Investigation of attitudes to identity, culture and language in a Coptic school community

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Statement of Originality

I certify that the research in this thesis entitled **"Investigation of attitudes, culture and language in a Coptic school community"** is my original work and it has not been previously submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any university or institution other than Macquarie University. I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. In addition, I certify that all information resources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee: Reference number: **5201200327** Date Approved: **13 August 2012**

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Synopsis

While there has been a substantial growth in Coptic communities in Australia, there has been limited research on these communities. The aim of this thesis is two-fold. It hopes to contribute to educators' knowledge of student development in Coptic schools, pastoral care and curriculum considerations. The second goal is to contribute to the as yet limited study of the Coptic diaspora community. To this end, the thesis examines construction of identity in school students in a Coptic school in Sydney, Australia.

The thesis asked these three research questions:
1. What are the characteristics of students, and their perceptions of the school?
2. What are students' perceptions of their identity?
3. How do students negotiate their identity in 21st Century Australian society?

To achieve this, a mixed methods approach has been taken to access both measurable attitudes and deeper perceptions, using quantitative and qualitative research designs. The quantitative survey was constructed from three established instruments, which measure ethnicity, acculturation, and level of religiosity. There were 326 participants from Year 5 to Year 12 who completed the quantitative survey and 31 parents volunteered to complete the quantitative survey. Qualitative data were collected in focus group discussions and interviews. Participants were 41 students who voluntarily participated in the qualitative focus group discussion, and 10 parents participated in one-on-one interviews.

In the data, students appear to be involved with diverse multiple identity development, moving between cultures and languages, and between different environments and social activities without difficulty. The analysis also explores contradictions and ambivalence in some student data. The thesis acknowledges the role of the school in both the setting of the research, and its formative influence on students. A picture emerges of the students within their school context as the immediate research setting, but placed within supportive circles of influence which are the church, family, and community.

The thesis offers an illustration of identity construction which may be of value across other diaspora groups. The thesis offers insights into student development, valuable to educational

authorities towards the design of relevant quality curriculum. The thesis may inform government understanding of youth education within immigrant groups.

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been a qualitative research study. Thank you for conducting the interviews and for audio recording of the student focus groups and parent interviews, taking his precious time from his busy school schedule.

During the period of my candidateship I was appointed the General Secretary of the NSW Ecumenical Council. Being outside the school system, I was able to see theory in practise, in identity, culture and language within the church communities and the interfaith circles that I was engaged with. I thank the NSW Ecumenical Council for the support they gave me and for giving me study leave to complete the thesis. Thank you for your understanding and support.

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Lastly, I am reminded by scripture in the words of Solomon, in his conclusion to matter in Ecclesiastes 12:9-14: -

^{9} Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. ^{10} The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.
^{11} The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one shepherd. ^{12} Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them.
Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.

^{13} Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the duty of all mankind.
^{14} For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil.
(New King James Version)

Glory to God in the highest

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Egyptian revolution of the 1950s saw many Coptic Egyptian Christians leaving Egypt to new homelands in the United States of America, Canada, Europe and Australia. The Coptic migrants have brought their identity and origins, culture, language and religion with them to Australia. As new immigrants, the Coptic people established their communities in Australia, transplanting a community from their home in Egypt to Australia.

Scholarship on Christians from the Middle East, such as in the case of the Coptic Orthodox Church community, is limited. McCallum (2010) stated scholarship on Christians from the Middle East focused on faith, historical origins and rites of the church. As McCallum (2010) states, "by examining Christian communities in the Middle East, scholarship can contribute to existing debates and introduce new research topic" (p. 486). McCallum (2010) calls for new body of research that is interdisciplinary to further understand communities in diaspora. The current thesis strives to meet this need, as a new research

The diaspora study of this one ethnic community is more vital today than at any point since their arrival to the shores of Australia over the last six decades. This study is significant as it uses the lens of a school case study to understand the construction of students' identity in relation to their understanding of heritage, origins, culture, language and religion.

Australia has received and welcomed migrants, refugees and asylum seekers settling, encouraging processes of assimilation and integration into mainstream society. As stated above, the new immigrants brought their heritage, origins and identity, language, culture and religion with them to Australia. Williams (1988) states that, "immigrants are religious, by all counts more religious than they were before they left home" (p. 11), which reflects the great diversity and celebration of Australia's religious landscape marked with a spectrum of places of worship, in churches, mosques, synagogues and temples in Australia. Migrants preserve their religious identity by transplanting and establishing their communities in their new host country. This project is informed by the literature of global diaspora studies on the complexities of culture, language and religion.

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis, presenting the background, focus and purpose of the research study and the definition of terms used in the thesis. The overview then proceeds to the research questions, research participants and the school case study in context. The methodology used in this research is discussed, with its significance to theory and practice and its limitations. Finally, a summary of each chapter is offered. This now leads to a discussion on the background context of the thesis.

1.2 Background

The word "Coptic" refers to the indigenous Christians of Egypt. There are many minority Christian communities in Egypt, with the major denomination belonging to the Christian family of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria. The Church traces its foundation to St. Mark the Evangelist, who ancient traditions report as founding the Church in 42AD.

Today, in 2017, Pope Tawadrous II is the 118th successor to St Mark the Apostle, Pope of Alexandria, and the Patriarch of the See of St Mark. The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt has experienced persecution over the past two thousand years. Of recent times, the Christians in Egypt have experienced persecution, discrimination, atrocities, killings, bombings, and the burning of churches. Over the last two years, most notable have been the beheading of 21 Copts in Libya in February 2015, the bombing of the Coptic Church in Cairo in December 2016 and the Palm Sunday bombings in the churches in Alexandria and Tanta in April 2017.

Since the 1950's - close to seven decades - the Copts have been emigrating from Egypt, seeking new host countries to establish new homes to live in. The Coptic people have chosen to migrate to lands such as Australia and New Zealand, the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom and Europe. The Coptic emigration to Australia commenced in the 1960s. Since that time, there has been significant community growth in the establishment of two Coptic Dioceses in Australia – the Coptic Diocese of Melbourne and the Coptic Diocese of Sydney – with many churches, monasteries for both men and women, theological colleges, church agencies and church schools.

And yet, there has been little research on these communities in Australia, their schools, or their needs (Marzouki, 2016). The lack of in-depth research takes on particular significance in a period where community grief and trauma are increasing and where strong welfare policies for student mental health in schools are essential. While there has been a scattering

of Coptic studies in other diaspora contexts (Brinkerhoff, 2016; Van Dijik & Botros, 2009), to the researcher's knowledge this is the first such study in Australia. Westbrook and Saad (2017) have noted that there is relatively a limited amount of scholarship on Coptic identity formation outside Egypt. Warner and Wittner (1998) in "Gatherings in Diaspora", provide some reasons why immigrant religious communities have been understudied, due to lack of statistical data, bias amongst researchers, and the limited research scholars in these new immigrant communities.

This thesis meets this gap with its study of students within one Coptic school in Sydney, St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College at Wattle Grove, located in South West Sydney, in the state of New South Wales, Australia. It is hoped that the study contributes to the school itself, the Australian community, and Coptic diaspora studies globally.

The new paradigm shift for the 21st century in Australia is to understand the 'world within the world' around us locally. The global problem of displaced people has forced a new effort to understand the flow of migration, immigration, and ethnic diasporic communities in the 21st century. The focus of this thesis is to provide a framework for one ethnic community to understand the construction of identity through the study of different parameters of identity, culture, origin, heritage, religion, and language. This thesis may inform frameworks for other ethnic communities in Australia. It will show that the construction of ethnic identities is always hyphenated, hybrid, multiple, and complex in form, and in structure.

Australia is a global village - a pluralistic, multicultural, multifaith and cosmopolitan society in the 21st Century (Bouma, 1995; Bouma & Halafoff, 2009). Australia is no longer an island, but houses the world within its borders. This project is of significance as it will assist and inform educators with educational and pastoral care inclusiveness and will contribute to diaspora research in Australia and globally. Secondly, it will provide educators with a framework to address quality learning in a heterogeneous and multicultural society, in a faith-based school, where current teachers are confronted with diversified classes in culture, identity, language and religion.

1.2.1 The Research problem

The researcher, in his previous role, became aware and concerned that many invisible assumptions were being made by school leadership and staff as to the characteristics and

attitudes of students in the school, with no evidence-based knowledge of students' beliefs. Decisions as to curriculum and welfare are determined top-down without consultation or reference to student data. Brinkerhoff (2016) has noted that in the Coptic diaspora, parents tend to give Coptic schools great responsibility for welfare, and the responsibility for passing on heritage and culture through the curriculum, with the school acting almost in *loco parentis*.

In particular, as noted, the school needs in-depth understanding and informed strategies for welfare management in this time of ongoing and escalating community trauma. There has been to this date no systematic effort on the part of the school to gather data on the students' characteristics, perceptions of the school, attitudes and identities. Considering the leading role that the schools play in the community and the increasing size of the Coptic diaspora, it is urgent that the schools' welfare and curriculum policies be informed by an in-depth understanding of the life world of the students. This thesis is the first in the Australian context to meet this need.

1.2.2 Coptic School Study

This study focuses on students at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College school community in Sydney. Schools are a complex, social process system with inputs and outputs (Hough, Paine & Austin, 1997). Schools are established with a vision and mission statement devised by school executive management, core beliefs and sense of purpose. Schools are a community that needs to value relationships between different stakeholders in students, teachers, and parents. The school needs to foster relationships within the community and be an active learning centre that has the capacity to investigate and learn new things. This project will include a focus on students' perceptions of their school.

Schools value the principles of pastoral care, in the school curriculum and in learning to achieve the best outcome for a population of students (Calvert, 2009). The value of pastoral care is focusing on the concern and welfare of students, developing their needs on a personal level, and seeing the social skills required to prepare students for their future life (Calvert & Henderson, 1995).

St Mark's pastoral care program endeavours to foster Australian national core values such as respect, responsibility, inclusion and tolerance. Teaching students these values through its

pastoral care program is intended to provide students with a framework to embrace values in the Australian way of life, to assimilate and to integrate. The school's management of students' well-being through its pastoral care and welfare policy is core to the value of choosing to study in a Coptic school (Calvert & Henderson, 1995). Thus, studying one school setting will give an opportunity to provide understanding of students' perceptions, visions and values towards their school, and to understand the school's climate and culture and any tensions or cracks evident.

As the former Head of Pastoral Care, the researcher used the program "Mind Matters" at St Mark's school to promote the well-being of students. The researcher, however, modified the delivery method to reflect the culture, language and identity of the school and to avoid any compromise of school core values and religious beliefs. "Mind Matters" is a holistic whole school approach program used in schools to promote students' well-being. The framework build on mind matters focuses on four components (or 'mind matters'):

1.   Students skills in resilience
2.   Positive school community
3.   Parents and friends
4.   Support for students experiencing mental health issues

To date, there has been only very limited research on children of the Coptic community in Sydney, Australia. This project fills this gap to provide a basis for future research in Coptic schools in Australia.

It is established that students' identity plays a large role in their engagement in learning and effective progress through school years (Gee, 2000; Smith, Walker, Fields, Brookins & Seay, 1999). Students attending the school at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College are encouraged by teaching staff, parents and community to succeed. This study will examine students' identity in their life at school.

Identity has been identified as an important analytical tool for understanding schools and society (Gee, 2000). Some of the salient factors to be considered are self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation and family, school and ethnic communities as significant to a student's academic achievement. The phenomenon of belonging to a community allows children to feel

happy, safe and secure in their identity. This embraces students' motivation and sense of self-efficacy on their ability to become successful (Smith et al., 1999). A study conducted by Smith et al. (1999) found a strong relationship between ethnic identity and the student's ability to succeed academically at school, achieving goals and fulfilling the social attitude values instilled by parents and community. This study seeks to investigate the relationship between ethnic identity and learning.

In context, there is limited research available on Australian Coptic student identity and learning. Hence, this thesis is significant in understanding the construction of identity in school students at an ethnic school community in Australia, and is one of very few such studies in Australia and globally. This study endeavours to fill the gap in the construction of Coptic identity with school students at an ethnic school in Sydney.

The 10-step top-down approach in chapter 2 shows the key fundamental structures of the literature informing this thesis, commencing with the sociological approach to identity and ending with the focus school study site in Sydney. This forms the basis of the research background to study Coptic school students in their attitudes towards their school, church, community and family perspectives.

1.3 Focus and purpose of the research study

This study focuses on understanding identity, culture and language in Australian students in a community in diaspora. The research fills a gap in the limited resources available in Australia and globally on the Coptic diaspora.

Thus, the specific and the broader purposes of the study are:

1.   To contribute to educators an understanding of the construction of identity in students in one Coptic school, and in other Coptic schools in Australia. This is of value in pastoral care and student welfare. It is of significance to school principals to have a nuanced understanding of the complex and changing development of their students.

2.   To enhance teacher professional understanding of the nature of their students and the complexity of subjectivity /identity construction, which is fundamental to their learning experience.

3.   To contribute to a broader range of educational understanding in the large number of schools with children of diaspora background.

4.   To contribute to understanding and knowledge in clergy of the relationship between church and school and the engagement with the church in the life of the students.

5.   To contribute to the as yet limited study of Coptic communities globally.

6.   To provide an academic foundation of knowledge about the Coptic school community, towards the future establishment of Coptic Studies as an endorsed course by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

7.   To contribute to Australian diaspora studies, to strengthen the mapping of the complexity of the multicultural Australian community.

1.4 Definition of Terms

To facilitate accurate understanding of aspects of this dissertation, several definitions must be considered.

Coptic Orthodox: The term, "Coptic Orthodox" refers to the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Christian Church of Egypt. The Coptic Orthodox Church is a church in diaspora, preserving its Coptic identity and culture through the establishment of church communities and Coptic schools. The Coptic language ceased being used as a community language due to shifting social circumstances: a decreasing population of Copts, and Arabic being the language of commerce and civic administration. This resulted in an active discrimination against both the language and the religion. The Coptic language is now used only as a liturgical language in the Coptic Orthodox Church and is not used as a community language in Egypt nor in diaspora.

Learning Community: Community is being involved and sharing the same identity, language, culture and basic principles. In defining the practice of community, Wenger (1998), provides three dimensions: mutual engagement, shared repertoire and joint enterprise. Mutual engagement refers to the engagement of diversity, relationships, social complexities, community maintenance and doing things together. Shared repertoire includes discourses, concepts, artefacts, historical events, stories, styles, actions and tools. Joint enterprise refers to negotiation, mutual accountability, interpretations and local response.

Identity: Identity may be the most studied research construct in the social sciences (Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx, 2010). Different disciplines have contributed to diverse perspectives, from anthropology (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Sökefeld, 2001), psychology

(Erikson, 1968; Phinney, 1989) and sociology (Bouma, 2006; Lawler, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Identity is the study of the relationship between the individual and the community. Erikson's (1998) social identity theory provides a possible beacon that discusses identity - "the reliability of young adult commitments largely depends on the outcome of the adolescent struggle for identity (where) the basic patterns of identity must emerge from the selective affirmation and repudiation of an individual's childhood identifications and the way in which the social process of the time identifies young individuals". Erikson's social identity theory on commitment is an important attribute to an adolescent's identity formation.

The second important attribute which affects the adolescence stage is role play in childhood. As Erikson (1998) state, it is the gradual variety of "changing self-images that have been experienced during childhood, and that, during adolescence, can be dramatically recapitulated, and the role opportunities offering themselves to young persons for selection and commitment" (p. 73). The constant nurture of the adolescent identity by family, school and community plays an important role in the development of the social psychological identity formation. This study is informed by the theoretical frameworks of sociocultural theory and social psychology.

Cultural and Identity: Culture is a complex social process (Hope, 2005), defining social structures, a system of symbols and society's social fabric (Geertz, 1973). In Hoyle's (1986) words, culture concerns values that "manifest in norms which govern behaviour and the symbols – language, actions, and artefacts – which express these values" (p. 3). Hall's (2003) definition of cultural identity provides an understanding that culture tells the story of the past, in that it shares history and origins. Cultural identity also belongs to the future. Cultural identity is a paradox, belonging to the past and to the future. Individuals have multiple cultural identities. Hall (1996, pp.2-3) describes discursive practice as an approach that sees "identification as a construction" a process that is never completed for it is always in process. Cultural identity is constantly changing and never stops changing as an individual grows and ages (Hall, 2003).

Ethnic Identity: Ethnic identity describes the origins of minority group members (Phinney & Chavira (1992). The principle of ethnic identity stems from the formation theories on social identity and ego identity. Ethnic identity theory focuses on an individual's belonging and membership to a certain group that has a certain engagement in culture and history. Ethnic

identity includes the three parameters of culture, language and religion, and is a constantly changing fluid process (Bottomley, 1997). Ethnicity is a "social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have minimum of regular interaction" as described by Eriksen (2003, p.35). Ethnicity is a social construct to self-identify and self-label pertaining to a group that defines origin, culture, descent and ancestry (Fenton, 2003). An 'ethnic marker' defines and labels an individual or group's identification through, dress wear, customs, origins, language and descent (Dervin, 2016). Ethnic identity has a multidimensional framework that is constantly changing over time.

Egyptian Identity: McCallum (2012b, p.117) defined the term Copt coming from the Greek word, *aigytos*, meaning Egyptian, and "highlights the close relationship between the Copts and the land of Egypt". With this complexity in mind, to understand the Egyptian identity framework we need to consider a variety of complex parameters that are intertwined and integrated with past history, association with the land, culture and language. Beginning with past history, Egypt's geographic position in the Mediterranean in Alexandria as a pivotal port and trade; the fertile Egyptian land; and the rich source of water in the river Nile was the attraction for Egypt to be invaded and ruled by foreign powers. First, with Alexander the Great in 331BC, then the Dynasty of Ptolemy, the Roman Empire, and the Islamic Arab Invasion in 642 AD. For the Copts, the Arab invasion was perceived to end the Byzantine pressure for the Church to be reunited after the church schism between East and West of 451AD (McCallum, 2007). According to McCallum (2007), the Arab invasion of 642AD signaled the end of the persecution by the Byzantines to a new era of freedom with a new ruler.

However, under the Islamic Arab rule, the Copts experienced oppression, discrimination, pressure to convert to Islam and the payment of the jizya tax. They had the choice to conform or continue to fight (McCallum, 2012a). In the 19th and 20th Centuries, Egypt was occupied by the French and British colonisation resulting in Egypt experiencing new paradigms in European and Western identities, culture and French and English language into Egypt. In 1952, Egypt sought its own identity, with Gamal Abdel Nasser leading the Egyptian Revolution for liberation from foreign powers. The Copts saw participation in nationalism as a path to liberation from oppression and to be equal citizens in the land they call home (McCallum, 2012a). However, the hope they had in the revolution failed as persecution

followed. They commenced to emigrate and transplant their religious Coptic identity and their Egyptian identity to other lands (McCallum, 2007).

The Coptic language was never the official language of Egypt as it was ruled also by foreign powers since Alexandria the Great in 331BC. Since the Arabic invasion, the official language in Egypt has been the Egyptian Arabic. The replacement of the Coptic language by Arabic occurred in the 11th Century (Rubenson, 1996) to secure employment, trade and commerce dominated by Arabic.

The relationship between the Egyptian Government and the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt has been tense for a long period of time. The negotiation offered by the Egyptian Government was to allow the Patriarch (the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church) to govern and lead the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt without any government interference, in return that the Church supports the President and Government of the day. This was referred to as the "millet system" (McCallum, 2007).

Finally, however the Copts are proud of Egypt and still attached to the land (McCallum, 2012a). The Copts chant with pride the Egyptian national anthem, which reminds them of their homeland of Egypt, and showing their loyalty, admiration for unity and equality with all Egyptians. This was the desire of the Copts as part of their sense of the national unity and national freedom from foreign occupation in Egypt. The following is an extract from the national anthem of Egypt.

Pride in the Egyptian Anthem
My homeland, my homeland, my homeland
You have my love and my heart.
My homeland, my homeland, my homeland
You have my love and my heart.
Egypt! O mother of all Countries,
you are my hope and my ambition,
And above all people
Your Nile has countless graces
(Lyrics by Mohamed Younis Al-Qady, 1878)

In conclusion, the above highlights the complexity in using the term Egyptian identity as integrated and intertwined with the Coptic identity, as the Coptic Orthodox Church is a national church of Egypt.

Diaspora: The concept "diaspora", is a compound Greek expression, 'diasperein' – 'dia' meaning 'across' and 'sperein' referring to 'sow or scatter'. Hence, the term 'diaspora' refers to communities and people who have being scattered abroad from their home origins to new lands through, exile, migration, and immigration (Braziel & Mannur, 2003). Diaspora is a contemporary public discourse and social theory that is constantly used in society, public policy on the global movement of people and resettlement in the new host country (Flores, 2009). The global landscape described by Hall (2003, p.244) is a "new world" that defines diasporic identity as hybrid and diversified, that is, constantly changing and transforming into new hybrid identities.

The Coptic Community: The Coptic community is considered as a religious minority in a majority Islamic state in Egypt. The Coptic community draws its strength in knowing their religious identity is a national Egyptian Orthodox Church of Egypt (McCallum, 2007). The religious identity in being classified Christian in a majority Islamic state, is important for the Coptic community. The relationship of the National State of Egypt and the Church through the 'millet system' allows the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church the full autonomy to governance of the church in return for supporting the Egyptian President and the Government (McCallum, 2007).

The Students in Study: The students in this study are majority 1st generation Coptic Australians, with some born overseas.

1.5 Research Questions
The purpose of this study is to investigate the construction of Coptic students' identity. The research questions were designed to examine the students' perception of their identity, language and culture, and to explore how students negotiate their identity. The study examines the following three research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of students and their perception of the school?
2. What are the students' perceptions of their identity?
3. How do students negotiate their identity in 21st century Australian society?

1.6 Research Participation
The research involved two groups of students and parents in the research study.

The first group of 326 students and 31 parents participated in a questionnaire research study. The second group of 41students (volunteers from the first group) and ten parents participated in focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

The first group included a mixed gender of sixty students in years 5 and 6, and two hundred and sixty-six students from years 7 to 12, with a total of three hundred and twenty-six students participating, and thirty-one parents who had children at the school participated in completing a questionnaire. The student age ranged from 10 to 18 years, with most students born in Australia and a minority born overseas.

The second group involved a mixed gender of forty-one students from years 7 to 12, and ten parents who participated in focus group and one-on-one interviews. Student ages ranged from 12 to 18 years, with most born in Australia, and others born in Egypt and in Saudi Arabia.

1.7 Role of the Researcher

The researcher came to Australia as migrants from Egypt in 1966, with his parents and sister. Growing up in Australia was challenging, with changes in culture, language and identity. The researcher's father is Egyptian-born, while the researcher's mother is of Greek descent, born in Egypt, with her father born on the Greek Island of Limnos and her mother from the Greek Island of Leros.

The researcher believes that his identity, culture and language have constantly changed, being fluid and dynamic, having a hyphenated identity as Australian-Egyptian-Greek. This study has been of personal importance and growth to the researcher, as he explores his own identity construction, culture and language, while not forgetting his ancient roots, heritage and origin.

The researcher taught at one of the Coptic schools in Sydney, and tried to bring the challenge of culture, language and identity to children born in Australia of migrant Coptic Egyptian parents. For this reason, the focus of this study is to investigate the construction of student identity in a case study of a Coptic school in Sydney. The researcher recognizes the operation of possible "desirability effect" (Neuman, 2000) occurring in his conduct of the research within the school in which he is known. He also recognizes the work of Glesne and Peshkin (1992) in acknowledging the influence of researcher bias in the collection and interpretation of data.

1.8 The Case Study School

Since the arrival of the first Copts in the 1960's, the Coptic community in Sydney aspired to maintain their Coptic identity, culture, language and religion to sustain their heritage identity and assimilate into Australian society (Brinkerhoff, 2016). The first Coptic schools in Australia were established in Melbourne in 1991 and Sydney in 1996. The first director of the College, Fr Marcos Tawfik, laboured to establish the first Coptic school in Sydney. The second director, Fr Antonious Kaldas, worked to build the school on the current site at Wattle Grove, a suburb in the south west of Sydney and the school was officially opened in 1998. The college aims to work closely with the parent body to ensure its continual success in partnership between school, church, and community. School values are centred on Christian love and values, service, humility and church traditions, and are designed to make students feel safe and supported. In the increasing trauma resulting from current atrocities against the Copts in Egypt, this aspect of support and safety becomes increasingly significant.

The school endorses the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) national framework on its nine values for Australian schools - compassion and care; doing your best; a 'fair go'; freedom; trustworthiness and honesty; integrity; respect; responsibility; and inclusion, tolerance and understanding.

In a previous role, as Head of Pastoral Care at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College, the researcher developed a 5-value system in a pastoral care program entitled, "HEART", an acronym for harmony, equity, acceptance, respect and tolerance. These espoused values are integrated into the curriculum and teaching of the College. Using the words of Kinsler & Gamble (2001, p.80), the "considerations of school culture are incomplete without consideration of students" where the social economic status and student demographics are considered as part of the school culture. The school environment and school culture may influence student motivation, school morale and academic culture that is affected by "espoused values and deep assumptions of the society they serve" (Kinsler & Gamble, 2001, p.84). These espoused values are reported in this research. The rationale for this thesis was drawn from the researcher's former professional role in the school.

1.9 Methodology

In answering the three research questions, a 4-level top down approach was used, considering epistemology, theoretical lens, a mixed methods approach, and choice of methods of data

collection developing a research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Ten sequential steps were taken in data collection and analysis for this research study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The approach taken utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods, a process that Creswell (2003, p.215) defines as, "the most straightforward" of the mixed method approaches.

The researcher's intention was to collect data from students and parents at one ethnic school in Sydney. Two different data collection methods were used. The first method used a questionnaire survey instrument to collect data from 326 students and 31 parents, providing **quantitative** data.

The second instrument involved 41 students who volunteered to partake in a focus group setting, and 10 parents who volunteered to take a one-to-one interview, providing **qualitative** data.

The prime focus of this thesis is based on the study of students at the school. The collection of student data would deliver specific information about:
1.   Students' attitude to their identity, culture, language and heritage.
2.   Students' attitude towards, their religion, school and church.

The collection of data from parents was intended only to triangulate the perceptions of the students.

1.10 Significance of the study: Connecting the research with practice
This study is significant to school educators and administrators on welfare policies, curriculum, pastoral care and differential learning for students coming from ethnic backgrounds. Teachers seek to provide the best opportunity for student learning and outcomes. Teachers in Australian schools, both state and private schools are confronted with a diversification of the multi-ethnic, multi-language and multi-religious.

It is recognised that teachers must differentiate the curriculum, in individual schools, to cater for the needs of students who are diverse in language, culture and background. The goals set by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, 2012) are intended to promote excellence and equity in education for young people. The three goals for

young students are to be successful learners, confident and creative individuals and to be informed and active citizens in Australian society. ACARA (2012) encourages schools and teachers in the importance to teach in context to enrich students' learning across the curriculum. The classroom will have "multiple, diverse and changing needs that are shaped by individual learning histories and abilities, as well as cultural and language backgrounds and socioeconomic factors" (ACARA, 2012, p.17). Hence, schools and teachers need to understand the students whom they may teach. Secondly, there is need for an in depth understanding of the complex processes of identity in a diaspora community, as many communities have settled in Australia and are calling Australia 'home'.

1.11 Limitations of the study

The project carries the limitations of a one-school case study. The sample size of 326 students completing the survey questionnaire is relatively good in number compared to only 41 students who volunteered for the focus group data research. The limited number from the parent body of 31 parents participating in the questionnaire and only 10 parents in the one to one interview provides a limited focus, a small segment of the parent body at the school. There was limited access to parents, and limitations in access to students within the school timetable. Although the researcher had left his active role and employment in the school (Department Head for Coptic Studies, Pastoral Care and Coptic Orthodox Studies) at the time of the research, it is certainly possible that, due to the author's former role, there were expectations to say positive things about the school. A further limitation may lie in researcher bias, and desirability effect (Neuman, 2000) in students, staff and parents.

1.12 Chapter Summaries

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature relevant to the present study. The chapter explores literature on identity - cultural and multicultural - language, religion and diasporic studies. Chapter Three gives a detailed account of the methodology of this study, which includes approach taken, research design, participants and ethical considerations. Chapter Four reports on the findings of this study focusing on students' responses. Chapter Five reports on the triangulation of data focusing on parents' responses. Chapter Six provides a discussion on the findings. Chapter Seven provides a summary of the study and presents a conclusion drawn from the findings and discussion of the previous chapters. The implications of this study and recommendations for further research are offered.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the thesis, covering a focus on the literature review, methodological approach, findings on student data and triangulation of parent's data with student data. A final summary chapter completes the thesis.

I am a Copt, with 'hyphenated' origins, Greek-Egyptian, and a proud Australian. Who am I? Throughout this thesis, I have been growing and changing my perceptions as to my own identity through examining the students I served as teacher and priest for over 17 years at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College in Sydney, Australia. This study is a thesis about the construction of identity in students at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College at Wattle Grove, in the south west of Sydney.

This is their story that follows.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1   Overview

This section reviews literature that has informed the current project. The conceptual framework of this research has drawn upon a number of disciplines.

The purpose of this study is investigation of the construction of identity in school students in a Coptic school. The school curriculum, policy and welfare procedures all need to be built on a deep understanding of the formation of identity in the students, in its responsibility for their educational, emotional and spiritual development. The school plays an important role as a facilitator in the life of the church and the community it represents. This thesis is interested in students' perceptions of the school and church in their life. The Coptic school that is the site of the research, established in 1996, maintains the Coptic heritage of its community in diaspora. The question remains, what is the school's relevance to meet the needs of students, parents and the Coptic community? The researcher interrogates himself: "I ask myself, as a researcher and teacher, do I really know the children at the Coptic school which is the focus of this project: who are these children?"

Therefore, these questions lead this research to investigate and understand the importance of identity as the theoretical framework for the thesis. Identity is constantly being formed by a changing variety of markers including culture, language, heritage, religion, and social environment. An integral part of this thesis is to understand Coptic communities in the Sydney (Australian) context. Communities in diaspora frequently gain momentum and strength in establishing schools to support and nurture their identity through the maintenance of heritage, culture, language and religious values and practices (Williams, 1988). This research studies student identity within one faith-based-school in a diaspora community setting.

The organisation of this chapter follows the basis set by Cooper (1998) where the value of the literature review "…begins with the researcher examining reports of previous studies related to the topic of interest. Without this step, researchers cannot expect to construct an integrated, comprehensive picture of the world" (p. xi). The following section sets in order a process to understand the integrated nature and complexities of this project.

Figure 2.1 below shows that the structure of this chapter is organized into 10 steps, from the two theoretical frameworks which have informed the study in Steps 1 and 2, through to Step 10 focussing finally on the school case study.

Step 1: Theorectical Framework 1: sociocultural theory

Step 2: Theorectical Framework 2: identity theory

Step 3: Linkage: bridge between sociocultural learning and identity

Step 4: Cultural/ethnic identities

Step 5: Component issues in identity

Step 6: Diaspora studies

Step 7: Studies of Coptic communities

Step 8: Diasporia Australian context

Step 9: School studies

Step 10: One School

Figure 2.1 Structure and sequence of the Literature Review in Steps 1-10

2.2   Step 1: First theoretical framework: sociocultural theory

The founding father of sociocultural theory, a Russian, Lev Vygotsky, lived in the early 20th century (1896-1934). Whilst Vygotsky's sociocultural theory was developed in the 20th century, his thought and ideas remain very relevant to the social make-up of the 21st century. Vygotsky postulated four premises in understanding higher cognitive processes: cultural historical, micro-genetic, ontogenetic and phylogenetic (Marginson & Dang, 2017). Cultural historical refers to human social activity. Micro-genetic refers to immediate and current events. Ontogenetic implies the individual's lifespan. Phylogenetic expresses the natural evolution of humans. These four premises have contributed strongly to modern educational research connecting to a worldview of social learning theory and application (Marginson & Dang, 2017).

The value of the Vygotskyan sociocultural theory is seen in the dominant social experience of human development. This social experience is expressed through the individual's internal cultural practice gained through family origins and environment experience. This is highlighted by Vygotsky (1986) when he expressed, "true development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual" (p.36). The significance of the social cultural practice is experienced from the individual's cultural and origin environments in which they have been brought up.

The influence of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory has grown outside Russia since the 1960's and has shaped much interest in educational research to modern times. Effectively, Marginson and Dang (2017) argue that a return to Vygotsky's theory offers an alternative to the psychology of individualism that has dominated English speaking countries in the west. The significance of Vygotskyan theory is its ability to engage and unite social and individual realms in psychology, significant and relevant in the 21st century in the social learning paradigm. Adding to this, Vygotsky was an empirical social scientist who valued the science of observation and database analysis in the early 20th century; the principles of the mixed method paradigm did not exist then until the end of the second half of the 20th century.

Cole and Scriber's (1978) critique on Vygotsky suggests that he was the first modern psychologist to suggest "the mechanisms by which culture becomes part of each person's nature" (p. 6). The heart of Vygotsky's theory lies in the understanding that human cognition

and learning are a cultural and social activity rather than an individual phenomenon (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev & Miller, 2003).

Crandell, Crandell and Zanden (2012) propose that Vygotsky's notion of human development is focused on the following five frameworks:

1. Human development occurs during the early formative years and is characterized by the surrounding world view and the historical, social and cultural character.
2. Human development takes place during changes in a person's social and cultural activities.
3. Humans observe an activity and then internalize the basic forms of that activity as their own.
4. Humans learn systems of symbols and signs, such as language, objects and icons to internalize activities.
5. Humans assimilate the values of a culture by interacting with other humans in that culture.

The value in Vygotsky's theory is embedded in humans interacting socially and culturally with others. It provides a developmental perspective on human's cognitive functions in reason, thinking and language in mediated signs and tools (Wretch, 1985). Lantolf (2000) suggests the most fundamental concept in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is that the human mind is mediated, as humans rely on the physical world through "symbolic tools, or signs, to mediate and regulate our relationships with others and with ourselves and thus change the nature of these relationships" (p. 1). Hence, by symbolic tools, it refers to artefacts that humans create over time that are passed on to the next and future generations. (Lantolf, 2000).

The paradigm of learning and education using Vygotsky's sociocultural theory lies in the role of the environment and social interaction in children's cognitive development. Lutz and Sternberg (1999) focus on Vygotsky's notions of 'Internalization' and the 'Zone of Proximal Development'. By Internalization, Vygotsky suggests that the cognitive development is a result largely from the outside in, absorbing knowledge from context. Thus, it is social and environmental factors that influence cognitive development in children and in humans. The social interaction depends on where the child is. For example, if the child is at home, the

social interaction will be with its parents. If the child is at school and acts as a student, then the social interaction will be with its teachers.

The second useful notion in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is a focus on the Zone of Proximal Development. Lutz and Sternberg (1999) define zone of proximal development as "a range of tasks that children are not able to manage on their own but can manage with the aid of adults and more skilled children" (p. 292). The child, with the assistance of learned others in the principle of 'scaffolding', acquires the skill through guided learning and activity and internalises the learning as his/her own. Children gain knowledge and skills through the help of others, such as parents at home, teachers and peers at school, where the social interaction and overlapping zone is where the learning occurs.

If we compare this with other giants of developmental theory, there are differences between Piaget and Erikson and Vygotsky in understanding human development. Whilst Piaget and Erikson propose stages of development, Vygotsky presents no stages. The emphasis of Piaget's theory on cognitive development is from within and views the environment as either impeding or fostering development. Vygotsky's theory is the opposite, as his theory offers the importance of social interaction and the environment playing a very significant role in their development (Lutz & Sternberg, 1999). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, as Gajdamaschko (2015) suggests, offers an alternative approach to understanding the development of the child, which may result in effective teaching and learning.

The development of this thesis has been informed by two theoretical frameworks. This section has presented the first framework, Vygotskyan sociocultural theory, to understand students at a school in south west Sydney, placing into context "socio" referring to the social environment of human beings interacting with the students, in this case, the students' social interaction with their peers and teachers at the school; at home, with their parents, carers, family and extended family; at church, the clergy and congregation; and the broader Australian society, its people.

The term "cultural", in this context refers to how the activity is conducted. The student's worldview at the school incorporates several sociocultural paradigms that include their environment, such as their home, school, church, community and the world they live in, and

the socio paradigm of many human beings that include their familial (home), teachers and peers (school), clergy and friends at church, and the broader society they live in.
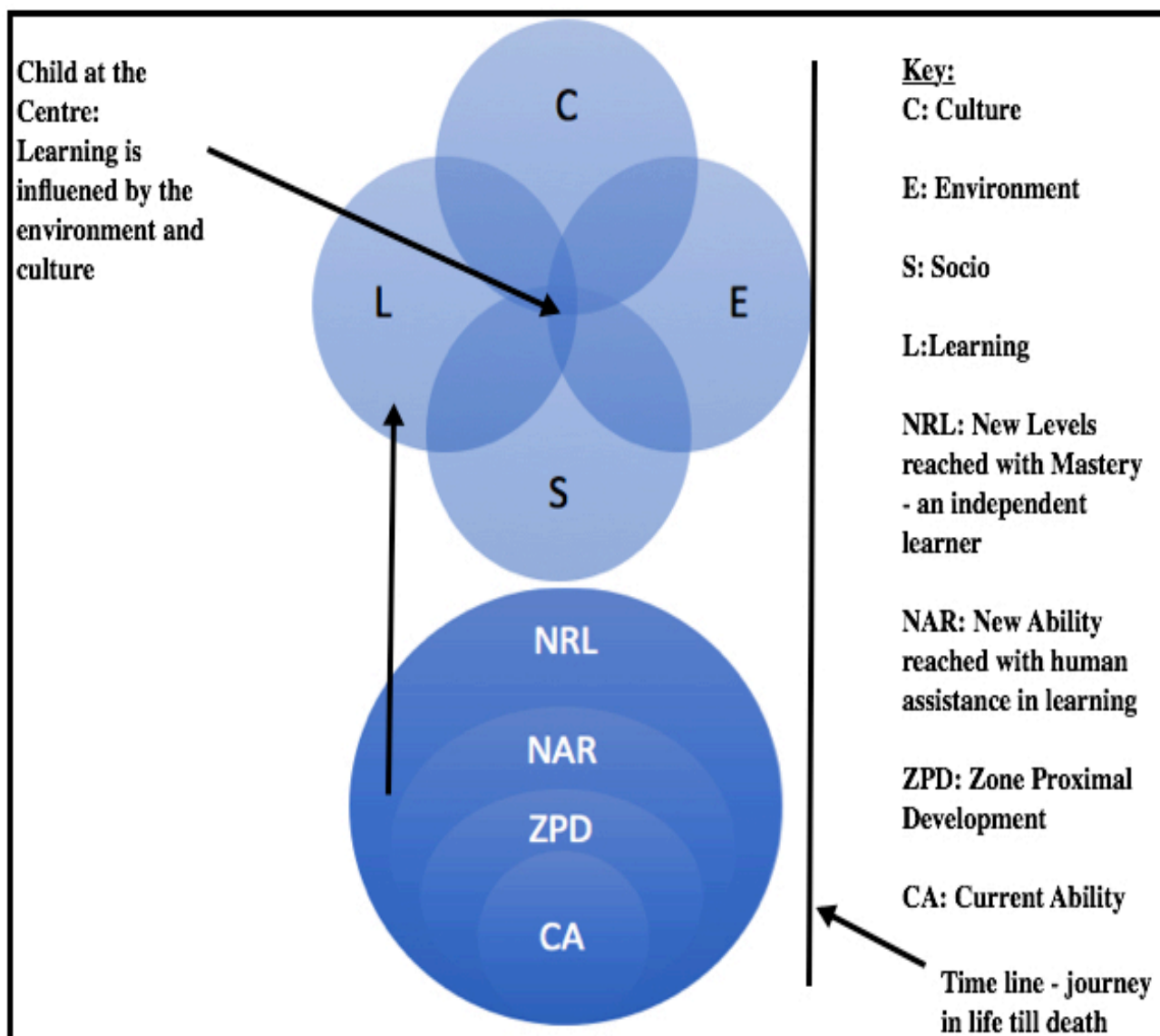
Figure 2.2 A reflective perspective on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory for this thesis

The above figure is a reflective perspective on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. The Venn diagram with four circles overlapping each other incorporates learning, is influenced by culture, environment and society, and has the child at the centre. Learning is a constant zone of proximal development, where learning never stops and a constant mastery of skills and beliefs is developed as the human being matures in life. New skills are always constantly

learnt. The agent at the zone of proximal development requires the assistance of a parent at home, teacher at school, sporting coach at the sporting field etc. Our ability to constantly learn is affected by the beliefs of the actors, of the teachers and mentors who provide scaffolding for every new activity learnt.

The above describes the first theoretical framework used in this thesis, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, focused on the nature of learning. As this project is a study on students at a Coptic school in south west Sydney, the second theoretical framework that will be used deals with the construction of identity. Before proceeding to a detailed review of the second theoretical framework in Step 2, this review pauses to define the notion of "culture" as understood in this thesis.

2.2.1 The understanding of culture in this thesis

Whereas in earlier periods of anthropology, culture was considered as static and fixed artefacts produced by (and often removed from) a community, a foundational change in the understanding of culture has been the work of anthropologist Geertz (1973). Geertz (1973) understood culture to be lived, and defined culture as "the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action, social structure is the form that action takes the actually existing network of social relations" (p. 145). It is a cultural system of symbols, that provides access to the conceptual world we live in (Geertz, 1973). Geertz (1973) treats culture as a shifting "self-contained super organic" (p. 17). Hope (2005) defined culture as a "symbolic and learned aspect of human society" (p. 4) and said the "knowledge of culture is gained through a complex social process" (p. 4). It is acquiring a system of belief, ideology and values to gain an understanding of how human society functions as a system (Hope, 2005). Hoyle (1986,) described culture as idea of values considered "worthwhile by the members of some group. These values are manifest in the norms which govern behavior and the symbols – language, actions, artefacts – which express these values" (p. 3).

Thus, culture is a fluid and unfixed complex system for understanding how the 'Other' functions in the real world, and cultural identity forms the understanding of one's own cultural background. This thesis takes as its model the work of Stuart Hall (1990) who refers to cultural identity as "a matter of becoming, as well as of being. It belongs to the future as

much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation" (p. 225).

This will be further discussed in Step 4 of the Literature Review (section 2.5)

2.3   Step 2: Second theoretical framework: Introduction to Models of Identity

Identity may be the most studied research construct in the social sciences (Vignoles et al., 2010). Research on identity is diverse and complex in detail, with rich outcomes from diverse disciplinary paradigms (Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier & Zenou, 2016; Joseph, 2013). The various literature on identity shows the many different perspectives, as different disciplines argue the case in their definition, from anthropology (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Sökefeld, 2001), psychology (Erikson, 1968; Phinney, 1989) and sociology (Bouma, 2006; Lawler, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), all forming paradigms to their definition on identity.

Linguistic psychologist, Joseph (2006), writes "…your identity is, very simply, who you are…" (p. 486) but that identity is indeed not simple nor clear-cut, for it comprises many elements in the one simple description. The term 'identity' is a paradox and slippery with struggles to provide a clear definition and a clear understanding (Joseph, 2006). There is a need to look from a multi-platform and a multi-view realm to appreciate and understand the term. A single and simple definition will prove incomplete.

Lawler (2008), a sociologist, posits multiple ways of looking at the concept of identity and on each occasion, it leads to a different definition. Another sociologist, Piore (1995), directs the understanding that identity is linked with individuality and is multi-dimensional and unique. Interests are diversified with variety, leading to the posit that individuals are different, possessing their own interest.

As to the term 'group identity', Piore (1995) defined the term as, "many of an individual's interests are bound up and represented by a single group. Indeed, the number of interests associated with a single group is so large that it defines the person" (p. 21). A conclusion is drawn that there is no pinnacle answer.

Psychologists, McDevitt and Ormond (2004) defined identity as "people's self-constructed definition of who they are, what they find important, what they believe, and what goals they want to accomplish in life" (Glossary p. 3). In their explanation about adolescents acquiring their identity prior to adulthood, McDevitt and Ormond (2004) explained how adolescents need time to investigate and explore the different elements of career, religious belief and political convictions. Hence the nature of identity may include aspects of belief, religion, spirituality, politics and career.

This thesis has found the work of Marcia (1980) particularly relevant (discussed in more detail below). Marcia (1980) defined identity as, "a sense, an attitude, a resolution…as an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history" (p. 159). Marcia explains that the better developed this structure is, the more aware individuals are of their own uniqueness and similarity to others and of their own strengths and weaknesses in finding their way in the world. Inversely, the less developed this structure is, the more confused individuals seem to be about their own distinctiveness from others and the more they rely on external sources to evaluate themselves. Marcia (1980) thus says that "the identity structure is dynamic, not static. Elements are continually being added and discarded. Over a period of time, the entire gestalt may shift" (p. 159).

Marcia's (1980) definition of identity is "difficult to delimit". Identity-defining formation is a non-conscious, slow and gradual process, constantly being refined, bit by bit, constantly changing and constantly adding to the full identity of the individual.

The above introduction shows the complexity of determining a definition of identity. According to Vignoles, et al., (2010), identity process and content can be defined at 3 levels: individual, relationship and collective. **Individual** identity refers to the individual preferences, such as personal goals, values, religious belief, self-esteem and self-efficacy about one's own core values (Vignoles et al., 2010). **Relationship** identity refers to the role taken with others in their relationship with their parents, siblings, teachers and community members (Vignoles et al., 2010). **Collective** identity refers to a person's identification and categorization to a group, which includes ethnicity, religious values and beliefs, gender and nationality (Vignoles et al., 2010). The levels of social identity are constructed over time, and the identity of one's roles is constantly changing. Having introduced some of the complexity

in Step 2, this review will examine the work of Erikson and Marcia in more detail, for their particular relevance to analysis in this project, focused on young people's development.

2.3.1 The work of Erikson

The psychosocial development identity theory as proposed by Erikson (1998) includes eight different stages: infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood and old age. This thesis' focus is on school age and adolescence.

Erikson (1998) states "the reliability of young adult commitments largely depends on the outcome of the adolescent struggle for identity (where) the basic patterns of identity must emerge from the selective affirmation and repudiation of an individual's childhood identifications and the way in which the social process of the time identifies young individuals – at best recognizing them as persons who had to become the way they are and who, being the way they are, can be trusted. The community, in turn, feels recognized by the individual who cares to ask for such recognition" (p. 72). The process of social identity development, an important attribute of adolescence identity formation, is commitment. Community plays an important part in this process. The second important attribute is role play in childhood that directly affects the adolescence stage. As Erikson (1998) states, it is the gradual variety of "changing self-images that have been experienced during childhood, and that, during adolescence, can be dramatically recapitulated, and the role opportunities offering themselves to young persons for selection and commitment" (p. 73).

