanding of the journey of Taiwanese Indigenous people and their social health.



Chapter 5:

RESULTS



Relationship with Self

1. Consequences of Education Measures on Identity

a. Obtaining Legal Indigenous Status to Gain Eligibility of Education Measures

Before this year, 2024, Taiwanese Indigenous people were required to show their legal Indigenous status through their surname (Indigenous Peoples Status Act, 2024). A child's surname is typically inherited from the father in Taiwanese Han society. Participants with one Indigenous parent could confront difficulties in obtaining legal Indigenous identity due to a clash in cultural expectations and legal requirements. Participant 1, who has a strong Indigenous identity but only obtained legal Indigenous status before applying for university to utilize the educational measures, stated "I feel like what I think of myself and what's in the law, I'm the same identity. So, it's kind of a relief I don't need to explain things (Participant 1, in-depth interview, 3/17/2024)." Participant 1 acquired an Indigenous status after their father, who was half-Indigenous and half-Han, chose to adopt his mother's Indigenous name. Despite his initial desire to retain his father's name as the last son to do so, he made the change so that Participant 1 could benefit from the educational measures that would alleviate the financial responsibilities on him, the primary breadwinner of the family. Indigenous students and their families are sometimes burdened with decisions that can negatively impact them, whether culturally or psychologically, to appease the requirements of some policies.

b. Complex Upbringing Due to Migration Motivated by Education Opportunities

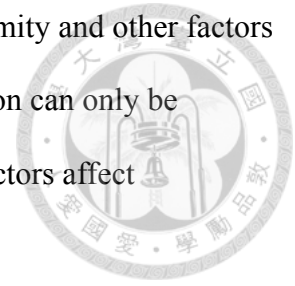
Educational opportunities for children, work opportunities of the parents, and the location of the family are major factors for where parents choose to raise their children. For Indigenous students, their backgrounds tend to be complex with moving multiple times specifically for better

education opportunities. This can mean moving outside the village for more financial opportunities for the parents and a better education for the children. Indigenous students then have backgrounds that are not typical for an Indigenous person who lives in their tribe or of an urban Han counterpart. For example, Participant 7 grew up with their grandparents in the village as a child but then moved to a bigger city for a better education for junior high school. Their family has royal status in their tribe, which they explained allowed them close access to cultural events as a child. Participant 7 describes themselves as a “special guest” who would sit next to their grandfather at the events. This experience of being included and sitting next to an influential person in the event without truly understanding it is why they considered themselves a guest rather than a participant. They explained that their family had a plan for them to eventually move out of the village, so they attended elementary school outside the village. By not attending school in the tribe, they then did not learn what they felt was necessary to “be Indigenous.” Participant 7 states:

I grew up with confusion. So, I...have an Indigenous, legal identity. But I’m very far from the tribe, so I have no right to attend the inner group in the tribe. Because I didn’t go to the tribe school. So I don’t have the right. I don’t have the connection with the inner circle in this tribe. (Participant 7, in-depth interview, 4/9/2024)

During elementary school, students learn how to be a part of society and learn many social rules and expectations in this setting. Participant 7 spent their childhood near their tribe but was not taught with the other children in the tribe. They then moved away from the tribe. Their remark highlights how confusing culture can be for a person to have an experience that is physically close but not fully immersed. Many Indigenous students have backgrounds where they live in the village for a certain period of time and then later on move to a more urbanized area. Since

Indigenous practices and events are conducted in the tribes, physical proximity and other factors greatly affect the feeling of cultural understanding and belonging. Confusion can only be expected when there is a common belief that culture is innate, but many factors affect understanding and embodying the different facets of culture.



c. Acculturation Effects on Indigenous Students in Han-Dominated Schools

Indigenous students, especially those living in urban areas, can experience the push and pull effects of growing up in a Han-dominated society. In Taiwanese society, it can seem that the majority have power over what being “Indigenous” means. For urban Indigenous students who are born and raised in the city, they may not fit the existing stereotypes and may be considered “not Indigenous enough”. This can mean their Indigeneity may not be acknowledged if they grow up in a Han-dominated environment. For urban Indigenous students who want to use education measures, this can cause constant stress in the school environment. Participant 5 states, “I recognize my Indigenous identity is closely related to the entrance exam...Because I think the affirmative action define my indigenous identity....That defines my whole life (Participant 5, in-depth interview, 3/27/2024).” Taiwan’s mainstream society places heavy expectations on students to excel in school. Taiwan’s education system is rooted in Confucian philosophies that prioritize hierarchical leadership. It is also influenced by the belief that “everything is of inferior quality; only education is good (You Zonghui, 2019).” This fosters intense competition as individuals strive for prestigious positions to attain power and respect. Positions that require more education are viewed as more prestigious, so test scores are used as the primary measure (Liu & Wei, 2023). These test scores are then used as a societal measurement of a person’s self-worth, so Indigenous students must try to adapt and excel.

2. Impact of Educational Measures on Confidence

a. Score Comparison and Competition

The stigma attached to using educational measures exists whether an Indigenous student uses it or not. This stigma is part of the stereotype that has been formed about Indigenous people in Taiwan. It is combined with a unique system in Taiwan where students know how their scores compare to their classmates. This awareness can fuel competition between one another or resentment if one knows someone got to the same place as them without having the same score. In Taiwan's education system, each school has an allotted percentage for the number of Indigenous students that can get into the school; therefore, Indigenous students only compete against each other. The majority of people in mainstream Taiwanese society do not have complete awareness of the conditions of the special education measures, especially when it comes to Indigenous students using them. It is common for Han Chinese students to believe that Indigenous students are competing against them and may take their spot in their chosen school. This lack of awareness can fuel discrimination and impact the relationships of Indigenous students and other classmates.

Suppose an Indigenous student uses the educational measure that allows them an increase in their score to get into a school. In that case, they and other students who know they are Indigenous will know their score did not originally qualify to enter that school. In Participant 5's case, they experienced discrimination from close friends when others found out they got into a more prestigious school than them:

Because I have some experience is that my best friend...say something discriminates against me. They think I didn't put in any effort but got the bonus. Your friends? Yes, and best friend...I have a feeling that I put in some effort, but no one sees that. Everyone just

sees. You got a bonus point. You don't have to study, and you can get to a better university or a better senior high school. (Participant 5, in-depth interview, 3/27/2024)

This kind of discrimination between classmates can create distance and or end relationships for Indigenous students.

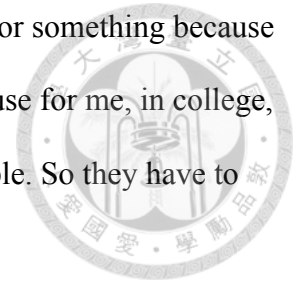


b. Internalization of Negative Beliefs due to Stigma on Education Measures

Then, if an Indigenous student struggles academically when they enter school, using the additional points may validate the existing stigma that Indigenous students are not smart or could decrease the confidence in the student since, in general, the additional points are given to students with the understanding that the school they get into is at a higher level than the scores they originally obtained. The academic gaps may be too wide for the student to shorten, especially if they internalize their situation where their classmates may perform better and believe they are not smart enough to be there. This was the case for Participant 8: “Oh, yeah, I’m here because of the affirmative action, so like, I kind of assume my classmates are better (Participant 8, in-depth interview, 4/8/2024).” Understanding how your scores compare to others and being the only person in that position can intensify negative thoughts in an academically rigorous environment.

In the same case, knowing how your scores compare to others can also negatively impact Indigenous students within their community. For example, if you are in a school with the same Indigenous students, you may be able to know how you compare to them and guess who could get into slots for particular schools. Participant 1 was able to get into a prestigious school in the language department but had to compete against other Indigenous students. Their original test score was not high enough to automatically be placed into the school. Participant 1’s ability to understand the intricacies of their enrollment affected their confidence:

When I first came into the college, I was kind of not that confident or something because I kind of feel like oh, because I got the extra because I could. Because for me, in college, some department will kind of open one, like position for these people. So they have to take one. (Participant 1, in-depth interview, 3/17/2024)

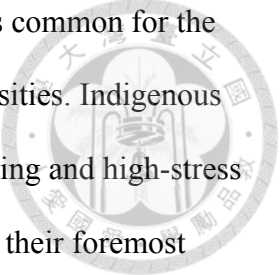


In this statement, they explain that their confidence decreased after understanding that they had to use the additional point to get into the program and that maybe their program had to accept an Indigenous student due to the policy. Since their overall score didn't qualify for acceptance in the first round, the second round entailed competing with other Indigenous students. They were then accepted through this method. Since their score was higher than the other students they competed against, they were accepted. Additionally, their low confidence did not last long since language skills can be proven in person, not just by test scores. The competition among Indigenous students is significantly more intense than in the broader society, as they often compete for a limited number of available seats. This dynamic can intensify competition among Indigenous classmates.

3. Intrinsic Pressure to Succeed

a. Individualized Pressure to Succeed in Han-Dominated School

Some Indigenous students attend Han-dominated schools from the start of their academic careers. Han-dominated schools and schools within Indigenous tribes run differently due to differences in resources, like the number of students and teachers. Success in Han-dominated schools and society is centered around students' test scores and obtaining white-collared jobs. The idea of success is not measured the same way in Indigenous culture and would differ according to the tribe. Taiwanese mainstream schools are not typically balanced with work and play, and students tend to study in school for most of their time. Usually, the educational



resources in schools in the tribe are less than in the more urban areas, so it is common for the Indigenous and Han-dominated school environments to be of different intensities. Indigenous students who attend Han-dominated schools can experience a more demanding and high-stress environment. As children, most are just preoccupied with school, and this is their foremost obligation. Indigenous students who attend a Han-dominated school experience a culture rupture where their school reality is different from their home reality (Zhenwei, 2021). They are forced to adapt to the expectations and values of their school and then come home to a different set of expectations and values. This stress can result in internalized pressure to succeed. Since school is typically a child's main priority, the dissonance between one's community and one's outside community may feel isolating, as it could narrow navigating the pressure only on oneself. To adapt and succeed in the Han-majority school system, where the Indigenous student may be the only one in their family or community who understands this, they may feel like they can only rely on themselves to succeed. Typically, the family is part of the high-pressure expectations of Taiwanese society as the families can help with their school work, enroll them in private academies, or obtain tutors. Failure to perform well academically may risk proving the stereotype that "Indigenous people are not as smart as their Han counterparts" to be true. This situation could result in a physical and mental disconnection between individuals and their Indigenous peers if they become occupied with studying and are unable to spend time together, just like Participant 6 has experienced:

Because every year, so many judge from the tribe members. Because when I was in high school, I really struggled in my studies. But I still live in the village. But I don't really have so much time to participate in their work. Like maybe every day we have to work at

night. But I have no time, so I just stay home and study. And then when I go to work, there are some sisters and brothers. (Participant 6, in-depth interview, 4/17/2024)

Although Participant 6 had a close-knit upbringing with their tribe, they still were susceptible to judgment as their priorities and lifestyle choices changed due to education. To prioritize mainstream societal expectations, such as excelling in a Han-dominated school, may also be risking an Indigenous student's sense of belonging.

b. Imposter Syndrome

Besides causing distance between others and oneself, high internalized pressure can also make someone highly critical of themselves, affecting self-esteem. Han-dominated society puts pressure on success through the formulaic path of education and white-collar professions. To find success in this mainstream society would mean meeting those expectations. This pressure is placed on all students, but the stigma and other factors that Indigenous students deal with can have a big impact:

Why I think I'm not good enough is that society impacts me. Because always if there is a number one in a class and they will have the number two. So why should I use this number one, number two to define whether a child is a good or... So, but my parents don't care the study score. So the pressure is from school, from teachers, or from classmates, not from my parents. So, I really thank my parents. They are not putting this pressure on me and my sister and brother also. (Participant 5, in-depth interview, 4/1/2024)

This quote from Participant 5 highlights the amount of damage that can be done by navigating the expectations of this society. They bring up the class rankings that dictate students' worthiness as "good" or "bad." The school system, including teachers and classmates, reinforces this logic.

