

An Exploratory Study of Asian Immigrant Youth's Experiences of Settling into Canada with
the Assistance of Youth Settlement Services

by

Yupei Xia

B. A., Xi'an International Studies University, 2013

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the School of Child and Youth Care

© Yupei Xia, 2015
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be produced in whole or in part, by photocopy or
other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

An Exploratory Study of Asian Immigrant Youth's Experiences of Settling into Canada with
the Assistance of Youth Settlement Services

by

Yupei Xia

B. A., Xi'an International Studies University, 2013

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jessica Ball

School of Child and Youth Care

Supervisor

Dr. Sandrina de Finney

School of Child and Youth Care

Department Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jessica Ball

School of Child and Youth Care

Supervisor

Dr. Sandrina de Finney

School of Child and Youth Care

Department Member

Settlement services for immigrants are a relatively new phenomenon in Canada. There is a dearth of research examining the roles of settlement services in the transition process of immigrant youth. Drawn from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, this interpretive qualitative study explores the experience of Asian immigrant youth who settled in Canada with the assistance of settlement services for youth. This study, conducted in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, involved immigrant youth from China, Korea, and the Philippines, aged 15-24, who participated in semi-structured, audio taped interviews regarding the roles a local settlement services agency (the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society) played in their transitions to Canada. Data were analyzed using an iterative thematic analysis approach. The findings contribute to understanding the ecological context of settlement experiences of youth and shed light on challenges and barriers that Asian immigrant youth may experience in smaller, predominantly white, urban centres such as Victoria. The study also yields insight about the impact of settlement services in the acculturative process of Asian immigrant youth. This research offers a theoretical framework that can inform the design of settlement programs and the delivery of programs in practice. The study also supports several recommendations for settlement services that may be useful for the particular agency and for settlement agencies in general.

Keywords: Asian immigrant youth in Canada, settlement services, cultural adjustments, transition, ecological systems theory

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	II
Abstract	III
Table of Contents	IV
List of Figures	VII
Acknowledgements.....	VIII
Chapter One. Introduction	1
Demographics about Immigration in Canada	3
Background	3
Importance of the Study	4
Guiding Research Questions.....	5
Thesis Overview	7
A Note on Language	9
Summary	10
Chapter Two. Literature Review.....	11
Asian Immigrant Youth	11
Concept of acculturation	11
Multiculturalism.....	11
Challenges facing immigrant youth	14
Cultural differences between the West and the East.....	16
Challenges facing Asian immigrant youth.....	18
Settlement Services	21
Settlement services for immigrant youth	24
Ecological Systems Theory.....	26
Chapter Three. Methodology.....	29
Interpretivist Epistemology.....	29
Researcher Positionality.....	30
Qualitative Research	31
Research Design.....	32
Participant recruitment.....	32
Informed consent	32
Data collection	33
Data analysis	34
Validity	35
Ethical Considerations	36
Research partnership	36
Representation of voice.....	37
Participant confidentiality	38
Voluntary participation	38
Limitations of the Study.....	38
Summary	39

Chapter Four. Data Analysis	40
Participants.....	40
Data Analysis	40
Process of Data Analysis	40
Stage One.....	41
Stage Two	43
Stage Three	44
Stage Four	46
Significant Issues	46
Future Improvements	48
Chapter Five. Findings	50
Theme One: “ <i>Because We Came from Other Countries</i> ”—Settling into Victoria Presents	
a Wide Range of Challenges.....	50
Sub-Theme One: Language	53
Sub-Theme Two: Academics.....	56
Sub-Theme Three: Unfamiliarity.....	58
Sub-Theme Four: Culture	61
Sub-Theme Five: Relationships.....	64
Sub-Theme Six: Difficult feelings	67
Theme Two: “ <i>They Are Nice People Who Help Us</i> ”—Settlement Service providers as	
Helpers	69
Sub-Theme One: Helping people settle down	70
Sub-Theme Two: Helping me and my parents	70
Sub-theme Three: A place of gathering and sharing	71
Theme Three: “ <i>I got help from them</i> ”— The Responsiveness of VIRCS’ Services for	
Youth.....	71
Sub-Theme One: Making friends and practicing English.....	73
Sub-Theme Two: Learning about life skills	74
Sub-Theme Three: Academic support	75
Sub-Theme Four: Support for parents	76
Theme Four: “ <i>What Do I Want?</i> ”— Services That Immigrant Youth Wish to Have in the	
Future	77
Sub-Theme One: Making connections.....	77
Sub-Theme Two: Flexible events	78
Sub-Theme Three: Individual support	78
Sub-theme four: Outdoor activities.....	78
Summary	79
Chapter Six. Discussion	80
Summary of Research Findings	80
Findings in Relation to Previous Literature	82
Immigrant youth.....	82
Settlement services for youth.....	84

Implications for Service Providers.....	87
Directions for Future Research	90
Conclusion	93
References.....	95
Appendices.....	106
Appendix A.....	107
Appendix B	108
Appendix C	109
Appendix D.....	110
Appendix E	111
Appendix F.....	113
Appendix G.....	119
Appendix H.....	121
Appendix I	127

List of Figures

Figure One	27
Figure Two.....	45
Figure Three.....	51
Figure Four.....	72

Acknowledgement

This study would not have been completed without the support of numerous people in my life. I would like to acknowledge the support of my family, committee members, friends, research participants and staff at Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS).

To my Mom and Dad, thank you for your unconditional love and supporting me to pursue my dream of studying abroad. Thank you for traveling to Canada to take care of me when I was busy with schoolwork, practicum and thesis. Thank you for nourishing me with the steamed buns and dumplings that you stored in the freezer before you left Canada. Thank you for always trusting and encouraging me during my two-year education in Canada. I am so lucky to have you two as my parents.

To my committee members, Dr. Jessica Ball and Dr. Sandrina de Finney, I am deeply grateful for your consistent support and guidance. I would like to thank Dr. Jessica Ball for her enormous input, her prompt feedback, her patience and encouragement. I would like to thank Dr. Sandrina de Finney for her enlightening comments, insightful advice, and flexibility. I am truly fortunate to have worked with both of you who sustained my hope of completing this study.

To my friends who have stood beside me throughout this endeavour, thank you for knowing and acknowledging how hard this process has been. To my research participants, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your willingness to participate. I offer deep appreciation to staff at VIRCS who helped me with recruiting participants.

Chapter One. Introduction

Canada has the highest proportion of immigrants to its total resident population in the world (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Thirty-six percent of immigrants in Canada are children and youth aged 24 years and younger (Statistics Canada, 2006). Settlement services are offered to help newly arrived permanent residents and refugees settle, adapt and integrate into Canadian society (Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2003, p. 9). Settlement services encompass a range of programs and provisions that address the challenges newcomers face as they enter and grow into happy and productive members of their chosen community (Prairie Global Management, as cited in Zhao, 2009). Immigrant youth are entitled to services that effectively address their settlement needs and promote their full participation in Canadian society (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).

Existing literature suggests that cultural differences present Asian immigrant youth with a variety of challenges to adapt to their new country, including language barriers (Dion & Dion, 2001), shifting family dynamics (Handford, & Basu, 2010), intergenerational cultural conflict (Janzen, & Ochocka, as cited in Quirke, 2011), separation from family members and friends (Quirke, 2011), racism, discrimination, social exclusion, and a lack of sense of belonging (Cooper, 2003, Delgado et al., 2005, as cited in Ngo 2009). The design of the current research is based on an ecological framework, also known as ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which suggests that an individual's developmental environment is nested in and shaped by multiple, intersecting contexts or systems. For immigrant youth, the adaptation challenges they have encountered are multidimensional and run across various intersecting systems. Ecological systems theory provides a framework for

analyzing the effect of multiple systems, such as family, peer groups, community agencies, economy, immigration and settlement policies, and broader socio-cultural patterns, on shaping an individual's experience. The current study utilized this ecological framework to map out how various settlement services function in the familial, school, community and social contexts of the lives of immigrant youth.

Considerable research has been devoted to understanding settlement services for immigrant adults, or immigrants in general. However, until very recently, little research has examined the functionality of these services, particularly for immigrant youth (Fuligini, Ghuman, Rumbaut & Portes, as cited in Berry et al., 2006). A number of recent studies, including this one, aim to fill this gap. This study is exploratory in nature because the examination of settlement services is still in the preliminary stage and this study attempts to lay the groundwork that will lead to future studies. The purpose of this research is to gain familiarity with the phenomenon of settlement services for immigrant youth and acquire new insight into understanding the settlement experiences of Asian immigrant youth. This examination intends to engage Asian immigrant youth in research, thus providing them with the opportunity to describe issues in relation to immigrating to Canada from their personal perspectives, particularly regarding adaptation challenges and settlement services received from VIRCS. These findings may generate an in-depth exploration of acculturative experiences of Asian immigrant youth and contribute to our understanding of the impact of settlement service providers in their transition process.

Demographics about Immigration in Canada

Canada has one of the highest rates of immigration in the industrialized world, with 18.9% of the population born outside of Canada (Berry, et al., 2006). In addition, 36% of immigrants (390,800) are immigrant and refugee children and youth aged 24 years and younger (Statistics Canada, 2006). Provincially, British Columbia welcomes an average of 40,000 new immigrants each year, and approximately one in six is youth (Strategic Information Branch, Labour Market and Immigration Division, 2010). Geographically, immigrants are more likely to arrive from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and South and Central America (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005). According to Statistics Canada, in 2006, 81.6% of Canadian immigrants came from Asia, with 466,940 of them from China, 303,195 of them from the Philippines and 98,395 of them from Korea. In BC, 25,638 (73.6%) out of 34,823 immigrants (BC Stats, 2011) were from Asia. By focusing on Asian immigrant youth, this study may generate insight regarding one of the largest immigrant youth populations in Canada.

Background

As an international student from China, my personal cross-cultural experience may resonate with those of Asian immigrant youth who settled in Canada, giving me the privilege to view their experiences through an insider's lens to some extent. As a student in Child and Youth Care, an applied human services profession, I desire to take advantage of my genuine acculturative experience to work with youth with cross-cultural experiences as well. I was very fortunate to do my practicums at Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) and Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA), respectively, which not

only helped me gain practical experience working with immigrant youth, but also built on my theoretical knowledge of settlement services for youth. Before commencing my practicum at VIRCS, I expressed interest in collaborating with VIRCS to conduct research about Asian immigrant youth and I was granted consent to recruit participants with the assistance of youth workers at VIRCS. During my practicum at VIRCS, for the purpose of ensuring my research was designed in an ethical, culturally appropriate and youth friendly manner, I had a weekly discussion about my research with Leanne Gislason, former Director of Settlement Programs. Leanne also helped me with drafting my interview questions and conceptualizing my four guiding research questions to ensure my research proceeded in the direction that VIRCS desired to see from my research outcomes. The support letter (see Appendix I) provided by VIRCS assisted me with receiving the ethics review approval from University of Victoria. Moreover, while working with youth workers at VIRCS in the past, I introduced my research to them in great detail, which helped them with clearly and accurately sharing my research information with potential participants. Reciprocally, VIRCS benefited from including my research findings pertaining to youth services at VIRCS in writing grant reports. My research also yielded several recommendations for VIRCS to potentially improve their settlement services and implement services that are tailored to the needs demonstrated by my research participants.

Importance of the Study

Studies regarding immigrants or settlement services have been conducted mostly in major metropolises, such as Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal or Calgary, where a variety of settlement service agencies and ethno-specific services are available to immigrants because

of a high percentage of immigrant population residing in these areas. On the contrary, Victoria is a mid-size, predominantly Caucasian city where 12% out of 330,000 are immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2006). As a result, immigrants in Victoria only have access to two agencies, VIRCS and ICA. Attributable to a comparatively smaller number of immigrants, there is a lack of research that focuses on immigrants in Victoria. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct this research to present and document the experiences of immigrant youth who settled into Victoria in a more systematic way.

My conceptual approach to this topic is grounded in the idea that the subjective nature of human psychological functioning determines that people from different cultural and social backgrounds experience and interpret the world differently (Li, 2009). Every culture has distinct characteristics that make it different from every other culture (Xie, 2007). Therefore, youth coming from different countries may have varied acculturative experiences and how they interpret their cross-cultural experiences may vary, too. Presenting these personal narratives contributes to expressing experiences in personal and sociocultural contexts from their personal perspectives, which allows me, the researcher, to generate new theoretical understandings relevant to this area of study (Brunner, 1990; Igoa, 1995; Nieto, 2000). Moreover, unlike most research that either investigates cross-cultural experiences of immigrant youth or settlement services, the intention of this study is to speak directly with immigrant youth who have settled in Victoria and have experienced settlement services from VIRCS.

Guiding Research Questions

This present research is conducted in collaborative partnership with VIRCS to recruit

research participants from their agency. Given that Victoria is a mid-sized city with 12% of its population being immigrants, the number of immigrant youth who have accessed services at VIRCS and self-identify as Asian is very limited. Youth workers at VIRCS have known some of the potential participants for years, thus it is likely that they may be able to pinpoint some participants based on the commentaries made about the youth services. Therefore, the confidentiality of research participants may be undermined.

Although a substantial part of my research is dedicated to examine how immigrant youth thought and felt about the services they received at VIRCS, I did not include interview questions that asked what was missing or what did not work regarding the assistances provided at VIRCS for the following two reasons. First, most youth have established close relationships with VIRCS staff and they wish to maintain such relationships and receive continuous support from VIRCS. Therefore, they may refrain from answering questions about what services were not helpful at VIRCS for the fear that commenting on youth services would jeopardize the relationships between them and the youth workers. Second, participants are fully aware of the risks to their confidentiality prior to the interviews, so they may withdraw from commenting on the youth services at VIRCS for the purpose of not being identified by VIRCS staff. In order to obtain rich and in-depth data from the interviews, I switch the focus to examine what services research participants would like to have in the future, which helps service providers design programs tailored to the needs of this target population. My four guiding research questions are rooted in the goal to contribute to understanding how Asian immigrant youth adapt to living in Canada with the assistance of settlement services.

The four guiding research questions are:

1. What are the challenges or barriers that Asian immigrant youth have encountered while settling into Greater Victoria and how do they deal with those challenges?
2. What role do settlement services and settlement service providers play in immigrant youth's process of transitioning to Canada?
3. What do Asian immigrant youth find helpful about the settlement services and in what ways do they find them helpful?
4. What kinds of services would Asian immigrant youth (my research participants) like to have available to them in the future?

Semi-structured interview questions were designed to address these guiding questions for the hope of eliciting in-depth information from participants. These guiding research questions also provide an overall structure for my research findings. By using a thematic analysis approach to analyze data, I intend to develop four major themes with sub-themes based on the four guiding research questions. Below is my thesis overview which summarizes the layout of my research paper.

Thesis Overview

In the first chapter I outlined what is known about this research topic and what is missing in the literature. Following that, I explained where my interest in studying Asian immigrant youth stemmed from and offered an overview of the demographics about immigration in Canada. This chapter also set the stage for coming chapters by describing why this research study is needed and the guiding questions this research attempts to address.

Chapter Two provides a literature review which is comprised of two main parts. The

first part examines challenges that Asian immigrant youth have encountered making adaptations to the host country (Canada) and the second part concerns settlement services for immigrant youth. This chapter also details the theoretical framework, the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which guided my methodology and research design.

The third chapter outlines my research methodology, which consists of four sections. The first section is a description of my epistemological orientation and my positionality as the researcher. The second part is an overview of my research methodology, including participant recruitment, data collection method, and data analysis approach. The next section is a discussion of validity and ethical considerations involved in this research study. The chapter concludes with a summary of the limitations of the research methodology.

Chapter Four is a detailed description of my data analysis process. The chapter starts with introducing research participants. The next part explains how I analyzed data in an evolving process by using the thematic analysis approach. Examples of how I constructed themes from a close reading of the data are also provided. This chapter ends with a discussion of salient issues arising from my data analysis process.

Chapter Five reports four major themes in relation to the four guiding research questions. The first theme demonstrates that participants encountered a wide range of challenges settling to Victoria and how they dealt with these challenges. The second and the third themes show that participants received various forms of support from VIRCS. The fourth theme illustrates the kinds of services that research participants wish to have in the future.

The last chapter is a discussion about research findings. This chapter starts with

summarizing research findings based on the ecological systems theory Bronfenbrenner (1979). The next part examines major findings in relation to relevant literature on Asian immigrant youth's settlement experiences in Canada. The last part highlights the implications that practitioners could take away in their future practices of working with immigrant youth and directions for future research.

A Note on Language

I use the term Asian immigrant youth throughout this paper as an all-encompassing term which includes youth coming from Eastern Asia, Southeast Asia, Southern Asia, West Central Asia, Oceania and the Middle East. This research focuses on immigrant youth aged 15 to 24, who were born outside Canada, with no more than seven years of residence in Canada and who immigrated to Canada from one of the aforementioned regions in Asia.

The term "immigrant adaptation" is the process through which individuals seek to satisfy their needs, pursue their goals and manage demands encountered after settling into a new society (Ryan, Dooley, & Benson, 2008). Therefore, immigrant youth need to develop functional abilities to perform newly defined roles in the host society, such as the abilities to meet new academic challenges, learn new expectations from their schools, teachers and parents, gain acceptance into new peer groups, and develop new kinds of social competencies (Santos, as cited in Kwak, & Rudmin, 2014; Seat, 1998). They also have to cope with their present conditions and prepare for their future.

The term "settlement" is defined as

A long-term dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equity and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to

the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities (Seat, 2000, p. 9).

Settlement could be seen as the period of adjustment that occurs following a migrant or refugee's arrival in a new country, as they become established and independent in their new society (The Department of Immigration and Citizenship of Australia, as cited in Zhao, 2009).

With a particular focus on youth settlement services provided by VIRCS, I have outlined a number of programs that are available at VIRCS. The Enable Program is designed to support newcomer children and youth aged 6-25 since 1997 ("Children, Youth & Young Adults," n.d., para. 2). Immigrant youth between the ages of 8 to 24 have access to Homework Club & Tutoring, Youth Activity Night, Program of Life Skills and Youth Strides Summer Camp. Aside from programs, immigrant youth also have access to one-on-one support from youth workers at VIRCS.