The concepts of selection and commitment cannot exist without the conscious self-experience of "I", that is described by Erikson (1998) as "existential identity" (p. 73). The existential identity nurtures values in adolescence, such as intellectual, political and religious, success and the ability to adjust to different conditions (Erikson, 1998). Hence, the social psychology identity formation in the adolescent is constantly nurtured and formed by family, school and community. Thus, adolescent behavior is the manifestation of a commitment to role choice that has developed over time. The early period of role decision is fluid, and therefore identity is constantly forming until there is a long-term commitment to role decision.

The identity of an adolescent is fully formed by the end of adolescence when he/she is ready to proceed to the next stage of life (Erikson, 1998). The human condition is based on the human constantly learning during growth affected by culture, geography, history and

technology. Erikson (1977) defines culture as "ritualization" where the "child can be expected to begin to grasp the symbolic meaning of behavior and accept both restriction and delay for the sake of cultural belongingness within a world view" (p. 81). The ritualization process helps create formality, assisting a social identity formation structure and moral values. For Erikson (1977), ritualization accomplishes seven different world view realities. It:

- raises the level of satisfaction of needs
- teaches a daily routine to life
- deflects feelings of unworthiness
- emerges a cognitive community's shared vision and nurtures cognitive understanding of moral right and wrong
- helps develop a sense of ritual understanding
- develops social differentiation to discriminate between right and wrong
- helps in the development of a world view and a belief system

The adolescent mind, as stated by Erikson (1950) is "essentially a mind of the moratorium, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult" (p. 327). Erikson's (1950) view highlighted the importance of family, school and community in the life of a growing adolescent. It is social nurturing and values that guide identity, one layer at a time, within the frame of the world view, in the words of Erikson (1950), "confirmed by rituals, creeds and programs which at the same time define what is evil, uncanny, and inimical" (p. 328).

The view taken on Erikson's theory by Arnett & Tanner (2009) is a paradox paradigm stating the theory as valuable and influential while simultaneously pointing out the weakness that Erikson's stages have not been validated and lack the biological basis of development. A further weakness this thesis considers on Erikson's theory is the absence to include the complexity generated by multicultural and diaspora identity mix. This gap may be due to the social shift which has occurred since the time of Erikson's work and the contemporary major movement of displaced persons as a global phenomenon in the 21st century.

2.3.2 The work of Marcia

Marcia (2003) has further developed Erikson's identity theory in examining how adolescents manage their transition from adolescence into adulthood in terms of their shift in ideology, occupation and event formations (Marcia 2003). Based on Erikson's identity theory, Marcia proposed two identity formations – exploration and commitment.

The following figure is adapted from Muuss, Velder & Porton (1996, p.60) shows a 2x2 table matrix. The two variables postulated by Erikson are commitment and crisis/exploration. Muuss et al. (1996) define the variable 'crisis/exploration', as "the individual actively examines developmental opportunities, identity issues, and questions parentally defined goals and values and begins to search for personally appropriate alternatives in respect to occupation, goals, values, and beliefs" (p. 59).

The 'commitment' variable is defined by Muuss, et al. (1996) as, "the extent that the individual is personally involved in, and expresses allegiance to self-chosen aspirations, goals, values, beliefs and occupation" (p. 59). These four identity states suggest the four different paradigm states with which individuals are challenged.

Marcia (1980) proposed that the outcomes of Erickson's two variables may be usefully thought of as four paradigms, as in Figure 2.3 below. These four paradigms or "results" are the outcome of whether and to what extent the person experiences commitment and crisis/exploration, the two 'axes'.

<div align="center">

Crisis/ Exploration

</div>

	Yes	No
Commitment Yes	Identity Achievement	Foreclosure
No	Moratorium	Diffusion

Figure 2.3 Marcia's four identity paradigms, adapted from Muuss et al. (1996, p.60)

The first paradigm, **identity achievement**, is reached when individuals can commit to and explore their identity and succeed in reaching their goals, values and beliefs. As with exploration, the individual's ability to work through a crisis because of their commitment and time given to the given problem results in positive identity formation (Berk, 2006; MacDonald, 1988; Marcia, 1980; Muuss et al., 1996).

The second paradigm, **foreclosure**, suggests individuals have not experienced an 'identity crisis' nor explored their identity but have made commitments on values, beliefs and goals through the agency of parents, school and community (Berk, 2006; MacDonald, 1988; Marcia, 1980; Muuss et al., 1996).

The third paradigm, **moratorium**, suggests the individual is actively searching for values, goals and beliefs but struggles to define personal identity due to an inability to commit (Berk, 2006; MacDonald, 1988; Marcia, 1980; Muuss et al., 1996).

The fourth paradigm, **diffusion**, suggests that the individual has not explored nor experienced an identity crisis nor made any commitment. Hence, identity diffusion is the lack of exploration and commitment in the individual (Berk, 2006; MacDonald, 1988; Marcia, 1980; Muuss et al., 1996).

The dissertation by Anderson (1993), exploring the relationship between Marcia's ego identity status and Erikson's psychosocial theory, shows that Marcia's status paradigm corresponds to Erikson's fifth stage on adolescence identity formation.

While Marcia's work, in common with Erikson's, did not explicitly consider the cultural mix of adolescents in diaspora communities, the four paradigms are regarded as useful in the analysis of youth development in this thesis (Mokhatebi-Ardakani, 2016). They suggest the complexity and variability occurring in construction of identity, a complex and multidimensional process.

Adding to development in the social world is cultural influence. In this case, identity must explore and adopt values from the host country and the subculture of the individual's family or diaspora community identity (Berk, 2006). Finally, the concept of gender identity is

defined as "the private face of gender. It refers to the perception of self as relatively masculine or feminine in characteristics" (Berk, 2006, p.520).

In constructing the second theoretical framework of the thesis, this section (Step 2) has examined some of the literature of Identity Theory, from social psychology and other disciplines. Before proceeding to consider what has been termed cultural or ethnic identity, we pause, in Step 2 below, to consider links which have developed between Steps 1 and 2, that is, the relationships between Learning and Identity.

2.3.3 Step 3: Bridge: The links between Learning and Identity

Educational psychologists have identified student basic needs in learning and education, and these generally include the facilities of emotion, intellect, physical and social needs, which vary from one student to another. These needs reflect human development of the student that occurs in their personal, physical, social, cognitive and moral development. Teachers have an opportunity and responsibility to observe student learning and to tailor education to meet what they understand to be student needs. Without evidence-based informed understanding of the developmental paths of individual students in particular contexts, however, there is plenty of room for error in inappropriate curriculum design, welfare practices and teacher choices (Marsh, 2004). This is the rationale for this thesis.

To understand learning, over the past one hundred years, the founding fathers of cognitive development theory have included Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Jerome Bruner (1915-2016). Jean Piaget proposed cognitive theory that offered insight on children's cognitive thinking and structure, as children think differently from adults through their developmental years. Piaget's theory proposing five developmental stages has had great impact on learning and education providing teachers over many years with concrete tools in understanding student development and its application to the classroom.

Jerome Bruner also examined the cognitive growth of a child's intellect and developmental process. Bruner's learning and educational developmental process affected how teachers viewed their students' ability to understand language development, internal information processing, the ability to describe past and future tense activities. A child requires the assistance of an adult to achieve cognitive development and recognize the importance of

language development for communication with other human beings. Bruner developed three stages to learning, described as enactive, iconic and symbolic stages. The **enactive** stage describes how the child uses senses of holding, rubbing, moving, and touching, providing an important concept of environment. The **iconic** stage involves learning to use imagery to identify and recognize instances of events and concepts and pictures to describe the events. The final stage is the **symbolic** stage where students use various systems of symbols including language, logic and mathematics to assist learning growth and educational development.

As we have seen in Step 1, Vygotsky focused on social interaction as the main aspect of human development. Accordingly, a child's growth is determined by the social world he or she lives in at home and at school and the social fabric of the society. Vygotskyan theory generated much interest in the importance of adults' input into the child's world, which influences cognitive development as he/she is in constant contact directly with their parents, their relatives, teachers at school, and the broader society. Peers and friends encourage significant communication skills and discussion, allowing cognitive growth development. Thus, Vygotsky's theory on student learning commences in their social world where students learn language and cognitive thinking from one another.

In more recent writing, the social theory proposed by Wenger (1998) posits that learning is an individual process but acquired only through a complex intersection of society, school and family. Wenger (1998) has proposed four components of social theory of learning: practice, meaning, community and identity. These four components reflect how individuals learn, succeed and excel at a given task. The following diagram Figure 2.4, from Wenger (1998, p.5) encompasses the complex role of community, practice, meaning and identity.
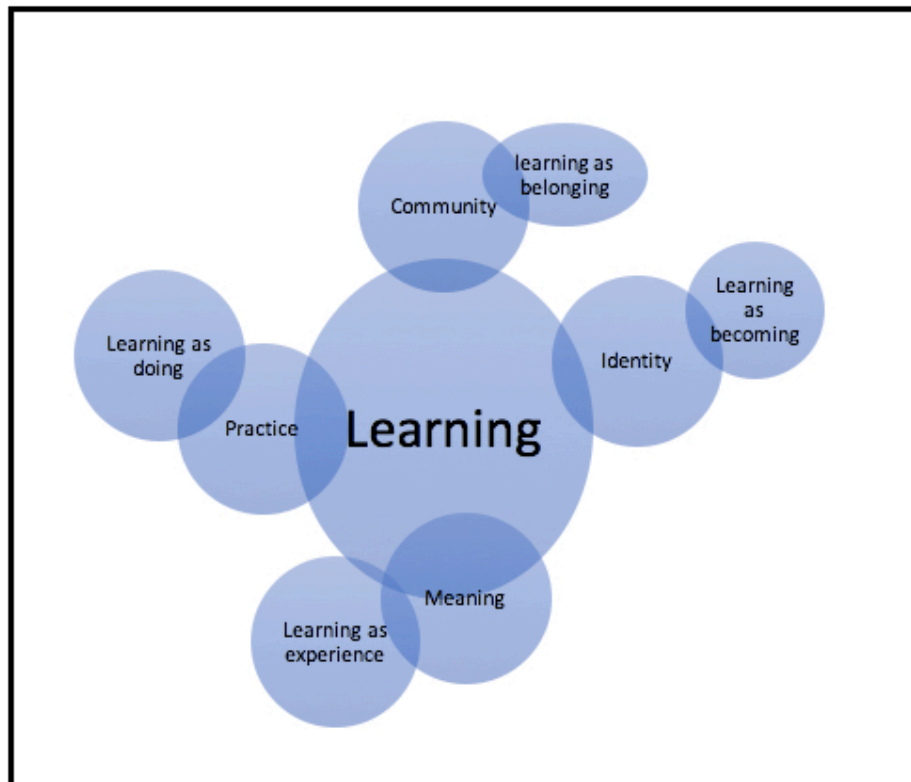
Figure 2.4 Wenger's four components of learning. From Wenger (1998, p.5)

The above diagram shows the direct relationship between these four components of learning. Identity affects learning. Being able to engage and construct knowledge that is meaningful to the individual results in positive academic achievement and positive outcomes. Accordingly, Wenger's (1998) argument is grounded in the following four premises:

(1) Individuals are social beings and it is a central aspect of their learning.

(2) The valued enterprise for social beings is achieved through their knowledge and their competence gained through their activity in society.

(3) By actively engaging in society, its participation nurtures knowing in the pursuit of the mastered enterprise.

(4) This produces meaning and the individual's ability to experience the world they are engaging in with meaning and purpose.

Accordingly, to Wenger (1998), the social theory of learning must incorporate these four components of meaning, practice, community and identity to interconnect and be mutually dependent. Wenger (1998) states that, "you could switch any of the four peripheral components with learning, place it in the center as the primary focus, and the figure would still make sense" (p. 5). Wenger (1998) concludes we become the learners and thus become the educators.

Hence in Wenger's words, "*if learning is a matter of identity, then identity is itself an educational resource*". This concept has been core to the rationale and development of this thesis. Identity is a powerful process that may enable us to identify who we are and where we fit. We are human beings constantly educated by the world around us, with layers of identity applied through school, family, home, society and the world that we live in. Identity is the educational resource that we use to mediate the social theory of learning in students.

Smith et al. (1999) studied the relationship between identity and learning and found a positive correlation existed in an individual's learning outcome and academic achievements. The conclusion by Smith et al. (1999) stating that, "young people's sense of belonging to their ethnic group (identity), along with a positive perception of self, are potent influences upon their feelings about their ability to achieve in school and in life" (p. 878), demonstrates the positive relationship that exists between learning and identity formation.

2.3.4 Step 4: Ethnic /cultural Identity

The theory of ethnic identity stems from Marcia's work and the four identity process outcomes based on commitment and identity: search diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium and identity achievement.

According to Phinney and Chavira (1992), ethnic identity is central to the "well-being of ethnic minority group members" (p. 273) because of the individual's ego in social identity theory. The principle of ethnic identity is based on social identity theory and ego identity formation. Phinney and her colleagues (for example, see Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts & Romero, 1999) have led work in this area for over two decades.

The three premises of the ethnic identity theory are focused on an individual's feeling of belonging to a certain group, engagement in history and culture, and the membership providing a positive attitude to the group (Phinney, Du Pont, Espinosa, Revill & Sanders, 1994). Bottomley (1997) states three parameters are included in ethnic identity: language, culture and religion. Bottomley (1997) also suggests that ethnic identity is "a fairly fluid process" (p. 45), to elude to ethnic identity as always changing, always transforming and always rearticulating. This is echoed in the later approach taken by Hall (1996, 2003) in his theory of cultural identity as always changing and always transforming. Identity is never static, but is a dynamic organism that is continually changing. The proposed study will investigate ethnic identity as a salient component in the construction of identity.

Eriksen (2003) defined ethnicity as a "social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have minimum of regular interaction" (p. 35). Ethnicity is belonging, ability to identify and to self-label yourself to a certain group. Fenton (2003) defines ethnicity as a social construct of culture and descent and "they elaborate these into the idea of a community founded upon these attributes" (p. 3). Ethnicity needs to be understood by its context, through people, origins and features of its culture (Fenton, 2003). While the researcher is aware, from other theoretical contexts, of the negative outcomes of limiting and essentialising cultural practice (Dervin, 2016), ethnic identifiers are commonly used to describe a group or an individual's ethnicity through customs, dress, language, origins and descent.

In this and the next section, I will provide different perspectives on the understanding of ethnic identity, including the work of Stuart Hall (1996), the acculturation (Ward, 2006), approaches to measuring ethnic identity (Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Rosenthal & Cichello, 1986), and religious identity (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010).

Migrants draw their identity from several sources to help maintain their heritage and complex identity through their mother language, culture and community identity. The concern of the case study thesis is situated in this balance, in what role the school will play, in how immigrant youth feel accepted and in their embrace of their host country as their identity and nationality (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001).

Fenton (2003) described ethnicity as a social construct of culture and descent with "meanings and implications of classification systems built around them" (p. 3). Kottak (2005) defined ethnicity as a combination of identification and belonging, describing it as "feeling part of an ethnic group and exclusion from certain other groups because of this affiliation" (p. 132). Phinney and Ong (2007) also observed ethnicity as belonging and identification with a certain group. The identification construct is constantly changing and Hall (1996) states this process is "never completed – always in process" (p. 2). The identification is a feeling of association, identifying oneself with ancestry, shared history and a sense of belonging to a certain group (Hall, 1996).

The review acknowledges the tension and the radical changes in the theoretical understanding of culture which have affected the cultural/ethnic identity research field. For many writers, the notion of 'cultural identity', associated more with qualitative research in anthropology, should replace the term 'ethnic identity', associated with quantitative research in psychology, such as in the measurement instruments work of Phinney and colleagues.

Hall (1996) suggests the deconstructive approach places essential primary concepts such as race, gender, class and ethnicity "under erasure" as they are "no longer serviceable" (p. 1). Reducing identity to its common denominators centres on politics and agency. For Hall (1996) the focus must be on discursive practices and cannot be captured by measurement instruments. The discursive practice defined by Hall (1996) is an approach that sees "identification as a construction, a process never completed – always in process. It is not determined in the sense that it can always be 'won' or 'lost', sustained or abandoned…identification is in the end conditional, lodged in contingency" (pp. 2-3).

Cultural identity cannot be static in time, as it is a continual paradigm shift, continually changing, a dynamic force throughout the life of a human being.

Of relevance to the community of this study, Hall (2003) suggests two practices underpin a model of cultural identity:
1.   Retelling the past, sharing culture, sharing history and ancestry.
2.   Belonging to the future is a constant change and transformation, but still subjected by sharing its history, power and culture.

These two premises point directly to the importance of retelling the story and sharing the history of the past with the new generation. Culture identity is affected by the past and is influenced by the future.

This study thus understands the dynamic of ethnic identity as multidimensional and constantly changing over time. The research collected data about student perceptions of personal, ethnic and national identities, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore both epistemological approaches. The project was interested in the students' self-identification, whether they identify a national identity, whether and how they self-identify as "mixed" or with allegiances to different groups, and a sense of belonging. The researcher was interested in how students understood and reacted to the terminology (for example, ethnicity, ethnic identity, nationality) used in the surveys and interviews.

2.4   Step 5: Component Elements of Identity

Berk (2006) suggests there are many factors that may influence the development and construction of identity. Some of these factors are family, personality, peers, school and community and the wider society. Similarly, this is echoed by Jersild, Brook, and Brook (1978) who suggest the individual's social world is centred on parents, home and family, peers, school, community and religion. In addition, Phinney and Ong (2007) developed a Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) to assess ethnic identity. The measure excluded the assessment of culture and beliefs. Using Exploratory Factor Analysis, Phinney and Ong (2007) confirmed two factors measuring ethnicity on the MEIM scales: exploration, and commitment and attachment (Erikson's model). The first factor as expressed by Phinney and Ong (2007) defined exploration as "seeking information and experiences relevant to one's ethnicity" (p. 272) through different activities such as exploring through reading and talking and learning from "cultural practices" (p. 272). The second factor, "commitment and attachment", is described by Phinney and Ong (2007) as a "sense of belonging" (p. 272) and "the most important component of ethnic identity" (p. 272). Similar findings on the MEIM Scale by other researchers have found these two factors on the construct of ethnic identity, work by Phinney and Chavira (1992), by Roberts et al. (1999), and by Spencer, Icard, Harachi, Catalano & Oxford (2000). This gives the idea that components of identity need to be of a multivariable nature.

The following - subsections of Step 5 - identify several possible components of identity as discussed by a range of scholars. These components have become important in this project.

2.4.1   Place of Birth

Place of birth has been identified as an important identity marker by researchers as it provides a sense of belonging and a sense of identity to one's origin, heritage, ethnicity and nationality (Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo & Cota, 1990; Bond, 2006; Kabir, 2014). The juxtaposition of being born and living in Australia with an ethnic heritage will not always identify an individual to be Australian. In a study survey of 340 youths, Collins, Reid and Fabiansson (2011) found that second generation immigrant Australians - the majority born in Australia - reported having a cosmopolitan, hybrid and fluid identity rather than reporting being Australian. Collins et al. (2011) stated, this phenomenon of Australian immigrant youth declaring a cosmopolitan, hybrid and fluid identity is "not new in Australia and is found in most western societies with significant immigrant youth minorities" (p. 95). Another Australian study conducted by Harris (2015) found young people identified themselves with hyphenated identities – where young people identified themselves with two cultures and their national host country. The context of multiple cultural existence – where young people interchange cultural identity due to context – the existence of "hyper" or "super-identity" has been expressed by Harris (2015) as "multiple discourses of difference exist, it is logical that young people will draw on these situationally to position themselves as belonging according to the currency of each in the space of membership" (p. 10). This tells us that, while one is born in Australia, it does not automatically make one Australian. Today, Australia is a cosmopolitan society where citizens may express belonging to a hybridity of cultures, yet still identify as Australian (Bouma, 2006).

2.4.2 Acculturation

Another approach to examining identity is through acculturation identification. Berry (2005) states that there may be four types of acculturation identification in which an individual may be engaged: marginalisation, separation, assimilation and integration. A **marginalised** person is one who does not identify with their community's culture or with the host country's culture. A person maintaining his/her culture and rejecting the host's culture is identified as **separated**. An **assimilated** person is identified as rejecting their own origin and culture for

the host country. An **integrated** person is one who maintains their culture and participates in the host culture (Berry, 2005). Berry's model of acculturation will assist in determining and identifying students' acculturation status in this study.

Ward (2006) examined single and dual heritage identities amongst New Zealander youth through an acculturation approach. Ward (2006) defines acculturation as, "the changes resulting from continuous first hand intercultural contact" (p. 243). This approach allows an examination of changes in values, identities, behaviours and attitudes (Ward, 2006). The acculturation theory has four different approaches: linear, unidirectional, categorical and orthogonal (Ward, 2006). The benefit to this approach is the scope to examine two cultures at two different poles opposite to each other. Further, it allows the flexibility to examine one culture over another, or to discount one culture for another, or to adopt one culture over another and it allows negotiation of cultures or a combination of two cultures (Ward, 2006).

Another benefit of the model is that it allows for an examination of self-identification between two cultures, between heritage and ethnicity, and between heritage and national identity. Further, Ward (2006) states the model allows for ethno-cultural identity values and norms to be examined in parallel with the national identity. For example, the model allows an examination of the values and norms between the Australian culture and the Egyptian culture. The acculturation approach model is valuable to this project as it will examine the values and the cultures of students' and parents' attitude towards their culture, ethnicity, heritage and national identity as Australian Copts. Secondly, it is valuable to this study, as it will allow an examination of the individual's norms and values that are attached to their single or dual identity, which they have adopted in Australia.

2.4.3 Language

For many of the students, Egyptian Arabic is their heritage language. As Valdés (2005) describes, heritage language speakers are a different type of language learner since, unlike learners of a foreign language who learn institutional contexts, they typically acquire their language skills in a variety of contexts including at home, with extended family and in the community. The language input they receive may be limited to the domestic context, and their understanding of syntax, vocabulary, genre and many other aspects of language may, without formal study, develop as incomplete and before the emergence of reading and writing

literacy (Montrul, 2010). In heritage language speakers, while varieties of the mother tongue may be spoken at home, English typically becomes a dominant language at school and with peers (Oguro & Moloney, 2012). It has been observed that particularly in the secondary school age group, social and cognitive factors also commonly negatively affect heritage speakers' development in language acquisition and their willingness to use it (Montrul, 2010). Growing up in an English-speaking country and being educated through the medium of English usually means that English becomes the dominant language in social interactions with peers and siblings and it commonly becomes the language in which students think and learn (Cummins, 1984). This understanding is represented in the data of the study.

In addition, Coptic may also be considered a heritage language, even though Coptic is not a community language. The Coptic community embraces the Coptic language as a liturgical language within the context of the church. Hinton (2001) defined culture and language as "closely intertwined" and further states that "…it is often said that language is the key to and the heart of culture" (p. 9). According to Romaine (2008), Coptic cannot be classified as a community language as, "languages can only exist where there is a community to speak and transmit them… a community of people can exist only where is a viable environment for them to live in and a means of making a living" (p 14).

Thus, the Coptic language needs to be placed in a different and limited aspect of exposure as a living liturgical language within the context of the church. Coptic is the last stage of the Egyptian language, a direct descendent of the language which was written in hieroglyphs (Layton, 2004). The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria has the Coptic language as the "official liturgical language and hymns as a window to the past, and thus to the true modern identity of the Copts" (Henderson, 2005, p.161).

As evidence of its currency, on the internet world wide web, on a number of Coptic Orthodox Church websites there are many free downloads on the Coptic language, hymns and tunes, the liturgies of the Coptic Church in the Coptic language and other resources freely available (Henderson, 2005). An example of a website address is at http://st-takla.org/ that offers resources including a download library, learning the Coptic language, Coptic books and daily readings etc. (www.st-takla.org). The researcher has witnessed students at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College eager to learn, chant and hear the Coptic language in the liturgy, in the hymns and the chants at the school. The students may identify the use of the Coptic language

with their Coptic identity. Students can identify Coptic font letters from English and Arabic letters and recognize the use of the Coptic language as a liturgical language even though not a community language.

As Coptic is not a spoken community language in Egypt or in the diaspora, it is not taught as a spoken language, even though it has a rich grammar structure, vocabulary and preserved religious texts. Hence, Coptic is very much an important element of church and religious identity. The Coptic language has an aural religious recognition within the Coptic community, as it forms part of their church identity as Copts. Recently, there has emerged an argument for deeper and more nuanced considerations of the complex connection between language, literacy and identity issues in multilingual students (Lo-Philips, 2010).

Language may develop a sense of belonging, where children can learn a second language at a very young age (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Accordingly, heritage language learning declines with second and third generation status (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Hence, the new migrants settling in a host country maintain their heritage language as a sense of belonging to their ethnic community. With second and third generation heritage language speakers, Carreira and Kagan (2011) showed "evidence of incomplete acquisition and loss of linguistic structures" (p. 42). A study conducted by Fillmore (2000) also showed a loss of proficiency of the heritage family language user to the dominant English language in the host country amongst second and third generation migrants.

The researcher's own experience shows his children can understand what is said in their Egyptian heritage language and either respond minimally in the language or respond fully in English. Welch (2016) noted the importance of culture and language at home, particularly when migrants commenced to be "fossilised" in Australia as their immigrant homelands had changed significantly. Welch (2016) argued the importance of giving students and their families the opportunity to learn their heritage language by providing the educational opportunities to maintain their culture, origin and language.

2.4.4 Religious Identity

This thesis understands that religious identity is most commonly integrated in the person's life in society. Bouma (2006) has written "Australia's religious and spiritual life is not

something separate and apart from the rest of society, but is as fully integral to the operation of the society as health, family and economy" (p. 17). However, this section examines the formation of religious identity.

The definition by Brunn (2015) places religious formation and identity as an important construction of ethnic and heritage identity formation. Brunn (2015) defined religion as "an important part of the fabric of most people's daily lives on the planet, regardless of the primary faith belief system, ideological histories and legacies, the stage of economic development and political system. After all, the quest for a meaning to life, a hope to improve the human condition and the role that humans play in their associations and interactions with others and their spiritual links to environmental worlds around them have been topics of interest from the earliest humans in local settings to those living in global cultures today" (p. 4).

In addition, religious identity is identified by core religious values, beliefs, spiritual values and behaviour (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010). The premise of religious identity is based on the group sharing similar values, practices and beliefs and the use of liturgical languages (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010). According to Peek (2005), a positive relationship exists between religious identity and ethnic identity in the land of immigration. This may suggest that ethnicity and religiosity are effective components of the identity construction in diaspora and not in the land of origin. This study will investigate religious identity as a component salient to the construction of Coptic identity. Religious identity is an effective component as it identifies an individual's faith, belief and religious values. During the 1970's and 1980's, Fowler (1981) built his faith theory development based on the work of others, which included aspects of Piaget's cognitive theory, Erikson's psychosocial theory and Kohlberg's moral development theory (Fowler, 2004; Leak, Loucks, & Bowlin, 1999).

Neuman (2011) combined these four theories to help nursing staff and professionals to provide care for children. As this project only explores children and adolescents from 10 to 18 years old in their attitudes towards identity, culture and language, Stages 2 and 3 are of interest to this research study.

Stage 2, identifies children aged 7 to 12 years old as at the "Mystical-Literal" stage. Neuman (2011) summarized this stage as "logical, systematic, concrete thinking *(Piaget)*; competence, mastery of skills, work/play with peers *(Erikson)*; morality – not disturbing

conscience or social sensitivity, showing respect/duty, obeying rules *(Kohlberg)*; fantasy confined to play, God as anthropomorphic, dealing fairly and reciprocally with people, symbols, literal *(Fowler)*" (p. 47). This stage is significant to the research as the study includes primary students in years 5 and 6, aged from 10 to 12 years, when observing students' response to the student questionnaire.

In Stage 3, the age is defined between 12 to 21 years, and is described as, "Synthetic–Conventional". In summary, Neuman (2011) described this stage as "abstract thinking, analytical, *(Piaget)*; peers' paramount, faith in self *(Erikson)*; majority rules, exception if violate welfare of person; laws for mutual good, cooperation *(Kohlberg)*; God as companion, guide, support, loving; sees the "ultimate" in terms of interpersonal relationships; can reflect on symbols and values, and the system of beliefs as a system *(Fowler)*" (p. 47). This stage is significant to the research study when observing the responses from students participating in the questionnaire survey and in focus groups.

Religious identity formation is one of the important components forming the adolescent's identity construction. However, the limitation of Fowler (1981) and of Erikson (1950) is their failure to deal with the multicultural and ethnic identity and diaspora context, which this research attempts to do. The next section addresses this gap.
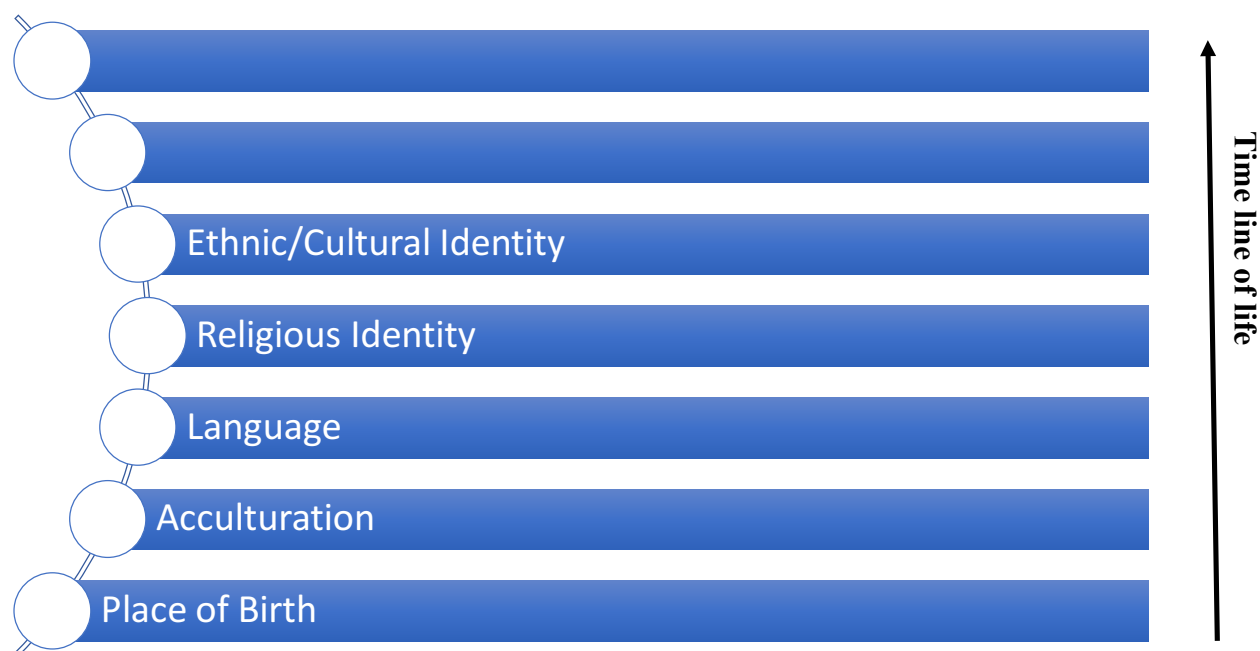
Figure 2.5 Researcher's perspective on components of identity

Two are left blank purposely to represent new layers of identity added in the course of life.

Bouma (2006) offers an alternative view point where he highlights in the 20th Century, religion and spirituality provided identity and meaning, but in the 21st Century, it is about production and maintenance of hope, through actions, beliefs, practices and places. This is significant to this thesis in the role of the school, church and community in supporting students and families, in particular, relating to the grief, and events in Egypt.

2.5   Step 6: Diaspora Studies

The study of diaspora is not a new concept nor is it a new term. Accordingly, to Gilroy (1993), 'diaspora' was a term which referred to the movement of the Jewish communities from their home land in ancient times. Today it occurs due to globalisation, the movement of people, culture and language, and the establishment of communities in new lands (Gilroy, 2003).

Braziel and Mannur (2003) postulate two premises on the importance of diaspora studies. The first is to view diaspora as rubrics of nationalism and nations while building an understanding of the people and the nation states. The second premise is that diaspora offers "myriad, dislocated sites of contestation to the hegemonic, homogenising forces of globalization". This is a result of the overwhelming global movement of people that has forced us to think globally and locally on the significance of diaspora studies. Thus, diaspora studies need a new paradigm of thought, as suggested by Braziel and Mannur (2003) with their conclusion and their own caveat on the wake of 11th September 2001, diaspora studies need to "rethink the contours of citizenship, migration and belonging globally" (p. 17).

Bartram, Poros and Monforte (2014) define diaspora as a population that is dispersed over more than one area (territory), having a salient durable relationship to a common homeland, identity and origins. Flores (2009, p.15) states "diaspora has the ring of antiquity, yet the term is a favoured keyword of contemporary social theory and public discourse". Flores (2009) suggests the term and consensus in defining diaspora is elusive. Until the 1990's, the diaspora has been exclusive to Jewish and African situations (Flores, 2009). As the global movement of people, the concept and context of diaspora as Flores (2009) suggests it is in "its current appeal and multiple meanings attest to massive demographic movement and resettlement at an unprecedented scope and scale, and the need to elaborate names and concepts with which to organise our knowledge of those new conditions" (p. 16).

The study of diaspora is diverse, as it includes other types of identities. Braziel and Mannur (2003) in describing diaspora as a rigidity of identity to include ethnic, gender, religion, and national, and not to discount the history of its people, where people are scattered and being collected "into new points of becoming" (p. 3). Hall (2003) expresses the concept of "becoming as well as of being. It belongs to the future as much as to the past" (p. 326). Over the past three decades, diaspora studies have been diverse and sometimes confronting, where older barriers have been broken down. Hall (2003) provided a prophetic view in his time to express the emergence of a changing global landscape, of a "new world" evident in the "beginning of diaspora, of diversity, of hybridity and difference" (p. 244). Hall (2003) describes diasporic identities, where identities are constantly reproducing and constantly changing and transforming, as diaspora identity is fluid, characterised by constant difference, towards a new hybrid identity.

Cohen's (2008) framework divides diaspora characteristics of groups into four phases. The classical phase where diaspora was confined to the Jewish experience, then to other groups of people, including the Greeks, the Irish, the Armenians, the Africans and the Palestinians.

In the second phase, Cohen (2008) describes the period of the 1980's and beyond, where different people, including political refugees, ethnic migrants, racial migrants and expatriates were looking for new homeland.

The third phase, Cohen (2008) writes, has "social constructionist sought to decompose two of the major building blocks" (p.1) demarcating and delimiting the diaspora, the religious communities and their homeland.

The fourth phase, Cohen (2008) describes as a phase of consolidation "marked by a modified reaffirmation of the diasporic idea, including its core elements, common features and ideal types" (p. 2). Cohen (2008) explains further by identifying five different types of diaspora to show the complexities and broad understanding attached to diaspora. These five types are victim, labour, trade, imperialist and de-territorialized diaspora. The victim diaspora is associated with refugees. The labour diaspora are seekers of job opportunities in a new land. The trade diaspora are professional and business opportunists in new migrant lands. The imperialist diaspora are the colonist settlers such as the colonial powers of yester year in the British rule, the French and the Russian empires. The de-territorialized diaspora includes the

religious diaspora, hybrid, cultural and post-colonial phenomena. Safran (1991) states the diaspora community refers to categories of people, such as, "expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities"— individuals who have been "dispersed from a specific original centre to two or more peripheral, or foreign regions" (p. 83).

The above discussion shows the broad understanding and diverse views on diasporic studies which is elaborated by Safran (2004): "Diaspora is a concept that is being used so widely that it has become an academic growth industry – not only in political science, but also in anthropology, sociology, psychology, religious studies, history, and even literature" (p. 9). Safran (2004) suggests diaspora has a special condition that includes social and political surroundings in the host country. It is the ability of communities to establish their identity in the host country. One of the driving forces for communities in diaspora is to establish their communal identity through their religion (Bonnerjee, Blunt, McIlwaine & Pereira, 2012). This is echoed by Williams (1988) when he states "immigrants are religious - by all counts more religious than they were before they left home - because religion is one of the important identity markers that helps them preserve self-awareness and cohesion in a group" (p. 11).

The establishment of religion as an identity marker allows expression through customs, dress, cuisine, place of worship, rituals, language, culture, community gatherings and events, and their preservation of their heritage.

Immigrants migrating to the United States also brought their religion with them (Warner 1998). The significance of migrants exporting their religion from their homeland origins highlights the importance of their religious identity intertwined with their heritage and ethnic identity. Warner (1998) states, "people migrating to the United States bring their religions with them, and gathering religiously is one of the ways they make a life here. Their religious identities often (but not always) mean more to them away from home, in their diaspora, than they did before, and those identities undergo more or less modification as the years pass" (p. 3). Migrants adapt to their new environment, through integration and assimilation of culture, language and the identity of the host country. Warner (1998) highlights the force of diaspora

stimulating and igniting "immigrants and their offspring to adapt their religious institutions to American conditions and in the process they often interact with religious communities already established there. The religious institutions they build, adapt, remodel, and adopt become worlds unto themselves, "congregations", where new relations among the members of the community – among men and women, parents and children, recent arrivals and those settled are forged" (p. 3). As Hall (2003) noted for the Afro-Caribbean community in the United Kingdom that "this was - is - the 'Africa' that "is alive and well in the diaspora" (p. 240). This is diaspora, for communities adapt, adopt, assimilate and integrate into their new surroundings and new homeland.

There have been numerous ethnic community studies considering the construction of ethnic identity within Australia, such as the Chinese (Xu & Moloney, 2014); the Greek (Rosenthal, Moore & Taylor, 1983; Rosenthal, Whittle & Bell, 1989); the Italian (Rosenthal, et al., 1983; Rosenthal, et al.,1983; Rubino, 2015); the Japanese (Moloney & Oguro, 2015); the Lebanese (Batrouney & Batrouney, 1985; Collins, et al., 2011); the Macedonian (Najdovski, 1992); the Maori - New Zealand (Green & Power, 2010); the Polish (Johnston, 1965); the Serbian (Procter, 2000); the Tamil (Kandiah, 2008); and Vietnamese (Thomas, 1999). These groups establish communities in diaspora, a home away from home, in this case, on Australian soil.

Najdovski (1992) highlighted the importance of the role of the church in the Macedonian community to strengthen traditions, customs, culture, and language. The involvement of the community to establish a Macedonian church on Australian soil in the 1960's proved fruitful, with four churches by the 1990's. This was to ensure the maintenance of Macedonian identity, culture and language through its many organisations, media agencies (ethic newspapers and ethnic radio), ethnic schools and sports organisations (e.g. soccer) (Hess & Waller, 2015; Najdovski, 1992).

2.6 Step 7: Studies of Coptic Diaspora Communities

Historically, the Copts have experienced much hardship, persecution and discrimination from Government officials and radical Muslims since 642 AD (Zeidan, 1999), making them second class citizens (Langohr, 2001). For the Copts, Egypt is their home and origin - they are the indigenous people of Egypt (Pennington, 1982; McCallum, 2007; Van der Vliet, 2009). Van der Vliet (2009) discusses the construct of the Copts as "modern sons of the

Pharaohs" (p. 290) in the 20th century literature. Rowe (2001, p.87) highlights the Copts' objection to being called a "minority" as secondary status citizens (Zeidan, 1999), minority "scapegoats" (Zeidan, 1999), and as a "traditional minority" (O'Mahony, 2006, p.501) in a land where they identify themselves as thoroughly Egyptian and Christian.

Modern Coptic emigration from Egypt commenced in the 1950's to the USA, Canada, Europe and Australia (International Migration Digest, 1966; Pennington, 1982). For the Copts to escape the constant discrimination, persecution and hardship from their fellow countrymen, they started their liberation by emigration in the 1950's (Sedra, 2012). To understand the movement of Copts emigrating and migrating to other countries and establishing Coptic communities in diaspora, there is a need to commence with a brief outline of Egypt's revolutions in the 20th century (Van der Vliet, 2009).

The first major revolution was Egypt gaining independence from British rule on 28th February, 1922 (Van der Vliet, 2009; Zeidan, 1999). The second saw the overthrow of the Egyptian aristocrat King Farouk from the palace by Nasser on 23rd July, 1952 (Pennington, 1982). These two Egyptian revolutions took place in the first half of the 20th century giving Egypt a new page in its history of change.

From 1952 to 2017, Egypt went through five changes of government (Nasser, Sadat, Mubarak, Morsi and Sisi) in the second half of the 20th century, and as Pennington (1982) has highlighted, the discrimination against Christian Copts in the public government and private sectors saw tension between church and state. Zeidan (1999) noted that systematic violence against the Copts by Muslim radicals in Asyut and Minya in Upper Egypt from the 1970's to 1990's was to destabilise the government, where many Copts, both lay and priests, were killed, with burning of churches and destruction of property.

This continued into the 21st century, when several atrocities against the Copts in Egypt led to many lives being lost. The most notable ones were:

- the killing of 21 Copts at Kosheh Massacre – 2nd January 2000
- 6 Coptic Christians killed in Naj Hammadi – 7th January 2010

- a car bomb parked outside the Saints Church in Alexandria killing 23 Copts and injuring 97 people - 1st January 2011
- 27 Copts killed at the Maspero massacre – 9th October 2011
- the overthrow of the Morsi Government which saw the Muslim Brotherhood on a rampage burning over fifty churches and destroying Christian properties all over Egypt over a 24-hour period – 13th August 2013
- 21 people were beheaded by ISIS in Libya on 12th February 2015 for being Coptic Christians
- 21 Coptic Christians killed when a suicide bomber entered St Mark's church and detonated a bomb – 11th December 2016.
- The most recent this year has been the Palm Sunday bombing on April 9th

The above are only samples of the Coptic Christians' experience in Egypt. Besides this, there has been constant persecution, harassment and discrimination in education, government and military appointments (Pennington, 1982; Zeidan, 1999), as well as forced marriage of girls to Muslim men (Tadros, 2013).

At the revolution in 2011, tens of thousands of Copts fled Egypt to safe havens in diaspora (Sedra, 2012). The Copts saw the revolutions as an opportunity to be equal class citizens in their own land. Emigration was the only chance for Copts to be equal citizens in a new land. And here the story commences as to why Copts choose to emigrate.

Since 1950's, the Copts have emigrated to over 60 different countries in 794 cities of the world with and over 500 churches and communities have been established in the process (Coptic World). The largest Coptic communities in diaspora reside in the USA, Canada, the UK and Australia with 12 Dioceses and 321 established churches and communities.

The Coptic World website registry highlights that the Coptic Orthodox Church worldwide and over one third of the Bishops of the Coptic church reside in diaspora. The main immigration countries focused on by the Copts were the USA, Canada, Europe, Australia, and selected Arabic countries such as the Gulf States and Libya (Zeidan, 1999).

With migration, the Copts also took the church to their new homeland. To serve the Copts in diaspora, the Church sent priests to these new communities and Bishops for pastoral care and to maintain a relationship with the mother church of Egypt (Brinkerhoff, 2016). The result of Coptic emigration to the West gave the opportunity for the Coptic church to be a diaspora church community (O'Mahony, 2008). Sedra (2012) noted that the Coptic diaspora relies heavily on Coptic TV satellite stations to broadcast community news from the motherland of Egypt. This now leads to a discussion on studies available on the Coptic diaspora.

Research attention to the Coptic diaspora has been limited. A study conducted by Brinkerhoff (2016) on the Copts living in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia focused on their attitude towards giving and helping their people in Egypt and the mother church in Egypt. Another study conducted by Brinkerhoff (2016) on Coptic diaspora focusing on assimilation and heritage identity in the USA showed that Copts in America have assimilated and stated "assimilation does not have to yield a loss of the heritage culture and associated religious values and practices" (Brinkerhoff, 2016, p.482).

Marzouki (2016) conducted a study on the Coptic diaspora in the USA and the relationship with the motherland of Egypt. The study found the Coptic Orthodox church played a key role in fostering and consolidating the relationship between the Copts in the USA and in Egypt (Marzouki, 2016). One of the remarks made by Marzouki (2016) that is important to this thesis is, that "no comprehensive study of the history and sociology of Copts living in the United States has been published in English" (p. 262). This thesis fills a gap by presenting a study on identity, culture and language in a Coptic school in Australia. Botros (2005) did a dissertation on the Coptic diaspora in North America and on the establishment of the Coptic community in Canada. The study is a narrative of the Coptic community in the USA and Canada providing a sociological perspective of the land of immigration and the role of the church in diaspora.

Severo and Zuolo (2012) conducted an Egyptian e-study on the diaspora and made comments on Copts living in Germany and in Italy. Their findings showed Copts living in Germany were highly skilled and integrated into German society, and links with the motherland of Egypt were weak (Severo & Zuolo, 2012). The Copts living in Italy were highly skilled and integrated into Italian society and did have a connection with Egypt (Severo & Zuolo, 2012).

de Souza and Rymarz (2004) conducted a study of the perceptions of young Australian Copts at two Coptic schools in Melbourne. The study focused on students' attitude towards religious practice and spirituality and the transmission of the Coptic traditional religious core values (de Souza & Rymarz, 2004). While this study was amongst the first research in the area, it did not explicitly address the construction of identity, culture and language. The current study fills this gap by addressing, at this later critical point in time, the construction of identity, culture and language of young Australian Copts living in Australia.

The above review indicates there has been limited research attention to Coptic communities in diaspora. The review indicates the need for further research in diaspora, with migrant churches central to their communities, assimilated and integrated into Australian society. This research is of further importance as the Copts in Australia will celebrate fifty years in Australia in 2019. As this case study is situated within the Australian context, it is important to briefly consider how this context itself has been constructed. Thus, the following section considers the nature of the Australian multicultural context.

2.7 Step 8: Multicultural Australia

The founding fathers of the Australian Federation (1901), produced a particular definition of Australia's way of life, language and religion, reflecting the values of the time (Crozet, 2008). Jupp and Clyne (2011) have stated that this process, through the sectors of government, economy and education implied a sense of linguistic and cultural superiority for white British English-speaking Australia. The Australian Federation movement proposed that Australia needed only one language for Australian national unity. This notion affected two communities that were active in their own heritage language – the German and Italian communities – influencing their native newspapers and schools (Crozet, 2008). After World War II, needing an increased labour force, Australia received a European migrant intake. Australia demanded that new migrants adapt and assimilate into the Australian way of life, forgoing their origins, culture and language.

In 1973, the Whitlam Government designed Australia's multicultural policy, finally ending the White Australia policy (Jones, 2000). Jupp (1996) describes multiculturalism as ending "…the belief that all other cultures were inferior to and incompatible with the mainstream culture of White British Australia. It accepted that immigrants would continue to speak their

own languages and would try to pass on to their children a sense of pride in their origins…"
(p. 6).