4. *Effect of Education Measures on Revitalization and Reclaiming of One's Indigenous Identity*



a. Exploration of Culture After Obtaining Educational Measures

While there are various ways the education system and educational measures can negatively impact Indigenous students in Taiwan, one positive outcome was how these factors motivated participants to delve deeper into their Indigenous identity. As legal Indigenous identity is required to access the educational measures, some participants were consequently motivated to explore their Indigenous roots further upon achieving legal recognition as Indigenous by law. Some Indigenous students with one non-Indigenous parent may change their last name later in life to qualify for the education measures. This change in name and requirements, such as a language test, initiates curiosity like Participant 3 experienced:

The process of identifying with my Indigenous identity started when I was about to take my college entrance exam. Back then, there was a system of bonus points for Indigenous students on the exam. So, to get those points, I started teaching myself my Indigenous group's language. Gradually, I became interested in what it meant to be Paiwan. After that, it took me about 7 or 8 years to find out how to pronounce my Indigenous name and how to write it correctly. It felt like having my name was the first real step in my journey of self-identification. (Participant 3, in-depth interview, 3/20/2024)

The legal status of an Indigenous person can have a big impact on how they perceive themselves. For some Indigenous students who were not exposed to their Indigenous culture, it can start their identity journey.

b. Access to School Environments That Encourage Indigenous Identity

The university setting is also a factor in exploring one's Indigenous identity. Participants feel that National Taiwan University's environment is a freer place with resources to learn more about Indigenous culture. NTU has an Indigenous resource center, an anti-discrimination club, an Indigenous resource center club, and an Indigenous club. Also, due to NTU's prestige, it can bring minority groups, such as Indigenous students, closer due to the tension that comes from being in a stigmatized group. For example, last year in 2023, the banner created that discriminated against Indigenous students at NTU for using additional points fueled the creation of an anti-discrimination group and other social activism on campus. Indigenous students like Participant 4 were motivated to join more events and meetings held by the Indigenous club after this:

For me, the turning point was last year's "Indigenous Banner Incident". Before that, I wasn't particularly interested in my Indigenous identity. After the incident, I began to develop an interest in things related to this ethnic group, and I tried to gain access to events related to the group. I would say it was all because of the Banner Incident. The whole event and the following signage events took place in front of the Administration Building. It was my first time attending events to appeal for my own rights. That made me feel that I was not alone to face all these problems and challenges. It was then that I started to approach this kind of community. (Participant 4, in-depth interview, 4/2/2024)

Minority groups that face discrimination together can create a sense of community and can be a source of empowerment. The banner incident was significant for the Indigenous community at NTU. NTU may be a target for discrimination against Indigenous students, but the community created to counteract this issue is unique and has created a safe space for Indigenous students.

c. Culturally Aware School Departments

The department students study in can also be a significant factor for an Indigenous student. Participants mostly studied social work, anthropology, and sociology. The students and professors should be more socially aware and sensitive in these departments. These departments may provide students with a safe and encouraging space to explore their identities. The skills taught within these majors can also relate to exploring and deepening their identities. Participant 5 learned tools and skills that led them to pursue a thesis based on their journey with their Indigenous identity. The classes and professors played a crucial role in guiding them on this journey that joins their academic and personal lives together:

So later I got into the social work graduate school. The training in social work graduate school. How to think, how to find a question, find a problem and how to express. These skills helped me to write my journey of identity. self-identity or Indigenous identity. And help me to dig out what experience impact me to feel I am a fake indigenous people. To feel what experience impacted me to think I am not qualified to be some... to be Indigenous people. (Participant 5, in-depth interview, 4/1/2024)

Indigenous students who enroll in departments focusing on marginalized communities can ultimately benefit and gain empowerment through the academic process. As they engage in classes and experiences exploring the complexities of vulnerable groups, it is natural for students to develop curiosity about themselves and their identities.

Relationship with Intimate Connections

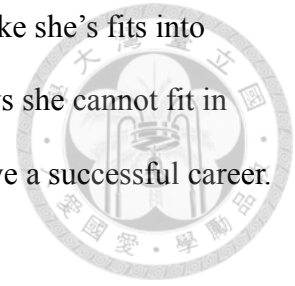
1. Impact of Parental Support on Indigenous Identity and Connections

a. Indigenous Parent Discouragement

Many Indigenous parents have moved to urban areas in Taiwan, which affects their connection with their family members and culture. This can influence their perspective on their tribe and tribe members and how much they teach or expose their children to their tribe's culture. In this study, most participants have a non-Indigenous parent or a parent who has a non-Indigenous parent. While Taiwan is generally a patrilineal society, the social structure in Taiwanese Indigenous culture varies depending on the specific tribe. All the participants' tribal cultures are patrilineal, so if their non-Indigenous parent is the father, it is more likely that Han culture would be the dominating culture within the house. The participants raised in a single-parent home were raised by their Indigenous mother, who had a distant connection with their Indigenous family and tribe.

According to my findings, some Indigenous parents discouraged participants from making Indigenous friends or getting close to Indigenous friend groups. Some parents did not teach or expose participants to the cultural practices of their tribe, including language, members, or events from their tribes. Many parents also struggle with mental health issues or deal with some trauma, which may impact their relationships with the participants and society. Much of a child's cultural identity is learned through the lifestyle and environment in the household. Urban Indigenous students are typically physically distant from their family's tribe and, therefore, learn most of their tribal background from their family. Participant 7's mother, who has royal status within her tribe, did not like the expectations placed upon her and left her village for Japan while Participant 7 was in elementary school. Participant 7 describes their mother as someone who is successful but does not have a community. How one's caretaker behaves can influence their behavior, for example:

Yeah. She thinks she's like a lone wolf in society, and she can act like she's fits into mainstream society but deeply in her heart. she's still like she knows she cannot fit in mainstream society, but she will pretend that she can so she can have a successful career.



(In response to: Can you describe your social life?) Yeah I have a group of friends. But they don't live here. And I do stuff just with myself. I would like go to the coffee shop with myself and my laptop, and I would sit like whole afternoon to do some research or just watch Netflix myself. (Participant 7, in-depth interview, 4/9/2024)

Like their mother, they consider themselves a “lone wolf.” When you are not close to a community, the problems of others can feel far away from you. Participant 7's mother teaches them that they should not feel that Indigenous issues should be their burden.

She told me that the Indigenous identity is just a part of your life. So you don't have to really stick with it. You can be others. Because my major is anthropology. And everyone thinks I will one day go back to my tribe and do research. But my mom told me that I don't have to have the burden to do research on my own culture. I can do whatever I want. She thinks this identity is my growing background but not the lifestyle I have to follow. (Participant 7, in-depth interview, 4/9/2024)

This kind of teaching does not encourage connecting with Indigenous culture. Since the Indigenous communities are Taiwan's biggest minority group, their issues are at the forefront of their identity. The lack of support does not necessarily mean discouragement, but with already a weak Indigenous identity, a parent's perspective can have a big impact. Similar to the example earlier, high expectations can be placed on no tribe members of noble status. Participant 2's father is Indigenous but chose not to teach them their tribe's language or other cultural things.

Their father returned to the tribe as a “failure” as he could not be as financially successful as expected. There is an expectation for tribe members who leave for the city that they should return with certain expectations met. Participant 2 grew up in the tribe, but the father expected them to learn about their culture from their teachers and community. Additionally, the father did not have a close relationship with his family or the community. These high expectations put pressure and stress on the father because the family’s personal story and his return to the village hurt the family’s reputation. The unwillingness to teach the tribe’s cultural duties and expectations contributed to Participant 2’s confusion about their identity:

I don’t feel comfortable in the tribe. I would say that my dad has built good relationships with the older generation, but he still feels uncomfortable due to his identity, and the pressure from my grandpa. My grandpa has high expectations for my dad. Thus, it is hard for my dad in the tribe. It is hard for him because of his identification of himself, and because the tribe holds high expectations for members who left the tribe to develop their own careers. He left the tribe really early, during his high school period. He was also involved in gang activities. So, when he returned, the tribe thought that he had gone off the rails. He felt uncomfortable because people would criticize his gang background and would think he was not qualified for his position at the aristocratic level in our tribe. People like my dad are expected to behave, but he has done it all...Anyways, his doings have disappointed the older generation in the tribe. (Participant 2, in-depth interview, 4/10/2024)

Although they grew up in their tribe, they did not have a close relationship with their Indigenous family members, and the relationships within their village were impacted by their father’s relationship with the tribe. An Indigenous parent may not be aware of the power they have in

their children's relationship with their Indigeneity or their connection with their Indigenous community and may be neutral in their support like the example shown above. This neutral position can stem from various reasons unrelated to their children, but their relationships with family and community can open or close opportunities for their children.