Summary

This introductory chapter lays out the foundation for the exploration of Asian immigrant youth who settled in Victoria and the settlement services they received from VIRCS. The present study is designed to examine the adaptation challenges that immigrant youth from Asia have experienced and how they deal with these challenges. It also focuses on the impact of settlement services in assisting immigrant youth with adjusting to their lives in Victoria. The next chapter contains literature pertaining to the settlement experience of immigrant youth and settlement services in Canada.

Chapter Two. Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of literature relevant to the current study. Summon, the search engine in the University of Victoria's library and a collection of documents provided by my committee members and my practicum supervisor at VIRCS were used to locate relevant literature. Key words searched included: immigrant youth, Asian immigrant youth, acculturation challenges, ecological systems theory, settlement services, immigrants and settlement services. Literature on immigrant youth in Canada and settlement services is included in the review.

This chapter is divided into three sections: The first section discusses relevant literature on Asian immigrant youth with a particular emphasis on the adaptation challenges they have encountered upon arrival in Canada. The following section reviews literature on settlement services, including theories that inform the delivery of settlement services and the models of settlement services that are most commonly used by service providers. The last section details the theoretical framework that guides the design of my research.

Asian Immigrant Youth

Concept of acculturation. The concept of acculturation has been widely referenced in studying immigrant youth. The process of acculturation refers to changes that take place as the result of continual contact between two or more cultures (Berry, 2003). It entails cultural and psychological changes. Cultural changes refer to alterations in a group's customs, and in their economic and political life. Psychological changes include an individual's shifting attitude toward the acculturation process, cultural identity, and his/her social behaviour in relation to the groups in contact (Phinney, 2003, as cited in Berry et al., 2006).

An acculturation space is created when individuals express the degree to which they wish to maintain their heritage culture and the degree to which they seek involvement with the larger society (Berry et al., 2006). A variety of acculturation frameworks and strategies have been provided by many scholars to understand the process of acculturation. Berry (1980) proposes four basic stages of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation/segregation, and marginalization. This model has been widely adopted in studying the cross-cultural experiences of immigrants. According to Berry's (1980) proposal, assimilation refers to establishing positive relations with the groups in larger society and with no interest in maintaining traditional culture. The separation/segregation stage describes a preference for maintaining traditional culture, but rejecting other groups within larger society. Integration suggests a positive attitude toward multiple cultures, whereas marginalization entails no preference for any culture. Although it is often the case that acculturation and assimilation are used interchangeably in the literature, acculturation is different from assimilation, as assimilation is either just the "terminal stop" in the process of acculturation (Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo, 1992), or a sort of "perfect" form of acculturation (Pires & Stanton, 2000).

Based on theories concerning acculturation, studies have found "many immigrants actually desire to maintain a substantial part of their cultural heritage and identity in the society of settlement" (Berry & Sam, 1997, p. 305). Under the influence of the official Canadian policy of multiculturalism, in general, immigrants are encouraged to maintain their cultural identity while participating in the host society (Berry, 2003). Duan and Vu (2000) argue that most immigrants are characterized by selective acculturation or functional acculturation, which "does not necessarily require individuals to disclaim their cultural values

or disown their ethnic identities” (p. 226). Orozco, Thompson, Rapes and Montgomery (1993) explain that an individual may take up certain traits from the new culture, leave some values behind, but retain other native cultural practices (p. 150). However, the degree to which immigrants acculturate to the host country varies greatly. This paper acknowledges that each immigrant youth holds his/her unique acculturative process, so a qualitative research approach serves to take account of each participant’s own personal story in great depth.

Multiculturalism. Settlement and integration services take place within both macro and micro scales within a country’s political, social and cultural discourse (Gyepi-Garbrah, Walker, & Garcea, 2014). Canada has adopted multiculturalism as its official federal policy at the macro level (Fleras & Elliott, 2002, as cited in Gyepi-Garbrah, Walker, & Garcea, 2014). In 1971, Canada was the first country in the world to implement a policy of multiculturalism which states that:

The government will support and encourage the various cultural and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for all (Government of Canada, 1971).

The Multiculturalism Act (1988) gave formal and concrete meaning to these general ideas. The Act declared that the policy of the Government of Canada is to:

Recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage (Canadian Multicultural Act, p. 4).

The essence of this policy is to advocate for the maintenance and development of heritage cultures; intercultural sharing and the elimination of barriers to the full and equitable participation of all Canadian in the larger society (Berry, 2013). Although Baubock (2005, as cited in Winter, 2015) suggests that “no other Western country has gone as far as Canada in adopting multiculturalism not only as a policy toward minorities but also as a basic feature of shared identity,” the egalitarian idea of multiculturalism raises concerns over racial and religious discrimination (Makarenko, 2010). Gunew (2004) claims that multiculturalism actually insulates a less overt kind of racism called “differentialist racism,” which hinges upon the “visibility of differences” (p. 80). Canadian multiculturalism has had a shaky standing under Stephen Harper’s Conservative government. Abu-Laban (2014) argues that the current government reduces the initial aim of multiculturalism, particularly the equal participation of Canada’s ethnic minorities (p. 150). Griffith (2013) states that the internal administrative reforms over the past years will lead to the abolition of multiculturalism and instead a creation of “a strong, common narrative citizenship” (p. 100). The discussion of Canadian multiculturalism is provided for the purpose of linking the impact of political decisions to the delivery of settlement services. Settlement service providers must move forward against the policy backdrop of a multicultural society. Instead of probing into settlement services at the macro level, this research shifts its focus to examine the active construction of settlement services at the micro level, where immigrants have direct contact.

Challenges facing immigrant youth. Settling into a new country as an adolescent encompasses changes in almost every aspect of daily life, placing a wide range of societal demands and expectations on the new arrivals (Dion & Dion, 2001). Adolescents undergo

significant developmental transitions and changes, such as puberty, sexual maturation, psychological maturation, shifting family and social roles, increased levels of independence and identity formation during this particular period of life (Chuang, 2010). The process of adapting to a new culture has been closely associated with stressful life experiences. For immigrant youth, their experiences are compounded by complex linguistic, academic, acculturative, psychosocial, social, emotional and economic difficulties.

Specifically, immigrant youth who are not fluent in English experience a verbal communication barrier which can trigger a sense of psychological and spiritual alienation from others (Rutledge, as cited in Nguyen, 2006). For immigrant youth, the inability to function well in school due to limited English proficiency may reduce self-confidence, create a feeling of loss of control and cause isolation and discrimination among peers at school. Being socialized in their country of origin during childhood and maintaining attitudes and behaviours associated with their family cultures can result in social difficulties for immigrant youth (Berry et al., 2006, as cited in Closson, Darwich, Hymel, & Waterhouse, 2013). Exposure to the reality of the new culture may lead immigrant youth to distance themselves from bonding with their cultures of origin. As a result, immigrant youth may face grief and a sense of “letting go” of their old environment (Nguyen, 2006). Ethnic discrimination, which refers to hurtful and unfair treatment because of one’s ethnic group membership (Greene, Way, & Pahl, as cited in Closson et al., 2013), can be damaging for the development of a positive ethnic identity. Immigrant youth from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa face racial stereotypes, particularly those identified as Blacks and Muslims in the school system, the labour market, media and in confrontations with the police force (Madibbo, 2005, as cited in

Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2010). Consequently, negative emotions, such as low self-esteem (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003) and feelings of isolation or depression (Closson et al., 2013) are likely to be experienced by immigrant youth. Economic factors also aggravate the situation faced by immigrant youth. As a family, they may have difficulties securing adequate housing, earning sufficient income and seeking employment (Salehi, 2010), and the lack of financial resources at the post-secondary level is standing in the way of immigrant youth's educational success (Kelly, 2014). According to Ferrer, Picot and Riddell (2014), the current poverty rate of a recent immigrant is nearly double that recorded in the early 1980s and 2.7 times greater than that of the general population (p. 850).

Cultural differences between the West and the East. As a result of settling into another country that operates drastically different from their country of origin, Asian immigrant youth may experience a significant culture shock, which may trigger a cultural clash. Clash of cultures refers to the ways that immigrant youth are caught between two or more worlds: immigrant culture (East) and host culture (West) (Ngo, 2008).

The dominant cross-cultural differences between Eastern and Western cultures are manifested in differences between languages, religions, traditions, socio-political systems, worldviews, ideologies, and family dynamics. According to Ghosh and Guzder (2011), Christianity is a predominant religion in the West, while Asians embrace Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Muslim, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism (despite the fact that Christianity is rapidly growing in popularity in Asian countries). The difference between individualism and collectivism is often addressed in studies that investigate cultural differences between the West and the East. Individualistically oriented, North American culture tends to place more

emphasis on individual autonomy, equality with parents, and asserting oneself (Yeh, Kim, Pituc, & Atkins, 2008). On the contrary, the ideology of collectivism in Asian countries, especially in China, is inclined to focus on filial piety, parental authority, restrained emotional expression, lifelong obligation to family, and family harmony (Ho, 1996; Yee, Huang, & Lew, 1998). For instance, one of the notable differences is that family dynamics within Chinese families often undergo a huge shift from mutual dependency and esteem for hierarchy to individual independence and equality of family members.

Asian immigrant youth may experience acculturative stress or negative reactions to the tensions resulting from the contact between two or more different cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, as cited in Yeh, Kim, Pituc, & Atkins, 2008). For example, in addition to learning English and/or French, Asian immigrant youth arriving in Canada must engage in independent thinking and decision making in order to adapt to a new school system (Yeh, & Drost, 2002, as cited in Yeh et al., 2008). Cultural conflict may also occur between home and school contexts (Ma & Yeh, 2005), because many parents expect their children to maintain their native cultural traditions and languages at home, whereas in schools, youth are expected to learn and speak the dominant language and adapt to mainstream culture. For immigrant youth from Asia, interactions with peers, friends, teachers or people outside institutions require them to learn to attend to others by adapting to multiple social roles and interpersonal obligations within a cultural context that they are not familiar with (Yeh & Hunter, 2004).

However, the cultural difference between Asian and Western countries does not imply that every country in Asia or North America possesses the same culture. On the contrary, even though commonalities are found among countries in the same continent, cultures differ

from one family, region and country to another. Asians are a diverse group and differ in their origins, languages, cultures, socioeconomic status, educational attainments, and immigrant experiences (Chui & Ring & Ho, 1991, as cited in Yeh et al., 2005). Alvarez, Kohatsu, Liu and Yeh (2002, as cited in Yeh et al., 2005) suggest that race and ethnicity play important parts in the identity development and acculturation process of immigrant youth from Asia. As such, it is impossible to make generalizations that can be applicable to every country in Asia. Given that every culture has its distinct characteristics that make it different from every other culture (Xie, 2007), youth coming from different countries may have varied acculturative experiences and how they interpret their cross-cultural experiences may vary, too. Therefore, presenting the personal narratives of youth enables them to tell their particular experiences in their sociocultural contexts, which contributes to understanding the complex and varied cross-cultural experiences among immigrant youth from Asia.

Challenges facing Asian immigrant youth. Cultural differences present Asian immigrant youth with a variety of adaptation challenges. The challenges encountered by immigrant youth are consistently reflected in the ecological framework, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), which suggests that the acculturation process of immigrant youth is shaped by the interactions with various levels of socio-ecological factors related to migration and acculturation. More specifically, their cross-cultural experiences are embedded in family, school, community and the larger Canadian societal contexts in which they interact with their host country, Canada.

At the family level, given that children tend to acquire English fluency faster than their parents, immigrant youth are expected to act as interpreters for the family, which multiplies

their responsibility not only to themselves but to the family as well (Handford, & Basu, 2010). Given the generally collectivistic nature of most Asian cultures and a strong emphasis on filial piety, many immigrant youth are expected to help the family adjust to live in Canada and may very often prioritize family interest over personal ones (Kwan, 2000, as cited in Yeh et al., 2008), which tends to limit the time they spend with their friends and on academic works (Yeh et al., 2013). As a result, many immigrant youth have to cope with the stress of adapting to different roles shaped by shifting family dynamics. Intergenerational cultural conflict may occur as parental expectations may differ from the expectations of peers and dominant Canadian culture, requiring them to negotiate the conflicting values of family and peers (Janzen & Ochocka, 2003, as cited in Quirke, 2011). In addition, many immigrant youth are challenged to choose and manage the competing demands and values of their culture of origin and the dominant Canadian values of individuality and independence (Yeh et al., 2005). In the transition period, Asian immigrant youth also face the challenge of coming to terms with separation from family members and friends left behind in their countries of origin, and the separation may cause difficult feelings of loss, grief, loneliness and isolation (Quirke, 2011).

Within school and community contexts, Asian immigrant youth are also likely to undergo a difficult time of regaining a sense of belonging as a visible ethnic minority who may be exposed to racism, discrimination, social exclusion and other forms of marginalization. Research has shown that immigrant youth from Asia are more likely than youth of European backgrounds to be excluded or victimized by peers and teachers because of their ethnicity and language competency (Li, 2009, as cited in Closson et al., 2013). Ngo

(2009) found that many immigrant youth express a feeling of not fitting into Canada and they attribute this to the limited access to culturally and linguistically competent support at school and in the community (Ngo, 2009). Ethno-specific services at school or in the community are not available to immigrants from every ethnicity. Because of the limited language proficiency and cultural differences, immigrant youth may find mainstream services inadequate in responding to their adjustment needs. The feeling of being left out can undermine their adjustment process and diminish psychological functioning, self-esteem, mental, emotional and physical health (Neighbors & Jackson, 2003, as cited in Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009). Consequently, Asian immigrant youth report low levels of participation in school and community activities.

Moreover, a significant number of children of immigrant families grow up in households that are immensely impacted by socioeconomic issues such as unemployment and underemployment, social isolation, and poverty (Cooper; Delgado et al.; Statistics Canada, as cited in Ngo 2009). Statistics have shown that one in two newcomer families in British Columbia live in poverty during their first 5 years in Canada (First Call, 2011). Immigrant youth are more than twice as likely to live in poverty, compared to Canadian-born children (Beiser, Hou, Hyman & Tousignant, 2002). Higher likelihood of poverty among immigrant families has confined their opportunities for education, employment and social support (Raphael, 2010, as cited in Hilario, Vo, Johnson, & Saewyc, 2014). Therefore, the impact of economic and political contexts on youth settlement experiences also need to be addressed. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory posits that environmental factors interact with proximal factors, such as family, school, peers, to shape the outcomes of an individual's

development. This framework emphasizes the interrelatedness that exists among factors at different levels and contributes to understand the full-scale developmental context that youth are embedded in.

Settlement Services

Canadian immigration policy seeks to attract “the best from the world to help build a nation” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012, as cited in Kelly, 2014). In Canada, all senior levels of government (i.e., federal and provincial) and many municipal governments have developed, or are implementing, settlement and integration programs to attract and retain newcomers (Garcea, 2006, as cited in Gyepi-Garbrah, Walker, & Carcea, 2014).

Settlement may be defined as:

A long-term dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equity and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities (Seat, 2000, p. 9).

As previously stated, settlement can be seen as the period of adjustment that occurs following a migrant or refugee’s arrival in a new country, as they become established and independent in their new society (The Department of Immigration and Citizenship of Australia, as cited in Zhao, 2009). The availability of adequate settlement services to meet the needs of newcomers is critical to the resettlement process. However, there are significant gaps in the implementation of settlement services and policies. Studies have found deficiencies in services for immigrants because of a lack of sufficient resources, narrow service mandates due to government funding cutbacks, a lack of collaborative working relationships between

services providers and increased competition between agencies and organizations for limited government funding (Makarenko, 2010). Settlement services are provided to foster the integration of new immigrants, which is a complex process that entails the adjustment of immigrants and their children to the economic, social, legal and cultural life in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006, as cited in Zhao, 2009). My study explores some of these gaps in the implementation of youth services at a local settlement agency in Victoria. My study also examines how immigrant youth benefit from the youth settlement services.

Canada does not have a unified approach to providing services and programs for new immigrants. Settlement services and programs are often offered by the federal government, provincial governments, local and municipal governments, and by non-government organizations (Makarenko, 2010). The most recognized model of settlement in Canadian immigration literature underlines three stages of adjustment following migration in relation to immigrants' needs at each stage (Mwarigha, 2002). In the initial settlement stage, services including translation, interpretation, language instruction, reception and orientation should be provided to meet immigrants' immediate needs. In the intermediate stage, access to institutions and programs is essential in developing employment-related skills, bridging cultural differences and facilitating labour market integration. Other services at this stage consist of health services, housing, language training and legal assistance. The final stage of settlement is the long-term struggle for politically, socially, economically and culturally equal participation in all spheres of life. Citizenship and Immigration Canada funds an extensive network of immigrant settlement services that addresses topics such as information and orientation, language and skills, labour market access, welcoming communities, policy and

program development.

The model for settlement services can be broadly divided into theoretically informed models and practice-based models (George, 2002). The first category of theory-based models consists of cultural competence models, ecological models, and empowerment models that inform settlement practices. The eco-system model (Morales, 1981) is seen as the most appropriate for working with newcomers from developing countries as it recognizes the reality of neo-colonialism and institutional racism and works at the individual and systemic level to empower newcomers. Neo-colonialism is the practice of using capitalism, business globalization and cultural imperialism to influence a country. Neo-colonialism describes the socio-economic and political control that can be exercised economically, linguistically and culturally (Idowu, 2014). The promotion of the neo-colonialist Canada facilitates the cultural assimilation of the colonised people. In the post-colonial era, neo-colonialism continues to apply its cultural, linguistic, social and political influences to new immigrants in Canada. The empowerment model is useful in that it builds on strengths and enhances the capacity of newcomers (Hirayama & Cetingok, 1998). Another stream of theory-oriented models centers on stages of migration and acculturation and grapples with critical variables affecting newcomers' adjustments at each stage. Cox (1995) states that the migration process involves four stages: pre-movement, transition, resettlement and integration. Nonetheless, Herberg (1998) proposes that acculturation is an ongoing phenomenon that can take several generations.