While the notion of 'Multicultural Australia' is the positive celebration of many cultures and
diversities of language, ethnicity and religion, it has been subject to criticism (Hage, 1998;
Welch, 2016). 'Multicultural' events were most frequently about 'visible' culture only, food
and festivals, without in-depth engagement and frequently omitted to include Aboriginal
peoples and their languages and culture. The notion continues to draw circles around
communities. Hickling-Hudson (2003) for example, has offered a powerful critique of the use
of 'multicultural' in education in Australia. She asserts that 'multicultural' continues to place
boundaries around human groups by the idea of 'culture' carrying within it residues of older
beliefs about race and nation.

Nevertheless, if we accept that the term 'multicultural Australia' signifies the diversity of the
Australian community, several scholars have made observations of its parameters.
Jones (2000) has defined multicultural Australia as having three dimensions: cultural identity,
economic efficiency and social justice. **Cultural identity** is defined as the right of
Australians to share and express their language, religion and cultural heritage. Bouma has
shown that Australia has become a multicultural and a pluralist religious society (Bouma,
1995), characterised by religious diversity (Bouma, Ling & Pratt, 2009) and multi-faith
experience (Bouma, 2012). Australia may be defined as a mosaic of religious and cultural
landscape, where spirituality, religion and culture are practiced by faith communities
(Bouma, 2006). **Economic efficienc**y encourages development and usage of the talents and
skills of all Australians. The third property, **social justice** advocates opportunity and equality
for all Australians regardless of their birth, ethnicity and race (Jones, 2000).

Phillips' (1998) extensive study of Australian identity concluded with three different
parameters. The first parameter focuses on a shared belief of everyday life of "a broad set of
shared understandings within Australia about its people and values, common languages,
symbols and practices which help to constitute them as Australians" (Phillips,1998, p.282).
The second parameter focuses on beliefs, attitudes and values held by the Australian public.
The third parameter is national pride. These parameters will be considered as an underpinning
basis to shed light on students' understanding of being Australian.

2.8   Step 9: School Studies

This study's focus on students in a school community has been informed by various school research studies. Schools have their own particular characteristics. Hough et al. (1997) describe schools as a social complex system that has inputs, processes and outputs. The study of schools leads to an understanding that schools have a sense of purpose, shared core beliefs and vision, relationships between students, teachers and parents, a school community and a relationship with its community.

School studies also share a paradox that needs to be understood, as Hough et al. (1997) write, "to develop new beliefs that are necessary for success in a global world, while at the same time retaining those traditional beliefs that are of enduring local and tribal value" (p. 105).

Understanding a school setting will help understand the school's core value in how it deals with its students. One of these values is pastoral care. Calvert and Henderson (1995) write about pastoral care as follows: "Pastoral care is concerned with the welfare of pupils and the help which they need to develop personal and social skills and understanding that will be of use to them in later life" (p. 70).

Why study schools? The value of studying schools is to understand how they are managed, the educational welfare of the students and to provide recommendations for change (Calvert & Henderson, 1995). Thus, studying a school setting provides opportunity to understand perceptions, visions and values, to understand school climate and culture and the structures in place there. Wilcox and Gray (1995) suggest studying a school provides opportunities for educators to document findings, to confirm issues and to reinforce their findings for the betterment of the school community. In a study of 117 local educational authorities in Wales and Britain, Brown and Ralph (1995) collected evidence by listening to staff, formal and informal discussion groups and surveys. The positive outcome of their study resulted in understanding of the cultural attitudes in the schools and their recommendations to those schools made positive changes in managing and reducing stress. Similar studies conducted in England and Wales have used postcodes to determine a school's catchment (Gibson & Asthana, 2000; Burgess, Greaves, Vignoles & Wilson, 2014). Factors in parent choice of a faith-based school and the distance from home have been the subject of several studies both in Australia and abroad (Holloway, Hubbard, Jöns & Pimlott-Wilson, 2010).

To ascertain the possible role of the school in the formation of student identity, this section focuses on student perceptions of their school. In the Australian context, a faith-based school is referred to as a non-government school and categorized specifically as either a Catholic or an Independent school (Striepe, Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2014). Most independent schools have an affiliation with a religious organization. The faith-based school has been part of Australian education for over 150 years catering for full-time students (Striepe et al., 2014). In this study, the Coptic school is a faith-based school with a religious affiliation with the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria. Bouma (2006) has written that "…faith based schools also provide an important context for religious groups to work out how to be both members of a faith and citizens of Australia, how to be Australian Muslims, Australian Catholics or Australian Lutherans" (p. 182).

Peterson and Deal (1998) defined school culture as the values, beliefs, norms, rituals and traditions built into the school over time. Understanding schools as a living organization may be best described by Ogbonna (1993) as "values, norms, beliefs and customs that an individual holds in common with members of the social unit or group" (p. 42). The data extracted from the focus groups showed similar findings on school culture as defined above. These represented several threads which are intertwined and overlapping, expressed in values and school routines.

Hough et al. (1997) in a school case study at Gilmore Primary school (in Canberra, Australia) provide a description of the school by asking four questions. These questions focused on the children, such as 'what are Gilmore children like?', 'how do they best learn?', 'what do Gilmore children need to learn?' and 'how do we know our children have learnt?' (Hough et al., 1997, p.139). The findings of these four questions gave a greater understanding of the school community, of teachers' expectations and strategies for effective learning. The teachers gained a better understanding of their students and the school community shared in understanding the students (Hough et al., 1997). This is the purpose of this project, to gain evidence-based understanding which will inform the provision of better education and welfare support of students.

2.9 Step 10: One School educational context

As described above (see Chapter 1, Section 1.9) this thesis focuses on St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox College at Wattle Grove. This thesis is not about the teaching in the school, but

about students' experience and identity construction within the school environment. Although there are some aspects of their life in the school environment, this section pays attention to learning models within the school that may impact on student development.

The thesis acknowledges the learning models that have supported 'whole school' growth in recent years in the case study school. The researcher can attest from his previous role, that these have included a focus on critical thinking, using for example De Bono's six thinking hats (Kivunja, 2015).

Programs in Coptic Orthodox Studies have used the work of Fowler (Fowler, 1981; Fowler & Dell, 2006) in considering the stages of religious identity and cognitive development. The program, "Mind Matters" (Wyn, Cahill, Holdsworth, Rowling, & Carson, 2000), was used to inform the curriculum in welfare and pastoral care. The school pursues a holistic integration of spirituality into the curriculum.

The researcher, from his previous role, can state that the New South Wales Department of Education and Training model of Quality Teaching Framework (NSW DET, 2008) has been used within the school to shape teachers' practice in the learning environment. The framework advocates a model of teaching focused on three dimensions: intellectual quality, quality learning environment, and significance.
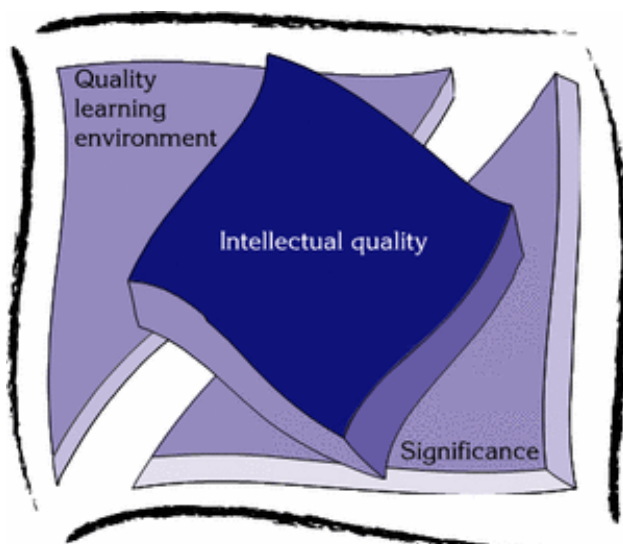
Figure 2.6 The Quality Teaching Framework (NSW DET, 2008)

'**Intellectual quality**' promotes student learning and engagement in higher order thinking by exploring depth of knowledge and understanding, constructing cross-curriculum understanding and building substantive communication.

The '**quality learning environment**' explores how teachers engage constructively to work together with students in the classroom environment by creating a positive climate focusing on learning, expectations, social support, and student direction.

'**Significance**' refers to making the learning relevant to the life of the student. This necessitates knowing and engaging with student background, culture, language and identity and being inclusive by connecting their stories (NSW DET, 2003).
And hence, ideally, quality teaching creates a culture of thinking in the classroom to enhance student's identity formation, learning outcome and ability and supports them in becoming critical, constructive and independent in their learning community.

In a book titled, *"History of the Coptic Orthodox Colleges of Sydney, Australia",* Kaldas (2016,) describes the case study school's mission and vision statement:

"St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College is a school that works in partnership with parents to create an atmosphere where Christian values and Coptic Orthodox tradition are the foundation of the school's practices and where students and staff feel secure and supported by all members of the school community. The distinctive, sincere and continuous practice of Christian love, service and humility provides students with the opportunity to develop and display high moral standard. Our students are challenged to strive to achieve excellence and success in all areas of the curriculum by attaining their full potential, having confidence in who they are as Christian individuals and becoming active participants in Church and the Australian community" (p. 8).

The values of the school focus on Christian beliefs, church traditions, feeling safe and supported, Christian love, service and humility. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) national framework endorses nine values for Australian schools:
- compassion and care

- doing your best

- fair go

- freedom

- trustworthiness and honesty

- integrity

- respect

- responsibility

- inclusion, tolerance and understanding.

The researcher developed a five-value system in a pastoral care program at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College titled "HEART", an acronym for harmony, equity, acceptance, respect and tolerance. These espoused values are integrated into the curriculum and teaching of the College.

Kinsler and Gamble (2001) state, "considerations of school culture are incomplete without consideration of students" (p. 80) where students' demographics and social economic status are considered as part of school culture. School culture creates in schools an environment that may impact on school morale, student motivation and academic culture that is influenced by "espoused values and deep assumptions of the society they serve" (Kinsler & Gamble, 2001, p.84). These espoused values are reported in this research as follows.

Hough et al. (1997) described three basic kinds of schools as communities: kinship, mind and place. **Kinship** describes communities emerging from a similar relationship, such as friends and families. **Mind** describes common shared goals and values. **Place** describes a common locale and habitat.

2.10 Summary

This chapter reviewed the diverse literature on identity, culture, language, religion, acculturation and diaspora. The literature has informed a framework and process to conduct a study examining the construction of identity in students at a Coptic school in Sydney. The selected literature reviewed has shown the diversity of disciplines that inform understanding and the gap in knowledge related to this project.

The ten-step, top-down approach showed the key fundamental theoretical structures and sequence, commencing with the sociological approach to identity and ending with the focus on one school study site in Sydney. This has formed the basis of the research background to study Coptic school students in their attitudes towards their school, church, community and family.

The global problem of displaced people has forced a new effort in understanding migration, immigration, and diaspora. The new paradigm shift for the 21st century in Australia is to understand the world within the world around us locally. The focus of this thesis is to provide a framework for one ethnic community to understand the construction of identity through the study of different parameters of identity, culture, origin, heritage, religion, and language. While a case study, this thesis may inform understanding of other Coptic schools, and more broadly, other ethnic communities in Australia. It hopes to show that the construction of ethnic identities is always complex, hyphenated, hybrid, and multiple in structure.

Since the 1950's, there has been a growing emigration of Coptic people seeking new homes. And growth in Coptic churches and church schools. And yet, there has been little research on these communities. This thesis hopes to meet the gap in the study of Coptic communities in Australia and globally. This project is of significance because it hopes to provide educators with a framework to address a heterogeneous and multicultural society, where current teachers are confronted with diverse classes in culture, identity, language and religion. This project hopes to assist and inform educators with educational and pastoral care inclusiveness and will contribute to diaspora research in Australia and globally. We now proceed to describe the design and conduct of the project.

Chapter 3 Methodology

The literature review has suggested that recent studies related to identity, culture, language and diaspora are commonly positioned within a sequential mixed method design. This chapter provides information about the participants and site, the research methods employed, the procedures and data collection. An overview of the data follows and a discussion of the credibility and limitations of the study concludes the chapter.

3.1   Overview

This chapter presents the research methods used in the study to understand students in a Coptic school community, constructing their identity, culture and language. It was a mixed method design of quantitative data, with subsequent collection of qualitative data and analysis that allowed a deeper understanding of Coptic student identity construction (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A student survey was first employed to gather data concerning the students' perception of identity, acculturation and religiosity. Focus group interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the data collected from the survey. Surveys were given to parents to further understand students' perceptions, and parent interviews were conducted to gain further insight. This chapter begins by presenting the research questions as outlined in Chapter 1, followed by a discussion on the research design and the methodological approach undertaken to answer the study questions.

3.2   Research questions

To understand the investigated study, the following research questions were posed:
1.   What are the characteristics of students at a Coptic school in Sydney?
2.   What are the students' perceptions of their identity?
3.   How do the students negotiate their identity in 21st century Australian society?

To answer these questions, the following research methodology and design were adopted.

3.3 Research methodology considered

This section discusses the chosen methodological approach taken, by outlining the characteristics of the quantitative and qualitative research, followed by the research design adopted. Outlining the characteristics of each research approach provides an understanding of the importance of using the two approaches, quantitative and qualitative data methods, as they are a dichotomy as presented in this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Dörnyei, 2007). The following is a discussion of their characteristics.

3.3.1 Quantitative data research

The emergence of social science research inspired by natural science in the 19th century gave social researchers a tool they adopted in their investigations called "scientific method". There is a three-stage approach - identifying the problem, generating a hypothesis, and testing the hypothesis (Dörnyei, 2007, p.30). This approach, Dörnyei (2007) states, offers "a tool to explore questions in an objective manner, trying to minimize the influence of any researcher bias or prejudice" (p. 31).

The basis of quantitative data method is the use of numbers and statistical analysis where it will provide data results and identify salient themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The quantitative method, O'Leary (2010) describes the approach as having "a strong belief in the scientific method, the need to test hypotheses, deductive logic, the need for objectivity, and as the name suggests, the value of quantification" (p. 106). Therefore, quantitative research provides a focus on numerical variables and variance as it "conceptualizes reality in terms of variables; it measures these variables, and it studies the relationship between these variables" (Punch, 2014, p.206).

The aim of the questionnaire instrument is to investigate students' and parents' attitudes towards identity, culture and language. The questionnaire comprises the six components identified in the conceptual model. The items in the questionnaire are prepare featuring self-administration, a collection from past studies and research, and instruments, rating scales and surveys associated with the measures investigated.

This is in line with other studies such as the MEIM which have taken one major scaling measure and other scaling measures in their instrumentation. This investigation will take the

same approach as Casey-Canon, Coleman, Knudtson and Veazquez (2011), Gong (2007), and, Rosenthal and Cichello (1986). The purpose is to ensure that all the components in the conceptual model are addressed.

In a study of ethnic identity and identification measuring self-esteem, Gong (2007) utilized five different measures: demographics, ethnicity, identification with major group, national identity and self-esteem.

The final format of the design of the questionnaire, the items to be included and factors to be administered to students and parents need to be finalized as suggested above in the research design. The survey used in this research is a combination of self-administered questionnaire and scale measurements taken and modified, adapted and adopted from existing surveys, measurements and scales. The survey was first tested as a pilot study.

3.3.2   Qualitative data research

Over the past century, particularly over the last forty years (since the 1970's), social science research has developed and emerged from scientific research into the science of qualitative research in second language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2007).

O'Leary (2010) argues the goal of qualitative research is "to gain an intimate understanding of people, places, cultures and situations through rich engagement and even immersion into reality being studied" (p. 114). Miles & Huberman (1994) described qualitative data analysis as a "source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts" (p. 1).

Thus, qualitative research captures rich data through enquiry by detailed interview, focus group and observation. The term "qualitative" is defined as "an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured, in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.4). The qualitative method and approach is used to extract rich sources of data associated with cultural studies, politics, ethics, interviewing, visual methods, participatory inquiry, interpretive analysis and case study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The auxiliary role filled by the qualitative method shows the investigation process is different from the quantitative method, as it offers a modern approach to research, a post-positivism to verify and discover theories, some evaluation criteria – external and internal validity, and a structured procedure for analyzing data collected (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The qualitative researcher emphasizes "the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape the enquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.4)

According to Creswell (2007), there are five different kinds of approaches to qualitative design: narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study. "Ethnography" is defined as focusing on an entire cultural group, describing and interpreting shared values, behaviour, language and beliefs (Creswell, 2007). This study will use the ethnographic approach to investigate Coptic identity, culture and language from students and parents at a single Coptic school in Sydney.

Dörnyei (2007) argues the qualitative methodology has several strengths including that it:

- is an effective way to explore uncharted, highly complex situations
- allows the "why" questions to be answered
- builds flexibility
- broadens understanding of the issues

Dörnyei (2007) outlines salient weaknesses in the qualitative methodology:

- concerns about sample size and the issue of generalization:
- researcher's bias and idiosyncrasies affecting data analysis as well as building and concluding complex and narrow theories
- it is too time consuming and labor intensive
- it lacks methodological measure.

The two methodologies, the quantitative and the qualitative approaches, highlight their strengths and weaknesses. An adoption of a mixed method approach will be no different, as it will also show its strengths and its weakness as a methodology for collecting and analyzing data. To this, our discussion now turns to a mixed method paradigm.

3.3.3 Mixed methods approach

Denzin and Lincoln (2005), describe the mixed method approach as a direct descendant of classical experimentation, where the method presumes a hierarchy, "in which quantitative methods are at the top and the qualitative methods are relegated to a largely auxiliary role in pursuit of the technocratic aim of accumulating knowledge of what works" (p. 9).

The mixed method paradigm involves the features found in the methodologies in quantitative and qualitative data collection and the analysis of data in a single study (Dörnyei, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Mertens, 2010). The mixed method approach allows triangulation of data used simultaneously through multiple lenses and methods to achieve a deeper understanding and a greater perspective in a single study (Dörnyei, 2007; Mertens, 2010). The mixed method approach allows the researcher to systematically draw data inference through triangulation.

The research design has philosophical assumptions that provides a framework of understanding as described by Creswell & Plano Clark (2007), that it is:
"a methodology …that guides the direction of the collection and analysis and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (p. 5).

The mixed method approach extends the researcher's mind into a paradigm design giving multiple lenses and methods, encourages the researcher to think in a pragmatic and transformative manner to gain a deeper understanding of the data collected and synthesized (Mertens, 2010). The strength of the mixed method as Dörnyei (2007) philosophically states is in the triangulation of data, as it reduces "the inherent weaknesses of individual methods by offsetting them by the strength of another" (p. 43) and highlights a complementary reality.

The multi-level analysis of complex issues is a strength of the mixed method, as it allows researchers to combine numeric and qualitative data, for "words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.45).

The principles of a mixed method allow a broader audience and an outcome validity through convergence and collaboration of data sets.

Dörnyei (2007) suggests there are pragmatic weaknesses in the mixed method as it may substitute for critical and conceptual thinking. Dörnyei (2007) questions the mixed method because of the ability of the researcher to handle the numeric skills required to effectively complete quantitative studies and extract data from qualitative methods in a single study, if researchers are not trained or skilled in both methodologies. If this is the case, Dörnyei (2007) is correct in saying that the mixed method approach will do more harm than good, as the researcher will lack the skills to extract results and outcomes the he/she seeks for a successful research case study.

In developing an approach and method for this research, the approach taken by Crotty (cited by Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) provides a philosophical framework on four level conceptual research design to demonstrate a world view position within a mixed method paradigm. The philosophical framework sets four questions for the researcher to consider in designing the method.

The **first** level focuses on epistemology, on how the researcher will obtain the knowledge that will inform the research project. This research project adopts the constructivist approach to obtain knowledge and understand new knowledge by interpreting the open-ended questions in the qualitative data from the responses given by people in the world view of their own experiences.

The **second** level identifies the theoretical lens taken in this research project, which uses sociocultural and identity theories as the framework. The choice of methods used in this research is the **third** level, identified as a mixed method approach undertaken to obtain the data using both quantitative and qualitative mixed methods. The **fourth** level show the types of methods, procedures and techniques used to acquire the data through use of surveys, focus groups and interviews (Creswell, 2003). This conceptual model has been adapted to represent the design of the research study as presented in Figure 3:1

Paradigm worldview
Epistemology: constructivism

↓

Theoretical Lens
Sociocultural theory, Identity theory

↓

Methodological Approach
Choice of Mixed Methods

↓

Methods of data collection
Surveys, student focus group and parent interviews
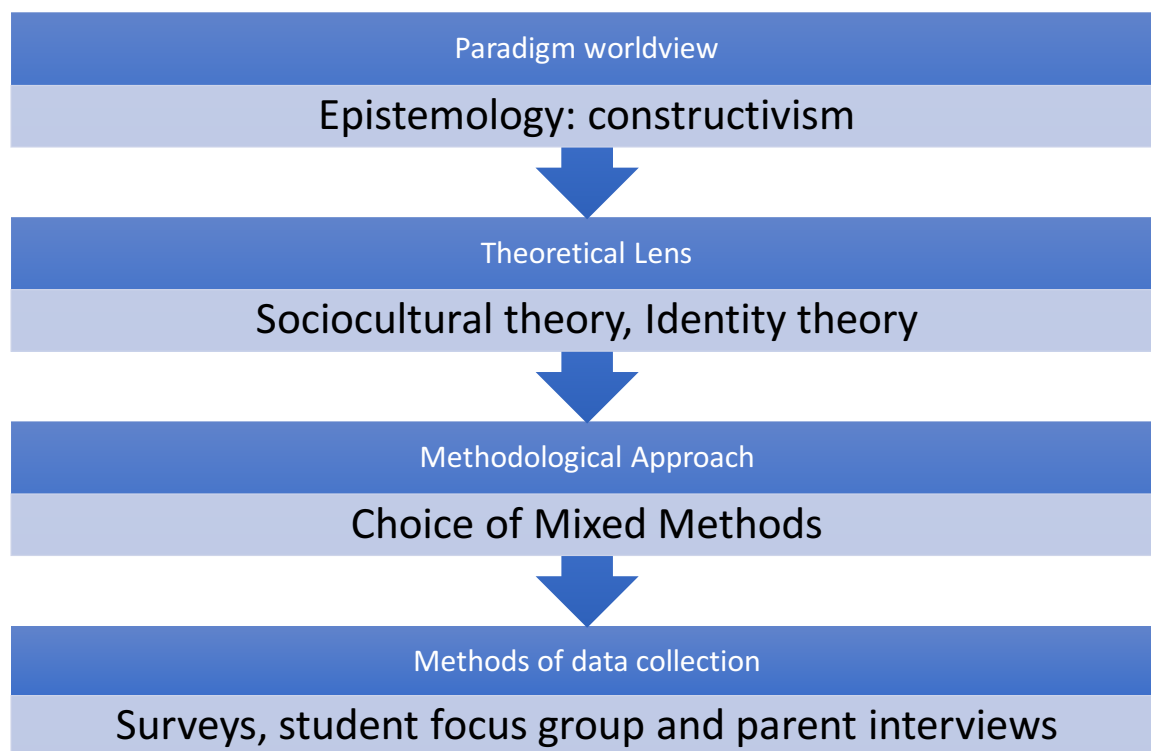
Figure 3.1 Four levels for developing a research design

The above figure shows the structural design taken in this research. The figure shows four levels commencing with **paradigm worldview, theoretical lens, methodological approach and methods of data collection**.

There are firstly philosophical assumptions that underpin a mixed method project. These philosophical assumptions are termed by Creswell & Plano Clark (2007, p.39) as 'worldview', referring to the "basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide inquiries" brought by the researcher to inform their study.

According to Hartas (2010), research in education is becoming very complex and requires a constructivist understanding and integration of social, economic, political and cultural factors. As Hartas (2010) explains, "this awareness has stimulated the integration of different worldviews to support mixed methodologies for educators to engage with enquiry" (p. 50).

The study at hand is similarly complex and requires a mixed method approach to draw the best paradigm available to the researcher to reach a deeper understanding through a systematic framework. Discussion is now turned to the research design used in this study.

3.4   The research design

The mixed method design, according to Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) "addresses the decisions of level of integration, priority, timing and mixing" (p. 68) to meet the various complexities that are inherent in the conduct of research projects. Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) found the mixed method design as "a limitless number of unique combinations" (p. 68) and they concluded there were six small sets of combinations which researchers commonly combined and frequently practiced. These six designs affirmed by Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) are:

1) **Parallel convergent design**. This is a parallel methodology that uses both quantitative and qualitative data collections which are analyzed, compared or related and then the data is interpreted.

2) **Explanatory sequential design**. This design commences with quantitative data collection and analysis, with a follow-up of qualitative data collection and analysis, then data is interpreted.

3) **Exploratory sequential design**, which commences with qualitative data collection and analysis. Then the design proceeds to quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by data interpretation.

4) **Embedded design**. This is a design that uses the quantitative/qualitative design embedded within the qualitative/quantitative method of data collection and analysis, followed by data interpretation. This is a design within a design, as the name suggests, embedded.

5) **Transformative design**, which commences with quantitative data collection and analysis followed by qualitative data collection and analysis, ending with data interpretation.

6) **Multiphase design**. This framework uses a three-stage design. The first phase is a qualitative study which informs the phase study. The second phase is a quantitative study which informs the third phase study. The third phase is a mixed method study.

The above six designs recommended by Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) suggest that all project studies may be considered unique. Thus, this signifies the importance of choosing an appropriate mixed method research design as a framework for the research study. The six

designs suggested above all use the paradigms in quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The difference between the designs are the method of the design and how/when it is used. As this study will use the principle of sequential design commencing with quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis, the researcher chose the explanatory sequential design framework.

The steps taken in this study using the explanatory sequential design are presented in Figure 3.2 showing a total of ten steps to reach the interpretation of data. The sequential steps show five 'stages' of the design. Phase 1 focus is student quantitative data collection and analysis, with determining data to be explained. Phase 2 focus is student qualitative data collection and analysis. Phase 3 is quantitative parent data collection and analysis and Phase 4 is qualitative parent data collection and analysis. Phase 5 is the interpretation and triangulation of the entire dataset.
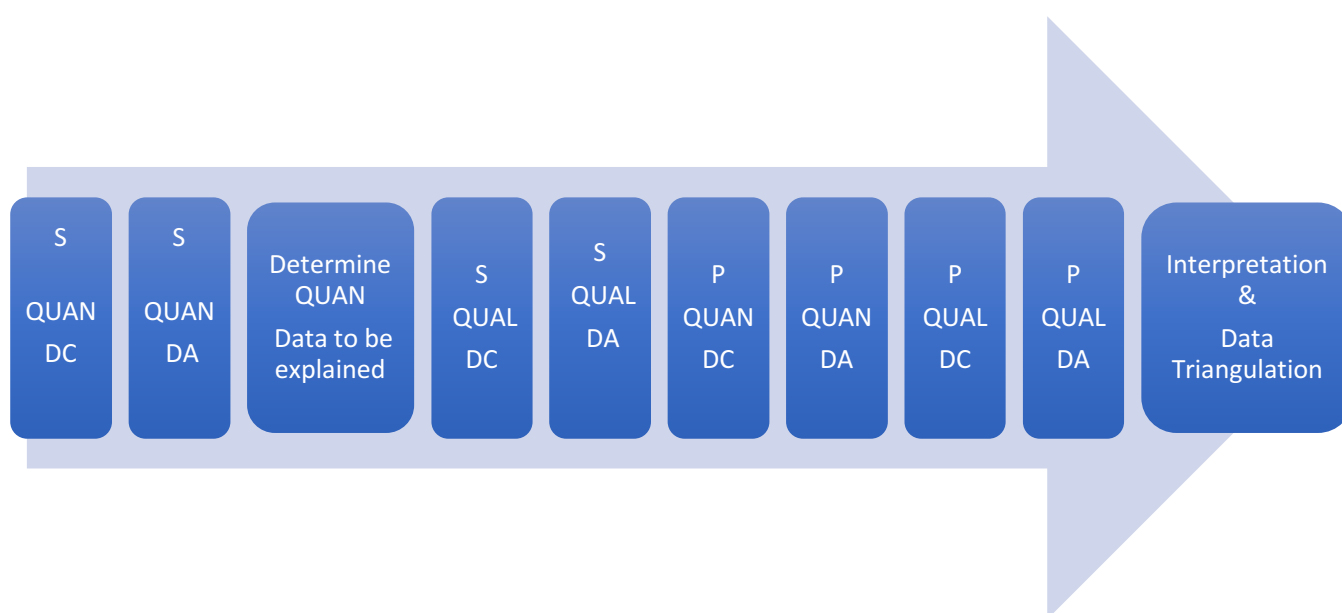
Figure 3.2 Sequential steps taken in this study

Key:
QUAN: Quantitative
QUAL: Qualitative
S: Student
P: Parent
DC: Data Collection
DA: Data Analysis

The researcher uses the explanatory sequential design framework to answer the research questions raised in this study. The next section explains the role of the researcher in this study, to which we now turn.

3.5 Researcher role in the Methodology

As detailed in Section 1.7. The researcher was full-time unpaid as a teacher/priest educator and had a pastoral role at the school. He was the Head of three departments: Orthodox Coptic Studies (the school's religious education program), Coptic Studies Department (the culture, heritage and language of the Coptic community) and Pastoral Care (overseeing the school's pastoral care program). The researcher's role as a Coptic Orthodox priest and as Head teacher at the school was problematic if the researcher engaged directly with the conduct of distribution and the engagement of the survey, focus group interviews and parent interviews. As the Coptic community has respect towards the priesthood, the participants may have responded in a way to have pleased the researcher in a certain response they may have thought to be pleasing the researcher. The conflict of interest was raised by the Ethics Committee, and the researcher recruited volunteers from the staff of the college to participate, distribute and collect survey instruments.

The researcher took the following approach to avoid direct influence on the students' responses:

a.   For the primary school surveys, the researcher saw fit for the primary school leadership and their staff to conduct the survey questionnaire. The high school questionnaire survey was directed by the Deputy Head of College to direct staff in the distribution and execution of the survey by students at the College. The surveys were collected and placed in an envelope and given to the researcher.

b.   A volunteer was recruited to conduct the 10 focus groups and the one to one parent interviews. The staff member did not have any children at the school. The staff member was not related to the researcher. The staff member did not teach Coptic Studies at the school. The staff member was an administrator respected by students, staff and parents. The researcher received advice from the supervisor both orally and by email on the interview process, giving time for the participants to respond and to reflect on their response when possible. After the first interview, the interviews were monitored by the researcher and the supervisor. The

interviewer forwarded the recording for quality control of the interview of the focus and parent interviews. The procedure was assessed as satisfactory.

c.   The audio recordings were listened to

d.   The transcripts are the actual recordings of the interviews, and accordingly were not altered for grammar or for final production.

e.   The quotations are exact, unaltered from transcript.

f.   A pilot run was conducted on the survey instruments with selected parents whom the researcher knew by email and a test run conducted through Monkey Survey.

g.   The focus group questions and parent interview questions were piloted.

3.6   Participants and site selection

3.6.1   Student participants

This study involved 326 primary and high school students enrolled at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College in 2012 who participated in the survey questionnaire. The characteristics of student participation were from the primary school in Years 5 and Years 6. The high school participation were students in Years 7 to Years 12. Student's age range from ten years to eighteen years old with both genders. Table 3.1 show student's gender, school year and age of students.

Characteristics	Students N=326 Survey Participation		
Girls	156		
Boys	156		
Class Year	**N= Students**	**Age**	**N= Students**
Blank	6	Blank	7
Year 5	28	10	19
Year 6	32	11	29
Year 7	35	12	37
Year 8	42	13	36
Year 9	42	14	41
Year 10	44	15	52
Year 11	46	16	46
Year 12	48	17	45
		18	14

Table 3:1 Demographic information about students who participated

The focus group interviews attracted 41 students who volunteered to participate in the focus group interviews. Table 3.2 shows a summary of student gender, age range and place of birth.

Gender	N= Number	Age Range	Born in Australia	Born in Egypt	Born in Saudi Arabia
Male	22	12-18	19	3	-
Female	19	12-18	14	4	1
			33	7	1

Table 3.2 Summary of Focus Group Students

3.6.2 Parent participants

Thirty-one parents who had children at St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox College in 2013 voluntary participated in the survey and ten parents participated in the one-to-one interviews with no financial incentive. Most parents were professionals working in Sydney. The parents were first or second generation Coptic Australians. The parents either lived near the school or were distant travelers. Ten parents volunteered for one-to-one parent interviews. Table 3.3 is a summary of the parents' demographic.

Gender	N=Number	Age Range	Australian Born	Overseas Born
Male	2	36-42	1	1
Female	8	32-50+	1	7

Table 3.3 Parent Demographic information

3.6.3 Case Study school

As noted in Chapter 1, the case study is a K-12 co-educational school in South West Sydney, Australia. It was the first Coptic School to be established in Sydney. The school was founded by the Very Rev Fr Marcos Tawfik in 1996 with the support of parents and the Coptic community in Sydney wishing to provide for their children an education that is balanced with Christian values and Coptic Orthodox Christian traditions.

This study used participants who were students and parents at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College. St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox College may be regarded as a sample population of a cross-section of the Coptic community living in Sydney. Student demographics showed students came from different economic backgrounds and different church parishes and the school attracted students from many suburbs across Sydney.

The sampling method used to carry out the research was 'stratified form' sampling. Lynn (2002) defines the aim of stratification is, "to guarantee that the sample reflects the structure of the population, at least in terms of one or more important variables" (p. 190). It is

anticipated that the strata will be representative of the Coptic community in Sydney. As with all sampling methods, the stratified approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Its main strength lies in allowing the researcher to have control over the strata population within a sample (Neuman, 1994). The main weakness of the stratified approach lies in the fact that the sampling population cannot be partitioned into subgroups (O' Leary, 2010).

3.7   Data collection methods

3.7.1   Construction of Survey instruments

O'Leary (2010) provides an effective approach to developing survey questionnaires. The ten steps suggested by O'Leary (2010) were used as a framework to construct a questionnaire for this study. The steps were:

1.   operationalize concepts for variables to be measured

2.   explore existing instruments - research available surveys and whether the instruments, surveys and questionnaires may be modified, adapted and adopted

3.   draft new questions

4.   decide on response scales and categories, such as the Likert Scale that has one to four categories, 1 - strongly agree to 4 - strongly disagree

5.   review questions

6.   rewrite questions

7.   order questions for better effective flow

8.   provide written instructions to avoid any ambiguity and confusion

9.   ensure layout and design are clear, professional, logical and presentable

10.   write covering "Information and Consent Form" letter to introduce the questionnaire and the project, including study aim, objectives, confidentiality, anonymity and a statement to reassure the participant that he/she may withdraw from participation if they feel uncomfortable at any stage on commencement of completing the questionnaire (See Appendix D on letter sent to parents).

The above framework was used in this study.

Dörnyei (2007), in developing and piloting questionnaires, suggested drawing up a pool of questions the study seeks to answer. After drawing the initial list, Dörnyei (2007) suggested seeking trusted friends to go through the items and requesting feedback until the final items are constructed into a complete survey.

This process of construction was used in the survey questionnaire. The initial survey featured a pool of 176 scales plus demographic questions. The trusted friends in determining the final survey construction as suggested by Dörnyei (2007) were the researcher's supervisors. The initial pool of 176 scales was reduced to 52 scales. The scales chosen were reduced to scales that had a proven and tested reliability (see section on Pilot Study).

The final survey (Appendix H) consisted of 71 scale items. The scales included items taken from three different scales, all tested and demonstrated to be reliable (Creswell, 2003).

The scales used were:
1. MEIM (Multi Ethnic Index Measure) – 12 scale items by Phinney and Ong (2007)
2. Acculturation – 30 scales adapted from 2 scales:
    a. Orthogonal Cultural Identification scale by Beauvis and Oetting (1998) (6 scales)
    b. Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans –II by Cruellar et al. (1995) (27 Scales)
3. Religious scales – 10 scales adapted from Worthington et al. (2003).
4. Demographics – 19 open-ended and closed-ended questions were used to extract student and parent demographics

Instrument	Source	Focus	Items	item no. on the survey
1. MEIM	Phinney and Ong (2007)	Exploration, commitment, attachment & belonging	12	1 - 12
2. Acculturation	**1**.Orthogonal Cultural Identification scale by Beauvis and Oetting (1998) (6 scales) **2.** Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans – II by Cruellar et al. (1995) (27 Scales)		30	13- 42
3. Religiosity	Worthington et al. (2003).	Religious commitment	10	43-52
4. Demographics	Self-written during the pilot study	Extract demographics	19	53-71

Table 3.4 The Three Sources of items in the Student/Parent Survey

The aim of the quantitative survey was to investigate students' and parents' attitudes towards identity, belonging, culture, community, language and religion. This research project thus chose to use these three well-established, reliable scales plus 19 demographics to answer the three research questions in the case study. Some information is given about each scale in the following section.

3.7.2   Construction of the Student/Parent Survey Instrument (See Appendix H)

3.7.2.1 Ethnicity

"Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure" abbreviated as MEIM (Phinney, 1992), measures ethnicity. MEIM has been used directly, adapted and included as part of the administered instrument in ethnic studies. Different researchers used the original Phinney (1992) 12-item scale (Casey-Canon, Coleman, Knudtson and Velazquez, 2011; Phinney, 1992; Dandy, Durkin, McEvoy,

Barber and Houghton, 2008). Others have used a 14-item scale (Germain, 2004; Worrell, Conyers, Mpofu & Vandiver, 2006).

The proposed study will use an adapted version of the 14-item scale by Phinney (1992). Five items measure ethnic identity - items 1, 2, 4, 8, 10 and seven items measure affirmation, belonging and commitment - items 3, 5, 6, 7, 9,11, 12. Results provided by Phinney (1992) reflect the 14-item scale as reliable, $\alpha = 0.80$. This study will use a 12-item scale. Participants will be asked to respond to statements such as, "I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as history, traditions and customs" (item 127) and "I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my ethnic group" (Item 128).

3.7.2.2 Acculturation

The study used 33 scaled items from two scales to measure acculturation:

a) Six scaled items were modified and adapted from the Orthogonal Cultural Identification scale by Beauvis and Oetting (1998). The responses to the statement questions were adjusted, for example the original response included "American Indian way of life", "White American way of life" etc., which were modified to "Australian way of life, Egyptian way of life". Participants were asked to respond to a statement by ticking the cultures with which they identify, "Does your family live by or follow the" with Australian culture, Egyptian culture, Coptic culture and other culture (item 4). This scale has sound reliability $\alpha = 0.8$ (Beauvis & Oetting, 1998).

b) 27 scaled items were chosen, modified and adapted to the study from the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans –II by Cruellar et al. (1995) with reliability $\alpha = 0.83$-0.91 (Cruellar et al., 1995). Participants were asked to respond to items including, "My family cooks Egyptian food" (item 163) and "My friends now are of Australian origin" (item 164).

3.7.2.3 Religiosity

The religious identity salience will be measured by the 10 items adapted from Worthington, et al. (2003). Results provided by Worthington et al. (2003) showed the scale has reliability α

= 0.88. Participants were asked to respond to statements such as "My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life" (item 187) and "I often read books and magazines about my faith" (item 192).

3.7.3   Pilot Study

The pilot study covered two phases by engaging a small number of parent volunteers and the researcher's supervisors. The first phase used a small number of parent volunteers to test the quantitative survey using an online "Monkey Survey" platform for anomalies and ease in completing an on-line survey. This phase was important as the quantitative survey was given to primary school students in Years 5 & 6.

The second phase involved the researcher's supervisors and the researcher testing the instrument items on the survey and the questions that were asked to students in focus group interviews and in parent interviews. Using the approach by Janesick (1994), the pilot study was conducted at one sitting for a brief period to review and observe the instruments. This process allowed testing the survey questions to uncover unforeseen misunderstandings in the study (Janesick, 1994). The pilot study used Willis (2005) "cognitive interviewing" techniques on the comprehension of survey and interview questions and the decision process and responses.

Two conclusions were drawn from the pilot study: it evaluated the comprehension of questions by asking what does the question ask? (i.e. question intent) and what do specific words and phrases in the question mean to the respondent (i.e. meaning of terms) and it gauged the decision process on the scaling scores used in the survey. The scaling score used in this study was based on a four-point Likert scale ranging from: 1 - Strongly Disagree; 2 - Somewhat Disagree; 3 - Somewhat Agree and 4 - Strongly Agree (Worrel, Conveyers, Mpofu & Vandiver, 2006). The use of this scale score has been tested by Worrel, Conveyers, Mpofu and Vandiver (2006) in a study sample of adolescents in Zimbabwe.

Dörnyei (2007) summaries the strength of the quantitative methodology thus: "at its best the quantitative inquiry is systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalizable to other contexts" (p. 35). With strength comes weakness, and Dörnyei (2007) highlights "quantitative

methods are generally not very sensitive in uncovering the reasons for particular observations or dynamics underlying the examined situation or phenomenon" (p. 35).

3.7.4 Focus groups and interviews

3.7.4.1 Focus group

The researcher did not take part in the interview process to avoid any conflict of interest and any form of influencing the responses given by students and parents. The researcher approached a staff member of St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College to facilitate focus groups and interviews with parents. An invitation letter was sent to parents inviting their children to participate in the focus group and the parents to be involved in the project. The letter requested parents to sign a consent form to allow their child to participate in the focus group.

As quantitative data will not be able to uncover underlying concepts and themes on the identity construction due to the nature of the collected data, the focus group will compliment this gap. Thus, the focus groups are to provide answers to questions that the survey questions cannot provide.

After the initial analysis of the survey was completed, data showed that the quantitative survey provided statistical numbers reflecting student attitudes toward questions set in the survey. The focus group questions warranted a different set of questions to extract student attitudes towards their identity or their heritage, being Coptic, Egyptian and Australian, their attitude to the school and negotiating their identity. The initial questions were piloted by asking the researcher's supervisors and a staff member at the College for their feedback on the responses received from the quantitative data. The pilot study looked at the questions that were not asked nor could they be requested due to the nature of quantitative enquiry. The questions were refined and retested against the acquired results received from the survey. The final version of the questions for the focus group was set at six questions as follows:

1. Would you say you are Coptic? What do you think makes you Coptic? When do you feel most Coptic?
2. When do you feel proud of your heritage? Why, and how?
3. What do you think makes this school Coptic?

4. Do you feel Australian as well? When? What things do you do that makes you
    Australian?

5. What do you feel Egyptian? When? What things do you do that make you an Egyptian?

6. Is there a time where you need to trade-off, balance or swap your Egyptian identity with
    your Australian identity? If so, when?

To ensure a safety net on student response, an open final question was given to students: "Is there anything else you would like to add?" This final question was added to ensure all possibilities and all opportunities were given to the students to respond to the set questions. The focus group meetings were digitally recorded by the assistant researcher. To provide information to the participants in the focus groups, a flyer was prepared noting that a digital recorder will be used, and if the participants feel uncomfortable at any time during the focus group session, they will be able to withdraw without any discussion. The flyer was used to introduce the above questions to the focus group participants and will give a scaffolding approach to how the focus group will be led by the research assistant. The flyer used the Macquarie University logo. See Appendix I for further details.

3.7.4.2 Parent interviews

The parent data interviews will be used to triangulate the student data and will be the final set of questions to be set after the initial analysis from the student survey and student focus groups have been performed. An initial discussion with the research assistant was made to gauge his response to the focus group outcomes and to provide input that was lacking from the questions that were asked in the focus group. An initial set of questions was drawn up and piloted through a meeting with the supervisors to gauge relevance and significance to the current project.

The final nine questions were set as follows:
1. Why would you say you send your children to a Coptic school?
2. How would you describe your identity?
3. What do you like about being Coptic?
4. What does it mean to you to be an Australian Copt?
5. Do you feel that you are Coptic? What sort of things do you do that make you
feel Coptic?
6. What does your heritage mean to you?

7. How do you identify with your heritage, and how does it affect your life?

8. Do you get the impression that this is a Coptic school?

9. As a parent of a student at St Marks College, what does it mean to you to be an Australian or an Egyptian and how do you associate with each of the two. Do you feel like your life is sometimes a combination between the two?

The nine questions focused on why parents send their children to a Coptic school, on describing their identity, their perspective on the Coptic school, and their understanding of heritage. Finally, parents were given an opportunity by the assistant researcher for a say by asking, "Is there anything else you would like to add". This was included to ensure that all they want to say is expressed in the interview.

A letter of introduction was prepared using the nine questions. The introduction also reminded the parents their interview would be digitally recorded for research purpose only and if parents felt uncomfortable during the interview they would have the opportunity to withdraw at any time. For further details see Appendix J.

3.8   Procedures for data collection in the case study school

The researcher introduced the research study to the whole school by giving short talks at school assembly in July and August 2012. The study was introduced to the whole teaching staff of the College at staff meetings in July and August 2012, requesting their assistance in distributing the collection of parent consent forms for student participation and the collection of survey questionnaires. Letters to the parents/carers with a consent form attached were sent by hard copy and electronic form via an email sent to all parents at the College (see Appendix D). The student data collection timeline for survey and focus group interviews was set for August 2012 to November 2013. The parent data collection time line was set for November 2013 to February 2014.

Proposed Time	Instrument	Time Allocated	Data Collection	Frequency
August 2012 (Term 3, 2012)	Quantitative Survey	Within allocated class time of 45 minutes	Primary School on-line survey Years 5 & 6	During Information Technology classes (4 classes)
August 2012 (Term 3, 2012)	Quantitative Survey	30 minutes	Year 7 - 12	Set time during August exams 2012
October 2013 (Term 4, 2013)	Qualitative Survey	30-minute focus groups	Student Focus Groups	10 groups
November 2013 – February 2014 (Term 4, 2013 to Term 1, 2014)	Quantitative Survey	30 minutes	Parent on-line and hard copy surveys	During and after school time
November 2013	Qualitative Survey	30-minute interviews	Parent interviews	10 Interviews

Table 3.5 Data Collection timeline and frequency

The Data Collection Plan timeline was adhered to (2012 - 2014). In total, the data collection period took over 18 months. This period of 18 months allowed for a comprehensive data collection using a sequential mixed method methodology.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

3.9.1 Protection of human subjects

The principle issue was the engagement of students from Years 5 to 12 at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College, for survey questionnaires and focus group interviews. The framework used to address the key ethical issues and obligations to protect human subjects followed O'Leary (2010) commending three key areas to consider: submission to Ethics of an application for approval to deal with children under 18 years of age, informed consent and ensuring safety, confidentiality and anonymity to students. Each of these are briefly discussed as follows.