Another way that Indigenous parents can discourage their children from cultivating Indigenous relationships is by warning against drinking with Indigenous peers. Due to the stereotype that “Indigenous people are good at drinking,” some Indigenous parents warn their children not to befriend other Indigenous people. This can confuse and affect how Indigenous students perceive and interact with other Indigenous peers. Participant 4 remembers:

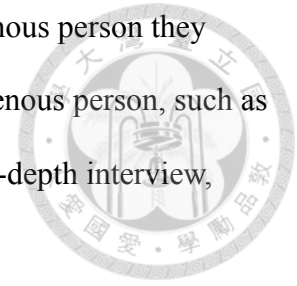
When I was young, oftentimes I would see some news about Indigenous people on TV.

Because of the news, I used to say that I don't want to be an Indigenous person. My mom then replied, “Ok, then we can abandon this identity when you grow up.” It was until a few years later, when I grew up a bit, that my mom told me not to get close to Indigenous people, probably because they drink. (Participant 4, in-depth interview, 4/2/2024)

In Participant 4's case, their mother is Indigenous, and their father is Han, and they do not look stereotypically Indigenous. Since their Indigenous identity is not always recognizable by the majority, it allows them the choice to identify themselves. Their mother discourages them from pursuing close relationships with other Indigenous people and also accepts and gives permission for Participant 4 to disregard their identity out of fear of being associated with Indigenous people. This situation confirms what mainstream media perpetuates about Indigenous people in the eyes of Participant 4.

I would say that growing up I have this thought that I may be discriminated against because I am an indigenous person. Appearance-wise, I don't look like an indigenous

person, but I am afraid that when people notice that I am an indigenous person they would criticize me for enjoying the benefits or bonuses as an indigenous person, such as getting extra points on the college entrance exam. (Participant 4, in-depth interview, 4/2/2024)



Parents can influence how their children see the world and themselves. Here, Participant 4 talks about their fear of others knowing their identity. This will affect their relationship with themselves and also their potential relationships.

2. Support systems in the School

The role of a support system within the school system can impact how a student navigates their academic career and personal life. Using the additional points from the educational measures, they are more at risk of struggling psychologically, socially, and/or academically than their Han counterparts on top of normal adjusting to joining university. Indigenous students are also likely to be one of the only indigenous people in their higher education programs. This can mean a lack of support within the school system. Participant 5 and Participant 6 had very supportive and mentor-like professors who profoundly impacted their academic and personal lives. Participant 6 states:

I can get the PhD in a hurry and go back to be her peer. Like, we can work together, yeah, we can push this thing outside. So yeah, she has this expectation, I have this expectation too. Yeah, she's really, really impactful, have an affect on me. Because she made me believe that I could do that. (Participant 5, in-depth interview, 4/17/2024)

Here, Participant 6 shares how their professor has motivated them to pursue a PhD, and not only that, but also to pursue an international PhD. This motivation is supplied with the expectation that Participant 6 can get this higher education to become their equal in the academic field. The

level of confidence a professor instills in a student is impactful and represents the “effect” that Participant 6 alludes to as crucial in shaping a person’s life path. Participant 5 also has a similar relationship with their professor. When Participant 5 dealt with her personal situation, which eventually affected her academic obligations, they could be honest with their professor and form a close bond. Their professor becomes Participant 5’s main confidant in dealing with their personal situations.

And my parents are also able to help me, my friends, but I will choose something to talk to my family because they worry about me a lot. So I will tell them my situation, my mind statement and, and tell them, don’t worry about me because if I have something I will talk to you. And to my friends, I will tidy up my thoughts, then talk the outcomes to my friends. And my friends will support me, like emotion support but only to my professor, I will put many, much garbage to her. (Participant 5, in-depth interview, 4/17/2024)

Here, Participant 5 discusses how vital their professor is in processing and managing her issues. This professor has allowed them to discuss all issues, giving them a safe space to grow personally and, thus, the ability to manage their academics more smoothly. Both Participant 5 and Participant 6 have close relationships within their departments.

This kind of teacher and student support is also important during the younger years. The teenage years are when one’s identity is formed, and social interactions can be intense and profound. Identity can be especially vulnerable for Indigenous students in Taiwan. Factors such as the low percentage of indigenous people in Taiwan, the differing physical and cultural differences between tribes, and the high commonality of having a mixed culture household of Han and Indigenous are some that can impact one’s identity. A common experience is that

Indigenous students who are born and raised in the tribe are unaware they are a minority in Taiwan until they start attending a Han-dominated school. Navigating this change is a big adjustment, especially when faced alone. Participant 10 moved outside their tribe after elementary school and found themselves as the only Indigenous student in their class. On the first day, a Han classmate called them the derogatory word meant for Indigenous people in Taiwan. On the first day of their new school and new environment, they learned they were different, impacting how they moved afterward. They decided not to draw attention to themselves and their indigeneity until they took a class specific to their Indigenous language with an Indigenous teacher:

Participant 10: After the second year that I started taking classes of my language, I started following my culture and to see like how beautiful it is. I should never be ashamed of being Indigenous.

Interviewer: Where did you get that from your teachers your classmates are just within yourself?

Participant 10: The teacher of my language class, the Binawanan (Paiwan's tribe language) teacher, because he also teaches those classes in like a big city and he told us that he's seen many many students acting like they don't want to admit that they're Indigenous, like they're trying to hide it. (Participant 10, in-depth interview, 5/4/2024)

Cultural-specific classes such as language classes can be empowering for Indigenous students. This teacher took the opportunity to empower his students after seeing how many students try to

hide their identities. For Participant 10, this gave them a protective barrier in navigating school from then forward.

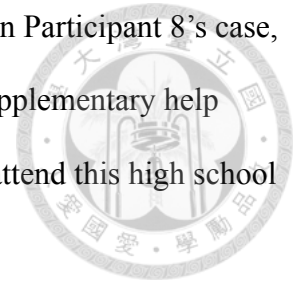
Conversely, the absence of a support system can result in detachment from one's environment or tension within it. In many cases, schools are not equipped with resources to help those using the educational measures; therefore, students are meant to fill the gap independently. Teachers also play an important role in mitigating the tension that may arise between Indigenous students and other Taiwanese classmates. For Participant 6, they experienced a situation where their teacher did the opposite when a fight arose between them and their Han classmates over a Han classmate bullying their fellow Indigenous classmate for having a lower score than the school average:

She just improperly told us they are you guys, you are so tired. That's because of an exam-oriented society. You are so tired. Why? She's oblivious. We are the Indigenous people, be bully right? Yeah. But. She blames it on the exam, not the bully and she said, all of you are victims. (Participant 6, in-depth interview, 4/17/2024)

In this situation, the teacher did not acknowledge the bullying that was taking place and how the Indigenous students were victimized in the situation. This made Participant 6 feel a lack of support and understanding from their teacher.

For Participant 8, they dropped out of high school for a year because they felt the gap was not manageable. Participant 8 went to the top high school in their area using educational measures. Without using the additional points, Participant 8 would have gotten into the second-best high school, meaning their scores were already quite high. Participant 8 had this score without additional educational efforts, such as attending cram school. They stated they didn't typically study and were not serious about education. Participant 8 states that this high

school was difficult for everyone and was not the only one that struggled. In Participant 8's case, although naturally academically smart, they did not have the skillsets or supplementary help navigating this new territory. On top of that, they had moved to a dorm to attend this high school in the city.



I'm away from my family and I'm not the greatest in the school that basically everyone ends up going to if not NTU, they'll be abroad somewhere. So like yeah, but like so being a low-grade student is kind of stressful but looking back I know that's because I gave up too quickly too soon and decided to join a club. (Participant 8, in-depth interview, 4/8/2024)

The stress that Participant 8 endured attending this high school, in combination with living on their own, led them to drop out of high school.

3. *Quieter Social Lives*

a. *Multiple Stigmatized Identities*

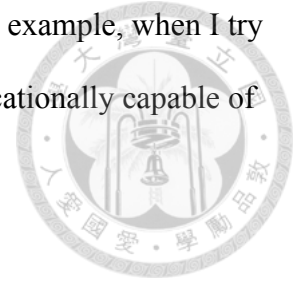
Participants who have other multiple stigmatized identities struggle with close connections.

Participant 2 shares their experience as a gay, trans, Indigenous person and the difficulties of having a support system:

Interviewer: Do you have anyone in particular to talk about this?

No. If I am trying to address some cultural issues, then talking to Indigenous friends would help. But I don't have a particular person to talk to about the things that we are discussing now. For one reason, everyone's busy because they are the typical office workers, and they won't read my text when they are off. So, to address this problem, I need to go over everything by myself and try to digest it on my own. When it comes to something more complicated, not limited to Indigenous matters, such as something more

private, my Indigenous friends won't be able to understand me. For example, when I try to discuss topics like education, my Indigenous friends are not educationally capable of discussing this with me, let alone addressing problems with me.



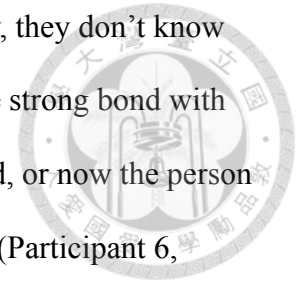
Yeah, we're talking about the "Trans" issue. Not everyone can understand what we are talking about.

Yes, even if I talk to people that have similar identities with me, they might not be as helpful as people expected them to be, because we come from different backgrounds. They might not understand my situation when it comes to relationship issues. So I think I don't have anyone in particular to talk about this, because my Indigenous friends are busy and they may not be able to understand what I am saying. (Participant 2, in-depth interview, 4/10/2024)

The multiple stigmatized identities make their issues very particular, leading them to believe it is challenging to relate to or be understood by others. Their multi-layered and complex issues can be hard to articulate and feel fully understood. Participant 2 discusses how their intersectional identities become an issue as they navigate mainstream society as Indigenous people, yet their support network may not be as intersectional or diverse. Participant 6 reiterates this notion as their best friends are lifelong friends from their tribe but understand that they cannot fully understand their experiences as they learn and grow in a mainstream urban area:

They have not really lived in another county. Yeah, before, yeah. And they don't know what college is like. So if I want to talk about some issue, actually, I don't really talk to them. But I really love them, because we grow up together. But they cannot fully

understand me. They just like my family, you know, like my family, they don't know what I'm doing, they cannot understand, but I love them. I have the strong bond with them. But still, they are not the one I can talk to deeper. close friend, or now the person who can really speak a lot, I think, talk a lot, I think it's my friend. (Participant 6, in-depth interview, 4/17/2024)



It can be an isolating experience for an Indigenous person to navigate mainstream society as they are a minority in a minority community. As their journey becomes more unique, they become in between communities as these communities are distinct.

b. Shift in Social Environment

Participants were also found to have experienced a social shift, where they have become less social as they have grown older and do not feel inclined to pursue new connections. Many participants have few close connections and tend to do most things independently:

Maybe just like, hang out maybe like once. Hang out with friends maybe like once in a month or a couple of months. I'm more like, because my life is more like just school, work, school, work...I was never really like looking for a community... I'm not a social butterfly or anything, but when I'm with like my friends, let's say those friends from the nursing college, I'm cool, but I'm also cool with being alone. I don't need to be with friends all the time. (Participant 10, in-depth interview, 5/4/2024)

Participant 10 has a neutral attitude towards their social life, commenting that it doesn't matter if they have company. This sentiment is shared by other participants and can indicate how their experiences have brought them more inward and less social. As one encounters life complexities and learns more about oneself, spending more time alone can be a normal experience. As Indigenous students navigate through mainstream society, they may face more challenges than

the average Taiwanese student, making this experience more common among Indigenous students.



