

Choices and Challenges: Chinese Graduate Students' Transitional Issues at a
Canadian University

A Thesis Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

By

Xiaodong Zhang

July 2011

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify reasons why Chinese graduate students chose one Canadian university in which to study and to examine the transitional issues they encountered. Based on post-positivistic epistemology as the philosophical foundation, Creswell's (2002) triangulation design in mixed methods research was employed. Fifty-one Chinese graduate students registered in master or doctoral programs at the university responded to an online survey that collected quantitative and qualitative data. Excel and SPSS (18.0) were employed to analyze the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were utilized to examine the participants' transitional issues. Qualitative data were analyzed to develop major themes in relation to the participants' reasons for choosing this university in which to study and the transitional issues. Trustworthiness of the study was discussed from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

The findings showed that the participants came to study at this university in Canada because of academic reasons, such as high-quality academic programs, research focus, competent faculty members, appropriate admission requirements, world-recognized degrees, and the opportunity to practice English. When studying in their academic programs, they encountered difficulties with listening, speaking, and academic writing in English. They also encountered difficulties in understanding academic readings, seeking advice, course work, and lack of resources. In their daily lives, the students encountered loneliness, isolation, lack of communication due to different cultures, financial issues, and accommodation problems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and thank Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart's contribution to my dissertation. As my supervisor, Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart provided me with valuable comments, suggestions, and insights regarding my dissertation research and writing. I would also like to thank Dr. Kapoor from the Department of Educational Policy Studies, Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta who served as the external examiner for my dissertation. Dr. Kapoor's comments and suggestions were appreciated. A sincere thank you is extended to my Advisory Committee: Drs. Geraldine Balzer, Patrick Renihan, Keith Walker, and Hongming Cheng, chair of my final oral defense. In addition, I want to thank Drs. Ivan Kelly and Warren Noonan for their academic guidance and support throughout the dissertation process.

The support of the International Student Office at the University of Saskatchewan in facilitating my research and the support of the Chinese graduate students who participated in my research were essential facets of my work and crucial to the completion of my dissertation. Furthermore, I wish to thank the Saskatoon Chinese community for their support during my studies at the University of Saskatchewan. To friends, fellow students, and all those who supported me during my doctoral journey, I wish to extend my sincere thanks.

My deep appreciation is extended to my parents and parents-in-law for their patience and understanding. Finally, my special thanks to my lovely wife Meng Li (Lemon) for her continued support both academically and in my daily life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT, FOCUS, AND FRAMING	1
Context.....	1
Chinese Students Studying Abroad.....	3
Canada: Chinese International Student Enrolment.....	5
The Researcher’s Story.....	8
Purpose of the Study.....	9
Significance of the Study.....	10
Assumptions.....	11
Delimitations of the Study.....	12
Limitations of the Study.....	12
Definition of Terms.....	13
Organization of the Dissertation.....	14
 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	 16
Factors Affecting International Students’ University Selection.....	16
Academic Factors.....	16
Non-Academic Factors.....	20
International Students’ Transitional Issues.....	23
English Language Difficulties.....	23
Academic Adjustment.....	26
Social Adaptation.....	33
Canadian Policies and Universities’ Practices Related to International Students.....	38
Conceptual Framework.....	41
Summary.....	42
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN.....	 44
Purpose of the Study.....	44
Research Design.....	45
Participants.....	46
Purposeful Sampling.....	47
Justification for Using an Online Survey.....	48
Adaptation of the Online Survey.....	50
Description of the Online Survey.....	54
Pilot.....	57
Data Collection.....	59
Data Analysis.....	59
Data Presentation.....	61
Trustworthiness.....	61
Ethical Considerations.....	66

Summary.....	67
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	68
Reasons for Choosing this Canadian University.....	76
Transitional Issues Encountered by Participants	81
English Language Difficulties.....	82
Academic Adjustment.....	92
Social Adaptation.....	101
Summary.....	110
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF STUDY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION.....	112
Summary of Study.....	112
Discussion.....	116
Implications for Research and Practice.....	123
Conclusion.....	129
REFERENCES.....	135
APPENDIX A.....	152
APPENDIX B.....	154
APPENDIX C.....	156
APPENDIX D.....	169

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1. The increase of Chinese students in Canada.....	7
2.1. Conceptual Framework.....	41
4.1. Gender and age of participants.....	69
4.2. Accompanying family members of the participants.....	70
4.3. The current status of participants in Canada.....	70
4.4. Years participants spent studying in Canada.....	71
4.5. Degree programs in which participants studied.....	71
4.6. Distribution of participants' majors when they studied in Canada.....	72
5.1. Renewed conceptual framework.....	128

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
4.1 Survey Items 15-33: Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations	77
4.2 The Major Reasons for Choosing This Specific University.....	81
4.3 Survey Items 35-50: Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations	83
4.4 The Major Themes on English Language Difficulties.....	92
4.5 Survey Items 55-66: Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations	94
4.6 The Major Difficulties in Academic Adjustment.....	100
4.7 Survey Items 69-84: Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations	102
4.8 Transitional Difficulties Concerning Social Adaptation.....	109
5.1 Comparison between New Findings and the Findings Supported by Previous Research.....	122

CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXT, FOCUS, AND FRAMING

Currently, globalization facilitates cross-border studies, and its impact on postsecondary education has been significant. As well, universities play an important role in supporting globalization by incorporating a variety of cultures, customs, ideologies, and values into their programs offering theoretical instructions and practices (Arnove & Torres, 1999). The scope of international education gradually expanded as universities in developed countries accept international students who have different language, cultural, and ideological backgrounds (Altbach & Knight, 2007). As more international students choose to study and conduct research at universities in developed countries, international students' transitional issues from home countries to host countries become more obvious and important (Altbach & Knight; Ayano, 2006).

In this research, I focused on the transitional issues Chinese graduate students encountered at a Canadian university. Chapter One provided a global context for the research, followed by a description of Chinese students studying abroad. Specifically, information in terms of Chinese students in Canada was presented. As the researcher, my personal story as a Chinese graduate student enrolled in a Canadian university formed a part of the document. Also, this chapter presented the purpose and significance of the study, followed by the assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and definition of terms.

Context

As the world changed at an ever-increasing pace, economic, technological, political,

and social-cultural factors made it necessary to intensify efforts to challenge and overcome obstacles among nations in what was referred to as the globalization movement (Altbach & Knight, 2007; MacGillivray, 2006). From this perspective, higher education became a global issue, and internationalizing higher education was at the forefront of the new focus (Lu, 2006; Naidoo, 2006).

International education became an industry related to economic and technological development (Tan & Simpson, 2008). Both developed and developing countries emphasized the importance of higher education and had their respective interests and strategies in this regard (Andrade, 2006; Wang, 2004). Co-operation between nations enabled individuals to pursue post-secondary education beyond national boundaries. As well, the proliferation of international student programs encouraged students to study outside of their home countries, an opportunity that benefited both developed and developing countries and led to the internationalization of higher education (Humfrey, 1999).

Altbach and Knight (2007) stated that developed countries established international higher-education programs for their own economic interests. Yao (2003) noted that higher education programs promoted international cooperation, creating competent citizens and satisfying the needs and expectations of participating countries. International students from developing countries travelled abroad to learn advanced techniques and to gain experiences. Furthermore, higher-education programs delivered by universities in developed countries provided international students with opportunities to make academic,

social, and economic contributions to their home and host countries (Brown & Holloway, 2008). For example, the British government emphasized the importance of internationalizing higher education and encouraged British universities to accept as many international students. In 2006, 318,000 international students were enrolled in academic programs in British universities, of whom 106,000 were postgraduate students. The British government treated tuition fees and other expenses paid by international students as an important source of financial income (Brown & Holloway).

Naidoo (2006) stated that there were three mobility styles in internationalizing higher education— international student mobility, program mobility, and institution mobility. Naidoo defined international student mobility as students moving from developing countries to developed countries. Program mobility suggested that similar programs could be provided in different countries. Educational institutions establishing outside of their home countries were an example of institution mobility. Compared to the latter mobility styles, international student mobility was most prevalent. Naidoo stated that in 1955, approximately 150,000 international students studied abroad; in 2002, the number was 1.9 million, approximately 10 times as many. Brown and Holloway (2008) stated that among international students as a whole, Chinese students went to the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and European countries to pursue further education.

Chinese Students Studying Abroad

China was a developing country with the largest population in the world and sent

students to study abroad for more than one hundred years (Cheng & Mao, 2002). This span of time could be broken down into five distinct periods:

- Period One: 1870 to 1880,
- Period Two: 1890 to 1910,
- Period Three: 1920 to 1930,
- Period Four: 1950 to 1970,
- Period Five: 1980 to the present (Liang, 2004). From 2000 to 2010, China's overall population still grows. With the decreasing value of US dollars and China's increasing economic strength, the number of Chinese students studying abroad will continually increase.

Since 1980, China encouraged students to study abroad and endeavored to attract foreign investment (Zhang & Brunton, 2007). After joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Chinese government and educational institutions focused on the importance of internationalizing higher education (Cheng & Mao, 2002; Wang, 2004; Yao, 2003). The Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China (2008) stated that China supported international programs and co-operative agreement. Over the last 30 years, China became increasingly involved in international higher-education programs. The United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, Singapore, New Zealand, France, Germany, Japan, and Russia established academic programs and other services with China for Chinese students (Tan & Simpson, 2008).

Co-operative international programs developed along with Chinese students'

increasing desire to receive post-secondary education abroad (Liang, 2004).

Approximately 250,000 Chinese students studied in 70 countries between 1980 and 1996 (Zhang, 1996). The China Daily (2008) noted that in the following decade, approximately 1,210,000 Chinese students studied abroad, nearly 10 times as many as the total number of Chinese students studying abroad before 1996. In addition, Chen (2007) predicted that the trend would increase as students, parents, educators, and Chinese society supported the internationalization of higher education and enrolment in international post-secondary institutions.

The reasons why Chinese students chose to study abroad were multifaceted. The most important reason was the large population in China. Cheng and Mao (2002) stated that Chinese universities were not able to accept all competent students due to a lack of financial support, limited educational resources, and insufficient space available for the competent students. In addition, students were only able to pursue their studies at university by passing the University Matriculation Examinations. Similarly, problems confronted students who wished to pursue graduate studies. Despite their academic abilities, Chinese students had limited opportunities to receive a post-secondary education in undergraduate and graduate programs in China (Cheng & Mao; Yao, 2003).

Canada: Chinese International Student Enrolment

Canada advocated multiculturalism within a bilingual framework that fostered cultural diversity and welcomed people from other countries to study and live in Canada (Tischler, 2008). The Canadian government's policies and programs attracted

international students from all over the world. Historically, there was a positive relationship between China and Canada. Chinese people regarded Canada as a peaceful, harmonious, and welcoming country (Liang, 2004). Many Chinese decided to study and live in Canada. Historically, in the 1960s, no students from China were documented to qualify at Canadian universities. Later, China began to send students to Canada because Chinese people thought Canada was one of the best countries for international students to study and live in (Chen, 2007). Gradually, China became a leading source country of international students in Canada (Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China, 2008; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008) stated that Canadian universities attracted Chinese students in increasing numbers each year.

Data in Figure 1.1 showed the increase of Chinese students in Canada from 1990 to 2005. Between 1999 and 2002, the number of students grew to 9400 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). In 2005, this escalated to a record of 17,600, accounting for the largest proportion of international students in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2008). In 2006, about 30,000 Chinese students came to Canada to study (Citizenship and Immigration Canada), a trend which China Daily (2007) stated would be likely to continue. The Canadian Embassy in China (2009) stated that Chinese students became the largest international student group in Canada in 2008: 36,041 Chinese students came to Canada, accounting for 23% of the total number of international students in Canada. According to Government of Canada (2011), in 2009, over 50,000 Chinese students out of 200,000 international students (25%) came to study in Canada. The Chinese students

represented the largest group of international students in Canada. The Government of Canada regarded Chinese students as a strong linkage with China and that they bring a rich culture to Canadian classrooms.

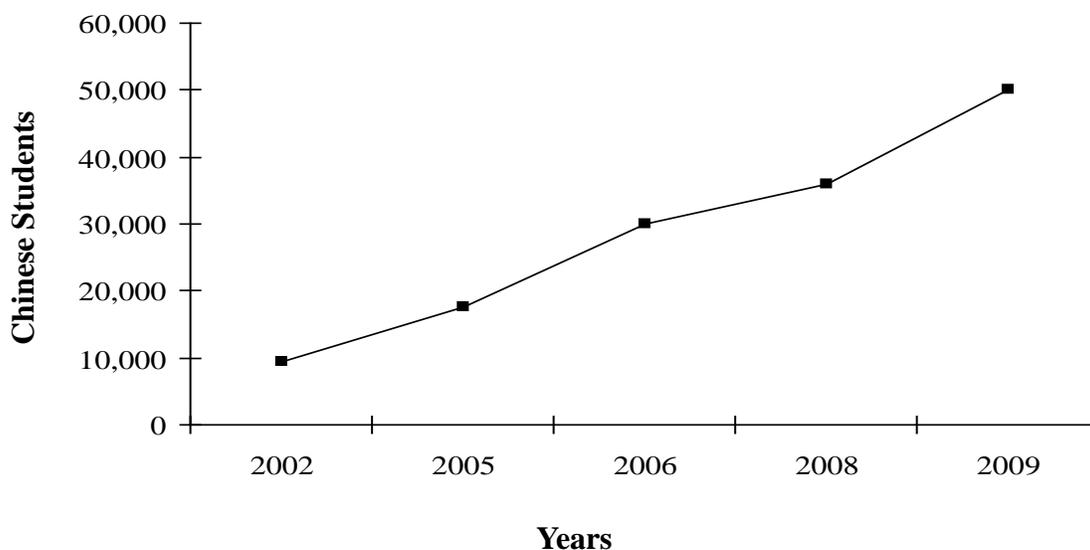


Figure 1.1. The increase of Chinese students in Canada.

Liang (2004) and Li (1998) noted that international students including Chinese students contributed to the Canadian economy by paying tuition fees and living expenses. However, Andrade (2006) noted that international students faced challenges, both academic and social, in studying abroad. Schutz and Richards (2003) commented that Canadian educational policymakers and educators should consider international students' needs, wants, and expectations to promote academic and cultural exchange within Canadian universities. Andrade (2006) and Tischler (2006) argued that the difficulties and problems international students faced daily should be appropriately emphasized and addressed.

The Researcher's Story

Guba and Lincoln (1982) and Creswell (2002) stated that a researcher's relevant background, experience, knowledge, and techniques could help make his or her research more understandable and trustworthy. In this research, I shared my personal story as a Chinese graduate student studying at a Canadian university. On arriving in Canada, I was excited because I was confident that I would do well in graduate studies. In China, I was an English major. Before coming to Canada, I read more than 50 English language novels, such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Great Expectations*, and *Gone with the Wind*. I achieved full marks in the sections of English grammar and writing in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). I also participated in the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and achieved sufficient marks to apply for graduate programs provided by universities in North America. I believed that I was qualified for graduate studies in Canadian universities.

However, the first difficulty I encountered when studying in Canada was my English language skills. The feedback on my first paper included a large number of comments written in red. I achieved a low mark, indicating that I barely passed the course. I felt sad and frustrated because English skills, which once made me proud of myself, suddenly made me feel ashamed. Academic writing in English was a challenge due to a different logic and format required in Canada. It was upsetting to be unable to write as fluent and clear papers in English as in Chinese.

Another difficulty I encountered was the different organizational design of Canadian

classes. In China, I was accustomed to lectures, in-class practices, and examinations. In Chinese classrooms, the teacher was authoritative and powerful, but Canadian classes are comprised of seminars and panels in which I was required to share my own points of view with other students in class. In this way, we would learn from each other. In my first class in Canada, I did not say a word because I was accustomed to keeping silent and listening to the teacher. I did not know how to exchange ideas. At that time, I felt like an outsider isolated from other students. In addition, for the Canadian graduate class, I had to prepare and complete presentations—a process with which I was unfamiliar. In my first presentation, I was nervous and lacked confidence when I faced my professor and classmates. I did not know how to begin or manage my presentation.

I not only encountered difficulties in my graduate studies but also challenges in everyday living. I was not used to the Canadian food or weather. I was ill for nearly a month and was absent from classes. At that time, I was homesick and lonely, missing my family and friends in Beijing. I wanted to have traditional Chinese meals but was unable to find the ingredients at grocery stores. In addition, although I am from the northern part of China where there is snow, and the average temperature is around minus ten degrees in winter, I was still not prepared for the extremely cold weather. When I experienced snowstorms and winter temperatures as low as minus thirty degrees, I thought that life was uncomfortable in Canada.

Purpose of the Study

In this research study, I focused on Chinese graduate students' reasons for selecting

one specific Canadian university located in Western Canada and their transitional issues at this university. The purpose of the research study was:

1. To identify reasons why Chinese graduate students chose one specific Canadian university in which to study and
2. To examine transitional issues Chinese graduate students encountered during their studies.

In accordance with the purpose of the study, two research questions were provided:

1. Why did Chinese post-baccalaureate students select this specific university as the site to pursue graduate studies?
2. What transitional issues did Chinese graduate students encounter when studying at the Canadian university related to difficulties in the English language, academic adjustment, and social-economic adaptation?

Significance of the Study

It was my intention that this study might provide information regarding Chinese graduate students' experiences and transitional issues at prairie-based Canadian universities. The study's recommendations on policies regarding Chinese graduate students and other international graduate students might be for a basis on which university-level policymakers and practitioners support international students. By reading this study, university leaders, faculty members, and administrators may gain a deeper awareness of Chinese students' reasons for choosing this university and their major transitional issues encountered in the English language, academic adjustment, and social

adaptation. As well, factors related to institutional power within the university may also impact students' studies and lives. University administrators may wish to consider their ethical responsibility—not only to attract the students, but also to take care of them in their academic programs and daily lives in order to enable the students to achieve success and complete their program of studies.

Based on the findings of the study, the university leaders, faculty members, and senior researchers could develop appropriate policies and programs aiming to solve the students' transitional issues. This research would be significant for future program planning and strengthening of student services to ensure ongoing success of Chinese students who pursue graduate studies in Canada. This would be particularly important given the growing number of Chinese students who choose to come to Canada for graduate studies.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in the development of this study:

1. The reasons why Chinese graduate students chose the specific university and the transitional issues the students encountered at the university in this study would be identifiable and analyzable.
2. The participants in the study shared their opinions, feelings, and thoughts openly and honestly when completing surveys.
3. The participants in the study were assumed to have adequate English language proficiencies to correctly express their ideas and feelings in written English.

4. An online survey was considered a credible and dependable method for collecting quantitative and qualitative data for the research.
5. Sufficient information was collected from the participants to ensure that adequate quantitative and qualitative data related to the research questions could be analyzed in the study.

Delimitations of the Study

This study had the following delimitations.

1. The study was delimited to a description and analysis of Chinese graduate students' transitional issues encountered at one specific Canadian university instead of making any generalization beyond the participant group in the study;
2. The study was delimited to Chinese graduate students currently enrolled at this specific university;
3. The reviewed literature was delimited to research papers and books, government websites and documents, and technical reports related to international students' transitional issues from 1998 to 2009;
4. Survey data in the study were collected between March and April, 2010.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations related to the study were as follows:

1. Statistically significant results did not and could not reveal causality or reasons for transitional issues encountered by Chinese graduate students at the specific Canadian university;

2. The reviewed literature did not and could not represent all studies concerning international students' transitional issues;
3. No appropriate models or conceptual frameworks regarding international students' transitional issues or transition uses for other populations were identified in the literature review;
4. Since the study was conducted in 2010, transitional issues encountered by Chinese graduate students beyond this year might be different from the transitional issues identified in the study.
5. The researcher's own bias was from a perspective of Chinese graduate students studying at a Canadian university, so understanding and interpretation of the findings might have been limited to represent these students' voices.

Definition of Terms

Terms might have different meanings, indications, and implications when used in different contexts. The terms defined in the study were provided below.

1. Transitional issues—problems, difficulties, dilemmas, and troubles regarding English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation encountered by international students when they come to Canada;
2. Mandarin—the official Chinese language (The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2008);
3. Chinese graduate students—international students from mainland China who are Chinese nationals enrolled in masters or doctoral programs in the specific

- Canadian university;
4. International students—university students who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents;
 5. Academic content—the content of courses outlined in course syllabus, textbooks or other materials used or distributed in the course.
 6. Learning outcomes—student academic achievement.
 7. Home countries—students’ countries of origin;
 8. Host countries—countries receiving international students;
 9. Supports and services—academic and social programs for international students provided by Canadian universities;
 10. Graduate programs—degree programs beyond the baccalaureate level;
 11. Globalization—an association of international economic, technological, political, cultural, and social forces in the twenty-first century (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Organization of the Dissertation

This study was organized in five chapters. Chapter One discussed the context of the study, Chinese students studying abroad, my personal story as a Chinese graduate student studying in Canada, the purpose and significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and definition of terms used. Chapter Two provided a literature review regarding factors that might impact international students’ decisions regarding university selections and transitional issues they may have encountered. Chapter Three presented the research design, participants, data collection, analysis, and presentation.

Trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also included in the chapter. Chapter Four presented findings related to participants' reasons for choosing the specific Canadian university and their transitional issues at the university from the perspectives of studying in an English language environment, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. Chapter Five provided a discussion, implications, and the conclusion regarding Chinese graduate students' reasons for choosing a Canadian university and the transitional issues they encountered.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Two presented literature relating to factors affecting international students' university selection and issues surrounding English as a second language, academic adjustment, social, and economic adaptation. This chapter also included current Canadian education policies concerning international students and a selection of Canadian universities' programs designed to assist international students.

Factors Affecting International Students' University Selection

Why did international students choose to study in a specific university located in a foreign country? According to previous studies, two aspects influenced international students' university selection: academic and non-academic considerations. The academic factors might include students' research interests, quality of academic programs, a university's and a country's international reputation, students' English language proficiency, and supervisors' recommendations. Non-academic determinants might include availability of student visas, safety on and off campus, and financial issues.

Academic Factors

One reason international students study abroad was related to academic factors. The university chosen could affect their future careers. The choice might depend on their personal research interests and quality of available academic programs. Quality of academic programs referred to both hard and soft conditions. As Tan and Simpson (2008) stated, hard conditions included curricula, libraries, and computer laboratories. Soft

conditions included faculty members' teaching abilities, research achievements, and attitudes towards students, especially international students. When selecting universities, international students focused on both sets of conditions.

Chen (2007) found that East Asian students chose Canadian universities based on their research interests. Searching a Canadian university website enabled them to know whether programs matched their research interests. As a result, if they did, students might apply there. East Asian students also thought that the quality of a graduate program and professors' abilities were important when choosing a university. The students believed that Canadian universities provided them with high-quality academic programs and that research facilities and professors displayed excellence. In addition, in surveys of international students at Canadian universities organized by the Canadian Bureau for International Education, Walker (1999) and Vries and Richer (1988) agreed that international students studying in Canada believed Canada provided high quality academic programs.

Marginson (2007) stated that Chinese students chose American universities because the students believed the United States provided high-quality academic programs. Chinese students also chose Australian universities based on their academic merit. Choo's (2007) study on Chinese students in Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs indicated that Chinese MBA students preferred the universities that provided concrete and specific techniques related to business administration, instead of delivering abstract theories.

In addition to international students' personal research interests and the quality of academic programs, a university's reputation might also affect students' selection. Wang and Yang (1999) indicated that a university's international reputation depended upon if it was recognized worldwide. Zhang and Brunton (2007) showed that international students compared international reputations when selecting a university. Similarly, a country's international reputation might influence international students when they selected universities. Some studies found universities in English-speaking countries, such as Britain, United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, attracted more international students, especially Asian students, than universities in non-English-speaking countries. For instance, Chen (2007) noted that teachers and parents in East Asian countries encouraged their students to study in English-speaking universities because when students returned to their home countries, they would have more job opportunities than those who did not study abroad. Seo and Koro-Ljungberg (2005) found that Korean students chose American universities because they had more opportunities to find good positions with doctoral degrees granted from American universities than those who obtained their doctoral degrees from their home country.

When applying to a university in an English-speaking country, international students might regard their English language proficiency as another important factor affecting their decision regarding university selection. Students were concerned about whether their English language skills were proficient enough for them to study in English-speaking universities. English language proficiency was related to English language

examinations and courses taken in their home countries. Chen (2007) found that students' expertise in English was important to their choices of a university. East Asian students were aware of American universities' requirements for English language test scores and Graduate Record Examination scores (GRE). Some British, Australian, and New Zealand universities did not require English language scores, GRE scores, or essays written in English. Thus, students who had perceived adequate English language skills tended to take English language and GRE tests and applied to American universities, while students whose English language skills were not adequate tended to apply to British, Australian, and New Zealand universities which did not require English language test scores. Zhang and Brunton (2007) noted that Chinese students' English language capabilities affected their selection of educational institutions. Chinese students with lower English language scores in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) were able to study in diploma and certificate programs provided by colleges, while Chinese students whose English language levels were sufficient might be able to choose graduate programs provided by universities.