Ethical considerations in the project were as per reference to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007). The present study involved collecting data from students, many of whom were under 18 years of age, thus the submission of a full ethics application was required and was submitted to the Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-committee of the Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval was given for a period of five years (see Appendix A), conditional upon the provision of an annual progress report to the Ethics Committee (reference number 5201200327).

3.9.2 Informed Consent

O'Leary (2000) stated "participants can only give informed consent to be involved in a research study if they have full understanding of their requested involvement – including time commitment, type of activity, topics that will be covered, and all physical and emotional risks potentially involved" (p. 41). O'Leary (2000) suggests seven important informed consent issues:

- participants are competent – psychologically and intellectually capable
- participation is voluntary
- the right to discontinue
- not deceived about the study
- not coerced by the abuse of power for their participation and not induced
- on competency, students at the College are all mainstreamed
- psychologically and intellectually capable. The school does not cater for students with intellectual disabilities.
- students at the college can make their own informed decisions (autonomous).

All the issues were addressed in the information letter to parents, reassuring them that participation is voluntary, of their right to discontinue, giving brief details of the study and that there would no coercing nor any form of payment, incentive or inducement. Informed permission was sought from the Head of College, relevant teachers, parents/carers and students. (See Appendix D and Appendix E).

As most of the students were under the age of 18, consent forms were required from their parents/carers to take part in the survey and the focus group interviews. Only students who had a signed parent/carer consent form participated in the survey and focus group interviews. Students who did not have a consent form did not participate.

There was no apparent risk of student psychological harm resulting from answering items on the survey instrument or participation in the focus group interviews. The same applied for parent participants. The survey instrument did not include any clinical measures on depression or other psychiatric pathology.

Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. To ensure this, students and parents were identified by pseudonyms and no names were taken or written on any of the survey forms. The completed surveys and any notes written in the focus group interviews were collected and stored in a locked filing cabinet with no access to anyone except the researcher for the required seven years, after which it will be destroyed appropriately.

3.10 Data coding and analysis technique

An inductive process was used in the analysis and coding of data. The data analysis was divided into quantitative and qualitative. The process was, in principle:
1.   Quantitative:
   a. Frequency data used for analysis
   b. Factor analysis used only on MEIM scale using the SPSS statistical program
   c. Underlying themes developed
2.   Qualitative: Focus group and interviews: a transcription of the audio MP3 files was thematically coded by content analysis devised by the researcher, as described by Neuman (2000).
3.   Triangulation: data combined for comparison and analysis.

During reading and listening to the audio transcripts, a coding system was developed using a framework of identifying words and themes surfacing from the audio and transcripts (Neuman, 2000). A code list and themes were identified and the relationship between the themes was developed as described below.

3.10.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The survey data was collected by two different methods. The primary school students in Years 5 and 6 entered their answers directly on the online survey platform using Monkey Survey. Surveys collected from Year 7 to Year 12 were manually entered. In total, 326 students participated in the quantitative survey. SPSS, a data analysis program, was used to obtain a basic statistical inference on frequency and a total percentage on the Likert Scale for all scales on the survey.

Factor analysis, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) on the MEIM scale was performed to extract factors. The quantitative data frequency and percentage provided a landscape typography of the data at hand.

In detail, before proceeding to Factor Analysis, SPSS provides two statistical tests to determine the suitability of the data collected for factor analysis. The first test is the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) value. The KMO value assists the researcher to measure whether the variables will be grouped into smaller sets of underlying factors. The KMO values varies from 0.0 to 1.0, with the value closer to 1.0 having a significant presence of factors to be extracted, and a value below 0.5-0.0 indicating a poor to no significant sets of factors.

The second test is the Bartlett Test for Sphericity which measures the test for non-normality, with smaller value less than 0.05 and closer to 0.0 indicating factor analysis may be useful. Statistical test using CPA factor analysis conducted on the twelve items of the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) scale confirmed that the data were suitable for factor analysis.

The KMO measure verified the sampling adequacy, KMO= 0.894 and the Bartlett Test for Sphericity gave a significance of 0.0. The SPSS program confirmed the two factors measuring ethnicity in exploration, commitment and attachment, with alpha reliability scores of 0.667 and 0.851.

Empirical research on MEIM scales with other ethnic communities offered by Phinney (1992), Roberts et al. (1999) and Spencer et al. (2000) have confirmed two factors in their studies. A second test was conducted to confirm two factors in the MEIM scales. Using the Component Plot in Rotated space on MEIM scales, the SPSS program highlighted two components with Cronbach Alpha reliability for component 1, with a score of 0.76 and component 2 with a reliability score of 0.76. The second test confirms the first test in having two factors to explain the multi-identity ethnic mix of students studied in this research. Other empirical studies finding the same factors are also confirmed in this research study (Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Roberts et al., 1999; Spencer et al., 2000).

3.10.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

To avoid issues relating to child protection policy, students were interviewed in focus groups. Fontana and Frey (1994) states that group interviews are called "focus group interviews" (p. 365). The researcher requested a fellow teacher at the school to volunteer to conduct the focus group interviews and to audio record the sessions. Before the commencement of the interview, an introduction letter was given to the students in the study, reminding them of their right to withdraw at any time without questions, and for students to hand over a consent form signed by their parents/carers (Creswell, 2007). The interviews were objective, flexible, persuasive, empathic and reflective which resulted in good detailed discussion in the audio recordings within the ten focus groups. The audio recorded data collected from the focus group interviews were sent to a professional to transcribe the recordings (Creswell, 2007). The minimal sample size for 30 respondents was achieved having 41 students participating in the study (O'Leary, 2010).

The transcription used allocated pseudonyms to identify the participants. The audio was sent to a professional transcriber who translated the audio into transcripts. Data was manually observed by reading and listening to it repeatedly. The transcript data was coded and recorded as a word list for each focus group. The word list was refined and observed repeatedly, to understand the underlying themes being generated within the set data. Themes and subthemes were considered for further investigation. This was repeated for both the student focus groups and parent interviews. The researcher found this was a lengthy but sound process to set and establish themes and subthemes to understand the audio data at hand

(Creswell, 2003). The overall focus was on extraction of themes and the relationship between them, to build an understanding of the students' attitude to the school, identity, culture, language, community and religion.

3.10.3 Triangulation of Data

The two data sets, quantitative and qualitative data, were compared and analyzed for similarity and difference. Data triangulation is a way of finding areas of common convergence obtained from two different measures in quantitative and qualitative data (Erzberger & Kelle, 2003). The triangulation analysis was used to find complementary and divergent of results between the two methods used in quantitative and qualitative paradigms (Erzberger & Kelle, 2003).

The triangulation of data supported the sequential mixed method approach used in this case study. This research showed that the use of mixed method design and multiple sources of data to explore the research questions for feasible answers is effective, as supported by Mackey and Gass (2005). Stake (2000) stated triangulation of data "serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen" (p. 444) which has been established in this study. The use of data triangulation minimizes bias, builds credibility, sets validity and strengthens reliability of the data, which is the next focal discussion.

3.11   Study reliability and validity

This chapter has detailed the methods of data collection and the treatment and analysis used in the sequential mixed method paradigm. It is appropriate to consider the reliability and validity to show the credibility of the study. Using Van Deth's (2003) words, "original research is based on the collection of fresh data", as presented in this study.

Observing other researchers' criteria for reliability, the practices in this project meet the advice of Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), Dörnyei (2007), Moloney (2008), Neuman (2000), and Van Deth (2003) on achieving appropriate research reliability and validity:

- it provided definition of the population and description of sample procedures
- it listed a timetable on the mixed methods used

- audio recording and transcription of data
- data coded, content analysis themes determined
- copy of questionnaire, report on design of instruments and pilot study
- research ethics and data collection
- anonymity and reporting
- method and triangulation of data
- peer checking
- respondent feedback
- the school is a sample of the community found in Sydney

Having established that the practice in the study worked towards establishing reliability and validity, the study acknowledges some limitations.

3.12   Limitations of methods used

There were some limitations in the procedures of this study, observed in reflection:

i.   The inability to attract parents from the school community to participate in the interviews and survey questionnaires resulted in only a small sample of parent participants.

ii.   The sequential mixed data took a longer time to complete data collection and analysis

iii.   There was a limited descriptive statistical analysis study on all three scales presented in this study

iv.   The use of 'snapshot' design rather than longitudinal design, meant the study was not able to include a 'time' paradigm to test identity construction and measure changes in attitude to identity, culture and language over time.

v.   Focus group questions were limited and could have added more diverse questions

vi.   Using software package in NVivo for qualitative data analysis may have reduced the time to analyse data inference

vii.   The project advertisement could have been better promoted

These possible limitations could have been avoided in light of what the researcher knows about the study now as compared to at the commencement of the research. A conclusion to the methodology chapter follows.

3.13   Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the choices made in research methodology design, to answer the three research questions on student perceptions of self, school, identity, culture and language. The process and procedure of sequential mixed method paradigm was employed to explore a school case study. The construction of the survey instrument and the choice of proven scales used was designed to give strength to the descriptive data of the study. This mixed method study uses diverse sources of data and confirmed convergence, comparison and difference through data triangulation to ensure reliability and validity. Ethical issues were addressed and described. Raw data, coding and thematic process to derive themes and sub-themes to answer the three research questions which inform the findings presented in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Overview of Chapter 4

This chapter presents the findings of the research project. The thesis aims to answer three research questions as outlined in this section. The three research questions to be answered:

Question 1: What are the characteristics of students and their perceptions of the school?

Question 2: What are the students' perceptions of their identity?

Question 3: How do the students negotiate their identity in 21st century Australian society?

To answer the above three research questions, the project used data collected from the following 3 empirical data sources:

1.   Survey data (students N= 326, parents N=31)

2.   Focus group data (students N=41)

3.   Interview data (parents N=10)

In this chapter, however, only the first two data sources will be examined. The parent interview data will be examined in Chapter 5.

The reader is reminded that in the survey data, three established scales were used to collect different types of student data (See Chapter 3, section 7). They were: (1) **Multi Ethnic Index** Measure (MEIM) (Phinney and Ong, 2007), (2) **Acculturation Scale** (Beauvis and Oetting, 1986; Cruellar et al., 1995), and (3) **Religiosity** (Worthington, et al., 2003).

The format of this chapter is divided into three main sections to answer the above three research questions:

        Section 4.2 – Answering Research Question 1

        Section 4.3 – Answering Research Question 2

        Section 4.4 – Answering Research Question 3

Some brief explanation is offered:

Section 4.2 – Answering Research Question 1

    This section presents a profile of the student demographics collected from the quantitative empirical survey data and students' perspective of their school from qualitative focus group data. The demographic reported covers place of student, gender, age, school year and place of birth. Student perspectives on language, self-identification and student aspiration are reported in this section. Student perception of the school on culture, curriculum, spirituality, learning community, the role of the school and their feelings are reported in this section.

Section 4.3 – Answering Research Question 2:

    A focus on student perception and attitude to identity is the focus of this section using the quantitative data survey and the qualitative data focus group data collected from students at the school. This section reports the findings on the student narratives and the student responses to questions asked in the focus groups. The qualitative data were taken from the focus group audio recordings and made into transcripts. The transcripts were then analysed using a process of categories and codes into thematic information. (Neuman, 2000).

Section 4.4 - Answering Research Question 3

    This section draws on conclusions and observations from the data collected, with a main focus on components of identity in Coptic students.

    As the collected data is complex and detailed, I commence with a table mapping the content presentation to answer each research question. The following Table 4.1 is a visual structure of the chapter.

Section	Empirical Source Data	Findings
Section 4.1	Overview Chapter 4	
Section 4.2 Research Question 1 - Student characteristics and student perception of school	Quantitative Survey Data	**4.2.1 Characteristics** 4.2.1.1 Gender, age, school year 4.2.1. 2 Place of Birth 4.2.1. 3 Place of Residence 4.2.1. 4 Language 4.2.1.5 Aspirations 4.2.1.6 Summary
	Qualitative Data Focus Group Data	**4.2.2 Student Perception of School** Introduction to Nature of Focus Groups 4.2.2.1 School Culture etc. 4.2.2.2 Coptic Education 4.2.2.3 Spirituality 4.2.2.4 Community 4.2.2.5 Conclusion re role of school & feelings

Section 4.3
Research Question 2
– Student perception of identity
	Answers using Quantitative and Qualitative Data
	
	Quantitative Data
	(4.3.1 - 4.3.2)
	
	Qualitative Data
	(4.3.3 – 4.3.4)
		4.3 Student Perception of identity
		
		4.3.1 Self Identification
		    4.3.1.1. Interpretation
		4.3.2. Sense of Belonging
		    4.3.2.1 MEIM
		    4.3.2.2 Factor Analysis
		
		4.3.3 Role of sense of heritage
		    4.3.3.1 Egyptian History
		    4.3.3.2 Coptic History
		    4.3.3.3 Ambivalence re heritage

Section 4.4 Research Question 3 – Components of identity identifiable in students	**Negotiation**	**4.4 Negotiation between different identities** **4.4.1 Feeling Egyptian** 4.4.1.1 Family, friends and community 4.4.1.2 Cultural practices 4.4.1.3 Language **4.4.2 Feeling Australian** 4.4.2.1 Place of Birth 4.4.2.2 Social interaction – sense of community and friends 4.4.2.3 Cultural practices 4.4.2.4 Language 4.4.2.5 Feeling multicultural – belonging to diversity

Section 4.5 Summary of Chapter 4		**4.5 Summary and Discussion of Chapter 4** **Data Analysis**

Table 4.1: Visual Structure of Chapter 4

4.2 Answering Research Question 1

This section reports the student demographics collected from student survey data.

Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of students and their perceptions of the school?

To answer this question, attention is drawn to describing student characteristics at the school.

4.2.1 Characteristics: A description of students at the school

The survey data afforded a rich source of information to describe the students at the school. Using the data collected from the survey, the following sections describe student demographics, aspects of language and student aspiration as shown above. Reporting on the student demographics includes a discussion on student gender, age and school year at school, place of birth and place of residence.

4.2.1.1 Student gender, age and school year

There were 326 students who participated in the student survey. Students report their gender as female 47.85% (N=156) and as male 47.85% (N=156) with a missing data 4.30% (N=14). Students' age ranged from 10 to 18 years, with the largest age group 15 years (N=52) and smallest age group 18 years (N=14) with students leaving the age label blank (N=7), 2.15%. The school ranged from years 5 to 12. The largest group was year 12 (N=48) and the smallest was year 5 (N=28). The project is mindful of the developmental phases represented in these age groups and the role of this in student responses (Erikson, 1998).

4.2.1.2 Place of Birth: Students, parents, grandparents

Most students (N=237, 73%) were born in Australia, with 38 in Egypt (11.7%), 32 students in 15 other assorted countries (9.8%), and 7 students did not report their place of birth (2.1%).

11 students reported either the date, month or year as their place of birth (3.4%). This may have been due to the younger age groups misunderstanding the survey item.

Students reported 20 different countries where their father was born. Most students reported their fathers being born in Egypt - 224 (68.7%). Other students reported their father's birthplace as Australia: 8 (2.5%), Sudan: 16 (4.9%) and Lebanon: 9 (2.8%). 16 other countries were represented: 48 (14.7%) and no identification was given in 21 (6.4%).

Students reported 24 different countries where their mothers were born. Most of the mothers' birthplace was reported as Egypt: 205 (62.9%). The balance reported as Australia: 19 (5.9%), Sudan: 18 (5.5%) and 21 other countries: 64 (19.6%); with no identification 20 (6.1%).

Students reported 28 different countries for their grandfather's place of birth, with the majority in Egypt: 207 students (63.5%), and a small number with an Egyptian mix, such as Egyptian Sudanese and Egyptian Lebanese: 6 (1.8%). Students also reported their grandfather's place of birth in Sudan: 16 (4.9%) and other countries: 70 (21.5%). There were 23 (7.1%) students that did not identify their grandfather's place of birth, maybe not known.

Students reported 24 different countries for their grandmother's place of birth, with the majority in Egypt: 215 students (65.9%) and Sudan: 14 students (4.3%). The final 97 students reported their grandmother's place of birth as 22 'born in other countries' 70 (21.5%) and 24 (73.6%) did not identify their grandmother's place of birth, maybe not known. The final 3 students: 1 (0.3%) with a date only and 2 (0.6%) reported "Not Applicable".

In summary, this case study, most students were born in Australia, with their parents and grandparents born overseas. Other studies in Australia and abroad have shown similar patterns in the children of migrants who have been born in the host country, whilst at least one of their parents and grandparents were foreign-born (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013; Khoo, 2004; Portes & Zhou, 1993). The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines a 'migrant' family as having at least one parent born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). This case study is thus in part a study of first generation Australian school students of migrant families.

4.2.1.3 Student place of residence

Students were given the opportunity to give their place of residence by recording the postcode and suburb in the demographics. Both postcode and suburbs were tabled to determine how close and how far was the school's catchment to attract students (Burgess et al., 2014; Gibson & Asthana, 2000).

The survey data showed students came from 68 different suburbs in Sydney 82.21% (N=268) and 17.79% (N=58) gave a blank response. The three largest groups lived in Wattle Grove 15.95% (N=52), followed by Casula 6.74% (N=22) and Holsworthy 3.99% (N=13). Other surrounding suburbs attracted 3.67% (N=10) in Glenfield, Liverpool, Moorebank, Padstow and Prestons.

To determine the distance between where students lived and the school address, the Google Maps engine was used. Students travelled from home to school in kilometres: Casula 6.5 km, Holsworthy 1.7km, Glenfield 9.0km, Liverpool 5.7km, Moorebank 3.5km, Padstow 12.5km, and Prestons 9.6km.

There were 6 students who travelled from a great distance, as far as Blacktown 0.30% (N=1), Castle Hill 0.30% (N=1), Gladesville 0.30% (N=1), Sans Souci 0.61% (N=2) and Sylvania Waters 0.30% (N=1). The Google Maps engine indicated the distance from home to school as: Blacktown 35.7km, Castle Hill 55.3km, Gladesville 34.3km, Sans Souci 24.1km and Sylvania Waters 29km.

Around 18 students live near a Coptic Orthodox Church in: Bexley 1.53% (N=5), Campbelltown 1.23% (N=4) and Macquarie Fields 2.76% (N=9). The distance indicated by Google Maps was Bexley 20.5km, Campbelltown 24.4km and Macquarie Fields 10.6km.

These results show the parents' and students' willingness, commitment and dedication to travel up to 55km for education at this school. Results also show the parents' choice of residence near a faith-based school and its community. The results also indicate parents chose to live near their church community in the belief perhaps that their family would be nurtured spiritually on a day-to-day basis. Similar studies conducted in England and Wales have used postcodes to determine schools' catchments (Burgess et al., 2014; Gibson & Asthana, 2000).

Factors in parent choice of a faith-based school and the distance from home have been the subject of a several studies both in Australia and abroad (Holloway et al, 2010).

4.2.1.4 Student language abilities

From the survey data, 70% of students reported that they can speak in the Egyptian Arabic language and 68.1% reported that they enjoyed speaking the Egyptian language. 1.5% of students reported that they could not communicate in English. 58.9% of students reported that they enjoyed Arabic music, while 42.6% of students reported watching Arabic TV. Students showed they were less likely to read and write Egyptian Arabic. Only 6.9% reported being able to read and 10.7% could write in Arabic Egyptian. 89.2% of students reported that they did their thinking in English with only 20.5% students reporting thinking in Arabic.

The results indicate a language shift from the mother tongue of Egyptian Arabic to English. Similar studies in Australia have shown first generation immigrant families losing their mother tongue language to English (Buda, 1992). This has happened globally, Russian immigrants to Germany also losing their Russian mother tongue to the mainstream German language (Michel, Titzmann, & Silbereisen, 2011).

For many of the students, Egyptian Arabic is their heritage language. Heritage language speakers typically acquire and use their language skills in a variety of contexts, including at home, with extended family and in the community (Valdés, 2005). The language input they receive may be limited to the domestic context and their understanding of syntax, vocabulary, genre and many other aspects of language, may, without formal study, develop as incomplete, before the emergence of reading and writing literacy (Montrul, 2010).

In heritage language speakers, while varieties of the mother tongue may be spoken at home, English typically becomes a dominant language at school and with peers (Oguro & Moloney, 2012). It has been observed that particularly in the secondary school age group, social and cognitive factors also commonly negatively impact on heritage speakers' development in language acquisition and willingness to use it, and complicate identity alignment with the language (Montrul, 2010). This understanding is represented in the data of the study.

In addition, Coptic may also be considered a heritage language, although Coptic is not a spoken community language. The Coptic community embraces the Coptic language as being largely limited to its role as a liturgical language within the context of the church. We reflect

on Hinton's (2001, p.9) claim that "language is the key to and the heart of culture" (Hinton 2001, p.9). According to Romaine (2008), Coptic cannot be classified as a community language as, "languages can only exist where there is a community to speak and transmit them… a community of people can exist only where is a viable environment for them to live in and a means of making a living" (p. 14). As mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.3.3, the Coptic language exists in a limited but vital role as a living liturgical language within the context of the church.

Henderson (2005) describes the Coptic alphabet as the last stage of the Egyptian hieroglyphic language of the Pharaohs. The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria has the Coptic language as the "official liturgical language, and hymns as a window to the past and thus to the true modern identity of the Copts" (Henderson, 2005 p.161). As an indication of the prevalence of Coptic, on the internet World Wide Web, there are lots of free downloads on the Coptic language, hymns and tunes, the liturgies of the Coptic Church in the Coptic language and other resources freely available on a several Coptic Orthodox Church websites (Henderson, 2005). An example of a website address is at http://st-takla.org/ that offers many resources including a download library, learning Coptic language books, Coptic books and daily readings etc. (www.st-takla.org).

The researcher has witnessed students at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College with linguistic curiosity, eager to learn, chant, and hear the Coptic language in the liturgy, hymns and chants at the school. The students may identify their knowledge and use of the Coptic language with their Coptic identity. Students can identify Coptic font letters from English and Arabic font letters and recognize the use of Coptic as a liturgical language even though they do not understand it as a community language. As Coptic is not a spoken community language in either Egypt or in diaspora, Coptic is not taught as a spoken language, even though Coptic has a rich grammar structure, vocabulary and literature in preserved religious texts.

Coptic is very much an important element of church and religious identity. Students have an aural recognition of Coptic, and it may form part of their church identity as Copts. Recently, there has emerged an argument for deeper considerations of the complex connection between heritage language, literacy and identity issues in heritage language students (Lo-Philips, 2010; Xu & Moloney, 2016).

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4.2.1.5 Student aspiration

The survey data showed that 87.73% (N=286) of students gave over 130 different occupational responses, with only 12.27% (N=40) with no indication of aspirations. The widely diverse responses given by students indicate an aspiration to succeed. Data indicate they want to emulate the professional or socioeconomic level of their parents. Students aspire to be like their parents or like one of their family members. The largest response recorded was aspiration to be a doctor 18.10% (N=59) followed by teaching 8.59% (N=28), law 4.91% (N=16), engineering 3.99% (N=13) and dentist 2.76% (N=9).

One student expressed that they wanted to be "successful" and another wrote she aspired to be "a mother". Two students wrote: "whatever God wants" and "whatever God gives me", reflecting the students' internalisation of church teaching and secure sense for the future. Four other students wanted to be: a rock star, racing car driver, a pilot, and an inventor. Five students aspired to open a business in a bakery, a childcare, and in pharmacies. One male student wrote that he wanted to be like his brother, "I want to be like my brother when he finishes university, a business leader". Two students wanted to be part of the Australian military as an army doctor and a combat medic. One student desired to be a police law enforcement officer. Only one student aspired to be a millionaire. Five students aspired to careers in sport, such as a sports doctor, sports administrator, sport scientist, sports physiotherapist and an athlete. Six students gave a different spectrum: to be a photographer, a trades-person, a store manager, a cartoonist, an artist, and a concert musician. Two students aspired to work in construction. Students who did not respond to the survey were 7.67% (N=25), with a N/A response of 1.84% (N=6) students. There were 1.84% (N=6) students who had no idea of their aspirations and 0.92% (N=3) students were not sure of their aspiration.

The above aspirations show the students appear to be motivated, inspired, and are challenged by their future, as they are influenced by their families to be successful. These results agree with other studies on Australian schools and abroad where students' aspirations are motivated by parental and teacher support influencing their future and social success, their well-being and their achievements in life (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001; Mansfield, 2010).

4.2.1.6 Summary of student characteristics

The above section presents a snapshot picture of the students, as they report themselves in this project. The students are of migrant families, where one parent or two were born overseas. Most students are first generation Australians with the students born in Australia. Mostly, both parents and grandparents were born overseas. This study presents a growing migrant community that has come largely from Egypt. The aspirations are high (Muuss, Velder & Porton, 1996). The results indicate students may feel well supported by their families, school, and community (Welch, 2016; Williams, 1998). Students at the school are diverse and are prepared to travel to receive a faith-based education (Holloway et al., 2010). As children of migrant families, the students appear highly motivated to succeed, having dreams to fulfil through the aspirations as recorded above. The implication for school policy makers and educators is to understand the cohort of students who are to be taught (Wilcox & Gray, 1995). Having addressed the first research question on the characteristics of students at Coptic school in Sydney, our attention is now directed to the second part of Research Question 1.

4.2.2 Student perceptions of school

Introduction

This section addresses students' perception of the school. It provides profiles of the student participants and addresses students' perception of school culture, curriculum, spirituality, school as a learning community and the role of the school and feelings. A discussion on the student focus group profile follows.

School students were invited to participate in focus group discussion and 41 students gave their consent. The profile details of the 41 students are presented below in the following Table 4:2. The table indicates the participants by group, gender, age and place of birth. The table shows 10 focus groups, with the first group having 5 participants and the other 9 focus groups with 4 students only. It shows that most students were born in Australia, with one student born in Saudi Arabia and 7 born in Egypt. The student average and median age is 15 years, with the youngest age being 12 and the oldest age being 18. Student gender consisted of 54% (N=22) males and 46% (N=19) females.

Focus Group	Student	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
1	Age	15	15	15	15	15
	Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
	Birth	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia
2	Age	16	16	16	16	
	Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male	
	Birth	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia	
3	Age	16	15	15	16	
	Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	
	Birth	Egypt	Australia	Australia	Australia	
4	Age	15	17	17	18	
	Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male	
	Birth	Australia	Australia	Australia	Egypt	
5	Age	17	17	17	17	
	Gender	Female	Female	Female	Male	
	Birth	Australia	Saudi Arabia	Australia	Australia	
6	Age	18	18	17	17	
	Gender	Male	Female	Female	Male	
	Birth	Australia	Egypt	Australia	Australia	
7	Age	14	14	14	14	
	Gender	Male	Female	Female	Male	
	Birth	Egypt	Australia	Australia	Australia	
8	Age	13	13	13	13	
	Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male	
	Birth	Australia	Australia	Egypt	Australia	
9	Age	12	12	12	12	
	Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	
	Birth	Australia	Australia	Australia	Australia	
10	Age	12	12	14	14	
	Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	
	Birth	Australia	Australia	Egypt	Egypt	

Table 4.2 Focus Group Profiles

To ascertain the possible role of the school in the formation of student identity, this section focuses on student perceptions of their school. In the Australian context, a faith-based school is referred to as a non-government school and categorized specifically as either Catholic or as Independent (Striepe et al., 2014). Many independent schools have an affiliation with a religious organization. The faith-based school has been part of Australian education for over

150 years, catering for full time students (Striepe et al., 2014). In this study, the Coptic school is a faith-based school with a religious affiliation to the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria.

The transcript data in relation to student perceptions of school was coded and recorded as a word list for each focus group (Neuman, 2000). Upon grouping the data, four sub-themes emerged: perceptions of school culture, of spirituality, of community, and of curriculum. Each thread will be addressed in turn as follows.

From analysis of student perceptions of school, it appears that the school may have an influence on the students' identity in four areas:

a.   School culture (values and daily routines)

b.   Coptic education

c.   Spirituality

d.   Community

4.2.2.1   Student perceptions of School Culture

As discussed in Chapter 2 Section 6, Peterson and Deal (1998) defined "school culture" as values, beliefs, norms, rituals and traditions built into the school over time. Understanding schools as a living organization may be best described by Ogbonna (1993) as "values, norms, beliefs and customs that an individual holds in common with members of the social unit or group" (p. 42).

St Mark's school website displays the school values and ethos focusing on 9 main principles. These are: spiritual values and experiences; self-esteem and perseverance; co-operative learning; respect; cultural and heritage; responsibility; opportunity to succeed; and being an active community member. These values did surface in the student data.

The data extracted from the focus groups showed similar findings on school culture as defined above. These represented several threads which are intertwined and overlapping, expressed in values and school routines.

In the focus group data, students perceived that school values promoted ethics, morals and ethos. Students' saw that the values underlying the school were Coptic. As one student perspective on the school being Coptic focused on its morals and its values, "…the morals and values that we go by…" (FG3, S3), and another student reflects with certainty, "…we all know the ethics and morals that we should be following…" (FG5, S3). Another student focused on the "…Christian values in the school…" (FG1, S1) as an expression of the values that characterised the Coptic school.

The following two students express that the school's ethos plays an important part of the school culture. The first student provides an underlying personal understanding of the school's ethos, whilst the second student states his/her subjective view:

- "the ethos of this school, it's really beautiful in the fact that it focuses on all of the commandments and most of the church's traditions and, also, the church's characteristics…" (FG2, S2)

- "…and the moral ethic of the school and the ethos" (FG5, S4)

One of the espoused values reported by students is respect. One student expressed this value in her perception that respecting one another makes the school Coptic, saying, "I think what makes this school Coptic is the amount of respect (there is for) each student and teachers…" (FG3, S4). Students appear to embrace the school's espoused values and are encouraged to live these values through its ethos and the promotion of its ethics by respecting the human being as a core value of the school.

Another aspect is the school's motto. The school website states the school motto as, "to live as Christ". Students report the importance of the school motto and the school's name as having an effect on the student attitude and perception of the Coptic school. One student claimed, "I abide by the motto, 'To live as Christ'" (FG2, S3). Some students appear to value the school's motto and express that they want to live daily by the school motto.

One student succinctly states the following, "I think what makes this school Coptic is, well first it's called St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College, and so, everyone knows that it's a Coptic school" (FG5, S1). Another student expressed the same sentiment, "What I think makes this school is the name of the school, and also the chapel and the church just across the road" (FG9, S3). Thus, the students' perspective on the school label and on the school name is by default to say very simply, 'yes, it is a Coptic school by the school name'.

Students' daily perceptions of their life at the school provides some underlying understanding of the school culture. The following six students express their perspective on the daily routine at the school. It is focused around the religious practice of prayer at the school:

• "It would have to be the daily routine of the school that makes it Coptic, just morning prayer and prayer before lessons, which are all centred on our faith, definitely enhance the Coptic traditions in the school" (FG4, S3)

• "…also the prayers that we do in the morning, daily prayers before the lesson" (FG7, S1)

• "what makes this school Coptic is that the rules are based around our religion and our prayers before class and in the mornings" (FG7, S4)

• "How we pray every morning…" (FG8, S1)

• "What makes this school Coptic is how everyone prays together in the morning, and how we pray in the afternoon just before we leave, and how before every lesson we try to pray, and the environment" (FG8, S4).

Student perspective on the daily activities of having prayer and the visits of religious figures - priests and bishops - to the school is an important aspect to the student for the school to be Coptic. One student perspective expressed this saying: "What I think that makes this school Coptic is that we pray every morning and sometimes we go and pray in the church with Abouna (Father the priest) and some of the bishops" (FG10, S1).

Some students express that they value the traditions maintained by the school. These focus on the school's ability to integrate the life of the church within the life of the school. Two students in Focus Group 3 gave their perspective on traditions expressed as follows:

• "…I believe that St Marks is a Coptic school because it takes part in all the traditional aspects that make our church, like we go to regular masses, and the icons and the culture, illustrates the Coptic tradition" (FG3, S2)

• "I think what makes this school Coptic is…the traditions that we follow, as well as the events we celebrate like Coptic New Year…" (FG3, S3)

The above two reflections give the perception that the school has integrated some traditions of the church within the day-to-day operations of the school. Another student gave the same

perception on tradition saying: "…what makes this school Coptic is the fact that we keep our traditions alive by participating in masses and significant events that occur according to the Coptic calendar" (FG6, S3).

It is evident that the students' responses on the value of the religious perspective on traditions at the school reflects that their school is Coptic for this reason.

This study has found students' identities are fluid, and they constantly negotiate their identities in terms of context. Students could identify and demonstrated a high regard for the school's ethos and values learnt at the school. The data collected indicated no signs of students' challenge to the value systems of the school. The school's values are expressed in the school's visions and beliefs held by the school and the expectations on students, staff and parents to uphold the values at all times. The values deliver student ownership and responsibility.

In conclusion, student response and perspectives suggest that the school's climate in promoting a school learning community through tradition, church events, festivities and liturgies creates a Coptic school environment. These underpinning threads reported by students allude to why the school is Coptic. The data suggest that school has also created a spiritual space for the students to engage (Hough et al., 1997; Wenger, 1998)

4.2.2.2 Student perceptions of Coptic education

The curriculum's goal is to "promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and society and to prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life" (White, 2004, p.2).

In terms of general curriculum, the primary school promotes an individual learning program to allow its students to achieve their best and in the high school the Australian National Curriculum is being implemented. The rationale of the Australian Curriculum is centred on equity and quality (ACARA webpage). The Pastoral Care program focuses on the well-being and social skills of each individual student (Calvert & Henderson, 1995).

As noted, the school gives an opportunity for students to engage and contribute to their community by learning their heritage through curricula activities. We note briefly as background that the school timetable allows for students to receive three different instructions

in Coptic Orthodox Studies, Coptic Studies (language, history and culture), and Coptic Orthodoxy.

Coptic Orthodox Studies is a compulsory subject in which students receive religious instruction, teachings and dogma of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The core program of Coptic Studies teaches the language and culture of Coptic history and is offered as an elective unit in the school. The school also offers another elective as a basic theological subject in the Coptic Orthodoxy program, where more in depth study of topics of the Coptic Orthodox Church are offered. Students choose between Coptic Orthodox Studies or Coptic Orthodoxy. This allows students to experience meaning, learn about their religious identity, practice their faith and engage their learning as belonging within the school faith community (Rymarz, 2013; Rymarz, 2014; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Williams, 1988).

Students' perceptions indicate that most were largely satisfied to participate in the school's heritage program. They could report that this included Coptic Orthodox Studies, the Coptic Orthodoxy program, the teaching of the Coptic language and the Arabic language, the teaching of Coptic history and heritage, learning to draw and paint Coptic icons and the singing and learning of church hymns. The following are some student perceptions of the school curriculum:

The first student, *"...From a young age, being here from kindergarten, you learn Arabic, you learn Coptic, you learn Coptic Orthodox Studies, so it's a very Coptic oriented school and its instilled to the very end. Even in Year 12 you have to learn Coptic Orthodox Studies, and you need to learn about your religion and everything is like Coptic oriented"* (FG5, S1).

The second student, *"...We also get to study Coptic Orthodox Studies throughout all ages throughout the school, and it's a good opportunity to learn about this"* (FG4, S1).

On Coptic Studies, one student provides a view on why the study of this subject makes the school Coptic. The student expressed, *"How we pray every morning and how we sing hymns and how we learn how to draw and paint icons"* (FG8, S1). For students to sing hymns, they need to learn the Coptic phonetic alphabet language and to read the words in Coptic. It also provides students a chance to learn to draw and paint icons. The Coptic Studies program provides students with the opportunity to learn Coptic, iconography - the drawing and

painting of Coptic icons - and the history and culture of the Coptic church. One student described "Coptic Iconography" as "wonderful" (FG6, S1).

On the Coptic Orthodoxy program, one student expresses, *"...we also have a Coptic Orthodoxy program and Coptic Orthodox and this helps us learn about the Coptic Orthodox community"* (FG1, S3). Student perceptions may suggest that they are constructing a religious identity in alignment with practices in the school community (Rymarz, 2013; Rymarz, 2014; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Wenger, 1998; Williams, 1988). This is strengthened in the following section.

4.2.2.3 Student perceptions of school practice of spirituality

Student perceptions on the school's spirituality varied. Students saw the value of spirituality at the school as making an effective mark on the school's climate and environment. Prayer, liturgy, feasts, celebration and fasting reflect students understanding of embarking spirituality at the school. There were some responses by students which reflected the underpinning thread of spirituality at the school. The following three responses reflect overall students' responses:

- "…the things that make it Coptic are attending the liturgy, prayer every morning and in the afternoon" (FG, S1)
- "I think what makes this school Coptic is all the masses that we hold every week, and it gives us an opportunity to come and pray together, and I think that's a really good opportunity that makes us all Coptic" (FG7, S 2)
- "I think everyone around me makes me think I'm in a Coptic school because we usually have masses every two weeks and usually pray in the morning" (FG8, S3)

The above three responses suggest that, while students are obliged to attend a spiritual service at the school, some students have a positive perception of this, and see it as an activity that creates shared belonging to a community (Rymarz, 2014). This forms part of their peer life at the school and the construction of their membership of the school Coptic community.

Another aspect of spirituality provided by the school is the its ability to engage with the church constantly. This helps the students to observe and to feel the church's affiliation to the school. Student perception of seeing the presence of the clergy, both priests and bishops at the school gives a strong indication of the church's engagement, interaction, alliance and

affiliation. The following four students give a personal reflection on the presence of clergy and affiliation of the church at the school. Students are moving towards trying to define their idea of "Copticness", that is, trying to critically describe the characteristics of this community.

- "…Coptic bishops come to our school and pray…" (FG1, S2)

- "… the close alliance it has with the Coptic Orthodox Church…" (FG2, S4)

- "…because of the fact that we practice Coptic beliefs like prayer, and we go to church and all that. That in itself makes this school Coptic…" (FG3, S1)

- "…and just having the ability to interact with the hierarchy of the church so easily and simply, which other people who stay at home all day or go to different schools don't get to encounter" (FG6, S4)

Some student perceptions suggest that to them there is a connection between education and religion, between their intellectual and spiritual development, and, thus, for some, in the shaping of their identity in this community: "The thing that makes the school Coptic is the priests…" (FG5, S4); "…we are surrounded by priests on a daily basis…" (FG5, S3) and it "…is the presence of the father the priest…" (FG6, S1).

Students reported the tangible symbols of their faith and religion in the priest, the liturgy and external markers that help them understand their own religious identity in being Coptic. These symbols are agents in identifying their religious identity and give the students access to their religious identity and that may be the reason why students have no need to explore their identity, as they know who they are.

For some students, the school is a spiritual space, where they can engage in a spiritual dimension of their religious identity construction. The students' perception is that the school offers a sacred place for the church. There is a zone of proximity religious development offered by the school, where the school offers a spiritual space. The students position the school campus as a special space, where they can think about their futures in spiritual terms. The physical markers on the school campus – the school chapel acts as the church in the school. The school offers a liturgy weekly for students to experience spirituality regularly.

The students experience a spiritual dimension that is not just symbolic. The artefacts in the chapel, such as the icons and the cross (the researcher's personal experience) provide access

to a deeper spiritual dimension. Using Vygotsky's words, "proximity spiritual education zone". This physical marker of spirituality gives access to the deeper connection of a sense of security, which is evident in parent data.

The students allude to the understanding there is a connection between their education and spirituality, and spirituality with their religion. One of the outcomes that is surfacing with students is their positive approach to life achievement and desire to succeed in life, self-esteem and positive motivation about who they are. It may reflect the spiritual support the school offers through their spiritual program as school is a community supporting the school community.

Mason, Singleton and Webber (2007) have written about spirituality in Australia. Their research work explores religious identity and beliefs, religious practices and spirituality in different youth social groups. The response by students indicate spirituality is 'a way of life' that draws on values, attitudes, practices and commitment encouraged by the school (Mason, Singleton, & Webber, 2007, p.41).

An outcome that is drawn from the qualitative data is the sense of security. Students feel safe and secure in the realms of spirituality and the comfort of knowing that they are safe at school and within their spiritual community. This also reflected in the parents' attitude as to why they have sent their children to a Coptic school, which is because of spirituality, security and safety.

The school is an example of the proximity zone of spiritual development at the college. The students enter this zone and experience a symbolic interaction of the church, through the clergy presence on the school campus, their engagement in the classroom and their constant spiritual talks. The students may be experiencing different levels and layers of proximity zone development, and this difference is dependent on the special space they are occupying, for example – from the school site, the classroom, the school chapel, and the playground. Having discussed the students' perception on spirituality, we now turn to a discussion on students' perception of community.

4.2.2.4 Students' perception of Community

Students continued to try digging deeper to identify aspects of their school community. Hough et al. (1997) described three basic aspects of schools as communities: "kinship, mind and place". **Kinship** describes communities emerging from similar relationships such as friends and families. **Mind** describes common shared goals and values. **Place** describes a common locale and habitat. A school community is also described as ideally a learning community (Hough et al., 1997), as it adapts and contributes to a learning organisation. Wenger (1998) describes a learning community as involving its internal social re-configuration, that it includes practice, community, meaning and identity, reflecting a multidimensional slice of individual learning. The school as a learning community has role to meet, both within and outside community standards to ensure the school is constantly learning as an organisation and to meet the individual learning of its students through their engagement and contributing to the life of the school (Wenger, 1998).

Analysis of the data transcripts shows students perceptions that the school's environment also plays a role in making the school Coptic. This is more broadly conceived than routines and practices. One student perceived that, within and beyond the school's mixed population, relationships between students, and between students and teachers, are formative:
 "I think what makes this school Coptic is the environment. Not everyone here is Coptic Orthodox, but we kind of rub off each other, and the close connections we have with our fellow students and teachers, not only at school but in the community, like within social and church events. That's where being Coptic is reflected in our school" (FG2, S1).

Students reflected that the people at the school made an impact for the school to be Coptic. This is expressed as mutual respect by one student, saying, "I think what makes this school Coptic is the amount of respect each student and the teachers have towards the beliefs…" (FG3, S4).

The physical presence of the small chapel within the school makes some students feel they are in an inclusive environment in the Coptic school. While it is compulsory for students to attend, it appears to act, nevertheless, as an inclusive space: "What I think is Coptic about this school is that we have a chapel and a church, and we go and have masses together, even the Indians come together and have mass*"* (FG9, S2).

Students perceived that the deliberate construction of a sense of community in daily routines and spiritual practices, has an important role in the school (Wenger 1998; Williams, 1988). People at the school - students and teachers - are the school community. A sense of community is explicitly valued at the school and some students can see that the school tries to foster self-worth. The following are some of the student perceptions of community at the school:

- "…also the community, like the people and the spirit makes this school Coptic" (FG3, S1)

- "…the strong community spirit that we have, most of the time…" (FG6, S1)

- "I think that the students and the teachers make up most of the Coptic school" (FG8, S2)

- "… the people and how they act and behave" (FG9, S4)

- "…the people all love each other and we have lots of masses…" (FG10, S3)

- "We have a Coptic community because we pray…and we have masses regularly" (FG10, S4)

The school is glued together by community and spirituality. The above perceptions expressed by the students on their community and spiritual journeys show their understanding, as these two forces act mutually inclusively, as they are integrated, are inseparable and are intertwined to directly influence the character and construction of student identity.

Community is an important part of students' well-being in belonging to communities. The students are influenced by the different communities they belong to. In this case, the school acts as a community, within the broader community of the church and the cultural community they engage with. The school is a proximity community zone within the proximity zone of the church. The students feel at home at school because the school is a locale in which they feel accepted, respected, wanted and received as important members of the community. In retrospect, the school community is a zone of proximity development that nurtures a direct force on student's character and personality and on how they respond and deal with each other in the values and goals learnt and achieved within the community.

4.2.2.5 Conclusion re perceptions of school

The above data analysis suggests that for many students, their perceptions of their school are largely positive. Many students describe a bond and relationship with their school. Student perceptions were sorted into the four underpinning themes: school culture and daily routine; spirituality; curriculum, and community.

This student captures her personal relationship with the school, in the intersection of these elements:

"From a very young age, being here from kindergarten, you learn Arabic, you learn Coptic, you learn COS (Coptic Orthodox Studies), so it's a very Coptic oriented school and it's instilled to the very end. Even in Year 12 you learn COS, and you have to learn about your religion, and everything is like Coptic oriented. We have Coptic events surrounding the year, and we've got priests who talk to us daily, and we read the bible and pray. It's Coptic oriented" (FG5, S1).

This student sums up the relationship between school culture, curriculum, spirituality and community.

The data analysis suggests the diagrammatic representation offered in Figure 4.1 below.
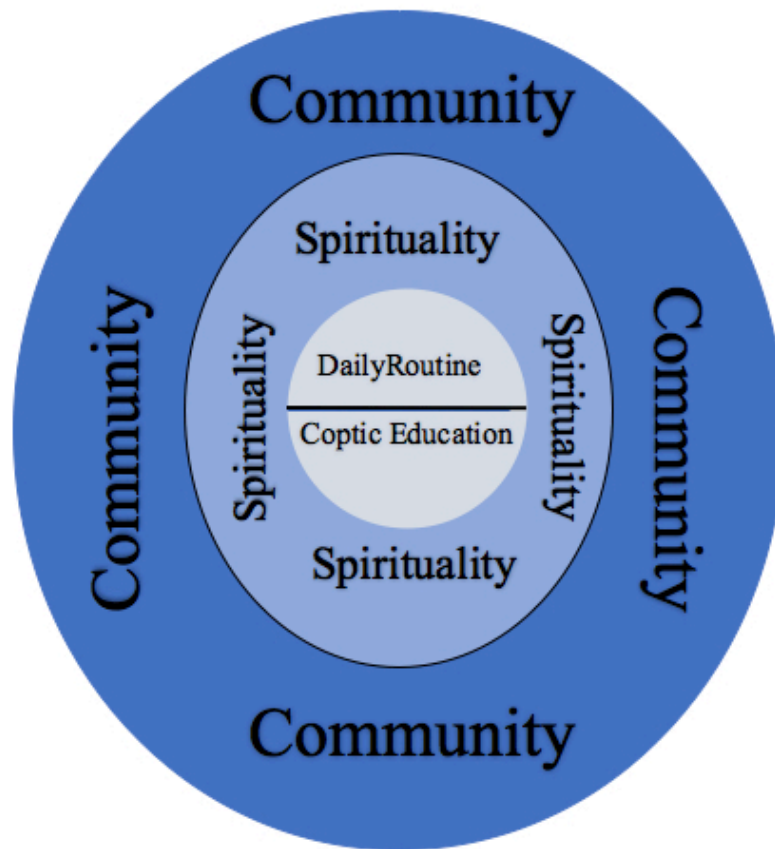
Figure 4.1 Diagrammatic relationship of students' perspective at school

Hence, the results showed the focus groups valued their school. Students showed a positive attitude to their peers, teachers, church and community. The Coptic school is a learning community which tries to foster a positive school culture by collaborating in an affiliation with the Coptic Orthodox Church. The diversity of the school's curriculum program allows students to engage with the Coptic language, religious instruction, Coptic history and Coptic heritage. The school is more than just an education hub for student learning; it is also the students' second home, where students feel they are in a safe place, an environment of acceptance, mutual respect, and, for some, construction of identity. The school is a zone of proximity educational development, where students' identity is constantly nurtured and constructed, putting down new layers of identity construct as they progress through their school years.