Relationship with Casual Connections

1. Comfortability in Han-Dominated Society

a. Motivation to not Fulfill Stereotypes

Indigenous students are confronted with stereotypes, whether through in-person microaggressions or mainstream media. It is a consequence of being a minority and has greatly influenced where and who one feels safe. As previously stated before, some stereotypes influence the decision-making of Indigenous students through the fear of reinforcing negative stereotypes such as drinking too much or not being as smart. There are even stereotypes that the majority may not perceive to be negative, such as “Indigenous people are good at singing,” which can affect exploring oneself fully. From an early age, Participant 8 enjoyed performing and singing for other people. They were introduced to musical instruments by their father, who made them by hand. It wasn’t until high school, when they struggled with school, that they decided to lean into music. They did this to feel like they were still “good” at something even though they had always been reluctant to pursue music so they didn’t reinforce the stereotype:

Pretty early, like in Elementary school, are still willing to sing in front of people but like I don’t like People say hey sing a song like you’re a great singer. I don’t know because looking back, I’ll say it’s because I don’t want to be the one that um... I think it’s because like I don’t want to be the person that enforces the stereotype. (Participant 8, in-depth interview, 4/8/2024)

Indigenous students may choose not to fully engage in interests or curiosities because they fear they may reinforce some stereotype. The fear of being exactly like the image Taiwanese society paints of an Indigenous person can lead to Indigenous people behaving in what they believe is socially acceptable and not how they truly wish. Indigenous students have to learn how to maneuver through the spaces, and some who do not look stereotypically Indigenous may choose not to mention they are Indigenous. Participant 7 divulges:

No, I don't think I have to hide my Indigeneity. But actually, I don't think I have to like introduce myself with this information. I mean, I don't know why, but back in junior high or senior high, we didn't care if you were Indigenous, actually....Or we would ask if the appearance was very typical or very special. We will ask, but it won't be like if I want to be friend with you or some identity is not that important in my junior high and senior high school. (Participant 7, in-depth interview, 4/9/2024)

b. Fear of Being Oneself in Han-dominated Society

Indigenous students' spaces may not feel safe showing their full selves. There is fear that even when Han people are nice to them, when they let their guard down, they may show their true feelings about Indigenous people. Another fear is that maybe a particular person who is Han may be safe but not their community. These factors may make it difficult for an Indigenous person to feel a sense of community or comradery in a Han-dominated society.

But I think the things happened because you guys always go out with me. But when you drunk, when you maybe have too much fun, so you forget, you have to remain your politics right. So I always meet these things because we are NTU students. We are the people who get higher education. I think it's really bad, you know, because everyone we

know we have to be ethnic friendly. But you can tell, you can find out they are inside.

They are still discrimination. (Participant 6, in-depth interview, 4/17/2024)

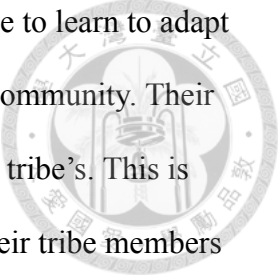
This can affect how you show up in an academic and professional environment. When asked about needing a community, Participant 10 explained:

Not really. No, maybe, maybe like back in nursing colleges, of course, like, you know, students or like teenagers, you always trying to fit in the group that you don't want to be that kind of weirdo, weird kid that's not got invited to any party or any birthday.

Maybe when I was like younger, like in teens, yes, but after, you know, working for like six years, I, I am more like a realist. It's fine. Like, you know, because everybody, you know, after you graduate or you grow up, you got to, everybody's got to be busy with their own life. So I guess that's just those things that you get, you get used to it of being alone. You get used to it for not looking for coming in. Even at work, like I can talk, I can be cool with coworkers, but I never share any privacy about my life with them. Never. I never exchange like my, like maybe just like line contact, but I never, like, you know, let them know about my social media things like Instagram or Facebook. (Participant 10, in-depth interview, 5/4/2024)

Participant 10 shares that as they have grown older, they have accepted that people are busy and become used to being alone. They maintain a professional relationship with their colleagues and do not share their social media in their workplace.

2. Sense of Belonging within Indigenous Community



Indigenous students who pursue their studies in a Han education system have to learn to adapt and thrive, which can create a gap between themselves and the Indigenous community. Their values adapt to fit mainstream society's values, which could clash with their tribe's. This is common for urbanized Indigenous students who live outside their tribes. Their tribe members perceive them as outsiders. On the other hand, they may perceive themselves as outsiders if they have internalized the lack of exposure and understanding of their tribe's culture. How individuals perceive themselves in their surroundings will influence their willingness to interact with those around them. How their surroundings perceive them also holds the potential to impact their self-perception. For Participant 6, Participant 1, and Participant 10, their tribes perceive them to be different from the rest. Since none of them live in the tribe any longer, their tribe members either make jokes or comments about how they are different. The differences can be compared to being more city-like but still acknowledge a gap between the tribe members and the participants. Acknowledging differences between a community and individuals creates tension and room for doubt. Doubt of identity and, thus, doubt of community. A few years ago, Participant 10 had a conversation where someone from their tribe told them they were an outsider:

I do have not a fight but a small argument about this that I might not know much culture of how they were because they were spending their whole life there. But I am willing to learn, but when getting to a little argument that there's a person that he told me like, you don't know anything about this, so like just be quiet. I was like, okay, I might not know as much as you, but I am learning and if I did something wrong, teach me not scold me, not to say something like that, I am from this tribe. And then they told me, like, you are an outsider... They just make me feel really bad, like sometimes I do question, at that time I do question, am I really strong, like you don't feel strong, my identity?



Interviewer: When was this?

That was a couple of years ago, maybe 3,4 years ago, and there would be like, where do you belong, do you belong to the Han, or do you belong here, belong to Taiwan, like that. And there are some movies about that, like, they, I don't know why, but they would see the Indigenous people that, if they went outside to study, where they study, work, and they say, because you've been there too long, they would always feel like you're not one of us. If you love your culture, you should stay in the tribe. But that's not how I think.

(Participant 10, in-depth interview, 5/4/2024)

Participant 10 has a strong sense of identity, but incidents like that can lead them to question themselves and doubt the strength of their identity. This questioning of culture is rarely encountered within the majority culture.

Indigenous students can also internalize what indigeneity means to them if they grew up in an urbanized area or left their tribe early. What indigeneity differs from person to person and can be heavily influenced by what the majority believes is "Indigenous." Many of these things have been significantly impacted by Taiwan's colonial past. Participant 5 attempted to join the Indigenous student club when they joined the university to find themselves overwhelmed and anxious once they met their fellow club members:

It's the bad thing. I am nervous. I want to be some kind of Indigenous people, but I can't talk in my tribe's language. I can't dance like that. I don't have the experience with the tribe life. I think I am a fake Indigenous person. But I think my sister and my brother

never thought that they can be Indigenous people. (Participant 5, in-depth interview, 3/27/2024)

For Participant 5, they believed that a “real Indigenous” person is someone who can speak the language, dance, and have tribe experience. It didn’t matter that they had two Indigenous parents.

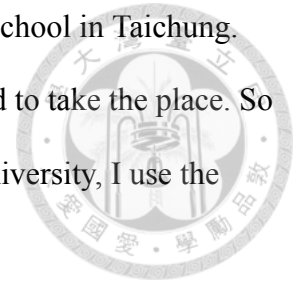
3. Perception of Special Education Measures

Participants learn about educational measures such as additional points from their teachers in school. They are told that these educational measures are due to Taiwan’s colonial history and that, as an Indigenous person, they have the right to use them. These special educational measures are thus reparations for the damage inflicted on the Indigenous communities in Taiwan. The controversies and stigma that follow this policy are significant to the experiences of an Indigenous student. It can affect how Indigenous students see their worth in society because it affects how society sees Indigenous people. Some participants believe that educational measures are unnecessary and that another form of reparations is needed. Due to how the educational measures are set up, Indigenous students compete with one another. Indigenous students from urban areas versus the tribal areas have different resources; therefore, urban Indigenous students are more likely to benefit from the educational measures since the schools have limited seats. Participant 7 opted out of the educational measures to enter high school so that they wouldn’t take the place of another Indigenous person:

I think I just, cause if you use it, you will take the position.

Interviewer: What’s the position?

So maybe 12, 12 Indigenous people you can get into the best high school in Taichung. But if you apply, so I will take one. And I don't, I don't think I need to take the place. So yeah. Think somebody...will need it more. But when I apply for university, I use the affirmative action. Cause I really want to get into this university.



I know some because my senior high is like the best high school in town and some urban Indigenous people will use the affirmative action to get into like medical school. But like their grade is already getting to like another medical school but they want you to attend to the best medical school. So they use the affirmative action but it will like push another village Indigenous students to this program. (Participant 7, in-depth interview, 4/9/2024)

Participant 10 also opted out of using educational measures throughout their academic career. They do not think it's necessary and want to show that Indigenous students don't need to use this policy to succeed. They stated that they do not need to go to a top university but rather just to receive the education they want.

Interviewer: Do you feel like your differences of opinion about Indigenous issues put you closer or further away from your identity or like the community?

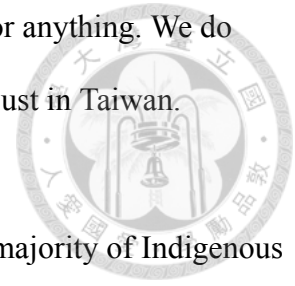
I feel stronger for my identity, but I feel... farther from the community. I do feel that, because like I said, like most of them, they don't agree with that.