The practice-based settlement service models include three levels: reception and basic-level services, labour-market entry support and specialized settlement services. A

structural difference has also been brought up between ethno-specific agencies and mainstream agencies (Pinto & Sawicki, 1997). Ethno-specific agencies typically accommodate their services to the particular communities they are serving, while mainstream agencies share the dominant culture value system and may struggle to engage culturally diverse communities (Yee, Marshall, & Vo, 2014).

Settlement services for immigrant youth. Immigrant youth have established a strong presence in Canadian society. Immigrant youth from various regions and countries speak different languages, possess unique characteristics and have varied adjustment needs depending on where they are in their process of integration. As illustrated in the section regarding challenges faced by immigrant youth, the needs of this population are complex and multifaceted and require services from all sectors.

Although a considerable amount of research has been devoted to understanding the generic picture of settlement services for immigrants, much less has addressed services developed particularly for immigrant youth (Fulgini, 2001, Ghuman, 2003, Rumbaut & Portes, 2001, as cited in Berry, et al., 2006). This lack has simulated a number of recent studies, as well as the present study to examine the role of settlement services in assisting immigrant youth with addressing challenges and barriers resulted from immigration.

A literature review on existing settlement services for immigrant youth reveals that most practices tend to focus on social empowerment, academic skill development, language training, school-work transition, leadership development, recreation, cultural orientation, counselling and harm reduction via approaches like empowerment, prevention, case management and ecological model. Most agencies that provide settlement services have

adopted a holistic, client-centered, case management approach that aims to strengthen internal resilience of immigrant youth (Chuang, 2010). In general, settlement services for immigrant youth are designed to cover six main areas. First, immigrant youth are provided with one-on-one support, workshops and referrals to suitable programs and agencies. Second, they receive step-by-step educational advancement. Third, settlement agencies offer short-term, practical, small group language classes that prepare clients for low-skilled work to meet their immediate employment needs. Fourth, one-on-one or group counselling is provided through settlement agencies. Another focus of service providers is to set up positive peer role models among immigrant youth. Last but not least, activities that encourage clients to participate in their communities are offered.

However, the lack of an integrative conceptual framework and the inconsistency of terminology, along with the growing complexity of youth development programs make it difficult to categorize existing approaches of settlement services for immigrant youth. Small and Memmo (2004) group settlement services into three aspects: prevention, resiliency and positive/community youth development. The prevention approach is commonly used to reduce or eliminate risk factors and increase protective factors among at-risk youth. Despite its popularity, the prevention approach is seen as deficit-based as it stresses emphasis on youth problems, not strength (Benson, 1997). The resilience approach helps youth cope with negative situations and fosters a positive development outcome. Nonetheless, Hagan and McCarthy (1997) argue that this approach fails to consider environmental conditions and structural limitations, such as racism, discrimination, social isolation, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and child abuse at home that may negatively impact youth. The positive youth

development model concentrates on strength, competencies, youth participation and active participation.

While each of these models provides valuable insights into certain aspects of the experiences of immigrant youth, none of them provides an overall picture of how various factors intersect to shape the settlement process for immigrant youth. Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), addressed in the following section, provides a framework for understanding how individual, familial, community, social, economic and political factors interact in the settlement process.

Ecological Systems Theory

My research design is based on an ecological framework, also known as ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which suggests that an individual's developmental environment is nested in and shaped by multiple, intersecting contexts or systems.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework for human development was first introduced in the 1970s as a conceptual model and became a theoretical model in the 1980s. The heart of Bronfenbrenner's theory remains the ecological-stressing, person-context interrelatedness.

Below is a graphic of the model of ecological systems that are involved in youth development (see Figure One).

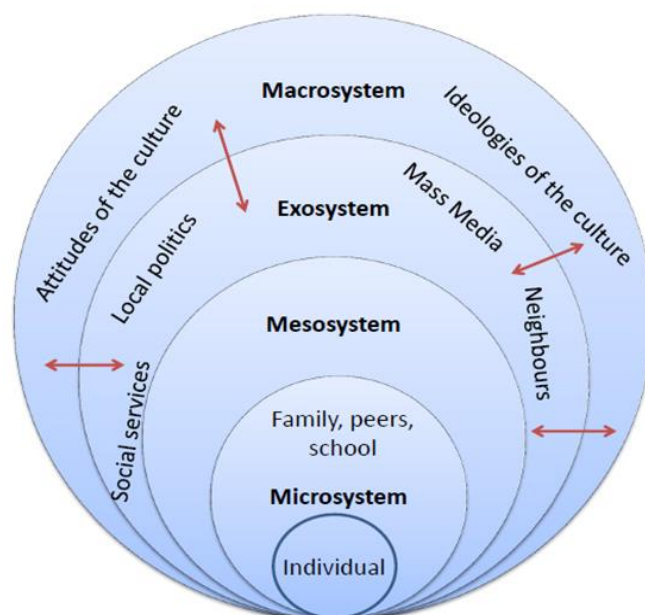


Figure One. The model of ecological systems theory. This model demonstrates the ecological systems involved in youth development.

For immigrant youth, adaptation challenges are multidimensional and run across various intersecting systems. Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) provides a framework for analyzing how multiple systems such as the family, peer groups, community agencies, economic factors, immigration and settlement policies, and broader socio-cultural patterns, among others, shape an individual's experience. My study will utilize this ecological framework to map out how various settlement services manifest themselves in different layers of contexts.

The Microsystem is of the closest proximity to Asian immigrant youth and contains structures with which youth have direct contact, including family, school, peers, and neighbourhood (Berk, 2000). The next system is the mesosystem, that connects two or more systems in which youth live, such as the connection between youth and their parents, teachers, neighbourhoods and churches, and between the youth and a settlement agency (Swick & Williams, 2006).

The Exosystem is the larger social system in which youth do not directly function. Factors in this layer impact youth development through interacting with other variables in the Microsystem (Berk, 2000). For example, youth have access to settlement services which are seen as a form of social support they receive outside of family. Moreover, local, provincial and federal politics and policies do have an impact on immigrant youth. Starting in 2014, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), immigrant youth in Victoria have had access to settlement workers in schools (SWIS), who act as liaisons between schools and the families of youth.

The outermost layer is the Macrosystem, which is composed of cultural values, customs and laws (Berk, 2000). It refers to the overall pattern of ideology that characterizes a given society with the existence of various societal groups, such as social classes, ethnic groups or religious affiliates (Mclaren & Hawe, 2005). The influence of the Macrosystem permeates into every layer of context and helps hold together the many threads of the lives of youth.

Drawing on ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), I have designed a methodological approach that has enabled me to respond to the contextual ecologies in shaping the experiences of immigrant youth. For instance, I constructed interview questions that address the ecologically and mutually interactive factors in their cross-cultural experiences, and my research partnership with a settlement agency enabled me to document the multi-faceted aspects of settlement services for immigrant youth.

Chapter Three. Methodology

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section describes my epistemological orientation, my positionality as the researcher and my alliance with existing paradigms of qualitative research. The next section is an overview of the research design, including participant recruitment process, informed consent, methods used for data collection, approaches to data analysis, and qualitative research validity. The third section is about ethical considerations in terms of conducting research with immigrant youth, such as representation of voice, participant confidentiality, voluntary participation and ethics of partnership with an agency. The chapter ends with a discussion of limitations of the research study.

Interpretivist Epistemology

This research study is theoretically located in the interpretivist epistemology, which acknowledges that reality is understood subjectively and meaning is created through the interactions between the researcher and participants (Ellis & Chen, 2013). The idea that understanding is dialogical suggests that each conversation involves an interpreter and another person (Soganci, 2013). As the interpreter of this study, I attempt to interpret the text of the interview by respecting the multiple meanings of participants' stories and developing an awareness of their complexity by avoiding one dimensional certainty (Caputo, 1987, as cited in Soganci, 2013). Interpretivism holds that multiple realities exist and that participants are the experts of their lived experiences (Ellis & Chen, 2013). Through an interpretivist lens, I view things as experienced, perceived and symbolized by individuals instead of seeing things existing in an objective world (Ferguson, 1993). As the researcher for this study, I am

interested in participants' multiple interpretations and reflections of their cross-cultural experiences of settling into Victoria.

Researcher Positionality

My positionality as a researcher is congruent with an interpretivist orientation. I occupy overlapping roles as both an outsider and insider. I completed my practicum with the Enable Program at Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) from January to May. My practicum placement at VIRCS was a four-month internship for me to integrate the knowledge gained at school into a practice-based setting. VIRCS is a non-profit organization, founded in November 1989, which helps immigrants, refugees, new Canadian citizens and visible minorities settle and adapt into new lives in Greater Victoria ("About VIRCS," n.d., para. 1). Offered since 1997, the Enable Program at VIRCS is designed to support newcomer children and youth aged 6-25 since 1997 ("Children, Youth & Young Adults" n.d., para. 2). During my practicum, I have established connections with some prospective participants for my study. However, I have not spoken with any of the youth about my research project, but only worked with them in the context of my practicum. This ensured that the youth saw me as a youth worker, not a researcher who was going to conduct a research on them.

The following factors combined together position me as a partial insider in this study: my ethnic identity, my experience of settling into Canada as a young adult and international student, and my experience of working with Asian immigrant youth in the context of settlement services. My prior relationship with potential participants is likely to increase the level of trust shared between participants and me, which may make research participants feel more comfortable with deeply describing difficult or emotionally laden experiences to me

during the interview (Adler & Adler, 2002, as cited in Knox & Burkard, 2009). However, I am aware that my personal cross-cultural experience and my previously constructed assumptions about Asian immigrant youth may influence how I develop interview questions, and how I interpret and analyze the data. Therefore, research questions are developed in consistency with relevant literature on immigrant youth from Asia. While analyzing data, I will adhere to the meanings conveyed by participants and take account of the uniqueness of each participant's settlement experience.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research can be generically defined as “A situated activity, which locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 4). Given that youth from diverse backgrounds have varied cross-cultural experiences, this research focuses on exploring each youth participant's unique experience of settling into Victoria and presenting their stories in their personal and broad ecological contexts. Qualitative approaches contribute to the discovery and exploration of individual experiences and meanings as proposed by Kurtz, Lindsey, Jarvis, Williams, and Nackerud (2000):

Qualitative methodologies are the most appropriate approach for studying perceptions, subjective experiences, and the meanings of those experiences as they allow researchers to capture the richness and depth of information that is lacking in quantitative approaches (p. 384).

As such, this study aimed to generate information about the settlement experiences of Asian immigrant youth and the settlement services they received during the transition process.

Research Design

This section outlines how the research study unfolded, including the process of participant recruitment, informed consent, data collection methods, data analysis approach, and issues regarding validity and reliability.

Participant recruitment. Six immigrant youths, including three male youths and three female youths, all of whom self-identified as having an Asian cultural heritage were recruited for the study. Geographically, I consider Asia as consisting of Eastern Asia, Southeast Asia, Southern Asia, West Central Asia, Oceania and the Middle East. Therefore, for this study, youth who were born in one of the aforementioned regions met the first sampling criteria. Second, the youth were all between the ages of 15 to 24 and with no more than 7 years of residence in Canada. Also, all participants received services from VIRCS and were willing to share personal stories in considerable detail.

Participants were recruited with the assistance of youth workers at VIRCS. Upon receiving research ethics review approval from the University of Victoria, youth workers at VIRCS posted my research poster on the VIRCS Facebook homepage and VIRCS Youth Night, which were the platforms to disseminate my research information. Youth workers at VIRCS also shared the information with youth who came to the agency. My research posters were also posted on the bulletin board at VIRCS's office. Youth who were interested in doing this research were encouraged to contact me by phone or email.

Informed consent. Once the initial responses to my research posters began to come in, I followed up with potential participants via email, phone or in person, to determine if they met all the sampling criteria. After screening out ineligible participants, I arranged a meeting

at each participant's convenience of time and location in order to discuss the full details of my research with them, including explaining the participant consent form and the parameters of confidentiality in everyday language. Participants were also given copies of draft interview questions in advance to the interview, to allow them time to consider the nature of their participation. For participants under 19 years old, information letters were provided to their parents with my contact information. I also informed them that their parents were welcome to contact me if they have any questions or concerns regarding the research. Participants over 19 years old either signed the participant consent form in advance to the interview, or on the scheduled day of interview. Youth less than 19 years old were asked to bring signed parental consent forms with them on the scheduled day of interview, and all of them did so.

Data collection. I used semi-structured individual interview as my data collection method. Each individual interview was audio-taped and was between 20 minutes to 1 hour in length. The semi-structured interview is a well-established and widely used research method to systematically gather rich and contextualized information (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, Seidman, 2006, as cited in Li, 2009). Kvale (as cited in Soganci, 2013) proposes that the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, and to uncover their lived world (p. 1).

The protocol for a semi-structured interview generally involves the use of open-ended questions based on the central focus of the study (Knox & Burkard, 2009). A semi-structured interview may also seek specific information regarding some of the driving research questions. Interviewers remain flexible with the flow of the conversation throughout the interview and may probe individual participant stories in more details (DiCicco-Bloom &

Crabtree, 2006). In-depth interviews allow people to explain their experiences, attitudes, feelings and definitions of the situation in their own terms and in ways that are meaningful to them (Hoonard, 2012). Interview questions were not the same for each interviewee and I responded to the content of each interview as it progressed, and probed for more depth as needed (Hill et al., 2005). Using an iterative process, themes that emerged from early interviews were included in later interviews, in order to build understandings of Asian immigrant youth experiences incrementally.

Data analysis. I used thematic analysis to analyze and interpret the data transcribed from the interviews. In general, thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme is seen as something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represents some level of patterned response within the data. A thematic analysis may also involve paying attention to contradictions and silences in the data, as well as connections and disconnections between the identified themes and sub-themes. In this approach, data analysis involves a more comprehensive description of the entire data set instead of a detailed account of one particular aspect of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this regard, I needed to accurately identify and analyze the content of the entire data set, so that readers get a sense of an overall picture without losing some depth and complexity

The data consisted of the transcripts of the audiotaped interviews with all research participants and the field notes taken during interviews. My data analysis proceeded iteratively and inductively; that is, I included topics and began to construct themes as they came up and removed or edited themes from my analysis framework if they were not proving

useful as the analysis evolved (Hoonard, 2012). Transcription and analysis of one interview was completed before conducting the next interview. This evolving approach is generally consistent with qualitative research, which tends to be open ended and concerned more with being attuned to the participant than to rigid application of a standardized interview and analytical protocol for every participant (Kvale, as cited in Knox & Burkard, 2009). Themes and sub-themes were categorized into four groups to answer my four guiding research questions. Themes relevant to Asian immigrant youth's adaption challenges and settlement services were presented by using the ecological systems model.

Validity. In the context of an interpretivist research approach, validity is not conceptualized or "done" in the traditional sense, or elaborated within a positivist paradigm (Soganci, 2013). Attempts have been made to promote new validity criterion for interpretivist qualitative research. For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that the parallel term for rigor in interpretivist paradigm is trustworthiness, and the criteria to ensure trustworthiness are credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Graue and Walsh (1998, as cited in Soganci, 2013) argue that interpretive validity is conceptually similar to internal validity in terms of emphasizing coherence among researcher epistemology, methods, data, theories, and interpretations (p. 247). In this sense, my research can be said to have some degree of validity. I engaged with literature in order to design appropriate and effective research methods. I adopted the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as my theoretical framework, which has been widely referenced by scholars studying immigrant youth. I used semi-structured interview, a well-established data collection method to obtain data from participants. My research design is congruent in that the interpretivist research

paradigm is consistent with my researcher positionality, the exploratory nature of this research, an ecological systems framework, and the subjectivity and multiplicity of participants' experiences.

Ethical Considerations

The research was approved by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee and conformed to the ethics protocols of Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS). The research had relevance and integrity, in that it attempted to respond to the needs of VIRCS, and to give people who work with immigrant youth a better understanding of the challenges and barriers that Asian immigrant youth have experienced while adapting to live in Victoria. Embarking on a research project with youth who are immigrants from Asia, I had to consider about a variety of ethical issues, including: research partnership, representation of voice; participant confidentiality; and voluntary participation.

Research partnership. The collaborative partnership with VIRCS placed the confidentiality of research participants at stake and limited the scope of my research inquiry. Since youth workers at VIRCS knew most of the youth very well, research participants were faced with the risk of being pinpointed by youth workers. Research participants were only recruited from VIRCS, but not from Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, which is a government funded settlement agency in Victoria. Most research participants received support from both agencies, and the services from both agencies complement each other in assisting youth with adjusting to their lives in Victoria. Given that my research examined services provided at VIRCS, I had to remove the information about ICA disclosed by participants from the transcripts. Not having ethical approval from ICA and the collaboration

with VIRCS restricted me from including information with regards to other settlement service providers.

Representation of voice. Although the in-depth interview is a widely used data collection method in qualitative research, many scholars have called the notion of “voice” and authenticity in question. St. Pierre (2008) questions the scientific warranty of privileging the voice of participants as the truest and most authentic meaning transmitter. Mazzei and Jackson (2012) claim that qualitative inquiry assumes that voice can speak the truth without relating the truth to the self, or considering the contextual restraints that shape subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, as cited in Mazzei & Jackson, 2012) first introduced the concept of “plugging in” and Mazzei and Jackson (2012) suggest that as researchers, we “plug into” voices of participants, our own voices, theoretical voices and voices of other scholars to produce a continuous process of making and unmaking knowledge claims. MacLure (2013) further argues that qualitative research is heavily invested in language practices, such as interviews, field-notes, focus groups, conversation and so on, but falls short on dealing with the bodily entanglements of language, quasi-linguistic matters, or feelings and sensations.

As much as researchers attempt to develop explicit interview strategies for the purpose of avoiding interference and assumptions, (Madriz, 2000, as cited in Kirby, Greaves & Reid, 2006) interview questions are typically articulated beforehand by the researcher based on a prior understanding of the topic. In this research, most of the prior knowledge I brought to crafting my methodology came from the relevant literature that I examined, my experience of working with immigrant youth and my personal cross-cultural experience of settling in Canada.