Figure 4.1 shows the school in the centre. It acknowledges the importance of spirituality extending beyond the school into the community. The figure also reflects the forces working together that are mutually inclusive, showing that community embraces spirituality and realms of school culture reflected through daily routines and the engagement and interaction of Coptic education, all working together to construct student identity daily. The figure also reflects Vygotsky's proximity zone of development. The student is in the zone and feels at home.

4.3 Students' perceptions of identity

This section answers Research Question 2: "What are the student perceptions of identity?"
To answer this research question, data were collected from two different data sources:
Student survey (Quantitative)
Student focus groups (Qualitative)

As we have noted, Australia's education system has allowed migrants to aspire to opportunities for their children in the new home land (Welch, 2016). Migrant parents typically wish to strongly maintain their heritage identity through their mother language, culture and community identity (Markose & Simpson, 2016). It has been suggested that when migrants start to feel accepted, they may embrace their new host country as their nationality and that their subsequent identity construction can become fluid, dynamic, hybrid (Phinney et al., 2001). For their children and for subsequent generations it can become more complex.

This study has discussed (Chapter 2, section 2) the possible approaches to 'categorisation', and different aspects of identity. It has been influenced by the work of Phinney and many others considering notions of ethnicity, culture and language. The project acknowledges that the separation of these aspects is an artificial one, and that identity operates as an integrated and constantly shifting 'whole' (Dervin, 2016).

Identity is understood as dynamic and multidimensional, constantly changing over time (Hall, 1996; Hall, 2003; Marcia, 1980). The research conducted in this project defines ethnicity as identifying with a certain group, but this may be also dynamic and multi-dimensional (Phinney et al., 1994).

Using the artificial notions of different identities, we collected data about student perceptions of personal, ethnic and national identities. We were interested in their self-identification, whether they identify a national identity and how they identify as "mixed" or with allegiances to different groups, and experience belonging. In retrospect, we have also critically questioned whether and how students understand and react to the terminology used in surveys. The different terms and overlapping categories used appear to have elicited diverse, in fact, contradictory, responses in students. But, while we first thought this was a limitation in our methodology, in fact it may have delivered exactly the confusion, multiplicity and complexity that suited the students. Multiple self-identification may be part of the complexity of identity, and a feature of the students in this study (Hall, 1996).

4.3.1 Self Identification

Self-identification within the survey context involved choosing options as to national identity, ethnic identity and mixed identity. This section treats each aspect in turn.

Students were first given the opportunity to self-identify by responding to four scales in the survey questionnaire. The four scales were responses on: as an Australian Copt (scale 39), as an Australian (scale 40), as an Egyptian (scale 41) and as an Egyptian/Sudanese (scale 42).

Students responded to the following scales: "I like to identify myself as an Australian Copt" (scale 39); "I like to identify myself as Australian" (scale 40); "I like to identify myself as Egyptian" (scale 41); and "I like to identify myself as Egyptian/Sudanese" (scale 42). Students responded on a Likert 1 to 5 scale: 1 - "Strongly Disagree", 2 - "Somewhat Disagree", 3 - "Somewhat Agree", 4 - "Strongly Agree" and 5 - "Not Applicable". Each scale will be addressed in turn as follows.

75.5% (N=246) of students self-identified themselves as Australians. There were 8 students who chose not to answer the scale, using, "N/A" 0.6% (N=2) and blank response 1.8% (N=6).

Nine more students self-identified as Australian than the number of students who reported having been born in Australia 72.68% (N=237), a difference of 9 students. Being born in Australia appears to be a salient factor in self-identification (Bond, 2006; Bernal et al., 1990;

Kabir, 2014). The following Table 4.3 is a summary from the four scales on student identification. It shows the multiple positive choices students made for themselves:

Scale	Students identify as:	Agree/Somewhat Agree	N/A
39	Australian Copt	67.5%	10.3%
40	Australian	75.5%	0.6%
41	Egyptian	64.2%	12.%
42	Egyptian/Sudanese	47.2%	13.8%

Table 4.3 Student self-identification

Students also self-identified as being Egyptians 64.2% (N=209). There were only 12% (N=39) who chose to report "N/A" and 1.5% (N=5) chose to miss the scale.
Some students further self-identified as Egyptian/Sudanese: 47.2% (N=154). Continuing with this multiple self-identification, 67.5% (N=220) of students' self-identified as being Australian Copt. A high "N/A" reported at 10.1% (N=33) and 1.2% (N=4) chose to miss the scale. We recall that the school population is diverse, that is, it is not exclusively Egyptian or purely Coptic Christian. It suggests that students are well diversified in culture and identity (Ward, 2006; Warner, 1998) and enthusiastically enjoyed identifying with multiple identities (Hall, 2003).

The above four identification responses may suggest that students are not limited to their ideas of their identity, or, more likely that they embrace multiple identities simultaneously as part of their life in Australia.

In summary, students' response to these four scales, being Australian 75.5%, being Egyptian 64.2%, being Egyptian/ Sudanese 47.2% and being Australian Copt 67.5% shows the interesting complexity of their identity structure formation. The Likert Scale enables multiple positive answers resulting in a presentation of a multiple complex identity structure. Simply, the identity formation structure is not static, but is dynamic and may be constantly changing (Dervin, 2016; Hall, 1996; Marcia 1980). While, as acknowledged, this result may reflect the

way the questions were formulated, it still reveals a great deal about student perceptions of identity.

To add further to this complexity, the following are the student responses to three demographic questions on national identity, ethnic identity and on mixed identity as follows. This further illustrates student multi-identity structure (Hall, 1996).

Students were asked to respond to a statement, "My national identity is…" from a list of five countries: Australia, Egypt, Sudan, Greece and Palestine. Student interpretation of the meaning of this item is unclear, given that they have answered the items above already. Younger students may have variously interpreted 'national identity' as to do with their place of birth, or to do with their current home, or their parents nationality. Older students may have engaged with considering the meaning of the item more deeply.

Thus, the data is unclear. Students were given an option to write "other" in the space that was provided on the survey data. The responses given by students as to their national identity were: Australian 57.98% (N=189); Egyptian 27.30% (N=89); Sudanese 2.15% (N=7); Greek 0.30% (N=1); Palestinian 0%; and 19.02% (N=62) students recorded "Other". In "Other", 23 different nationalities were reported, with the highest number being Egyptian 4.29% (N=14) and Indian 3.07% (N=10). The response by students to record and self-identify as Egyptian in the label "other", is indicative of the process of identity negotiation these students engage in daily or fluid about their national identity, heritage and hybridity (Collins, et al., 2011; Hall, 2003).

Students were then asked to describe their ethnic identity. Student interpretation of the meaning of this item is again ambiguous. Students responded to a short statement, "My ethnic background is…" with 13 different ethnic backgrounds. The highest reported ethnic identifications were: Egyptian 47.24% (N=154); Sudanese 3.98% (N=13); Australian 2.15% (N=7); Lebanese 1.84% (N=6) and Egyptian Mix 5.21% (N=17). The Egyptian Mix reflected students' response to hyphenated identity, a hybrid of two identities, such as, Greek-Egyptian (N=4), Australian-Egyptian (N=4) and Ukraine-Egyptian (N=1).

Some students self-identified their ethnic identity as their religious faith and affiliation, such as, "Coptic Orthodox", "Catholic" or "Greek Orthodox" at 19.63% (N=64). Two other ethnic

identities reported that were not part of the Coptic community were Indians 6.13% (N=20) and Serbians 2.54% (N=8).

Fourthly, this scale item invited students again to define the elements of their identity make-up. Students response to a mixed identity statement. "I am a mixture of…" resulted in 46 different combinations of ethnic mix totalling 60.12% (N=196), and some students did not respond, using a "no" labelling 39.88% (N=130). The range of student identification reported from a single identity mix to a maximum of four-identity mix gave light to the rich diversity and culture mix of the students. The mixes were: "Egyptian"; "Australian and Egyptian"; Australian and Egyptian and Lebanese"; and "Australian and Egyptian and Greek and Coptic". The reported combinations in percentage and numbers: one 3.68% (N=12); two 50.31% (N=164); three 5.21% (N=17); and four 0.92% (N=3). The largest identity mix reported were Australian Egyptian: 31.59% (N=103) followed by: Egyptian Sudanese: 2.15% (N=7); Australian Egyptian Lebanese: 2.15% (N=7) and Egyptian Greek: 1.53% (N=5). The reporting of student mix shows students were aware and willing to identify their heritage and origin.

4.3.1.1 Interpretation

The above reported responses on students' national and ethnic identities illustrate some contradictions and multiplicity in student identity. Student's identity construction indicates a complex and fluid construct. The data also illustrate that students are possibly confused in their understanding of the term "ethnic identity as religious affiliation", or perhaps they rejected the "boundaries" placed around the concepts by the survey item construction.

As Australians, students responded to national identity with 189 responses and 7 as ethnic identity. This shows the idea of multiplicity as to their national identity. This may also highlight that students were confused in the variety of options and labels given to them to choose their identity as presented in the survey, causing them to be challenged by describing their own identity. This confusion resulted in students identifying their identity as Egyptians, with 154 responses as Ethnic Identity and 89 as National Identity.

A second interpretation may highlight that students do not need to categorize their identity. Students' willingness to respond to items about their national and ethnic identity displays

their ability to talk about their origins and heritage, and at the same time, suggests their simultaneous identification with being Australian. The responses by students on their national identity, ethnic background and mixture of identity, show students embrace a complex identity structure formation that appears to be constantly changing and forming (Hall, 1996). This may provide an understanding that students may be happy to be identified with a national identity, ethnic identity and religious identity. It shows the students' ability to integrate into Australian society without losing their heritage and origins. They are proud of being identified with multiple identity structures. They are proud of being Australian with an Egyptian Coptic heritage.

In conclusion, the above data illustrates students are diversified, may be well integrated and able to assimilate into Australian society, without losing their Egyptian identity. Other studies have shown similar findings where response was "positional", that is, identity changes depending on the space which is occupied, in interactions with Anglo-Saxon Australians or with their ethnic community (Chiang & Yang, 2008, p.253).

This now leads us to a discussion of sense of belonging.

4.3.2 Identity - Sense of Belonging

As noted in Chapter 3, Phinney and Ong (2007) used the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) to assess ethnic identity. The measure excluded the assessment of culture and beliefs. Using Exploratory Factor Analysis, Phinney and Ong (2007) confirmed two factors measuring ethnicity on the MEIM scales: "exploration" and "commitment and attachment".

The first factor as expressed by Phinney and Ong (2007) defined exploration as, "seeking information and experiences relevant to one's ethnicity" through different activities, such as reading, talking and learning from "cultural practices" (p. 272). The second factor, "commitment and attachment", is described by Phinney and Ong (2007) as a "sense of belonging" and "the most important component of ethnic identity" (p. 272).

Similar findings were revealed in this project using Principal Component Analysis, where two main factors were relevant to the construct of ethnic identity, exploration and commitment, with alpha reliability scores of 0.667 and 0.851. Similar finding on the MEIM

Scale by other researchers have found two factors in the construct of ethnic identity by Phinney (1992), by Roberts et al. (1999), and by Spencer et al. (2000). Attention is now drawn to the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure scale used in this project.

4.3.2.1 Multi Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) Scale

Table 4.4 shows a summary of the student responses to the 12 MEIM scales.

Scale	Description	Strongly Disagree and Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree	N/A	Missing Data	Total N = 326 100%
Scale 1	I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as, history, traditions and customs	20.86% (68)	74.85% (244)	3.37% (11)	0.92% (3)	100.00% N=326
Scale 2	I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly my ethnic group	16.6% (54)	78.2% (255)	3.7% (12)	1.5% (5)	N=326
Scale 3	I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means	9.5% (31)	87.1% (284)	1.8% (6)	1.5% (5)	N=326
Scale 4	I think a lot that my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership	24.5% (80)	69.9% (228)	3.7% (12)	1.8% (6)	N=326
Scale 5	I am happy that I am a member of the group that I belong to	4.3% (14)	92.7% (302)	1.8% (6)	1.2% (4)	N=326
Scale 6	I have a strong sense of belonging to my ethnic group	8.9% (29)	86.5% (282)	2.5% (8)	2.1% (7)	N=326
Scale 7	I understand pretty well what my ethnic group is, I have often talked to people about my ethnic group	11.1% (36)	84.7% (276)	2.1% (7)	2.1% (7)	N=326
Scale 8	To learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to people about my ethnic group	26.7% (87)	69.4% (226)	1.2% (4)	2.8% (9)	N=326
Scale 9	I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group	10.7% (35)	85.9% (280)	2.1%(7)	1.2% (4)	N=326
Scale10	I participate in cultural practices of my group, such as special food, music or customs	16.0% (52)	80.6% (263)	2.1% (7)	1.2% (4)	N=326
Scale11	I feel strong attachment towards my own ethnic group	13.8% (45)	82.3% (268)	2.5% (8)	1.5% (5)	N=326
Scale12	I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background	6.8% (22)	90.8% (296)	1.2% (4)	1.2% (4)	N=326

Table 4.4   Multi Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) scale

The table indicates most students reported being happy about their identity. 92.7% of students' report feeling happy in belonging to their ethnic background and 4.3% disagreed (scale 5). The students also reported feeling good about their cultural and ethnic background, with 90.8% agreeing and 6.8% disagreeing (scale 12). These two scales, scale 5 and scale 12, indicate student happiness in belonging and feeling good about their ethnic community. The

data suggest students have a clear sense of who they are (scale 3 – 87.1%) and a strong sense of belonging (scale 6 – 86.5%).

Students reported having pride in their community (scale 9 – 85.9%) and had willingness to participate in its cultural practices and customs (scale 10 – 80.6%). Scale 8 had the highest disagreement where 26.7% of students indicate that they do not talk about their ethnic background to other people. The second highest disagreement is Scale 4 with 24.5% of students reporting they did not think a lot about their life nor how it will affect their ethnic group. These two scales, scale 4 and scale 8, may indicate students' willingness to negotiate their identity. All 12 scales on the MEIM reported missing data. Scale 7 and scale 8 had the highest missing data with 7 and 9 students respectively missing answering the scale. Finally, 12 students reported "not applicable" for scales 2 and 4.

The relatively high MEIM scale scores indicate students are willing to express positive feelings about themselves, indicating positive self-esteem and self confidence in their attachment, association and pride related to their ethnic community. The results also show students are willing to negotiate their ethnic identity with the host country. This result shows the structure of ethnic identity and its components has a complex and dynamic construction that is constantly changing and has a multi-faceted feature to its structure (Hall, 1996; Marcia, 1980; Roberts et al., 1999).

Our next focus of discussion, is to extract further understanding from the data survey, by factor analysis of the MEIM scales.

4.3.2.2 Factor Analysis

A statistical program SPSS version 24 was used to perform factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis (CPA) method with rotation to extract relationships within the twelve MEIM scales. The following is reported. The Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) test result was 0.894, indicating a positive presence of items per factor. A Bartlett Test for Sphericity showed a significance of 0.000 indicating that the sample size and the results of surveys collected in the MEIM scales were adequate for factor analysis. Figure 4.2 describes the scree plot diagram that identify two factor components with Eigenvalue greater than 1, explaining a Cumulative variance of 50.843% (see Appendix M).
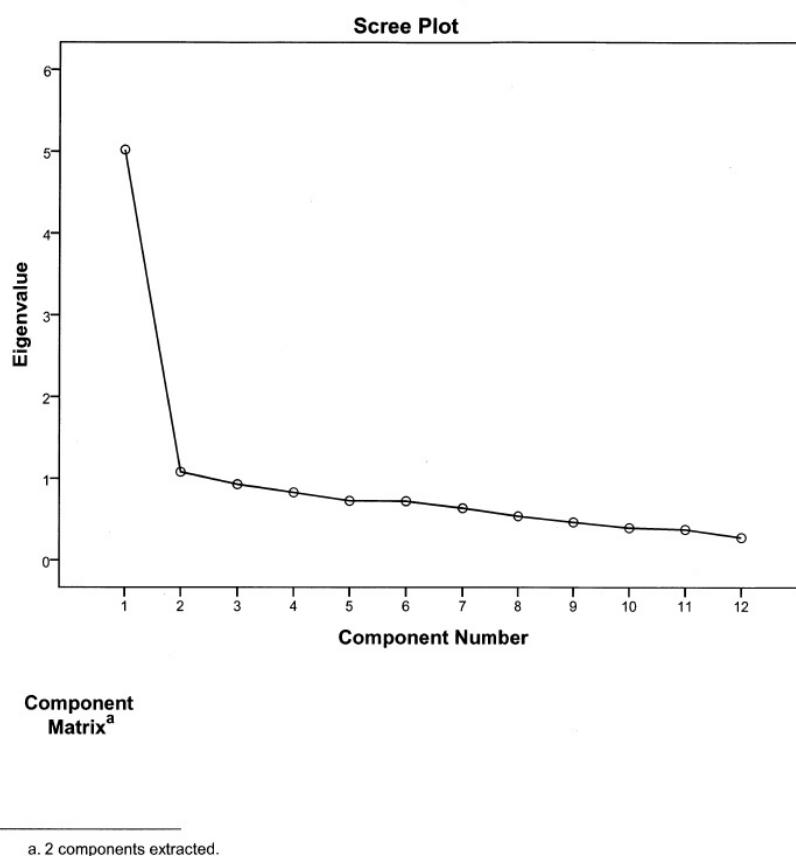
Figure 4.2 Scree Plot

The scree plot diagram showed two factor components with Eigenvalue greater than 1, explaining a Cumulative variance of 50.843. These 2 underlying factors explain 50.843% of the variance on the 12 MEIM scales of the survey data. Factor 1 with eigenvalue of 5.021 explains 41.840% of the variance, and factor 2 with eigenvalue of 1.080 explains 9.003% of the variance, with a total cumulative variance of 50.843%. Figure 4.3, Component Plot in Rotated Space shows 2 groups circled, which are labelled as factor 1 and factor 2:

Factor 1 explains 5 items, scales 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12. The loadings are shown in Table 4.5 indicating that these items all relate to the factors of affirmation, belonging and commitment. Factor 2 explains 7 items, scales 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 10. The loadings are shown in Table 4.5 indicating that these items all relate to the factor ethnic exploration.
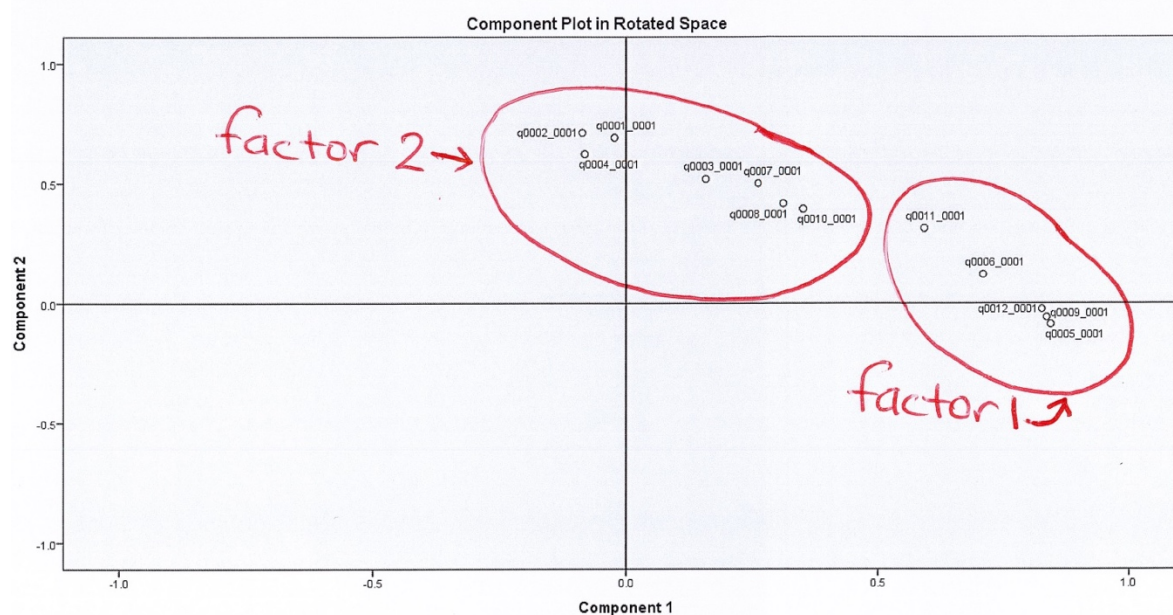
Figure 4.3 Component Plot in Rotated Space

Factor loadings show much of the factor is explained in each variable. The factor loadings are identified in bold in Table 4.5. Internal consistency for reliability between variables showed Cronbach Alpha reliability score for Component 1, 0.76; and Component 2, 0.76. These 2 scores show good internal reliable consistency between the variables. In Factor 1, the scales identify students' "Affirmation, belonging and commitment". In Factor 2, the scales identify students' "Ethnic Exploration".

Scale	Factor 1: Affirmation, belonging & commitment	Factor 2: Ethnic exploration
Q1: I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as history, traditions and customs	-.022	**.691**
Q2: I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly my ethnic group	-.086	**.711**
Q3: I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means	.156	**.518**
Q4: I think a lot that my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership	-.081	**.622**
Q5: I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to	**.843**	-.088
Q6: I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group	**.708**	.120
Q7: I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me	.260	**.501**
Q8: To learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to people about my ethnic group	.312	**.416**
Q9: I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group	**.835**	-.059
Q10: I participate in cultural practices of my group, such as special food, music and customs	.351	**.393**
Q11: I feel strong attachment towards my own ethnic group	**.591**	.312
Q12: I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background	**.825**	-0.25

Table 4. 5 Factor loadings for the MEIM Scales – factor values in bold

4.3.2.3 Interpretation

The factor analysis shows students in this period of their lives have two important factors relevant to the construction of their identity. The first factor, "Affirmation, belonging and Commitment" shows that students in the adolescent stage need to be wanted, to belong and to be constantly affirmed as individuals and as human beings. This shows how important community life is to students researched at the College.

The highest score in factor 1 identified scale 5 (0.843), that students were happy to belong, followed by scale 9 (0.835) that students had lots of pride in their ethnic group. The school is a community zone that fosters and generates community spirit and community life.

The second observation indicates loadings in factor 1 are much higher than loadings for factor 2. This may highlight the students' own personal experience in relevance and the importance of community over exploring their ethnic and heritage origins.

The highest loading score values in factor 2 were scales 2 (0.711) and scale 1 (0.691). These two scales indicate that the ethnic community is relevant and important to students. Scale 2 identifies that students are active in their respective communities, whilst scale 1 identifies students as seeking to know about their community. The third observation identifies that students are integrated into the host society. Factor 1, scale 11 (0.591) is the lowest score value in factor 1, identifying attachment to their ethnic community. This may show students are engaged in the host society and have a sense of seamless integration rather than the notion of "assimilation".

Two lowest factor 2 scores are below 0.5, scale 8 (0.416) and scale 10 (0.393). These two scales identify the perceived (low) importance of cultural practices and talking about their culture. This may indicate that students feel no need to exert themselves in extending their attention to heritage and ethnic culture. Secondly, this low regard for taking initiative in seeking out contact about their heritage may be due to the Coptic education which students receive at school. The knowledge about heritage culture is all supplied at school, so there is no need for them personally to seek it out, beyond school. Hence, illustrating the sociocultural approach, the factor analysis shows the powerful role of factor 1, the influence on students of culture, environment and society.

Also, again, applying Marcia's model, factor analysis has shown that students fit the positive notion of integration into society rather than the negative associations with "assimilation", which may involve loss of heritage, away from their community.

This study confirms findings concerning the two factors, 'ethnic exploration' and 'affirmation, belonging and commitment', in similar studies on ethnic communities. (Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Roberts et al., 1999; and Spencer et al., 2000). However, as with any ethnic community study, there are limitations to the adequacy of quantitative measurement to represent complex human emotions. To this end, I now turn to the focus group data for qualitative discussions of student perception to their identity.

4.3.3 Student perceptions of a sense of heritage in identity

As a first step in data analysis of responses re: 'heritage', students' responses were coded and the codes recorded in a descending order to explore the student underlying sense of heritage. These words were coded and recorded for frequency (Neuman, 2000).

The highest frequency listed words used by students focused on: a rich history; ancestry; Egyptian background; persecution, struggles and turmoil in Egypt; a strong faith; and community. Less frequently listed words focused on the church, spirituality, and on family. On Egyptian heritage, students reported as being proud of their ancestry and Egyptian heritage background as it is of rich history, as expressed by the following two students:
"I feel proud of my heritage, my Egyptian heritage, because think about it – the pyramids, the sphinx, everything's Egyptian, and we can celebrate our Egyptian heritage in church and at school" (FG1, S3) and "the history is amazing, and what I've been taught by others, I feel it's an inspiration for me to keep going, and inspiration to keep our history alive…" (FG6, S1).

This section will discuss students' references to Egyptian history and Coptic history. Following this, it will discuss students' mixed feelings about their heritage and histories.

Students expressed the value of their Coptic Egyptian community, traditions and culture. Their value is expressed by the following two students:
"I am definitely proud of my Coptic heritage. The traditions and culture that's been passed down through generations has moulded me into the person I am…" (FG4, S3) and, "…the fact that I can live in a country where Coptic people have only been around for about forty

years and there's a strong Coptic community, churches, colleges, facilities, makes me very proud of my heritage*" (FG4, S2)*

In retrospect, an overall majority of 35 students responded positively on heritage, with four students expressing not being proud, and two students indicating neither. Emerging themes drawn from the transcript data on heritage reported student personal reflections on their attitude towards their identity from their response in the focus groups. Most students reported a positive response on their origins and their heritage. Students growing up in the Egyptian community said they were fascinated by their shared heritage and ancestry stories (Hall, 1996). This may indicate students' attachment to the Egyptian Coptic community, as a sense of belonging, and a reason to be part of the ethnic community (Hall, 1996). The reported responses show a positive outcome reflecting positive self-esteem about themselves and good confidence as young adolescents growing up in an ethnic community in Australia (Smith et al., 1999).

On Egyptian Coptic identity, the following three responses elaborate a sense of history as an element of their identity:

"I think just to know that we're part of such a strong faith, and the foundations of this heritage is just amazing, to know that you're part of such a beautiful…yeah, brings tears to my eyes." (FG2, S1)

"…my heritage, ancestry and culture, belief and tradition. I keep this in high regard as I have a certain pride, certain aspects of pride towards my culture, and that's how it makes me feel" (FG2, S3)

"…it's a source of identity for everyone, and it basically shapes the character and the way I act today" (FG4, S3).

From this, two emerging and underpinning themes contribute to the students' sense of heritage formation - Egyptian history and Coptic History, and these will be discussed next.

4.3.3.1 Egyptian History

The thesis notes that two things are being elided here: pre-Christian ancient Egyptian history (pyramids, Pharaohs, etc.) and Coptic heritage. To what extent do the students understand them as the same or different? Many of them clearly see it as a continuum, as indeed it is in

many respects, but one might reflect on the fact that the history and monuments which seem to give the students pride in being Egyptian are largely pre-Christian.

Students could identify their Egyptian heritage and ancestry by naming famous Egyptian monuments and artefacts found in Egypt, such as the pyramids and the sphinx. Students expressed feeling "proud" of their heritage because of their ancestors, as illustrated in some of the following responses:

•   "my heritage, my Egyptian heritage, because, think about it – the pyramids, the sphinx, everything's Egyptian, and we can celebrate our Egyptian heritage in church and at school" (FG1, S3)

•   "…They (the Egyptians) built the Pyramid of Giza…" (FG10, S1)

•   "…The Pharaohs they made civilisation happen" (FG3, S1)

•   "…Our Egyptian background's got amazing stuff like the pyramids..." (FG8, S3).

The above four responses suggest students associate their heritage with their knowledge of monuments and artefacts that are visible (Hall, 1999), representing a world famous ancient civilisation still standing today. As one student reflects, "I feel very proud of my heritage because Egyptians are responsible for making the pyramids, and they've created wonderful things including the sphinx" (FG1, S5). For the Egyptian students, this is heritage and ancestry that appears to give them positive identification with their Egyptian identity and ethnicity (Hall, 1996; Hall, 1999).

The Copts' ancestors are the pharaohs who built the pyramids and the sphinx. The ancestors' story is found in the history of Egypt. Students were fond and proud of their Egyptian heritage and ancestry because "it has a rich history" (FG1, S1). As one student expressed: "the Coptic heritage is very rich, and it's very old, and we have a very wonderful background with very nice ethics and values, and it's very wonderful to be grown up into" (FG1, S4).

Belonging and associating with a rich Egyptian history makes the students proud of their origins and their ethnicity. The above quotes show the students' ability to highlight value in the intergenerational transmission of Coptic heritage and Egyptian ancestry through the "nice ethics and values (for) it's very wonderful to be grown up into" (FG1, S4). This student has

highlighted an important attitude to value and appreciate Egyptian heritage, origin and identity.

Finally, students reported feeling proud because they were able to associate Egypt with having the long history of an ancient civilisation (Hall, 1996; Hall, 1999). The following two students expressed these sentiments:

"...I have lot of history that we can date back really far" (FG5, S2);

"...being Egyptian, starting up civilisation, being one of the smartest civilisations in the world, yeah, that makes me proud as well" (FG5, S1).

An ancient Egyptian Coptic history also attracts an ancient Coptic faith community (Williams, 1988), which I now turn to as the next theme of discussion.

4.3.3.2 Coptic History

Students did not shy away from expressing their heritage as including constant persecution, struggles and increasing turmoil in Egypt. They cite this as the reason to have a strong faith in God and to be equally proud of their ancient Coptic martyrs as expressed by the following students:

"Of course you feel proud of your heritage. All throughout history, our ancestors have been going through times of struggle and turmoil, it really makes you feel lucky and privileged to be here, safe and privileged in such a country as Australia" (FG2, S4) and "Yes I am proud of my heritage to when the martyrs were around, they gave their lives up for Christ" (FG8, S4).

Students expressed being proud to be part of a faith community which is binding people together, with a sense of belonging and identity, social interaction and association (Smith et al., 1999; Wenger, 1998; William, 1988). The collected data reported student's faith community attitude to their identity and heritage. It showed a source of pride in the association and affiliation of their faith community.

The following student highlighted this association:

"I am definitely proud of my heritage. I think just to know that we're part of such a strong faith, and the foundations of this heritage is just amazing, to know that you're part of such a beautiful…yeah, brings tears to my eyes" (FG2, S1).

Students' knowledge of heritage and history may inspire some students to invest in their membership of the Coptic faith community, which inspires some students to persevere to maintain their identity. As one student reported saying:

"I feel it's an inspiration for me to keep going, and inspiration to keep our history alive. As you can see, Egypt and all the persecution and all that, it just makes me want to get involved in the Coptic community" (FG6, S1).

The Copts, as Zeidan (1999) states, "view their history as a long series of persecutions, massacres, forced conversions and destroyed churches…martyrdom and suffering have a high symbolic meaning for Copts as they perceive themselves as facing a constant existential threat" (p. 56).

Through suffering and martyrdom, the Copts are determined and committed to preserve their heritage and identity in the face of constant persecution. This study found the student perspective of the Copts like that expressed by Zeidan (1999). The following three students reflect their struggles on persecutions and why they are proud of their association with their faith community:

- "…we have gone through a long way. All of them have been persecuted, well not all of them but most of them. They've all been persecuted and until now there is still strong, and God works his miracles through all of us to show that there is still some hope" (FG7, S3).

- "…Suffrage in Egypt, our religion has still kept going and that's a sign that it's meant to be something to be proud of" (FG7, S4)

- "… because we've been through so much, and to come out as a strong community is what make me proud of being Coptic" (FG6, S3)

The students also acknowledged the martyrdom of their forefathers, seeing the martyrs (FG8, S4) as heroes of faith, as expressed by the following 2 students:

- "…The Coptic's, they fought for our faith…" (FG3, S1)

- "…because I believe that our ancestors were the ones that made up our faith in its entirety, and we're the ones that are carrying our faith through to our generations to come, I feel very proud" (FG3, S2)

Students report having a sense of security and well-being in their attachment to the Coptic faith community. This draws their faith heritage and identity into a modern perspective as to why they are so proud of their attachment to the Coptic faith church community. One student expressed the significance of Jesus visiting Egypt by saying, "…Yeah I do feel proud about my heritage because Jesus visited Egypt" (FG10, S4).

For some students, seeing the significance of the Coptic church as a faith community is because of history, heritage and tradition. These two students expressed their faith community as a pillar and a rock:

- "…It's a solid pillar in such a turbulent world. Even just the fact that we have just an unbroken line of discipleship from St Mark to our current Pope, and so that's going to continue forever, and it just makes me proud that I've got a solid rock to go to at the end of the day" (FG6, S4);

- "…faith from a very early age…we've stayed strong throughout all the years and our faith is built on a rock". (FG5, S2)

One student expressed that it was a privilege to be part of the faith community: "being Coptic is one of the most biggest privileges ever" (FG9, S3). The concept of heritage, faith and identity are important to the students' identity formation as it draws on the support of the faith community, as one student expressed saying, *"…both my ancient Egyptian ancestors and my Coptic heritage, because the Coptic's, they fought for our faith, and the Pharaohs they made civilisation happen"* (FG3, S1).

Hence, (alongside the sense of multiplicity in self-identification in the large-sample quantitative data noted above) there is in this small-sample qualitative data a more unified, consistent sense of belonging and association with an ancient faith community. There is some enthusiastic positive representation of Egyptian Coptic identity as it expressed personal faith (Williams, 1988). The report by students on the Egyptian Coptic descent of their forefather's faith played an important role in the students' heritage identity as Egyptian Coptic Christians. One student expressed, *"…the Coptic community is a community that is very close to God…"* (FG1, S1). To belong and to be associated with a faith community is associated with their Egyptian heritage and Egyptian Christian Coptic heritage.

Expressions such as, "my heritage is when the martyrs were around, they gave their lives for Christ" (FG8, S4) and "because over thousands of years the Coptic faith has resonated and has standed strong, as evident through the martyrs..." (FG4, S2). Hence, the Coptic term for "Egyptian" stems from a Greek word, "Aigyptios" (McCallum, 2007).

The above responses are expressions in which students expressed a positive attitude to being Egyptian and to belonging to an ancient heritage (Smith et al., 1999). The data, however, also included some students who refrained from expressing this view. The following section reports on some students who reported that they were less happy, or ambivalent about their Egyptian heritage and ancestry identity.

4.3.3.3 Students' ambivalence about heritage and ancestry

Four students said they had mixed feelings about their heritage. The thesis acknowledges that some students expressed mixed feelings about the role of heritage in their identity. These mixed feelings focused first on lack of knowledge, "well, I'm not really proud of my heritage, but I'm not really ashamed of it either. I don't think I know enough about it to be proud of it" (FG3, S3).

Secondly, one student mentioned lack of experience and not having been to Egypt. She thus, does not engage with it, or relate to it so well personally, as expressed, "I haven't been to Egypt before and I haven't seen the monasteries" (FG7, S2).

One student had negative feelings about the revolution in Egypt (2014) and Egyptian politics, expressed as 'due to the recent revolution and struggles in Egypt', "I do not feel proud of my heritage because of what's happening in Egypt" (FG9, S2).

Lastly, one student appeared to reject or push back against any implied assumption at interview enquiry about being "proud" of their Coptic identity: "I wouldn't say that I'm proud, but I'm neither ashamed of my heritage. It's different to a lot that's in Australia, so it's kind of cool, but, I wouldn't necessary say I'm proud" (FG6, S2).

This suggests the student is criticizing any assumptions and the idea of being labelled and is pushing back against attaching value to only one aspect of his identity. He is suggesting that he may be equally proud of his Australian-ness, in fact, all aspects of his identity, as his

hybrid, hyphenated, multiple identity cosmopolitanism is developing (Hall, 1996; Hall, 2003; Harris, 2015). This student was born in Egypt.

Students may have wished to distance themselves from the idea of being cast in a single identity and wanted to promote an independent image of themselves, capable of negotiating their identity as a multiple identity structure, and of identifying themselves more with the host country (Ward, 2006).

The above broad range of student responses as examples of heritage and ancestry, suggest a multitude of perceptions of role of heritage in identity (Hall, 1996, Williams, 1988). Finally, belonging and association is an underlying outcome stemming from heritage and ancestry, for it is, "pretty cool" (FG10, S1), and it is "nice stuff" (FG9, S4) to be associated with and belonging to the Egyptian community.

The students' responses suggest a fluid process of negotiation of relationship with Egypt and Australia. From the viewpoint of their relatively stable life in Australia, Egypt may appear to them unstable, dangerous and volatile. Student ambivalence about their heritage and their homeland highlight their disappointment in the homeland to distant themselves from Egypt due to instability and security issues (McCallum, 2007). Their allegiance is not with contemporary Egypt, but with the ancient history which they see as part of their Coptic faith education.

We note that there appear to be some interesting contradictions between different data sources above. Further to the discussion of ambiguity, if we return to consider the MEIM survey data, we notice, for example, some participants "strongly disagree" and "somewhat disagree" with the statements. The third column in Table 4.6 highlights the sum of "strongly disagree" and "somewhat disagree". The percentage value (and student numbers in brackets) show diversity in students' attitude towards their culture, language and identity, and tension between their heritage identity and membership in the broader Australian society (Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Welch, 2016).

Scale	Scale Description	Percentage 100% (326 Participants) **Strongly Disagree and Somewhat Disagree**
Scale 1	I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as, history, traditions and customs	**20.9% (68)**
Scale 2	I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly my ethnic group	**16.6 % (54)**
Scale 3	I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means	**9.5% (31)**
Scale 4	I think a lot that my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership	**24.5% (80)**
Scale 5	I am happy that I am a member of the group that I belong to	**4.3% (14)**
Scale 6	I have a strong sense of belonging to my ethnic group	**8.9% (29)**
Scale 7	I understand pretty well what my ethnic, I have often talked to people about my ethnic group	**11.1% (36)**
Scale 8	To learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to people about my ethnic group	**26.7% (87)**
Scale 9	I have a lot of pride in my ethic group	**10.7% (35)**
Scale 10	I participate in cultural practices of my group	**16.0% (52)**
Scale 11	I feel strong attachment to my own ethnic group	**13.8% (45)**
Scale 12	I feel good about my cultural group and background	**6.8% (22)**

Table 4.6 Evidence of Ambivalence to heritage and ancestry

In Table 4.6, we see that there is a considerable number of students who are "pushing back" or resisting the implications represented in the scale items, that is, the implication that they should be heavily involved in what is called an "ethnic group". They don't see themselves as limited to one identification.
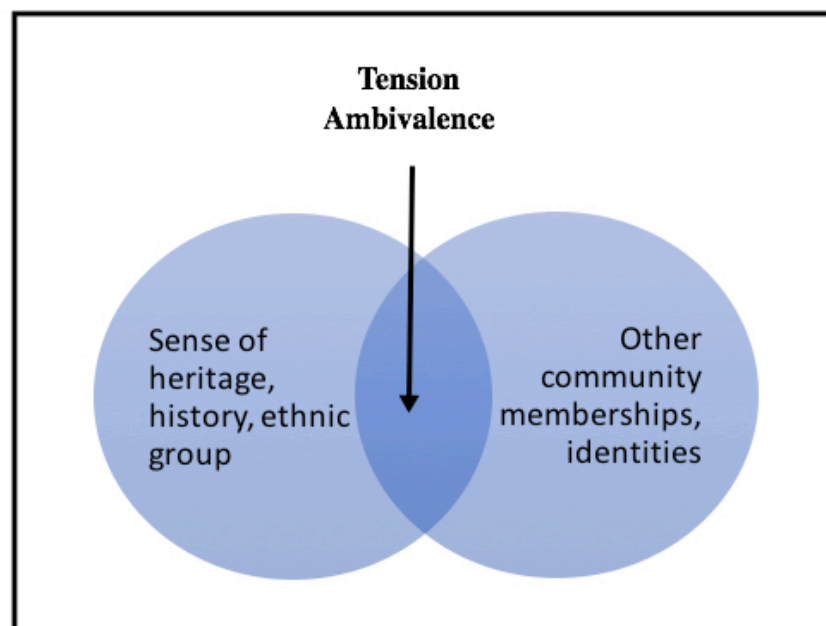
Figure 4.4 The role of sense of heritage

The above figure 4.4 shows the role of sense of heritage in the student's life. The student is between two different forces – sense of heritage and sense of belonging also in the broader community in Australia. The figure symbolically expresses the student in the centre experiencing living in a dual culture setting. The left circle represents and is symbolic of the heritage and ethnic community. The right circle represents and is symbolic of the Australian community and society. The low score values on all twelve scales may indicate students have integrated into Australian society and have maintained their heritage and ethnic identity. Figure 4.4 may reflect that students learnt to live and adapt to their local environment, culturally and socially, and that they are content with both. The size of the overlapping area may vary for different students, and at different times in different spatial contexts in their lives. This will be explored in Chapter 6.

The next section further explores this idea, that students negotiate across community memberships, and move towards a new hybrid cosmopolitan identity (Collins et al., 2011). This moves towards answering research question 3.

4.4   Answering Research Question 3: Negotiation between different identities

In the focus groups, students were asked questions 4, 5 and 6:

Question 4: Do you feel Australian as well? When?

What things do you do that makes you feel Australian?

Question 5: Do you feel Egyptian? When? What things do you do that make you feel

Egyptian?

Question 6: Is there a time where you need to trade-off, balance or swap your Egyptian

identity with your Australian identity? If so, when?

4.4.1 What makes you feel Egyptian?

Exploring students' responses for being Egyptian were coded and recorded with frequency in a descending order (Neuman, 2000). The coding of key terms drew some importance on intergenerational transmission of culture, language and Egyptian identity. Most students mentioned cultural practices such as food, culture, friends and family and language. Others mentioned the Coptic school, having Egyptian parents, the Church, the traditional ways and having an Egyptian background. From the data, three emerging themes are drawn from student responses:

- Family, Friends and Community

- Cultural Practices

- Language

4.4.1.1 Family, Friends and Community

'Family, friends and community' is the first emerging theme in contributing to identity (Berk, 2006; Jersild, et al., 1978; Wenger, 1998). "Community orientated*"* (FG2, S2), as one student described the community they are associated with, shows the attitude towards ethnicity in its attachment and belonging as vital to an ethnic group. This is shown by the comments of the same student saying, "my heritage… that it's so community orientated and that everyone knows each other and we love each other, and I think it's just really great that we get to be part of that, because of our ancestors and how they went through all their struggles just to lead us to this moment…" (FG2, S2).

Students experiencing belonging and association feel close attachment to their family and community (Berk, 2006; Hall, 2006; Wenger, 1998). The following are some reported responses on family and community:

- "…I have grown in an Egyptian and Coptic family and community" (FG1, S2)
- "…being surrounded with the Egyptian community…" (FG5, S3)
- "I feel most Egyptian when I'm around community members, we watch movies and eat food" (FG6, S3)
- "…but I do feel Egyptian when I'm with my grandparents and at family gatherings" (FG3, 3)
- "…I do feel Egyptian when I'm with the Egyptian community, when I'm hanging around Egyptians…" (FG3, S4)
- "I feel Egyptian when I'm with my family, at family gatherings, when I'm at home because my parents mostly speak Arabic, and food is a big part that makes me feel Egyptian, and traditions like going to church and family gatherings…" (FG3, S1)
- "…we're around the Egyptian community with Egyptian friends" (FG10, S2)

The above responses show the effect of family and community on student ethnicity. It is an important element and attribute of their Egyptian ethnicity (Jersild et al., 1978; Berk, 2006). One student indicated they were not fond of Egyptian food or the Egyptian language, but family was still crucial to their Egyptian ethnic identity, as expressed in: "Yeah I guess I do feel Egyptian. I mean, I'm not a fan of the food, and not very familiar with the language, but my family is really Egyptian as well so they also help" (FG2, S2).

Intergenerational transmission is the transfer of language, cultural and faith from one generation to the next (Preston, 1998; de Souza & Rymarz, 2004; Van Dijk & Botros, 2009). The following responses suggest that some students are engaged in intergenerational transmission of ethnicity through upbringing:

- "…The things that I do make me feel Egyptian is I follow the traditional ways that I was brought up to be" (FG9, S1)
- "Yes, I do feel Egyptian. I'm always feeling an Egyptian person. This is because my parents are Egyptian, I was born in an Egyptian household, I've visited Egypt a few times before, I've got family there and also have traditions from Egypt that I have and I live with and by today in my house and that I share with my friends and my society" (FG1, S4)

- "…I'm just always reminded that I'm Egyptian. SO yeah, I feel Egyptian" (FG5, S1)

- "I do feel Egyptian because our community and my family have a remarkable ability to transfer all Egyptian culture and all the Egyptian way of life to Australia…" (FG6, S4)

- "I'm definitely proud of my Coptic heritage. The traditions and culture that's been passed down through generations has moulded me into the person I am. It's a source of identity for everyone, and basically shapes the character and the way I act today" (FG4, S3).

The above responses show the importance of parents transmitting culture and heritage to their children. Being born in Australia further clarifies the importance of intergenerational transmission of ethnic identity. As one student expressed, *"Of course, I feel Egyptian, even though I was born in Australia, I have grown in an Egyptian and Coptic family and community"* (FG1, Q5, S2).

This labelling and identification of origin and ancestry as being Egyptian, and at the same time being born in Australia, shows the students' multiple attachment to their origins, their descent and their heritage in their ethnicity as being Egyptians (Fenton, 2003). Other students expressed their ethnicity through religious celebration (FG1, Q5, S5), being born into Coptic culture (FG1, Q5, S3), and being at church (FG4, Q5, S4). One student, born in Australia, felt that he was 100% Egyptian (Q6, Q5, S1) and at the same time 100% Coptic (FG6, Q1, S1). This finding was like Tseung-Wong and Verkuyten (2013) when reporting on secondary students' difficulty in differentiating between national identity and religious identity. The above finding triangulates with the survey data. With family, friends and community comes culture, which now leads to the next discussion.