Especially when I mentioned, when we talk about the bonus, they'd be like, why would you think they have to remove the thirty-five percent? We deserve that. I'm like, yeah, we do deserve the government giving us some benefits. We do, because they took our lands

and we, we're like you, like everybody said, we don't have power or anything. We do deserve, like indigenous people in Taiwan, we do deserve, and not just in Taiwan.

(Participant 10, in-depth interview, 5/4/2024)

Here, their perspective on the special education measures differs from the majority of Indigenous people they discuss with, which has led to feelings of alienation. Conflicting opinions on a sensitive subject like this can impact relationships.



Chapter 6: DISCUSSION



Conceptualization of Social Health

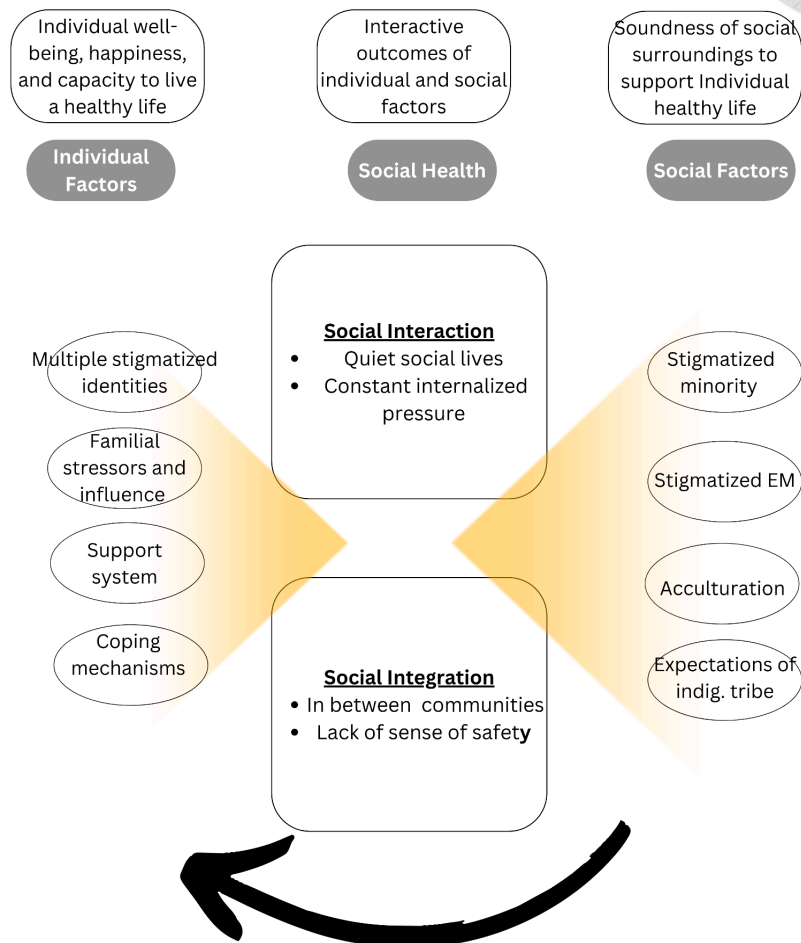


Figure 4. (Made by author) Indigenous students' social and individual factors of social health adapted from the social health model created by [Cho et al. \(2020\)](#) in Figure 2.

The model shown by [Cho et al. \(2020\)](#) adapted for this study is shown in Figure 4. Participants in this study demonstrated that social factors, such as belonging to a stigmatized

minority, engaging with stigmatized educational measures, acculturating to mainstream Han society, and meeting the expectations of their Indigenous tribe, significantly influence their interactions and integration within society. These social factors are significant barriers when navigating interpersonal relationships and can affect individuals personally. Individual factors, including possessing multiple stigmatized identities, familial stressors and influences, accessing support systems, and utilizing coping mechanisms, were observed to impact participants' social interactions. All of these personal factors can be influenced by uncontrollable societal barriers from the historical trauma and current environment living as an Indigenous person in Taiwan. They may cause or influence some of these factors. Both kinds of determinants were crucial in shaping social interactions and the participants' sense of genuine social integration.

The original model has two arrows going from individual to social factors and vice versa, indicating that they impact one another. From this research, social factors can influence individual factors (physical and mental determinants). For example, being a stigmatized minority may be the reason for familial stressors and influence, such as an individual's parents warning their children against being close to other Indigenous children. On the other hand, from the research findings, individual factors cannot be said to influence social factors.

Determinants of Social Health

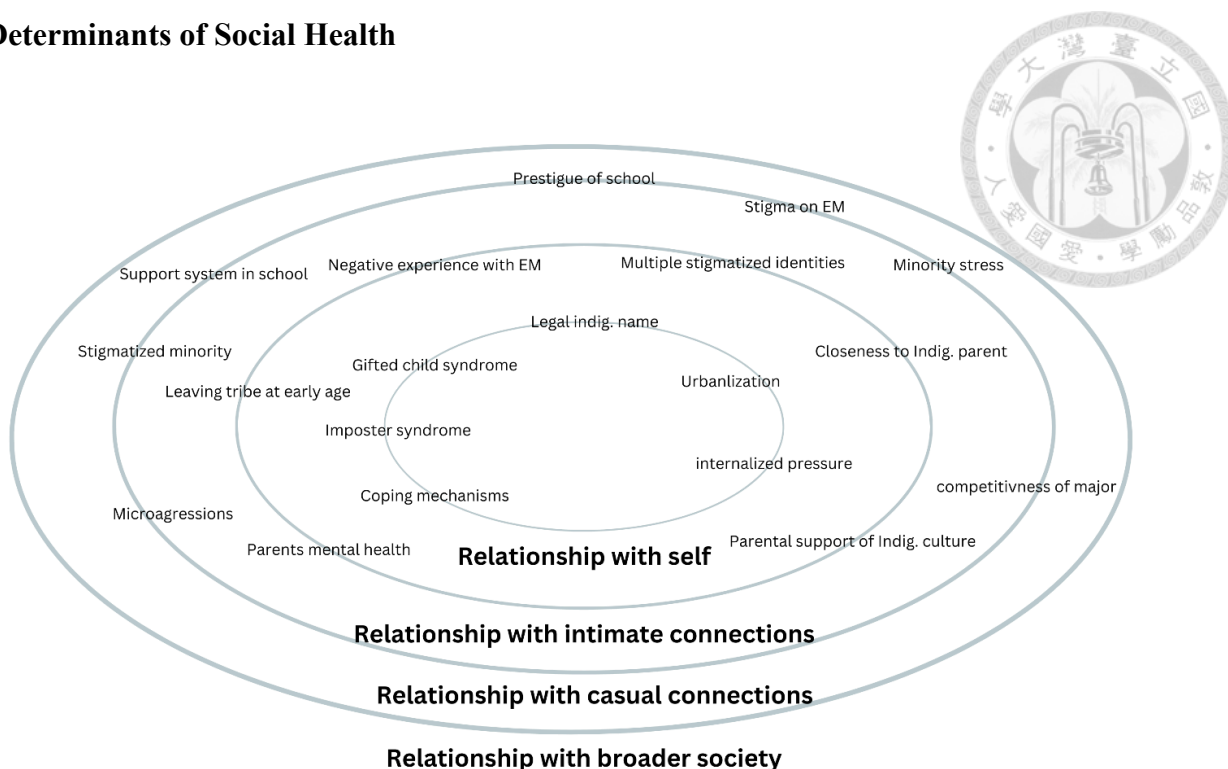


Figure 5. (Made by author) Common factors that impacted participants' relationships adapted from the socio-economic model shown in Figure by Waterworth et al. (2015).

Figure 5 uses a similar approach as the socio-economic model that theorizes that factors beyond an individual's control contribute greatly to their health. Factors are divided into individual factors, intimate social factors, casual social factors, and broader societal factors. In this study, the factors discussed can also be divided according to similar connections. Figure 5 shows the common factors that affect each relationship discussed between this study's participants. These factors can be interchanged and can be said to affect multiple kinds of relationships. Since the relationship with broader society can be abstract and broad, this model can be approached by using it to observe how one's relationship with self, intimate connections, and casual connections can all affect the individual's sense of belonging to broader society. The relationship starting

from the inner circle can significantly influence the relationship one step further from it. This means that the relationship with oneself can impact intimate relationships, affecting casual relationships and, ultimately, the relationship with broader society.



Definition of Social Health

What is the impact of special educational measures on the social health of Indigenous students? This is the central question that our research aims to answer. To understand this, we need to define social health. From the findings of this study and Cho et al.'s (2020) conceptualization of social health, social health can be seen as establishing and nurturing interpersonal relationships to form a social network and support system. These interpersonal relationships start with the relationship with oneself and then extend outward. A strong sense of social well-being includes feeling secure in relationships, maintaining existing connections, and having the ability to form new ones.

Specifically, when looking at the findings of this research, feeling confident in one's self-identity, feeling understood in one's most intimate relationships, existing within some kind of group, and feeling comfortable in existing and new spaces made up of different combinations of people in the society are important factors in a healthy social health. Social wellbeing only looks at an individual's relationships, but social health looks at the whole picture. Belonging to some kind of group is a major key to social health as it considers people's social connections. An individual can have strong relationships, but the sense of social integration is not truly there if they are all individual relationships. Therefore, an individual must have some sense of group belonging. The sense of belonging within a group requires being oneself and being understood, respected, and cared for. This leads to a sense of safety and is the difference between feeling integrated.

Thus, social health can be visualized by considering one's relationship with oneself, intimate connections, casual connections, and broader society. The quality of the relationship with oneself can greatly influence close connections, which in turn can affect casual connections. These interconnected relationships can then shape an individual's perception of themselves within society and influence their willingness to engage with it. By focusing on the impact of special educational measures, we can gain a deeper understanding of how these measures can either support or hinder the social health of Indigenous students.