Participant confidentiality. There was a risk to confidentiality due to a limited number of self-identified Asian immigrant youth and the collaboration with VIRCS staff in recruiting participants. In order to maintain confidentiality, participants were referred to as participant One, Two, Three, Four, Five and Six on the completed research paper. I also removed specific identifiers from the interview transcripts, including, but not limited to a combination of demographic factors that would make it easy to identify the participants. I also edited direct words, culturally sensitive and personally identifying information. I explained to participants that confidentiality might be breached if there was a disclosure of child abuse or plans to harm themselves or others. The limitation to ensure confidentiality was noted in each participant's consent form and was highlighted at the beginning of each individual interview.

Voluntary participation. Participation in this research was completely voluntary. I explained on the research poster that youth participation or non-participation would neither affect their ability to access any future services at VIRCS, nor their relationship with the researcher or youth workers at VIRCS. Participants could withdraw at any time from the research without any consequences. For youth under 19 years old, I also informed their parents on the consent form that their children had the rights to withdraw from the study and that data collected would not be used for this study. Participants who withdrew from the research at the interview location would still be reimbursed the amount of five dollars or two bus tickets and provided with refreshments.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the small research sample, findings of my study pertain only to the limited

setting in which they were obtained and cannot presume to represent all Asian immigrant youth residing in Victoria, or in BC and Canada. Instead, it could be viewed as an exploratory study of the settlement experiences of a group of Asian immigrant youth. Time and monetary constraints have shaped the reliability and validity of my research. Instead of incorporating perspectives from significant others, such as participants' parents, teachers, settlement workers, and peers, the only data collection method involved individual interviews with immigrant youth. As a self-funded project, no second researcher was involved in my research, which placed me as the only interpreter of the data collected. As the researcher, my personal experience as an individual of Asian descent, residing in Victoria, undoubtedly influenced my interactions with the youth participants and affected my interpretation of the data.

Summary

This chapter describes the methodology used for conducting the present study. Based on the ecological systems theory, this interpretive qualitative research not only examined the various factors that were involved in different layers of developmental contexts for immigrant youth, but also explored the multi-faceted settlement services received by research participants. This study also attempted to foster direct conversation with youth and enabled me to move forward to analyze data and develop key themes relevant to the four guiding research questions.

Chapter Four. Data Analysis

This Chapter is comprised of three sections. The first section describes the research participants. The second section presents the data analysis process with specific examples to demonstrate the construction of themes and sub-themes. The last section summarizes the significant issues arising from analysis of the data.

Participants

Out of consideration for the limited number of participants qualified for this research and the connection between participants and youth workers at VIRCS, special precautions were taken to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Identifiable indicators were removed from data transcripts and preventative measures were taken to avoid association with specific demographic information connected with each participant. The participants consisted of three male youths and three female youths, aged 15 to 24 years, from China, Korea and the Philippines. Their length of residence in Canada ranged from one to five years. Cross-cultural experiences of participants varied significantly and they all consented to have their interviews audio recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Data Analysis

The four driving research questions were temporarily set aside to avoid imposing an a priori framework onto the data. Instead, an inductive analysis was conducted, which allowed for the possibility of generating unexpected findings. In addition, utilizing a content-driven and inductive approach was consistent with my exploratory orientation of the data analysis. As suggested by Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012), before any analysis occurred, I thoroughly read and re-read the data, searching for words, trends, themes, patterns, or ideas in

the transcripts that assisted with the creation of an outline for data analysis. Attention was also given to examining tensions, contradictions, exclusions and silences in and across individual interviews.

Process of Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the transcript data. Thematic analysis enabled me to identify factors that seemed to influence the cross-cultural experiences of participants. As Namey et al. (2008) described:

Thematic analysis moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas. Codes developed for ideas or themes are then applied or lined to raw data as summary markers for later analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes or topics within a data set, looking for co-occurrence, or graphically displaying code relationships (p. 138).

Drawn from Miles and Huberman's (1994) model of data analysis, and inspired by *Applied Thematic Analysis* by Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012), I developed a blended thematic analysis approach for this research which consisted of 4 stages.

Stage One. At the initial stage of data analysis, an open-coding strategy was employed for analyzing each interview transcript. Coding allows the researcher to review the entirety of the data by identifying the most significant meaning and what the data is attempting to express (Halldorson, 2009, Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, as cited in Alhojailan, 2012). On completion of the first interview, the interview from the audio tape was transcribed verbatim. During the transcription process, I jotted down ideas as they came to my mind. On the first transcript, notes, comments and short phrases were added in the margin and labeled in red as

identifier for cross-referencing. This offered a summary statement, or keywords for each entry of participant responses. After completing the first round of data coding, I read through the transcript again while bearing the four guiding research questions in mind. This assisted with finding excerpts from the full data that related to the research objectives.

Data analysis of the first transcript was completed prior to conducting the second interview. Data collection and analysis were performed in an evolving process with interview questions being semi-structured and the content of the questions being redesigned based on lessons learned from previous interviews. Analyzing prior interviews directly upon completion aided me with assessing the effectiveness of the questions in eliciting desired information. This also helped me to identify existing patterns with regards to missing answers to certain questions.

During this stage, data analysis proceeded on an interview-to-interview basis. Upon transcribing the second interview, the second transcript was analyzed following the same procedure implemented for the first transcript, with the exception of using a different color to mark codes (in this instance, yellow was used). The second transcript was cross examined with the first transcript with particular attention paid to the codes generated from both data. This aided me with comparing respondents' answers and identifying commonalities and unique themes among participants. The third data set was analyzed in the same procedure. Data analysis for each transcript repeated until the completion of data collection with the last research participant. This iterative process allowed me to verify, confirm and qualify themes by searching through data and repeating the process to identify further themes and categories (Pope, Ziebland, & May, 1999).

The question “Have you encountered challenges or barriers moving to Victoria?” was used in this chapter as an example to illustrate how data were analyzed in each stage of the process. In the first stage, each participant’s answer to this question was coded separately on the transcripts. On the first transcript, codes, including “language, miscommunication, unable to express myself, communicate with people, unfamiliar with the culture, making friends, making new connections, lonely, helpless, and it takes time” were noted. For the second transcript, “difficulty at school, learning new stuff, new reading and writing skills, discussion in class, difficulty making friends with the locals, difficult finding identities, language barrier, it takes time, talking fast, and Canadian accent” were recorded in the margin. On the third transcript, “language, culture difference, English course is the hardest” were coded. For the fourth transcript, codes including “unfamiliar with the environment, helplessness, having no background at school, learning a new language, English course is the hardest, communicating with local people, and feeling isolated” were noted. On the fifth transcript, “different cultures, different experiences, language, understand others, and learn English” were added in the margin. For the last transcript, “remaining connected with friends in my hometown, building new relationship, different types of people, different backgrounds, dealing with people’s relationships, studies, and language” were the codes identified from the data.

Stage Two. In the second stage of coding data, I gathered all the codes (words, phrases, comments) from all transcripts onto a clean set of pages. To group codes into categories, and remove duplicates, the codes were scanned for similarities and differences. At this stage, repetitive codes were removed to create a reduced number of codes, and they were:

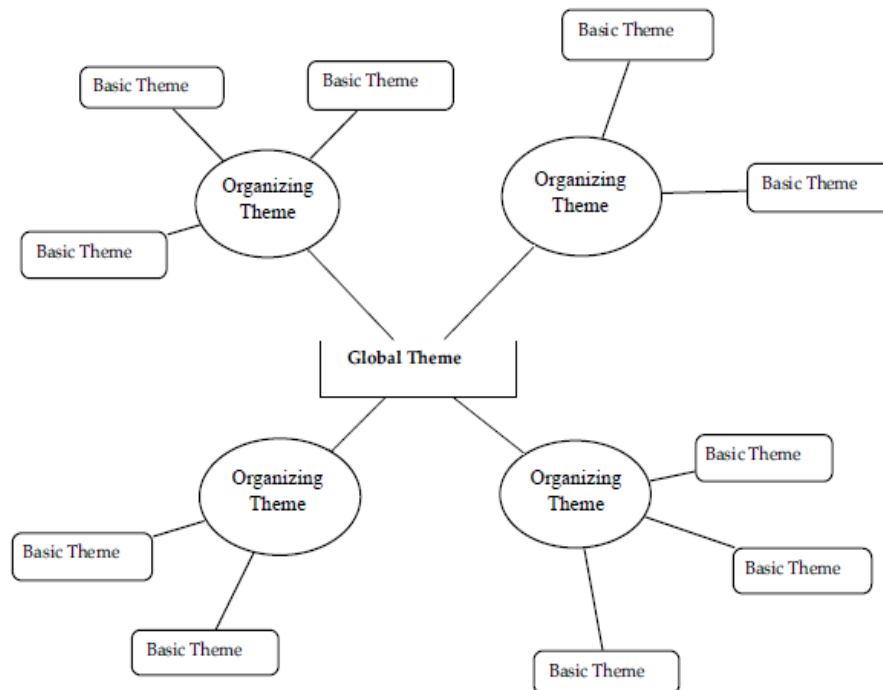
“language, miscommunication, unable to express myself, communicate with people,

unfamiliar with the culture, making friends, making new connections, lonely, helpless, it takes time, difficulty at school, learn new stuff, new reading and writing skills, discussion in class, difficulty of finding identities, talking fast, Canadian accent, culture difference, English the hardest course, unfamiliar with the environment, having no background, feeling isolated, different experiences, difficult to understand others, remaining connected with friends in my hometown, different types of people, different backgrounds, dealing with people's relationships".

Codes were then grouped into six different themes, including language, academics, unfamiliarity, cultural differences, relationship, and feelings.

Stage Three. The next stage of analyzing data began after compiling a shorter list of categories from the prior stage. I went further and looked for overlapping or similar themes. Themes were then reduced and refined by being grouped together into major themes and sub-themes.

Based on Stirling's (2001) proposal of thematic networks analysis, there are three



levels of themes: Basic Themes, Organizing Themes and Global Themes. Basic Themes are of the lowest-order of premises evident in the data; Organizing Themes include clusters of Basic Themes to summarize more abstract principles; Global Themes are the most ordinated themes that encapsulate the core claim in the data (Stirling, 2001). As such, sub-themes developed from previous stages were equivalent to Basic Themes and major themes were generated to represent Organizing Themes. Below is a graphic of the structure of thematic network analysis (See Figure Two).

Figure Two. Structure of Thematic Network Analysis (Stirling, 2001). This figure demonstrates the process of constructing themes based on the Thematic Network Analysis.

Basic Themes were grouped under Organizing Themes and then each Basic Theme was allocated with keywords from transcripts relevant to that particular category. During this

stage, six Organizing Themes were determined. This first Organizing Theme was language barrier and the Basic Themes underlying it were “miscommunication, inability to express themselves, difficulty of understanding others and communicating with people, and taking long time to learn a new language”. The second Organizing Theme was academic difficulties which were shown by “having to learn new stuff at school without a background, new reading and writing skills, getting used to in-class discussion, and finding English to be the hardest course”. The third Organizing Theme was a strong sense of unfamiliarity as participants explained “being unfamiliar with the environment, the culture, the school system, and the people”. The fourth Organizing Theme focused on cultural differences which were demonstrated by “encountering people from different backgrounds, or having different experiences, or meeting different types of people”. The fifth Organizing Theme centred on relationship. Participants experienced “challenges of making friends with the locals, building new relationships, and keeping connected with relationships established back home”. The last Organizing Theme was about difficult feelings experienced by participants, including “feelings of loneliness, helplessness, isolation and hardship of establishing identities”.

Stage Four. The final stage involved defining and naming themes in a way that captured the essence of the themes. Global Themes were generated by compiling a cluster of linked Organizing Themes conveying similar meanings. Global Themes illustrated main points in the data (Stirling, 2001). Six Organizing themes were identified from the prior stage and they all centred on the various challenges that immigrant youth from Asia encountered moving to Victoria, Therefore, the Global Theme regarding the particular question “Have you encountered challenges or barriers moving to Victoria?” was that settling to Victoria presents

Asian youth with a wide range of challenges.

Significant Issues

Significant issues arose during the data analysis process, including my self-reflection regarding my role as the data collector and identification of possible improvements in data collection.

As a novice researcher, I sometimes found my interview skills limited during the interview process. While listening to the audio-taped interviews, I noticed that I hastily interceded when participants did not answer the question the way I expected, and did not always give them enough time to contemplate the question. Waiting and allowing participants a moment of silence would have been a better strategy of action. In addition, I realized that even though I diligently asked the questions and made a sincere effort at probing, some participants responded with a few words or very short answers that were not particularly useful or informative. The interview questions I designed were unavoidably affected by my personal cross-cultural experience of settling to Victoria as a young adult and my previously constructed assumptions that youth experienced similar challenges as I did. However, the feedback I received from participants suggested that they did not find all the questions applicable to their situations as they grew up in different family structures, had varied years of residence in Canada, and differed in age.

In order to stimulate as much information as possible during the interview, I implemented several interview skills that I found very helpful. I used transitional sentences to connect participants' responses to my next questions. By repeating participants' responses, re-emphasizing and empathizing with their feelings, a more engaging conversation between

myself and the participants was created. Asking probing questions, such as “Could you please give me an example?” or “In addition to what you have mentioned, do you have something else to say?” or “Could you please be more specific?” assisted me with obtaining rich and in-depth responses from participants. Most participants had established connections with me prior to the research, so the interviews proceeded like a casual conversation between us. The relationship established between us was critical to reduce the pressure felt by participants. Some of them mentioned that the interview helped them look back at what has changed over the years and who they have become today. Some expressed that the interview was quite relaxing and they were given freedom to say as much as they desired

Further Improvements

Upon completing data analysis, I recognized that a few improvements could be made during data collection. Due to a lack of time and resources, all data were collected within two weeks, imposing pressure on me and VIRCS staff. Given that participant recruitment is a time-consuming process, the process should have begun earlier than I planned. My participant recruitment also began at a tricky time with most programs at VIRCS wrapping up and youth preparing for their final exams. It did not occur to me that most potential participants did not know my full name- Yupei Xia until I was approached by some participants to confirm if I was doing the research. My full name Yupei Xia with my English name Summer in the parentheses appeared on the poster. Since most potential participants knew me as Summer instead of Yupei Xia, they might not have been willing to participate in a research study conducted by a complete stranger. Many participants expressed their concerns about not being able to answer interview questions due to their limited proficiency

in English, which could be a contributing factor to the lack of interest illustrated by potential youth in participating in this research.

While listening to the audio-taped interviews, I also discerned a pattern whereby female youth tended to be more articulate and expressive than their male peers. In the future, it would be useful to develop interview skills that encourage male youth to share more about their experiences in order to generate a more comprehensive data set. The concept of an Experiential Learning Cycle suggests that an introductory activity may be effective in opening up conversation among participants. Based on my experience of working with youth, separating boys and girls in two groups helps to create a safe, private and comfortable environment where participants are inclined to disclose more in-depth self-reports. Therefore, the integration of the activity Comfort Zone, which explores the level of comfortability displayed by research participants under different circumstances, could be used in future to create opportunities for a researcher to observe trends, commonalities and variations among participants. Participants would be asked to answer a list of questions that probe into the adaptation challenges that immigrant youth experienced, such as speaking English in front of a group of people, taking initiatives to make friends, asking people for help, doing presentation in class, and so on. Participants will experience stepping into a comfort zone, panic zone or the zone between comfort and panic zone according to their answers to each question. After finishing the activity, the researcher will invite male participants and female participants to debrief about what they see, hear and notice during the activity and how they feel about such activity in their separate focus groups. Finally, both focus groups reconvene as a large group and debrief together.

During the interviews, I felt that some participants answered the questions pertaining to youth programs at VIRCS with some reservations even though I previously explained that participation was completely anonymous and confidential. Participant concern regarding confidentiality when speaking about services they are receiving is an issue that a researcher must take into consideration while recruiting clients from a service providing agency. Despite these limitations, as an exploratory study and a learning experience, the data gathering and analysis process constituted a productive first step in gaining perceptions from Asian immigrant youth about their settlement experiences.

Chapter Five. Findings

This chapter presents the findings of a thematic analysis of six interviews conducted with immigrant youth. Themes were grouped into four major categories based on the four guiding research questions. Quotes from the interviews were used to illustrate the key themes in participants' own words for the first and second themes. I summarized two other quotes as part of titles of the third and fourth themes. The first theme is "*Because We Came from Other Countries*"—Settling into Victoria Presents a Wide Range of Challenges. This theme centres on the challenges that participating Asian immigrant youth encountered and how they dealt with those challenges. The second theme is "*They Are Nice People Who Help Us*"—Settlement Service Providers as Helpers. This theme focuses on the role that settlement service providers play in the transition process of immigrant youth to Victoria. The third theme is "*I Got Help from Them*"— the Responsiveness of VIRCS' Services for Youths, which examines how research participants thought about youth services provided at VIRCS. The last theme is "*What Do I Want?*"— Services That Immigrant Youth Wish to Have in the Future. This theme is about the services that research participants wish to have in the future.

Theme One: "Because We Came from Other Countries"—Settling into Victoria Presents a Wide Range of Challenges

The quote "Because we came from other countries" from the transcript of Participant Six was used as part of the title for the first theme, because it aptly captured what most participants said. Participants spoke at length about the adaptation challenges they encountered after moving to Canada and how they dealt with those challenges. Participants' descriptions demonstrated that they experienced a variety of difficulties trying to adapt to live

in Canada and some of these difficulties still exist after living in Canada for a couple of years. Six sub themes were created with regards to the challenges or barriers that Asian immigrant youth experienced during their transition period, including language barriers, academic difficulties, a sense of unfamiliarity, cultural differences, dealing with relationships and difficult feelings. In the face of these challenges, all research participants sought to actively adapt to their new lives in Canada instead of passively sitting and waiting. Below is a graphic for Theme One presented by using the ecological framework (See Figure Three).