4.4.1.2 Cultural Practices

Student attitudes towards identity can be affected by food, music, celebrations and gatherings. Students reflected on the importance of culture through several media, such as parents and grandparents, home, school and church (Williams, 1998). They expressed both Egyptian and Coptic culture as having an effect on their Egyptian ethnicity. The following are some reported responses by some students:

- "…Yeah, I feel Egyptian, because my parents are Egyptian and I'm immersed in Egyptian culture…" (FG5, S1)

- "I do feel Egyptian, all the time. I was born in Egyptian culture, Coptic culture, and I will always be" (FG1, S3).

- "…I'm immersed in Egyptian culture…" (FG5, S1)

- "Yeah, I do feel Egyptian, especially at social events or like celebrations like weddings or what-not, where traditions like food and culture are all embraced" (FG2, S1)

- "Yes, I do feel Egyptian because we eat Egyptian food…" (FG10, S2)

- "We celebrate our Egyptian heritage in church and at school" (FG1, S3).

A culture balance that is experienced by students through their parent's home, school and church provides, as one student expressed, "…culture, belief, (and) tradition" (FG2 S3). The ability to celebrate Egyptian culture at home, school and church reflects a positive attitude towards their Egyptian identity and ethnicity (Williams, 1998).

One student expresses a good summary of the above student reflections:
"Even though I was born in Australia I do have an Egyptian background, and I am heavily influenced by parents who are both Egyptians as well. They carry such characteristics and cultural aspects to my life that heavily influence me. And these cultural beings are upheld and embraced throughout my existence" (FG2, S3).

The above findings triangulate with survey data. Having addressed cultural practices, the discussion now leads to language.

4.4.1.3 Language

Use of language features strongly in student identity (Bottomley, 1997; Dervin, 2016; Williams, 1998). The ability to communicate in Egyptian Arabic made students feel more Egyptian than those who could not speak the language. One student response on language, "…I feel Egyptian most of the time, mostly at school, communicating with Egyptian people, speaking Arabic. Also, my parents generally speak to me in Arabic at home, and I'm surrounded by Arabic food, Egyptian food. There's always Egyptian TV on…" (FG5, S1). The reflection in speaking Arabic at home is expressed by another student saying, "…when I'm at home because my parents mostly speak Arabic…" (FG3, S1).

Communicating in Arabic makes students feel more Egyptian, as reflected with the following students:

- "…I do feel Egyptian because of the language we speak…we communicate with people that speak Arabic…" (FG3, S2)
- "I feel Egyptian because I usually speak Egyptian at home…" (FG10, S1)
- "I feel Egyptian because my parents are Egyptian at home and they talk in Arabic a lot. And I realised that the parties that we go to are normally are very Egyptian" (FG7, S2).
- "Hearing the Arabic language read in the church and participating and going to "parties and festivals or weddings, because it's usually in Arabic as well" (FG7, S1)

Conversely, a couple of students expressed difficulty in communicating in the Egyptian language and they consequently felt difficulty being Egyptian. One student reflects, "…because of the language barrier, I do find it difficult to be an Egyptian" (FG5, S3), and "…not really at home, because we usually speak English and just eat any food…" (FG3, S3)

I am not Egyptian, but…

Some of the students reported with some clarity that they were not Egyptian. Their interaction and acceptance by their peers made them feel Egyptian. As one student expressed, "I do feel Egyptian at certain times, though I'm actually not Egyptian. But being surrounded by the community and interacting with other Egyptians, they do accept me and make me feel like I'm one of them" (FG5, S2).

Another student of Lebanese background reported, "At times, yeah, I do feel Egyptian, but at other times I don't feel Egyptian. Mainly, ever since attending St Mark's Orthodox College, being around other Egyptians, I do feel Egyptian. But other times, I don't feel Egyptian, because I attend a Lebanese Church and factors make me feel like I'm not an Egyptian" (FG5, S4).

4.4.2 So, what makes you feel Australian?

Students were asked to respond to the focus group question "Do you feel Australian as well? When? What things do you do that make you feel Australian?".

Amongst focus group participants, there were 33 students born in Australia and 8 born overseas. There was a lively and diverse response to this question. The responses given by students born in Australia reported ambivalence to "being Australian". Five main themes emerged in the students' response to this question. They are place of birth, community and friends, cultural practices, language, and finally, multiculturalism: belonging to diversity.

In reflection, this thesis notes that the wording of the question, "Do you feel Australian as well? When? What things do you do that make you feel Australian?", implied the existence of some definable "Australian culture". It is clear that, while some stereotypes of "Anglo" white Australian lifestyle may be understood, in fact, Australian culture is as diverse as the many communities present in it.

4.4.2.1 Place of Birth

Place of birth has been identified as an important identity marker by researchers as it provides a sense of belonging and a sense of identity to one's origin, heritage, ethnicity and nationality (Bernal et al. 1990; Bond, 2006; Kabir, 2014). The juxtaposition of being born and living in Australia with an ethnic heritage will not always identify an individual to be Australian. In a study survey of 340 youths conducted by Collins et al. (2011), second generation immigrant Australians - where the majority were born in Australia - reported having a cosmopolitan, hybrid and fluid identity rather than reporting being Australian. Collins et al. (2011) stated, that this phenomena of Australian immigrant youth declaring a cosmopolitan, hybrid and fluid identity is "not new in Australia and is found in most western societies with significant immigrant youth minorities" (p. 95).

Another Australian study conducted by Harris (2015) found young people identified themselves with hyphenated identities – where young people identified themselves with two cultures and their national host country. The context of multiple cultural existence – where young people inter-change cultural identity due to context – the existence of "hyper-" or "super-identity" has been expressed by Harris (2015) as "multiple discourses of difference exist, it is logical that young people will draw on these situationally to position themselves as belonging according to the currency of each in the space of membership" (p. 10). This tells us, whilst one is born in Australia, it does not automatically make one Australian. Today, Australia is a cosmopolitan society expressing a super hybridity of cultures, yet it is still possible to identify as Australian.

In this study, some students reported their birth place in Australia as a major factor in "feeling Australian". One student reported their birth as a "second culture" (FG3, S3), while another student reported saying, "I think it's now become my first culture, where I was born in Australia and I grew up with Australian friends" (FG3, S4). Students born in Australia resonate a secondary attachment with 'friends', being 'citizens of Australia' (citizenship FG5 S4), as an expression of 'first and second culture', 'being raised in Australia', 'lived in Australia' etc. Some of these expressions indicate that students' attitude towards Australia is their home, as one student expressed:

"Yes I do feel Australian as well. I always feel Australian, there's no particular time when I feel Australian. I'm always an Australian. Things that I do that make me Australian are that I celebrate Australian events, I was born in this country, and pretty much Australia is my homeland. So everything I do is pretty much Aussie, and I abide by anything just as any other Australian person would, it's not like there's a difference, I'm still an Australian person, just with a Coptic background" (FG1, S1).

One student expressed that Australia is 'home away from home', as student 5 in Focus Group 1 stated:

"I'll always be an Australian. Australia is my home away from home. I'll always respect Australian morals and values. Because I partake of Australian events such as Australia Day and so on"

Five students who were born in Australia reported that they did not feel Australian. Four other students who were born in Egypt labelled themselves as not feeling Australian. Even some students born in Australia expressed diverse reasons why they did not feel Australian. One student born in Australia expressed the following: "No, I don't feel really Australian. I was born here, but I was brought up with an Egyptian background and everything, so it feels like Egypt here" (FG7, S3)

The student's tone in the audio recording suggests some frustration in not feeling Australian due to what she sees as an overly-Egyptian upbringing. This student was aged 14 and expressed some resentment at her upbringing which has not allowed her more contact with the Australian community.

Being raised in Australia, being born in Egypt and spending most of their life in Egypt does not support a student in feeling Australian. For example, student 1 in Focus Group 7, reported not feeling Australian because he was born in Egypt, saying "No I don't feel that I'm very much Australian, because I was born in Egypt".

However, this student reports the spatial/place factor, that "…sometimes I feel Australian when I go to the beach or have a barbecue or play with friends". Even though the student did report feeling non-Australian because of birth, the activities of going to the beach and having a barbeque represent the idea that place of birth is not an exclusive prediction of identity (Emeka & Vallejo, 2011). There is variation evident in the *"feeling Australian"* identity in students born in Egypt and those born in Australia.

Being born in Australia appears to cement most students' feelings of belonging and sense of identity as Australians being integrated into Australian society, culture and community (Jakubowicz, Collins, Reid & Chafic, 2014). Students' origins and memories of their homeland in Egypt shaped their feeling of not being Australian. One student expressed, "No, I don't feel Australian, because I'm originally Egyptian and all my memories of life in Egypt. I was born and raised there" (FG1, S4). The students born in Egypt reported mixed feelings due to culture, family, tradition and community. One of the features that prevents students from integrating and embracing Australian identity lies in students not being given enough opportunity to embrace the wider Australian community.

4.4.2.2 Social interaction: Sense of Community and friends

Some students reported that social interaction with the broader community and having friends from different Sydney communities has been an important part of their Australian identity. Students' involvement in the Australian community and having Australian friends, have helped shape their identity through blending and integration into Australian society. We note in passing that some students refer to Australia, Australian culture, and Australians as culturally monolithic rather than the diverse population which it is (Bouma, 2006). Below, they try to define the activities and spaces which make them feel Australian

Students reported that growing up in Australia with Australian friends beyond the Coptic group makes them feel Australian. Student 4 in Focus Group 3 expressed feeling Australian due to his birth and early community interactions: "I definitely feel Australian. I think it's

now become my first culture, where I was born in Australia and I grew up with Australian friends, and only 'til later in high school was I really exposed to an Egyptian community, so I definitely do feel Australian".

Similarly, Student 4 in Focus Group 4 expressed blending and being out of his community and being involved with Australian culture gives the opportunity for an Australian identity to be nurtured: "Yeah I do feel Australian. I feel Australian when I'm out in society, and when blending in with Australians. Australian food as well, that's part of Australian culture, so yeah that makes me feel Australian"

We note that, perhaps due to being interviewed within the perceived cultural confines of their school environment, a number of students used the phrase *"out there"* to refer to the Australian community, as opposed to their Egyptian Coptic community.

Being involved in the Australian community and society allows students to be themselves and experience Australian culture, as these following three students expressed saying in FG4, S3 suggests spatial difference "out there socially": "I do feel Australian as well, although not as much as I would of the Coptic faith or of Coptic culture. Basically, when I'm interacting "out there socially", whether it be through sport or any events, there's Australian culture that becomes part of Coptic culture, and yeah, there it is" (FG4, S3)

FG6 S2 suggests his family "get in" with Australian culture, and his neighbours are "around": "I do feel Australian, being brought up in a family where they try to get in with the Australian culture, kind of helps a lot. And having all these Aussie neighbours around, communicating on most days, is just part of the Australian culture" (FG6, S2)

FG5 S3 is "surrounded" by Australian people in positive relationships which have encouraged participation: *"*Yep, I feel Australian. I'm surrounded by all the Australian people, and feel as though we've known each other for a while. My neighbours are very nice, and they're Australian, and we interact very well, so it does help that I do feel Australian. Attending things like Australia Day or the football, it does make you feel that you are an Australian citizen". (FG5, S3)

We see here demonstrated the role of social interaction in identity construction as, "more nuanced, multileveled and ultimately complicated framing", according to Block (2007, p.13). We see in these students that identity is constructed through interaction and negotiation with others (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

Students' involvement in the wider Australian community has resulted in building friendship and community with other Australians. The following three students reported the engagement in community and friends associated with cultural activities they perceive as "Australian", whatever that is construed to represent:

- "Yes I feel Australian, because we're around the Australian community, and we do barbeques and we celebrate Australia Day, so that's what I think makes us Australian" (FG10, S1)
- "I sometimes feel Australian, because I'm usually with my friends that are Coptic and then sometimes I go and meet other Australian people from the Australian community" (FG10, S2)
- "I do feel Australian, especially around my community because we participate in a lot of community activities that also allow us to interact with other individuals, and so hence making me feel more Australian" (FG6, S3)

To be born in Australia does not automatically make one Australian. As one student expressed being around Egyptian friends, Egyptian people and Egyptian culture were reasons for not feeling Australian as expressed by Student 2 in FG8:
"I don't really feel Australian. Because I usually hang out with Egyptian people, and I just learn more about my culture".

On the other hand, there are examples in the data of students who have minimal Australian community contact and thus do not "feel Australian". The following two students expressed these sentiments:

- "I do not feel Australian, since I go to a Coptic school, I go to a Coptic Church, I'm surrounded by Coptic family and friends, so I don't really participate in the Australian culture" (FG4, S1)
- "I don't really feel Australian. Because I usually hang out with Egyptian people, and I just learn more about my culture" (FG8, S2)

This study has shown students have a hyper (Harris, 2015), hybrid (Collins et al. 2011), Australian-Egyptian identity. As noted above, other authors noted a super-identity (Harris, 2015), going from one identity to another according to context.

4.4.2.3 Cultural Practices

Students reported feeling Australian through participation in what they see as Australian cultural practices (Phillips,1998; Jones, 2000; Harris, 2015). Being involved through Australian community cultural events allowed students to be Australian by engaging in these activities, such as Australia Day and ANZAC Day. Other cultural events that were significant in many of the responses were going to the beach and barbeques (Jones, 2000; Phillips, 1998). The following are students' responses highlighting the importance of participation:

- "Yes I do feel Australian, when we go out to the city and all we see, or most of what we see, are Australian people. When we celebrate Australia Day it makes me feel Australian, when we eat Anzac cookies" (FG8, S1)

FG2 S4 acknowledges stereotypes but offers strong personal belonging:

- "Every morning when I wake up I always feel very Australian. I was born here, lived here my whole life, never left Australia. You really feel Australian in the more stereotypical activities, such as going to the beach, barbeques. But like a few people before me, Anzac Day and Australia Day, those big events really make you feel very Australian" (FG2, S4)

- "I definitely do feel Australian. Since Australia is a multicultural accepting country, I do not forget that I am from an Egyptian background, though I do practice a few of the Australian traditions. So, I feel Australian on events such as Australia Day and Anzac Day. Things I do is, like, go out with the family, celebrate with the Australian community, with the successes of Australia and of this country" (FG2, S1)

- "I definitely feel Australian. I always feel Australian, because I was born here and it's kind of like my second culture. The things I do that make me feel Australian are like, I participate in a lot of sports, we're always out on the beach, and I have a lot of friends who are Australian" (FG3, S3)

- "I feel Australian because I was born here and we normally go to the beach in summer and stuff, so it makes me feel Australian". (FG7, S2)

Many quotes again suggest the spatial aspect of going "out" from the immediate Coptic community. The above comments highlight students' admissions on cultural practices on their perception on what makes them "feel Australian". The recurring term expressed by students, "going out", highlights the students tone and from the audio recording, students are excited about the opportunity to experience Australian culture by participating in local events held by Australian cities of Sydney, Australian beaches and local Australian events.

It is the physical space of going away from their residential home and their Egyptian Coptic community to the broader host Australian community. The researcher is perplexed to understand the importance of these stereotypes expressed by the students. The question lies: 'is it deliberate to demonstrate their belonging to Australian society and community or to their ethnic heritage Egyptian community'; or is it 'parents influence'; or is it 'pure public belonging - caused by Australian media and the peer pressure of Australian society'?

Sport is a favourite activity expressed by students in being Australian, as one student says: "Most times I feel Australian, mostly when I'm with the boys, watching the footy or soccer, and having meat pies and all that stuff" (FG6, S1). The activities in "doing things with the boys" by watching Australian footy and eating their favourite Australian food, meat pies, informs their identity in feeling Australian.

Another favourite Australian behaviour is holidays. Students associate being Australian by their activity in having holidays, as one student expressed saying, *"I do feel Australian when I'm on holidays and I'm around where mostly Australians live"* (FG9, S4). Conversely, one student identified his lack of participation in Australian cultural practices, by expressing: "Not necessarily. Personally, I don't feel Australian as much, because I believe the Egyptian culture and traditions is what makes us Australian" (FG3, S2).

4.4.2.4 Language

Language is a sense of belonging, where children can learn a second language at a very young age (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Accordingly, heritage language learning declines with second and third generation status (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Hence, the new migrants settling in a host country maintain their heritage language as a sense of belonging to their ethnic community. With second and third generation heritage language speakers, Carreira and Kagan (2011) showed "evidence of incomplete acquisition and loss of linguistic structures"

(p. 42). A study conducted by Fillmore (2000) also showed a loss of proficiency of the heritage family language user to the dominant English language in the host country among second and third generation migrants. The researcher's own children show they can understand what is said in their Egyptian heritage language and either respond minimally in the language or respond fully in English.

Welch (2016) noted the importance of culture and language at home, particularly when migrants commence to be "fossilised" in Australia as their immigrant homelands have changed significantly. Welch (2007) argued the importance of giving students and their families the opportunity to learn their heritage language by providing the educational opportunities to maintain their culture, origin and language.

Accent identifies who you are, and defines your origin and identity. Accent tells the story of your source of origin and ethnicity. Matsuda's (1991) description on accent gives a story that illustrates the effect of accent on heritage language users:

"Our accent carries the story of who you are - who first held you and talked to you when you were a child, where you have lived, your age, the schools you attended, the languages you know, your ethnicity, whom you admire, your loyalties, your profession, your class position: traces of your life and identity are woven into your pronunciation, your phrasing, your choice of words. Your self is inseparable from your accent. Someone who tells you they don't like the way you speak is quite likely telling you that they don't like you" (p. 1329)

Hence, the use of language highlights the importance in every day communication usage. Families are responsible for providing children with the sense of belonging to a language, culture, and integrate cultural identity. Children are sponges that embrace a hybrid, fluid and dynamic identity that is constantly changing as they mature into adult life and beyond (Hall, 1996; Bottomley, 1997; Collins et al., 2011).

Speaking and communicating in English as reported by some students is part of their Australian identity. This allows students to be part of the wider Australian community by communicating in English as reported by the following students:

- "I do feel Australian as I was born in Australia in 2000, and I feel Australian as I speak English and that's the Australian language today that we all speak" (FG9, S1)

- "What makes me feel Australian is the way I speak, because it's very Aussie. And the way my parents speak is very Aussie as well. What things do I do that makes me Australian? I play a lot of Australian sports, like sometimes I play soccer" (FG9, S3)
- "Yeah, I feel Australian. I was born here, my first language is English and I'm surrounded by Australians all the time when I go out. When I communicate, when I converse with people. Also, most of the things I do are very westernized, you know like computers, reading books, movies and stuff. So yeah, I feel very Australian" (FG5, S1)

English language pronunciation may also be a factor for students who decline to identify themselves as Australians. One student reported saying:

"No, I don't feel Australian, because my accent is not really good, and I usually hang around with Egyptian friends, and my community is all Egyptian, so I don't really feel Australian" (FG8, S3)

4.4.2.5 Multiculturalism: belonging to diversity

Students are from migrant families. They could relate to Australia's multicultural policy in allowing migrants to come to Australia for a better life. Students reported their view on their participation in multicultural Australia as making them Australians. The following students report their Australian identity in a multicultural Australia:

- "I was born and raised in Australia. Australia is known as a multicultural country, and I have been partaking in certain activities that have got to do with Australia. I think that this has heavily influenced me and had an impact. And this impact has made me who I am today" (FG 2, S3)
- "I guess I do feel Australian, because Australia allowed my friends to migrate here and have new opportunities, the land of opportunity, for their children and what-not. I don't exactly participate in Australian activities, being surrounded by such an intense Coptic environment through school and church and at home. However, I guess I do participate in the Australian culture through sport, food, etc." (FG4, S2)
- "I do feel that I am Australian. Every day we're surrounded by the flag, national anthem, and participating in events such as Australia Day, and having quite a few Australian friends I think that interacting with different cultures, that makes us Australian, because we accept each other because we're multicultural" (FG5, S2)

Australia's multicultural policy has given the above students the opportunity to report their Australian identity in belonging to a country that has accepted their culture and heritage as being Egyptian. To these students, feeling Australian is a representation of diversity itself and the acceptance of other cultures.

The above data analysis sheds light on "feeling Australian". They identify as Australians because of multicultural Australia. The students identify with multiple identities. Students acknowledge Australia's' multiculturalism as part being personally accepted, belonging and simply, being Australian.

The data analysis illustrates the notion of cultural intersection, as defined by Berry (2005). This is the variable diverse intersection of two "cultures" as acculturation. Students' self-labelling as Australians and belonging to a multicultural Australia is in line with Berry's model of integration and multicultural theory of living successfully in two cultures (Berry, 2005). Language is a bearer of culture, (Welch, 2007). The following Figure 4.5 depicts "Feeling Australian".
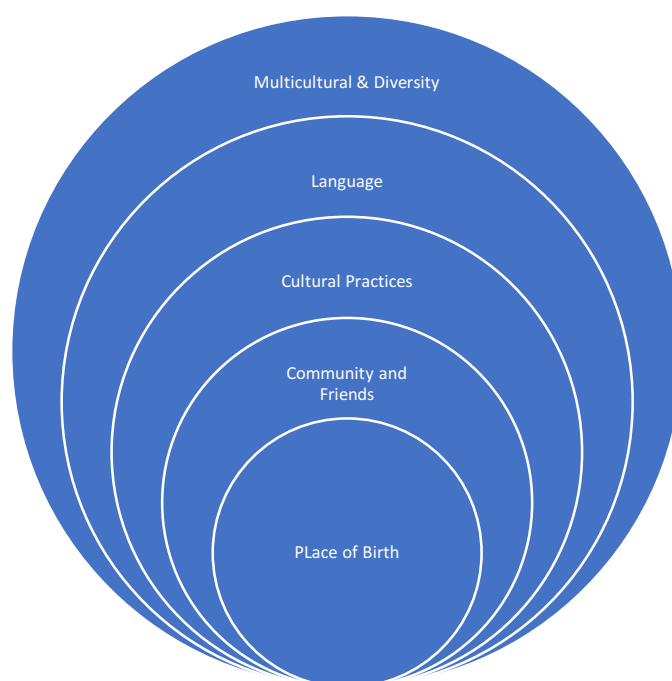
Figure 4.5 Feeling Australian

Figure 4.5 shows a visual diagram of identity construction in migrant students on their perspective of how they feel to be Australian. The figure shows the first layer is being born in Australia, the place of birth. Following this, there are four other layers that contribute to students' perspective that makes them feel Australian - community and friends, cultural practices, language and multicultural diversity.

4.5   Summary and Discussion of Chapter 4 Data Analysis

The mixed method design used in this research project gave the opportunity to understand the complexity of identity, language and culture at a single Coptic school in Australia, viewing the data in different the dimensions through the lenses of quantitative and qualitative exploration. The research answered the set of three questions:

Question 1: What are the characteristics of students and their perceptions of the school?

Question 2: What are students' perceptions of their identity?

Question 3: How do students negotiate identity?

The data analysis has shown that, in regard to 'student characteristics', the students are diverse in home geographical location, family birthplace, own birthplace, future aspirations, and language use. The students are from families who are investing in their children's education and spiritual development in a Coptic school which represents the centre of the Coptic community. With regard to 'student perceptions of the school', the student response was diverse and included ambiguity, but was largely positive.

Many students reported that they admired the school effort to create a safe and nurturing community. They reported that the presence of clergy, the chapel and the religious practices emphasized to them constantly that it was a dual integrated religious and educational environment. The role of school for some is a second home where security, friends and activities are found. Spirituality formed part of the students' personal development through the faith activities during the school day.

Regarding Research Question 2, perceptions of identity, a more complex and diverse picture emerged. Students enthusiastically embraced multiple self-identifications, in quantitative data and any implied, confusing barriers between national, ethnic and religious identities appeared either not to matter to them, or to dissolve.

As children of migrants, it may reflect student positive self-esteem and motivation with aspirations to succeed in society by breaking culture barriers, by assimilating and integrating into Australian society. The dominance of the English language as a major communicator over their heritage language of Arabic or Coptic is significant. Students expressed a sense of belonging, affirmation and commitment to their community. Their perception of community was not limited to the Egyptian ethnic community, but also embraced their Australian society, including assimilation and integration. The place of birth is significant to a sense of self-identification, but may contribute to confident and multiple identifications. Diversity in identification in family and community were expressed by students. The diverse community participation in school, church, family, wider community events and sports reflected a major sense of diverse belonging. There was confusion between heritage and exploration of pre-Christian Egypt and early Christian culture, and only some understood the difference and were knowledgeable.

In regard to Research Question 3, and the notion of "negotiating" identity, students expressed no need to explicitly "trade-off" or negotiate identities, as most seem to have a fluid sense of continuity across identity contexts. In the end, for these students, their perception of a membership of multicultural Australia gives them the space and freedom they need. But, while the notion of 'multicultural Australia' may largely remain conceptualised as a mapping of different co-existing community groups, students suggest that they are part of an integrated Australian society, a cosmopolitan identity.

We note that place of birth may nevertheless still remain for some a personal marker which may bring up issues of patriotism, nationalism and family loyalties.

In conclusion, the students can be regarded as a model of diverse, complex, cosmopolitan identity. It has been observed that Australia is emerging as a cosmopolitan society, superseding older models of multicultural society (Collins et al., 2011). This study appears to confirm the findings of Collins et al. (2011) in its similar identification of very positive aspirations in a small sample of Sydney's immigrant youth, their strong sense of having a positive future role in Australian society, their sense of belonging and ownership of their community or neighbourhood. Collins et al. (2011, p.94) noted that "they live connected lives, with multicultural friendship networks rather than living their lives parallel to and separate from other youth" (p. 94). Most students were born in Australia yet most hinted at

some type of cosmopolitan, hyphenated identity (Harris, 2015), reflecting their diverse cultural heritage and their global connectedness through diasporic family networks.

Chapter 4 has presented the findings from the collected student data. The chapter has addressed the construction of student identity formation in a Coptic school in Sydney. The significance and relevance of identity to learning has been identified and established.

In Chapter 5, the analysis will now be directed to the collected parent data in surveys and parent interviews, which will be our next focus.

Chapter 5 – Parents' perceptions of identity and school

5.1 Introduction

While the focus of this thesis is the examination of identity in the students of a Coptic school, this chapter sheds extra light on the students by examining their parents' perceptions. It examines parent data from 31 parent surveys and 10 parent interviews.
The survey is the same as the student survey. The data were analysed.

The interviews (30 minutes) were conducted by a lay teacher at the school (not the researcher), in the school building, between September and October 2013. The interviews were audio-recorded and the recordings transcribed. The transcriptions were read and re-read for emerging themes.

From close examination of both the survey and interview data, three themes emerged from parent data:

- parent personal identity

- dependence on school and church community

- parent views of the school.

The organization of this chapter will focus on integration of data from surveys and interviews into each theme. This chapter also presents comparative triangulation of data from students and parents, uncovering some sharp differences in their respective perceptions of identity and community belonging. A discussion of intergenerational change is presented. We first briefly note demographic details of parents surveyed and interviewed.

 Parent Demographic, Survey data

Thirty-one parents completed the survey instrument. Parent age ranged from 31-54 years. The gender mix was 20 females and 9 males with 2 undeclared.

Most parents recorded higher education achievements and professional roles in health care such as doctors, nurses, age and disability practitioners and pharmacists. There were also accountants, teachers, an industrial chemist, office workers and a priest. Two parents recorded themselves as homemaker and self-employed.

The survey asked parents to categorise themselves. As noted in Chapter 4, it is unknown how the parents interpreted the meaning of the categories 'national identity' and 'ethnicity'. Firstly, in naming their 'national identity', parents recorded Australian 74% (23), Egyptian 16% (5), Palestinian 3.2% (1), Sudanese 3.2% (1), and no label 3.2% (1).

Parents reported their place of birth as follows: Australia 22.6% (7), Egypt 54.8% (17), Kuwait 3.2% (1), Lebanon 6.4% (2), Sudan 3.2% (1), and no identification (2). This is in contrast with the student data of with a diversified mixture of reported place of birth. However, students reported a majority born in Australia, whilst the parents' majority was born in Egypt.

Parents reported their ethnicity as follows: Egyptian 32.2% (10), Coptic 25.8% (8), Sudanese 9.6% (3), no identification 9.6% (3), Arabic 3.2% (1), Greek 3.2% (1), Kuwaiti 3.2% (1), Lebanese 3.2% (1) and Palestinian 3.2% (1). And finally, the highest frequency place of birth for both parent and grandparent was Egypt with 58% (18). Then followed a similar pattern to the ethnicity recorded above, with Greece, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, United Emirates and Iran.

Parent demographic in interview context

The following Table 5.1 is a summary of the demographic of parents who were interviewed in this research study. The age ranged from 32 to above 50 years of age with an average age of 38.4 years. There were 8 females and 2 males interviewed. Most parents were born in Egypt (6), with Australia (2), England (1) and Kuwait (1) next. Only one parent was an ex-student from the College.

Parent	Gender	Age of Parent	Birth	Number of Children	Children's Age	Children's Gender
1	F	46	Egypt	2	16,11	F, M
2	F	50+	Egypt	2	22, 15	M, M
3	F	38	England	2	12,10	M, F
4	M	36	Australia	2	5	M
5	F	40	Egypt	3	17, 14, 10	M, F, M
6	F	39	Egypt	3	16,15, 13	F, F, M
7	F	36	Australia	3	13, 8, 7	F, M, F
8	F	32	Kuwait	3	8, 6	F, M
9	F	45	Egypt	1	14	F
10	M	42	Egypt	3	11,13, 13	M, F, F

Table 5.1 Demographic of Parents interviewed

The following Table 5.2 Triangulation provides a summary of the potential triangulation between the data which has afforded students' perceptions as discussed in Chapter 4 and the data which has afforded parents' perceptions of identity and life in Australia.

Students	**Parents**
A. Role of the School	Q1. Why they send their children to the school
	Q8. Is the School Coptic
B. Students' perception of identity	Q2. Parents describing their identity
Q3. What do you like about being Coptic	
Q4. What it does to be an Australian Copt	
Q5. Feeling Coptic	
Q6 & Q7. Heritage	
C. Negotiation	Q9. Negotiation

Table 5.2 Triangulation

5.2   Parent perception of personal identity

5.2.1 Self-Identification

The response given by the ten parents clearly shows that parents express their religious affiliation almost unilaterally as their identity. In the interviews, five parents described their identity purely in terms of their membership of the Coptic Church, without any indicator of national identity, e.g. Coptic Christian, Coptic faith, Coptic Orthodox and Egyptian Coptic Orthodox. Three parents followed "Coptic" with an indication of origins, e.g. Coptic Australian and Coptic Australian Egyptian. Only one parent offered a nationality (Sudanese) as their identity.

Parent 3 was born in England, but she self-identified as Sudanese. However, parent 3 further expressed her religious identity as "Coptic Orthodox". (These results shared some commonality to the students' responses on their identity).

Parents were asked in the interview, "How would you describe your identity"?
The parents interview responses confirmed the survey findings, in claiming a religious identity. Parent 1 reported in her response saying: *"Obviously first and foremost I'm*

Christian – a Coptic Christian – that is probably the most important thing to me. I have no idea, I don't know! I've never been asked about my identity before! I mean, being a Christian is probably about the most important thing. I don't know how else to answer that question!"

Parent 1 sees her identity as focused on her Christian faith and feels no other identity than that. Parents 4 and 7 expressed their identity in a few words, "I'm Coptic Australian", whilst parent 6 appears determined with her response saying, "My identity lies in the Coptic faith, that's for sure, with the morals and the values that my parents have passed on to me, that I hope to pass on to my children". Parent 6 expresses hope and determination to transmit a religious identity to her children. Only parents 8 and 9 included the word "Egyptian", saying that they labelled themselves thus: "I usually say I am an Egyptian Coptic Orthodox" and "I am proud to be an Egyptian Coptic Orthodox person".

We note the contrast here between parents and students. The somewhat homogeneous response given by parents in labelling their identity differed to the more heterogeneous response given by students. The students' response, as discussed in Chapter 4, section 3.3.3, indicated that some students expressed confusion and ambiguity and a sense of hybridity, complexity and multiplicity in their understanding of identity.

5.2.2 Parents reflecting on heritage and religion

Parents reflected on what they like about having a Coptic identity focused on faith, tradition, history, persecution and survival. One parent gave her reflection saying that, "My history. The fact that we're passionate, the fact that we didn't give into persecution, the strength of my ancestors and our history" (Parent 7). This parent identified their Coptic history and showed passion towards their Christian heritage, as observed by McCallum (2007) in other contexts.

Unlike student responses in this area, where they include and conflate pre-Christian history and Coptic history as their identity (Chapter 4, section 3.3.1 and section 3.3.2), parents did not express any interest in ancient history and the pre-Christian era of Egypt. The parents' heritage focus is solely on the Christian era. However, one parent's notion of heritage was expressed as her enjoyment of the story telling of her parents living in Sudan and in Egypt:

"Heritage to me means, when I listen to stories of when my parents were in the Sudan and in Egypt, and just listening to how life was and how they are still trying to get us to live in a certain way, according to where we came from*"* (Parent 3).

Parents' view on heritage and identity appear to be centralised on Christian heritage. In critical retrospect, this may reflect a methodological limitation in how the questions were asked, focusing mainly on their Coptic Australian heritage rather than asking further about their involvement in Australian society. To the parents, heritage and identity focused on home, church and church community (McCallum, 2007). These responses may reflect the parents' attitude to being a parent, the responsibility of raising their children and their efforts to achieve intergenerational transmission of their identity to their children. Issues of language, current Egyptian culture or life in Australia, were hardly expressed by the parents.

5.2.3 Parents reflecting on their own growth and development

We have seen that parent personal identity is framed around religious heritage and spirituality. As an extension of their self-categorisation, some selected survey data show that the religious focus of parent identity has also shaped their sense of their growth and development.

We briefly consider the responses collected from parents on the ten religious scales. Four scales recorded above 90% with the highest response recorded in:

Scale 45: "It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection": 93.6% of parents agree/somewhat agree

Scale 44: "I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith": 90.3% agree/somewhat agree

Scale 46: "Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life": 90.3% agree/somewhat agree

Scale 47: "Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life": 90.3% agree/somewhat agree

Scale 43: "My Religious beliefs lie behind my whole life": 83.8% agree / somewhat agree

These five scales indicate the parents' thoughts and ideas about life are centred on a religious spectrum foundation. There is also diversity amongst parents found with these five scales.

For example, in scale 43, 6.5% did not agree/somewhat disagree with the religious beliefs lying behind their whole life, 6.5% identified as not applicable and 3.2% had missing data.

These scales indicate that parents' identity may be stable in homogeneous religious and spiritual development. Parents portray their religious identity as the framework of their life in Australia with more clarity and enthusiasm than they describe any sense of national identity about their current Australian context (Bouma, 2006; McCallum, 2007).

Parent 1 identifies her heritage as being Christian and she believes there is not one moment where she is "switched off" from being Coptic: *"It's every moment. Like, there isn't a moment where I switch off – it's not like I become a Coptic just when I walk into church, you know. I live and breathe, it's while I'm at home, while I'm cooking and doing domestic duties, when I'm with my children, when I'm with my family, my friends. Nothing changes, it's just been instilled in me, I believe. And that's just how we've been brought up"*.

Parent 1 seems to express the sentiment of parent identity as being grounded in religious faith and membership. This is in contrast with students who have been born into a society where they value their participation in Australian life and activities equally with their religious identity. We recall (Chapter 4, section 4.5) students' statements that they can move between different environments and feel different identities in different places, with different friends (Bouma, 1995; Bouma 2006).

5.3 Belonging / involvement in community

An important part of understanding identity is to note the subjects' sense of belonging and community membership (Wenger, 1998). Parents completed the Multi Ethnic Identity Measure scale survey (See Appendix H) with three scales above 80% (scales 3, 7 and 12).

Responses again indicate in parents a close, perhaps even somewhat exclusive alignment with the Coptic church community. Some items in the survey indicate that most parents feel secure in their local Coptic community. For example:

Scale 5: "I am happy that I am a member of the group that I belong to": 71% agree/somewhat agree, 12.9% strongly disagree/somewhat disagree and 12.9% identified as not applicable.

Scale 6: "I have a strong sense of belonging to my ethnic group": 74.2% agree/somewhat agree, 16.2% strongly disagree/somewhat disagree and 6.5% identified as not applicable.

Scale 50: "I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation": 87.1% agree/somewhat agree, 6.5% strongly disagree/somewhat disagree and 3.2% identified as not applicable.

However, we note again the diversity evident in parents' response to the acculturation questions in which they also indicate they feel secure and stable with their community whilst growing up and now as adults (Rudmin, 2003). Following Rudmin's recommendations, we acknowledge "researchers should identify responses of indifference…by including "no opinion" or "don't know" response options and by discounting data that show no differences from random responding. Responses indicating indifference should not be merged into measures or categories" (Rudmin, 2003, p.30). For example:

Scale 32: "My friends, while I was growing up were of Coptic Origin": 80.6% agree/somewhat agree.

Scale 17: "I associate with members of my community": 87.1% agree/somewhat agree.

In interviews, the concept of 'negotiation between cultures' was introduced with parents, but they indicated they were not interested in this concept and that there was no need for negotiation or movement across cultures, as they felt secure in their community.

Despite the professional profiles of many parents in the broader Australian community, there was surprisingly no mention of "changing across spaces" or identity changing according to context, such as students showed in chapter 4. Parents suggest they are grateful and respectful towards Australia, as Parent 5 expressed: "Being an Australian Copt is respecting the country that opened its arms for us when we came from Egypt, which was Australia. Respecting its rules, living in harmony with people, and understanding their background and being able to

live in harmony and do what's right by Australia, but at the same time being Coptic and having a strong faith".

They express their need to sustain very close community membership. Parent 7, born in Australia, sustains this attitude, when she expresses the "hand in hand" continuity of her identity as:

"Mainly Australian, because I'm born and raised here. I'm definitely Australian first. However, in terms of my Coptic background, it's my belief, my faith more than anything else. I don't know anything about being Egyptian. My cousin is from Egypt, and she talks about certain cultural expectations. I'm completely oblivious to it. There's certain things I understand within the church culture, but again it's based on the spiritual aspects. So yes, I am Australian, and yes I am Coptic in terms of my faith. The two go hand in hand. But in terms of being Egyptian, I know nothing about it, I really don't".

Parent 7 reports being born in Australia and identifies as being Egyptian and her faith as being Coptic. It is understood by her age (37 years) that this parent went to a non-Coptic based school and had an Australian education and upbringing. The response given by Parent 7 indicates that she was not exposed to a Coptic curriculum. The term used by Parent 7 expressing her Egyptian history as "oblivious" provides an understanding that she is unfamiliar and unacquainted with her Egyptian history and with her Coptic church history.

The first observation highlights there is a distinction between Egyptian and Coptic history. Parents seem disinterested in Egyptian history and unable to engage in pre-Coptic Christian history. That is, parents don't mention the history of the Pyramids and ancient Egypt as students expressed pride in Egyptian history.

The second observation highlights that it is the school and its curriculum (in *loco parentis*) rather than parents playing a strong role in student identity and that the school is taking the role of intergenerational transmission by default. The school is designing and providing Coptic education that includes a selected balance of Egyptian and Coptic history for students to understand the difference and appreciate their heritage, or 'who am I?'.

According to Berry's (2005) model and associated models of identity (Ward, 2006), some parents appear not to have integrated as easily as students were able to. The above data on parent responses fit with the model of identity that has become marginalised by default. They

may live and work as professionals in Australia and proclaim to be Australian, but feel personally secure and comfortable within their adherence to a limited Coptic community framework (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.2 on variety of approaches to acculturation).

We note the contrast with students who indicated that they felt open to move from one space to another because they felt comfortable and at home in the spaces (school, home, church and society).

These parental attitudes are reflected in the next section of data analysis, in their perceptions and expectations of the school, and parent desire for the school to represent the Coptic community and belonging.

5.4 Parent perceptions of School/Church Community

The parent responses as to why they send their children to a Coptic school focused on their perception of the school's education program, spiritual environment, community spirit, sense of belonging, the values promoted by the school and their belief that the school is a 'safe' place for students.

The following excerpts reflect parents' attitude to their choice to send their children to the Coptic school. The first parent provides some scope of why parents send their children to the school by stating:

"I send my kids to the Coptic school for several reasons. One is that it's very important to me that they get an excellent education, and I believe that the school can provide that for them. I'm really happy with the programs that are in place at the school. I like the fact that they're surrounded by their Christian heritage, and that, besides it being instilled in them through the church and at home, it's also instilled in them through the school" (Parent 1).

The above parent raises the importance of education, school program, heritage and where the school is an extension of space of the home and the church.

The second parent focuses on community spirit and sense of belonging by remarking:
"The reason that I send my children to a Coptic school is for the community spirit, and that they get to go to Mass and have priests walking around, and just have that sense of belonging to a school where they always have the customs and traditions" (Parent 3).

From our knowledge of student perceptions of daily routine and environment, it seems the school fulfils its charter to parents. However, three parents gave their reasons for sending their children to the school on the basis of the school teaching the Coptic language, the notion of safety, and "good investment". Relevant to the Coptic language, the parent was influenced by her son's response to her:

"It's very good to keep our traditional Coptic language and beliefs. He's learning Coptic language; all the hymns we have. I tried to take him out of St Marks, but he said "I will forget how to read the Coptic, and he was crying", so I think he is very happy here with his friends" (Parent 2).

Parent 4 expressed the notion of spiritual 'safety' as a factor in his response saying, "I believe that it has a good foundation in regards to education, as well as the spiritual environment to keep him safe". This parent may be referring to moral education as protection from negative social behaviours (such as drugs). Given the parents' own socio-economic level and aspirations for their children economically, it is surprising that only parent (7) suggested that enrolling his child was a good investment in the child's academic and economic future, "mainly for a spiritual benefit, welfare. Also, based on past academic results, it was a good investment".

Finally, in regard to the school being Coptic, parents' responses were similar in essence to the students' perceptions, as displayed in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.1. Both parents and students see the school culture expressed in spirituality practice, such as prayer and liturgy, the teaching of values, Christian artefacts such as the presence of a cross at the front of the school, and school curriculum.

In conclusion, regarding perceptions of the school, the triangulation of parent and student qualitative data show that both parents and students appear to recognise how the values and practices of the school have a role in shaping student identity. However, while most students appear to enjoy their school life as one element in their broader life, they are less interested in the school being 'safe', that is, in limiting the extent of their evidently more diverse community memberships.

5.5 Discussion of parent data response

It was noted that the parent replies to the interview questions shared a great deal of similarity. This implies they may experience little movement and negotiation in their cultural memberships. Looking for explanations, maybe it is that parents are older and have been in Australia longer. Having passed through the identity-seeking phase of adolescence, they present themselves in the interview as confident and secure. The way the parents position themselves is embedded and further supported by their parent peer group in the church/school community. This community provides security and personal and religious identity.

As the "clients" of the school, the parents want the school to reflect their perspectives. They value a high educational outcome for their children, and values and faith-based principles to be practised and embraced (Bouma, 2006; Rymarz, 2013).

Parents feel a sense of security for their children as students at the school. They support the school in providing what could be critically considered a "cocoon" environment. This is giving limited exposure to the experience of diversity for their children and students at the school (Rymarz, 2014).

Parents want their children to embrace a religious identity like themselves. However, like most adolescents, the students need to differentiate and separate from their parents, as they look outside the school and talk about activities (Rymarz, 2014; Bouma, 2006).

Parents make clear distinction on their preferred religious identity, separate to their civic identity, whilst students represent a hybrid continuity of integrated identities. The difference between parent and student data may suggest that this is resulting in some tension and disparity between students and parents, and/ or between students and the school environment, in that the school environment is constructed to carry out parents' wishes (Bouma, 2006; Rymarz, 2014).

5.6 Intergenerational change: perceptions of identity

A brief examination of the difference in parent/student social environments is also revealing. Returning to the quantitative data, we can see from comparing parents and student responses on several survey items, that the make-up of the social circles of parents and students is markedly different. This shapes different expectations and an openness to diversity in the

children. For example, the following Table 5.3 makes it clear that students have a greater number of friends from the broader community. This further clarifies generational shift in social alignment in the younger generation and the more "fluid" nature of student identity.

	Parent response % agree/somewhat agree	Student response % agree/somewhat agree
Scale 32, "friends of Coptic origin",	80.6%	69%.
Scale 34, "My friends are of multicultural mix"	64.5%	80%
Scale 37, "My friends are now of Egyptian origin"	87%	78%
Item 40, "I like to identify myself as Australian"	58.1%	75.5%.

Table 5.3 Comparing parents and students' responses on four scales

Difference in parent/student thinking and outlook may be also inferred from their different response in regard to language and culture preferences.

On the item "I think in Arabic", students 'agree' responses were 20.5%, with parents at 45.2% agreement. Arabic is an L1 for some parents, but an L2 for all students. This represents another difference in thinking and participation in L1 English-functioning Sydney, between parents and students.

Similarly regarding their cultural engagement with Egypt such as music and Arabic TV, students showed limited interest. The parents' response to Arabic music was 70.95% and Arabic TV 61.3% compared to students' response to Arabic music of 58.6% and Arabic TV 42.6%.

In this area, however, parents themselves appear to have only a limited interest in current Egyptian/Arabic culture. This may be due to their negative association with political change in Egypt and the persecution of Coptic churches. Thus, they have little desire to participate in either different Egyptian culture or in contemporary Australian culture. This leaves them with

their focus on the church community. The students, however, appear to be curious, open and hungry to know about both ancient and modern Egypt and Australia.

This study confirms findings in other studies of intergenerational change and we pause to consider the relevant issues raised in some of this research. de Souza and Rymarz (2004) studied 109 young Australian Copts and found teenage students aged between 11 and 17 experienced a strong association between their faith community and family. The study indicated more than 90% of parents were born in Egypt and had a significant strong relation on religious identity and cultural identity to their Egyptian homeland (de Souza & Rymarz, 2004). Australian Coptic parents persevere in transmitting a religious heritage to their children as they see their religious identity being important to them (Rymarz, 2014; de Souza & Rymarz, 2004). The result in the intergenerational difference between parents and students indicate students have distance themselves from their home land of Egypt and embrace Australian home security, whilst parents have turned to their authentic religious identity as a sense of security (McCallum, 2007).

The global movement of people has given rise to a modern diaspora, as ethnic communities move from one country to another whilst maintaining a strong bond with their motherland (Brinkerhoff, 2007). Brinkerhoff (2007) strongly asserts an association of identity with diaspora when she states, "the motivation for diasporas to mobilize, for whatever purpose, is likely to be for the expression of their identity, for maintaining or acquiring power or other resources, or both" (p. 5).

In a study of an ethnic Chinese Church community in the USA, Yang (1998) noted a homogeneous identity of its members having a "complex diversity with multiple boundaries defined by the very different religious, cultural and social background of the members" (p. 339). This suggests that American Chinese maintained their homogeneous Chinese identity in a complex diversified American society. Yang (1998) highlighted that much of the ethnic community in America graduated from American colleges with higher degrees – Masters' and PhD's – and worked as professionals. This study also had similar findings on parents with higher degrees, working as professionals, living in a complex heterogeneous Australian society and yet with homogenous Coptic identity.