In addition to English language proficiency, international students might be influenced by their supervisors' recommendations when they selected a university in which to study. Chen (2007) identified that Japanese graduate students came to Canadian universities because they listened to their former supervisors' advice. Choo (2007) also noted that Chinese students studied at British universities recommended by their supervisors.

Non-Academic Factors

Although the primary purpose for international students travelling abroad was for education, there were non-academic factors affecting their selection of a country and university in which to study. Three examples were accessibility of student visas, safety on and off campus, and financial issues. International students might change their decisions in selecting a university when encountering difficulties in applying for student visas. Naidoo (2006) noticed that after September 11, 2001, the American government undertook a cautious approach to approving international student visas. When international students found applying for American student visas to be too complex a process, they chose other English-speaking countries, such as Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. Chen (2007) and Liang (2004) both found that Chinese students studying in Canada believed it was easier to acquire a student visa there. Therefore, more Chinese students decided to come to Canada in which to study rather than to spend time applying and waiting for an American visa.

In selecting a university in which to study, students considered whether the campus and external environment were perceived as safe. They avoided areas they considered dangerous. Walker (1999) and Vries and Richer (1988) found that international students thought Canada was safe, and they consequently enrolled in Canadian universities. Furthermore, Chen (2007) stated that East Asian students thought Canada was safe, and Canadian universities provided international students with safe environments in which to study. Also, Canada was believed to practice less racial discrimination against Asians

than other countries.

Pimpa (2005) noted that Thai students compared campus safety when choosing a university in which to study. Thai students preferred Australian universities to American universities because Australian universities provided safer learning environments.

Srikatanyoo and Gnoth (2005) also stated that Thai students regarded campus safety, university facilities, physical conditions, and the external environment off campus as

important factors when selecting universities. Tan and Simpson (2008) revealed that

Chinese students regarded safety on campus as an important criterion for selecting

universities. Chinese students' concerns with safety, both on and off campus, impacted

their short and long-term decisions. Zhang and Brunton (2007) noted that Chinese

students believed New Zealand universities provided them with safe environments.

In addition to safety on and off campus, international students were concerned about

financial issues related to tuition fees, living expenses, and scholarships. Brown and

Holloway (2008) stated that tuition fees impacted international students' decisions when

selecting a British university. Tuition fees and living expenses in Britain were high for

international students. They needed to find part-time jobs to support their studies. Smith

and Rae (2006) confirmed that international students in New Zealand compared tuition

fees when choosing universities and selected those they could afford. In addition, Walker

(1999) found that international students came to Canada because compared to other

English-speaking countries, the tuition fees and living expenses were more affordable.

Chen (2007) stated that East Asian students in Britain thought tuition fees and

scholarships were important when selecting an English-speaking university. The students in Chen's research needed scholarships to cover tuition fees and living expenses. Students compared the value of scholarships provided by different universities. If the amount was higher than the sum of expenses at one, they might decide to study there. For example, Pimpa (2005) stated that Thai students compared tuition fees when selecting Australian universities and chose the ones that required lower fees. Joseph and Joseph (2000) noted that Indonesian students calculated the sum of tuition fees and living expenses in deciding where to study.

Liang (2004) suggested that Chinese students compared tuition fees assessed by Canadian universities with the financial support they provided when choosing a university. Tuition fees assessed by Canadian universities were lower than those at American universities, so Chinese students tended to select Canadian universities in which to study. When applying to Canadian universities, Chinese students did not consider the universities that did not provide financial support because in addition to paying tuition fees, they must be able to afford living expenses including food, accommodation, transportation, and other costs.

In summary, when international students selected a university, both academic and non-academic factors might affect their decisions. On the one hand, they chose universities based on their personal research interests and the quality of academic programs; they compared countries' and universities' international reputations; they considered their English language proficiency levels; and they followed their supervisors'

recommendations. On the other hand, they considered the availability of student visas, how safety issues were handled on and off campus, and whether they would receive appropriate financial support.

International Students' Transitional Issues

After arriving in their host countries, international students might encounter transitional issues when studying or conducting research in their academic programs. According to the literature, international students encountered these problems mainly in the areas of English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation.

English Language Difficulties

For international students whose first language was not English, English might be the initial challenge they faced when studying in a foreign English-speaking country. According to Brown (2001), people's native languages affected their second language learning in different ways, such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Second language speakers usually made grammatical errors based on the assumption that the new language would follow the same rules as their native language. For example, Seo and Koro-Ljungberg (2005) noted that the Korean and English languages not only belonged to different cultures, but they were also different in grammar, syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Korean students felt less confident when presenting speeches in English before English-speaking professors and classmates. Some students dropped courses due to English language inadequacy.

Tang (2006) stated that English had different characters, spellings, pronunciations,

grammar, and syntax from Chinese. The differences between the two languages caused Chinese students problems related to speaking and listening when learning English. Other difficulties they confronted in their academic programs were related to reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary.

English speaking and listening difficulties. Brown and Holloway (2008) observed that international students were nervous about their accents when speaking English. Due to a lack of English language proficiency, some students chose to avoid English-speaking students so as not to be embarrassed. For example, Kim (2007) found that Korean students encountered English language difficulties in course work and did not communicate well with their supervisors. The Korean students were not able to use English to express their views or to use simple words to reply to their supervisors' questions. They believed that their English language abilities could be improved, but the difficulties with the English language would never be completely eradicated.

Wang (2004) found although Chinese students studied English before going abroad, they needed to improve their level of English listening and speaking skills. Zhang and Brunton (2007) found more than 56% of Chinese students studying in New Zealand encountered English language difficulties. They were not familiar with the particular New Zealand accent and believed that English spoken in New Zealand was not standard.

Liang (2004) reported that Chinese students studying in Canada encountered difficulties in listening and speaking. They could not understand Canadian instructors' accents and humor and were unable to follow discussions in class, so they felt uneasy

with Canadian instructors and students. Li (2001) interviewed four female Chinese students in Canadian undergraduate programs. The students prepared for TOEFL examinations before coming to Canada and their scores ranged from 530 to 580, which qualified them for admission. However, after coming to Canada, they experienced English language difficulties. They were weak in communication and understanding and needed to take courses in English as a Second Language (ESL). In the United States, Lin (1998) analyzed adjustment experiences encountered by Chinese students. Among 30 students interviewed in the study, 80% experienced English language difficulties and thought that speaking English was difficult.

English language difficulties in academic programs. International students also encountered English language difficulties related to English grammar, vocabulary, writing, and reading materials in their academic programs, as well as English language examinations. Their English language difficulties negatively affected their academic achievement and limited their thoughts and participation in academic programs in English-speaking countries. Andrade (2006) found that international students attending lectures encountered difficulty in understanding. Smith and Rae (2006) stated that international students in New Zealand encountered English language difficulties in class. English language inadequacy created an increased workload for faculty and staff members when instructing international students. Similarly, Tatar (2005) found that Turkish students encountered difficulties at American universities due to a lack of English language proficiency.

Wang (2004) identified that English language difficulties in graduate studies were barriers to Chinese students' academic success. English reading materials in graduate programs were more difficult to understand. In addition, Chinese students needed to learn more about English grammar and vocabulary to improve their academic writing. Liang (2004) also found that academic writing in English for Chinese students was difficult because they lacked formal training in this area while they were in China. In Canadian academic programs, Chinese students spent more time and energy reading textbooks in English and writing in English than Canadian students. In addition, Lin (1998) agreed that academic writing in English was difficult for Chinese students. Inadequate English language skills affected their graduate studies. The extent to which this was a problem varied among different departments. Chinese students in social sciences used English more than those in natural sciences.

In summary, international students encountered obstacles when studying in English-speaking countries. Their native languages could differ in characters, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Students faced speaking, listening, reading, and writing difficulties in academic programs.

Academic Adjustment

Different ways of thinking. Durkin (2008) stated that Asian students in Britain had different understandings concerning critical thinking and encountered difficulties derived from different ways of thinking when meeting British students and lecturers. Asian students were not willing to give up their traditional ways of thinking and thought the

British way of critical thinking was direct without caring about others' feelings. Asian students preferred an implicit to an explicit way of presenting opinions because they thought the explicit way caused debates and conflicts. The reason for the Asian approach was that they wanted to keep class contexts harmonious and did not want to encounter conflicts with British students regarding materials presented in lectures. The difference in Asian and British cultures caused Asian students to feel embarrassed and encounter difficulties in British classes. Furthermore, Asian students did not wish to accept the British way of critical thinking completely because when they returned to their home countries upon completing their programs, they would consider it risk to change their ways of thinking.

Choo (2007) noted that Chinese students expressed negative views concerning critically reflective ways of teaching and learning in British Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs. Chinese students did not understand the relationship between critical thinking and their jobs. One student commented that her employer expected her to acquire practical knowledge and techniques instead of training how to think critically.

Different teaching and learning approaches. International students also encountered difficulties with different teaching and learning approaches in class, which might negatively affect their academic adjustment when they studied abroad. Brown and Holloway (2008) noted British teaching and learning approaches affected international students' academic achievement. In addition, they were not able to sleep at night due to

concerns about their studies. They felt tired and sleepy in the daytime, did not understand their instructors in class, and were not able to complete assignments on time. Andrade (2006) stated that because of different teaching and learning approaches, lectures were difficult for international students to understand, causing stress. They were not accustomed to group work, peer collaborations, and presentations. Although they worked hard, their academic outcomes were not positive. In addition, Walker (1999) indicated that international students found it difficult to understand course content related to teaching and learning approaches at Canadian universities.

Smith and Rae (2006) stated that international students in New Zealand faced different teaching and learning approaches and spent more time and energy adapting to instructors' methods in class than New Zealand students did. Statistically, Ward (2001) stated that 80% of Asian students treated different teaching and learning approaches as a primary obstacle in academic programs. Specifically, Seo and Koro-Ljungberg (2005) found that Korean students encountered difficulties with American procedures. Due to a gap between the Korean students' expectations and what they achieved, they felt frustrated by their lack of academic progress. They faced stress and disappointment in their experience at American universities.

Similarly, Tatar (2005) found that Turkish students encountered different teaching and learning approaches at American universities that they were not willing to accept. In Turkey, teachers dominated students and students kept silent. However, when Turkish students came to America, they were surprised to find students talking freely about topics

that were not directly related to the class materials. Turkish students thought talking about irrelevant things in class was a waste of time because they did not realize students could learn from each other by discussing subjects outside the contents of their textbooks.

Although Turkish students read the textbooks prior to classes, they could not express their opinions or engage in discussions as fluently as American students. Oral participation not only required Turkish students to have adequate English language abilities, but also meant that they needed to get involved in class. They felt uncomfortable and frustrated when expressing views in front of American professors and peers.

Zhang and Brunton (2007) found that Chinese students encountered teaching and learning approaches in the host countries to be different from those used in China. In Britain, cultural diversities, educational systems, regulations, and procedures caused Chinese students to have negative feelings, such as anxiety, fear, and confusion (Choo, 2007). An obvious example of a transitional difficulty was that Chinese students did not like “student-centred learning” (Choo, p. 153), such as in-class discussion among students. Rather they expected to have “clear instructions from lecturers in the form of study packs or student handbooks with clear learning outcomes, assessment schedules and criteria to guide their learning” (p. 153). Chinese students believed lecturers should take responsibility for the class. One commented, “If I wanted to take responsibility for my own learning, I would have enrolled on a distance learning MBA course. I come to this business school to expect lecturers to direct and guide me in my learning” (p. 153). Issues related to national cultural understandings affected Chinese students because the

issues did not match their expectations, previous experiences, or familiar learning habits.

Wang (2004) stated that Chinese and American educational practices were different. On the one hand, Chinese professors dominated their classes. They stood in the front of the classroom teaching students based on textbooks. Desks and chairs were arranged in order. The evaluative system was straightforward: a mid-term examination and a final. On the other hand, in American universities, professors were not authoritarian but organized discussions and debates. Different methods were used to evaluate students, such as essays, presentations, discussions, class performance, as well as examinations. In addition, American professors discussed topics outside of textbooks and required students to read extracurricular materials. Lin (1998) also noted that American classroom practice was different from that in China. Although American students thought Chinese students were hard-working, they believed that American students were more involved in class discussions and other activities than Chinese students. However, it seemed that Chinese female students were more involved in class discussions than Chinese male students because Chinese male students preferred to keep silent and lacked enthusiasm to share their thoughts with others.

Liang (2004) noted that Chinese students encountered different teaching and learning approaches in Canada and needed to become more accustomed to these methods. In China, students obeyed teachers and participated in lectures and examinations. Materials were to be learned by rote. Chinese teachers gave students definitive answers and instructed them step by step. In Canada, Chinese students needed to get involved in

discussions and give presentations in class. They did not feel confident when questioning and challenging concepts learned in class. In addition, Canadian teachers encouraged students to solve problems by themselves. Canadian students were more independent than Chinese students in this regard. Li (2001) noted that Chinese students were given explicit instructions in class. Chinese teachers managed their classes and expected students to preview lessons, attend classes, finish homework, and participate in examinations. At home, Chinese parents were supposed to help their children review school materials. However, when Chinese students came to Canada, they found Canadian teachers did not provide definite answers.

Communication difficulties. International students also encountered communication difficulties in their academic programs which negatively affected their academic adjustment. Their communication difficulties were related to the different languages, educational systems, ideologies, philosophies, and cultures between host and home countries. Kim (2007) stated that Korean students encountered communication difficulties during discussions with American supervisors. Due to different ideologies, philosophies, and cultures between Asian countries and the United States, Korean students felt frustrated and discouraged when their supervisors were not able to understand them. Korean students emphasized the importance of the relationship between supervisors and students. For example, Korean students felt upset when their supervisors did not appear to care about them or had time to share with them. Gradually, Korean students developed negative attitudes towards their supervisors and failed to receive a

clear direction concerning academic work.

In addition to Kim's (2007) study focusing on Korean students, Tatar (2005) noted that Turkish students encountered academic difficulties due to a lack of oral participation and felt isolated in American classes. In addition to different languages, cultures, and education systems between Turkey and the United States, class contexts affected Turkish students' oral participation. Although Turkish students participated in class activities less than American students, their lack of oral participation did not indicate Turkish students were not involved in the class. The reason was that Turkish students preferred learning by listening rather than by talking with others and hoped American instructors and students would be able to understand the Turkish culture and educational system. Turkish students appreciated American instructors and students' support when they paid attention to them, which enabled Turkish students to share more ideas with American instructors and students without feeling anxious.

In summary, international students' transitional issues in academic adjustment included different ways of thinking, different teaching and learning approaches, and communication difficulties in academic programs. When studying abroad, international students encountered different ways of thinking between their home and host countries and were not willing to completely accept alien ways of thinking because they wanted to maintain their traditional values. In addition, international students encountered different teaching and learning approaches and felt frustrated when they failed to achieve success in their academic programs. International students also encountered communicative

difficulties when studying abroad. They found their professors and classmates misunderstand them due to language, cultural, philosophical, and ideological differences.

Social Adaptation

In addition to English language difficulties and academic adjustment, international students encountered issues related to social adaptation, including dangers towards international students on and off campus, culture shock, loneliness and isolation, and financial problems. In this section, studies concerning international students' social adaptation were presented.

Dangers for international students on and off campus. As the number of international students studying abroad increases, crimes and attacks directed toward them might also increase in host countries. Brown and Holloway (2008) stated that international students expressed fear in their living environment when they saw British people drink beer and get drunk in the street at night. The issue of British people drinking in areas close to where international students congregate negatively affected their attitudes towards campus safety.

Cable News Net (2009) broadcasted that a female Chinese student was beheaded in a restaurant in the Graduate Life Center at an American university. The crime shocked the American university, the local Chinese community, and Chinese students who were frightened and concerned with safety on and off campus. In addition, Tan and Simpson (2008) and Lin (1998) found that an American campus was unsafe for Chinese students who were not familiar with the local environment. Due to the increase of crimes and

attacks on Chinese students studying abroad, the Ministry of People's Republic of China (2009) warned Chinese students to be careful when studying abroad. Incidents of Chinese students being attacked, robbed, and killed occurred in Russia, Britain, the United States, Australia, Japan, France, and Canada. In addition to crimes and attacks on Chinese students, their money for paying tuition fees and living expenses were also scammed.

Culture shock. Brown and Holloway (2008) stated that international students' difficulties, dilemmas, and problems could be related to culture shock. For example, the extent to which students suffered culture shock was correlated with the duration of time they stayed in Britain and the extent to which their home cultures were similar to the host culture. Those who were familiar with British culture and stayed in Britain for a longer period of time suffered fewer difficulties and problems related to culture shock than students coming to Britain with no knowledge of British culture. Incidentally, those who did not get used to the rainy and cold weather in Britain found that it negatively affected their studies and everyday lives.

Andrade (2006) stated that Asian students were not good at communicating with students from other cultural and regional backgrounds. Asian students spent a long time getting involved in American cultures and values but were not able to completely accept them. Specifically, Ayano (2006) noted that Japanese students were not able to adapt to the British culture when studying in Britain. To the British, the Japanese were regarded as outsiders, while the Japanese wanted to return to Japan as soon as possible to resume their customary lifestyle.

In addition to Japanese students' beliefs, Kim (2007) and Seo and Koro-Ljungberg (2005) stated that Korean students' thoughts and manners were influenced by Confucianism, originating from ancient China. There were differences between Confucianism and Western philosophies in the United States, so Korean students felt making efforts to adjust themselves to American culture and values within American universities was difficult. Koreans had strong relationships with their family members, indicating that Korean students tended to share their thoughts and ideas with their parents, brothers, and sisters, rather than their American classmates. Compared to American students, Korean students had stronger family ties.

Pearson-Evans (2006) found that Irish students had difficulties when studying at Japanese universities. Irish students encountered difficulties in Japan because they did not like Japanese foods, such as rice, seafood, or sushi. They were restricted to a small social network in which they wanted to maintain an Irish cultural atmosphere. Due to a lack of Japanese language proficiency, they did not want to communicate with Japanese people and preferred to speak Irish and English to communicate with Irish students.

Zhang and Brunton (2007) noted that New Zealand universities did not pay attention to Chinese students' thoughts, beliefs, and values in academic programs, while Chinese students thought adapting to New Zealanders' thoughts, beliefs, and values was difficult. Liang (2004) stated that Chinese educational cultures, philosophies, policies, systems, and pedagogies were different from those in Canada. In addition, different weather, food, and transportation affected Chinese students' everyday life. Liang further noted that

Chinese students thought summers had long days and were hot and dry. However, winter was long, dry, and cold, so Canada's long winter challenged Chinese students. As to food issues, Chinese students were able to find Chinese restaurants to have Chinese food, but when they cooked in home-stays, their Canadian roommates did not like the cooking smells. In some facilities Chinese students were not allowed to use kitchens in student residences, apartment buildings, or home-stays. Regarding transportation, Chinese students took buses to shopping malls or the campus because they did not have cars. They thought that transportation fees were expensive, and buses did not have convenient schedules. Lin (1998) noted that Chinese students suffered segregation and encountered problems with food every day. In addition, single Chinese students had more housing and transportation problems than those who were married.

Loneliness and isolation. Andrade (2006) and Brown and Holloway (2008) stated that international students encountered loneliness and homesickness in English-speaking countries because they did not have social networks with local people in their host countries. Specifically, Kim (2007) noted that Korean students in American universities had few American friends and little involvement with American students who lacked interest in learning Korean students' cultures and traditions. Korean students did not participate in activities organized by local communities. In addition, Ayano (2006) noted that Japanese students felt lonely, isolated, and depressed when studying in Britain. They missed their family members, having parties with their Japanese friends, enjoying Japanese movies, and having sushi meals.

Financial problems. Zhang and Brunton (2007) stated that international students encountered financial problems when studying abroad since they needed to pay tuition fees, living expenses, health insurance, food, accommodation, and transportation. In host countries, international students usually paid more tuition fees than local students but were not granted sufficient scholarships to cover their tuition fees and living expenses. Seo and Koro-Ljungberg (2005) noted that senior Korean students might receive financial support from their families but did not have incomes from other sources. Therefore, they studied hard to complete their programs and returned to Korea to make money, get married, and take care of their parents. Liang (2004) noted issues related to financial support for Chinese students in Canada at the time of her research. She noted that Immigration and Citizenship Canada did not allow international students to take jobs off campus.

Lin (1998) stated that Chinese students encountered financial problems when studying in the United States, because they did not have sufficient financial support from the university and were unable to manage their personal budgets. In addition, Chinese students had problems filling out tax forms. Those over 30 years old encountered fewer financial problems than the students less than 30 years old.

In summary, transitional issues encountered by international students included English language difficulties, academic achievement, and social-economic adaptation. In their daily lives, international students were not able to communicate with English-speaking students, and their academic achievement was affected by their inadequate

English language skills. In addition, international students experienced different philosophies, policies, systems, teaching and learning approaches, evaluative criteria, and professor-student relationships. As to social-economic adaptation, they encountered dangers on and off campus and suffered culture shock, loneliness, and isolation in their everyday lives. Furthermore, international students experienced different weather and food, accommodation issues, transportation difficulties, and financial problems during their studies abroad.

Canadian Policies and Universities' Practices Related to International Students

This section provided identified Canadian policies related to international students at a national level. It also discussed programs and services regarding international students at three Canadian universities. Implementation of these programs at the universities was further presented.

Canadian Policies

Since international students must meet requirements listed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, this section presented revised policies concerning international students. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2009) revised its policies related to international students, stating that they were permitted to find on- and off-campus jobs while studying at Canadian universities. In addition, Citizenship and Immigration Canada allowed international students to apply for work permits within 90 days after graduation. International students were not required to show job offers from Canadian employers. If they were able to find jobs related to their specializations within 90 days after graduation,

they could apply for work permits for a period of three years.

Universities' Practices

In Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan (2009) provided services and programs for international students through the International Student Office and the Language Centre. The International Student Office organized university students to pick up new international students at the airport in Saskatoon and provided campus orientations, information regarding on- and off-campus accommodation, and regulations for applying for and renewing student visas. Furthermore, the International Student Office (ISO) organized English corners, English language programs, academic writing in English, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) preparation, and French courses. International students were able to participate in the English language programs to increase their English language proficiency. In addition, the University of Saskatchewan also hosted a Chinese Students and Scholars' Association that helped organize Chinese students on and off campus.

The University of Alberta (2009) established the International Centre where international students were able to connect with International Student Services and the Global Education Program. The purpose of these organizations was to promote mutual understandings between students from different countries with different cultural backgrounds. International Student Services provided different programs and services for international students to address their living difficulties, such as on- and off-campus housing, Canadian banking information, family issues, individual budgets and finances,

Canadian customs regulations, documents required by the Canadian Government, driving licenses, emergent loans and bursaries, health insurance, and multi-cultural workshops.

The Global Education Program assisted international students in learning about issues related to internationalization. In addition, the University of Alberta organized orientation activities for new international students to help them address transitional issues and learn about the university, the city of Edmonton, and the country of Canada. The transition orientations provided by the University of Alberta covered topics such as how to learn and live in Canada, academic issues and accountabilities, and immigration policies.

The University of Manitoba (2009) developed programs and services for more than 2500 international students within undergraduate and graduate programs. It provided the International Centre for Students and the English Language Centre for international students to help them address difficulties in their studies. The International Centre for Students provided campus orientations to help new international students familiarize themselves with the campus and offered information regarding accommodation in Winnipeg and ways of addressing living difficulties. As to academic issues, both the International Centre for Students and the English Language Centre provided programs of English language practice for international students. The International Centre for Students developed a volunteer, non-credit program to help improve spoken English language abilities. The Language Centre provided international students with academic English language programs to improve grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening comprehension, and writing skills.

Conceptual Framework

According to the literature review conducted for this study, Chinese students and other international students had their own reasons for choosing universities in English-speaking countries. The researchers in the literature identified that some of the students might have multiple reasons that could encourage them to pursue further studies. When coming to live in the English-speaking countries and studying in their academic programs, the students encountered transitional issues, such as English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation.