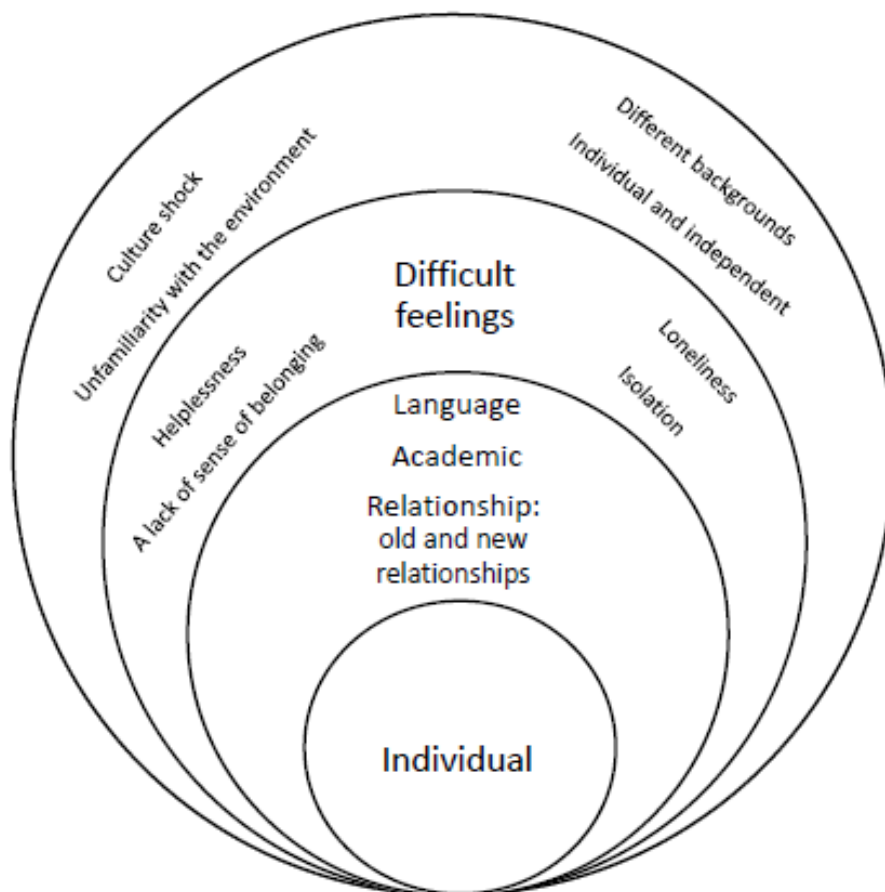


Figure Three. Theme One-adaptation challenges. This graphic illustrates the multidimensional adaptation challenges that research participants encountered by using the ecological framework.

Participant One shared a story that happened after arriving in Canada. This story describes aspects of the culture shock that some youth experienced while transitioning to Canada.

I remembered the first week when I started school. Then one day I threw a piece of paper in the garbage which I should throw in the recycle. So the teacher came in and found that there is a piece of paper in the garbage. He picked it out. And asked who did this. Then I was really embarrassed. Actually, I did not even know what I did wrong. I thought maybe I threw out other people's paper but I remembered that it was my paper. I did not know what the problem was. And he told me that you need to put this in the recycle. I was like what do you mean recycle? Like he has to explain to me how recycle works here in Canada. It is just something you will never realize if you have never lived in the country.

This quote demonstrates the environmental responsibilities and norms that students in Canada are supposed to know and follow in schools. Children in Canada are educated with the knowledge of recycling starting from kindergarten, or even earlier at home by parents. However, for newcomer youth who were born in other countries, Canadian recycling methods would be a foreign concept because they were never taught about recycling at school or by their parents. Coming to Canada means that newcomer youth must learn about social norms and rules all over again, as well as their parents.

Participant Two recalled what happened in a cafe, which was the first time she ever came to such a place in Canada.

When I first came to the cafe shop, I don't even know how to open the bathroom door. So the bathroom door would be like you pull it from the outside, but actually I was keeping pushing the door, so I was standing there for like 3 minutes, just keep pushing. And there is one guy came to me and said are you trying to open the door? I said yes, I think it is locked or someone is inside. And that guy told me that you have to pull the door. At that time, I was totally embarrassed. I want to cry but I was also thinking myself so ridiculous you know. A lot of such kind of experiences happened to me in the past.”

Participant Two's story is an example of navigating through physical spaces and everyday life through the functioning of objects. Something as seemingly simple as opening a door can become a symbol for being an outsider. The experience of being unable to open a door made Participant Two emotional because it triggered negative feelings and embarrassment, and also made her feel ridiculous—operating a door in her home country would not have caused the same reaction. New immigrants in Canada are living in a physical environment completely different from their home countries, demanding them to relearn how everything works in Canada. The emotional difficulties involved in the process of learning about and getting familiar with their physical surroundings places an extra burden onto the transition period of newcomer youth.

Sub-Theme One: Language. All participants mentioned how language remains a barrier and three thought language as the biggest challenge and claimed that “everything else builds on it”. They also shared how they dealt with language barriers. Participant One explained language barriers were the leading cause of miscommunication and the inability to

express, to relate and communicate with others. Language barriers also made it difficult to obtain the necessary information required and led to other barriers.

Of course language is the biggest challenge because still I am like nowhere near the native speaker level, so sometimes there is miscommunication and I was not able to express myself the way I wanted. So that also will result in the fact that I may not get all the information I need. So that is definitely a big barrier. And I would say that everything else builds on it. And you need again relate to many people, and to communicate to many people and language of course is the tool you use, right? So language is one of the barriers that can lead to other barriers as well.

Participant Two stated that it took time to get used to how people talk in Canada.

Language barriers also manifested themselves in the cultural context as Canadians spoke English in a way that was hard to understand for Participant Two. After being able to understand people talking in English, Participant Two began to imitate Canadians in speaking English.

Language barriers also included in the culture part. They speak so fast and they have Canadian accent. I don't know what they are talking about when I just got here. It took me a long time to really get used to how they speak English here, like I start to understand what they are talking about. I start to try to speak like people here.

Participant Three said that *“The biggest challenge is the language. I just tried my best. Just remember things, like vocabulary, grammar, sequence. I am very proud of myself.”* Also, participant Four mentioned the lack of confidence of speaking to the locals due to her accent, which tied to Participant One’s statement that second language learners don’t possess the

same level of language proficiency as native speakers. As a result, Participant Four felt it hard to express and share opinions with others.

I think learning a new language for me is a major obstacle I have to overcome. I spend a lot of time reviewing my subjects, especially English, because it is difficult for second language learner. So I spend a lot of time working on my English homework. Like I have to learn how to communicate with the local people. Sometimes, I am afraid of my accent, so I could not speak up my opinions easily.

Participant Five explained that: *“For the first year the language, you need to speak and then understand what other people are saying. Then you need to learn English.”* Participant Six shared the way of figuring out how to speak English well through communicating with others which was not easy in the beginning. Participant Six courageously took initiatives to socialize with others for the purpose of practicing English. Although socialization helped Participant Six improve English language skills, it was fairly difficult to take that first step of communicating with others in English.

If you can't speak a language well, you just have to talk to more people. Because myself, I am an outgoing person, I still don't want to speak out English at the first time. And I push myself. I force myself to speak to people and attend activities and that works.

Trying to connect with people, they are not all good, but most of them are good people.

Language barriers were identified as a major obstacle for most participants, but they found out ways of dealing with this challenge by diligently studying English and communicating with others. Participants not only worked hard at school to grasp the basic knowledge about English acquisition, but also consistently created chances to practice

speaking English. Although it took time to learn a new language, participants showed a positive attitude towards making efforts to improve English skills.

Sub-Theme Two: Academics. Some participants expressed the difficulty of adapting to the school system in Canada because of their limited language abilities, the different expectations from teachers and parents, and a lack of education background in Canada.

Participant One explained that:

When I came here, I did not know my school and I did not even know about my own study life. What is it going to be like? I will be studying in a school where people talk in English, but before I was studying with my native language. It's going to make a big difference.

Participant Two expressed the difficulties experienced at school because of the academic transitions in Canada. She had to adopt new learning approaches in order to perform well at school and adjust to the new teaching approaches at the same time.

The most difficult thing for me was the changes happened at school. I don't have a background attending school here. So all I have to do was like learning new stuff and learning new strategy of writing skills, and reading papers and discussion in class, and so it's quite difficult for me to deal with all of these.

Participant Four talked about the academic difficulties encountered at school in the past. The most difficult moment for Participant Four was doing presentations which made her nervous and stressed. The feeling of “being left behind” and “the need to catch up” posed emotional and psychological pressure to Participant Four’s school years.

Canada is not like [my hometown], you don't have any background. It's like you have

to work harder in order to get good grades and to go to the university you want to go. I already left behind the normal students; you know what I mean, like locals. I have to catch up. I am afraid to speak in front of the public, the people. Doing a presentation in front of my class is most challenging for me. Because sometimes you just get nervous easily. When there is too much eye contact and all the focus is on you and teachers are like really cold and watching you with his big eyes opened when you are doing the presentation.

The aforementioned obstacles in participants' student lives multiplied the tasks that they have to fulfill. Coming from other countries, participants had no previous experience of studying in Canadian institutions, so they had no idea what student lives in Canada meant to them. The exposure to new learning and teaching methods brought a number of challenges to participants at school, such as reading and writing in English, understanding everything taught in English, engaging in class discussions and doing presentations in front of the class. Some of them felt left behind the local students because of a lack of educational background in Canada or limited English language abilities. Worrying about their future study at universities, some participants were anxious to catch up with their Canadian classmates.

For immigrant youth, studying in an environment where the primary language of instruction is English requires them to constantly improve their English proficiency in order to understand what teachers are saying in class and be able to discuss with group members. As second language learners, participants were also faced with difficulties of understanding the content of textbooks, lesson taught in class, assignment requirements or instructions. Participant Four mentioned the hardest part was doing presentations in front of the class

which related to the previous statement that speaking English with an accent stood in the way of communicating with others, not to mention with a group of people watching and listening to you. Therefore, barriers to participants' academic success were closely connected with the language barriers, which could be seen as a main cause of the difficulties that participants encountered at school.

Sub-Theme Three: Unfamiliarity. Many participants stated that everything seemed unfamiliar to them when they just arrived and it took time to adapt to their new lives in Canada. Because of the unfamiliarity and uncertainty that accompanied participants' transitions to Canada, they described having feelings of “not belonging, anxiety, panic, scaredness, helplessness, confusion, blindness, not having a direction and loneliness”. For most participants, these difficult feelings began to dissipate as time went by, but for Participant Four, the feeling of loneliness still existed and did not go away.

Participant One expressed the feeling of not belonging to Canada at the very beginning and how that feeling changed after living in Canada for five years. Participant One gradually built connections with people in Canada and became more familiar with the living environment. Now, Victoria feels like home where Participant One belongs to.

When I just arrived here, I felt I did not quite belong to here. Because I did not know many people and I did not know this place. It made me anxious because I don't know anything about here. But right now, I just feel comfortable. Feel like at home and feel like I belong to here now. When people ask me where I am from. I generally say I am from Victoria. Because I think that's what they are asking for. But also I feel natural and I think it is right to say I am from Victoria since I have lived here for five years.

Participant Two described the feeling of panic and helplessness after arriving in Canada because everything seemed foreign to her. The feeling of unfamiliarity made Participant Two worried about her new life. However, the process of familiarizing herself with how things function in Canada helped her take an appreciative stance in the midst of the unknown things around her. Now, she views possibilities and uncertainties through a positive lens.

Before I came here, I was very excited. When I came here, I got panicked. I think it's the feeling of unfamiliar with everything and there is no one who can help you. I was totally scared of all these uncertainties in the past, but for now I am totally enjoying all these possibilities and uncertainties. I think that's what life means.

Participant Three's parents made the decision to immigrate to Canada, while Participant Three was only abruptly informed about the sudden change that was about to occur. Not being psychologically and physically prepared to move to another country, Participant Three experienced a mixture of negative feelings upon arrival in Canada, where the language environment was completely different. Right now, with friends and families around after four year of residence in Canada, Participant Three feels at home in Canada. Participant Four would rather stay in Canada than back home because of the relationships established in Canada and the support received from his parents.

When I first came here, I felt a little bit afraid, confused, and blind. I felt like having no direction, because the whole language environment is totally different. At that time, I don't know anything, I feel very very lonely. I was noticed that my family immigrated and I was the last one to know. I didn't have enough time to prepare for [living in] another country. Later, I felt good. I think I like here much more than before. I would

like to stay here than [my hometown], because I have lots of friends here and my parents always come here. I am now very comfortable to live here.

Participant Five reported that “*Right now, it's like you live here. You feel safe.*” Participant Six changed her attitude of dealing with others’ opinions and stopped from worrying too much about other people. Now, Participant Six becomes more positive than before. “*I am happier than before and I am like a more positive person than before. I don't care about craps anymore. Because I used to give a lot of craps about other people or other thing and I don't care anymore.*” Participant Four recalled strong feelings of loneliness and helplessness in the first month and would get excited seeing a cat on the street. The feeling of loneliness did not go away. Participant Four dealt with loneliness by constantly moving forward.

Participant Four was not defeated by the existence of loneliness, but continued to carry on.

I think I remember the first day I came to Canada. The first night I could not sleep because I was alone and I was unfamiliar of the environment and the jet lag, so I could not sleep. And I could not forget the feeling of helplessness. During my first month, I sometimes felt very lonely at night. I can get excited when I saw a dog or cat on the street. It was like every day you don't know what to do, where to go, who to talk to, what can be expected. Now, Life is still hard but you have to keep going and carry on. I think I know how to get along with myself to stay with loneliness.

The sub-theme of a sense of unfamiliarity entails different types of negative feelings as shown from the excerpts above. Each individual participant contrasted the negative feelings they had when they first arrived to the positive feelings they developed after living in Canada for years. Participants’ descriptions illustrated where these negative feelings came from and

how these feelings changed afterwards. Upon arrival in Canada, participants had little or no knowledge about living in a new country. Everything seemed strange and unfamiliar to them, which led to many emotional difficulties at the beginning. It took time for them to rebuild connections and settle down as a family. They also slowly figured out how things function in Canada which helped them adjust to the new living situations. The sense of unfamiliarity with the lives in Canada gradually decreased and eventually disappeared over time. Commonalities were found in their experiences, yet exceptions still existed, such as in the case of Participant Four who still felt lonely after living in Canada for five years. Participant Four found a way of staying with the loneliness and moving forward at the same time.

Sub-Theme Four: Culture. The exposure to two or multiple cultures, the cultures of origin and Canadian culture, brought a variety of challenges for the research participants. In the face of these challenges, they found ways to balance the cultural differences. The responses of participants also showed that the degree to which each individual has acculturated differ drastically, based on factors such as age at migration, ethnicity, years of residence in Canada, degree of identification with the culture of origin and the host culture, and personality.

Participant One described his understanding of being Canadian and what that means for an immigrant youth. Participant One seemed to understand that there are cultural differences among specific regions and provinces in Canada. Therefore, being Victorian is what it means to be Canadian in Victoria for Participant One. The key argument found in Participant One's excerpt is the need to accept the reality that life is different in Canada and that there is no choice but to adapt to it.

You have to learn from your experience, learn from the mistakes you made. You have to accept that there are things that you don't know, and you need to catch up. You need to learn because it is the routine or the custom here. You need to adjust to it. You need to adapt to it. You learn to act like a Canadian, to be more specific, like a Victorian.

Participant Two shared the experience of struggling between multiple cultures and how the balance was made by mixing two cultures together instead of abandoning the culture of origin and simply adjust to the new life in Canada. The combination of two cultures created opportunities for Participant two to adopt parts of both cultures that might be beneficial to her in the long term.

So when I came to Canada, I tried to make myself get into this culture as soon as possible, so sometimes I feel like I try to abandon some of my original culture, but until now, I find out that sometimes, trying to put yourself in a culture does not mean that you have to abandon your original culture. It means that you have to mix these two cultures together. Sometimes you find out that this is the new thing for me, and maybe this is very helpful in the future, so you combine these two things together. And this is how you deal with two different cultures.

Participant Three saw cultural differences differently from Participant One's assertion that "You learn to act like a Canadian, to be more specific, like a Victorian.". Participant Three believed that Canada is multicultural and Asian culture is embedded in and part of the Canadian culture. The exposure to western culture also reduced the cultural differences experienced by Participant Three. The frequent contact with Asian cultures in Victoria made the cultural differences less challenging for Participant Three, whereas Participant One felt

compelled to behave like a Victorian.

Cultural difference is Ok because we have lot of chances to get in touch with the western culture. Also Canada is multicultural, right? And there is a lot part of Asian cultures, and there are a lot of Asian restaurant around us and Asian people around us. It is just very very small things that are different.

The excerpts above demonstrated three different strategies employed by three participants to deal with the challenges that arose from cultural differences. Participant Four stated that culture could not be simply defined by ethnicity because each individual is unique and has his/her own selves. The idea of becoming a Canadian has never occurred to Participant Four. From Participant Four's perspective, everyone is different from others and should not be defined by their ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, being the person that Participant Four wanted to be was the approach taken to dealing with two cultures. The essence of Participant Four's argument was that "It is up to me" to decide "who I want to be".

Actually I never want to be a Canadian. I just want to be myself. I don't want to define myself in a fixed definition. I want to be international, because everyone has different colors. They have different selves, so I have never tried to become a Canadian. At most time, I feel really easy to be who I am. Because I can choose to not involve in discussions or groups or communities or I can choose to get into different circles of communities or peoples. It's up to me.

Four participants shared their different thoughts about cultural differences and each explained his/her unique way of handling this challenge. There is no standardized solution that is applicable to every immigrant youth for dealing with cultural differences. On the

contrary, these four participants managed to discover their own paths that were of meaning and relevant to them.

Sub-Theme Five: Relationships. Most participants expressed the difficulties of dealing with various types of relationships, including establishing new relationships in Canada, staying connected with old relationships back home, and figuring out how to handle relationships with parents and grandparents.

Participant One explained that not being connected with friends and relatives back home meant that new relationships had to be established in Canada for the purpose of feeling connected to others. It took time for Participant One to build relationships in Canada, and he felt lonely along the process.

I am not living in [my home country] anymore. And my friends and relatives are not with me, so I need to make new friends and new connections. And that takes time. At the beginning, sometimes I felt I was all by myself and felt lonely, helpless. But I think that's normal when you go into a new environment.