Looking further for explanation, Bhatia (2007) has suggested, in a study of a community of professional, middle-class Indians living in American society, that there were three codes to the interpretation of culture in this community: social context, historical and institutional. This bears a remarkable resemblance to the present study, where these three codes are replicated.

History represents Coptic heritage, the institution represents the church and social context represents the Egyptian Coptic community. In Bhatia's (2007) study, a middle-class professional Indian community could be regarded as having "solid identities", just as this study also highlights parents having a firm, grass-rooted cultural identity intertwined firmly with a religious Coptic identity.

Kim (2012) provides three different frameworks to understand cross-cultural adaption in parents and offspring. The first framework is through an historical approach providing cross-cultural adaptation with its origins, dating back to the 1930's where social science research formalized this phenomenon as acculturation.

The second framework focuses on migrants facing social and psychological cross-cultural issues in their adaption to their host country over a long period of time (Kim, 2012). This leads to a migrant's desire to seek and to adapt so that he/she may succeed in adopting the country's host language and the local cultural practice of the host nation (Kim, 2012).

This study has found the Australian Coptic parents have embraced the local host language of English to reach a certain level of success in Australia. This is the same findings as in Kim's (2012) research of immigrants in their host nation.

The third framework is Berry's (2009) alternative bi-dimensional acculturation model which defines four acculturated states migrants face in their host country to one of four: integrate, assimilate, separate or be marginalized. Berry's model (2009) is widely used in many cultural contexts and studies, but has been criticised. We suggest it is less relevant to investigating the next generation of students and the tensions experience in generational shift.

Berry's (2009) bi-dimensional model allows the study of first-generation immigrants in the host country to determine the effect of cultural identification to fit within one of these four

acculturated states. Accordingly, this study indicates parents have acculturated and integrated into Australian society and have not chosen to assimilate into Australian society.

Cohen (2008) suggests the diaspora in global cities frames a generational phenomenon of opposing localism and cosmopolitanism. We recognize the lives of the students in this study as they live their culture and language within the community and the space they share with others. The world today is embedded in culture and language and the value of understanding the complexity and multiplicity of diversity that surrounds us.

In the view of Vertovec and Cohen (2002), we are challenged daily by the changing world we live in, by embracing diversity within a complex multi-layered identity structure, as they speak of "cosmopolitanism" as a form of new behaviour: "for the majority of the population, living their lives within the cultural space of their own nation or ethnicity, cosmopolitanism has not been an option. However, in the contemporary world, cultural and linguistic diversity is omnipresent, and the capacity to communicate with others and to understand their cultures is available…such everyday cosmopolitanism might be regarded as a newly recognized form of behaviour" (p. 5).

The researcher is asking the question, is this a new form of behaviour, or is it because of a multi-structured identity construction displayed by diaspora groups living in the host nation that has surface because of the multi-cultural society that we live in, embracing and celebrating diversity through multi-cultural, multi-faith and multi-ethnic communities under the banner of integration (Bouma, 2006). Migrants no longer lose their identity to the host country, but embrace new identities, new cultures and new languages as part of their own.

This study has given an opportunity of understanding a community that has also embraced new language, culture and identities without trading off their heritage origins. This project has examined the importance of the construction of Coptic identity in a Coptic community in Sydney by understanding the omnipresence of culture, language and identity in a school community that they embraced with much importance as a second home.

Capozucca (2012) conducted a study on Coptic identity, diaspora and heritage by interviewing ten Coptic adults in London in 2012. The findings resembled those of this study regarding parents, such as the importance of religion, church and faith.

As one example on Coptic heritage, Capozucca (2012) quotes one of the adults saying, "The thing is bringing up children here, we would teach them how to cope with society, bring values to the country*"* (p. 39)*.* With similarity to this study on community, Capozucca (2012, p.41) stated about church life: *"…*85% of my social life revolves around the church" and that "…community is my second family…". These responses in Capozucca (2012) confirm this study's findings of parent's strong alignment with religious identity.

Preston's (1998) study on ten children's perspective on language in a Coptic community in London found intergenerational differences between children and their parents about language used to transmit religious tradition. Preston (1998) found children commonly used English to communicate daily and it was preferred for their religious instruction.

No difference from the Coptic adults, Preston (1998) states that "in moving to London, adult Copts have adopted the language of their new surroundings for communication with the world outside their own community. English is seen as the key to success in the new country. This switch of language has also affected the new generation…the second generation of Copts in London seem to prefer English to Arabic. The children generally speak English to each other, as well as to their parents" (p. 96). Preston's (1998) findings confirm this study's results on parents' view of language and identity. The development of Copts in London bears similarities to the Copts in Sydney.

The study of over 700 families conducted by Phinney, Ong and Madden (2000) showed immigrant families need to be understood by their history, culture, immigrant and adolescence experience. This study also confirms a discrepancy between students and parents, where students are more exposed to the values, culture and customs of the host country compared to their parents who are adamant to retain their overseas values.

Van Dijk & Botros' (2009) study on two immigrant Christian groups – the Copts and the Calvinists in Canada showed how they established and maintained their communities. Van Dijk & Botros (2009) found that Coptic parents integrated and assimilated slowly with the host country, a similar finding to that in this research.

The Copts in Canada were highly educated and identified with their religious identity in being Copts compared to their ethnicity (Van Dijk & Botros, 2009). The difference between parents and students, as found in in this study, was also noted by Van Dijk & Botros (2009). Coptic parents in Canada stated that they sent their children to a Canadian Coptic to maintain their religious link with the church to the motherland of Egypt, while the students simultaneously were also deeply engaged with local culture and diverse society.

5.7 What does the parent data mean for student identity construction?

The students in this study, who have high aspirations for the future, see that their parents are role models of achieving a balance between spirituality and work ethic, and for some, this will be carried forward in their own lives. The students see their parents involved in the local community at the school. These activities have a shaping influence in identity construction in the students. The parents, are thus, acting as ZPD mentors to their children in their achievement of personal, social, religious and cognitive development. And yet, form the student data, we know that the older students are diversely also involved in the broader communities and developing individual identities. Figure 5.1 illustrates on going learning cycle involved in student interaction with parent influence in childhood and adolescence development, all of which is involved in identity construction. The figure shows a three-level upward movement with a spiral return to the bottom for a new learning experience as the child ages. The student engages with parent mentoring facilitating the learning of values and behaviours. These include in younger children cultural values, values of gratefulness and empathy. In older students, this will also include, work ethics and professionalism, spirituality, values, community involvement, respect for Australian law and the land. At the third level, the student reaches their personal best achievement in their particular behaviours, and as the child matures, they are constantly moving in this cycle of learning.
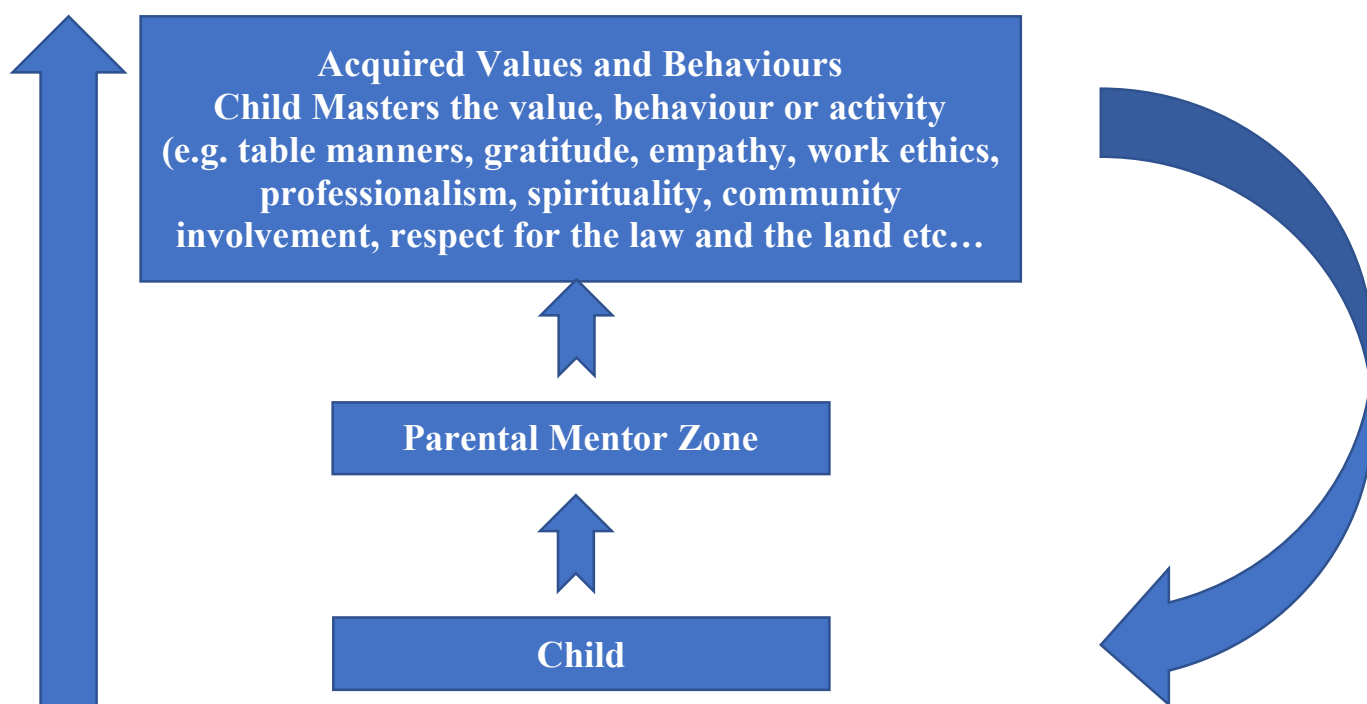
Figure 5.1 On-going Child-Parent Learning Cycle

5.8 Conclusion

The examination of parent data, and contrasts between parents and students, has shed some extra light on identity processes in students and raised discussion of possible tensions in intergenerational change.

Ang (2003) argues the importance of recognizing hybrid identity today where ethnic communities can express their cultural and origin identity in their host country. Cultural identity (Dervin, 2012) needs to be recognised as fluid and constantly changing in the life context of the individual. That is, defining one's own cultural identity is acknowledging the constant movement between the space of identification and self-labelling of who one is.

In this study, both parents and students may find themselves more "Egyptian" in the space they occupy in Australia. While some parents professed in interview to never "switch off" being Coptic, they remain nevertheless models of adults, in their life in Sydney, like their children, engaged with intercultural identity phenomena.

Examination of the parent data has highlighted that this is a study of a trans-national community in process, that has come from Egypt and abroad to settle in Australia as new migrants with their community (Flores, 2009; Cohen, 2008).

Hall's (2003) diasporic identity is characterized by hybridity, where the formation and construction of identities is constantly changing and reproducing to form a new breed of identity that *is* "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall, 2003, p.244). This study shows a complex hybrid pluralistic identity formation in students that is constantly changing and renewed to meet the new diversified contemporary context in Sydney, Australia.

This chapter found that the construction of identity was different in parents and students. While parents identified strongly with their religious identity, students included their national identity, social identity and associated with their heritage more easily than their parents. The chapter has included similar findings in other studies, such as, Costigan & Dokis (2006), Capozucca (2012), Phinney et al. (2000), Preston (1998), and Van Dijk & Botros (2009).

This study showed that the construction of identity changes with time. With new immigrants arriving to the host country of Australia, the Copts integrated and in time, with the second and third generations, they assimilated into Australian society without losing their heritage. This chapter confirmed the salience of heritage, language, culture and religious identity as important components of the construction of identity, but in students this is negotiated against other elements in their life and social contexts. This chapter has also served to demonstrate the new and complex nature of student development and the role of parents.

Chapter 6 will offer a model of development synthesized from this study's findings and the final chapter will provide a conclusion to the thesis.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will first synthesise data findings and consider a clear answer to the three research questions posed:

Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of the students and their perceptions of the school?

Research Question 2: What are the students' perceptions of their identity?

Research Question 3: How do students negotiate their identity in 21st century Australian society?

The researcher wishes this thesis to impact on four contemporary contexts as follows.

Firstly, understanding the current grief that the Coptic community is experiencing and the effect it has on the school community, the students and their families. These people are all now seeing and hearing first hand, through the media, atrocities involving families and community members who live in Australia with families living in Egypt. This raises critical issues relating to student welfare and pastoral matters for both the students and the immediate family - parents and siblings - in their wellbeing, mental health, motivation, self-esteem and self-efficacy.

The second context is in understanding of parent agency in students' lives, with parent anxiety due to constant trauma. This is manifested in parent concern for both the physical and moral safety of the students, impacting on their children, and what parents expect from the school.

The third context which the thesis wishes to explore is quality learning in classrooms. In today's classroom, the teacher is confronted with much diversity and challenge. This study provides a research in identity construct, valuable for educators to understand student identity as an important element in maximising quality teaching learning, pastoral care and welfare of students coming from an ethnic background. This will also assist teachers' professional understanding of student identity and background and its implications for learning theory and practice in classroom setting.

The fourth context is to influence institutional understanding at the executive policy level, of the dynamic force of learning and identity and the need for an informed response to the changing life of students in Sydney, that is, an understanding of the school's complex role in preparing students to be good citizens in future society by integrating and assimilating, without forgetting their origins, heritage, culture and language.

Whilst, this study did not focus on teaching strategies or pedagogy, the educational theory used in the study on a socio-cultural and identity framework provided a rich data-set, both in the quantitative data and qualitative transcripts of students at the school.

This chapter will provide a discussion on the three research questions and their implications for future research.

6.2 Answering the Research Questions

The purpose of this mixed method study was to engage students at a Coptic school, in the south west of Sydney, who were invited to complete a survey and to participate in focus group discussion.

In total, there were 326 students who completed the survey and 41 students participated in the focus group. The detailed findings of the student data are found in Chapter 4. The purpose of involving parent participation in this study was to triangulate with the student data by exploring the responses given by parents and to investigate whether data supports or disagrees with the findings in the student data. This was achieved by having 31 parents complete a survey and 10 parents participate (willingly) in a one-to-one interview. The parent finding data is in Chapter 5.

This thesis focused on the investigation of students' perception of their identity, culture and language. The following is a discussion on the research questions that the study addresses.

6.2.1 Research Question 1

What are the characteristics of students and their perceptions of the school?

Student age ranged from 10 to 18 years, and school year from years 5 to 12. The study recognises the developmental and cognitive range that this age range represents. The study showed most students were born in Australia (73%), followed by Egypt (11.7%) and a lower

percentage in 15 other countries (9.8%). The students are at least 1st generation and 2nd generation Australians with no grandparents born in Australia.

The school attracts parents from all over Sydney to provide education for their children. The demographic data showed parents recorded 68 different suburbs in Sydney. This study shows parents' willingness to travel and to reside near the school.

Student language ability identifies their multi-identities and multi-language skills. Most thinking was done in English (89.2%), with only a small percentage in Arabic (20.5%). This result appears to be consistent with first generation migrants losing their mother tongues to the host nation (Buda, 1992; Michel et al., 2012). No students could use Coptic as a community language. The students were only able to use the Coptic heritage language as a liturgical language in chanting the hymns and in the traditions of the church.

In future aspirations, a high student response (87.73%) provided 130 different occupational professions, with the most popular being doctors (18.10%), followed by teachers (8.59%) and lawyers (4.91%). Students aspire to be like their parents or family members. Empirical studies on children from migrant families similarly show high aspirations, as found in this study.

In sum, the student demographics in this study identify students having multiple identity structure through their origins, place of birth, heritage and language. The study presents a growing migrant community which has come largely from Egypt, where most of both parents and grandparents were born overseas.

Most students, however, were born in Australia and are first generation Australians. Their aspirations are high (Muuss et al., 1996). The results suggest that students may feel well supported through their families, school, and community (Williams, 1998; Welch, 2016). Students at the school are diversified and are prepared to travel to receive a faith-based education (Holloway et al., 2010). As children of migrant families, the students appear highly motivated to succeed, having dreams to fulfil through the aspirations recorded above. The implication for school policy-makers and educators is to understand the cohort and the students to be taught (Wilcox & Gray, 1995).

Having addressed the first research question on the characteristics of students, our attention is now directed to the second part of this research question - student perceptions of school, where classrooms are diverse and multi-lingual. We turn to the qualitative data to provide an opportunity to hear the voices of the students on their perception of school.

Students' Perceptions of school

The voices from the 10 focus groups of 41 students surface several themes from the transcript. Focus groups were taken from the high school age-range only. Four sub-themes emerged - school culture, spirituality, community, and curriculum.

Students' perception of their school drew mostly positive feedback that may suggest student satisfaction and positive learning outcomes. This may also suggest in the students' experience, a level of significance in their learning through the perceived conceptualised values promoted by the school. These values have the school endeavouring to provide a space for students to belong and engage their culture, language and identity through the medium of school and church artefacts, culture, spirituality, and curriculum.

The school endeavours to act as a community, where both teachers and students may experience a sense of belonging, indeed, to a family or second home. As the school is a learning community, the integration of the quality teaching framework into pedagogy may appear to have supported positive learning outcomes. While student perception of the school was largely positive, we have noted some ambivalence to issues at school. Kalakoski and Nurmi (1998) have noted how adolescents' identity exploration and commitment may be affected by their changing perception of institutional practice and problems encountered. And yet, most students suggested that they could see some connections between learning, curriculum, and the faith-based nature of the school (see Literature Review section 2.9 Quality Teaching Framework).

The researcher has acknowledged the likely functioning of "Desirability Effect" (Neuman, 2000), with students commenting on their school, within the school grounds, to school personnel. And yet, across all the focus groups, the students seem to suggest that their learning and development has significance and meaning that overflows from school to their home, and to the broader communities they belong to.

This section now completes research question 1, and we now turn to answering research question 2.

6.2.2 Answering Research Question 2

What are the students' perception of identity?

The data-set collected, both quantitative and qualitative, suggests that student identity construct is complex, dynamic and constantly changing; new layers of identity are constantly adding to their cognitive and social development. This section will answer Research Question 2 by first considering the data collected from the quantitative data set.

Quantitative Data

Students enthusiastically self-identified with a multiple identification mix of different national, ethnic and religious identities, in the self-labelling scales. This identifies students' willingness to claim their origins and heritage as an important marker of who they are and how they see themselves. The highest frequency in student's perception of identity was as being Australian Egyptian Coptic mix. The self-labelling of their identity reporting shows the students to be a rich mix of diversity and culture. The underlying factor in students' ability to accept a wide variety of cultures and nationalities in themselves seems to be that they are living the Australian multicultural spirit and ethos.

The study looked for factors and co-relationships in the data. The suitability of the data for this process was tested using the KMO test and the Bartlett Test for Sphericity, which showed that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Factor analysis showed that there were two significant factors emerging from the MEIM scales. Factor 1 was the group of MEIM scales (5, 6, 9, 11, 12) to do with "Affirmation, Belonging and Commitment". The relationship between these items was positively correlated. Factor 2 was the group of MEIM scales (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10) to do with "Ethnic Exploration" showing the relationship between several items.

This means, for instance, that it is group membership, sense of belonging, pride in ethnic group, and strong attachment which all work together to support identity development in students. Further, spending time in finding out about one's ethnic history and traditions, being active in ethnic organisations and having a clear sense of identity, all work together to

support development. However, the second factor is less important personally for students. This may be due to their diverse social lives (from the qualitative data). The "exploration" content (e.g. Coptic history) is delivered to them at school, so they don't need or desire to seek it out in the rest of their lives.

Qualitative Data

Transcripts were used to hear the voices in the focus group on the second research question. Three themes were identified in the students' perceptions of identity: a sense of heritage, knowledge of Egyptian history, and experience of Coptic spirituality. The themes show that origins and history are important components to understanding the underlying factors of identity for students. The history and origins of the students are an important marker in partly defining who they are and where they came from. Whilst most students were born in Australia, the students still considered themselves as Australian Egyptian. This indicates students (and some of their families) did not forget that they originated from Egypt. The Coptic spirituality expresses their religious identity. Students showed their national identity as Australian, their ethnicity as mainly Egyptian identity or as Sudanese, and their religious identity their Coptic spirituality. In all, these three express as mutually inclusive, inseparable, and hybrid identities.

There was evidence that students perceive their identity was also positional, where identity changed with the space which they occupied. As a marker of their sense of individuation, some students said they felt more Australian when surrounded by other Egyptian people and they were more Egyptian when surrounded by the broader Australian society. Students label themselves accordingly to express who they are.

Knowing who they are has a relationship with their learning and impacts on how they learn, for they find significance in their learning and reason for it. The significance in learning is a source of motivation and an intrinsic factor to succeed and be successful people like their parents or other members of their family. The constant persecution and struggles in the Egyptian homeland makes parents encourage their children to secure a safety net for their future success. The parents' view the school is as an agency, acting out parent responsibility in providing an intergenerational transmission node at the school on behalf of the parents.

Students may be seen to exemplify the notion of Vignoles et al. (2010) in having three levels of identity: relationship, collective and individual. We can see that they have strong *relationship* identity, in the roles taken with others in their relationship with their parents, siblings, teachers and community members. We can see they also have a strong *collective* identity, in their identification and categorisation to a group, which includes ethnicity, religious values and beliefs, gender and nationality. But we can also see that they are developing a strong *individual* identity, with their own unique set of peers and preferences outside the school, some ambivalence towards school practice, a degree of developing self-esteem and self-efficacy about their own core values. This can cause cracks in student relationships with the expectations of school and family.

6.2.3 Answering Research Question 3
How do students negotiate their identity in 21st Century Australian society?

In answering Research Question 3, the voices from the focus groups transcripts were used. Students negotiate between their different multi-identities, changing with the space they believe they occupy, by accommodating, adjusting and arbitrating between the two or more cultures they move between, and how others may see them. Fielding (2009) has termed identity as the "common ground which is negotiated between who an individual sees him/herself to be and who others see that individual to be" (p. 43). The question addressed student negotiation, and asked when they feel Egyptian and when they feel Australian, and when they need to compromise between the two. The discussion will address each of these negotiations separately.

Feeling Egyptian

The transcript highlighted three emerging themes in students' perceptions, believing that they 'feel Egyptian' focusing on family, friends and community, cultural practices and language. Each theme will be briefly discussed.

The concept of family and friends and the community embracing the lives of the students appears to constitute the identity layer of 'being Egyptian'. The trajectory of family, friends and community embeds the force of belonging. To belong is to be wanted and needed and draws a sense of engagement, association, attachment, acceptance and loyalty to a community and family. Belonging also draws attention to relationship and rapport within the community. It draws a layer of identity of belonging within a community and sense of self-

worth, where the community expresses the individual as an asset to the broader family and community.

The school strives to give the students a sense of self and a sense of community. A measure of their success may be the few students who were neither Egyptian nor Copts, who expressed being part of the community and a sense of self-worth, as they felt accepted as individuals and were accepted for who they were. They expressed that they felt part of the family and community. Most of the students were born in Australia, but nevertheless these students felt more Egyptian because of their engagement and the connection of being Egyptian through family, friends and community. Being in a community is an effective force that may potentially help stabilise a person's sense of wellbeing.

Most students felt proud of being Egyptian, for they felt part of their core family at the school, home, church, community and in the broader Australian community. Finally, students perceived that they felt OK feeling Egyptian because of Australia's acceptance of multiculturalism. Family, friends and community were also an agency to impart intergenerational transmission of cultural, language and identity. Through this, cultural practices are passed from one generation to another, which is our next point of discussion. The student data has shown students express 'culture' as an important part of their identity construction. The cultural practices such as, music, food, celebrations, and community and family gatherings played a part in students' identity formation and construction. The influence of cultural practices from the different trajectory spaces that students experience, from their direct engagement and community involvement at school, home, church, and the broader Australian society, has given the students the opportunities to experience cultural exchange and to embrace culture.

The student data reflect students have enfolded Australian cultural values and have embraced the Egyptian culture, entwining these two into one as their own. The students identify themselves as Australian Egyptian, and believe they have the best of both cultures. For these students, living in Australia has allowed them to live in a dual culture, that is, to live in a habitual culture exchange, to live in a cultural community expressed at home, school, church and in the broader host society. Culture allows language to be practiced and used. This now leads to a discussion on language.

Language and being bilingual, are potent salient agents of identity formation and construction. Kanno (2003) has noted that bilingual individuals position themselves between two (or more) languages and cultures, and differentially incorporate these languages and cultures into their sense of who they are. In this process, there is a balance between individual choice and power, and the influential social context. Thus, this study's students also self-identified through the agent of language. The use of language(s) in the spaces they occupied was a marker of identity. The use of the English language identified students as being Australian, and the use of the Egyptian Arabic language identified students as being Egyptian. Most students could use the Egyptian Arabic language without the ability to read and write the Egyptian Arabic script. Some students understood the Egyptian Arabic language with their families but were unable to answer in the native language, responding in the host English language.

The ability to communicate in the language in which students could communicate in the space they occupied at home, school, church and in society proved to be a potent salient identity construct. The heritage Coptic language was only used by students as a liturgical language. Whilst students could not communicate in Coptic, their ability to read the Coptic script to chant in the musical tune of the church supports them in identifying their religious identity as being Coptic.

Language identifies the individual's identity, belonging, engaging and being part of the community. Further, by not speaking Egyptian Arabic within the Egyptian community or at home, students felt more Australian. Amongst Australian friends, when students spoke in Egyptian Arabic amongst their peers, they felt more Egyptian. While the study has looked for trends, it acknowledges that for every individual student, the negotiation of being Egyptian or Australian will constantly change as per position and space.

Feeling Australian

Most of the students who participated in this study were born in Australia. The study showed five themes emerged from the focus group of being Australian:

- place of birth
- community and friends
- cultural practices

- language (covered above)
- multi-culturalism

Place of birth appears be a potent factor of student identity in being Australian. Being born in Australia has allowed students to feel a sense of belonging and of being part of the wider Australian community. Students' attachment to being born in Australia makes them feel Australian. Being born in Australia expresses something of their hybridity and multiple identity. Their place of birth is an identity marker. As one student expressed their feeling, "Australia is my home away from home" (FG1, S1). This study has shown being born in Australia gave students a sense of identity as Australians being integrated into Australian society, through their community engagement and through their network of friends.

Community and Friends. Students expressed the importance of being involved in the Australian community by blending and integrating, as an identity marker of being Australian. The opportunity to be involved through social engagement and social interaction expressed student identity, being Australian. The Student's sense of being Australian is intertwined with community involvement and engagement. Students not only have friends from their own ethnic community, but also have friends outside their community. By engaging through social interaction with other Australians, this has helped to confirm their Australian identity. This study has shown where students are given the opportunity to be engaged with the broader Australian society students can express their hyphenated Australian-Egyptian identity. Through the engagement of community and friends come cultural practices and understanding.

Cultural practices

The Australian calendar, sports, culture and arts provide an opportunity for students to engage and participate as part of the broader Australian community. The engagement is experienced not only on an individual level, but also through the school community, family and church involvement in Australian cultural practices. This engagement in cultural Australian practices and events is a potent identity marker of being Australian, and gives students a sense of belonging and to actively feeling they are positioned as Australians.

Multi-culturalism

Australia's endorsement of multicultural policy at all levels of government – Federal, State and Local – encourages a multicultural society. Students have positively responded to feeling at home, accepted and respected as part of society due to their perception of the multicultural stand by Australia. The students feel they are Australians, integrated and intertwined into Australian society as the social fabric of the community. The acceptance as individuals and as a community demonstrates their experience and identity as Australians. The force of belonging and respect as students, has given them a sense of worth and self-efficacy in their identity as Australians, without comprise to their heritage and origins. The 2016 Australian Census confirms Australia as a culturally rich, diverse nation (ABS, 2016). The words of Inglis (2011) echoes the importance of citizenship "often cited as a measure of attachment or belonging to a society" (p. 173). These students are Australian citizens who feel accepted and who feel belonged in a multicultural Australian society.

6.3 Cracks in the data

We have noted students who provided diversity within their understanding, who expressed ambivalent feelings about heritage (section 4.3.3.3), and in their attitude to their social world (see Table 4.6). This study suggests that students feel they can choose their own pathway as teenagers. Both of our theoretical frameworks (discussed further below) help us to understand some of these students who chose not to agree with items in the MEIM scales. Their disagreement may highlight they have reached their own understanding of their identity, and are now able, with their own determination, to take positive direction in their lives, including being ready to take on new challenges and emerge into broader society. These students have succeeded in reaching their own personal "Proximity Development Zone", and are ready for their next stage of development. There is indication of a student sense of agency in choosing their own destinations. This is evidence of individualisation in the identity process and in the "Exploration" process as outlined in the work of Marcia (2003) (discussed in the next section), in reflecting on the success of the theoretical frameworks in understanding identity in this study.

6.4. How successful were the theoretical frameworks?

6.4.1 Reflecting on Psychological model of identity

The study found that the use of the work of Marcia and Erikson provided a sound framework for analysis. Marcia proposed the four outcomes within the 2x2 matrix (section 2.2.3).

"Commitment" means the extent to which an individual is personally involved in self-chosen activity, in their aspirations, values, goals, beliefs and occupation and in their committed organization and allegiance (Muuss et al.,1996). For "Exploration" means the individual actively examines their developmental opportunities in exploring their identity, personally questions parent-defined values and goals, and begins to search for individual personal alternatives in occupation, beliefs, goals and values (Muuss et al.,1996). If there is both commitment and exploration, there is identity achievement. In the students in this study, there is commitment evident in the students' experience of their school life. There is exploration in their apparent participation in the school curriculum, such as Coptic Orthodox Studies (religious teaching of the school) and Coptic Studies (heritage).

These are perceived as significant by the students, providing positive educational outcomes. We acknowledge that students within a school have limited choices and agency. It is their parents who have chosen to send them to the school and to invest in their children's commitment and exploration (see section 2.2.2). From the work of Erikson, we know that social, psychological identity formation in the adolescent is constantly nurtured and formed by family, school and community.

From the survey data, we can see a big difference in responses between year 5 students and year 12 students. To some extent, we can say that the younger students may fit the description of "foreclosure" in Marcia's model of identity (Figure 2.3). The younger students have not yet explored, or experienced identity crisis, but have made commitment.

6.4.2 Reflecting on Sociocultural Models

Vygotsky's theoretical model sheds valuable light on student experience in environments associated with the student and child in different spaces, environments and cultural settings. This study has shown students' experience as a constant socio-cultural process that stems from their learning at home, at school and in the community.

The student is experiencing a process of constant "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1986). There is the constant learning influenced by the student's unique different environments and socio-cultural mix. This study shows the theoretical framework of Vygotsky's theory as foundational understanding of the Quality Teaching Framework at the school.

The Quality Teaching Framework has the student as its focus for teaching strategy and outcome, where the students achieve because their learning is significant to their lives and adds value to their identity. We have shown in Figure 2.2, that the child is the centre to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. The whole school environment may regarded as the proximal development zone, where students are taught by their teachers. The teachers at the school nurture, mentor and teach the students new skills of learning, values and attitudes. The students reach new levels to become independent learners through the skills, values and attitudes taught by their teachers. The students find themselves acquiring skills that they can impart to their fellows.

Effectively, we see a positive correlation between students' self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation and educational outcomes, and the students' self-belief that they can achieve high success outcomes and a notion of "future self" (Dörnyei, 2000). As students are at different levels, all students achieve their personal best, that is, their current ability at the beginning of the school year progresses with each school year. Effectively, the Quality Teaching Framework is an application of the socio-cultural learning theory, where students have achieved educational outcomes because their intellectual learning has significance and meaning and is supported within a quality environment.

Finally, the school's proximal zone development acts as an intergenerational agency, imparting to the children layers of identity – heritage, language, religion, and origins – and at the same the values and ethos of being Australian, intertwined and integrated into a harmonious, hyphenated, multi-layered identity, with individuals and collective identity formation and construct.

Students' engagement at home provides another proximal development zone where students practice the cultural, language and religion at home. The study shows students' home life is a complementary, intergenerational transmission development zone. Parents have chosen for the school to take on responsibility for the student's learning and the embracing of heritage, culture and language – an intergenerational transmission injection by the school, encouraged at home with the parents.

The constant presence of adults in the student learning experience is a constant nurturing from the teachers at school, parents or carers at home and community teachers and leaders at their respective community gatherings, and in their local Coptic church community. This research study also highlights that students saw value in the church and the clergy as part of their identity formation and construct. The church and clergy are also a proximal development zone agency, where the clergy are mentors and teachers of spirituality and the students learn a spiritual dimension to their identity. Their identity is a constant spiritual growth that is increasing, nurtured and valued. As they grow and mature in life, the values that are taught at school and encouraged through the constant presence of clergy and the influence of the church become a layer of religious identity which they may take forward into their adult self.

6.4.3 Complementary perspectives

The two theoretical frameworks provide complementary perspectives. We see a macro- (Vygotsky) and a micro- (Marcia) understanding of identity. The socio-cultural aspect provides a 'big picture', three-dimensional understanding of the child's life being shaped by the action of family, school, and community from without.

The psychological approach (Marcia) is seen as a two-dimensional focus on the individual being engaged in commitment and exploration in a more self-driven process from within. Therefore, the construction of identity must be seen as a two-way process, from without and from within.

6.5 Model of Diaspora, Identity, Faith-based Education (DIFE)

The DIFE model is presented in Figure 6.1. As noted above, identity construction is working both from within and without.

Community, Family

Spirituality

Intellectual

Curriculum
Coptic Studies
Coptic Orthodox Studies

School   School

Signifiance

Identity
Heritage
Artefacts

Child

Environment

Daily Routine
Church
Classroom Climate

Church   **Church**

Community, Family   **Community, Family**

Diverse Broader
Australian Community

Diverse Broader
Australian Community

Time
Dimension

Spirituality

Community, Family

School

Diverse Broader
Australian Community

Diverse Broader
Australian Community

Australia

Diasporic Space

**International Setting:
Mother Land/Mother Church**

Rest of the World

USA & Canada

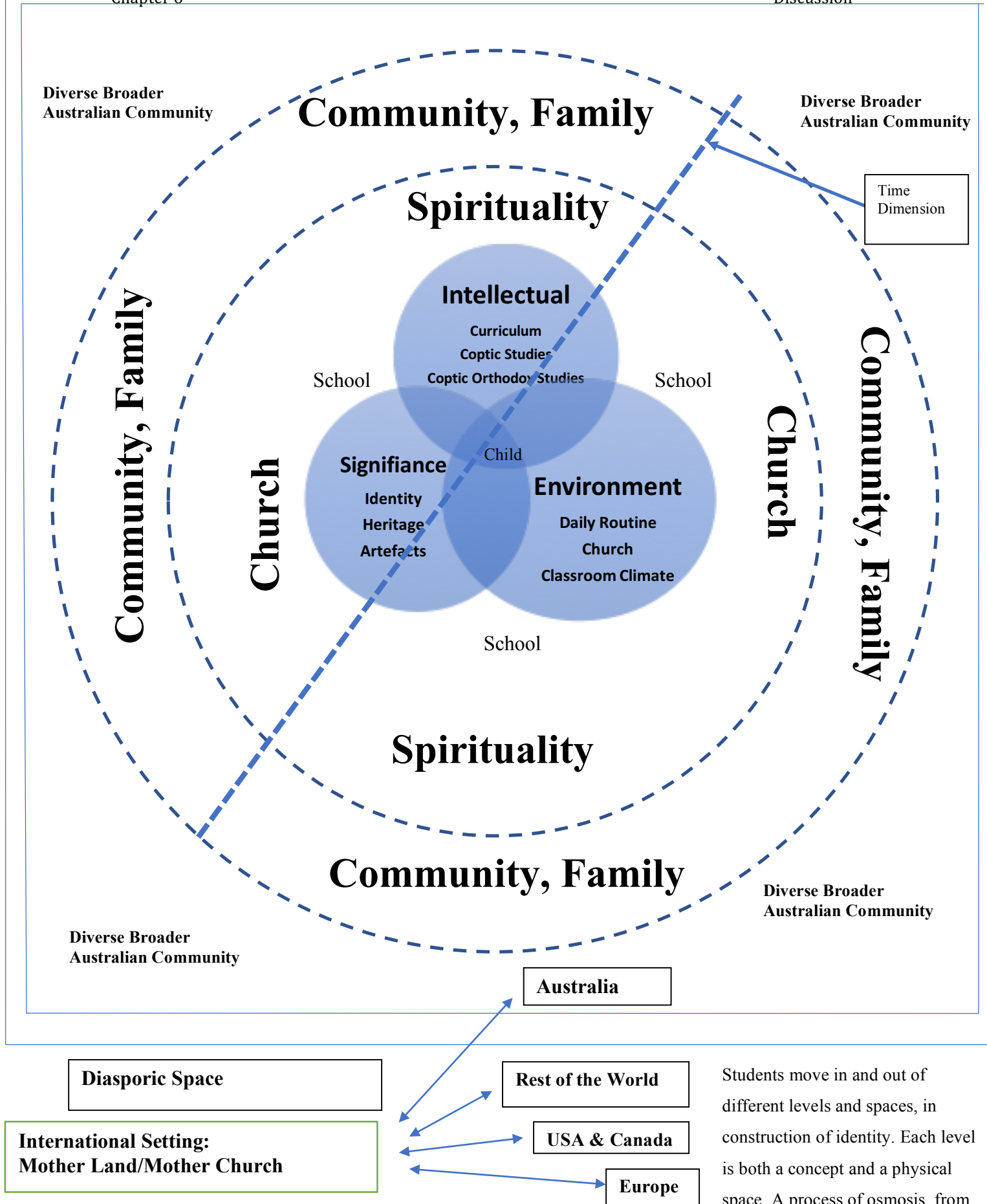**Europe**

Students move in and out of
different levels and spaces, in
construction of identity. Each level
is both a concept and a physical
space. A process of osmosis, from
one space to another.

Figure 6.1 The DIFE Model

The centre of Figure 6.1 indicates that the student within the school is the focus of the model. He/she is progressively influenced by multiple aspects of school life, church, community and family. The diagram reflects that the child is part of layers of communities (school, church, home, friends). These also represent layers of relationships - intellectual, spiritual, familial and social.

The first level of influence is the *school*. The school provides, as presented by the three circle Venn diagram, intellectual growth supported by the perception of significance and a quality environment. These three circles influence and mould cognitive and social development within the school.

In *intellectual development*, the student is engaged in studying general curriculum, Coptic Studies and Coptic Orthodox Studies. This sets a foundation of knowledge, values, ethics and morals. The relationship between the educational and the religious content is seen by students as complementary. It appears to create cognitive stimulus in framing a sense of purpose and future directions for the students. This is intended to build self-esteem and motivation. This is supported by the school campus *environment*. This includes daily routines, the presence of the church, and the classroom climate. It also includes feelings of self-worth, happiness and belonging. This encompasses pastoral care, welfare, well-being and safety. This may result in positive outcomes for the student in the classroom and in their wider life. The environment is an important support factor in student learning.

Significance is whether the student perceives the learning to be relevant to their life and emerging identity. The significance for the student is that he/she knows their school life is in alignment with their identity. We see this expressed by students in being articulate about their heritage knowledge (albeit in some cases flawed), their pride in their heritage identity, and their knowledge of symbols and artefacts within the classroom and church practices. The school is immersed in its religious context and the physical presence of the church. The school is embraced by the church and spirituality is embedded in the school ethos and practice. The perceived "Coptic nature" of the school becomes an important personal identifier for the students. Many students could articulate aspects of what they perceived to be Coptic identity, which included resilience against persecution and discrimination. This means the church and its history (both ancient and contemporary) frames a disposition

towards resilience, protection within the church, and personal effort to succeed in a new country.

The school and the church sit within the Egyptian Coptic *community*, both a Sydney diaspora community and a collective of wider global diaspora Coptic communities. Here the child experiences a personal relationship with family and friends, experiencing belonging and acceptance. The community initiates activities for the child which create opportunities for belonging and respect.

The Coptic community sits within the broad Australian community and is, as expressed by most students, an integrated, assimilated community. There is some divergence in their parent experience, a 'generation gap', where some parents in the study seemed unable or unwilling to pass from the "Coptic community" to the level of the broader Australian community. This contrasted with most students, who reported that they negotiated and moved between these levels easily.

Australia sits within an *international setting*, on the perimeter of the diagram. This includes the diaspora groups in other countries (US, Canada, Europe), and Egypt the Motherland and Mother Church. Recent atrocities in the Motherland have impacted on all levels of the diagram, with the final impact on the child. Therefore, the importance of reassuring the child of valid identity coherence and safety has never been greater.

The time dimension line through the middle of the figure reflects the process of growth in the child. As students develop, their identity shifts and becomes more complex and they encounter new relationships, environments, experiences and communities.

This model may be applied to many different faith-based educational environments. The term "church" may be exchanged for the broader idea of "faith-based" for example mosque, synagogue, temple, or place of worship. The model becomes authentic to one community when its own context and unique settings are part of the model.

In this discussion chapter, a synthesis of findings has been developed. The DIFE model offers a template for understanding identity construction in the students of the study, but also offers an analysis of student development on other faith-based educational environments, where a

diaspora community is involved. The final chapter of the thesis offers a conclusion to this study.

Chapter 7   Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents an overview of the research's initial sense of purpose, the literature context by which the study was informed and how it was carried out. A summary of the findings then brings us to several conclusions. The limitations and strengths of the study are noted. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations and some implications as to possible future areas of research.

This thesis concludes, with Bouma (2006) that Australia's religious and spiritual life is "alive and well" (p. 85) in this study. This thesis has found that for both students and parents their Coptic faith "is about hope, the production and maintenance of hope through actions, beliefs, practices and places that link person and group to a reality or frame of reference that is both beyond the immediate perpetual and material frame and deeply embedded within the person" (p. 30).

The thesis has born in mind Wenger's (1998) proposal that the relationship between education and identity is "a learning architecture" (p. 270). It involves educational engagement, imagination and alignment. Wenger proposes that in the formation of identities, students need:

1.   Places of engagement
2.   Experience and materials with which to build an image of the world and themselves
3.   To have a world view to make things matter i.e. meaning-making

The thesis has seen that, in the Coptic community, church and home, "identity and learning serve each other" (Wenger, 1998, p.271). Wenger states that educational imagination includes orientation, reflection and exploration. This has been the prime goal and desired outcome of the research: the researcher would like to see the closer engagement of the school with society, to understand student identity and for students to flourish and be transformed by learning. If the school can perceive that "identity is itself an educational resource", this will set a path where educators can be mindful of the multiple identities and rich experience which students bring to their school and their learning.

This research set out to examine the identity construction of students within an ethnic community in diaspora at a Coptic school in south west Sydney, using a quantitative and qualitative mixed method case study. The thesis wished to provide a study to illustrate an ethnic community in diaspora, in constructing the identity of school students towards their attitude, culture, origin, heritage, religion, and language.

A further purpose of the study was to gain dual insight into the investigated relationship between ethnic identity and learning, the construction of student identity at an ethnic school and to inform educators about pastoral and welfare issues.

For school principals to have a nuanced understanding of student development, the complexity of student learning and the quality teaching framework is to foster and harbour the best in student learning. This dissertation illustrates a framework for teachers confronted with diversified classes in culture, identity, language and religion. The research fills a gap in the limited study available on Australian Coptic student's identity and learning. Hence, this thesis is significant in understanding the construction of identity in school students at an ethnic school community in Australia and is one of very few such studies in Australia and globally (McCallum, 2010).

The focus of this thesis was twofold: to understand the construction of identity, culture and language in Coptic Australian students at a Coptic school in Sydney; and to understand a community in diaspora, where origins, heritage and religion in Coptic Australian students act as a catalyst.

These two large goals were expressed through the seven specific purposes (as listed in Chapter 1) of this research:

1.   The research provides policy makers and stake-hold school educators with an understanding of the construction of identity in students in one Coptic school. It is of significance value in policy, pastoral care and student welfare for school principals to have a nuanced understanding of the complexity and change development in their students.

2.   It also provides a professional understanding of the nature of students and the complexity of subjectivity/identity construction, which is fundamental to the student learning experience in the classroom.

3.   The study adds to a broader range of educational understanding in the large number of schools with students of diaspora background.

4.   The study adds paradigm understanding and knowledge in clergy relationship between church and school, and student engagement with the life of the church

5.   This thesis contributes to the limited study of Coptic communities globally.

6.   It enhances an academic foundation of knowledge for the Coptic school community towards laying a future foundation in establishing Coptic Studies as an endorsed course by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

7.   It adds to the Australian diaspora studies, mapping another page in the complexity of an Australian multicultural community.

The rationale for this thesis was drawn from the researcher's former professional role in the school. The prime focus is based on the study of students at the school. The collection of student data delivered specific information about students' attitude to their identity, culture, language and heritage, and students' attitude towards their religion, school and church. Each of these purposes stated above will be addressed in the concluding remarks.

The study addressed these three Research Questions:

Question 1: What are the characteristics of the students and their perception of the school?
Question 2: What are students' perceptions of their identity?
Question 3: How do students negotiate their identity in 21st century Australian society?

7.2 Modelling and practice adopted in the thesis

7.2.1 Overview of Literature Review

The question that drove this research was that the school curriculum, policy and welfare procedures all need to be built on a deep understanding of the formation of identity in the students and responsibility for their educational, emotional and spiritual development. Thus, this question leads the research to investigate and understand the importance of identity as the theoretical framework for the thesis.

Communities in diaspora frequently gain momentum and strength from establishing schools to support and nurture their identity through maintenance of heritage, culture and religious values and practices (Bouma, 2006; Williams, 1998).

The literature review moved through various steps: an examination of two theoretical models - sociological and psychological, component issues in identity: place of birth, acculturation, language, religion, diaspora studies, studies of Coptic communities and the diaspora Australian context. The review considered the relevance of schools' studies, and finished with the case study of one school.

In the examination of identity, the work of Erikson was considered, in its highlighting of the importance of family, school and community in the life of a growing adolescent. It is social nurturing and social values that guide identity, a layer at a time, within the frame of the world view. However, it was noted that this lacks the complexity generated by the multicultural and diaspora mix.

The researcher is aware that migrants draw their identity from several sources to help maintain their heritage and complex identity through their mother language, culture and community identity (McCallum, 2007).

The literature review suggests that in this study, there were four salient component elements of identity: place of birth, acculturation, language and religious identity. The work of Ward (2006) was influential in this thesis, as acculturation is the "changes resulting from continuous first hand intercultural contact" (p. 243), the negotiation of cultures or a combination of two cultures. It is the examination of self-identification between two cultures, between heritage and ethnicity, heritage and national identity, and the flexibility of values and norms to be examined in parallel with national identity. This thesis valued Ward's approach to acculturation as it could examine the values and the cultures of the students and the parents' attitude towards their culture. The notion of stages of development in religious identity (Fowler, 1981; 2004) was influential in this thesis (Section 2.3.4).