Cultural Identity Axis

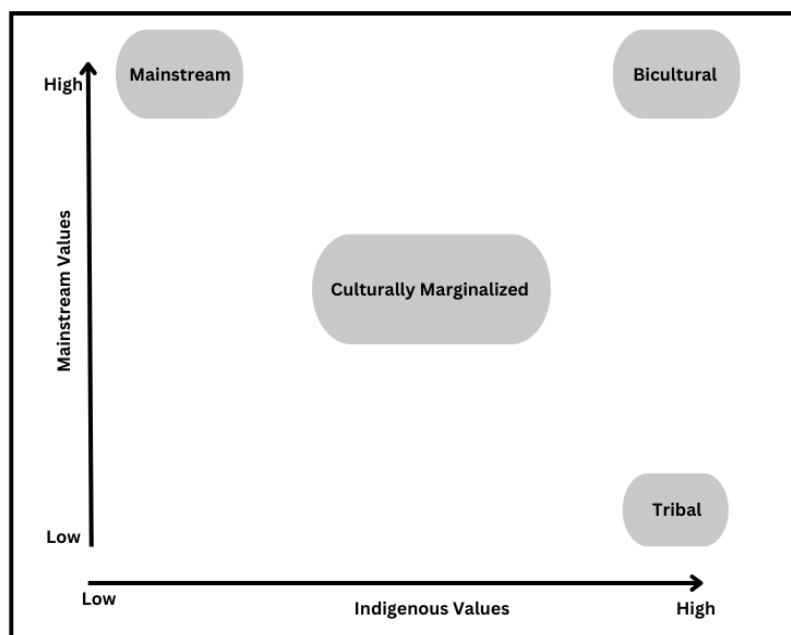


Figure 6. (Made by author) Adaptation of the cultural identity axis created by Cheng & Jacob (2008) to show the different cultural identities of Indigenous students depending on their mainstream and Indigenous values.



The model created by Cheng & Jacob (2008) in Figure 3 divides Indigenous students into four cultural identities depending on their exposure to mainstream and Indigenous culture. Looking at the findings from this study, it is difficult to properly put participants into one identity as they are in their early to middle twenties and have explored their identities further than the participants in Cheng & Jacob's (2008) study. Instead, it can be used to see how their identities move as they dive deeper into their cultural identities. Figure 6 is an adaptation of Figure 3, which uses the same labels for the different identities but uses Indigenous and Mainstream values instead of mainstream and tribal cultural exposure. This allows us to see identity as dynamic and flexible because of the continuous movement of something as abstract and personal as identity. It also allows the individual more power in their identity as exposure to certain aspects is not in their control; therefore, how someone adheres to mainstream or indigenous values can be a better understanding of the identity they currently have. Mainstream identity is on the far top left, indicating a person has only mainstream values and no Indigenous values. Bicultural identity is on the far top right, indicating a person has strong mainstream and Indigenous values. If a person has strong Indigenous values but weak mainstream values, then they would be closer to tribal identity, which is the far bottom right. Everything in the middle of those extremes would be considered a culturally marginalized identity.

This model shows how dynamic identity formation is and the intricacies at play. In support of Cheng & Jacob's (2008) conclusion, parents or caregivers play a major role in identity formation, and the strength of their cultural identity is crucial. Participants with parents with

weak connections to their tribe and Indigenous family did not support the participants in discovering and gaining confidence with their Indigenous identity. If an individual has a weak foundation of their identity growing up, going to university where their environment changes and exposes them to diverse people and diverse settings can start disrupting the identity they grew up with. Using educational measures can also be another major disruptor, whether they have to intentionally learn their tribe's language to obtain the language certificate or change their last name to qualify for the educational measure. This discovery period can be ongoing, and the environment and society around them will play a big role.

Although this model was created using participants from the US and Taiwan, it uses factors such as frequency of cultural events and speaking the language at home, which doesn't consider the uniqueness and historical trauma of the tribes in Taiwan. Some tribes do not have many cultural events, such as the Atayal, which do not celebrate the harvest festival. Then, due to colonial rule, Indigenous people were prosecuted if they were to speak their language during the "promotion of Mandarin movement" in 1946 (Ciwang Teyra et al., 2022). Due to historical trauma and acculturation, it is common for Mandarin to be the main spoken language in Indigenous peoples' homes. This is not to say that Indigenous people do not use this as a measure of their own Indigeneity. Still, it is important for Taiwanese society to collectively rethink what Indigenous means in today's society, fully considering the uniqueness of each Indigenous tribe, the historical trauma, and the contemporary challenges that Indigenous people have to deal with as they navigate their cultural identity.

Educational Measures Impact on Indigenous Identity

Indigenous students can use special educational measures when they start high school, during the middle of their adolescent development stage. Social interactions are especially important at this time. Since having an Indigenous identity is stigmatized on top of the stigma of the educational measures, Indigenous students are vulnerable and have extra burdens that their fellow Han classmates do not have to bear. These societal stigmas and discrimination will play a role in identity formation.

This study saw that Indigenous students who started their schooling in the Han-dominated education system, whether from elementary and or junior high school, all put high value on their education and their performance. This could be because being introduced to mainstream values early makes assimilation and adaptation more manageable. Due to acculturation, students would adhere to mainstream expectations and values, such as success in education. All three students with bicultural identities believe there is value in performing well in school.

Students with mainstream identities saw no impact after using the special education measures because their Indigenous identities were not known by their classmates at that time. Mainstream society does not question their identity and are perceived as only Han Chinese. Although they are learning more about Indigenous culture and issues in university now, they still hold weak Indigenous identities but hold strong mainstream societal values.

Students with culturally marginalized identities were influenced by factors that connected with using the special education measures. Some individuals felt compelled to delve deeper into their Indigenous culture after obtaining Indigenous status. This sometimes involved having four characters in their name instead of the usual three. They then had to explain the change in their name. This eventually sparked curiosity and passion for their Indigenous culture. Some started

exploring their Indigenous culture after starting university as their campus may have more Indigenous groups and spaces for Indigenous students to unite over social matters. Discrimination against Indigenous students as a group is more public on school campuses, which also means more opportunities for Indigenous students to come together. This influenced some participants to join some Indigenous groups. Some students studied in departments that cultivated a sense of safety and empowerment, drawing them closer to their Indigenous identities. Some students did not like their new environment, which embodied Han values.

Identity and its Impact on Relationships

Indigenous students who use the educational measures consequently opt into mainstream society's system if they haven't been doing so before. Mainstream society's education system for an Indigenous student would mean being one of the few, if not the only, Indigenous students in their class. These ten participants have had varying times in navigating this social system. Their identities play a big role in how they perceive themselves and others, affecting their relationships. The relationships in our lives and future ones shape our paths, resources, and opportunities.

Three participants possess strong Indigenous identities and aspire to integrate and succeed in mainstream society. Therefore, they can be positioned closer to bicultural identity. All three stated that their identity was Indigenous. They are all female, raised in the tribe, and have high academic and career ambitions. In **You Zonghui's (2019)** study, education was the most significant contributor to the Indigenous participants' mental health. This finding would explain why these participants suffer from high internalized pressure to succeed. The importance of education is shown in their efforts to adapt to mainstream society's values and expectations.

Not only do students with more bicultural identities try to adapt to mainstream society, but these participants also try to maintain their relationships within their Indigenous community. All three face the same issue with their tribe, which considers them more urbanized. This is also exemplified in the study by [Ciwang Teyra et al. \(2022\)](#), where the identities of urban Indigenous students were challenged and discriminated against by their tribe members, causing harm to the participants.

Participants with bicultural identities have close relationships with Indigenous family members. Two spoke highly about their relationship with their grandmother and considered them their safe space. The other participant spoke of their large extended Indigenous family as their safe space. All three have best friends who are Han Chinese, whom they consider to be the main person they can confide in for most of their problems. It seems that having close relationships with people from both communities allows the participants to feel the importance of both societies. They work hard to meet mainstream societal expectations whilst still holding tightly to their Indigenous identity. They know how to navigate Han-dominated spaces, but how integrated they feel in mainstream society seems to be still developing.

On the opposite spectrum, two participants showed to be closer to mainstream identity. Both males and Han Chinese passing grew up without acknowledging their Indigenous background until university when they decided to use the extra points. Since their values align mostly with mainstream society, they can be shown to be closer to mainstream identity. These participants are not close with their family members. Their partners and their friends are Han. This shows that they do not have close relationships with anyone who is Indigenous. That being said, these two participants are the youngest in the study and are under twenty-one years old. They are still in the early phases of learning about their cultural identities.

Three participants can be positioned more in the middle in Figure 6 as culturally marginalized, although they would have been considered more mainstream before attending university. Growing up in urban areas meant a lack of exposure to Indigenous culture, leading them to adopt lifestyles similar to the Han majority. They didn't identify as indigenous or did not think that they should. Following university and a deeper exploration of their identities, they would now be considered to have culturally marginalized identities. This is because their Indigenous identities are still developing alongside a mix of mainstream and Indigenous values.

Hence, five participants can be identified somewhere more central in Figure 6 as having a more culturally marginalized identity. The participants self-identified as Indigenous but admitted to confusion and are currently at a stage of working towards a stronger cultural identity. Using the same logic as Cheng & Jacob (2008), two individuals dropped out of school at various levels, so they would be closer to the middle top right. Zhenwei (2021) speaks about cultural disharmony, which both participants spoke about in some form. Their new school environment did not match their expectations of success or views. Two participants actively seek a stronger connection to their Indigenous culture but still feel like guests as they navigate Indigenous spaces. Since both feel safer in Indigenous spaces, they can be placed around the middle right area. The more culturally marginalized participants struggle with feeling safe in their environments due to discrimination. Some deal with not feeling Indigenous enough or guilt for using educational measures or microaggressions, just like the participants in Ciwang Teyra et al.'s (2022) study. The remaining participant has multiple stigmatized identities on top of a weak Indigenous identity but selectively follows some mainstream values. Their identity can be visualized closer to the lower right. Those with culturally marginalized identities may be more vulnerable compared to other identities because they acknowledge their tribe's values yet do not

possess strong cultural identities while still upholding and judging themselves using mainstream societal values. This makes room for self-hate if they do not meet the standards of mainstream society.



Although these five participants seem to feel safer with their Indigenous community, they live in Han-dominated areas. Also, the Indigenous parents of all five either have weak connections to their tribes and Indigenous identity, or the participant is not close with that parent. Half of the participants with siblings were close with their siblings. They all have a majority of Han Chinese friends and partners. The two participants with multiple stigmatized identities do not date at all and stated fear or disinterest in being in a relationship. Three of them have other stigmatized identities, and all are actively doing something that strengthens their connection with their tribe. This means they are navigating the middle ground between the two societies but do not feel secure in their cultural identity yet. Lastly, most seem to have quiet social lives or have shifted to more reserved social dynamics.

The participants with marginalized identities show a mixture of Han and Indigenous relationships in their lives with differing intensities. Although all participants stated that they had a support system of some sort, their social lives do not seem robust. This could be due to paradoxical conditions where some participants may have more intimate connections with Han Chinese people but may still feel unsafe in Han-dominated spaces.