Participant Three shared the experience of trying to make friends in Canada. The culture of making friends is different in Canada and Canadians possess different personalities, so it was hard for Participant Three to make friends with Canadian students. Not being familiar with the social climate in Canada, many of Participant Three's attempts of making friends were in vain. Participant Three also mentioned that it took even longer to make friends in Canada which resonated with Participant One's statement that building relationships was a long process. Participant Three also saw the personal traits of individuality and independence from local students which she probably did not notice before she came to Canada. As a result,

making friends with people who displayed different personalities was not easy.

I think how people know each other and getting to know each other is different. When I get here, I find it is quite difficult, you know, to make friends with local students.

Because you can definitely talk with them for many hours, but after that, actually they don't have the thoughts of getting to know you better. It will take you a longer time to get to know people here. People is kind of try to be very individual and independent here.

Participant Four expressed concern about not spending time with relatives back home and about conflicts with parents at home. Participant Four has a strong attachment with her grandparents, thus being unable to visit them frequently because of the separation makes her “feel sorry”. Participant Four also mentioned the conflict at home due to a lack of mutual understanding. She felt too much pressure at school while her mother did not pay enough attention to understand what was going on and instead blamed Participant Four for not being appreciative and grateful. Although from the mother’s perspective, they immigrated to Canada for the sake of Participant Four’s education and future, the pressure of graduating from school and the fierce competition with other Asian students caused too much psychological stress to Participant Four.

I spend a very short time with my extended families, like we only meet once or twice year during winter vacation or summer vacation. So I feel really sorry especially to my grandparents, because they are getting old. So maybe in the future, if I can get a pretty good job, I want to go back to my home country to spend some time with them [...]. I told my mother that I am so disappointed of Canada and I regret to come to Canada.

She was like I am talking about nonsense because we spent lots of money to immigrate here and how could you say you feel regretful for coming to such a good country. But I just felt too much pressure to graduate. Recent years, there is lots of Asian students and the average GPA of getting into university keeps going up. I tried very hard, but my mother did not understand me.

Participant Five said that *“I got to go to different schools, and people, like friends change. I met different people. It is actually not bad. It is normal. You just got to establish new friendships and I like making friends.”* This excerpt demonstrated the constant changes that happened to the relationships Participant Five had with others and how Participant Five viewed these changes as chances to make more friends. Participant Six stated that the hardest part of moving to Canada was to keep connected with old relationships back home and establish new relationship in Canada. Participant Six gained confidence through building relationships with people from different backgrounds and people having different personalities.

The most challenging thing for me is how to remain the old relationship between me and old friends back in my home town and how to build relationships here with different kinds of people here. I and the people here are like two different types of person. They have different backgrounds. Deal with people’s relationships really makes me more confident about myself. You can make more and more people like you. It’s just you have to take the step to try.

In addition to discussing the difficulty of staying connected with people back home and building new connections in Canada, Participant Six also talked about the father-child

relationship. The education systems in each country function differently, and the education system in Canada work in a different manner compared to those of Participant Six's home country, where the father completed all his education. Even though the father could help Participant Six with schoolwork, misunderstandings still happened in their family.

I guess it is just sometimes my father, because he finished all his study in my hometown. And sometimes he did not get how my study life is going, and he doesn't know the process that I have. Sometimes he just [doesn't] know. He is like, he only expects me to get a good grade but he did not to know how [I am] supposed to get it. He can help me with my homework, but it is just the way I get my grades here is not the same back in [my hometown]. Sometimes I just ignore him. But if I have time, I will explain that to him, so I really hope that he will understand me.

Participant Six's story is an example of how children, like Participant Four, may often be in a position of having to explain or translate educational systems/norms to their parents, who may not be able to offer the assistance required at school, because they are not familiar with the school system in BC. However, for local students, their parents went through the same education system, and may be able to provide sufficient and helpful assistance at home. This means that immigrant youth may have to depend on their own to adapt to the academic transitions without having assistance from their parents. Parental expectation of children getting good grades without knowing the grading systems in school may also cause some tension in the relationship.

Sub-Theme Six: Difficult feelings. Some participants mentioned having difficult feelings while living in Canada and explained how they dealt with those negative feelings.

Participant Two shared the experience of attempting to establish her identity in Canada. Being in a new culture, she used to compare herself with Canadians and that made her depressed and disappointed. After acquiring a positive attitude towards the difference between her and other people, she switched her focus to the things that she loved. This made a huge difference in her journey of seeking identity.

Sometimes, it is difficult for me to find my identity. I don't know who I am. It is like I am not in my [hometown], and how I can behave myself. And when you are in a new culture, sometimes it takes you some time to establish something. Sometimes, I am trying to compare myself to Canadian people here, so I always get depressed and disappointed after you know compare yourself to other people. But I think it is ridiculous because they have what they have and you have what you have. So I just stop worrying about all of this and start to do things that I love and it turns out there are so many things that surprise you, so that's how I deal with that.

Participant Three expressed the feeling of not belonging to Canada. Being aware that Canada is “the country for living”, Participant Three might try to live differently in future. The specific examples from the excerpt illustrate the lack of a sense of belonging to Canada. The presence of Team Canada in the Women’s World Cup did not bring excitement to Participant Three and not being a fan of hockey made Participant Three feel a disconnection with belonging in Canada. These indicators also show what a sense of belonging means to Participant Three.

Because Canada is the first country except [my hometown] I have been to, so the country is not for travel [but] is for living. It is different. But now I learned English, I

got good education so I can go anywhere in the future if I want. I am not sure if I belong here. Maybe I will live another way. I don't have the feeling of belonging in Canada. The FIFA was held in Edmonton, I don't feel excited to support the Canada team. I am not a fan of hockey either.

Participant Four shared the experience of being isolated at school, which also demonstrated that students at school stereotyped Participant Four as someone who did not know how to socialize with local students. The feeling of being isolated made it hard for Participant Four to get involved with local students.

Sometimes, I am very shy. So people don't get to know me. Sometimes they think, oh, she is a [foreign] student. She doesn't know how to get into our groups, so we just ignore her or we just ask her something when necessary, so sometimes I feel being isolated. So I have to try hard to get into local people's circles.

Participants shared a number of difficult feelings they experienced while living in Canada, including “feelings of disappointment, depression, isolation, and a lack of belonging”. These challenging feelings were intertwined in particular situations where participants had to figure out how to discover their identities, regaining a sense of belonging and fitting in local people’s circles. Even though participants sought different strategies of dealing with these difficult feelings, it was not an easy process for them to handle the emotional discomfort.

Theme Two: “*They Are Nice People Who Help Us*”—Settlement Service providers as Helpers

I use the quote “*They are nice people who help us*” from Participant Six’s transcript,

which speaks to most participants' understanding of settlement service providers. When referring to settlement service providers, the most recurrent word used by participants was "helper". Participant Two also described the service providers as their friends and teachers and more than a place that provides services to immigrants. She conveyed that it is also a place of gathering, sharing and communicating. Three sub-themes were created in relation to the roles that settlement service providers play in research participants' lives.

Sub-Theme One: Helping people settle down. The first theme found from the transcript data was that settlement service providers help immigrants settle down in Victoria and they offer a variety of services. Participant One stated that "*It helps immigrants to settle in Canada. They will provide a variety of services that help you establish your life here.*" Similarly Participant Two expressed that "*VIRCS provides the support for people who need help and who are new here.*" Participant Three mentioned "*It is kind of organization to help immigrants with their life, work, children.*" Participant Four disclosed that "*It is an organization that helps immigrants to settle down. It can also help you with solving problems*". Based on participants' understanding, VIRCS offers different kinds of services to immigrants to assist them with establishing their lives in Victoria and help them with solving problems in multiple areas, including their life, work and children.

Sub-Theme Two: Helping me and my parents. The second theme is about the various forms of support that youth and their parents received from VIRCS. Participant Six stated that "*They helped me build my confidence and a lot of language skills. I really hope they continue to create all those things because they really can help a lot of people.*" Participant One mentioned that "*My father went to the English classes there and they helped*

him with learning English and answer his questions.” Participant Four briefly replied that *“It offers English classes or workshops for my parents.”* These three participants shared how VIRCS helped them and their parents with improving their settlement experiences and learning about Canadian culture after immigrating to Victoria. VIRCS helped youth with learning English and building their confidence and Participant Six sincerely hoped that VIRCS would continue to offer their help to newcomer youth who would benefit a lot from the services at VIRCS. VIRCS greatly aided the parents of immigrant youth by hosting formal English classes and workshops, which assisted their parents with language and cultural transitions to Canada.

Sub-theme three: A place of gathering and sharing. Aside from the first two themes, Participant Two shared that:

When you get there, you can talk with others, so many people would know this place. So more and more people will come to this place. It's kind of like gathering. And people can find a lot stuff they can share with each other. I think it's a place for such kind of sharing and helping. They also teach a lot of stuff and I trust them. They are like my friends.

This excerpt illustrates that VIRCS is a place where immigrants gather together and socialize. People build connections and share their stories in a friendly and welcoming environment. It also demonstrates the close relationship between Participant Two and the service providers at VIRCS.

Theme Three: “I got help from them”— The Responsiveness of VIRCS’ Services for Youth

To protect the anonymity of my research participants, I removed the names of the programs they participated at VIRCS from the excerpts. All participants have accessed the services offered at VIRCS' youth programs and they shared their thoughts on those programs during the interviews. To summarize, youth programs at VIRCS helped immigrant youth with building relationship with others, making friends, practicing English, learning about life skills, and getting academic support. Also, participants' parents benefited from participating in the adult programs, which created opportunities for them to learn English and establish friendships. Four sub-themes were created, including making friends and practicing English, learning about life skills, academic support and support for parents. Below is a graphic designed based on the ecological framework to illustrate youth services at VIRCS (See

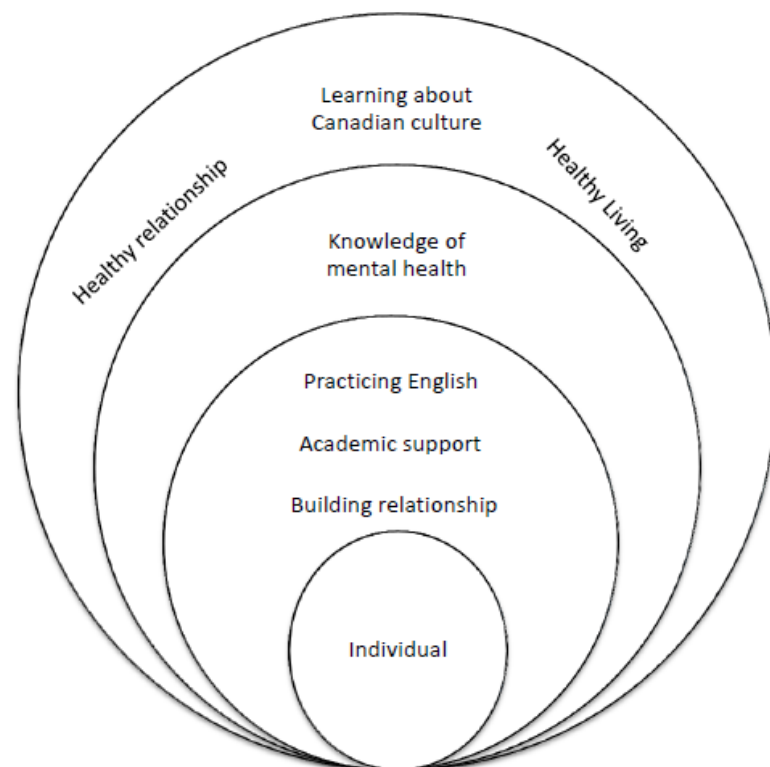


Figure Four).

Sub-Theme One: Making friends and practicing English. According to the excerpts relevant to the challenges that research participants encountered moving to Canada, many mentioned the challenge of establishing relationships. Most participants agreed that participating in VIRCS' programs opened up chances for them to engage and socialize with others. Another challenge mentioned by all participants is the language barrier. Though talking and making new friends, participants found it relaxing and easier to speak English.

Participant One shared the experience of making friends while participating in program activities, which he thought was really helpful and fun. *“At the [program], we talk while eating snacks and we play games. It is a program that I find really helpful. It helps me make new friends, and my English improved.”* Participant Three recalled having the opportunity to meet people from other countries and practice speaking English at the program. The program was “fun and good” based on Participant Three's experience. *“The [Program] is good, and fun. I can meet lots of people. We have different languages, so we have to speak English, so I have chance to practice my English.”* Participant Five mentioned that it was easier to make friends with other newcomer youth at the program. The program also created opportunities for newcomer youth to practice English and learn about Canada.

The [program] has a lot of newcomer. They come from different countries. Then you meet new friends. If you talk to them, it also helps you to practice English. It is easier to make friends there. It is very friendly. And you learn stuff. It is actually very relaxing.

Participant Six shared the experience of coming to VIRCS youth program. At the program,

Participant Six could behave as who she really was and found herself actually belonging with a group of people. It was also her first time “opening her heart” to connect with others.

I go to [the program] and I do make a lot of friends there. Actually it was the first time that I opened heart to other people there. At that night, I was really happy because I can finally find myself being there, like a part of this group. It also helps me to speak out English.”

From the above excerpts, it is obvious that through socializing with other newcomer youth, research participants not only made new friends and expanded their relationship with others, but also practiced and improved their English in the meantime. The friendly and relaxing environment created for youth at the program helped them communicate with others with much ease.

Sub-Theme Two: Learning about life skills. In addition to making friends and practicing English, research participants shared their experiences of learning about a wide range of information relevant to youth development. This applied, especially to topics pertaining to issues that immigrant youth are likely to encounter, such as knowledge about Canadian culture, healthy lifestyles, healthy relationships, physical and mental health.

Participant Two shared the experience of participating in a youth program where topics, such as Canadian culture, healthy living and relationship, mental and physical health were addressed.

It was quite an excellent experience. All newcomer youths [were] brought together. I shared my experience and talk with others. They introduce Canadian culture and help us get to know more about Canadian culture. I also learned about healthy living styles

and healthy relationship. I also got to know about mental and physical health in a fun way. We play lots of games. It is very important to talk about mental health because when you get into a new place, it is quite common that you have negative feelings, and you have to get through and deal with negative feelings.

Participants Three and Five shared similar experiences of gaining knowledge at VIRCS.

Participant Three mentioned that *“They help us know about Canada, like the cultures here.”*

Participant Five shared that *“You play with your friends, and learn about relationships, cultures or healthy living.”*

Growing up in other cultures, participants did not get the same kind of education as Canadian born students did. Most of topics addressed at VIRCS programs were not taught at school, but they are of great significance to youth’s student or adult lives. Therefore, the knowledge participants learned at VIRCS through informal education complemented the knowledge that they gained at school.

Sub-Theme Three: Academic support. Most participants discussed the challenges involved with academic transitions. To respond to the needs of research participants, VIRCS provided academic support, which participants found very helpful. Participant Five shared the experience of having volunteers who helped him with his homework, which was a form of additional support to him. *“[The program] is pretty fun. The volunteers help you and they are really nice. If you have homework, you just do it there and people help you to do it. You have extra help than you have at school [...].”* Participant Six found the program a great place to study because it was quiet and she could concentrate on her schoolwork with help to call on whenever any academic problems would arise. Participant Six conveyed that *“I go to [the*

program]. I do get my study helped. They help you with problems and it is a good place. It is quiet and people do their own thing. If you can't do it, you just get help [...].”

Sub-Theme Four: Support for parents. Some participants mentioned that settlement service providers not only offer help to the youth, but also to their parents with learning English, dealing with problems or with their jobs. Participant Four stated the adult program to be very helpful for parents.

They are very happy about it. They met friends there. It just gave them the chance to meet people around us. When they first came here, they had no friends, no people they know. Now they have chance to know people who come from [the same country as my family], and also from other countries and they can build relationship with them and with the teacher, and they can speak English well. They also have volunteers for their English, and it is very good.

The experience of Participant Four’s parents indicates the significance of creating opportunities for people to establish connections with each other. It also reflects that practicing and improving English and communication is highly beneficial for both youth and adults. For the parents of youth, they have to re-establish relationships in Canada because they, like their children, also arrive in a country without previously knowing anyone. Often the case is that parents possess even lower levels of English language abilities than their children, which makes it much harder for them to build connections with other people. VIRCS is a place that they can easily connect with other people who share similar experiences and practicing English while talking to people from other countries.

Theme Four: “*What Do I Want?*”— Services That Immigrant Youth Wish to Have in the Future

The fourth theme usefully represented the data about the settlement services that my research participants wish to have for them and for youth like them in the future. Participants shared the hope of having services to help them make connections and strengthen social engagement, and holding weekly or monthly event that fits their parents’ schedules. They also expressed the hope of getting more individual support or doing more outdoor activities. Four sub-themes were developed, including making connections, flexible events, individual support, and outdoor activities.

Sub-Theme One: Making connections. Participant One expressed the wish of establishing more connections with others, especially with people from different backgrounds. Participant One also mentioned having more opportunities to expand their network with Canadians, which would be really helpful.

I would really appreciate it if there could be more services that help you make connections. Maybe they could have some Canadian volunteers with different backgrounds. It would be helpful if you get to know more people here to build the network.

Similarly, Participant Six shared her belief of the importance of communication and socialization. Also, she believed that communication was the most effective way to learn and improve English language proficiency.

I think more on the social part in whatever ways. Because doing social things is the

only way you can communicate with people. Communication is very important. Through talking is a better way to learn English. You got to say something to respond.

Sub-Theme Two: Flexible Events. Participant Three mentioned his parents' situation of living in Canada and working in his home country back and forth and hoped that there could be more services that would fit his parents' flexible schedules. Participant Three's case is very common among immigrant youth from Asia as their parents or one of their parents still has to work in their home countries in order to cover the expenses of living in Canada. Therefore, for parents, flexible weekly or monthly events would accommodate their unstable schedules.

My parents, they have job in [my home country], so they have to travel around. If they have more events for our parents who don't have a stable schedule, that would be great. Like weekly event or monthly event, very short term event, learn something like fishing, or gardening.