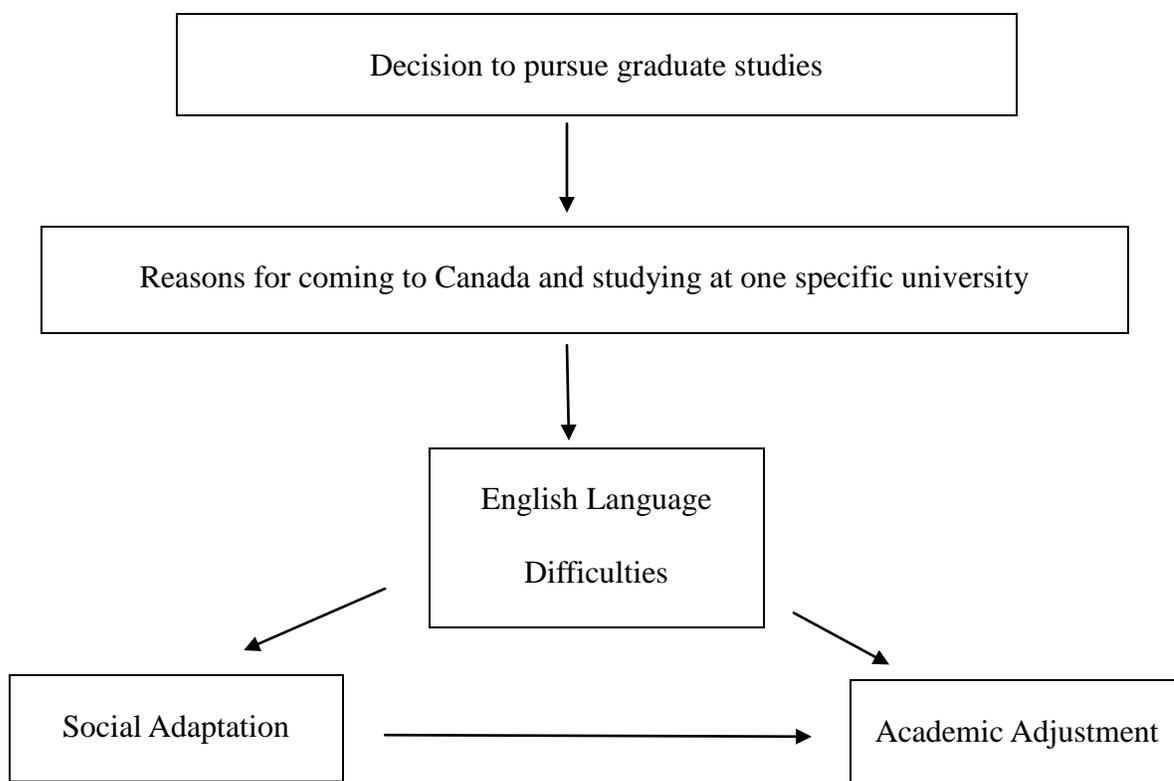


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework.

Figure 2.1 showed the conceptual framework developed based on the findings of the

literature review and the purpose of this study. The conceptual framework hypothesized that the Chinese graduate students studying at the specific Canadian university might have their own reasons for choosing this university in which to study and might have encountered transitional issues in the English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation, all of which might have been interrelated. The English language difficulties and social adaptation might have an impact on the students' academic adjustment. Therefore, the conceptual framework involved an identification and exploration of these reasons and transitional issues encountered by the students.

Summary

This chapter summarized factors affecting international students' decisions concerning university selections in English-speaking countries. It presented international students' transitional issues from the perspectives of English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social-economic adaptation. In addition, it put forward Canadian policies and three Canadian universities' practices related to international students. Although the literature revealed that students encountered transitional issues when studying abroad, these issues were not completely addressed. Studies from 2008 revealed similar transitional issues identified by studies in 1998. Therefore, transitional issues were still challenges for students to overcome when they studied abroad. Specifically, the concerns of Chinese graduate students at Canadian universities regarding studying in an English environment, academic adjustment, and social adaptation needed to be identified, examined, and addressed.

In addition, the literature review showed that there was a low extent to which policies concerning international students were initiated at a national level. Specifically, no specific policy statements aiming to solve international students' transitional issues including English language difficulties, academic adjustment, or social adaptation across Canada were identified in the literature. The lack of these policy statements indicated that there were not any developed models or conceptual frameworks concerning international students' transitional issues in Canada, and that Canadian policymaking and practice concerning international students might be light.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter Three reemphasized the purpose of the study and research questions and introduced research design, purposeful sampling, and online survey instrumentation. Specifically, justification for using an online survey, adaptation of the instrument to this study, and a description of the online survey were provided in this chapter. Piloting the study and data collection, analysis, and presentation were also discussed. In addition, the chapter presented trustworthiness and ethical considerations. A summary was presented at the end of the chapter.

Purpose of the Study

In this study, I focused on Chinese graduate students' reasons for selecting one Canadian university, located in the prairie provinces, and the students' transitional issues at this university. Specifically, the purpose of the study was:

1. To identify reasons why Chinese graduate students chose this Canadian university in which to study and,
2. To examine transitional issues Chinese graduate students encountered during their studies.

In accordance with the purpose of the study, two research questions were provided:

1. Why did Chinese post-baccalaureate students select this university as the site to pursue graduate studies?
2. What transitional issues did Chinese graduate students encounter when studying

at the Canadian university related to difficulties in the English language, academic adjustment, and social-economic adaptation?

Research Design

Post-positivistic epistemology was the philosophical foundation for the research study. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) stated that an objective reality could not be completely known using a post-positivistic epistemology. Guba and Lincoln (2005) indicated that within post-positivistic epistemology, truths were supposed to exist, but the truths related to an objective reality could not be absolutely explored or understood. Creswell and Clark (2007) noted that truths related to an objective reality could be gradually approached and understood, and that post-positivists provided probable facts and theories.

Within post-positivistic epistemology, Creswell's (2002) triangulation design could be used as mixed methods, designed to "simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data, merge the data, and use the results to best understand a research problem" (pp. 564-565). Creswell and Clark (2007) stated that researchers might use this triangulation design when they wanted to straightforwardly "compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings or to validate or expand quantitative results with qualitative data" (p. 62). Morse (1991) noted that in using triangulation design, researchers were able to "obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" (p. 122). In addition, through triangulation design, researchers were able to combine the respective strengths of quantitative and qualitative research in a single study (Creswell, 1994; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Patton, 1990; Tashakkori & Teddlie,

1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Furthermore, Dellinger and Leech (2007) and Creswell (2009) noted that a combination of quantitative and qualitative data presented more information from numerical and narrative perspectives than would either quantitative or qualitative data alone.

In this research, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through an online survey. Once the online survey was completed, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed. Finally, findings were summarized and compared. Thus, the research was completed in four phases:

Phase One: quantitative and qualitative data collection;

Phase Two: quantitative and qualitative data analysis;

Phase Three: quantitative and qualitative data presentation; and

Phase Four: implications based on quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Participants

Participants in this research were Chinese students from mainland China, enrolled in graduate programs (post baccalaureate) at a Canadian university in a prairie province.

The participants were limited to those identified as international students with student visas when they first arrived in Canada. It was anticipated that the participants' first language would be Chinese. This was verified through the online survey in the research study. To sum up, the participants were:

1. Chinese graduate students from mainland China enrolled in master's or Ph.D. programs at the Canadian university;

2. International students with student visas when they first arrived in Canada;
3. Students who spoke the Chinese language as their first language; and
4. Students who spoke the English language as a foreign language.

After consultation with various units at the university, I learned that the official data of the university could not provide for the exact number of the Chinese graduate students who currently registered in master's or Ph.D. programs. Therefore, I estimated the total number of the Chinese graduate students at the university based on various colleges' enrolment data. There were five Chinese graduate students who registered in the College of Education when the research was conducted, and the university has 12 colleges. Without university data, I estimated the total number of Chinese graduate students at the university was 60. This conservatively estimated number determined the size of the potential participant pool. However, due to their different situations and experiences, some of the students might not be willing or able to respond to the online survey. After the online survey had been posted, 51 Chinese graduate students responded. Therefore, the response rate in the research was estimated at 85% based on my calculation.

Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used in the study. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) defined purposeful sampling as “the process of selecting units (e. g., individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a study's research questions” (p. 343). In addition, Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) stated that purposeful sampling was a process in which researchers selected participants who provided sufficient and useful

information related to research questions. This research identified reasons why Chinese graduate students chose this Canadian university in which to study and examined their language difficulties, academic adjustments, and social-economic adaptation. According to the purpose of the study, purposeful sampling was an appropriate strategy to be employed. The International Student Office at this university sent emails to known Chinese graduate students, informing them of the purpose of the study, inviting them to participate, and directing them where they could find the online survey. The students were also provided with ethical considerations related to the research.

Justification for Using an Online Survey

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) defined mixed methods data collection strategies as “the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study” (p. 218). For instance, a survey was a method for simultaneously collecting both quantitative and qualitative data when including closed-ended and open-ended questions (Babbie, 2004; Jackson & Trochim, 2002; Vitale, Armenakis, & Field, 2008). Using mixed methods in survey application, researchers were able to combine both closed- and open-ended questions to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 1999; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Erickson & Kaplan, 2000). Survey instruments were a widely-used mixed methods data collection strategy (Creswell, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori). In addition, Teddlie and Tashakkori regarded a survey as “within-strategy mixed methods data collection” (p. 218), which was defined as collecting both quantitative and qualitative data “using the same data collection strategy” (p. 218). In this research, the

words, “survey” and “questionnaire”, were regarded as having the same meaning and could be used interchangeably.

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) stated that when surveys were used in a study, the researcher employed the surveys as a technique by which participants would use self-reports to express their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward a topic of research interest. Teddlie and Tashakkori further stated that traditionally surveys used paper and pencil as methods to collect data in a study. However, with the advent of personal computers and the Internet, online and email surveys became more popular and were widely used in social and behavioural sciences (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori).

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) noted that surveys were an “efficient data collection strategy” (p. 232). They further stated that it was a major advantage for researchers to use online surveys or email their surveys to prospective participants. These methods were also “less expensive to conduct than in-person interviews” (p. 232). In addition, Arnau, Thompson, and Cook (2001) stated that online surveys were “web-based” (p. 23), allowing participants to complete them on a website without using mailed surveys. Arnau, Thompson, and Cook clarified the advantages of using online surveys. First, they were attractive to researchers, providing fast and easy contact with participants. Second, Arnau, Thompson, and Cook stated that online survey response rates were high and that participants could submit complete surveys. Third, using online surveys was neither expensive nor time consuming, saving researchers time, energy, and money. Teddlie and

Tashakkori identified the positive characteristics of online surveys as follows:

1. Online surveys could determine attitudes, feelings, and beliefs of participants or respondents toward a research purpose or a topic of research interest;
2. Online surveys could involve participants' or respondents' self-reports;
3. Online surveys could include closed- and open-ended questions;
4. Online surveys could be used to generate quantitative, qualitative, and mixed data;
5. Using online surveys, respondents were not required to contact researchers; and
6. Using online surveys could save time, money, and human resources.

In this study, besides the advantages of using an online survey discussed in this section, Chinese graduate students could respond and submit the online survey regardless of physical location. For example, when the research started, some participants outside of Canada could receive and complete the online survey by using the Internet.

Adaptation of the Online Survey

In social and behavioral sciences, when researchers wanted to employ surveys in their studies, they should conduct a literature review to determine whether or not there were extant surveys in relation to their research purposes and focuses (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Clark, 2007; DeVellis, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). If these surveys could not be located, they needed to design their own surveys (Creswell, 1994; DeVellis; Teddlie & Tashakkori). However, Creswell (2002) and Teddlie and Tashakkori argued that designing a new survey was more expensive and

time-consuming and took more human resources than locating an extant survey that was appropriate to the researchers' studies. Furthermore, Creswell (2003) and DeVellis suggested that a newly designed survey might not be valid or reliable and that findings resulting from the surveys might not be trustworthy. Therefore, it was better for researchers to locate existing surveys appropriate to their studies than to design new surveys by themselves (Creswell, 1999; Creswell & Clark; DeVellis; Teddlie & Tashakkori).

If the researchers were able to locate appropriate surveys, they needed to consider and evaluate their trustworthiness (Creswell, 2002; DeVellis, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998):

1. If the surveys had only closed-ended questions and generate quantitative data, the researchers needed to check their validity and reliability (Creswell, 2002; Creswell & Clark, 2007; DeVellis, 2003);
2. If the surveys only had open-ended questions and generate qualitative data, the researchers needed to check their credibility and dependability, which could be regarded as content validity (face validity) and reliability (internal consistency) in quantitative research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009); and
3. If the surveys had both closed- and open-ended questions and generated both quantitative and qualitative data, the researchers needed to check their trustworthiness. Therefore, there were no unified or consistent criteria that could

evaluate the surveys at the present time (Creswell, 2002; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Some researchers and scholars argued that validity and reliability should be used to check the trustworthiness of surveys that included both closed- and open-ended questions (DeVellis, 2003; Field, 2005). Other researchers and scholars argued that credibility and dependability must be used to check the trustworthiness of these surveys (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). A third group of researchers and scholars argued that both quantitative and qualitative measures of trustworthiness could be used (Creswell, 2002; Creswell & Clark, 2007).

Specifically, Guba and Lincoln's (1982) criteria of trustworthiness of research were used in this research. Reasons for this were discussed later in this chapter.

In this research, the online survey was adapted from a literature review of existing surveys for international students. Three surveys in the literature were identified because they included items related to international students' university choices, difficulties with the English language, learning issues, and difficulties that occurred in daily life, which were all related to the purpose of this study. The three surveys were: *Canada First: The 1999 Survey of International Students; Experiences, Aspirations, and Opinions: A Survey of Chinese Students in Saskatchewan, Canada* (1999); and *British Columbia International Student Survey Report* (2009). Based on the three surveys, the online survey had five sections: demographics, selection of Canadian universities, English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. The items in the section of

demographics were chosen from the survey titled *Experiences, Aspirations, and Opinions: A Survey of Chinese Students in Saskatchewan, Canada*. The items in the section of university selection in Canada were adapted from the survey titled *Canada First: The 1999 Survey of International Students*. The sections regarding English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation were drawn from the three surveys.

Based on the three surveys, a multiple-choice and open-ended question format was used in the online survey, employing a Five-Point Likert type scale. The nature of the Five-Point Likert type scale used in the study was to “measure respondents’ level of agreement or disagreement to a series of items related to a given topic of interest” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 338). According to Teddlie and Tashakkori, survey items with the Five-Point Likert type scale demonstrated the extent to which participants responded to each of these survey items. In this study, wording and meaning of the Five-Point Likert type scale had been adapted to fit the purpose of the study and research questions. For example, a survey item was as follows: I chose this university because of the quality of education at the university. (1) strongly not agree, (2) not agree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. There was one more option added in the online survey: not applicable, which indicated that the item was not applicable for the participant to respond. Every “not applicable” response to the online survey was not scored and was considered not appropriate for further statistical analysis. Furthermore, since there were neither any findings nor data of validity and reliability attached to the reviewed surveys

in the literature, I conducted a pilot study, Pearson`s correlations, and the internal consistency test (Cronbach's Alpha) to demonstrate that the online survey was valid and reliable.

Description of the Online Survey

The online survey had five sections. Section A concerned demographics of the participants in the study and had 12 questions, including multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The questions were concerned with the participants' gender, age, first language, second language, and marital status, as well as the type of visa with which they entered Canada, whether their family members accompanied them, and how long they have been in Canada. Furthermore, the participants' specializations in their graduate studies and the levels of education they were pursuing in Canada were included. The participants were asked their reasons for studying in Canada in an open-ended question format.

Section B was about the participants' reasons for choosing this university in which to pursue their graduate studies. The items in this section were with the format of the Five-Point Likert type scale and open-ended questions. Nineteen items referred to their reasons for university selection. The contents of the items included whether this university was their first choice, the quality of education at the university, whether tuition fees required by the university were affordable, financial support offered to the participants, and whether the participant knew someone who also studied at the university. The items also alluded to the size of the university, the number of other

Chinese students enrolled, the availability of particular programs, the admission process, reward facilities, and living accommodations. Requirements for English language proficiency tests (TOEFL/IELTS/GRE), issues regarding faculty, staff, and security, responses to the landscape, and possible future employment goals were also addressed. The last question in this section asked the participants why the particular university was chosen.

Since the reviewed literature showed that Chinese students studied English before coming to Canada but still encountered difficulties with the English language (Wang, 2004; Liang, 2004), Section C focused on the participants' English language difficulties. The items in this section were with the Five-Point Likert type scale, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions. There were 16 Five-Point Likert type scale items, one multiple-choice question, and three open-ended questions. The contents of the 16 Five-Point Likert type scale items included speaking and comprehending English when going shopping, reading English newspapers and magazines, comprehension in watching English TV programs, reading and writing emails in English, taking notes in English in class, reading textbooks and academic works in English, writing term papers, essays, and reports in English for class assignments, oral presentations, discussions, and tutoring in English, and courses of the English language as a second language (ESL). The multiple-choice question asked the participant whether she or he had enrolled in an ESL program at the university. The three open-ended questions asked the participants how long they studied English in China, whether they encountered English language difficulties when

studying at the university, and the reasons for the difficulties.

The reviewed literature showed that when studying abroad, Chinese students encountered different teaching and learning approaches from that used in China, indicating that they could not be easily accustomed to these different teaching and learning approaches (Zhang & Brunton, 2007), so Section D concerned the participants' difficulties with their academic adjustment, which was also based on the reviewed surveys. The Five-Point Likert type scale was used in this section. There were 12 Five-Point Likert type scale items and two open-ended questions. The contents of the 12 items included meeting academic requirements determined by the university, choosing a program of studies to meet the participant's objectives, receiving academic advice, performing adequately in written assignments, performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills, understanding content and information presented in classes, finding help with academic problems, coping with different teaching methods and learning styles, teamwork in class, interacting with professors, and the participants' academic expectations. The two open-ended questions asked for comments on any difficulties or problems they might have encountered in academic programs and the reasons for these difficulties.

Since the reviewed literature showed that Chinese students encountered difficulties in their daily lives after school, such as different food, transportation, and harsh weather (Liang, 2004; Zhang & Brunton, 2007), Section E concerned difficulties with social adaptation. In this section, the Five-Point Likert type scale was used, which was based on

the existing surveys. Different numbers indicated different levels of difficulty in terms of the participant's social adaptation in Canada. There were 16 Five-Point Likert type scale items and three open-ended questions. The contents of the 16 scale items included getting along with Canadian students, developing Canadian friends, making friends with other international students, participating in student activities on campus, joining Canadian students' social activities, getting used to western-style food, enjoying western music and sports, adapting to the cold winter, getting used to Canadian culture and life style, adjusting to the living conditions at the university, and finding suitable housing, medical, and recreational services on campus. The first open-ended question asked the participants to comment on any difficulties they may have encountered in their social life. The second open-ended question asked for reasons for these difficulties and if they had been resolved. The last open-ended question asked the participants to comment on their personal experiences in relation to English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation during their first year in Canada.

The online survey was presented in English with the use of computer software deemed more convenient than a Chinese version. Furthermore, it was supposed that Chinese graduate students who participated in the research had adequate English skills to read and understand this survey. Completing the survey took approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Appendix C provided a copy of the online survey.

Pilot

The online survey had been piloted before it was finalized for this research. Teddlie

and Tashakkori (2009) defined a pilot study as “a small-scale preliminary research project in which the investigator tests procedures to set the stage for the actual study” (p. 341). In addition, Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) defined a pilot study as “a small-scale, preliminary investigation that is conducted to develop and test the measures or procedures that will be used in a research study” (p. 648). The reason for piloting this research was to increase its trustworthiness. Gall, Gall, and Borg indicated that researchers piloted their studies to improve their procedures and increase the trustworthiness of their studies.

For piloting the study, I invited five international graduate students from five different countries who were studying in master’s and Ph.D. programs at a Canadian university to complete the survey in a paper format. One of the five students was from China. The pilot study lasted approximately two hours. Five graduate students participated in the survey and spent 25 to 30 minutes completing the survey. They provided me with both written comments and oral suggestions. After completing the survey, the students spent one hour discussing the pilot survey, making a number of comments and suggestions for improvement of the document.

The suggestions for improving the survey made by the five students were related to wording to ensure that the meaning of the items was clear and easy to read. The students identified that these changes would assist Chinese students in understanding and responding to the survey. Furthermore, the students suggested that each closed-ended item should ask only one question. All their suggestions were considered, and revisions were made to the survey.

Data Collection

Between March and April 2010, I collected quantitative and qualitative data through the online survey after revisions had been made based on the feedback from the pilot study. I contacted the International Student Office at the university and asked them to send emails to Chinese students who registered in graduate programs. After waiting for two weeks, the International Student Office posted an introduction to this research and the link to the online survey on their web page as a reminder. Both the emails and the web page provided prospective participants with the purpose of the study, ethical considerations, contact information of me as the researcher and my supervisor, and the website address where the Chinese graduate students could locate, complete, and submit the online survey.

As to designing the online survey, I used online survey designing functions through the website of the university where I conducted this research. I typed each survey item into an online format provided by the online survey designing functions. The functions helped me save the participants' responses to the survey in an EXCEL file and categorize their responses according to different sections. In addition, the functions could also provide me with percentages of the participants' responses to different choices.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed. The Statistical Packages in the Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0) and Microsoft Office EXCEL programs were used to examine the quantitative data. Since the survey data were saved in an EXCEL file by the

online survey designing functions, I transferred this EXCEL data file into an SPSS data file. Furthermore, I conducted statistical analysis using both SPSS and EXCEL functions to double-check quantitative results. Both the SPSS and EXCEL functions provided the same results. Specifically, descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were employed to examine the quantitative data.

To analyze qualitative data, first, I read all the participants' narrative responses to the open-ended questions in the online survey to generally understand their meanings.

Seidman (2006) stated that researchers should read participants' words to form a broad idea of qualitative data and further analyze them. Second, I reread the participants' responses to confirm my understanding. Third, based on each open-ended question, I coded the participants' verbatim comments and categorized the comments that had similar ideas together into multiple groups. Fourth, I examined the groups and thought whether there was a major theme for all the comments in each group according to the participants' university selections, English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social-economic adaptation. Creswell (2002) stated that researchers needed to separate, code, categorize, segment, and label qualitative data so that general themes could be formed. According to Clark and Creswell (2007), the researcher needed to identify some linkage between quantitative and qualitative findings in mixed methods research. In this study, themes emerging from quantitative and qualitative data were summarized and compared. The findings obtained in this study were further compared to the findings provided by previous research in the literature review.

Data Presentation

Quantitative data were presented in tables with interpretation and verbal description. Qualitative data were presented in paragraphs. According to the purpose of the study and the research questions, quantitative and qualitative data related to participants' university selections were presented together in a section to explain reasons why the participants chose this university. Quantitative and qualitative data related to the participants' English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation were presented in respective sections in Chapter Four.

Trustworthiness

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) and DeVellis (2003) stated that quantitative researchers used validity, reliability, generalizability, and objectivity for data accuracy and consistency. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that qualitative researchers used credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability to indicate whether data could make sense to researchers, participants, and readers. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) and Creswell (2002) noted that there were no unified criteria for data trustworthiness in mixed methods studies.

In this research, trustworthiness was discussed from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. The qualitative perspective included credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The quantitative perspective involved validity and reliability. Validity was maintained based on the purpose of the study and the target population of Chinese graduate students.

Reliability was tested by an analysis of internal consistency of the survey items using Cronbach's alpha coefficient value and its standardized form. The two types of reliability measures could support each other if their values were similar, demonstrating the survey items were reliable.

Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1982) stated that credibility means whether data sources and a researcher's data analysis and interpretation were believable and trusted. Guba and Lincoln further stated that triangulation, member-checking, and peer reviews were strategies that could maintain the credibility of a study. Guba and Lincoln noted that in triangulation, researchers used different data sources and research methods to check and interpret data. Quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to support the credibility of this study.

As a Chinese graduate student myself who came to Canada to study, my experience helped maintain the credibility of this research. Creswell (2002) stated that the researcher herself or himself could be regarded as a credible instrument when collecting and analyzing data. Creswell and Clark (2007) also indicated that the researcher's and participants' experiences could make data credible in a study.

Furthermore, adaptation of the online survey helped maintain credibility of the study. DeVellis (2003) indicated that researchers needed to design their surveys based on a literature review and review of existing surveys to make their own more credible. I adapted this online survey from surveys regarding international students designed in

Canada, Australia, and the United States. The online survey in this study focused on the participants' university selection, English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation at this university.