An overview of diaspora research studies considered the work of Hall (2003) and Cohen (2008) and Safran (2004). More particularly, the study was influenced by the notion of Hall's (2003) expression of a global landscape, of a "new world", as the "beginning of diaspora, of

diversity, of hybridity and difference", where identities are constantly reproducing, changing and transforming into new identities as diaspora identity is fluid and characterised by constant difference towards a new hybrid identity.

From diaspora in general, the review moved to consider one specific community, the Copts in diaspora (see Section 2.4.1). Since the 1950's, the Copts have emigrated to over sixty different countries in 794 cities of the world, with over 500 churches and communities. The principal destinations have been the USA, Canada, Europe, and Australia. Copts also took the church to be the central focus of their life in their new homelands (McCallum, 2007). Research attention to the Coptic diaspora has been limited (McCallum, 2010). The Copts in America have assimilated into the upwardly mobile "work hard" ethic of the US, and yet shown that "assimilation does not have to yield a loss of the heritage culture and associated religious values and practices" (Brinkerhoff, 2016, p.482).

Following this, the review placed the Coptic community within its Australian multi-cultural context (Section 2.5). One of the very few studies of Copts in Australia is de Souza & Rymarz's (2004) study on the perceptions of young Australian Copts at two Coptic schools in Melbourne. This study did not address the construction of Coptic identity, culture or language. Thus, the current study filled this gap by addressing the construction of identity, culture and language of young Copts living in Australia. The case study is situated with the Australian context and its importance is to briefly consider how this context itself has been constructed. This is relevant to appreciating student's understanding of being Australian. The study looked at different parameters which underpin multi-cultural Australia, embracing cultural identity, economic efficiency and social justice (Jones, 2000), a broad set of values, beliefs, attitudes and symbols, a common language and national pride (Phillips, 1998).

Finally, the review considers the school setting of this project and a variety of school-based studies (see Section 2.6), especially the notion of pastoral care and the welfare of students. The work of Calvert and Henderson (1995) and Hough et al. (1997) was important to this thesis as it helped illustrate the importance of school settings to understand core values and beliefs in pastoral care.

The value of a critical study of schools is to understand how they are managed, to examine the educational welfare of students and to provide recommendations for change (Calvert and

Henderson, 1995). This study similarly wanted to understand perceptions, visions, values, school climate, school culture and structures in a faith-based school. The literature review provides theoretical frameworks, an understanding of component issues and details of previous relevant studies and supports the progressive transformation of understanding in the researcher. The review finishes with available information about the case study as a community (see Section 2.6.3).

7.2.2   Review of methodology and data analysis

The research design was informed by a constructivist epistemology, a theoretical lens (identity), a mixed methods approach and a choice of quantitative survey instruments and qualitative focus groups and interviews. A ten-step process was taken to conduct the research study (see section 7.2.2 on the Construction of the Survey Instruments).

The study involved 326 students from primary and high school at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College who participated in the quantitative data survey and 31 parents who had children at the college complete the survey questionnaire. The focus group qualitative data involved 41 students and 10 parents who participated in one-to-one interviews.

The survey quantitative data consisted of 71 scale items taken from three different scales, empirically tested and demonstrated to be reliable (Creswell, 2003).

The design of the interview questions was refined by conducting pilot studies with both students and parents (Section 3.7.2). All participants were made anonymous.

The study used an inductive process that was effective to analyse and code the collected data. The process taken to analyse the quantitative data comprised:
a.   Frequency data used for analysis
b.   Factor analysis used only on the MEIM scale using an SPSS statistical program
c.   Development of underlying themes

The process taken to analyse qualitative data from student focus groups and parents was effective whereby the transcripts from the audio MP3 files were thematically coded by content analysis devised by the researcher (Neuman, 2000). This was followed by data triangulation of student and parent data-sets for comparison and analysis.

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7.2.3 Limitations of the Study

The project carries the limitations of a one school study phenomenon. The sample size of 326 students completing the survey questionnaire is relatively strong in number compared to only 41 students who volunteered for the focus group data research. The limited number from the parent body of 31 parents participating in the questionnaire and only 10 parents in the one-to-one interview provides a restricted focus, a small segment of the parent body at the school. There was limited access to parents and to students in the school timetable. Due to the author's former role in the school (Department Head for Coptic Studies, Pastoral Care and Coptic Orthodox Studies) and his expectations of students, staff and parents at the school, there may be researcher bias or desirability effect (Neuman, 2000) in students, staff and parents.

7.3 Summary of findings - students and parents

Answering Research Question 1, the thesis provided a description from the data of the characteristics of the students. Most students were born in Australia, but many students reported their fathers and mothers were born overseas. The students came from a wide variety of suburbs across Sydney, some travelling a long way to school. Most students are multilingual, use Egyptian Arabic daily and have a basic knowledge of Coptic through the liturgy.

Students have high professional aspirations for their future. Research question 1 also asked about students' perception of the school, and the student's perceived that the school has influenced their identity in four areas: school culture, curriculum, spirituality and community. The students clearly understood that the school, is a learning community through traditions, church events, festivities and liturgies in what the students regard as a Coptic school environment.

In the curriculum, the students appear to enjoy aspects that include Coptic Orthodox Studies, Coptic language and history. The students feel the school encourages them to discover a sense of belonging through curriculum. Most students saw the value of spirituality at the school. Students perceive that the school is engaged with the church, see the school as a community and that are were many factors in the quality learning environment, constructing

the intellectual context, the environment and the significance of learning (Section 4. QTF). Students recognise that the community is created by respect in students and teachers and a sense of belonging. Most students feel valued and have self-worth.

Research Question 2 asks "What are students perceptions of identity"? In the quantitative scales, students reported multiple self-identification. They appeared not to be able to differentiate between national identity and ethnic identity, as though it were a continuous multiple identity construct. Students have no need to categorise their identity. Most students report a strong sense of community belonging and attachment. Factor analysis on the MEIM scales highlighted two factors in affirmation, commitment and belonging, and in ethnic exploration.

MEIM scales found that many aspects of ethnic exploration are important in the students' lives, and that they involve exploring their own community. Most students, considering their young age, have a strong sense and knowledge of Coptic heritage and history. However, some resisted the idea of labelling their identity as Coptic, but favoured rather a multiple construct. The students wanted to promote an independent image of themselves.

Research Question 3 asked how students negotiated their identity in 21st century Australian society. Students reported there are several factors which influence their negotiation and construction of identity. Family, friends and community, culture practices, language, place of birth, and the broader society indicated students feel they belong to multicultural Australia.

Figure 6.1 shows the child is the central focal point of a learning community environment within a spiritual community in a broader social community. Within the student community there is lots of diversity in the construction of identity and this is reflected in the many variables in the upbringing of a child within family and community and the response by school and church. The figure highlights the child is a free agent and makes those individual choices of negotiating identities within their own world.

7.3.1 Reflections on student findings:

The study has highlighted students' identity construction. This section will briefly reflect and draw out seven aspects of the students' experience and aspects of identity construction.

1) Students identified their communities as intertwined and inseparable between family, school, their Egyptian community and their life in the broader Australian context. Through these communities, students appear to have successfully embraced, integrated and assimilated into society.

2) From these communities, students have constructed multiple identities. Students have self-identified as Australian, and at the same identified as being Egyptian and Coptic. Students have noted confusion and difficulty in sifting between ethnic and religious identity.

3) These multiple identities are a source of strength for students, providing a sense of worth, self-esteem and motivation through students' exploration of their identity, and knowing who they are, and their place of birth. This study has shown students with multiple identities cross culture with ease, between, school, home, church and the broader society through their ability to relate, engage, communicate, and cross language and culture by identifying and using their multiple identity structure to the space they are occupying and they are in with ease and without thinking.

4) The study indicated the importance to students of heritage, origins, history and a homeland in diaspora. The school plays a role in intergenerational transmission, on behalf of the parents. The parents are choosing to send the students to the school for this purpose. The Coptic language remains to the student as a heritage liturgical language, in addition to their use of Egyptian Arabic. The students have assimilated into English usage for communication, but have integrated dual language usage for a community purpose. Some students demonstrated confusion between heritage, exploration of pre-Christian Egypt and early Christian phenomenon.

5) The study has shown that students' multiple identity structure was constantly changing as they developed, adding layers to their identity, character, personality and self-image. Diverse students belonging to a community was expressed in their changing participation at school, home, church and in the wider community.

6) School appeared to have the role of a second home for some students because they felt secure, embraced by friends and a sense of community. The study revealed the importance of spirituality in some students' personal development, life outlook, and faith journey at school.

7) Although the study commenced using the term 'negotiation' between identities, the findings appear to indicate that there is no conscious negotiation undertaken or

necessary. Students swap and change between identities, varying with the circumstance, space, and company, indicating negotiation to be negligible. The sense of security of home, school and church enables students to have a sense of cohesion and continuity, moving between environments and spaces with ease. The sense of identity across different environments is intertwined.

7.3.2 Reflection on parent findings

Parent perceptions were collected to have further views on the students and to triangulate student perceptions. The study used both survey and interview data with parents.

Parents felt that the school was a safe environment to send their children. They valued the alignment between church and school. In general, there was more uniformity in parent responses compared to students'. Parents identified strongly and exclusively with the church and the Coptic community, in contrast to the children. Parents appeared to have less diverse interaction with Australian society compared with the children who are very inclusive in their approach to being Australian. This may indicate a generation gap between parents and children and the beginning of a change of attitude towards their diasporic identity. It appears that parents are giving the school the responsibility for transmission of intergenerational language, culture, heritage and religion. Section 5.7 has reflected on the role-modelling involved, and effects of the parent data in relation to the student construction of identity.

7.4 Significance of the thesis

In Chapter 1, the researcher proposed that this thesis had seven purposes in mind, hopes for the possible impact, significance and usefulness of the thesis. The outcome of these will be briefly considered in turn.

1.   The thesis offers a valuable contribution to school educators' understanding of the construction of identity in students in a Coptic school, and, by extension, in other Coptic schools in Australia. This is of value in designing policies and curriculum for pastoral care and student welfare. It is of significance to school principals to have a nuanced understanding of the complex and changing development of their students.

2.   It offers material which may enhance teacher professional understanding of the nature of their students and the complexity of subjectivity/identity construction. This is fundamental

to teachers' ability to create effective and relevant learning experience. Teachers seek to provide the best opportunity for student learning and outcomes. Teachers in Australia, in both state and private schools, are confronted with diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-language and multi-religious classes. It is recognised that teachers must differentiate the curriculum, in individual schools, to cater for the needs of students who are diverse in language, culture and background (ACARA). The goals set by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2012) are set to promote excellence and equity in education for young people, with three goals set for young learners to be successful, confident and creative individuals and to be informed, active citizens in Australian society. (ACARA, 2012) encourages schools and teachers about the importance of teaching in context to enrich students' learning across the curriculum, as the classroom has "multiple, diverse and changing needs that are shaped by individual learning histories and abilities, as well as cultural and language backgrounds and socio-economic factors" (p. 17). Hence, schools and the modern teacher need to understand the students whom they may teach.

3.   The thesis contributes to a broader range of educational understanding in the wider field of schools with a high percentage of children of diaspora background, which aim to integrate understanding of students into quality teaching and learning.

4.   The research offers material and analysis which contribute to the clergy's understanding and knowledge of the key relationship between church and school and the engagement of the church in the life of the students.

5.   This thesis contributes to the limited study of Coptic communities globally, in this critical era of increasingly troubled Coptic communities in diaspora.

6.   The thesis provides a contribution to academic knowledge about the Coptic school community, which may support in the establishment in future of Coptic Studies as an endorsed course by the NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority)

7.   The research contributes to the diversity of Australian diaspora studies, to strengthen mapping of the complexity of the Australian multi-cultural community. There is a need for in depth understanding of the complex processes of identity in diaspora community, as many

communities have settled in Australia and are calling Australia 'home'. This is recognised to be of economic and societal importance.

The study has proposed a new conceptual framework for the complex nature of school students' identity construction as a complex system that is hyphenated, hybrid, multi-identity, constantly changing and complex in form and structure. The framework produced in this project is significant for other multi-ethnic communities in Australia in understanding the construction of their cultural ethnic identity. This study provided an opportunity to examine the construction of identity, culture and language at a Coptic school in Sydney to contribute to the limited research on Coptic diaspora studies globally.

This thesis provides an understanding and knowledge of the role of clergy in the relationship between church and school and in the engagement of the church in the life of the students. The study gained insight into a religious ethnic community in diaspora, where its origins, heritage and religion act as a catalyst for growth and learning in students' lives in their Coptic school. This research fills a gap in the limited resource available in Australia and globally on Coptic diaspora.

7.5 Recommendations and Further Research

The study makes these recommendations:

1.   The author recommends that, for teachers in Australian Coptic Schools, a shared teacher professional development course in student welfare be developed, drawing on the findings of the study.

2.   The study recommends that teacher training places greater attention on student cultural and linguistic diversity in terms of understanding student interaction with learning. In addition, many young teachers are employed by faith-based schools and need a deep understanding of the role that the church plays in the development of student education.

3.   The researcher recommends the development, at Diocese level, of continuous education for clergy, in understanding students' development and identity in their lives in church and schools. Clergy needs to understand that the holistic development of critical-thinking students must involve multiple inputs from the broader society.

4.   There is a need for coordination and cooperation between the different Coptic schools in Australia, to share resources and professional understanding of students. This thesis

recommends that an umbrella organisation be established for this purpose, particularly in the educational context of the Australian curriculum.

5.   The thesis recommends that a group from across the Coptic schools construct an application to NESA for Coptic Studies to be a "board-endorsed" subject, at matriculation public examinations, for example, in New South Wales, at Higher School Certificate level.

Recommendations for future research from this study to deliver more knowledge about the Coptic community and schools in Australia include:

(a) the need for a longitudinal study which could provide evidence of sequential development over time in students in a Coptic School. This would give detailed illustration and mapping of processes which were only briefly sketched in this study

(b) a study across different Coptic schools in Australia would provide information about differences between curriculum and policies

(c) a comparative study across Coptic and other diaspora communities may highlight similarities and differences developing in children's experience and development

(d) a theoretical field of identity construction should include new parameters of development in multiple identity situations

(e) following studies and models in many other heritage language fields, a study should be conducted in the establishment of Coptic as a heritage language, capable of being taught in schools, in the tradition of classical Greek and Latin.

This thesis examines students' lives in a single Coptic school community in Sydney. The findings confirm but extend findings in other Coptic communities and provide new perspectives on Coptic students' identity in the Australian context.

This ends the thesis, but the story of the Coptic community in the Australian context in diaspora is continuing.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Ethics Approval

MACQUARIE University   SHENOUDA MANSOUR <shenouda.mansour@students.mq.edu.au>

RE: HS Ethics Final Approval (5201200327)(Condition met)
1 message

Fhs Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au>   Mon, Aug 13, 2012 at 2:57 PM
To: Dr Robyn Moloney <robyn.moloney@mq.edu.au>
Cc: Dr Malcolm Choat <malcolm.choat@mq.edu.au>, Dr David Saltmarsh <david.saltmarsh@mq.edu.au>, Father
Shenouda Soliman Mansour <shenouda.mansour@students.mq.edu.au>

Dear Dr Moloney,

Re: "An investigation of Attitudes towards identity, culture and language
in a Coptic School Community"

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the
issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics
Sub-Committee and you may now commence your research.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical
Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at
the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr David Saltmarsh
Dr Malcolm Choat
Dr Robyn Moloney
Father Shenouda Soliman Mansour

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1.   The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing
compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research
(2007).

2.   Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision
of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 13th August 2013
Progress Report 2 Due: 13th August 2014
Progress Report 3 Due: 13th August 2015
Progress Report 4 Due: 13th August 2016
Final Report Due: 13th August 2017
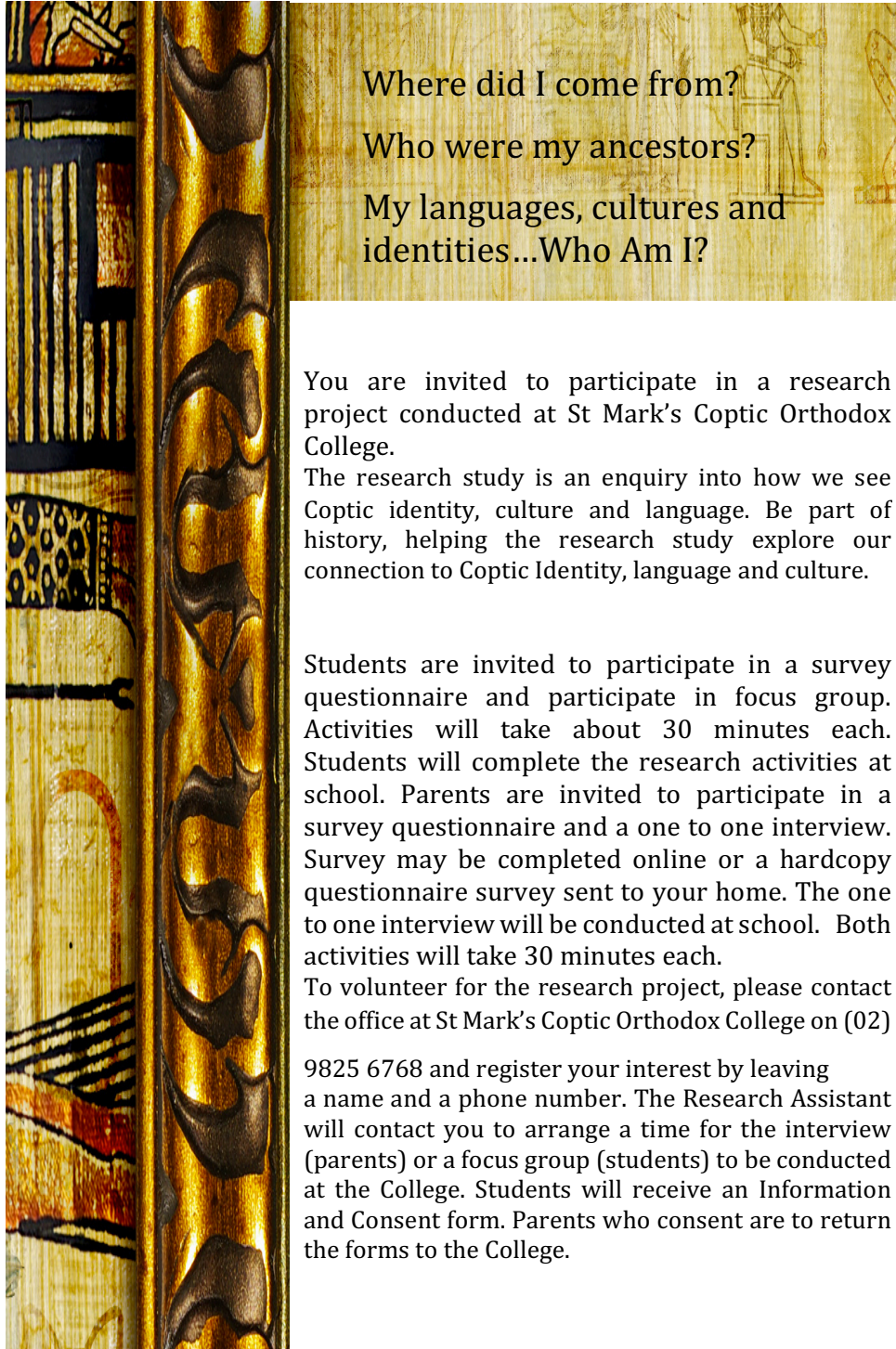
NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a
Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been
discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to
submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/
human_research_ethics/forms

Appendix B Advertisement Promoting Project at the School Community

Where did I come from?

Who were my ancestors?

My languages, cultures and identities…Who Am I?

You are invited to participate in a research project conducted at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College.

The research study is an enquiry into how we see Coptic identity, culture and language. Be part of history, helping the research study explore our connection to Coptic Identity, language and culture.

Students are invited to participate in a survey questionnaire and participate in focus group. Activities will take about 30 minutes each. Students will complete the research activities at school. Parents are invited to participate in a survey questionnaire and a one to one interview. Survey may be completed online or a hardcopy questionnaire survey sent to your home. The one to one interview will be conducted at school. Both activities will take 30 minutes each.

To volunteer for the research project, please contact the office at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College on (02) 9825 6768 and register your interest by leaving a name and a phone number. The Research Assistant will contact you to arrange a time for the interview (parents) or a focus group (students) to be conducted at the College. Students will receive an Information and Consent form. Parents who consent are to return the forms to the College.

Appendix C Email to Parents to participate in a Pilot Study

M Gmail   Shenouda Mansour <shenouti@gmail.com>

ON LINE SURVEY
3 messages

Fr Shenouda Mansour <shenouti@gmail.com>   Mon, Jul 30, 2012 at 1:14 PM
To: Francois David <davidf@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Mary Nicola <nicolam@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Mary Williams
<williamsm@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Robert Bishay <bishayr@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Mervat Sidhom
<sidhomm@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Sylvia Hanna <hannas@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, silvanada@gmail.com, Jackie
Shehata <shehataj@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Jaime Jacob <jacobj@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Wagdy Micheal
<michealw@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Kamal Boutros <kamal_boutros@hotmail.com>
Cc: Father Shenouda <shenouti@gmail.com>

Hi All,

I have an on line survey for my PhD, and I need to test it before finally commencing my research.
 I would appreciate if you would kindly complete it for me and
tell me your comments, as it will be very valuable for me.

Just click

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PYNF6TN

KInd regard

Fr Shenouda

M Gmail   Shenouda Mansour <shenouti@gmail.com>

Online survey
3 messages

Fr Shenouda Mansour <shenouti@gmail.com>   Mon, Jul 30, 2012 at 1:08 PM
To: Father Matthew <fr.matthew2@bigpond.com>, Fr George Nakhil <frgeorge@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>, Fr Gabriel
Yassa <Fr.Gabriel@copticmail.com>, Fr yousief fanous <fryfanous@copticmail.com>, Abouna Suriel
<fr.suriel_hanna@copticmail.com>

Hi All,

I have an on line survey for my PhD, and I need to test it before finally commencing my research.
 I would appreciate if you would kindly complete it for me and
tell me your comments, as it will be very valuable for me.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PYNF6TN

KInd regards

Fr Shenouda

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Appendix D Email – Approach to Parents

M Gmail

Shenouda Mansour <shenouti@gmail.com>

Coptic Studies Program
2 messages

office@stmarks.nsw.edu.au <office@stmarks.nsw.edu.au>   Thu, Aug 30, 2012 at 4:50 PM
To: shenouti@gmail.com

Dear Fr. & Mrs. Mansour,

I have been a great supporter of the Coptic Studies Program at the College.

Fr Shenouda Mansour is doing his PhD in Education with a special focus on St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College at Wattle Grove. The title of the project: "An Investigation of Attitudes to Identity, Culture and Language in a Coptic School Community in Sydney". Your child will be asked to complete a survey with a list of questions on their attitude towards identity, culture and language and some demographics.

No names (Anonymity) will be identified at all times.

To help Fr Shenouda Mansour complete any research at St Mark's College, Macquarie University requires students to have consent from parents/carers.

Please find an attached "Information and Consent Form STUDENTS".

If you do not wish your child to participate in this survey, please contact Mrs Sidhom at the College office.

Your assistance is very much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Mr. Rekouniotis
Head of College

Appendix E Information Consent Form

Parent's Copy

Information and Consent Form
PARENT CONSENT FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Name of Project: "An Investigation of Attitudes to Identity, Culture and Language in a
Coptic School Community in Sydney"

Your SON/DAUGHTER has been invited to participate in a study to investigate the attitudes to identity, culture and language of the Coptic people, conducted amongst students and parents of the college.

The study is being conducted by Fr Shenouda Mansour as part of his research study to meet the requirements of a Doctorate degree in Education (PhD in Education) under the supervision of Dr. Robyn Moloney (*contact telephone number: 02-9850 8605 and email address: robyn.moloney@mq.edu.au)* of the Department of Education.

If you decide to allow your son/daughter/ ward to participate, he/she will be asked to complete an anonymous survey questionnaire, and / or participate in a focus group discussion with 3 other students. If you decide allow him/her to participate in the focus group discussion, Fr Shenouda will audio-record the discussion, so it can later be transcribed. In the event of any discomfort that may occur in the process of the research, your child/ward may withdraw without reason and without adverse consequence.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential (*except as required by law)*. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. The researcher, supervisors, St Marks Coptic Orthodox College and only the appropriate authorities of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Australia will have access to the research data and study. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request by emailing the researchers. The findings may be later published in St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College Newsletter, church newsletters and church magazine of the research outcomes. A feedback report will be produced and available to parents of St Mark's Coptic College and to the parishes of the Diocese of Sydney.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to give consent for your child/ward to participate. If you decide to give consent, your child/ward is free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I,………………………………………………………….*(participant's name)* have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I have discussed it with my child/ward. I give consent for him/ her to participate in this research, knowing that he/she can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____ Participant's Signature: _____
(Block Letters)
Date:
Investigator's Name: _____ Investigator's Signature: _____
(Block Letters)
Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Human Research Ethics Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(PARENT'S/CARER'S COPY)

www.mq.edu.au

Appendix F Information & Consent Form

Investigator's Copy

School of Education

Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW
2109 AUSTRALIA

Phone   **+61 (0)2 9850 8704**

Fax   +61 (0)2 9850 8674
Email   education@mq.edu.au

Information and Consent Form
PARENT CONSENT FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Name of Project: <u>"An Investigation of Attitudes to Identity, Culture and Language in a
Coptic School Community in Sydney"</u>

Your SON/DAUGHTER has been invited to participate in a study to investigate the attitudes to identity, culture and language of the Coptic people, conducted amongst students and parents of the college.

The study is being conducted by Fr Shenouda Mansour as part of his research study to meet the requirements of a Doctorate degree in Education (PhD in Education) under the supervision of Dr. Robyn Moloney (*contact telephone number: 02-9850 8605 and email address: robyn.moloney@mq.edu.au*) of the Department of Education.

If you decide to allow your son/daughter/ ward to participate, he/she will be asked to complete an anonymous survey questionnaire, and / or participate in a focus group discussion with 3 other students. If you decide allow him/her to participate in the focus group discussion, Fr Shenouda will audio-record the discussion, so it can later be transcribed. In the event of any discomfort that may occur in the process of the research, your child/ward may withdraw without reason and without adverse consequence.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential (*except as required by law*). No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. The researcher, supervisors, St Marks Coptic Orthodox College and only the appropriate authorities of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Australia will have access to the research data and study. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request by emailing the researchers. The findings may be later published in St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College Newsletter, church newsletters and church magazine of the research outcomes. A feedback report will be produced and available to parents of St Mark's Coptic College and to the parishes of the Diocese of Sydney.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to give consent for your child/ward to participate. If you decide to give consent, your child/ward is free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I,…………………………………………………..*(participant's name)* have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I have discussed it with my child/ward. I give consent for him/ her to participate in this research, knowing that he/she can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____ Participant's Signature: _____
(Block Letters)
Date:
Investigator's Name: _____ Investigator's Signature: _____
(Block Letters)
Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Human Research Ethics Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S COPY)

Appendix G Online Survey on Survey Monkey

Questionnaire for Students and Parents

Information and Consent Form
Name of Project: "An Investigation of Attitudes to Identity, Culture and Language in a
Coptic School Community in Sydney"

You are invited to participate in a study to investigate the attitudes to identity, culture and language of the Coptic people, conducted amongst students and parents of the college.

The study is being conducted by Fr Shenouda Mansour as part of his research study to meet the requirements of a Doctorate degree in Education (PhD in Education) under the supervision of Dr Robyn Moloney   (*contact telephone number: 02-9850 8605 and email address: robyn.moloney@mq.edu.au*) of the Department of Education.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an anonymous survey questionnaire, and / or participate in a focus group discussion with 3 other students. If you decide to participate in the focus group discussion, a Research Assistant will audio-record the discussion, so it can later be transcribed. In the event of any discomfort that may occur in the process of the research, you may withdraw without reason and without adverse consequence. The time taken to complete the questionnaire will be 30 minutes. The time taken to complete the focus group discussion will be 30 minutes.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential (*except as required by law)*. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. The researcher, supervisors and St Marks Coptic Orthodox College will have access to the research data and study. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request by emailing the researchers. The findings may be later published in St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College Newsletter, church newsletters and church magazine of the research outcomes. A feedback report will be produced and available to parents of St Mark's Coptic College by December 2013.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Your consent is indicated by clicking on, "Start Survey Button".

"Start Survey Button" (You will be redirected to the Survey On-Line)

The following questionnaire is voluntary and no name is required. The questionnaire is divided into written responses and rating your response to the questions asked by circling the most appropriate rating.

The survey should take no more than 30 minutes of your valuable time. Your response will help in gathering data for research and analysis to develop strategies.

Appendix H Survey Instrument

Final Survey – (In Word document)
Circle the number that best describes your answer, rating each question on a 1-to- 4 response
scale where:

1 - strongly disagree; 2 - some what disagree; 3 – some what agree, and 4 – strongly agree

Set A: Ethnic Identity Scale

1.	I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as history, traditions and customs	1	2	3	4
2.	I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my ethnic group	1	2	3	4
3.	I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me	1	2	3	4
4.	I think a lot about my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership	1	2	3	4
5.	I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to	1	2	3	4
6.	I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group	1	2	3	4
7.	I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me	1	2	3	4
8.	In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to people about my ethnic group	1	2	3	4
9.	I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group	1	2	3	4
10.	I participate in cultural practices of my group, such as special food, music, or customs	1	2	3	4
11.	I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group	1	2	3	4
12.	I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background	1	2	3	4

Set B: Acculturation Scale

13.	I speak Egyptian/Sudanese Arabic	1	2	3	4
14.	I speak English	1	2	3	4
15.	I enjoy speaking Egyptian/Sudanese Arabic	1	2	3	4
16.	I associate with Australians	1	2	3	4
17.	I associate with members of my community	1	2	3	4
18.	I enjoy listening to Coptic Church music	1	2	3	4
19.	I enjoy listening to Egyptian Arabic music	1	2	3	4
20.	I enjoy listening to English language music	1	2	3	4
21.	I enjoy Egyptian Arabic Language TV	1	2	3	4
22.	I enjoy English language TV	1	2	3	4
23.	I enjoy reading (books in Egyptian Arabic)	1	2	3	4
24.	I enjoy reading (books in English)	1	2	3	4
25.	I enjoy chanting (Books in Coptic at the church)	1	2	3	4
26.	I write (letters in Egyptian Arabic)	1	2	3	4
27.	I write (letters in English)	1	2	3	4
28.	My thinking is done in the Egyptian Arabic language	1	2	3	4
29.	My thinking is done in the English language	1	2	3	4
30.	My contact with Egyptians	1	2	3	4
31.	My contact with Australians (non Egyptian/Sudanese)	1	2	3	4
32.	My father identifies or identified himself as "Coptic"	1	2	3	4
33.	My mother identifies or identified herself as "Coptic"	1	2	3	4
34.	My friends, while I was growing up, were of Coptic origin	1	2	3	4
35.	My friends, while I was growing up, were of Australia origin	1	2	3	4
36.	My friends, while I was growing up, were of multicultural origin	1	2	3	4
37.	My family cooks Egyptian/Sudanese food	1	2	3	4
38.	My friends now are of Australian origin	1	2	3	4
39.	My friends now are of Egyptian/Sudanese origin	1	2	3	4
40.	My friends now are of multicultural origin	1	2	3	4

41.	I like to identify myself as an Australian Copt	1	2	3	4
42.	I like to identify myself as Australian	1	2	3	4
43.	I like to identify myself as an Egyptian	1	2	3	4
44.	I like to identify myself as Egyptian/ Sudanese	1	2	3	4

Set C: Religious Belief and Values

44.	My religious beliefs lie behind my whole life	1	2	3	4
45.	I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith	1	2	3	4
46.	It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection	1	2	3	4
47.	Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life	1	2	3	4
48.	Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life	1	2	3	4
49.	I often read books and magazines about my faith	1	2	3	4
50.	I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organization	1	2	3	4
51.	I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation	1	2	3	4
52.	I keep well informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions	1	2	3	4
53.	I make financial contributions to my religious organization	1	2	3	4

Set D: Demographic – Complete the following

54. My Gender is ⊗ Male ⊗ Female

55. I am a ⊗ student at the Coptic school ⊗ parent/ carer of (a student/students) at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College.

Fill in the following response

56. My ethnic background is _____

57. I was born in _____

58. My father was born in _____

59. My Mother was born in _____

60. My Grand father was born in_____

61. My Grand mother was born in _____

62. My National Identity is
⊗ Australian
⊗ Egyptian
⊗ Sudanese
⊗ Greek
⊗ Palestinian
⊗ Other _____

63. I am a mixture between
_____

If you are a student go to 64.   If a Parent, go to 65.

64. If a student:
When I finish school I want to be _____
I am in Year _____ at school.
My age is _____.

66. If a parent:

My highest university/college qualification is/are:

_____
_____
_____

67. I work as a _____

68. My age is_____

69. Your Postcode Where You Live is:

70. The Suburb Where You Live is:

71. Would you like to participate in a Focus Group Discussion in a "Student Group" or as a "Parent on a one to one basis", if yes, please contact the school on 02 9825 67 68 and leave your name and phone number and the Research Assistant will contact you to make an arrangement. Your assistance is very much appreciated.

Yes   No

Thank you for your time.

You have now finished the survey.

Thank you for your participation

Appendix I Focus Group Questions for Students

School of Education

Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109 AUSTRALIA

Phone   **+61 (02) 9850 8704**

Fax   +61 (0)2 9850 8674
Email   education@mq.edu.au

Questions for Student Focus Group
conducted at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College at Wattle Grove
NOTE: The Digital Recorder will be used by Assistant Researcher

to record the focus group discussion for <u>Research Purpose Only</u>

Thanks for coming! I have received your consent form from your parent/carer. I would like to remind you that you may withdraw from the focus group if you feel uncomfortable at any time. First of all, my name is Mr. Robert Bishay, the Research Assistant for this project conducted by Fr Shenouda Mansour as part of his doctorate PhD degree at Macquarie University. I will be conducting the focus group and I will be recording the discussion for research purpose only.

We are going to talk about how you might feel who you are, by asking you the following six questions:

Question 1: Would you say you are Coptic? What do you think makes you Coptic? When do you feel most Coptic?

Question 2: Do you feel proud of your heritage? Why, and How?

Question 3: What do you think makes this school Coptic?

Question 4: Do you feel Australian as well? When? What things do you do that makes you Australian?

Question 5: Do you feel Egyptian? When? What things do you do that make you an Egyptian?

Question 6: Is there a time where you need to trade-off, balance or swap your Egyptian identity with your Australian identity? If so, when?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix J Parent Interview Questions

School of Education

Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109 AUSTRALIA

Phone   **+61 (02) 9850 8704**

Fax   +61 (0)2 9850 8674
Email   education@mq.edu.au

Questions for Parent Interview conducted at
St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College at Wattle Grove

NOTE: The Digital Recorder will be used by Assistant Researcher to record the interview discussion for Research Purpose Only

Thanks for coming! I would like to remind you that you may withdraw from the interview if you feel uncomfortable at any time.

First of all, my name is Mr. Robert Bishay, the Research Assistant for this project conducted by Fr Shenouda Mansour as part of his doctorate PhD degree at Macquarie University. I will be conducting the interview and I will be recording the discussion for research purpose only.

We are going to talk about how you might feel who you are, by asking you the following nine questions:

Question 1: Why would you say you send your kids to the Coptic school?

Question 2: How would you describe your identity?

Question 3: What do you like about being Coptic?

Question 4: What does it mean to you to be an Australian Copt?

Question 5: Do you feel that you are Coptic? What sort of things do you do that make

you feel Coptic?

Question 6: What does your heritage mean to you?

 Question 7: In what ways do you identify with your heritage, and how does it sort of lie in your

life?

Question 8: Do you get the impression that this is a Coptic school?

Question 9: As a parent of a student at St Marks College, what does it mean to you to

be an Australian or an Egyptian, and how do you associate with each of the two, or do

you feel like your life is sometimes a bit of a combination between the two?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix K Sample 1 – Focus Group 9 -Student Transcript from Year 7

Transcript of Sample Group 9 recordings, for Father Shenouda Mansour (PhD Student, Macquarie University)

Interviewer: This is sample study 9. Can each of you please just state your age and where you were born?

Student 1 (male): I'm 12, and I was born in Sydney Australia.

Student 2 (male): I'm 12, and I was born in Sydney Australia.

Student 3 (male): I'm 12, and I was born in Sydney Australia.

Student 4 (female): I'm 12, and I was born in Sydney Australia.[1]

Question 1: Would you say you are Coptic? What do you think makes you

Coptic? When do you feel most Coptic?

Student 1: Yes I would say I'm Coptic. I feel Coptic because my background was brought up to be Coptic. I feel most Coptic when I'm in the church.

Student 2: I say I'm Coptic. I feel most Coptic when I'm in church.

Student 3: I would say that I'm Coptic. What makes me think that I'm Coptic is because I am Coptic. And what makes me feel most Coptic is when I'm in church.

Student 4: I am Coptic. I feel Coptic the most when I'm at church.

Question 2: Do you feel proud of your heritage? Why, and How?

Student 1: I do feel proud of my heritage, as I have researched my background, and what my heritage is, and how everything was back in the days.

Student 2: No I do not feel proud of my heritage because of what's happening in Egypt.

Student 3: Yes I feel proud of my heritage, because being Coptic is one of the most biggest privileges ever.

Student 4: Yes I do feel proud of my heritage, because it is nice and stuff.

Question 3: What do you think makes this school Coptic?

Student 1: What I think makes this school Coptic is the environment and the people in the school, which makes the school Coptic.

Student 2: What I think is Coptic about this school is that we have a chapel and a church, and we go and have masses together, even the Indians *(?)* come together and have mass with us.

---

[1] In this sample group, the four students speak in the same order for each question.

Student 3: What I think makes this school Coptic is the name of the school, and also the chapel and the church just across the road.

Student 4: The thing that makes our school Coptic is the people and how they act and behave.

Question 4: Do you feel Australian as well? When? What things do you do that makes you Australian?

Student 1: I do feel Australian as I was born in Australia in 2000, and I feel Australian as I speak English and that's the Australian language today that we all speak.

Student 2: I do feel Australian, because when I go into the Australian community, like you feel exactly the same, it sort of makes you go down a bit, and that's not really good.

    Interviewer: In what way do you think it makes you go down?

    Student 2: Like how their religion is different to us, and it's different, and so it's harder to get along with them.

Student 3: What makes me feel Australian is the way I speak, because it's very Aussie. And the way my parents speak is very Aussie as well. What things do I do that makes me Australian? I play a lot of Australian sports, like sometimes I play soccer.

Student 4: I do feel Australian when I'm on holidays and I'm around where mostly Australians live.

Question 5: Do you feel Egyptian? When? What things do you do that make you an Egyptian?

Student 1: I do feel Egyptian, as I was brought up to be Egyptian, and my background is Egyptian. The things that I do to make me feel Egyptian is I follow the traditional ways that I was brought up to be.

Student 2: Yes I do feel Egyptian, and I feel Egyptian when I come to school, surrounded by most of the Egyptians, where like we act exactly the same, because we know what all the Egyptians do so it's easier to connect together.

Student 3: Yes I do feel Egyptian. Sometimes when I come to school I see a lot of Muslims around and I just get scared. Part of being Egyptian is that the Muslims hate us, and I just get scared when I see them.

Student 4: Yeah I do feel Egyptian when I'm around Egyptians, and especially when I'm with my family, because they're all Egyptian and they've brought me up with the Egyptian tradition.

Question 6: Is there a time where you need to trade-off, balance or swap your Egyptian identity with your Australian identity? If so, when?

Student 1: There is no time when I need to trade-off, balance or swap. I was brought up and proud of my heritage, my Egyptian heritage, and there is no time where I trade-off.

Student 2: There is no time that I feel I should swap, because you should feel proud of being Egyptian, as you are unique, and people shouldn't criticise you for your religion.

Student 3: No there isn't a time when I need to trade-off. But there are sometimes I feel like I need stay Australian, because I don't like speaking Arabic, even with my parents, so just sticking to speak English. But sometimes I feel I need to be Egyptian and speak Arabic.

Student 4: No I don't feel there's a time where you should swap. I feel that they're both the same.

Appendix L Sample 2 – Focus Group 6 - Student Transcript from Year 12

Transcript of Sample Group 6 recordings,

for Father Shenouda Mansour (PhD Student, Macquarie University)

Interviewer: Sample study 6, can each one please state your name and where you were born?

Student 1 (male): 18, Sydney Australia.

Student 2 (female): 18, Cairo Egypt.

Student 3 (female): 17, Sydney Australia.

Student 4: 17, Sydney Australia.[2]

Question 1: Would you say you are Coptic? What do you think makes you Coptic? When do you feel most Coptic?

Student 1: I would say I'm 100% Coptic. What makes me Coptic is what I do, I'm a Deacon at Coptic Church, and ever since I can remember I live and breathe Coptic air. I feel most Coptic in church and community gatherings, and mostly at home.

Student 2: I feel most Coptic when I attend youth on Friday nights at the Coptic Orthodox church. I would say I am Coptic, being raised in a Coptic family, and being born in Egypt helps a lot with that.

Student 3: I feel most Coptic when I'm at community gatherings and at church, and if someone was to ask me if I'm Coptic, I would say yes.

Student 4: I would say that I was Coptic, and I think what really makes me Coptic is I totally identify with all parts of being Coptic, the community, the church, the tradition, and even things as simple as the hymns, the youth meetings and stuff like that – all these things add up to make me feel Coptic. And when I feel most Coptic is like standing in the middle of the liturgy and hearing all of the tradition unfold before my eyes, and hearing the Coptic language and all the Coptic hymns.

Question 2: Do you feel proud of your heritage? Why, and How?

Student 1: I'm very proud of my heritage. The history is amazing, and what I've been taught by others is, I feel it's an inspiration for me to keep going, and inspiration to keep our history alive. As you can see, Egypt and all the persecution and all that, it just makes me want to get involved in the Coptic community.

Student 2: I wouldn't say that I'm proud, but I'm neither ashamed of my heritage. It's different to a lot that's in Australia, so it's kind of cool, but I wouldn't necessarily say I'm proud.

---

[2] In this sample group, the four students speak in the same order for each question.

Student 3: I am proud of our heritage because we've been through so much, and to come out as a strong community is what makes me proud of being Coptic.

Student 4: I am proud of my heritage. I feel that it's a solid pillar in such a turbulent world. Even just the fact that we have just an unbroken line of discipleship from St Mark to our current Pope, and so that's going to continue forever, and it just makes me proud that I've got a solid rock to go to at the end of the day.

Question 3: What do you think makes this school Coptic?

Student 1: What I think makes this school Coptic is the presence of our Father the priest, and the strong community spirit that we have, most of the time. And of course Coptic Orthodox studies, which most of us enjoy, and the gatherings of a small number of Deacons here, the many hymns and also the Coptic iconography, which is wonderful.

Student 2: The rise of non-Coptics at this school makes this school a lot less Coptic, and the fact that it kind of is run by people who don't stand by the Coptic values, it's kind of bringing down the whole Coptic environment of the school.

Student 3: What makes this school Coptic is the fact that we keep our traditions alive by participating in masses and significant events that occur according to the Coptic calendar.

Student 4: What makes this school Coptic, I think it's just the practical reasons such as having pastoral care, having Coptic Orthodox studies, having the presence of priests as previously mentioned. And just having the ability to interact with the hierarchy of the church so easily and simply, which other people who stay at home all day or got to different schools don't get to encounter.

Question 4: Do you feel Australian as well? When? What things do you do that makes you Australian?

Student 1: Most times I feel Australian, mostly when I'm with the boys, watching the footy or soccer, and having meat pies and all that stuff.

Student 2: I do feel Australian, being brought up in a family where they try to get in with the Australian culture, kind of helps a lot. And having all these Aussie neighbours around, communicating on most days, is just part of the Australian culture.

Student 3: I do feel Australian, especially around my community because we participate in a lot of community activities that also allow us to interact with other individuals, and so hence making me feel more Australian.

Student 4: I do only feel Australian to an extent, because it's not as easy as you can say, to go out and communicate with Australians every day. There's a fine balance between being Australian and protecting

your heritage and executing *(?)* your heritage in another country. What would really make me Australian is just the practical sense of how I go to school and I'm going to study here and contribute to this country that has given me so much.

Question 5: Do you feel Egyptian? When? What things do you do that make you Egyptian?

Student 1: I feel 100% Egyptian. Of course I'm Coptic, which means I'm Indigenous Egyptian. When? Always. What things do I do that make me Egyptian? Going to church with Egyptians, eating with Egyptians, eating Egyptian food, listening to Egyptian music, and going to an Egyptian school.

Student 2: I agree with the previous, because of all this Egyptian culture and food and people and everything, having those around you all the time makes you feel Egyptian.

Student 3: I feel most Egyptian when I'm around community members, we watch movies and eat food.

Student 4: I do feel Egyptian because our community and my family have a remarkable ability to transfer all Egyptian culture and all the Egyptian way of life to Australia. You can actually execute it just by going along with your everyday Australian life, and just by going to church and being surrounded by Egyptians, that contributes to my pride of being Egyptian in Australia.

Question 6: Is there a time where you need to trade-off, balance or swap your Egyptian identity with your Australian identity? If so, when?

Student 1: No I never feel that I need to balance or swap my identity. I'm always Egyptian, no matter what.

Student 2: I feel like there is a balance between the Egyptian and the Australian identity, and there is no need to swap either, it kind of works together, growing up.

Student 3: I've never been in a situation where I've needed to choose one over the other, but if I was faced with this situation I would state that I am both, Coptic and Australian.

Student 4: There's a fine balance that you really have to acquire when you're trying to be an Egyptian living in Australia. Like when I think of this, I think of the saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". So it's something that you don't intend to do, but when you're around Australians and you're for example playing for a football team as I did, you can't help but want to assimilate to what they're doing and what they're saying, just as anybody would in that situation.

Appendix M – Cumulative Variance explained on the MEIM (Student)

Total Variance Explained – MEIM

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	5.021	41.840	41.840	5.021	41.840	41.840	4.389
2	1.080	9.003	50.843	1.080	9.003	50.843	3.711
3	.928	7.736	58.578				
4	.830	6.918	65.496				
5	.727	6.059	71.554				
6	.723	6.024	77.579				
7	.637	5.307	82.886				
8	.538	4.484	87.370				
9	.465	3.872	91.243				
10	.396	3.302	94.544				
11	.376	3.133	97.677				
12	.279	2.323	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.