Sub-Theme Three: Individual support. Participant Two mentioned taking part in youth programs that were delivered within group settings and there seemed to be a lack of individualized services. Participant Two shared that *"I really hope there is more individual help for youths who have very specific individual problems."*

Sub-theme four: Outdoor activities. Although some youth programs at VIRCS were designed to integrate a number of outdoor or recreational activities, research participants expressed the desire of having more opportunities for participating in outdoor activities. Participant Five said that *"I never thought about that. But it would be great if they give us free food. And I want to play basketball with my friends together and doing activities outside*

together.”

Summary

Demographic variables, such as years of residence in Canada, country of origin, family structure, parental economic and educational background, etc., would greatly influence the acculturation process of each participant. Therefore, the extent to which each research participant has acculturated to live in Canada differs greatly. In addition, differences in personality and attitudes towards immigrating to Canada play an important role in their transition process. Above all, the unique experiences encountered by each participant as a youth from Asia moving to Canada contributes to the insight on how to work with Asian immigrant youth and an increased understanding regarding the various adaptation challenges confronted by participants. However, with a small sample size, the findings of this research are not applicable to the large population of youth emigrated from Asia in Canada.

Chapter Six. Discussion

This chapter encompasses three main sections. The first section is a summary of research findings. The second section discusses the major findings in relation to relevant literature on the settlement experiences of Asian immigrant youth in Canada. The last section sheds light on implications for the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) and other settlement service providers in general and also outlines possible directions for future research.

Summary of Research Findings

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory suggests that an individual's developmental environment is nested in and shaped by multiple, intersecting contexts or systems. Findings of the current research pertaining to the challenges participants described in their adaptation to Canada and the services they received at VIRCS can be interpreted according to this ecological framework.

The ecological system that is of most proximity to the adjustment experiences of youth is the microsystem, which includes structures of family, school, peers and neighbourhood. Within the familial context, participants disclosed intergenerational conflicts due to high expectations of parents and a lack of mutual understanding. In schools, participants encountered various types of challenges, such as language acquisition barriers, difficulties in making friends due to limited English language skills or unfamiliarity with the culture of making friends in Canada, dealing with the grading procedures and school systems in Canada and enacting implicit cultural practices and norms that are assumed to be known. Separation from family members and friends back home also compelled most participants to establish

relationships beyond school and neighbourhood contexts. As this research study focuses on examining assistance offered at VIRCS, interview questions did not explore the supports available in participants' families, schools or neighbourhoods. However, confronted with adaptation challenges, participants shared their own coping strategies, including working hard on their personal characteristics of being confident, positive, proactive, more extraverted and persistently practicing English language skills, communicating and academic skills. Despite their efforts of making adjustments to live in Canada, some still experience difficult feelings of loneliness and helplessness and some of those barriers still exist in their lives.

The second ecological system, in which youth are embedded is the exosystem, where elements and experiences interact with variables in the microsystem to impact the development of youth. The settlement services that participants received from VIRCS are seen as a form of social support outside family and school. Programs at VIRCS assisted participants with establishing new relationships, improving their English language proficiency, and offering additional academic support outside school. VIRCS also offers programs that provide youth with knowledge that cannot be learned in classrooms or textbooks, but are fundamentally significant for them to function well and reach their full potential as youth or young adults. In addition, participants' parents also received support from VIRCS that helped them with learning English, and solving problems that resulted from miscommunication or unfamiliarity with Canadian social systems. From the perspectives of research participants, VIRCS helped them and their parents settle down in Victoria and people gathered at VIRCS to share and communicate with others. Participants also wished that programs at VIRCS could be more individually oriented, and integrate more

connection-building programs that enhance their social circles, outdoor activities and flexible weekly or monthly events about Canadian culture.

The most distal aspect of the ecology of youth is the macrosystem, which encompasses cultural values, customs and laws. Because of the cultural differences between participants' countries of origin and Canada, participants experienced a sense of unfamiliarity and many difficult emotions upon arrival in Canada. Cultural differences were of primary relevance to other adaptation challenges that participants experienced in the microsystem. Participants' varied understandings of cultural differences and how they coped with such differences also reflected that not everyone sought to acculturate in the same way.

Findings in Relation to Previous Literature

The findings of this research indicated that participants encountered numerous adaptation challenges while navigating their new lives in Canada. Participants described various strategies of responding to those challenges and indicated they received a number of services they found helpful and explained why these services were helpful to them. The research also discovered the kinds of services participants wished to have access to in the future.

Immigrant youth. Analysis of the commentaries of participants in this study appeared to support the notion of acculturation as a process that encompasses multifaceted challenges. For example, all the participants emphasized challenges related to a language barrier, academic transition, relationship formation, cultural differences, and negative feelings. A previous national research on immigrant youth in Canada led by Chuang in partnership with Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (2010) yielded similar results. Chuang (2010)

held focus groups with 125 newcomer youth from 30 countries on how they navigated their everyday lives in Canada. The results of data collected from focus groups demonstrated various challenges: language barriers (75 youth), peer relations (55 youth), school issues (51 youth), Canadian culture (39), parent-child relations (18 youth), and dual-culture (15). These findings are consistent with the findings of my study. In addition to these themes, Chuang (2010) also reported difficulties with negative behaviours, the Canadian environment, preferring the native country, missing the native country, financial issues, and language silos. Chuang (2010) argues that language problems often relate to other settlement issues, such as the adjustment to a new culture, obtaining necessary information, performing well in school, difficulty with making friends and so on. These language-related challenges were also identified by participants in the current study.

Another study about the needs of immigrant youth ages from 16 to 20 years old, conducted by Anisef, Kilbride and Khattar (2003), reported similar findings as those of the current study, including difficulty adjusting to a Canadian educational system, struggling with language barriers, and conflict at home as a result of cultural clashes between old and new cultures. Experiences of racism and discrimination and limited access to trained personnel at school to facilitate their success in schools were additional findings drawn from the Anisef, Kilbride and Khattar's (2003) research, which were not identified in my research. In a separate study, Anisef and Kilbride (2003) reported major issues confronting immigrant youth, including identity development, language issues, conflicts in values between home and peer group, and mental health problems, which are consistent with the findings of the current study.

In the current study, the finding of the negative feelings that participants experienced upon arrival in Canada and how those feelings changed afterwards reinforced findings of other studies. Based on the findings of my research, participants' feelings of loneliness, helplessness, unfamiliarity and lack of sense of belonging were ameliorated by time, by trying to be more proactive and open-minded, and by their personal efforts to adapt to their new lives in Canada. The efforts made by participants demonstrated that they were resilient. Resilience is commonly defined as the ability to achieve unusually good adaption in the face of severe stress and /or other ability of the stressed person to rebound to the pre-stress level of adaptation (Steinhauer, 1998, p. 51, as cited in Aniself et al., 2005).

There were significant differences in the nature of the foregoing studies and my study, which was exploratory. My study used a smaller sample of participants and data were collected through six individual interviews, whereas, the other three studies involved larger number of participants not only from Asia but also from other continents and these studies were either conducted by a professional research organization or in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and local settlement service affiliations across provinces. The less diverse sample of participants in my study may mean that the findings are more specific to immigrant youth from countries in Asia and to Victoria as a specific context, a mid-size, largely Caucasian city. However, this would need to be established through research involving larger samples of youth and through a comparative research design. The limited scope of the current study was also shaped by the requirements of a MA program. A complicated and substantial study was not expected at the Masters level.

Settlement services for youth. Since most research focuses on examining settlement

services from the perspectives of settlement service providers, there is a lack of research devoted to the opinions and ideas of immigrant youth, who are the clients of these settlement service-providing agencies. Research findings with regards to settlement services provided at VIRCS are similar to some of the existing literature on settlement services for youth in Canada. VIRCS has been proactive in responding to the needs of newcomer youth through a long-term, youth-centred and holistically oriented approach.

Settlement services for youth at VIRCS are designed with a proactive emphasis on resilience. Since most participants had no prior knowledge of Canadian cultural norms, customs, and systems, their experiences reflected a sense of being overwhelmed by the sudden change of living environment. Providing them with knowledge regarding values, beliefs, cultural norms, social relations, and education systems, in addition to equipping them with basic life skills, such as transportation, banking, medical and health service, would help to reduce the experience of unfamiliarity and the overall lack of belonging upon their arrival in Canada. Research participants mentioned the program at VIRCS that taught them about Canadian cultures, healthy relationships, healthy living and mental health, equipping immigrant youth with necessary knowledge of the understanding how life is lived in Canada. For example, the concept of “dating” may be an unfamiliar term to youth from Asian countries, but it is a common phenomenon in Canada that immigrant youth should be aware of. Another example is introducing the various opportunities for scholarship application, which may sound something new to immigrant youth from Asia. As suggested by Chuang (2010), knowledge about Canadian culture includes customs, norms and beliefs that are not normally taught in schools, but it would be incredibly beneficial to the prospective lives and

careers of immigrant youth. Through informal communication, immigrant youth are able to acquire an understanding of the rules and norms that direct the behaviours of people in Canada, which will empower them to positively deal with their adjustment and settlement issues (Chuang , 2010). Obtaining such knowledge builds a foundation for them to function well and confidently participate in society.

Services at VIRCS are delivered within a needs-based and holistic approach. Youth services are delivered in a non-ethno-specific manner. Research participants reported experiencing various challenges while adapting to new lives Canada. In response to these challenges, services for youth at VIRCS assisted them with school works, social integration within group settings and emotional adjustment through life skills coaching in informal groups. Gathering in groups help newcomer youth to develop social networks, meet new people and eventually make new friends. Although each program seemed to have a primary goal to fulfill, together they complemented each other, making it possible to holistically foster the academic, social and emotional adjustment of immigrant youth (Anisef et al., 2005).

Finally, programs at VIRCS demonstrated a youth-centred philosophy of working with youth aged 15 to 24. Most research participants explained that they found programs at VIRCS to be fun, relaxing and engaging as they always played educational or recreation games in a supportive and friendly environment (Anisef et al., 2005). According to participants, various forms of activities also contribute to create lively and engaging group dynamics which helped them quickly connect with other youth. Based on participants' commentaries, programs that focused on social interaction among participants was effective, but more opportunities to connect with others were also recommended. Moreover, most youth

programs at VIRCS are designed to foster the long-term acculturative process of immigrant youth as participants demonstrated that it took time to settle in Canada. Short programs may be of immediate help to the newcomer youth who just arrived. However, since the needs of immigrant youth vary at different stages in their transitional process, long term services that provide continued and constant support to immigrant youth are essential to foster their healthy adjustment. Commonalities were found in terms of what participants needed throughout the long term process. However, they had diverse perspectives on Canada and Canadian culture; they came from different family and cultural backgrounds; they spoke different languages; they were likely to have different religious and ethnic backgrounds. All these factors play important roles in shaping the kinds of services that they might need at different periods.

Implications for Service Providers

A number of variables influence the personal adjustments and settlement experiences of immigrant youth, including language fluency, age at migration, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, financial resources, the degree of identification with the host culture, and the amount of social interaction with the host society (Berry 1987, Furnham and Bochner 1986, Church 1982, as cited in Anisef et al., 2005). Therefore, the acculturative trajectory experienced by each immigrant youth differs from others, and their needs also vary to a great extent. Although there is no one-size-fits-all model for settlement service delivery, findings from this research generate some implications for practitioners who work with immigrant youth in Canada.

Even though most participants demonstrated resilience handling a variety of emotional,

cultural and cognitive tasks, it cannot be assumed that all immigrant youth from Asia will follow the same acculturative trajectory with a substantial investment of personal efforts. Even if participants successfully overcame all emotional hardships, the unnecessary burden of stresses and pressures involved in the process may have placed them at greater risk of mental or physical health issues than youth who had counselling or mental health support from settlement agencies. Hilario, Vo and Johnson (2014) proposed that mental health among Asian youth in Canada is shaped by factors related to migration and resettlement, especially the experiences of psychological and social acculturation. This may compound the stress of normative tasks, such as identify development and establishing a sense of belonging. Therefore pre-emptive measures must be taken to assist immigrant youth with emotional adjustment. Consequently, consistent emotional support for immigrant youth would help alleviate the emotional stresses experienced during the long transition process. For immigrant youth who suffer from severe mental health issues or mental discomfort, it is strongly recommended that the settlement agency cultivate good working relationships with youth mental health services, counselling services, and related services that will enable efficient referrals of youth in distress to appropriate supports. Settlement service providers also need ensure their receptivity to cross-referrals from other community organizations to provide support for immigrant youth in need of transition support services.

As suggested by research participants, individual models of service delivery would be of great help to newcomer youth. Individual aid would be the most effective for youth experiencing culture shock, or youth with limited resources to communicate in English, developmental disabilities and the need for one-on-one help with school-work (Anisef et al.,

2005). Lin, Yu and Harwood (2012) suggested that immigrant parents of children with disabilities experienced difficulties in navigating services in an unfamiliar system, so they need a “cultural broker” to assist them with seeking out support for their children. Immigrant youth with disabilities experienced unique adaptation challenges that require individual support that foster their healthy development in the community and in Canada. This can take the form of tutoring, involvement with mentorship programs or working with case managers in a linguistically sensitive and culturally appropriate manner. Even newcomer youth who have lived in Canada for years, may still have specific individual problems which require settlement service providers to work within a one-on-one setting to understand the situations more in-depth. Given that each newcomer youth has varied settlement needs, they would benefit greatly from individualized support that addresses their specific personal needs.

Expanding on the points made by research participants, it is recommended that settlement service providers design programs or provide individualized support to help newcomer youth smoothly transit from student lives to young adulthood. Such services could encompass application for college and university, scholarship and subsidies, knowledge of affordable housing, career counselling, employment-related skills development, job search, early family formation and so on.

Research participants also expressed the desire of having more programs that assist them with social engagement. Even though newcomer youth have the most contact with peers at school, which could be seen as windows to expand their social network, there are enormous barriers to building connections with others within the school context, including limited language abilities, the exposure to racism and discrimination, the unfamiliarity with

the different social climate at school, and the reluctance to display their accents. Therefore, settlement service providers should partner with community-based agencies, such as recreation centres, libraries, museums, volunteer service communities and youth councils in order to create more opportunities for newcomer youth to engage and socialize with other people. Collaboration with other social service providers could be delivered through weekly or monthly events that accommodate the varied needs and flexible schedules of youth. Similar to the recommendation of having more opportunities to socialize, research participants also mentioned that the most effective way to learn English is through communicating with others. Creating a friendly, open and non-judgemental environment for verbally mediated social interaction (i.e., not online, not focused on less language based activities such as sports or outdoor activities) would be of great importance in helping them practicing speaking English and building connections.

Directions for Future Research

It is important to provide opportunities for youth to express their opinions and ideas and listen to youth in developing and implementing programs and services, since they have the insider perspectives on their adjustment and settlement process. Given that a small number of research studies have investigated settlement services for immigrant youth in Canada from their perspectives, more research would be timely. However, it is a challenge to anticipate whether the findings of a few generic studies would be applicable to immigrant youth in general because immigrant youth in Canada is such a diverse group with varied adjustment needs. With the purpose of fostering a direct conversation between settlement service providers and newcomer youth, additional research should be dedicated to bridging

the gap by including perspectives from both settlement providers and immigrant youth simultaneously. This would enhance the applicability of research findings to that particular agency with voices of both parties being explored, examined and compared.

Furthermore, exploring the perspectives of youth from particular ethnic backgrounds with regards to the ethno-specific settlement services (available in major Canadian cities) would be beneficial to research. In addition, comparing these ethno-specific settlement services with mainstream settlement agencies would be advantageous. In-depth studies on settlement support from ethno-cultural communities would contribute to understanding the features of culturally appropriate programs and services. It would also enable practitioners to benefit from the resources of larger and more established mainstream agencies and build cultural competency of working effectively with immigrant youth from diverse cultural backgrounds (Yee, Marshall, & Vo, 2014). Cultural competence generally refers to the ability to interact effectively with individuals of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Being culturally competent is an ability that enables practitioners to actively identify and remove any barriers that prevent clients from accessing and participating in the organization's programs and services (Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2008). Moreover, the comparison between ethno-specific and heterogeneous settlement services creates opportunities for service providers to learn from each other and adopt the models of services that work best for their clients (Yee, Marshall, & Vo, 2014).

In addition, there is a lack of research on settlement services sectors and the adjustment needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) immigrant youth in Canada. LGBTQ immigrant youth are deeply influenced by intersecting identities linked to

racialization, sexuality, gender identity, education, employment and immigration status (Yee, Marshall & Vo, 2014). Research findings show that LGBTQ immigrant youth express considerable interest in accessing support, but remain disconnected from settlement services (Yee, Marshall & Vo, 2014). The investigation of the services provided to LGBTQ newcomers in Canada will expand our understanding regarding the functionality of settlement service organizations and contribute to creating a new space for the identity and belonging of LGBTQ newcomers (Garvey, 2011, as cited in Yee, Marshall, & Vo, 2014) in a way that respects and acknowledges their specific experiences.

Referring to the ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) of youth development, the school context is one of the variables that are most influential to the adjustment experiences of immigrant youth. In order to maximize the opportunity for immigrant youth to successfully adapt to new lives in Canada, future studies should focus on the collaboration between schools and settlement services. It would be beneficial to investigate the existing partnerships among schools and settlement providing agencies in supporting immigrant youth in schools and beyond the school environment. For examples, settlement workers in schools (SWIS), who are the liaisons between schools and immigrant youth's families, work in collaboration with school boards all over Canada, and most of them are staff from settlement providing agencies. Examining this kind of partnership from the point of view of immigrant youth would help settlement service providers develop programs that effectively and efficiently support immigrant youth settling in Canada. However, immigrant youth, whose parents hold temporary work visa, are not eligible to access the support from SWIS workers and only those are permanent residents are qualified for the services provided by SWIS

workers. Therefore, developing programs that are accessible to each and every immigrant youth irrespective of their immigration status, family economic situation, ethnic background, and religious practice is essential to foster the successful settlement of every newcomer youth. Programs such as conversation buddies or homework tutoring should be introduced to schools. The idea is to partner each immigrant youth with a local student who is willing to help his/her peers with practicing English and learning about Canadian culture and to offer one-on-one homework tutoring.