Dependability

Guba and Lincoln (1982) stated that data dependability was the extent to which data were accurate, stable, and reliable. They emphasized that data triangulation, appropriate data collection methods, and access to original data could be strategies to maintain data dependability. In this research, appropriate data collection methods were maintained. The participants independently completed and submitted the online survey, which they could locate on the university website and receive as email. In addition, access to original data was maintained. After conducting the survey, I preserved the data at a safe place for double-checking and further analysis. Seidman (2006) stated that researchers needed to keep original data to make analysis and interpretation more dependable. An auditor was invited to verify the survey data and its utilization in this research.

Confirmability

Guba and Lincoln (1982) stated that researchers needed to make data confirmable through triangulating data, exploring underlying epistemological assumptions, and describing concrete ways of conducting research. They emphasized data confirmability more than a researcher's "certifiability" (p. 248). Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln stated that researchers must check whether findings were derived from original data through appropriate analysis and whether data interpretation was reasonable and meaningful.

In this research, post-positivistic epistemology as the philosophical foundation and Creswell's (2002) triangulation design were used. In addition to the online survey, descriptions of data collection, analysis, presentation, and preservation of original data were also provided. Guba and Lincoln (1982) stated that if researchers demonstrated an appropriate and reasonable linkage from epistemological foundations, to research methods, to original data, to data analysis, and to interpretation of their findings, their data and findings would be more confirmable.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that transferability was whether there were similarities between research contexts. The meaning of transferability in qualitative research was similar to generalizability in quantitative research. Guba and Lincoln (1982) noted that purposeful sampling and "thick description" (p. 248) were two methods of maintaining transferability. Guba and Lincoln defined thick description as "providing enough information about a context" (p. 248). Through describing a context, researchers could judge whether findings were transferable between similar contexts.

Purposeful sampling was used to identify and examine the participants' university selection, English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. From Guba and Lincoln's (1982) perspective, thick description of the research was provided. A detailed statement regarding the purpose of the study, research questions, participants, quantitative and qualitative data collection, and analysis based on the online survey would enable readers to determine whether the findings would be useful,

applicable, and appropriate for other research contexts in the future.

Validity and Reliability of the Survey Items

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) defined content validity as “the extent to which the items in a test represent the domain of content that the test is designed to measure” (p. 636). They also defined face validity as “the extent to which a casual, subjective inspection of a test’s items indicates that they cover the content that the test is claimed to measure” (p. 640). Comparing tests to surveys, Gall, Gall, and Borg stated that validity and reliability issues of tests might be more serious than those of surveys. Furthermore, they argued that online surveys were valid when adapted from existing surveys related to specific research focus. The items used in this survey focused on Chinese graduate students’ studies and lives in Canada. In the pilot study I conducted, participants commented that this survey was valid and appropriate for Chinese graduate students.

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient value and its standardized form were calculated to test the reliability of survey items in each section. The two values could support each other if they were similar. For the items of reasons for choosing the university, the value of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .84, and the value of its standardized form was .84, as well. The two values were the same, indicating that the survey items were reliable. Therefore, the reliability data ($\alpha = .84$, $N = 19$) demonstrated that the 19 survey items in the section of reasons for choosing this university were internally consistent.

In the section of English language difficulties, the value of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .93, and the value of its standardized form was also .93. The two values

could support each other, indicating the survey items in this section were reliable. Therefore, the reliability data ($\alpha = .93$, $N = 16$) demonstrated that these survey items were internally consistent. In the section of academic adjustment, the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .91, and the value of its standardized form was .91, too, demonstrating that the survey items in the section of academic adjustment were internally consistent and reliable.

In the section of social adaptation, when discussing the reliability of the 16 items in this section, I found that the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .63, and the value of its standardized form was .68. Both of the values were less than .70, which indicated that the items were less internal consistent. However, since the value ($\alpha = .63$, $N = 16$) of Cronbach's alpha and the value ($\alpha = .68$, $N = 16$) of the standardized form were close to .70, there might be only minor affects to the reliability of the items in this section. The reason for less reliable values might be that social adaptation included diverse subthemes, so the participants' responses to the items related to social adaptation might not have been convergent, but scattered from each other. If the items were split based on positive and negative perspectives of the participants' social adaptation, then the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the negative perspectives was .82, and the value of its standardized form was .83, indicating that the items specifically related to difficulties in social adaptation were reliable.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2007) stated that researchers must pay attention to ethical considerations

when conducting research. In this study, quantitative and qualitative data were not collected until the study was approved by the Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioral Science Research of the University of Saskatchewan. The ethical standards of the Advisory Committee were followed. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and their consent was inferred by completion of the online survey. No harm was caused to the participants. The online survey was anonymous. The quantitative data were presented in an aggregate format. When analyzing and reporting the qualitative data, each participant's personal identity was well protected. Both quantitative and qualitative data were preserved at a safe place to ensure that confidentiality would be maintained throughout and after the study.

Summary

Based on post-positivistic epistemology, Creswell's (2002) triangulation design was used. Purposeful sampling was conducted to identify the participants who were Chinese graduate students at a Canadian university. After piloting the study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through an online survey. The Statistical Packages in the Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0) and EXCEL were used to analyze the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were employed. The qualitative data were analyzed with participants' original words as verbatim evidence. Trustworthiness of the study was discussed, and specific ethical guidelines were followed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, based on the purpose of the study, survey findings were presented and discussed to answer the two research questions: Why did Chinese post-baccalaureate students select this specific university as the site to pursue graduate studies? What transitional issues did Chinese graduate students encounter when studying at the Canadian university related to difficulties in the English language, academic adjustment, and social-economic adaptation? The findings for each of the questions were presented separately (A) findings regarding the participants' reasons for choosing this Canadian university; (B) findings regarding their transitional issues in English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation.

In each of the two sections, themes of quantitative and qualitative data were identified and summarized. When analyzing quantitative data, descriptive statistics were employed, such as means and standard deviations, which indicated the central tendency and variability of the quantitative data of the items. Frequencies and percentages were examined to demonstrate distributions of the quantitative data of the items. As to qualitative data, the participants' verbatim comments were analyzed and provided as examples for different themes that emerged from the data. The major findings from this research were summarized at the end of this chapter.

Before analyzing and discussing the findings regarding the participants' reasons for choosing this university and their transitional issues, their demographical information

was summarized as follows: Figure 4.1 showed that more females responded to the survey than males, and a majority of the participants were between the ages of 20 to 39. As to current marital status, 30 (59%) were single, 18 (35%) were married, and 3 (6%) were partnered. When studying in Canada, a majority of the contributors (73%) did not have any family member accompanying them.

Figure 4.2 showed the participants' family members who did accompany them. In addition, the online survey identified that the 51 (100%) participants spoke Chinese as their first language and English as their second language. Only one (2%) spoke Japanese as a third language. At the time of the survey, a majority (88%) reported holding student visas, as Figure 4.3 showed. Most of the participants in the survey indicated that they had stayed in Canada for more than one year. Figure 4.4 reported the participants' length of stay in Canada.

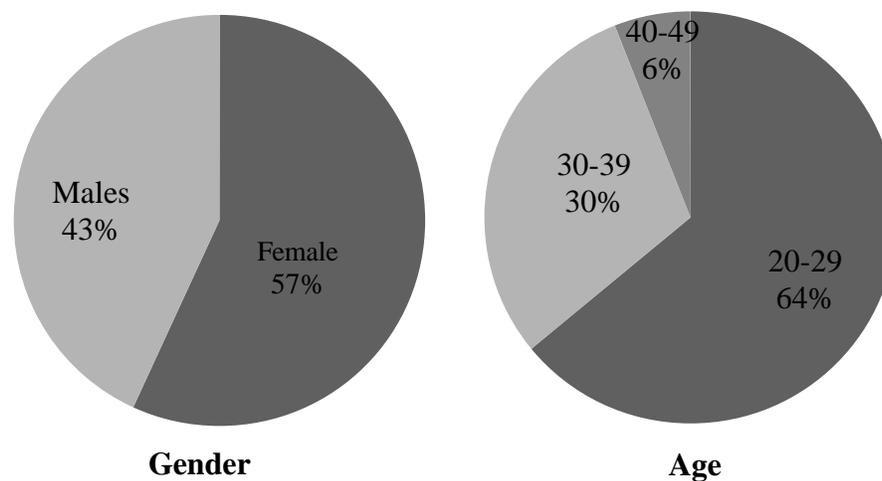


Figure 4.1. Gender and age of participants.

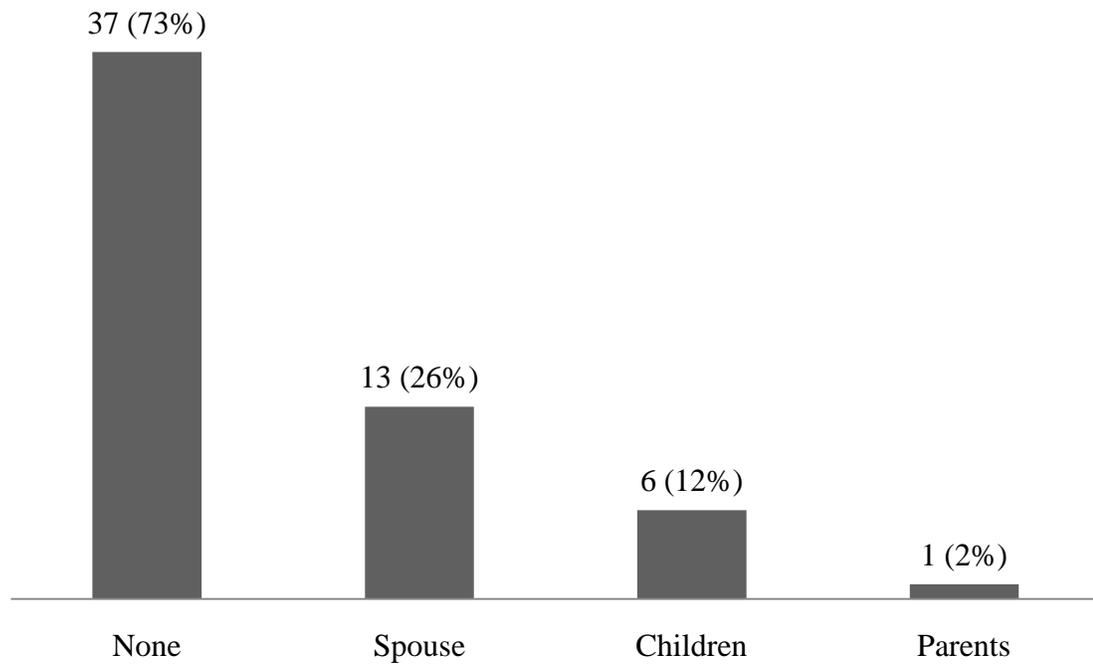


Figure 4.2. Accompanying family members of participants.

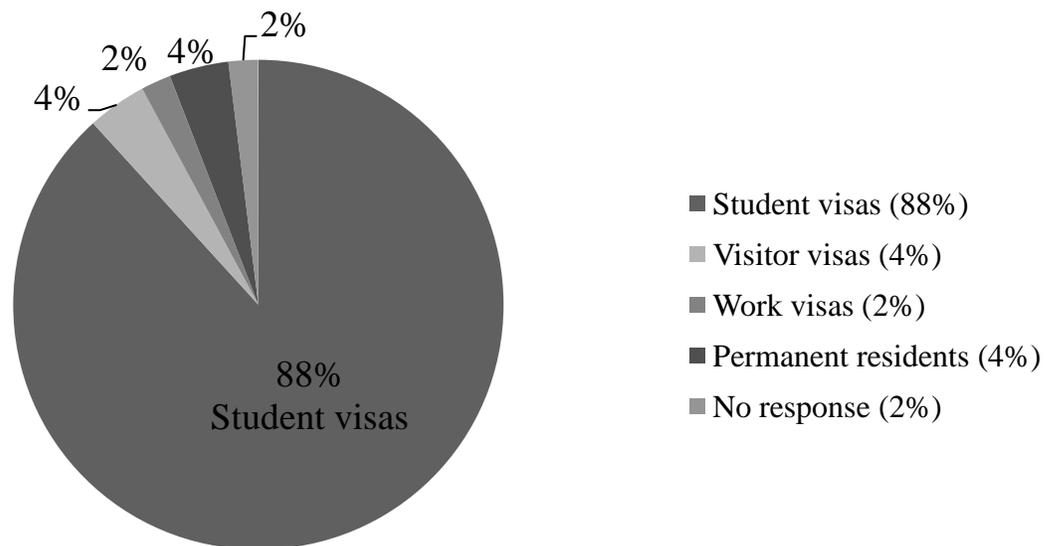


Figure 4.3. The current status of participants in Canada.

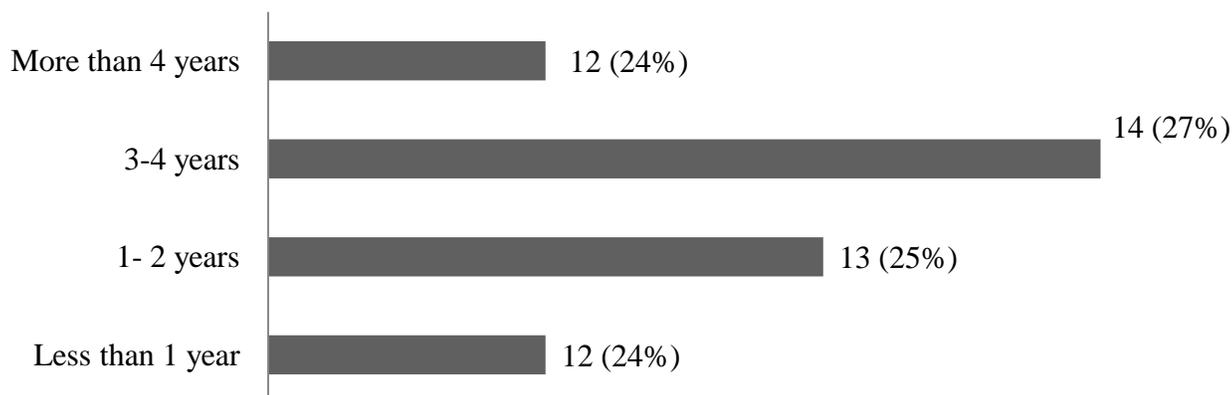


Figure 4.4. Years participants spent studying in Canada.

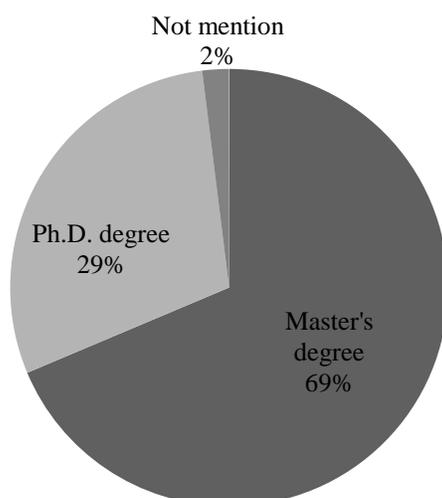


Figure 4.5. Degree programs in which participants studied.

When reporting their areas of study, 35 (69%) participants chose programs for a master's degree, and 15 (29%) participants chose Ph.D. programs. Two percent of the participants did not respond to this question. Figure 4.5 showed the proportion of the degree programs in which the participants studied. According to their specializations in Canada, a majority of the participants reported majoring in engineering, natural sciences, and agriculture, and a minority of the participants reported majoring in humanities, social

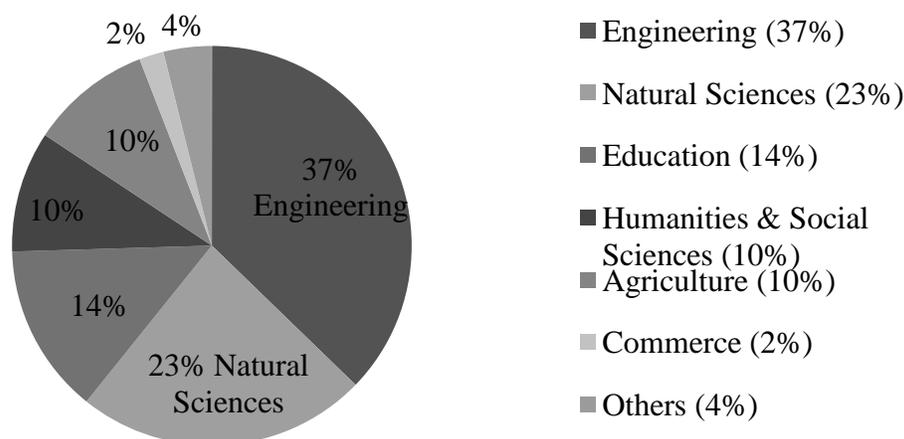


Figure 4.6. Distribution of participants' majors when they studied in Canada.

studies, and education. Figure 4.6 showed the distribution of the participants' majors they were studying in Canada.

Reasons for Choosing this Canadian University

This section provided the findings related to the participants' reasons for choosing the university. According to the literature review (Chen, 2007; Liang, 2004; Zhang & Brunton, 2007), Chinese students had a variety of reasons for studying in English-speaking countries. Within this context, therefore, the online survey used in my research included items about the participants' reasons for coming to Canada, studying in Canada, and choosing this Canadian university.

Reasons for Coming to Canada

In the online survey, 94% of the participants ($n = 48$) reported their reasons for coming to Canada. Among the 48 participants who responded to this item, 78% indicated that they came to Canada for the purpose of study, especially pursuing graduate studies.

For example, some comments included: “I come to Canada to learn in graduate studies;” “Canada has an excellent environment to do academic study;” “I was accepted by a PhD program in U of S;” “I join U of S to pursue my master degree in Engineering;” “To get higher qualified and better education;” “I want to practice English;” and “I would like to continue my study and also get an opportunity to see the world.”

However, some participants provided other reasons for coming to Canada in addition to study, such as experiencing western culture, earning work experience, raising children, and accompanying their spouses. For example, comments include, “It is a good opportunity for me to enrich life experience and learn more in the cultural environment;” “To know more about the outside world and to understand North American culture;” “I just like this country. I think it's more peaceful than the US. I've also heard of the beautiful landscape, and I always dream of seeing the world out of China;” “To enrich my knowledge in engineering and to gain work experience in Canada, which helps me build a better career;” “for the better future of my son;” “To give my child a less pressured childhood;” and to “come with my husband.”

Some participants wrote they liked Canada and thought that the Canadian environment was conducive to living and studying: “Canada is nice and peaceful;” “I like this country;” “Canada is an open and free country;” “...the comfortable society environment;” “Canada is a peaceful country which welcomes people from different cultures;” “...good living condition in North America;” and “I think there are more opportunity here in Canada to see the world...more opportunity to share ideas with

people from all over the world.”

The survey data demonstrated that the participants had a variety of reasons for coming to Canada. A majority of the participants reported that they came to Canada to study, but other participants also stated that they came to Canada to experience western culture, gain work experience, raise children, and stay with their spouses. Generally, most of the participants indicated Canada is a country where they could study and live well.

Reasons for Deciding to Study in Canada

Forty-one participants (81%) provided information related to their reasons for studying in Canada. A majority (63%) of them commented that they decided to study in Canada for educational reasons, including high-quality academic programs, research focus, competent faculty members, appropriate admission requirements, world-recognized degrees, and the opportunity to practice English in an English-speaking country.

The participants believed that Canadian universities had high-quality academic programs: “The education in Canada has high quality;” “High quality education system, more developed technology, different way of learning;” “good education comparing with the US;” “High reputation education;” and “The quality of education, high level of research.” Some participants chose Canadian universities to study because of their research focuses. The relevant comments included: “Interested in my supervisor's research;” “Like the medical research level in Canada;” “...here students have more freedom to do research in the area they really like;” “...the study in my area is pretty

good;” and “My department is in the college of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, so I assumed that I will do the clinical research in my future research career.” Further, according to the participants, having competent faculty members is one of the strengths of Canadian universities. They mentioned “Teachers, facilities, [and] environment” were important reasons for choosing Canadian universities. Another factor cited regarding the academic programs is their appropriate admission requirements. Some participants noted: “The admission requirement is easy for graduate students in Canada;” “Because I got the offer here;” and “Many Canadian universities don't require GRE or GMAT scores and TOEFL scores are not so high.” World recognized degrees were another important consideration: “I want a Canadian degree.” Practicing English in an English-speaking country also elicited comments: “I can practice English;” and “English-speaking country.”

In addition to academic factors, some participants regarded affordable tuition fees, sufficient scholarships, and low living expenses as important reasons for deciding to study in Canada: “The tuition fee is affordable for international graduate students;” “Lower tuition fees compared to European and American universities;” “I obtained scholarship for my study;” “living expenses are not very expensive comparing to Britain and USA.” Other reasons for studying in Canada included opportunities for an appropriate job: “I'll seek a position in China after graduation;” “The job market in Canada and US is also an attractive factor for me, high salary...the competition in Canadian job markets is not intensive so that it is easy for me to find a job after

graduation;” “...to find a good job;” and “...beneficial for job opportunities.” Some participants contemplated immigrating when considering studying in Canada. Their comments included: “...because of the policy of immigration;” “...bigger chances to stay as a permanent resident;” and “...immigrants are welcome here.” Some participants decided to study in Canada because of their family members’ or friends’ impressions of Canada: “My family likes it here;” “Both my uncle and sister got their degrees in Canada and they invited me to come here;” “I knew some friends here on the campus of this university.”

The data showed that a majority of the participants decided to study in Canada because Canadian universities provided high-quality academic programs, research focus in which they were interested, competent faculty, and appropriate admission requirements. In addition, Canadian universities offered world-recognized degrees and sufficient scholarships. Compared to other countries, tuition fees and living expenses were affordable.

Reasons for Choosing This University

Findings of Items 15 to 33

Fifty-one participants responded to survey items 15 to 33 related to their reasons for choosing this Canadian university. The response rate of this survey section was 100% ($N = 51$). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were presented and examined. Table 4.1 displayed the quantitative data

Table 4.1

Survey Items 15-33: Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations

<i>Q15. I chose this university because I was not accepted at my first-choice Canadian university.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	5 (10%)	9 (18%)	16 (31%)	11 (22%)	9 (17%)	1.86	1.30
<i>Q16. I chose this university because of the quality of education at the university.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
4 (8%)	25 (49%)	18 (35%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3.51	.93
<i>Q17. I chose this university because the tuition fees required by the university are affordable.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
16 (31%)	16 (31%)	13 (26%)	3 (6%)	0	3 (6%)	3.71	1.30
<i>Q18. I chose this university because of the amount of financial support offered to me here.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
13 (26%)	13 (26%)	12 (23%)	5 (9%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)	3.27	1.54
<i>Q19. I chose this university because of an exchange agreement with the university.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	12 (24%)	12 (24%)	19 (36%)	1.27	1.31
<i>Q20. I chose this university because I knew someone who studied (is studying) here.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	9 (18%)	6 (12%)	10 (20%)	16 (31%)	7 (13%)	2.06	1.50
<i>Q21. I chose this university because the university is the most effective in providing information.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	5 (10%)	24 (47%)	13 (26%)	3 (6%)	4 (7%)	2.57	1.14
<i>Q22. I chose this university because of the size of the university.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	9 (18%)	23 (45%)	8 (16%)	5 (10%)	4 (7%)	2.67	1.23
<i>Q23. I chose this university because of the number of other students from my country here.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	3 (6%)	20 (39%)	14 (27%)	9 (18%)	5 (10%)	2.14	1.10
<i>Q24. I chose this university because of the availability of a particular program at the university.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
7 (14%)	24 (47%)	14 (27%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	3.55	1.06
<i>Q25. I chose this university because the university has the fastest admission process.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	5 (10%)	27 (53%)	11 (21%)	6 (12%)	2 (4%)	2.53	.97
<i>Q26. I chose this university because a recruiting agent recommended the university to me.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	5 (10%)	8 (16%)	13 (25%)	11 (22%)	13 (25%)	1.69	1.38
<i>Q27. I chose this university because of reward facilities.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	10 (20%)	22 (43%)	10 (19%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)	2.65	1.18

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q28. I chose this university because living accommodations are available here.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	6 (12%)	24 (47%)	11 (22%)	4 (8%)	5 (9%)	2.49	1.17
Q29. I chose this university because the requirements of English language proficiency tests (TOEFL/IELTS/MELAB/CANTEST) in the university fit my level of English language abilities.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
4 (8%)	18 (35%)	9 (18%)	12 (23%)	6 (12%)	2 (4%)	2.92	1.32
Q30. I chose this university because of friendly people.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
4 (8%)	14 (28%)	22 (42%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	3.00	1.28
Q31. I chose this university because of safety and security.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
4 (8%)	13 (26%)	23 (44%)	6 (12%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	3.04	1.18
Q32. I chose this university because of beautiful landscape.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
5 (10%)	17 (33%)	16 (31%)	7 (14%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	3.08	1.32
Q33. I chose this university because of my future employment goal.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	18 (35%)	16 (31%)	6 (12%)	2 (4%)	6 (12%)	2.92	1.40

regarding items 15 to 33 in detail.