Chapter 7:

CONCLUSION



This research explores how the special educational measures affect Taiwanese Indigenous students' cultural identity and social health. First, factors that affected the participants' various relationships were separated in accordance from the most personal to the least: relationship to oneself, intimate connections, casual connections, and broader society. Major factors such as gaining a legal Indigenous name, familial stressors and influence, and support systems were found as significant to participants' social health. Using [Cheng & Jacob's \(2008\)](#) definitions and measurement of their cultural identities, the participants and their current cultural identity were visualized somewhere on the adapted cultural identity axis in Figure 6. They were placed with the acknowledgment that the placement is not fixed and changes accordingly with time and experience.

Three participants identified more closely with a bicultural identity, actively striving to incorporate the values of both their Indigenous heritage and mainstream culture. Their interpersonal relationships and interactions with society seem stable. Their integration with society also seems stable but still developing. Two participants can be classified as having more of a mainstream identity, where they possess more mainstream values. From their perspective, their relationships with friends and society are good but may change as they get older. They are still in the early phases of developing their cultural identities. Participants with a mainstream identity are not typically recognized as Indigenous in mainstream society and, as a result, do not identify themselves as Indigenous. Their relationships are influenced by this perception. If their identity shifts, their interactions and sense of belonging within society may also evolve. The remaining five are then seen to have more of a culturally marginalized identity, meaning they

adhere more to mainstream values but still have Indigenous values. These participants are seen to have weaker social integration with quiet social lives and less willingness to engage with society. Two of them do not engage in romantic relationships. While they may have some strong interpersonal relationships, they can lack consistent and healthy social interaction.



The Han-dominated education system causes barriers, tension, and stress for Indigenous students. The special education measures are seen as a preferential treatment and are meant to compensate for the historical impact on the Indigenous communities' education levels and resources. As a result, Indigenous students in Taiwan face inevitable challenges and decisions as they strive to participate and succeed in mainstream society. The pressure to excel in an education system that may feel unfamiliar leads to heightened stress levels. Using extra points and coping with stereotypes can contribute to lower confidence and imposter syndrome. Moving away from Indigenous families can create identity confusion, particularly when parents are distant from their tribe's culture. Family discouragement in exploring Indigenous culture and forming friendships rooted in past trauma can further complicate matters. The need for a supportive school environment becomes evident to bridge knowledge gaps and address personal issues. Dealing with niche and complex issues can be isolating, prompting some participants to seek a quieter social life to avoid microaggressions and subtle insults. Adapting to mainstream society may inadvertently lead to feeling less accepted within Indigenous communities.

Conversely, special education measures can spark curiosity and passion for learning more about their Indigenous language and culture. It can also lead students to an academic environment that empowers them in pursuing ambitious opportunities and in exploring and embracing their Indigenous identities. This shows the complex reality of the special education measures and the urgency to rethink the implementation and associated expectations. Are these

measures effectively reaching and benefiting the students who require them the most? Can students achieve academic success by utilizing these special education measures? Moreover, if students utilize these measures and graduate, are the mental and physical consequences justified? How do these consequences influence their relationship with themselves, their intimate and casual connections, and ultimately, their interaction with broader society?

Our social lives play a significant role in shaping the overall structure of our lives. As social beings inhabiting a communal world, it is essential to acknowledge the importance of feeling comfortable and confident in our interpersonal interactions and within society as a whole. Close relationships with family, friends, and romantic partners fulfill our emotional needs. Positive relationships with coworkers and classmates aid us in navigating and excelling in our work and studies. A sense of belonging with a broader society allows us to think outside ourselves so we can contribute to a healthy and safe society. Overall, the inability to form close interpersonal relationships and feel secure in community spaces can have mental, physical, and economic repercussions on an individual. With the current reality of the special education measures, Taiwan's Indigenous students' sense of belonging and social health is at stake. It is vital we study and address these issues in hopes to achieve the equity these measures aim to promote.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural Project Instead of Language Test as a Requirement

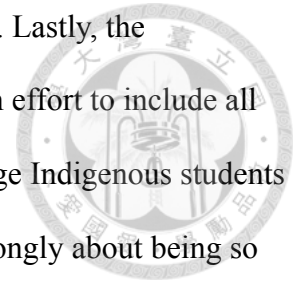
Through the interviews with the participants, I have compiled some recommendations to improve the current special educational measures and the current burdens Indigenous students have to endure when using them. Currently, students must pass a language test to obtain the full

amount of extra points on their exams. This language test is not helpful because it is not translatable in real-life conversations. Since the Indigenous tribes are still recovering from the aftermath of historical trauma specifically focused on language, language should not be used as a factor in proving one's Indigeneity. This test is more of a hindrance and reinforces the idea of who is Indigenous through Han society's lens. That being said, since this language test sparked some participants' curiosity and passion for learning about their tribe's culture, it shows such a requirement can also be a good thing. The perspective on this requirement can focus on revitalization and education for the students and the community around them. A project related to the student's tribe's culture can be the replacement requirement. This project can be purposely open-ended to allow room for creative and personal experiences and stories to be used to create this project. This project can then be presented within their class and school. To promote more education and exposure to different experiences and perspectives, a showcase for creative projects can be done by county and then by city.

Better In-School Support for Students

In agreement with [Zhenwei \(2021\)](#), supportive services should be better developed and utilized for Indigenous students. Relationships between faculty and students should be encouraged. This means that faculty should be educated on Indigenous cultures and the intricacies of Indigenous tribes to develop cultural competency. Resources and supportive services should be available for students dealing with the education gap when they use the bonus points. All though the number of Indigenous research centers on school campuses has increased over the years, placing all Indigenous matters on the Indigenous resource center is not efficient and as effective. On a university campus, students have different centers to handle different issues, whereas the

Indigenous resource center has to deal with all the issues within that center. Lastly, the Indigenous groups and resources run by Indigenous people should make an effort to include all versions of Indigenous experiences and identities. They should acknowledge Indigenous students who may have a weaker Indigenous identity and may not currently feel strongly about being so public in showing their activism when recruiting and promoting events.



Revamp Educational Measures to Allow More Access

The conversations indicate that educational measures are often utilized more for advancing in the school's prestige rather than for gaining access to education. This means that the students who may need these educational measures to get into a public school for financial purposes may not get access to it. Urban Indigenous students who are confident in their ability to gain admission to school, but are uncertain about securing a spot in a top-tier school, are more inclined to utilize educational measures. Students from the urban areas may have more financial and educational resources to obtain the few spots allotted to Indigenous students, which creates an unfair competition for the students from the tribe, who may have fewer resources and financial support. Additionally, gaining admission to a public school is only one aspect of the equation, as there may still be a financial burden associated with attending the public school. There needs to be a reconsideration of how Indigenous students can access and sustain their education.

More Research on Education Measures Effectiveness

Since there is an issue with the effectiveness of the special education measures in reaching Indigenous students who may need it the most, more research should be conducted. Some literature explores the dropout rates of Indigenous students compared to Han students but

not between Indigenous students. Dropout rates between Indigenous students who use the extra points versus those who don't can be studied to understand whether the educational measures are beneficial. Since there are two opportunities for students to use the extra points, when an Indigenous student uses the extra points, and their score before using the extra points should also be considered. This research would see how many students who used the extra points completed their education versus those who didn't. Factors like their original test scores and when they opted into the education measures should be considered. When looking at students who graduate versus drop out of high school, who would have been able to get into a public school without the extra points compared to those whose score couldn't get them into a public school? Are students who had used the extra points to get into high school graduating from a public university? Are more students who have lower scores mostly getting into private universities? All these questions can learn more about how effective the special educational measures are for Indigenous students. The effectiveness is important because of the high psychological and emotional impact from dropping out, not being admitted, and or not be able to afford school. The financial barriers, societal barriers, on top of personal factors should be considered so that the educational measures can provide better access to affordable schools and encourage academic growth.

CONTRIBUTIONS

This study developed a definition of social health tailored to Indigenous students in Taiwanese universities. It also established models of social health and identified factors influencing social health within this specific demographic. The impact of Taiwan's special education measures on the social health of Indigenous students was investigated. Additionally, recommendations based on the suggestions and experiences of Taiwan's Indigenous students were formulated.

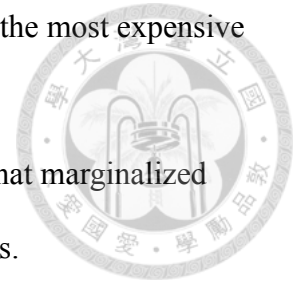


REFLECTIONS

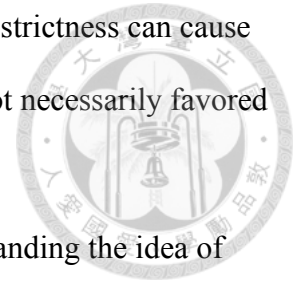
- The difference in education systems contributes to more externalization and internalization of stigma for Indigenous Taiwanese.
 - I found that compared to the US's education system, Taiwan's education system that is score-focused would contribute more negatively to minority students using preferential treatment. US's education system considers other factors, such as a personal statement and extracurricular activities for acceptance into schools. Also, affirmative action in the US does not guarantee you acceptance and is not as obvious in how it's used.
- Taiwan should re-evaluate the education system and values placed on it as the heavy competition doesn't contribute to anything positive.
 - From my understanding, although there are many Han students who do not know the full policy of the special education measures, there are some who do know but are still unhappy with them. This is because they believe that it is not fair to get in the same place as Indigenous students because they assume they did not work as hard. This resentment is due to the high stress and competition that all the students have to endure in Taiwan. I think turning towards people who you believe are your competition is common but is misdirected. The young generation should instead look at Taiwan as a whole and see that the current education system does not bring out the proposed benefits as they were taught to believe. This means that receiving a prestigious education does not automatically equal

prestige, money, and stability in Taiwan. Taiwan has one of the most expensive places in Asia to buy property, while having low salaries.

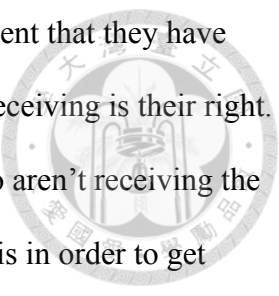
- I think our social health should be a topic in general, but I believe that marginalized communities have to deal with more barriers and complex situations.
 - As a human species, there is data that shows that we are dealing with bigger and more frequent social issues more than ever. Loss of community being at the center of it. I hope that through this study, readers can better understand how complicated someone apart of a minority community may go through when they're trying to navigate mainstream society. This is not to say that the majority of people do not have their own issues and complexities, but I believe that a minority has to make decisions and go through stressful situations that many don't have to go through. These situations are often closely tied to our feelings of safety, mentally and physically.
- Family support and motivation is crucial in the formation of identity and can be a protective barrier for negative social factors
 - From these interviews, I saw how impactful the relationships between the students and their Indigenous parents/caregivers on the students' identities. The reality is that these parents hold a lot of trauma that they have not had the privilege to heal from. This impacts how they teach their children about the real world and how to navigate it. Parents or caretakers need to see how vital their influence is on their children's identities. If they are ambivalent, the children will look externally. This is what can lead to confusion or a direction away from their cultural identity. On the other hand, if they are forceful about their identity, this can also cause children



to move away from their cultural identity. The pressure and strictness can cause resentment since children may understand their culture is not necessarily favored in mainstream society.



