

MASTER'S THESIS

An exploratory investigation of British expatriate adolescents in Hong Kong: their preferences and perceptions of being international

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**An Exploratory Investigation of British
Expatriate Adolescents in Hong Kong:
Their Preferences and Perceptions of
Being International**

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ABSTRACT

An Exploratory Investigation of British Expatriate Adolescents in Hong Kong: Their Preferences and Perceptions of Being International

by Hon Yeung LAM

This exploratory investigation of British expatriate adolescents living in Hong Kong provides statistical support for much of the claims made in the literature on 'third-culture kids'. These third-culture kids are adolescents who have spent considerable time in an overseas location and in a foreign culture. The exposure to another culture during an individual's most impressionable developmental years may have led them to form a 'third-culture' that is not entirely similar or dissimilar to their home or host cultures. Beside the British expatriate adolescents, two other groups of local adolescents in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom were used in the analysis. A thorough methodological approach was applied using factor analysis of two recently designed instruments. The empirical findings were consistent with the mostly anecdotal literature on the topic of third-culture kids and a useful set of variables was discovered with each of the two instruments. Third-culture kids were highly pertinent in their perceptions towards being international. They recognized that *international experience, openmindedness towards other cultures, respect and tolerance of others, flexibility, and own cultural identity* were variables that would lead an individual towards being international. These third-

culture kids also showed international mobility preferences and consequences arising from their international experiences. They displayed *international career preferences, international travel preferences, family orientation, and foreign language interests*. In view of their international perspective their *settling-down preferences* were low. One important implication of this study is that former third-culture kids may provide a much-needed source of human resources in the internationalisation of firms.

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