The total percentages of the responses to “strongly agree” and “agree” options were compared from the highest value to the lowest value. According to the total percentages, economic factors were the major reasons for Chinese graduate students to choose this university. Among the participants, 62% agreed or strongly agreed with item 17: “I chose this university because the tuition fees required by the university are affordable” ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.30$, $N = 51$); and 52% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with item 18: “I chose this university because of the amount of financial support offered to me here” ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.54$, $N = 51$). In addition, some participants emphasized the importance of “low tuition fees” and that they were able “to study with scholarships.”

Academic reasons were important for Chinese graduate students: Sixty-one percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with item 24: “I chose this university because of the availability of a particular program at the university” ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.06$, $N = 51$); and 57% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with item 16: “I chose this university because of the quality of education at the university” ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .93$, $N = 51$). Some made the following comments: “...the program fits me, and I think I can handle it in this program;” “The university provides the program that interests me;” “I like the electrical major;” and “The same research interest with my supervisors.”

Furthermore, 43% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with item 29: “I chose this university because the requirements of English-language proficiency tests in the university (TOEFL/IELTS/MELAB/CANTEST) fit my level of English-language abilities” ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.32$, $N = 51$). Among the 22 participants who responded to the open-ended question in terms of reasons for choosing the university, 5% thought that the English-language requirements determined by the university were important to them in their choice: “My English level fits this university;” and “The Language Centre provided me with an English-language training program.”

In addition to economic and academic reasons, 43% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with item 32: “I chose this university because of beautiful landscape” ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.32$, $N = 51$), which was a unique factor. They described the campus of this university as a “beautiful” and “lovely place.” According to the quantitative data, the following items in this section were important: item 31 “safety and security on the

campus” ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.18$, $N = 51$); and item 30 “friendly people of the university” ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.28$, $N = 51$).

Findings of Item 34

In addition, 22 participants further responded to item 34, the open-ended question: “Please comment on any reasons why you chose this university in which to study.” The response rate of the qualitative data in this section was 43%. More important reasons were highlighted, including family members’ or friends’ impact and supervisors’ suggestions. For example, six participants indicated that the opinions, suggestions, and comments provided by their family members or friends were important for them to choose this university: “My parents decided to choose this university for me;” “...because my husband is studying in this university and we want to live together;” “It was recommended by my uncle who used to live in Alberta;” “I had a friend here who was accepted as a graduate student and then I applied to this university;” “Friends have provided detailed information about this university;” and “I have some friends here.”

Three participants mentioned that their supervisors’ suggestions were important for them to choose this university in which to study: “My master’s supervisor recommended this university to me;” “Because my former advisor recommended this university and I was curious to discover western Canada;” “I chose to study here because my supervisor’s research interest fitted me better than other professors in other universities. I think research interest is most important to me.” As well, some participants indicated that they chose this university by chance: “I applied for several universities. Some universities

rejected me. This university gave me the offer first, so I came here;” and “...this was the first university to give me the admission offer.”

The Major Reasons for Choosing This Specific University

According to the quantitative and qualitative data in this section, Table 4.2 showed the major reasons why the Chinese graduate students chose this university. These participants reported that the major reasons included affordable tuition fees, quality of

Table 4.2

The Major Reasons for Choosing This Specific University

Quantitative Themes	Qualitative Themes
Affordable tuition fees (62%)	Affordable tuition fees
A particular program (61%)	Academic program and research focus
Quality of education (57%)	
Financial support (52%)	Scholarships
English language requirements (43%)	English language requirements
Beautiful landscape (43%)	Beautiful campus of the university
	Family members' or friends' impact
	Supervisors' suggestions

education, academic programs, research focus, financial support, English language requirements, the campus of the university, family members' or friends' impact, and supervisors' suggestions.

Transitional Issues Encountered by Participants

Findings of the participants' transitional issues encountered at this university were

presented from the perspectives of their English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. The findings regarding each perspective were provided in an independent section.

English Language Difficulties

Items 35 to 54

In this section, the participants were invited to report on difficulties or problems they might have encountered with the English language when they began to study at this university. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Items 35 to 52 were closed-ended questions, and items 53 to 54 were open-ended questions. The findings in this section indicated that these participants encountered various types of English language difficulties during their graduate studies. For example, although 90% of the 51 participants responded to item 52 that they had been studying the English language for more than eight years before coming to Canada, and 82% of the participants who responded to item 51 reported that they did not take any English as a Second Language (ESL) programs at the university.

In addition, all the participants ($N = 51$) responded to items 35 to 50 which were related to the participants' English-language difficulties. The response rate of the items 35 to 50 was 100%. When analyzing the quantitative data based on items 35 to 50, I found that the percentages of agree or strongly agree responses were not more than 50%. Table 4.3 displayed in detail the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the participants' responses to items 35 to 50.

Table 4.3

Survey Items 35-50: Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations

<i>Q35. I have encountered difficulties in speaking and comprehending English when going shopping.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	10 (20%)	13 (25%)	20 (39%)	7 (14%)	0	2.57	1.03
<i>Q36. I have encountered difficulties when reading English newspapers.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	9 (18%)	16 (31%)	18 (35%)	5 (10%)	0	2.75	1.06
<i>Q37. I have encountered difficulties when reading English magazines.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	9 (18%)	15 (29%)	20 (39%)	5 (10%)	0	2.67	1.01
<i>Q38. I have encountered difficulties in comprehension when watching English TV programs.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
7 (14%)	10 (20%)	21 (41%)	10 (19%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	3.14	1.13
<i>Q39. I have encountered difficulties when reading emails in English.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	31 (60%)	8 (16%)	0	2.18	.84
<i>Q40. I have encountered difficulties when writing emails in English.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	8 (16%)	9 (18%)	24 (46%)	9 (18%)	0	2.37	1.02
<i>Q41. I have encountered difficulties when taking notes in English in class.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
6 (12%)	12 (24%)	11 (21%)	19 (37%)	3 (6%)	0	2.98	1.16
<i>Q42. I have encountered difficulties when reading textbooks written in English.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	12 (24%)	12 (24%)	19 (36%)	5 (10%)	0	2.78	1.10
<i>Q43. I have encountered difficulties when reading academic works written in English.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
6 (12%)	12 (24%)	12 (24%)	16 (30%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	2.94	1.24
<i>Q44. I have encountered difficulties when writing term papers in English for class assignments.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
6 (12%)	11 (22%)	11 (22%)	16 (30%)	5 (10%)	2 (4%)	2.82	1.32
<i>Q45. I have encountered difficulties when writing essays in English for class assignments.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
6 (12%)	12 (24%)	9 (17%)	14 (27%)	6 (12%)	4 (8%)	2.73	1.46
<i>Q46. I have encountered difficulties when writing reports in English for class assignments.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	14 (27%)	10 (20%)	15 (29%)	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	2.69	1.32
<i>Q47. I have encountered difficulties when giving oral presentations in English in class.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
9 (17%)	9 (17%)	13 (26%)	14 (27%)	5 (11%)	1 (2%)	3.00	1.33

Q48. I have encountered difficulties when discussing learning contents in English in class.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
6 (12%)	9 (17%)	14 (27%)	19 (38%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	2.90	1.17
Q49. I have encountered difficulties when doing tutoring work in English.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	7 (14%)	18 (35%)	16 (31%)	2 (4%)	6 (12%)	2.47	1.26
Q50. I have encountered difficulties in the courses of English as a Second Language (ESL).							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	2 (4%)	6 (12%)	15 (29%)	8 (15%)	19 (38%)	1.35	1.31

Among the 51 participants, 29 responded to item 53, an open-ended question, “Please comment on any difficulties/problems you may have encountered with your English when you began to study at this university.” This response rate was 57%. Furthermore, 22 participants provided comments on item 54, “Please comment on reasons why you encountered problems/difficulties with English and the extent to which they were resolved.” The response rate was 51%.

Difficulties in Listening and Speaking English

The survey findings showed that listening and speaking English was a significant challenge for Chinese graduate students who responded to the survey. Among the 51 participants, 34% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered difficulties when they gave oral English presentations in class, and 34% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered difficulties in comprehension when watching English TV programs. Nearly one-third of the participants (29%) encountered difficulties when discussing material in English in class. Among the 29 participants who shared their comments regarding English-language difficulties, 23 of them (79%) described their difficulties with English listening and speaking from different perspectives.

Some participants thought that English native speakers spoke too fast for them to understand. Sometimes, they were not able to understand Canadian English speakers in daily conversations, especially during their first years in Canada. Their comments were presented as follows:

“Oral presentations are a big issue;”

“Listening and speaking were main problems after I came here;”

“My colleagues spoke too fast;”

“When I talk to others, I usually feel very nervous, and have difficulties to listen;”

“When I first came to Canada...English was the biggest challenge for me. I didn't understand people when they were talking because they spoke fast;”

“At the very beginning of my program, I did not get used to local Canadians' usage of English in daily life. I found the local people speak very fast and I was not able to follow their words;”

“In my first year here, listening was a big issue, especially when participating in discussions with other students whose mother tongue is English. However, after 5 courses, I feel better when communicating with Canadian students or professors;”

“During the first term, I had some difficulties in understanding certain instructors' lectures because they were talking too fast;” and

“I have difficulties to chat with English native speakers outside of my research.”

Some participants indicated that Canadian humor was difficult for them to understand. They commented that “the humor local people used in their conversations are difficult for me to understand. I didn't know why they laughed...sometimes I do not understand professors' or classmates' jokes.”

Some participants thought that they had strong accents when they spoke English,

which negatively affected their daily communications with others. Their comments varied from “To me, listening and speaking is always the biggest problem to Chinese students” to “when communicating with classmates and instructors, it is not easy for them to understand what I am saying.” Some participants felt it was difficult to understand international students from other countries. Their comments include, “It is difficult for me to understand people from India and Africa because of the strong accents,” and “I have some difficulties in understanding different accents of English.” In addition, TV programs broadcast in English were difficult for the Chinese students to understand. Some participants commented, “TV programs are hard to understand. They speak very fast,” and “There are always more slang words in TV than in books.”

The survey data showed that listening and speaking English was a challenge for the participants not only in classroom but also in daily life. If native speakers spoke fast or used humor, the participants would not be able to understand them. In addition, some participants could not understand international students who come from other countries due to different accents and pronunciations.

Difficulties with Reading English

According to the survey results, among the 51 participants, 36% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered difficulties when reading academic works in English ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.24$, $N = 51$); 30% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered difficulties when reading English textbooks ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.10$, $N = 51$); and 24% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered

difficulties when reading English newspapers ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.06$, $N = 51$).

The themes that emerged from the participants' verbatim comments indicated their difficulties related to reading in English. Among the 29 Chinese graduate students who shared their written comments regarding English language difficulties, seven of them stated that they had encountered difficulties in understanding textbooks or other academic reading materials written in English (24%). For example, some participants commented: "Textbooks and reading materials are hard for me to understand;" "I think that reading academic papers and textbooks is difficult for me in those first several months;" "I find that I am slow reading academic papers in English;" "I need to take time to adjust and read more articles in text book;" and "I had difficulties in understanding some research papers written in English when I began to study."

The participants encountered difficulties with reading English both in their academic studies and in their daily lives. The reading materials identified in this research included textbooks, learning materials used in class, research papers, and newspapers.

Difficulties with Writing in English

The participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered various English writing difficulties, such as writing term papers or reports in English for class assignments as class assignments, and taking notes in English in class. In the participants' verbatim comments, seven of them stated that they had encountered difficulties with writing in English, especially academic writing in their graduate programs. For example, a student commented that "I always have a headache when I have to write academic

papers”. Another commented, “I had a term paper last term and I spent more than a month to reading and writing,” and “...taking notes in class in the first term, I felt lost.” However, some participants still held positive attitudes toward difficulties in academic writing. For example, one participant stated, “Definitely, writing is not good enough, but at least, native speakers can help us proofread.”

Lack of English Vocabulary

A lack of sufficient English vocabulary was an important theme that emerged from the qualitative data. Nine participants noted that they lacked the ability to study, read books, understand others, and participate in daily activities. Following are some relevant comments provided by the participants: “I lack a sufficient amount of vocabulary when I came to Canada, especially the common words, phrases, and expressions used in everyday life;” “I have difficulties understanding contents in English in class because of vocabulary and difficulties to do the presentations in class or seminar because of lack of experience;” “Sometimes, I don't know some words, so I can't understand what others are talking about,” “...and for one of my exam, when I was preparing for it, I find it impossible to remember all the academic new words;” “Some terminologies are difficult to pronounce and memorize;” and “... a lot of new words.”

Difficulties with Understanding Instructional Information in English

The survey data revealed that among the participants who shared their written comments regarding English-language difficulties ($N = 29$), eight stated that they had encountered difficulties in understanding their instructors' or Canadian classmates'

speech (28%). For example, some participants commented, “I cannot fully understand the instruction;” “I may not catch what the professors said in some classes when they cited some local cases to illustrate something;” “Catching a professor’s information in class;” “It is also difficult for me to understand the teacher in class sometimes;” and “I had to further improve my English, sometimes, all the difficulties are mixed together. Due to a lack of English proficiency, I had difficulties when I studied in class.”

Probable Causes for English Language Difficulties

Twenty-nine participants responded to the open-ended question: “Please comment on reasons why you encountered problems/difficulties with English and the extent to which they were resolved.” Among the 29 participants who provided comments, 17 of them stated that they lacked living experiences in English environment. Some participants made the following comments:

“I lack experience of living in an English environment;”

“...it is because at that time I haven't get used to use English as a way of communication, but the problems will be solved as long as you keep trying;”

“Before I enrolled as a graduate student, I had left university for 13 years. I did not use much English when I worked comparing to the time when I studied at university;”

“I do not have enough time to join some activities to improve English;”

“I think I lack experience, so I tried to communicate with local students and professors and learn from them;”

“As a graduate student in the College of Engineering, I stayed and worked in lab most of the time. There were few chances to talk in English, so I think that there is no help for me to improve my spoken English in these years;”

“In our daily life, especially after studying at school, most Chinese students live in the Chinese community, which means they are speaking in Chinese more than English! We live with Chinese roommates and cooperate with Chinese colleagues...” and

“That's because I am not familiar with the conversation content and conversation pattern.”

Another reason that caused Chinese graduate students' English language problems in Canada was the English education they received in China. Ten participants indicated that they felt English education in China was not sufficient (35%). They shared the following opinions in the survey:

“Although I have been learning English for more than ten years in China, I am still not able to use English well because in China, students only learn formal and academic English in class. We don't learn daily English words and expressions much. Furthermore, in China, English is only a course, and Chinese students need to pass exams. Outside classrooms, nobody speaks English in their lives, so there is a lack of English context outside school;”

“Our English education is not practical;”

“I learned English to pass exams;”

“Chinese students did not receive enough listening and speaking training...but for sure it's getting better day by day if you are willing to improve it;”

“When I was learning English before I got here, it was basically reading and writing. Listening and speaking skills were not emphasized as much, that's why I had problems talking to others. As I stay here longer, I got used to their accents, and it's easier to communicate;” and

“I think the reason for the reading problem is because I am not familiar with those academic words as well as the theories and techniques. I have never had experience learning something new in English before I came to Canada, but when I read more papers I find it easier for me to understand them. Writing is based on reading and when you write things down, it's quite different from spoken

language. I have to consider every sentence before I wrote them down. I went to workshops about writing in the library but I think those workshops are not very useful to me. I think more practice is needed. I have spelling problems, and it's always difficult for me to remember the spelling.”

One participant indicated that a lack of confidence was her/his reason for encountering the difficulties. The participant only wrote down two simple words “no confidence” to respond to the question. Concerning the extent to which the participants’ English language difficulties were resolved, some of them provided their experiences about how to improve their English abilities. Based on their comments, I found that communicating with English native speakers and asking help from them was an effective way for Chinese graduate students to improve their English language abilities, as were previewing contents in academic programs, watching English TV programs, or listening to English radio programs. Here were some relevant comments:

“...after three months, I can almost understand the class because of interacting with my professors and Canadian friends;”

“Discussion with Classmates and professors is very important here. It helps me to review lecture content and understand the notes in class;”

“Asking native friends to edit my writing;”

“The first three months were tough, but after that, my Canadian roommate helped me a lot with my English and helped me adapt to the Canadian social life. I am a very lucky one;”

“Pre-learning before I go to the class is important to understand the content in English in class, especially for getting familiar with academic vocabulary and basic knowledge in the subjects...As for the presentation, good review and more practice will help me gain confidence and give a better presentation;” and

“It took some time for my ears to get used to the North American accent, the way English is spoken here, and the speed of English native speakers. I began to read more, listen to the TV and radio, and socialize with Canadian friends.”

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data concerning the participants’ English language difficulties, I found that the students’ difficulties related to listening and

Table 4.4

The Major Themes on English Language Difficulties

Quantitative Themes	Qualitative Themes
reading academic works in English (36%)	reading English textbooks and materials
taking notes in English in class (36%)	
giving oral presentations in English (34%)	speaking English
writing term papers in English (34%)	academic writing in English
watching English TV programs (34%)	listening comprehension in English
reading textbooks written in English (30%)	
	a lack of sufficient English vocabulary
	do not understand instruction in English

comprehension, speaking, lack of sufficient English vocabulary, academic writing, comprehension of instructions, and reading academic materials. Table 4.4 showed the major themes concerning the participants’ English language difficulties that emerged in the survey data.

Academic Adjustment

Items 55 to 68

All the participants responded to the survey items 55 to 66 concerning Chinese

graduate students' academic adjustment; the response rate was 100%. Table 4.5 showed in detail the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the responses to the items 55 to 66. This table showed that from items 55 to 66, fewer than half of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered specific academic difficulties in their graduate studies. Approximately, more than 20% of the participants chose the neutral option.

In addition, the participants were invited to comment on any difficulties or problems they might have encountered in their academic programs at this Canadian university. Among the 51 participants, nearly half of them ($N = 21$) responded to item 67, "Please comment on any difficulties/problems you encountered in your academic program." The response rate was 41%. A number of the participants ($N = 17$) provided comments on item 68, "Please comment on reasons why you encountered difficulties/problems in your studies and the extent to which they were resolved." The response rate was 33%.

Difficulties in Academic Writing

The quantitative data showed that 31% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they had difficulties when completing written assignments. The qualitative data revealed that difficulties in academic writing were encountered by the participants.

Among the 21 participants who shared their thoughts, seven of them stated that they had encountered difficulties in academic writing (33%). Most of them thought that research papers or reports were difficult to write. They commented, "Papers are hard for me to write." Some participants felt that the difficulties in academic writing were related

Table 4.5

Survey Items 55-66: Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations

<i>Q55. I encountered difficulties when trying to meet academic requirements determined by the university.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	11 (22%)	7 (14%)	24 (46%)	7 (14%)	1 (2%)	2.45	1.10
<i>Q56. I encountered difficulties when choosing a program of studies to meet my objectives.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	11 (22%)	11 (22%)	20 (38%)	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	2.41	1.13
<i>Q57. I encountered difficulties when getting academic advice.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	5 (10%)	14 (27%)	24 (47%)	5 (10%)	0	2.55	1.01
<i>Q58. I encountered difficulties when performing in written assignments.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	15 (29%)	13 (26%)	17 (33%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	2.76	1.12
<i>Q59. I encountered difficulties when performing in courses requiring mathematical skills.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	3 (6%)	13 (26%)	23 (45%)	9 (17%)	3 (6%)	2.08	.96
<i>Q60. I encountered difficulties in understanding content and information presented in courses.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	11 (22%)	16 (31%)	18 (35%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	2.76	1.05
<i>Q61. I encountered difficulties in finding help with academic problems.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	10 (20%)	16 (31%)	21 (41%)	4 (8%)	0	2.63	.89
<i>Q62. I encountered difficulties when instructors used different teaching methods in class.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	3 (6%)	21 (41%)	18 (35%)	5 (10%)	2 (4%)	2.47	1.03
<i>Q63. I encountered difficulties when using different learning styles.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	5 (10%)	21 (41%)	16 (31%)	6 (12%)	2 (4%)	2.47	1.03
<i>Q64. I encountered difficulties when dealing with teamwork in class.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	12 (24%)	12 (24%)	20 (38%)	6 (12%)	1 (2%)	2.55	1.05
<i>Q65. I encountered difficulties when interacting with professors.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	8 (16%)	11 (21%)	26 (51%)	5 (10%)	0	2.49	.95
<i>Q66. I encountered difficulties in trying to meet my academic expectations.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1 (2%)	7 (14%)	16 (31%)	23 (45%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	2.55	.95

to English language difficulties. Their verbatim comments were: “It is hard to find a suitable person to help correct grammar or language issues of a paper for a publication purpose;” “At the beginning, working and studying in English were a little difficult;” and “I had a tough time on remembering different terminologies.”

Class Work

According to the survey findings, difficulties in class work were encountered by the participants. Among the 21 participants who provided their verbatim comments, 14 of them stated that they had encountered diverse difficulties in class work (67%). Some participants stated that course work was heavy. They had “...a lot of class work to do;” “In class, there are still a lot of things to do, and I feel burdened sometimes.” Some participants thought that instructional strategies and class activities between China and Canada were different. They commented, “The classrooms in China are different from here;” “fitting in the classroom is the biggest problem;” and “teaching methods in class will influence my learning methods of course. Once I had a course instructed by a professor who concentrated on notes on the blackboard. I have difficulties to follow him and I almost failed in that course, because I do not like to take notes when listening to the instructor. So understanding the teaching methods in class is really important, especially when the content of teaching is English.” One participant further stated that s/he had difficulties in group discussions: “I dared not speak at first when participating in group discussions in class.”

In terms of difficulties in class work, some participants thought that the difficulties in

their graduate studies were related to listening comprehension. Comments included, "...sometimes in class I find it difficult to catch what the professor said, especially when they are talking about things new to me;" "hard to catch up with the contents and information presented in class;" and "sometimes it's hard to express my opinion in class because the classmates were talking too fast. I was afraid of being laughed at because of my English." Other participants felt that they lacked knowledge background or relevant experiences. For example, "I did struggle in the first two courses as I had no similar background to understand the content presented, which has no relation to my English proficiency;" and "If you never worked as an educator in Canada, you would feel lost about the content of classes at least in the first course."

Lack of Educational Resources

The participants reported that they had also encountered a lack of educational resources. They commented, "The lack of instruments for material characterizations on our campus;" "No textbooks in class. No homework;" "Sometimes the lack of instrument on our campus is hard to overcome. Therefore the experiment especially related to that instrument cannot be conducted;" and "...the professor gave out handouts before class I will try to read them before the class, because the course I took didn't have a textbook. If not, I will probably get more information from reading after the class."

Student-Professor Relationships

The findings included difficulties regarding a student-professor relationship. The participants commented, "...in my department, some professors are not that

approachable. It seems there is not sufficient culture or encouragement for international students to get proper mentorship;” “I hope all the professors could be fair to each student-especially to first year international students because we need more supports and encouragements;” and “I could not get along with my first professor and transferred to another department. He had more than 10 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows but only one got her degree, and all the others have quit the program.”

More Findings in Academic Adjustment

More findings in terms of difficulties in academic adjustment emerging from the quantitative and qualitative data in this section were provided as follows:

- Twenty six percent of the participants ($N = 51$) stated that they could not understand contents in courses. One participant commented, “I had difficulties in understanding some research papers written in English when I began to study. However, I do not think those difficulties were caused by my English. I think maybe they were caused by culture and experience, because I found that many local students also have problems in understanding the academic papers;”
- Twenty percent of the participants felt it difficult to seek help with academic problems: “I encountered difficulties when getting academic advice;”
- Some participants felt that examinations were difficult: “exams make me nervous” and “the exam formats are also different;” and
- One participant indicated that ideological differences between China and Canada caused academic difficulties: “It is difficult to combine new knowledge and my

experience, because Canada and China have different situations. Sometimes I wonder if my Canadian professors and classmates can really understand my ideas.”