- Marginalized communities should have more conversations on expanding the idea of their identity so that the power of their identity is in the hands of the community and not the majority.
 - I found that the Indigenous communities also play a significant role in the students' identities. From a historical perspective, it makes sense why tribes would be proud of a specific way of being Indigenous. Unfortunately, I think this is counterproductive for the Indigenous community. I think this is because there are many inevitable circumstances that will affect Indigenous individuals and their identities. In Taiwan, there are not many job opportunities in the tribes; therefore, many people have to leave for the cities. Also, there are many Indigenous and Han or different tribal relationships. Governing Indigeneity within the Indigenous community gives space for the majority to have their own opinion of who is Indigenous or not. I believe if there was more unity within minority communities, there would be more power going forward for more self-determination.
- The positive outcomes of Taiwan's special education measures outweigh the negative but the perspective from the people receiving it and the people who don't, needs to be shifted.
 - Taking what I heard from the participants of this study, the majority of the students favored the education measures but agreed that it could be better. The majority of the students perceive the measures to be a form of reparations. The



word behind reparations gives the receivers an acknowledgment that they have been wrongful actions towards them and that what they are receiving is their right. On the other hand, preferential treatment tells the people who aren't receiving the treatment that the people who receive this preference need this in order to get where they are at. Within Taiwan's society, this perception is very influential for Indigenous students in mainstream society. I believe that the Indigenous leaders should have the main control over policies that affect the Indigenous communities, such as the education measure policy. Currently, the policy does not consider the historical impact of Indigenous communities since language has been a main tool in colonization. I think the education measures requirements could be used as a tool for more education and exposure to the different stories of Indigenous people. It can be a tool for empowerment and exploration. This would necessitate having a concise understanding of the purpose of the policy. There should also be a focus on more education for Han majority to understand the reality of Indigenous people to create more empathy and awareness. Creating safe spaces for more discourse could be beneficial as I feel like culturally, Han Taiwanese do not like speaking about sensitive subjects like this.

LIMITATIONS

For this study, four interviews were conducted in Mandarin with a translator. The other eight were conducted in English. The language barrier between me and the translator and me and the interviewees should be acknowledged. In the interviews with the translator, it is possible that some translations were oversimplified, and some nuances could not be discussed. This issue could have also been present with the interviews conducted in English. In addition to this, the

transcriptions of the interviews conducted in Mandarin were not fully transcribed. After running the interviews on the transcription website, I found some particular parts I wanted to be edited and transcribed specifically, but they were transcribed by another translator. This means I did not have the opportunity to hear the full interviews in their own words. Another barrier was the inaccessibility of literature written in Mandarin. I did not have the full scope of all the literature on Indigenous students and the education measures in Taiwan. The papers found were translated through Google Translate or chatGPT, which are not foolproof translations.

This study's interviewees were students in social science departments such as social work, sociology, and anthropology. These departments typically consist of culturally aware and sensitive students, which could influence their perspectives on their school environment and interactions. Given the topic's relevance to their studies, they are more likely to be interested in participating in my study. Additionally, some participants are friends with the translator, which could impact the interviews due to the comfort level between the interviewee and the translator.

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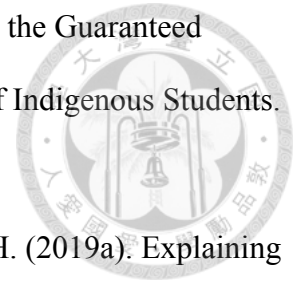
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APPENDIX 1



國立臺灣大學 行為與社會科學研究倫理委員會

Research Ethics Committee
National Taiwan University
No. 1, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Rd., Taipei, Taiwan 10617, R.O.C
Phone: 3366-9956 Fax: 2362-9082

審查核可證明

核可日期：2024 年 2 月 21 日

倫委會案號：202311HS020

核可證明有效期限：2024 年 2 月 21 日起至 2024 年 6 月 30 日

計畫名稱：升學優待措施對原住民學生文化認同及社會健康之影響

校/院/系/計畫主持人：國立臺灣大學/公共衛生學院/全球衛生學位學程/奧莫羅斯艾赫維 碩士生

計畫文件版本日期：【研究計畫書，2023 年 10 月 25 日】、【知情同意書，2024 年 1 月 4 日】、
【訪綱，2024 年 2 月 19 日】、【招募文宣，2024 年 2 月 19 日】

上述計畫業經 2024 年 2 月 21 日 國立臺灣大學行為與社會科學研究倫理委員會同意，符合研究倫理規範。本委員會的運作符合本校行為與社會科學研究倫理準則與規範及政府相關法律規章。

本案需經研究經費補助單位核准同意後，該計畫始得執行。

計畫主持人最遲應於本核可證明到期前的 6 週，提出持續審查申請表，本案需經持續審查，方可繼續執行。在計畫執行期間，若有計畫變更或嚴重不良反應事件，計畫主持人須依國內及本校相關法令規定通報本委員會。

行為與社會科學研究倫理委員會主任委員

洪貞玲

Ethical Review Approval
National Taiwan University

Date of approval: February 21, 2024

NTU-REC No.: 202311HS020

Validity of this approval: from February 21, 2024 to June 30, 2024

Title of protocol: The Impact of Affirmative Action in Education on In English Indigenous Students' Cultural Identity and Social Health

University/ College/ Department/ Principal Investigator : College of Public health Department of global health/ MSc Omorose Aighewi

Version date of documents : 【Research Protocol, October 25, 2023】，【Informed Consent Form, January 4, 2024】，【Interview Questions, February 19, 2024】，【Recruitment Advertising, February 19, 2024】

The protocol has been approved by Research Ethics Committee of National Taiwan University and has been classified as expedited on February 21, 2024 . The committee is organized under, and operates in accordance with, Social and Behavioral Research Ethical Principles and Regulations of National Taiwan University and governmental laws and regulations.

Approval by funding agency is mandatory before project implementation.

Continuing Review Application should be submitted to Research Ethics Committee no later than six weeks before current approval expired. The investigator is required to report protocol amendment and Serious Adverse Events in accordance with the National Taiwan University and governmental laws and regulations.

Chairperson Chen-Ling Hung
Research Ethics Committee



需要參與者！

積極平權措施與台灣原住民學生社會健康影響的研究

現場會準備餐點和飲品,也會負擔車馬費!

- ✓ 您是台灣原住民嗎?
- ✓ 您目前是學生還是畢業生?
- ✓ 可參加兩次面試; 團體 (與其他台灣原住民學生) 和一對一?

在這裡註冊!



Omarose Aighewi
國立臺灣大學公共衛生學院全球衛生學位學程0975687735

APPENDIX 3



One-on-One Interview Questions

Indigenous Identity

1. Can you describe your Indigenous background?
2. Can you tell me about your exposure to your family's tribe?
3. How would you describe your journey with your Indigenous identity?
4. Can you tell me about your experience with your tribe's language?
5. How is your relationship with your Indigenous relatives?
6. Can you recall your experiences with your tribe's cultural practices

Affirmative Action

1. How did you learn about affirmative action? How do you perceive it now? What experiences have you been apart of that was part of forming this perspective?
2. How has your indigenous identity been affected after highschool and our college ? Has it gotten stronger, weaker, or stayed the same?
3. Has there been any academic or career choices you've made that was influenced by your experience with affirmative action?

Mainstream Ideology

1. How do you think you relate to mainstream values in Taiwan?
2. How would you describe your intake of mainstream Taiwanese media?
3. Do you feel like you fit into mainstream society? / Do you feel comfortable in mainstream society?
4. How do you feel about how Taiwan portrays Indigenous people and culture?

Social Functioning

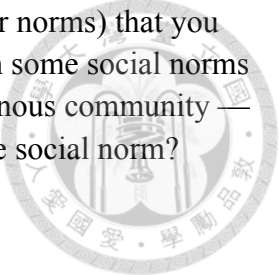
1. How do you think you manage your tasks at home, school, and or work?
2. Tell me about your day to day routine - do you have any difficulties keeping up with the tasks in your life?
3. How are your parents relationship with money?
4. How would you explain your relationship with money? Has it changed?
5. Tell me about your closest friendships
6. How would you explain your dating life?
7. Can you tell me about your relationship with your immediate family and relatives?

8. How would you describe your social life?
9. How do you like to spend your alone time?
10. Where do you consider home?



Group Questions

1. What is your understanding of affirmative action and what it is for. Is it for reparations and or more for decreasing the gap between the majority and indigenous people by acknowledging the differences of resources and affects from colonization?
2. Where do you think the stigma comes from about affirmative action? What do you think about urban indigenous students using bonus points if their score is pretty high already? Would it be different if this student was not from an urban area? Therefore, should it matter if you have good scores already to use it or not? Do good scores mean you have enough resources?
3. How do you feel about the current educational policies and requirements for indigenous people? Do you think the language test is a good idea? What are some barriers you had to overcome to obtain affirmative action? In some interviews, some people who obtained legal Indigenous identity and took the language test seemed to have a stronger indigenous identity. What do you think?
4. What policies do you feel exist to help indigenous people have more of their rights but do not work well in the real world? eg. Changing your Chinese name to your indigenous name
5. Are there any experiences you recall of discrimination that has impacted your indigenous identity—whether positively or negatively?
6. When was a time you were stressed due to you position of being indigenous or a minority— How did you cope with the stress? Are there any situations/environments you avoid due to this?

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7. Within your communities, what are the social norms (health behavior norms) that you see? Are there any experiences where you actively tried to partake in some social norms with your indigenous community in hopes of fitting into your indigenous community — how about any experience where you actively do not partake in some social norm?
8. Has there been a time while you were a student when your health behavior or identity was impacted? Maybe an influence from the people you were around, your self esteem at that time, or if there were any stress, or any positive exposure or new knowledge
9. Currently what is your mindset for where you want your career/academics to go and what you're currently working on in your personal life and where you want that to go?