Reasons for Encountering Difficulties in Academic Adjustment

Among the 21 participants who shared their thoughts on Chinese graduate students' difficulties in their studies, when considering the reasons why these students encountered the difficulties and the extent to which they were resolved, 17 participants provided their verbatim comments (81%). When thinking about the first year when coming to Canada, there were also 17 students sharing their experiences related to academic adjustment. The first reason for difficulties in academic programs was English language difficulties. Eight participants thought they encountered difficulties in their studies due to English language difficulties (38%). They commented, "...because of an English listening level, trying to adjust by more interacting with English native speakers;" "I had to further improve my English, and make a change in my personal life here. Sometimes, all the difficulties are mixed together;" "both due to English and specialization;" "...speak English more often;" "Listening ability needs to be improved. Sometimes the professors use examples or jokes that are of Canadian or western countries background. Not familiar with some of the culture here;" "I always feel myself so different from those whose first language is English. I didn't feel comfortable to ask questions, especially when I was the only one who seemed to have questions;" "I needed time to get used to North American English and study styles. It takes time to work in a language that is not your first language;" and

“...because when they are talking things new to me, they usually use the words that I don't know. I've no idea how to resolve this problem.”

A second reason for difficulties in graduate studies was different teaching and learning styles between China and Canada. Two participants (10%) provided their comments: “In China, teachers take care of everything. Students just follow their teachers in the classroom. Students have homework to write, and exams to prepare. Textbooks are prepared for sure. But here in Canada, sometimes, there is no only one correct answer. You need to discuss and debate with others. You have to read a lot about your major outside the classroom and prepare presentations. Personally, I think I have already got used to the learning styles here, but will encounter some difficulties during class;” and “...get used to the class and learning style here.” The third reason is problems with mathematics (5%). One participant commented, “I am not very good at math but usually discuss statistical problems with classmates who make my statistics a little better.” The fourth theme is a lack of confidence (5%). One participant wrote, “I think I lack confidence and experience in Canada, so I tried very hard to achieve academic success. I do not want my Canadian classmates and professors to ignore me when we discuss academic issues in the class.” As to the extent to which the difficulties in academic adjustment were resolved, one participant (5%) commented that to keep practicing would be helpful, “...as long as you keep working on what bothers you, the problems will go away at some point.”

Major Themes in Academic Adjustment

According to the survey data regarding the participants' transitional issues in academic adjustment, I found that their major difficulties in academic adjustment included academic writing, lack of understanding of instructional materials and directions, limited understanding of academic readings, failure to seek academic advice, lack of knowledge in selecting courses and programs of study, difficulties meeting academic requirements, changing culture in student-professor relationships, a lack of financial resources, and ideological differences between China and Canada.

Table 4.6 summarized the major themes developed from both the quantitative and qualitative data. The major themes were different, indicating that Chinese

Table 4.6

The Major Difficulties in Academic Adjustment

Quantitative Themes	Qualitative Themes
performing in written assignments (31%)	academic writing
not understanding contents in courses (28%)	not understanding academic readings
dealing with teamwork in class (24%)	class work
seeking help with academic problems (20%)	seeking academic advice
	a lack of resources
	a student-professor relationship
	examinations
	ideological differences

graduate students in this university might have encountered various difficulties in academic adjustment. In addition, the percentages of agreement in this group demonstrated that the participants encountered less difficulty in academic adjustment

than that in English language and social adaptation. One interpretation might be that the participants were hardworking and familiar with knowledge in their areas of study.

Although they encountered some difficulties in academic adjustment, they were still able to overcome these difficulties. Through the percentages of agreement in this group, it could be identified that the participants' major difficulties were focused on the English language and social adaptation.

Social Adaptation

Items 69 to 87

All the participants ($N = 51$) responded to items 69 to 84 concerning Chinese graduate students' experiences of social adaptation; the response rate to these items was 100%. Table 4.7 displayed the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of responses to items 69 to 84 in detail.

Generally, the table showed that fewer participants reported they had encountered difficulties in social adaptation. The proportion of the participants who agreed or strongly agreed the positive items such as item 82 "I enjoy the medical services on campus," item 83 "I enjoy the housing services on campus," and item 84 "I enjoy the recreational facilities on campus" was larger than that of the participants who agreed or strongly agreed the negative items such as item 71 "I encountered difficulties in making friends with other international students," item 72 "I encountered difficulties when participating in student activities on campus," and item 73 "I encountered difficulties in joining Canadian students' social activities."

Table 4.7

Survey Items 69-84: Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations

<i>Q69. I encountered difficulties in getting along with Canadian students.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	6 (12%)	21 (41%)	18 (35%)	6 (12%)	0	2.53	.86
<i>Q70. I encountered difficulties in developing Canadian friends.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	14 (27%)	14 (27%)	16 (32%)	4 (8%)	0	2.92	1.07
<i>Q71. I encountered difficulties in making friends with other international students.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	3 (6%)	22 (43%)	19 (37%)	7 (14%)	0	2.41	.80
<i>Q72. I encountered difficulties when participating in student activities on campus.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
0	4 (8%)	19 (37%)	22 (43%)	4 (8%)	2 (4%)	2.37	.89
<i>Q73. I encountered difficulties in joining Canadian students' social activities.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
4 (8%)	10 (20%)	18 (35%)	13 (25%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	2.80	1.23
<i>Q74. I encountered difficulties in getting used to western-style food.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	13 (25%)	16 (32%)	18 (35%)	2 (4%)	0	2.90	.96
<i>Q75. I like listening to western music.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
5 (10%)	19 (37%)	22 (43%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	0	3.41	.94
<i>Q76. I enjoy western sports.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	16 (32%)	28 (54%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3.24	.86
<i>Q77. I can adapt myself to the cold winter here.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
5 (10%)	24 (46%)	16 (32%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	3.47	1.03
<i>Q78. I can get used to Canadian culture.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
6 (12%)	27 (53%)	17 (33%)	0	0	1 (2%)	3.71	.83
<i>Q79. I enjoy the Canadian life style.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
5 (10%)	19 (37%)	25 (49%)	1 (2%)	0	1 (2%)	3.49	.86
<i>Q80. I encountered difficulties in adjusting to living here.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	6 (12%)	19 (37%)	15 (29%)	8 (16%)	0	2.63	1.08
<i>Q81. I encountered difficulties in finding suitable housing.</i>							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
8 (16%)	11 (22%)	17 (33%)	11 (22%)	4 (8%)	0	3.16	1.17

Q82. I enjoy the medical services on campus.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
3 (6%)	13 (25%)	25 (49%)	7 (14%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	3.08	1.04
Q83. I enjoy the housing services on campus.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 (4%)	11 (22%)	15 (29%)	12 (23%)	6 (12%)	5 (10%)	2.53	1.33
Q84. I enjoy the recreational facilities on campus.							
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
5 (10%)	18 (35%)	22 (43%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	3.29	1.15

In addition, 19 participants responded to item 85, “Please comment on any difficulties/problems you encountered in your social life.” The response rate was 37%. Seventeen participants further provided comments on item 86, “Please comment on reasons why you encountered difficulties in your social life and the extent to which they were resolved.” The response rate to this item was 33%. Furthermore, 17 participants reported on item 87, “Generally, thinking about the first year when you came to Canada, please comment on your experiences related to English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation.” The response rate was 33%.

Cultural Issues

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data in terms of the participants’ difficulties in social adaptation, I found that the most important difficulties Chinese graduate students encountered were related to cultural issues. For example, 33% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered difficulties in developing Canadian friends ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.07$, $N = 51$); 28% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they had encountered difficulties in joining Canadian students’ social activities ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.23$, $N = 51$); 12% of the participants felt it difficult to get along with Canadian

students ($M = 2.53$, $SD = .86$, $N = 51$); and 29% of the participants were not used to western food ($M = 2.90$, $SD = .96$, $N = 51$).

Cultural issues identified in this section needed to be addressed, because according to the qualitative data, quite a few participants highlighted the cultural issues and thought the cultural issues were challenges they had encountered. Their comments included:

“To some extent, it's a little bit hard to get involved with local culture;”

“It's hard to get into the Canadian circle. We go out and enjoy ourselves with friends who come from the same country as ourselves”; “Hard to make friends with Canadian students;”

“I find it's easier to resolve academic problems than making friends with Canadian students. Most of the time we get together with people who come from the same country as ourselves. It's hard to resolve social problems for me;”

“Difficulty makes us with local Canadians or other international students;”

“I find when I'm with Canadian friends and they are talking to each other, it's difficult for me to understand their topic;”

“As to my personal life after class, it is just my wife and me. We don't know many Canadian friends here, so we feel a little bit isolated from the local Canadian community;”

“The first year when I came to Canada was tough. I had to adjust to everything here. I had to make a change in my personal life here. In my everyday life, it is similar, too...I don't know some things here, perhaps due to cultural differences. I have to learn the Canadian way of life step by step, and follow Canadian rules here;”

“In my first year in Canada, I could not get along with my landlord because of living habits. She did not allow me to cook Chinese food in her house. It really frustrated me.”

“Sometimes, food is different. It's occasionally hard for me to buy Chinese food for cooking.”

Loneliness and Isolation

Fifty-eight percent of the participants provided verbatim comments in this section, stating that they felt lonely or isolated when living in Canada, especially in their first year. This was another major difficulty in terms of social adaptation for Chinese graduate students, and this theme was somehow related to cultural issues, too. The comments provided by the participants included:

“I don't have many friends, and usually feel lonely;”

“I feel a little bit isolated at the first three months;”

“I have some homesick at the beginning;”

“When I first came to Canada, everything was new to me. I had to learn all the time. After school, sometimes, I feel lonely when I stay alone in my room. I don't know where to go when I feel bored and upset, but I have some friends who can help me and we sometimes go out together;”

“I didn't have much social life, just study, I feel lonely, and miss family;”

“Friends circle is too limited since most of time I spent in the lab;” and

“I was not getting used to the environment when coming here first. I knew few people and don't attend activities here. I have some friends, but they are all Chinese students. I only talk with Canadian students in class or on campus. After class in my personal life, I don't have any Canadian friends. Sometimes, I feel lonely and miss my parents and friends in China. I don't know if I should stay here after graduation or I should go home. I can't see the future clearly. The longer I stay, the more easily I handle some difficulties.”

Suitable Housing

In addition, other themes emerged from the survey. Thirty-eight percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had encountered difficulties in finding suitable housing ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.17$, $N = 51$). They commented, “...housing is a big

issue when I came;” hard to “...find suitable and cheaper rooms;” and “I had to move out and found an apartment to live.”

Financial Issues

Some participants commented on financial issues as follows: “Money is another big thing. Sometimes, I feel nervous when I think about money because I don't have a job here. I wish I can have more support;” “I think finance is also another big challenge. I lack financial support. My parents support me to study here. I'm not sure if I could find a job after graduation;” and “We feel a lack of support for us in our daily lives, especially financial support.”

Public Transportation

The participants addressed inconvenience of public transportation: “...sometimes, transportation is difficult. I don't have a car, so when I go shopping, I have to take a bus. Usually I have to wait for a bus for quite a long time;” “...few buses at weekends;” and “buses are few, especially at night.”

Family Issues and Weather

Other participants mentioned their family issues: “My wife had difficulty in finding an appropriate job;” and “I think that my wife's English is poor and she attended ESL Class in the first few months. Now her English is much better.” A few participants thought cold weather was an issue for them: “The weather is cold in winter here;” and “the weather here is so cold that we are not able to stand it for a longer period of time.”

Reasons for Encountering Difficulties in Social Adaptation

Among the 19 participants, when considering the reasons why Chinese graduate students had encountered difficulties in their social lives, five of the participants expressed that English language difficulties were the first reason for the difficulties (26%). They commented, “English barriers,” “I am not familiar with the phrases they used. I don't know how to solve the problem. I just keep on attending activities and hope I can understand more next time.”

The second reason is a different culture (21%). Four out of the 19 participants who provided their written comments stated, “I have a different background with local people that may cause the difficulties;” “Culture is different;” “Our lives in China are so different from here. We feel lonely here because we are far away from our parents and friends in China;” and “Differences in culture and difficulty to get [in getting] what they are talking about.”

The third reason for the reasons is that the students did everything by themselves (11%). Two of the 19 participants commented, “. . . rent house by myself and keep warm, cook by myself;” and “We have to cook by ourselves.” The fourth reason is unfamiliarity with the place in which the university is located (5%). One participant commented, “When I came here, I didn't know the city well.”

Resolving Difficulties in Social Adaptation

Concerning the extent to which the difficulties in social adaptation were resolved and the first year when Chinese graduate students came to Canada, five out of the 19

participants shared that seeking help from other people, either Canadian or Chinese friends, was an approach that could be helpful (26%). The participants could attend diverse activities with their friends, such as church services.

The participants commented, “The name of the university is a good university. Most people are nice and I can find help from suitable guys when I meet difficulty or problem;” “I believe that making good new friends is very important for my first year in Canada. Both Chinese and Canadian friends are very helpful for me. They helped me a lot and made me feel at home in Canada;” “Things were a little difficult at the beginning. I quickly made friends, got along well with everybody, and enjoyed my church experiences;” and “It becomes easier as we stay here longer and we can make friends with Canadians now.” One participant wrote, “It was not difficult to adjust myself to life style here.” Another finding is being engaged in diverse activities themselves (5%). One participant commented, “It also helps that I love to travel, meet people, try all kinds of foods, and try all kinds of new experiences. I did not sit at home to watch TV or play games like I have seen so many international students do.”

Compared to the findings of English language difficulties in this research, Chinese graduate students encountered fewer difficulties in social adaptation in Canada. On the contrary, based on the quantitative data, the majority of the participants (65%) reported they were able to get used to Canadian culture ($N = 51$). More than half of the participants (57%) were able to adapt themselves to cold winter, which was a new finding in this research, because in previous research, harshly cold winter was a negative factor

impacting on Chinese graduate students' studies in Canada. A number of the participants (47%) enjoyed listening to western music and Canadian life style. Some participants (45%) reported they enjoyed the recreational facilities on the campus of this university. More than one third of the participants (35%) reported they enjoyed western sports, and some participants (31%) enjoyed the medical services provided on the campus of this university. These findings indicated Chinese graduate students' attitudes toward social adaption were mainly positive.

Major Themes in Social Adaptation

Based on the survey findings in this section, the major themes of difficulties in

Table 4.8

Transitional Difficulties Concerning Social Adaptation

Quantitative Themes	Qualitative Themes
hard to find suitable housing (38%)	
hard to make Canadian friends (33%)	loneliness and isolation
hard to be used to western food (29%)	food issues
difficulties in joining Canadian students' social activities (28%)	a lack of communication and understanding due to different cultures
difficulties in getting along with Canadian students (12%)	weather
	financial issues
	public transportation

social adaptation included cultural issues, loneliness and isolation, housing, making

Canadian friends, food issues, financial issues, weather, and public transportation. Table

4.8 provided the themes concerning social adaptation in detail.

Summary

The findings in terms of the participants' reasons for choosing the Canadian university, their English language difficulties, difficulties in academic adjustment, and social adaptation were examined and summarized. In addition, both quantitative and qualitative data in terms of the participants' reasons for choosing the university, English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation were examined, summarized, and provided. The participants' major reasons for choosing the university included: affordable tuition fees, academic program and research focus, financial support, English language requirements, family members' or friends' impact, supervisors' suggestions, opportunities, safety and security of the university, and the beautiful campus of the university.

Their major English language difficulties were: listening comprehension, speaking, academic writing in English, not understanding instructional information in class, reading academic works written in English, and a lack of sufficient English vocabulary. The participants' major difficulties in academic adjustment included: academic writing, not understanding information in courses, not understanding academic readings, seeking academic advice, class work, choosing a program of studies to meet the participants' objectives, trying to meet academic requirements determined by the university, a student-professor relationship, examinations, a lack of resources, and ideological differences between China and Canada.

The participants' major themes of social adaptation in a positive aspect were: getting

used to Canadian culture, adapting to cold winter, and enjoying western music, Canadian life style, recreational facilities on campus, and western sports. Their major difficulties in social adaptation included: loneliness and isolation, a lack of communication and understanding due to different cultures, financial issues, accommodation issues, food issues, cold weather, public transportation, and a family member's difficulties.

In both the pilot survey and the online survey, there were open-ended questions to solicit the participants' comments on any difficulties or problems they might have encountered in their academic programs or daily lives. In the pilot study, the participants did not think that they had encountered any issues in terms of racial discrimination. Furthermore, the findings through the online survey did not reveal that the participants' difficulties or problems concerning the English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation were due to racial discrimination.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF STUDY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Chapter Five included a summary of this research, conclusions, and implications for practice in terms of Chinese graduate students' reasons for choosing a specific Canadian university and the transitional issues they encountered from the perspectives of the English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. The summary of study contained a reiteration of the purpose of the study, research design, participants, data collection and analysis methods, and discussion of the findings. The exploratory nature of this research focused on identifying and examining the participants' reasons for choosing the university and transitional issues which were discussed from the perspectives of theory, research, and practice. A summary was provided at the end of this chapter.

Summary of Study

Purpose of the Study

In this research, I focused on Chinese graduate students' reasons for selecting one specific university located in Western Canada and transitional issues encountered by the participants. The purpose of the research study was:

1. to identify reasons why Chinese graduate students chose the specific Canadian university in which to study,
2. to examine transitional issues Chinese graduate students encountered during their studies.

In accordance with the purpose of the study, two research questions were provided:

1. Why did Chinese post-baccalaureate students select this specific university as the site to pursue graduate studies?
2. What transitional issues did Chinese graduate students encounter when studying at the Canadian university related to difficulties in the English language, academic adjustment, and social-economic adaptation?

Research Design

Based on post-positivistic epistemology as the philosophical foundation for the research study, Creswell's (2002) triangulation design in mixed methods research was employed as the research design. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through an online survey. Following the participants' completion of the survey, the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed; the findings were summarized and compared. Thus, the study was completed in four phases:

Phase One: quantitative and qualitative data collection,

Phase Two: quantitative and qualitative data analysis,

Phase Three: quantitative and qualitative data presentation,

Phase Four: implications based on quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Participants

The participants in this research were Chinese students from mainland China enrolled in graduate programs (post baccalaureate) at a Canadian university in a prairie province. The participants were limited to those identified as international students with student visas when they first arrived in Canada. The responses to the online survey

confirmed that the participants' first language was Chinese, and they spoke English as a foreign language. The characteristics of the participants were:

5. Chinese graduate students from Mainland China enrolled in master's or Ph.D. programs,
6. Their official status in Canada defined as international students with student visas when they first arrived in Canada,
7. Chinese spoken as their first language,
8. English spoken as a foreign language.

In this research, 51 Chinese graduate students who registered in Master's or Ph.D. programs at the university responded to the online survey. I was unable to obtain official data regarding the total number of Chinese graduate students currently enrolled in the university, so an estimated total number of the Chinese graduate students at the university was provided.

Data Collection

The online survey was adapted on the basis of a literature review and three surveys in terms of international students. A purposeful sampling strategy was employed in the research. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) defined purposeful sampling strategy as "the process of selecting units (e. g. individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a study's research questions" (p. 343). In addition, Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) stated that the purposeful sampling strategy was a process in which researchers selected participants who provided sufficient and useful information related

to research questions. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) and Creswell (2002) noted that there were no unified criteria for data trustworthiness in mixed methods research, trustworthiness of this study was maintained and discussed from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

The online survey was piloted and subsequently revised: piloting the research increased its trustworthiness. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) noted that researchers should pilot their research studies in order to improve research procedures and increase trustworthiness of research studies. The pilot phase included five international graduate students from five different countries studying in master's and Ph.D. programs who accepted invitation to complete the survey in a paper format. One of the five graduate students was from China. The pilot phase was composed of completing the survey, followed by written comments and suggestions regarding the survey. Pilot participants discussed how to improve the online survey. Their feedback was considered, and revisions to the online survey were made based on the feedback.

According to the feedback from the pilot study, the online survey was finalized. I contacted the International Student Office (ISO) at the Canadian university and requested emails be sent to Chinese students who registered in graduate programs at the university. The International Student Office agreed to do so, and two weeks later the survey was posted on their web page as a reminder. Both the emails and the web page provided prospective participants with the purpose of the study, ethical considerations, the researcher's contact information, and the website address where the Chinese graduate

students could locate, complete, and submit the online survey.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were simultaneously analyzed. The Statistical Packages in the Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0) and Microsoft Office EXCEL programs were used to examine the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were employed.

To analyze the qualitative data, I read and reread participants' narrative responses to the open-ended questions in the online survey to generally understand their meanings according to thematic analysis. Seidman (2006) stated that researchers should read participants' words to form a broad idea of qualitative data and further analyze them. After rereading participants' narrative responses, I analyzed the qualitative data and developed general themes regarding participants' university selections, English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social-economic adaptation. Themes derived from the quantitative and qualitative data were summarized and compared.

Discussion

The findings in terms of the participants' reasons for choosing this university and their English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation were discussed with the findings of previous research in the literature review. The findings in this research and findings in previous research were compared and contrasted to see if there were any new findings that emerged from this research.

Reasons for Choosing This University

The findings of the participants' reasons for choosing this university revealed that affordable tuition fees and financial supports were two major reasons—themes identified and examined by the previous research (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Chen, 2007; Joseph & Joseph, 2000; Liang, 2004; Pimpa, 2005). The findings in this research identified that the participants regarded academic programs and research focus as major influence in their decisions to study at the chosen university. This was supported by the previous research in the literature (Chen, 2007; Choo, 2007; Marginson, 2007; Tan & Simpson, 2008; Vries & Richer, 1988; Walker, 1999).

In addition, my findings showed that English language requirements determined by the university were important for the participants choosing this university. The previous studies in the literature review also identified that English language requirements were an important reason for international students to choose universities in their host countries (Chen, 2007; Zhang & Brunton, 2007).

Another influence in the participants' decisions of studying at the university was supervisors' suggestions (Chen, 2007; Choo, 2007). My research also identified safety and security of the university as a major factor. This was supported by the previous research (Chen; Pimpa, 2005; Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2005; Tan & Simpson; Vries & Richer, 2008; Walker, 1999; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). In my research, family members' or friends' impact, the beautiful campus, and opportunities were identified as factors for choosing the university, which were not identified or examined in earlier studies.

English Language Difficulties

The findings concerning English language difficulties in this research showed that listening and speaking were areas of difficulties encountered by the participants. This finding was supported by the previous research (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Kim, 2007; Liang, 2004; Li, 2001; Wang, 2004; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Academic writing in English was identified as a major type of difficulty in both this research and the previous studies (Liang; Li; Lin, 1998).

In addition, the findings in this research revealed that not understanding instructional information in class was a major difficulty for the participants, which matched the findings in the previous research (Andrade, 2006; Smith & Rae, 2006; Tatar, 2005). Reading academic works written in English was identified as another area of difficulty: a finding supported by the previous research in the literature (Liang, 2004; Wang, 2004). A lack of sufficient English vocabulary was highlighted as an area of difficulty for Chinese graduate students in my research. This finding was consistent with previous studies in the literature, which noted that insufficient English vocabulary was a problem for international students studying in English-speaking countries (Seo & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Tang, 2006).

Academic Adjustment

The findings in terms of the participants' difficulties in academic adjustment included an inability to understand information in course work and examinations. This was supported by previous studies (Andrade, 2006; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Choo, 2007;

Walker, 1999; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Specifically, class work was identified as a type of difficulty in academic adjustment in this research, which matched the findings in the previous research (Andrade; Brown & Holloway; Ward, 2001).

The findings in this research also showed that seeking academic advice and student-professor relationships were factors in academic adjustment. In this research, choosing a program of studies to meet the participants' objectives, trying to meet academic requirements determined by the university, a lack of resources, not understanding academic readings, and academic writing were factors, specific to the participants in this research.

Social Adaptation

The findings regarding the participants' social adaptation identified both positive and negative perspectives. This was different from the previous studies. A positive finding concerning social adaptation was related to getting used to Canadian culture. Previous research (Andrade, 2006; Ayano, 2006; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Pearson-Evans, 2006) identified that international students encountered culture shock when studying in their host countries and found that international students did not adapt to new cultures.

Another finding in this research was adapting to cold winter. Some participants commented that they were able to adapt to the cold winter in Canada, which was never identified or discussed in previous research that revealed the cold winter as a negative factor for international students (Liang, 2004; Li, 2001). Positive findings in my research also included the participants' enjoyment of western music, Canadian life style,

recreational facilities on campus, and western sports. These findings were not found in previous research.

Negative findings of difficulties in social adaptation identified in this study were loneliness, isolation, and a lack of communication and understanding due to different cultures which matched the findings in previous research (Andrade, 2006; Ayano, 2006; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Kim, 2007). Financial issues were also a major type of difficulty identified in this research: a finding supported by previous research (Liang, 2004; Li, 2001; Lin, 1998; Seo & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Zhang & Brunton, 2007).

The negative findings in terms of social adaptation also included accommodation, food issues, and public transportation, which all matched the findings in previous research (Liang, 2004; Li, 2001; Lin, 1998; Pearson-Evans, 2006). In this research, a new finding was about family members' difficulties in Canada, which was not identified or discussed in the previous research. Based on the comparison between the study and previous research, Table 5.1 summarized the major themes of findings and compared new findings and the findings supported by previous research.

Comparison

The comparison between the findings in this research and the findings in previous research in terms of international students' difficulties in their host countries demonstrated and reemphasized that tuition fees and financial supports were two important reasons for Chinese graduate students to choose a Canadian university. In addition, academic programs and research focus might play an important role in

university selection. Since Chinese graduate students spoke English as a foreign language, the English language requirements determined by a university were also an important factor considered in a participant's decision of choosing a university in which to study. Besides academic programs and research focus, the facilities and resources for learning and safety and security on the campus of the university were important. Family members', friends', or professors' impact might also play a significant role in Chinese graduate students' university selection, which indicated that the reputation of a university and the quality of education at the university were important for prospective graduate students, their families, and academics at other relevant educational institutions to consider and evaluate the university.

The findings in this study and the findings in previous research in terms of English language difficulties were consistent. No new finding regarding the English language difficulties encountered by the Chinese graduate students at the Canadian university was identified in this research. My findings revealed that Chinese graduate students encountered a variety of English language difficulties when studying in Canada, despite studying English for a considerable period of time (up to eight years) in China before moving to Canada. Previous research showed that Chinese graduate students' English language difficulties were similar and convergent during a long period of time and in different English-speaking countries. Overlapping findings in my research and previous research emphasized some of the major difficulties in academic adjustment Chinese graduate students encountered, such as inability to understand instructional information

Table 5.1

Comparison between New Findings and the Findings Supported by Previous Research

Themes	Findings Supported by Previous Research	New Findings (not identified in previous research)
university selection	affordable tuition fees and financial support	family members' or friends' impact
university selection	academic programs and research focus	the beautiful campus of the university
university Selection	English language requirements determined by the university	opportunities
university Selection	supervisors' suggestions	
university Selection	safety and security of the university	
English Language	listening and speaking	
English Language	academic writing in English	
English Language	not understanding instructional information in class	
English Language	Reading academic works written in English	
English Language	a lack of sufficient English vocabulary	choosing a program of studies to meet the participants' objectives
academic adjustment	being unable to understand information in courses	trying to meet academic requirements determined by the university
academic adjustment	examinations	a lack of resources
academic adjustment	Class work	not understanding academic readings
academic adjustment	academic advice and student-professor relationships	academic writing (not due to insufficient English language abilities)
academic adjustment	ideological differences	
social adaptation	culture shock	getting used to Canadian culture
social adaptation	cold winter, accommodation problems, food issues, and public transportations	adapting to cold winter
social adaptation	loneliness, isolation, and a lack of communication and understanding due to different cultures	enjoying western music, Canadian life style, recreational facilities on campus, and western sports
	financial issues	a family member' difficulties in Canada

in class, examinations, instructors' questions, class work, student-professor relationships, and ideological differences.

New findings regarding the Chinese graduate students' social adaptation demonstrated that some Chinese graduate students adapted to Canadian culture, living style, and the cold winter. A number of Chinese graduate students enjoyed western music, sports, and recreational facilities on the campus of the university. However, some of the major difficulties in terms of social adaptation appeared, such as accommodation issues, foods, public transportation, and financial problems in student responses. Previous research identified loneliness and isolation as negative factors affecting international students' studies in their host countries but did not identify the difficulties encountered by the international students' family members. In this research, the difficulties encountered by some Chinese graduate students' spouses were identified, indicating that sometimes difficulties in social adaptation expanded to students' family members accompanying them to Canada.

Implications for Research and Practice

Based on the discussion, implications were provided and discussed from the perspectives of research and practice in terms of Chinese graduate students' university selection and difficulties in the English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. The institutional power of the university that could help Chinese graduate students and other international students was clarified. Specific approaches to support the students were provided. In addition, the conceptual framework of this research was further revised based on the literature review and the findings of this research. The conceptual framework showed a positive start from nothingness in the research area of

international students' transitional issues regarding the English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation.

Research

An implication regarding research was that the previous studies in terms of Chinese students' studies in their host countries were less comprehensive both in methodology and content when identifying and examining their university selection and transitional issues. For example, some previous longitudinal research specifically focused on one perspective of Chinese students' studies or lives. No verbatim comments from the participants that could demonstrate what the participants thought about their difficulties were found in the previous studies. Other studies only focused on one or two Chinese students to examine what difficulties they had encountered during their studies, which could not provide a more general picture of the difficulties encountered by Chinese students as a whole at a university.

Research studies in terms of Chinese graduate students' university selection and difficulties in the English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation should contain more researchers to triangulate relevant findings. While researchers have their respective and unique strengths in conducting research, a research team composed of culturally and linguistically different researchers who are from different disciplines may create new understandings. Studies conducted by such a research team would be more trustworthy either in methodology or the findings. In addition, more quantitative and qualitative data should be collected and analyzed to comprehensively reveal Chinese

graduate students' studies and lives at other English-speaking universities. This would provide a more general picture of the reasons for choosing such universities, and more difficulties encountered by Chinese graduate students can be identified and discussed.

For scholars and researchers interested in international students' transitional issues in their host countries, repeating this exploratory research may be of value. Since an online survey was employed in the research using mixed methods design, further studies could easily be built on this research. Since this research was conducted only in one Canadian university, further studies can also involve more Chinese graduate students studying at different Canadian universities as multiple research sites to triangulate findings, which can provide more general themes related to Chinese graduate students' university selection and transitional difficulties. Focus groups or semi-structured interviews can be conducted to examine meanings and themes regarding Chinese students' university selection and their transitional issues.

In addition, the target populations in further studies may be broadened. For example, further research can involve Chinese undergraduate students who belong to a larger population than Chinese graduate students. Students from Korea, Japan, and other Asian countries should be involved. Besides university students as prospective participants, university policymakers, administrators, faculty, and staff members may also be involved in future studies in terms of international students' university selection and transitional issues. Different perspectives and voices may add more insights.

Practice

The findings in this research examining Chinese graduate students' reasons for choosing this university may be important for future enrolment. Identifying, examining, and discussing difficulties encountered by Chinese graduate students relating to the English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation may be important for the university if it wishes to attract Chinese students and improve programs and supportive services to help them both in their studies and everyday lives. Recognizing the effects of the impacts of institutional power on students' studies and daily lives should be mediated. University administrators should endeavor to support international students in Canada and develop a multifaceted approach to supporting the students – recognizing the ethical responsibility that the university should assist them throughout academic and daily life while the students study in their programs. Concrete approaches for supporting the students were provided as follows.

Based on the findings, the university may wish to develop a specific information document examining Chinese graduate students' (international students') major reasons for choosing this university and the major difficulties encountered during their studies and lives in Canada. It is suggested that the university hold information workshops for faculty members and others involved with international students based on the findings of this research. Furthermore, the university should bring together faculty and administrative groups to develop a more in-depth university-wide policy relating to international students.

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs should have more academic focus related to graduate programs offered at the university. Academic writing courses offered by various centers should be more connected with specific graduate programs. Academic writing courses should be offered to introduce and instruct students how to write specifically in agriculture, engineering, commerce, and social sciences. Academic reading courses can be initiated to assist Chinese graduate students in reading and understanding academic materials.

Programs for social adaptation can be developed to provide more services and supports for Chinese graduate students and all international students concerning accommodation, food, public transportation, and cold winter. Student counseling programs should include strategies that can help Chinese students and their family members overcome loneliness, isolation, and lack of communications in their academic programs and daily lives. In every semester, university-wide online surveys about international students' transitional issues might be administered to assist the university in further identifying the students' transitional issues and knowing more about their feelings and experiences when they study in Canada.

Colleges might develop an office or program that can provide academic support for international students who study within their respective colleges. This office or program can help international students be familiar with Canadian learning styles and the expectations of Canadian faculty members. In addition, the office or program can also help Canadian faculty members and students learn more about international students'

needs and expectations of their studies. Furthermore, the university should provide sufficient scholarships to attract more prospective international graduate students.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was revised based on the findings of the study. The

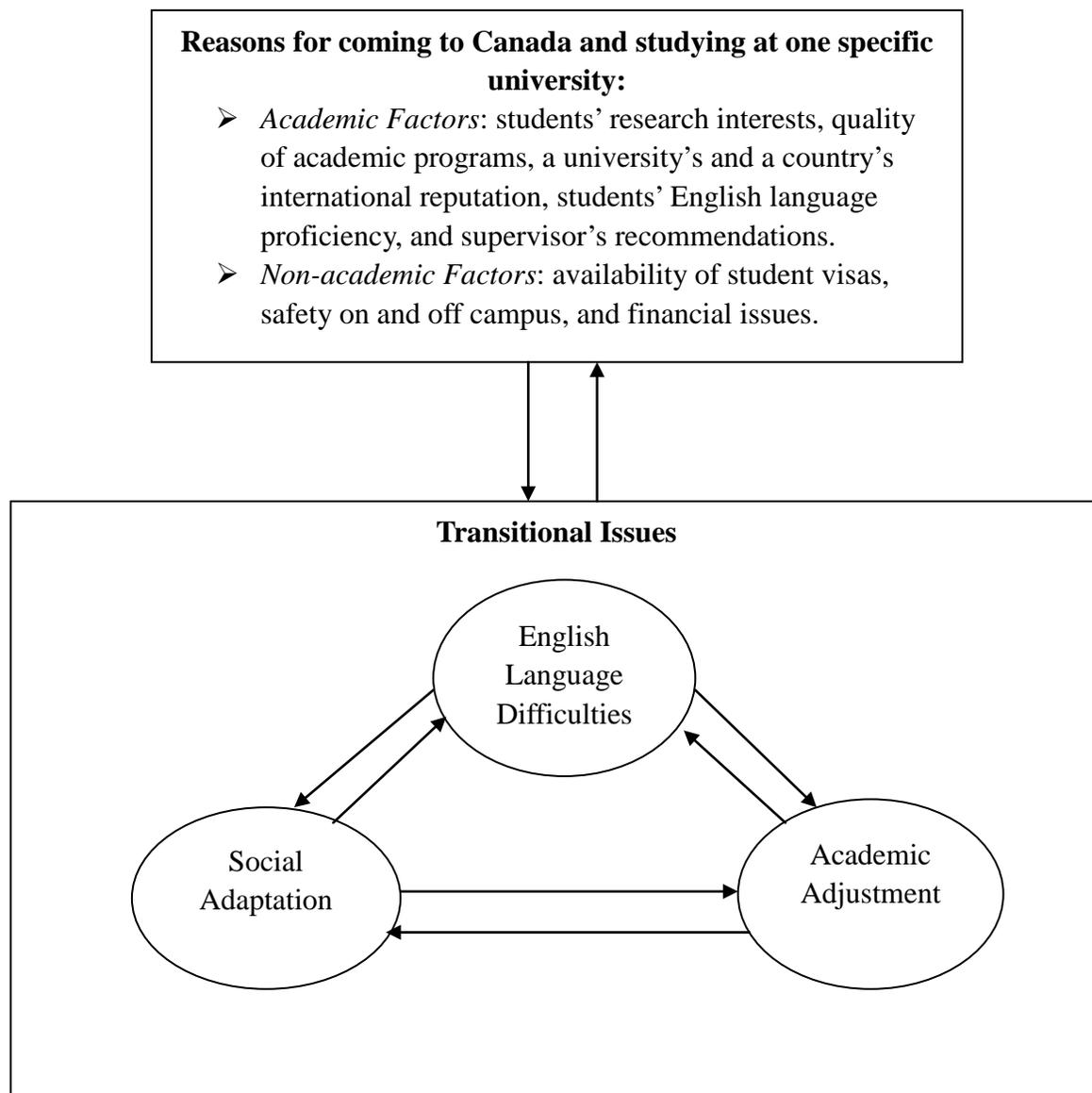


Figure 5.1 Renewed Conceptual Framework.

original conceptual framework was in a single linear way, which the findings did not

demonstrate. Specifically, some findings indicated that the difficulties with the English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation encountered by the participants might affect their family members, friends, and classmates in China who might be prospective Chinese students studying at Canadian universities. Thus, the results of this study might also affect the students' reasons for studying at Canadian universities. Hence, the revised conceptual framework displayed that the two boxes—reasons and transitional issues—might affect each other.

In addition, the three factors, English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation, might affect each other, each of which would not be independent from the other two. Figure 5.1 showed the revised conceptual framework.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was met, and the research questions were answered—the research findings provided the participants' reasons for choosing this university in Western Canada and the major transitional issues they had already encountered when studying in Canada. The participants' responses to the survey reinforced my experiences, transitional issues, feelings, and attitudes encountered as a Chinese graduate student studying at this university. I could visualize the difficulties and struggles other students faced and deeply understand their feelings and perspectives. I believe that my personal experiences made the findings more trustworthy; the participants' responses resonated with me regarding their reasons why they studied in Canada and the transitional issues they encountered. The findings did not reveal that racial discrimination was a factor faced

by the Chinese students.

Reasons for Choosing the University

In this research, I identified that the major reason for the participants moving to Canada was to pursue degrees (master or doctorate levels). Participants emphasized the importance of affordable tuition fees and sufficient financial supports; most of them learned about academic programs and relevant research areas at the university before coming to study. Although participants did not provide any verbatim comments on the reputation of the university, academic programs, research areas, and reputation of the university might have a relationship, because previous research identified reputation of a university was an important factor for students to consider the university (Wang & Yang, 1999; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). A majority of the participants commented that they chose this university because of the English language requirements. In China, although students have studied English for more than eight or ten years, they still find English difficult.

Students' personal safety was another concern, which was supported by previous research in the literature (Brown & Holloway, 2008). The findings and literature indicated that both students and their families considered the safety and security of a university, because the students themselves would travel a long distance to study in another country. Therefore, factors impacting on a student's decision to study at a university were interrelated to one another and might provide the students with a more holistic picture of the university to assist them in making their decision.

English Language Difficulties

The participants encountered English language difficulties, mainly in listening and speaking, which was supported by the literature (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Wang, 2004; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). When Chinese students studied English, they were trained in grammar and vocabulary in a large number of exercises and examinations. There were limited listening and speaking programs available to help Chinese students improve their listening and speaking abilities compared to in-class exercises and examinations. Although Chinese graduate students successfully completed English language tests, when coming to Canada, they encountered a number of differences between the English they learned in China and the English used in Canada.

Besides listening and speaking, academic writing in English was difficult for the Chinese graduate students, perhaps not only because of the English language itself, but also because of different writing logic and formats. Writing was an exterior expression of one's interior thoughts and logic, the difficulties related to academic writing in English include language, cultural, and ideological factors.

The findings revealed that the participants encountered difficulties when trying to understand instructional information in class and read academic works written in English. Some participants commented that they did not have sufficient English vocabulary. Through examining the findings, I realized that the participants' English language difficulties were not independent, separate, or isolated, but were interrelated, indicating that the participants' difficulties regarding vocabulary, listening, speaking, academic

writing, reading, and performance in class have directly or indirectly affected one another. This interpretation matched the integrative model of learning a second language discussed by Brown (2001). He argued that learning a foreign language was multi-dimensional, including vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating. All the dimensions might impact on each other when a student learned a foreign language.

Academic Adjustment

Different teaching and learning styles and ideologies between China and Canada might create further difficulties, which was both identified by previous research in the literature (Choo, 2007; Zhang & Brunton, 2007) and this study. Chinese graduate students lacked abilities to effectively communicate with Canadian professors and students in their programs, so when they had encountered some difficulties in their studies, they were not able to obtain sufficient academic advice or support that could help them solve their difficulties. Some participants encountered diverse and multiple difficulties in their studies, including trying to meet academic requirements determined by the university and their own personal objectives. Through the findings, I thought that the Chinese graduate students' difficulties in academic adjustment might not be separate or isolated factors. They might all affect the students' studies at the university.

Social Adaptation

In this research, I identified that the participants provided both positive and negative responses to the survey items regarding social adaptation. Some participants were able to

adjust to Canadian culture, adapt to cold winter, and enjoy western living styles. The findings demonstrated that the participants had a positive and optimistic attitude toward their studies and lives in Canada. They were able to overcome the difficulties they had encountered and change their attitudes and situations from negatives to positives, which was complementary to previous research in the literature.

Nevertheless, the findings concerning the participants' social adaptation showed that loneliness, isolation, and lack of communication and understanding due to different cultures were difficulties encountered by some participants during their studies in Canada. Furthermore, the participants encountered financial problems, which might have negatively affected their studies and lives in Canada. Different living styles in China and Canada caused them to have encountered accommodation problems, food issues, and inconvenience of public transportation, and some participants commented that cold weather was a problem for them when studying in Canada. The findings indicated that some participants were not able to get used to the living style in Canada, and they were not able to effectively change their attitudes or behaviors to be accustomed to the Canadian way of living.

In addition, some participants thought that their family members accompanying them to study in Canada had encountered difficulties in their lives. This finding demonstrated that the difficulties in social adaptation were not only to the students themselves but also to their entire families living in Canada. Their family members' difficulties might have negatively affected the students' studies, since they had to spend

more time and energy taking care of their family members.

I found this study significant because more Chinese students and other international students choose to study at this university and they make efforts to achieve success. The findings will inform university-level policymaking and practices. By identifying and examining the participants' reasons for choosing this university and the transitional issues they encountered, I provided specific measures to assist university leaders in supporting Chinese graduate students and other international students in the areas of the English language, programs of study, and daily social lives. Based on this study, the university will realize the impact of its institutional power and policymaking on the students' academic achievements and social lives. The university should not only develop programs that can attract the students, but also provide effective support for their studies and everyday lives. The future research may repeat this study, develop theoretical models of transitional issues, or involve more international students from other Asian countries to see if the findings of this study could be cross-validated and generalized.

REFERENCES

- Abe, J., Talbot, D. M., & Geelhoed, R. J. (1998). Effects of a peer program on international student adjustment. *Journal of College Student Development, 39*, 539-547.
- Anderson, G. (2000). *Fundamentals of educational research*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Andrale, M. S. (2006). International students in English-speaking universities: Adjustment factors. *Journal of Research in International Education, 5*(2), 131-154.
- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The internationalization of higher education: Motivations and realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 11*, 290-305.
- Arnau, R. C., Thompson, R. L., & Cook, C. (2001). Do different response formats change the latent structure of responses? An empirical example using taxometric analysis. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 61*, 23-44.
- Arnove, R. F., & Torres, C. A. (1999). *Comparative education: The dialectic of the global and the local*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Arthur, N. (1997). Counseling issues with international students. *Canadian Journal of Counseling, 31*, 259-274.
- Ayano, M. (2006). Japanese students in Britain. In M. Byram & A. Feng, *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 11-37). Toronto, ON: Multilingual Matters.

- Babbie, E. (2004). *The practice of social research* (10th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Barakett, J., & Cleghorn, A. (2008). *Sociology of education: An introductory view from Canada* (2nd. ed.). Toronto, ON: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Botha, E. (1989). Theory development in perspective: The role of conceptual frameworks and models in theory development. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 14(1), 49-55.
- Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development of British Columbia. (2009). *British Columbia international student survey report*. Victoria, BC: Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development of British Columbia.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Brown, L. B., & Holloway, I. (2008). The adjustment journey of international postgraduate students at an English university: An ethnographic study. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 7(2), 232-249.
- Burnett, C., & Gardner, J. (2006). The one less traveled by: The experience of Chinese students in a UK university. In M. Byram & A. Feng, *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 64-90). Toronto, ON: Multilingual Matters.
- Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis*. Hants, Britain: Ashgate.
- Byeon, K. H., Chan, F., & Thomas, K. R. (1999). Korean international students' expectations about counseling. *Journal of College Counseling*, 2, 99-109.

- Cable News Net. (2009). *Killer decapitates Va. Tech student, police say*. Retrieved February 8, 2009, from <http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/01/22/virginia.tech.death/index.html?iref=newssearch>
- Canadian Bureau for International Education. (1999). *Canada first: The 1999 survey of international students*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- Canadian Bureau for International Education. (1988). *Canada first: The 1988 survey of international students*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- Charles, H., & Stewart, A. (1991). Academic advising of international students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 19, 173-182.
- Chen, C. P. (1999). Common stressors among international college students: *Research and counseling implications*. *Journal of College Counseling*, 2, 49-65.
- Chen, H. (2005). *Practical program evaluation: Assessing and improving planning, implementation, and effectiveness*. London: Sage.
- Chen, L. (2007). East-Asian students' choice of Canadian graduate schools. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 7(4), 271-306.
- Cheng, F., & Mao, Z. (2002). *The report of education problems in China*. Beijing, China: The Social Sciences Press of China.
- Cheng, H. (2002). *Contextualising citation behaviour: Chinese graduate students' thesis writing*. Retrieved March 11, 2007, from <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/lasu/conference/cheng.doc>
- China Daily (2007). *Record number of students to travel abroad*. Retrieved March 21,

2008, from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-01/17/content_6399780.htm

Choo, K. L. (2007). The implications of introducing critical management education to Chinese students studying in UK business schools: Some empirical evidence. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 31(2), 145-158.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Foreign students*. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/monitor/issue06/04-students.asp>

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Immigration increases 20% in first quarter*. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/monitor/issue06/01-highlights.asp>

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Information for Educational Institutions*. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/institutions/index.asp>

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Foreign students overview*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/monitor/issue15/05-overview.asp>

City of Toronto (2008). *Toronto's racial diversity*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from http://www.toronto.ca/toronto_facts/diversity.htm

Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Calgary. (2008). *The Consul General in Saskatoon*. Retrieved February 25, 2008, from <http://calgary.china->

consulate.org/chn/xwdt/t354292.htm

Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Calgary. (2008). *The Economic and Commercial Section of the Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Calgary*. Retrieved February 25, 2008, from <http://calgary2.mofcom.gov.cn/index.shtml>

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (1999). Mixed-method research: Introduction and application. In G. J. Cizek (Ed.). *Handbook of educational policy* (pp. 455-472). San Diego: Academic Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd. ed.). London: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. P. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. London: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Crotty, M. (2004). *The foundations of social research*. London: Sage.
- Delinger, A. B., & Leech, N. L. (2007). Toward a unified validation framework in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(4), 309-332.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2 ed., pp. 1-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dong, Y. (1996). A cross-cultural relationship between the advisor and the advisee: Dissertation writing supervision in science. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 394 331.
- Department of Sociology, University of Saskatchewan. (1999). *Experiences, aspirations, and opinions: A survey of Chinese students in Saskatchewan, Canada*. Saskatoon, SK: Department of Sociology, University of Saskatchewan.
- Drew, C. J., Hardman, M. L., Hart, A. W. (1996). *Designing and conducting research: Inquiry in education and social science* (2nd ed.). London: Allyn and Bacon.
- Durkin, K. (2008). The middle way: East Asian master's students' perceptions of critical argumentation in U. K. universities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(1), 38-55.
- Eide, I. (1970). UNESCO studies on the role as culture carriers of Eastern students who received their university education in Western countries. In I. Eide, *Students as*

- links between cultures: A cross cultural survey based on Unesco studies* (pp. 109-195). Oslo, Norway: Unesco, and the International Peace Research Institute.
- Erickson, P. I., & Kaplan, C. P. (2000). Maximizing qualitative responses about smoking in structured interviews. *Qualitative Health Research, 10*, 829-841.
- Evers, C., & Lakomski, G. (1991). *Knowing educational administration: Contemporary methodological controversies in educational administration research*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Evers, C., & Lakomski, G. (1996). *Exploring educational administration: Coherentist applications and critical debates*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Evers, C., & Lakomski, G. (2000). *Doing educational administration: A theory of administrative practice*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Fatima, N. (2001). *International female graduate students' perceptions of their adjustment experiences and coping strategies at an urban research university*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA.
- Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Foster, W. (1986). *Paradigms and promises*. New York: Prometheus Books.
- Furnham, A. (1993). Communication in foreign lands: The cause, consequences and cures of culture shock. *Language Culture and Curriculum, 6*(1), 91-109.
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction*. New York: Allyn and Bacon.
- Ghosh, R., & Ray, D. (1987). *Social change and education in Canada*. London: Harcourt

Brace Jovanovich.

- Government of Canada. (2011). *Studying in Canada*. Retrieved June 1, 2011, from <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/china-chine/study-etudie/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- Government of Canada. (2009). *Studying in Canada*. Retrieved March 6, 2009, from <http://geo.international.gc.ca/asia/china/services/study-in-canada-ch.aspx>
- Government of Canada. (2008). *Canada's provinces and territories*. Retrieved February 24, 2008, from <http://www.goingtocanada.gc.ca/welcome/know/map/index.aspx>
- Government of Canada. (2008). *Studying*. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from <http://www.goingtocanada.gc.ca/studying/index.aspx>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed, pp. 191-215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1982). Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, (30)4, 233-252.
- Hardy, C. (1996). *The politics of collegiality: Retrenchment strategies in Canadian universities*. London: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Hawkey, L. C., Burleson, M. H., Berntson, G. G., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2003). Loneliness in everyday life: Cardiovascular activity, psychosocial context, and health behaviors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 105-120.
- Heiman, G. W. (2000). *Basic statistics for the behavioral sciences* (3rd ed.). New York:

Houghton Mifflin Company.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2010). *Mixed methods research: Merging theory with practice*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Humfrey, C. (1999). *Managing international students: Guides to good practice*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Huntley, H. S. (1993). *Adult international students: Problems of adjustment*. Athens: Ohio University.

Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G.. (1996). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G.. (2001). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Indiana University. (1998). College student experiences questionnaire. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University.

Jackson, K. M., & Trochim, W. M. K. (2002). Concept mapping as an alternative approach for the analysis of open-ended survey responses. *Organizational Research Methods*, 5, 307-332.

James, S., Hunsley, J. S., Navara, G. S., & Alles, M. (2004). Marital, psychological, and sociocultural aspects of sojourner adjustment: Expanding the field of enquiry. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 28, 111-126.

Johnson, R. B., & Onwugebuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.

- Joseph, M., & Joseph, B. (2000). Indonesian students' perceptions of choice criteria in the selection of a tertiary institution: Strategic implications. *The international Journal of Educational Management*, 14(1), 40-44.
- Kahne, J. (1996). *Reframing educational policy: Democracy, community, and the individual*. New York: Columbia University.
- Kaplan, R. B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. *Language Learning*, 16, 1-20.
- Kim, Y. (2007). Difficulties in quality doctoral academic advising: Experiences of Korean students. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 6(2), 171-193.
- Knight, J. (1995). *Internationalization at Canadian universities: The changing Landscape*. Ottawa, ON: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.
- Kurucz, P. (2006). *How to teach international students: A practical teaching guide for universities and colleges*. Nanaimo, BC: Success Orientations Publishing.
- Lacina, J. G. (2002). Preparing international students for a successful social experience in higher education. *Internationalizing Higher Education: Building Vital Programs on Campuses* (pp. 21-27). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Li, X. (1998). *A study of institutional autonomy in selected Chinese universities*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.
- Li, Y. (2001). *A narrative inquiry of the intercultural and academic transitional experiences of four female Chinese students*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Alberta.

- Liang, S. X. (2004). *Academic adaptation: Mainland Chinese students in graduate programs at a Canadian university*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary, Alberta.
- Lin, L. (1998). *Chinese graduate students' perception of their adjustment experiences at the University of Pittsburgh*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lu, Y. (2006). *Studying abroad and migration motivations: A case study of Chinese students at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.
- MacGillivray, A. (2006). *A brief history of globalization*. London: Robinson.
- Marginson, S. (2007). Global position and position taking: The case of Australia. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(1), 5-32.
- Marilyn, E. R., & Renee, S. T. (2000). Concerns, values, stress, coping, health and educational outcomes of college students who studied abroad. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 409-435.
- McLaren, M. C. (1998). *Interpreting cultural differences: The challenge of intercultural communication*. Norfolk, VA: Peter Francis Publishers.
- Ministry of People's Republic of China. (2009). *Warning Chinese students studying abroad*. Retrieved February 8, 2009, from http://www.jsj.edu.cn/article_list.php?sortid=2

- Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research, 40*, 120-123.
- Muscat, C. (2007). *City guide: Vancouver*. New York: Langenscheidt Publishers.
- Naidoo, V. (2006). International education: A tertiary-level industry update. *Journal of Research in International Education, 5*(3), 323-345.
- OECD. (2004). *Education at a glance 2004-OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD. Retrieved February 2004, from <http://www.europa.eu.int>.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Pearson-Evans, A. (2006). Recording the journey: Diaries of Irish students in Japan. In M. Byram & A. Feng, *Living and studying abroad: Research and practice* (pp. 38-63). Toronto, ON: Multilingual Matters.
- Pimpa, N. (2005). Marketing Australian universities to Thai students. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 9*(2), 137-146.
- Richards, L, & Morse, J. (2007). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Schutz, A., & Richards, M. (2003). International students' experience of graduate study in Canada. *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education, 7*(1), 10-26.
- Searle, W., & Ware, C. (1990). The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 14*, 449-464.

- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Seo, S., & Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2005). A hermeneutical study of older Korean graduate students' experiences in American higher education: From Confucianism to western educational values. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9(2), 164-187.
- Shields, P., & Hassan, T. (2006). Intermediate Theory: The Missing Link in Successful Student Scholarship. *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 12(3): 313-334.
Retrieve February 20, 2008, from <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/39/>
- Smith, L. M., & Rae, A. N. (2006). Coping with demand: Managing international student numbers at New Zealand universities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(1), 27-45.
- Srikatanyoo, N., & Gnoth, J. (2005). Quality dimensions in international tertiary education: A Thai prospective students' perspective. *QMJ*, 12(1), 30-40.
- Statistics Canada (2006). *University Enrolment*. Retrieved March 12, 2007, from <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/061107/d061107a.htm>
- Statistics Canada (2008). *Canada's national statistical agency*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from http://www42.statcan.ca/smr08/smr08_015_e.htm
- Simon, H. A. (1976). *Administrative behavior* (3rd ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Sun, P. (2000). *The history of the development of education in China*. Shanghai, China:

The East China Normal University Press.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics* (5th ed.). New York: Pearson.

Tan, W., & Simpson, K. (2008). Overseas educational experience of Chinese students: An evaluation of service quality experience in New Zealand. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 7(1), 93-112.

Tang, Y. (2006). *Pressure cooker: Many children in China have been robbed of childhood joys and developed emotional problems*. Beijing, China: Beijing Leefung-Asco Changcheng Publishers.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tatar, S. (2005). Classroom participation by international students: The case of Turkish graduate students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9(4), 337-355.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2003). Major issues and controversies in the use of mixed methods in the social and behavioral sciences. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 3-50). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

The Ministry of the People's Republic of China. (2008). *Name lists of official universities*

in Canada. Retrieved February 11, 2008, from

<http://www.jsj.edu.cn/mingdan/jianada01.html>

The University of Alberta. (2008). *Media clippings*. Retrieved April 3, 2008, from

<http://www.expressnews.ualberta.ca/mediasummaries.cfm?id=8450>

The University of Regina. (2009). *International students*. Retrieved March 20, 2009,

from <http://www.uregina.ca/newstudent/international.shtml>

The University of Toronto. (2008). *facts and figures (2006)*. Retrieved February 27, 2008,

from http://www.utoronto.ca/__shared/assets/Facts___Figures_20061283.pdf

The University of Toronto. (2008). *Quick facts*. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from

<http://www.utoronto.ca/aboutuoft/quickfacts.htm>

The University of Saskatchewan. (2008). *U of S facts & figures*. Retrieved February 27,

2008, from http://www.usask.ca/uofs/fact_sheet.php#faculty

The University of Saskatchewan. (2008). *Guide for international students*. Retrieved

February 27, 2008, from <http://explore.usask.ca/counsellors/pdf/intlguide.pdf>

The University of Saskatchewan. (2008). *Guide for international students (Chinese*

version). Retrieved February 27, 2008, from <http://explore.usask.ca/>

[counsellors/pdf/chineseguide.pdf](http://explore.usask.ca/counsellors/pdf/chineseguide.pdf)

Toyokawa, T., & Toyokawa, N. (2002). Extracurricular activities and the adjustment of

Asian international students: A study of Japanese students. *International*

Journal of Intercultural Relations, 26, 363-379.

- Vitale, D. C., Armenakis, A. A., Feild, H. S. (2008). Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods for organizational diagnosis. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 2(1), 87-105.
- Vries, J., & Richer, S. (1988). *The 1988 survey of international students in Canadian universities*. Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- Walker, J. C. & Evers, C. W. (1999). Research in education: Epistemological issues. In J. P. Keeves, & G. Lakomski (1999). *Issues in educational research* (pp. 40-56). Oxford, England: The Pergamon Press.
- Walker, J. L. (1999). *Canada first: The 1999 survey of international students*. Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- Wan, G. (1996). *The learning experience of Chinese students in American universities: A cross-cultural perspective*. Peoria, IL: Bradley University.
- Wang, Z. (2004). *Studying in the U.S.: Chinese graduate students' experiences of academic adjustment*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Illinois.
- Wang, Z. & Yang, Y. (1999). *Educational dynamics and research in Canada*. Beijing, China: Education and Science Publishers.
- Ward, C. (2001). *The impact of international students on domestic students and host institutions*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.
- Yao, Yilong, (2003). *Comparative research on return of education to economic growth across countries*. Guangzhou, China: Zhongshan University Press.

- Yin, R. K. (1989). *Case study research: Design and methods*. London: Sage.
- Yum, J. (1988). The impact of Confucianism on interpersonal relationships and communication patterns in East Asia. *Communication Monographs*, 55, 374-388.
- Zhang, H., & Jin, Z. (2001). *A brief history of the development of education in China*. Shanghai, China: The East China Normal University Press.
- Zhang, X. (1996). Thoughts of China's new generation of students studying abroad. *Successor of China*, 8, 5-13.
- Zhang, Z., & Brunton, M. (2007). Differences in living and learning: Chinese international students in New Zealand. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(2), 124-140.

Appendix A: The International Student Office's Reply to the Researcher

Date: **Mon, 30 Nov 2009 17:09:43 -0600**
 From: "Derek Tannis" <Derek.Tannis@usask.ca> **Block Address**
 To: "Xiaodong Zhang" <xiz459@mail.usask.ca>

Subject: **Re: Xiaodong Zhang: Research regarding Chinese Graduate Students**

 Reply
  Reply All
  Forward
  Print
  Delete

Hello Xiaodong,

You can count on the support of the International Student Office in disseminating the invitation to participate in this study. Once you have your ethics approval, please contact me and we can go from there.

All the best,

Derek.

Derek Tannis
 Manager, International Student Office
 Global Commons, University of Saskatchewan
 Room 60, Place Riel Student Centre
 Ph: (306) 966-4923 Fax: (306) 966-7824
 derek.tannis@usask.ca

Xiaodong Zhang wrote:

Dear Derek,

My name is Xiaodong Zhang. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Administration. My dissertation focuses on Chinese graduate students' reasons for choosing the University of Saskatchewan in which to pursue graduate studies and the transitional issues the students may have encountered including English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation.

In this research, prospective participants are Chinese graduate students from Mainland China currently enrolled in Master or Ph.D. programs at the university. I would like to conduct an online survey on PAWS, and I am wondering whether you could help me with this research by sending emails to the Chinese graduate students currently enrolled in Master or Ph.D. programs. This invitation email will inform the students of the purpose of this study, ethical considerations, my supervisor's and my contact information, and the link of the website where the online survey can be located, completed, and submitted. In the attachment is the invitation letter to the Chinese graduate students.

Your understanding and support concerning this research will be sincerely appreciated. Thank you so much in advance. I am looking forward to your reply. Have a great day.

Yours truly,

Xiaodong Zhang

Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Educational Administration
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
Ph: (306) 261-7328
xiz459@mail.usask.ca

Appendix B: Invitation Letter to Chinese Graduate Students

Dear Fellow Student,

My name is Xiaodong Zhang. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Administration. My dissertation research focuses on Chinese graduate students' reasons for choosing the University of Saskatchewan in which to pursue graduate studies and transitional issues the students may have encountered, specifically English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. Prospective participants are Chinese graduate students from Mainland China currently enrolled in Master's or Ph.D. programs at the University of Saskatchewan. If you are a current Chinese graduate student, you are invited to complete and submit an online survey on PAWS. By participating in the study and reading the dissertation of the study, you can reflect on some transitional issues you may have encountered at the university and you may better adjust to the university in the future. **The recruitment material is being sent out by the International Student Office on my behalf and the ISO has no links to the study.**

This study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan's Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) on February 8th, 2010. Questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Beh-REB Committee through **the Research Ethics Office** at 306-966-2975. Out of town participants may call collect. The risk is minimal in this study. The online survey will be anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout and after the study. You may withdraw from the online survey for any reason and without any penalty before submitting it. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you think are too personal or sensitive. The online survey can be accessed at the link _____ . (to be determined.)

If you are not interested in this online survey, please ignore this email. Thank you for taking time to read the email. If you have further questions or concerns about the online survey, please do not hesitate to contact me, my supervisor, or the Behavioural Research Ethics Board.

Supervisor: Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart

Email: sheila.carr-stewart@usask.ca

Phone: (306)-966-7611

Office ED 3075, Educational Administration

College of Education, University of Saskatchewan,

28 Campus Dr., Saskatoon, SK. S7N 0X1

Student Researcher: Xiaodong Zhang

Email: xiz459@mail.usask.ca

Phone: (306) 261-7328

Yours sincerely,

Xiaodong Zhang, Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Educational Administration,
College of Education, University of Saskatchewan
Ph: (306) 261-7328
xiz459@mail.usask.ca

Appendix C: The Online Survey

Cover Letter

Dear Fellow Student,

My name is Xiaodong Zhang. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Administration. My dissertation research is entitled *Choices and Challenges: Chinese Graduate Students' Transitional Issues at the University of Saskatchewan*. This research focuses on Chinese graduate students' reasons for choosing the University of Saskatchewan in which to pursue graduate studies and transitional issues the students may have encountered, specifically English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. The recruitment material is being sent out by the International Student Office on my behalf and the ISO has no links to the study.

This study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan's Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) on February 8th, 2010. Questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Beh-REB Committee through the Research Ethics Office at 306-966-2975. Out of town participants may call collect.

In this research, you are invited to complete and submit an online survey. The online survey has five sections concerning demographics, university selection, English language, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. Completing the online survey will take about 30 to 40 minutes. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact the Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB), my supervisor, and me.

Supervisor: Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart

Email: sheila.carr-stewart@usask.ca

Phone: (306)-966-7611

Office ED 3075, Educational Administration

College of Education, University of Saskatchewan,

28 Campus Dr., Saskatoon, SK. S7N 0X1

Student Researcher: Xiaodong Zhang

Email: xiz459@mail.usask.ca

Phone: (306) 261-7328

If you agree to complete and submit the online survey, please read the consent form.

1. Consent Form

This study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan's Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) on February 8th, 2010. Questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Beh-REB Committee through the Research Ethics Office at 306-966-2975. Out of town participants may call collect. The online survey has five sections concerning demographics, university selection, English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. Completing the online survey will take about 15 to 20 minutes. The recruitment material is being sent out by the International Student Office on my behalf and the ISO has no links to the study.

Purpose of the Study: To identify reasons why Chinese graduate students chose the University of Saskatchewan in which to study and to examine transitional issues these students may have encountered during their studies at the university.

Potential Risks: The risk is minimal in this study, because participants will be invited to only complete and submit an online survey, which is anonymous. Furthermore, their personal email addresses will not appear in their responses to the online survey.

Potential Benefits: This study can identify reasons for participants to choose the University of Saskatchewan and can identify and examine the transitional issues at the university. By reading the dissertation of the study, participants can reflect on the transitional issues at the university and may better adjust to the university in the future. I plan to share the results of the study with the International Student Office (ISO) so that the International Student Office will be able to further assist and support international students in the future. The study can also provide implications and recommendations for more international students as prospective readers of this study who may have similar transitional experiences in the future.

Storage of Data: All data will be locked in the researcher's office to maintain confidentiality when they are analyzed in the study. The data in electronic files will be securely stored on password protected computers. After completion of the study, all data will be stored in Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart's office for five years. After five years, all data will be destroyed.

Confidentiality: Your personal email address will not appear in your response to the online survey. The survey will be anonymous. The researcher will ensure that anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout and after the study.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the online survey for any reason and without any penalty. You may withdraw from the online survey before submitting it. Once submitting it, you cannot withdraw from the online survey. You may refuse to answer any questions that you think are too personal or sensitive.

Dissemination of Results: All data collected from the online survey will only be used for the researcher's dissertation and application for scholarly journals and conferences. The study may be published for scholarly journals.

Debriefing and Feedback: After the dissertation of the study has been completed, an electronic version of the dissertation will be available through the Library of the University of Saskatchewan. A copy of the online survey will be available in the appendix section of the dissertation.

Consent to Participate: Completion of the survey implies the participants' understanding of the consent form, consent for participating in the study, and permitting that the study can be used for professional seminars, academic conferences, and paper submissions to scholarly journals.

Agree Disagree

Section A

2. What is your gender?
 Female Male

 3. What is your age?
 19 or younger 20-29 30-39 40-49 Over 50

 4. What is your current marital status?
 Single Partnered Married Divorced

 5. What is/are your first language(s)? (You may choose more than one option.)
 Chinese Others

 6. What is/are your second language(s)? (You may choose more than one option.)
 English French Japanese Russian Korean Others

 7. Why did you come to Canada?
-

-
-
8. What types of visa did you hold when coming to Canada?
 Student visa
 Work visa
 Visitor visa
 Permanent resident of Canada
9. Do you have any family members to accompany you? (You may choose more than one option.)
 No Parent(s) Spouse Child/Children Others
10. How long have you been in Canada?
 less than 1 year 1 to 2 years 3 to 4 years more than 4 years
11. Are you a student?
 Yes No
12. What is your specialization?
 Natural Sciences Humanities and Social Studies Education
 Medicine Engineering Commerce
 Agriculture Music Others
13. What level of education are you pursuing when studying in Canada?
 Master's degree Doctorate degree Post-doctoral Other
14. Why did you decide to study in Canada?
-
-
-

Section B

15. I chose this university because I was not accepted at my first-choice Canadian university.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |

16. I chose this university because of the quality of education at the university.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
17. I chose this university because the tuition fees required by the university are affordable.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
18. I chose this university because of the amount of financial support offered to me here.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
19. I chose this university because of an exchange agreement with the university.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
20. I chose this university because I knew someone who studied (is studying) here.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
21. I chose this university because the university is the most effective in providing information.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
22. I chose this university because of the size of the university.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
23. I chose this university because of the number of other students from my country here.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
24. I chose this university because of the availability of a particular program at the university.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
25. I chose this university because the university has the fastest admission process.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral

- agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
26. I chose this university because a recruiting agent recommended the university to me.
- strongly not agree

 not agree

 neutral
 agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
27. I chose this university because of reward facilities.
- strongly not agree

 not agree

 neutral
 agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
28. I chose this university because living accommodations are available here.
- strongly not agree

 not agree

 neutral
 agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
29. I chose this university because the requirements of English language proficiency tests (TOEFL/IELTS/MELAB/CANTEST) in the university fit my level of English language abilities.
- strongly not agree

 not agree

 neutral
 agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
30. I chose this university because of friendly people.
- strongly not agree

 not agree

 neutral
 agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
31. I chose this university because of safety and security.
- strongly not agree

 not agree

 neutral
 agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
32. I chose this university because of beautiful landscape.
- strongly not agree

 not agree

 neutral
 agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
33. I chose this university because of my future employment goal.
- strongly not agree

 not agree

 neutral
 agree

 strongly agree

 not applicable
34. Please comment on any reasons why you chose this university in which to study.

Section C

35. I have encountered difficulties in speaking and comprehending English when going shopping.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |
36. I have encountered difficulties when reading English newspapers.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |
37. I have encountered difficulties when reading English magazines.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |
38. I have encountered difficulties in comprehension when watching English TV programs.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |
39. I have encountered difficulties when reading emails in English.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |
40. I have encountered difficulties when writing emails in English.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |
41. I have encountered difficulties when taking notes in English in class.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |
42. I have encountered difficulties when reading textbooks written in English.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |
43. I have encountered difficulties when reading academic works written in English.
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> strongly not agree | <input type="radio"/> not agree | <input type="radio"/> neutral |
| <input type="radio"/> agree | <input type="radio"/> strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> not applicable |

44. I have encountered difficulties when writing term papers in English for class assignments.
- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
45. I have encountered difficulties when writing essays in English for class assignments.
- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
46. I have encountered difficulties when writing reports in English for class assignments.
- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
47. I have encountered difficulties when giving oral presentations in English in class.
- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
48. I have encountered difficulties when discussing academic content in English in class.
- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
49. I have encountered difficulties when doing tutoring work in English.
- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
50. I have encountered difficulties in the courses of English as a Second Language (ESL).
- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
51. Did you enrol in an ESL program at this university?
- Yes No
52. How long did you study English before coming to Canada?
- 0-3 years 4-7 years 8-10 years more than 10 years
53. Please comment on any difficulties/problems you had with your English when you began to study at this university.

54. Please comment on reasons why you encountered problems/difficulties with English and the extent to which they were resolved.

Section D

55. I encountered difficulties when trying to meet academic requirements determined by the university.

strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

56. I encountered difficulties when choosing a program of studies to meet my objectives.

strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

57. I encountered difficulties when getting academic advice.

strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

58. I encountered difficulties when performing in written assignments.

strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

59. I encountered difficulties when performing in courses requiring mathematical skills.

strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

60. I encountered difficulties in understanding content and information presented in courses.

strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

61. I encountered difficulties in finding help with academic problems.

strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

62. I encountered difficulties when instructors used different teaching methods in class.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

63. I encountered difficulties when using different learning styles.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

64. I encountered difficulties when dealing with teamwork in class.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

65. I encountered difficulties when interacting with professors.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

66. I encountered difficulties in trying to meet my academic expectations.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

67. Please comment on any difficulties/problems you encountered in your academic program.

68. Please comment on reasons why you encountered difficulties/problems in your studies and the extent to which they were resolved.

Section E

69. I encountered difficulties in getting along with Canadian students.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

70. I encountered difficulties in developing Canadian friends.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
71. I encountered difficulties in making friends with other international students.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
72. I encountered difficulties when participating in student activities on campus.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
73. I encountered difficulties in joining Canadian students' social activities.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
74. I encountered difficulties in getting used to western-style food.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
75. I like listening to western music.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
76. I enjoy western sports.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
77. I can adapt myself to the cold winter here.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
78. I can get used to Canadian culture.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable
79. I enjoy the Canadian life style.
 strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

80. I encountered difficulties in adjusting to living here.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

81. I encountered difficulties in finding suitable housing.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

82. I enjoy the medical services on campus.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

83. I enjoy the housing services on campus.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

84. I enjoy the recreational facilities on campus.

- strongly not agree not agree neutral
 agree strongly agree not applicable

85. Please comment on any difficulties/problems you encountered in your social life.

86. Please comment on reasons why you encountered difficulties in your social life and the extent to which they were resolved.

87. Generally, thinking about the first year when you came to Canada, please comment on your experiences related to English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation.

Statement: In the event that you may have a negative emotional response when discussing the transitional issues, you may contact the Student Counselling Services of the University of Saskatchewan.

The website of the Student Counselling Services of the University of Saskatchewan is:
<http://students.usask.ca/wellness/counselling/scs/contact/>

Student Counselling Services: University of Saskatchewan, 104 Qu'Appelle Hall
Addition, Saskatoon SK, S7N 5E8

Tel: 306-966-4920.

Appendix D: A Reminder to Participate in the Survey

Dear Fellow Student,

I am Xiaodong Zhang, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Administration. My dissertation research focuses on Chinese graduate students' reasons for choosing the University of Saskatchewan in which to pursue graduate studies and the transitional issues the students may have encountered, including English language difficulties, academic adjustment, and social adaptation. This study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan's Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) on February 8th, 2010. Questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Beh-REB Committee through the Research Ethics Office at 306-966-2975. Out of town participants may call collect. The recruitment material is being sent out by the International Student Office on my behalf and the ISO has no links to the study.

This is a friendly reminder that the online survey remains on PAWS. If you are interested in this online survey, but have not submitted it yet, would you please locate the online survey on PAWS, read the consent form, and complete and submit the online survey? Thank you so much for your participation. If you have already submitted the online survey, please ignore this email. Thank you for your participation. If you are not interested in this online survey, please also ignore this email. Thank you for taking time to read the email. If you have any further questions or concerns about this research or the online survey, please do not hesitate to contact me, my supervisor, or the Behavioural Research Ethics Board.

Supervisor: Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart

Email: sheila.carr-stewart@usask.ca

Phone: (306)-966-7611

Office ED 3075, Educational Administration

College of Education, University of Saskatchewan,

28 Campus Dr., Saskatoon, SK. S7N 0X1

Student Researcher: Xiaodong Zhang

Phone: (306)-261-7328

Email: xiz459@mail.usask.ca

Yours sincerely,

Xiaodong Zhang

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Educational Administration

College of Education, University of Saskatchewan

Ph: (306) 261-7328 xiz459@mail.usask.ca