Conclusion

This study examined the settlement experiences of immigrant youth from Asia and the settlement services they received during their transition process. This study generated insight regarding the adaptation challenges that immigrant youth are likely to be confronted with and the various types of support required to foster their successful adjustments to Canada. Cumulative data revealed that each immigrant youth experiences a unique acculturative trajectory, requiring service providers to tailor their settlement services based on the varied needs of their clients. This study also highlighted the significance of bridging the gap between immigrant youth and service providers through the involvement of immigrant youth in research.

Throughout analysis of the research findings, the most notable observation is the self-reliance displayed in the midst of a myriad of challenges research participants faced while navigating their day-to-day experience in Canada. The question: “As a Child and Youth Care practitioner, what can I do to assist immigrant youth with transitioning into Canada?” was raised from my active engagement with participants and the literature in the research

process. Although small interventions alone may not be adequate to effectively support newcomer youth, I have the opportunity to improve my cultural competency of working with youth from diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and family backgrounds. Genuine engagement and authentic relation are essential to fully understand each individual's unique acculturative experience and provide services that respond to their varied needs. As a researcher, I strongly oppose the ideal of assimilating newcomer youth in order to integrate them into society. On the contrary, I will advocate for the public awareness and acceptance that immigrant youth are entitled to preserve their cultures of origin and absorb aspects of the cultures that make up Canadian society that they find beneficial and meaningful to them. I will also advocate for acknowledgement of the efforts made by newcomer youth to undertake ESL classes (English as a Second Language) by giving them academic credits on their transcripts. I can actively get involved in dialogue with community agencies, other settlement service organizations, educators and policy makers to enhance their understanding of the settlement experiences of immigrant youth and promote the implementation of targeted, timely and effective settlement services for newcomers.

References

- About VIRCS. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.vircs.bc.ca/about.php>
- Abu-Laban, Y. (2014). Reform by stealth: The Harper conservatives and Canadian multiculturalism. In J. Jedwab (Ed.), *The multiculturalism question: Debating identity in 21st century Canada* (pp. 149-172). Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Alhojailan, M. I. (2012). Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. *West East Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), 39-47.
- Anisef, P., & Kilbride, K. M. (2003), *Managing two worlds: The experiences and concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario*. Toronto, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Anisef, P., Kilbride, K. M., & Khattar, R. (2003). The needs of newcomer youth and emerging "best practices" to meet those needs. In P. Anisef & K. M. Kilbride (Eds.), *Managing two worlds: The experiences and concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario* (pp. 196-234). Toronto, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Anisef, P., Poteet, M., Anisef, D., Farr, G., Poirier, A., & Wang, H. (2005). Issues confronting newcomer youth in Canada: Alternative models for a national youth host program. Toronto, Canada: Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement.
- Beiser, M., Hou, F., Hyman, I., & Tousignant, M. (2002). Poverty, family process, and the mental health of immigrant children in Canada. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92, 220-227.
- Berk, L.E. (2000). *Child development* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

- Berry, J. W. (1980). Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation. In A. M. Padilla (Ed), *Acculturation: Theory, Models, and Some New Findings* (p. 9-25). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Berry, J. W. (2003). Conceptual approaches to acculturation. In K. M. Chun, P. B. Organista & G. Marin (Eds), *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research* (pp. 17-37). Washington DC, WA: American Psychological Association.
- Berry, J. W. (2013). Research on multiculturalism in Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 37, 663-675.
- Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006). *Immigrant youth in cultural transition: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation across national contexts*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Berry, J. W., & Sam. D. (1997). Acculturation and adaptation. In W. Berry, M. H. Segall & C. Kagit çibasi (Eds), *Social Behaviour and Applications* (pp. 291-326). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). Contexts of child rearing: Problems and prospects. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 844–850.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2005). *Facts and figures 2004: Immigration overview*. Ottawa, Canada: Industry Canada.
- Children, Youth & Yong Adults. Retrieved from <http://www.vircs.bc.ca/about.php>
- Chuang, S. S. & Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance. (2010). New start for youth

- study: An examination of settlement pathways of newcomer youth. Ottawa, Canada: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- Closson, L. M., Darwich, L., Hymel, S., & Waterhouse, T. (2013). Ethnic Discrimination among recent immigrant adolescents: Variations as a function of ethnicity and school context. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 24(4), 608-614. doi: 10.1111/jora.12089
- Cox, D. (1985). Welfare services for immigrants: Can they be better planned. *International Migration*, 23, 73-95.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, 1-45.
- DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, 40, 314-321.
- Dion, K.K., & Dion, K. L. (2001). Gender and cultural adaptation in immigrant families. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 511-522.
- Duan, C, and P. Vu. 2000. Acculturation of Vietnamese students living in or away from Vietnamese communities. *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development* 28(4), 225-41.
- Ellis, L. M., & Chen, E. (2013). Negotiating identity development among undocumented immigrant college students: A grounded theory study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60(2), 251-264. doi: 10.1037/a0031350
- Ferguson, D. L. (1993). Something a little out of the ordinary: Reflections on becoming an interpretivist researcher in special education. *Remedial and Special Education*, 14(4),

35-43.

Ferrer, A., Picot, G., & Riddell, W. C. (2014). New directions in immigration policy:

Canada's evolving approach to the selection of economic immigrants. *The Institute for the Study of Labour*.

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition: *2011 British Columbia Child Poverty Report Card*.

George, U. (2002). A needs-based model for settlement service delivery for newcomers to Canada. *International Social work*, 45(4), 465-480.

Government of Canada. (1971). Multiculturalism policy. *Statement to House of Commons*.

Ghosh, R., & Guzder, J. (2011). Re-bordering immigrant and refugee identities in Quebec's multicultural society: The case of South Asian youth. *Canadian and International Education*, 40(2).

Griffith, A. (2013). *Policy arrogance or innocent bias: Resetting citizenship and multiculturalism*. New York, NY: Anar Press.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publication.

Gunew, S. (2004). *Haunted nations: The colonial dimensions of multiculturalisms*. London, UK: Routledge.

Gyepi-Garbrah, J., Walker, R., & Garcea, J. (2014). Indigeneity, immigrant newcomers and interculturalism in Winnipeg, Canada. *Urban Studies*, 51(9), 1795-1811.

Hagan, J., & McCarthy, B. (1997). *Mean streets: Youth crime and homelessness*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Handford, P., & Basu, J. (2010). Supporting newcomer children and youth: A BCSAP learning exchange. *Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC*.
- Herberg, D. C. (1998). A framework for the settlement and integration of new immigrants to Canada. *Settlement and Integration of New Immigrants to Canada Conference*.
- Hilario, C. T., Vo, D. X. Johnson, J. L., & Saewyc, E. M. (2014). Acculturation, gender, and mental health of Southeast Asian immigrant youth in Canada. *Journal of Immigrant Minority Health, 16*, 1121-1129. doi: 10.1007/s10903-014-9978-x
- Hill, C. E., Knox, S., Thompson, B. J., Williams, E. N., Hess, S. A., & Ladany, N. (2005). Consensual qualitative research: An update. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 196-205.
- Hirayama, H., & Cetingok, M. (1988). Empowerment: A social work approach for Asian immigrants. *Social Casework, 69*, 41-47.
- Ho, D. Y. F. (1996). Filial piety and its psychological consequences. In M. H. Bond (Ed), *The handbook of Chinese psychology* (pp. 155-165). Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Hoonard, D. K. V. D. (2012). *Research in action: A Canadian primer*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Kelly, P. (2014). Understanding intergenerational social mobility: Filipino youth in Canada. *Institute for Research on Public Policy, 45*.
- Kirby, S. L., Greaves, L., & Reid, C. (2006). *Experience research social change: Methods beyond the mainstream* (2nd ed.). Toronto, Canada: Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication.
- Knox, S., & Burkard, A. W. (2009). Qualitative research interviews. *Psychotherapy Research,*

19(4), 556-575. doi: 10.1080/10503300802702105

Kurtz, P. D., Lindsey, E. W., Jarvis, S., Williams, N. R., & Nackerud, L. (2000). How runaway and homeless youth navigate troubled waters: The role of formal and informal helpers. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 17(5), 381-402.

Kwak, K., & Rudmin, F. (2014). Adolescent health and adaptation in Canada: Examination of gender and age aspects of healthy immigrant effect. *International Journal for Equity and Health*, 13.

doi: 10.1186/s12939-014-0103-5

Li, J. (2009). Forging the future between two different worlds: Recent Chinese immigrant adolescents tell their cross-cultural experiences. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24(4), 477-504. doi: 10.1177/0743558409336750

Lin, S. C., Yu, S. M., & Harwood, R. L. (2012). Autism spectrum disorders and developmental disabilities in children from immigrant families in the United States. *The American Academy of Paediatrics*, 130(2), 191-197. doi:10.1542/peds.2012-0900R

Longitudinal survey of immigrants to Canada: Process, progress and prospects. (2003). *Statistics Canada*.

Ma, P. W., & Yeh, C. J. (2005). Factors influencing the career decision status of Chinese American youth. *Career Development Quarterly*, 53, 337-347.

Makarenko J. (2010). Immigration policy in Canada: History, administration and debates. *Society of Culture & Communities*.

McLaren, L., & Hawe, P. (2005). Ecological perspectives in health research. *Journal of Epidemiology Community Health*, 59, 6-14. doi:10.1136/jech.2003.018044.

- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services. (2008). Achieving cultural competence: A diversity tool kit for residential care settings.
- Morales, A. (1981). Social work with third-world people. *Social work*, 26(1), 45-51.
- Mwarigha, M. S. (2002). *Towards a framework for local responsibility: Taking action to end the current limbo in immigrant settlement—Toronto*. Toronto, Canada: Maytree Foundation.
- Namey, E., Guest, G., Thairu, L., & Johnson, L. (2008). Data reduction techniques for large qualitative data sets. In G. Guest & K. M. MacQueen (Eds.), *Handbook for team-based qualitative research* (p. 137-163). New York, NY: Rowman Altamira.
- Ngo, B. (2008). Beyond “cultural clash” understandings of immigrant experiences. *Theory into Practice*, 47, 4-11. doi: 10.1080/00405840701764656
- Ngo, H. V. (2009). Patchwork, sidelining and marginalization: services for immigrant youth. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 7, 82-100.
doi: 10.1080/15562940802687280
- Nguyen, T. D. (2006). Immigrant Asian youth and cultural-identity challenges: Implications for pastoral counselling practice. *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling*, 60, 59-67.
- Omidvar, R., & Richmond, T. (2003). *Immigrant settlement and social inclusion in Canada*. Toronto, Canada: Laidlaw Foundation.
- Orozco, S., Thompson, B., Rapes, J., & Montgomery, G. T. (1993). Measuring the

- acculturation of Mexican Americans: A covariance structure analysis. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counselling and Development*, 25(4), 149-55.
- Pinto, M., & Sawicki, L. (1997). The ideological conflict between mainstream and ethno-specific agencies. *Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 15(4), 30-31.
- Pires, G. D., & Stanton, P. J. (2000). Ethnicity and acculturation in a culturally diverse country: Identifying ethnic markets. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 21(1), 42-57.
- Quirke, L. (2011). Exploring the settlement experiences and information practices of Afghan newcomer youth in Toronto. *The Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science*, 35(4), 345-353.
- Ryan, D., Dooley, B., & Benson, C. (2008): Theoretical perspectives on post-migration adaptation and psychological well-being among refugees: Towards a resource-based model. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21, 1–18.
- Salehi, R. (2010). Intersection of health, immigration, and youth: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 12, 788–797.
- Seat, R. (1997). The integration of immigrants into Canadian society: A new experience from FSA Toronto. Toronto, Canada: International Association for Public Participation.
- Seat, R. (2000). *Factors affecting the settlement and adaptation process of Canadian adolescent newcomers 16-19 years of age*. Toronto, Canada: Family Service Association of Toronto.
- Social Planning Council of Ottawa. (2010). Immigrant children, youth and families: A qualitative analysis of the challenges of integration.

- Statistics Canada (2006). 2006 census: Immigration in Canada: A portrait of the foreign-born population. *2006 Census: Highlights*. Retrieved from <http://www.census2006.ca/census-recensement/2006as-sa/97-577/pl-eng.cfm>
- Stirling, J. A. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 1*(3), 385-405.
- Strategic Information Branch, Labour Market and Immigration Division. 2010. *Immigrant youth in BC: Fact sheet*. Victoria, BC: Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
- Suarez-Orozco, C., Rhodes, J., & Milburn, M. (2009). Unraveling the immigrant paradox: Academic engagement and disengagement among recently arrived immigrant youth. *Youth & Society, 41*(2), 151-185.
doi: 10.1177/0044118X09333647
- Suinn, R. M., Ahuna, C. & Khoo, G. (1992). The Suinn-Lew Asian self-identity acculturation scale: Concurrent and factorial validation. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 52*(4), 1041-46.
- Swick, K. J., & Williams, R. (2006). An analysis of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective for early childhood educators: Implications for working with families experiencing stress. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 33*(5).
- Xie, Q. (2007). Cultural difference between the East and the West. *Canadian Social Science, 114*-117.
- Winter, E. (2015). Rethinking multiculturalism after its “retreat”: Lessons from Canada. *American Behavioural Scientist, 59*(6), 637-657. doi:10.1177/0002764214566495

- Wong, C. A., Eccles, J. S., & Sameroff, A. (2003). The influence of ethnic discrimination and ethnic identification on African American adolescents' school and socioemotional adjustment. *Journal of Personality, 71*, 1197–1232.
- Yee, B. W. K., Huang, L. N., & Lew, A. (1998). Family lifespan socialization in a cultural context. In L. C. Lee & N. W. S. Zane (Eds.), *Handbook of Asian American Psychology* (pp. 83-135). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yee, J. Y., Marshall, Z., & Vo. T. (2014). Essentialism: Incorporating hybridity into new conceptualizations of settlement service delivery with lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer immigrant youth people. *Critical Social Work, 15*(1), 88-103.
- Yeh, C. J., Ma, P. W., Madan-Bahel, A., Hunter C. D., Jung, S., Kim, A. B., Akitaya, K., & Sasaki, K. (2005). The cultural negotiations of Korean immigrant youth. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 83*, 172-182.
- Yeh, C. J., Ma, P. W., Okubo, Y., Liao, H. Y., Shea, M., & Kim, A.B. (2014). Ecological risk and protective factors of depressive and anxiety symptoms among low-income, Chinese immigrant youth. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 5*(3), 190-199. doi: 10.1037/a0034105
- Yeh, C. J., & Hunter, C. D. (2004). The socialization of self: Understanding shifting and multiple selves across cultures. In R. T. Carter (Ed.), *Handbook on racial-cultural psychology* (pp. 78–93). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Yeh, C. J., Kim, A. B., Pituc, S. T., & Atkins, M. (2008). Poverty, loss and resilience: The story of Chinese immigrant youth. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 55*(1), 34-48. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.55.1.34

Zhao, G. (2009). The experience of ethnocultural communities in supporting newcomers in Edmonton: A community Research. *Multicultural Coalition*.

Appendices

Appendix A. Script for Youth Workers at VIRCS

Appendix B. Research Poster

Appendix C. Facebook Script for Danny Tes

Appendix D. Script for Determining Participants' Eligibility

Appendix E. Draft Interview Questions

Appendix F. Participant Consent Form

Appendix G. Information Letter for Parents

Appendix H. Consent form for Parents

Appendix I. Support letter from VIRCS

Appendix A. Script for Youth Workers at VIRCS

Hello everyone:

I would like to share with you an invitation to participate in a research being conducted by Yupei Xia, a graduate student in School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria.

Yupei's study explores Asian immigrant youth's experiences of settling into Canada and the role of settlement services in their transitional process.

Participation in the study involves completing a 1 to 2 hour individual interview with the researcher. Each interview will be audiotaped.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participating in the study at any time. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your ability to access any future services at VIRCS, nor on your relationship with the researcher or youth workers at VIRCS.

Your anonymity will be protected before, during, and after your participation in this study. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by not using any identifying information in the data. Only the researcher, Yupei Xia will have access to the data collected.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please contact Yupei at yupeixia@uvic.ca.

Thank you very much for your time.

Are you an immigrant youth from Asia?

15-24 years old?

Want to tell **YOUR story?**



Yupei Xia, a graduate student in Child and Youth Care at University of Victoria, is conducting a study exploring Asian immigrant youth's experiences of settling into Canada with the assistance of settlement services and would like to talk to you!

If you would like to participate or have further questions please contact

Yupei at yupeixia@uvic.ca.

Thank you!

Appendix C. Facebook Script for Danny Tes

Hello everyone:

I would like to share with you an invitation to participate in a research being conducted by Yupei Xia, a graduate student in School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria.

Yupei's study explores Asian immigrant youth's experiences of settling into Canada and the role of settlement services in their transitional process.

Please find the attached research poster.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please contact Yupei at yupeixia@uvic.ca.

Your participation will be highly valued!

Thanks

Appendix D. Script for Determining Participants' Eligibility

Researcher: Hello. I am Yupei Xia. Thank you very much for considering participating in my research. I would like to ask a few questions to see if you are eligible to participate in this research.

1. How old are you?
2. Where do you come from? (which country)
3. How long have been here in Canada?
4. Have you received services from Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society?
5. Will you feel comfortable sharing your personal story? I have the draft interview questions if you would like to have a look at them. I can email them to you, or we can talk about them on the phone or I can explain them to you in person.

(For youth over 19) I will email a copy of the consent form to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns about this research. Please bring the signed consent form with you on our scheduled day of interview.

(For youth under 19) I will email an information letter and a consent form to your parents. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you or your parents have any concerns about this research. Please bring the signed consent form with you on our scheduled day of interview.

Your participation in this research is highly appreciated!
I look forward to talking to you soon.

Appendix E. Draft Interview Questions

Draft Interview Questions

1. Could you please tell me your place of origin?
2. At what age you arrived in Canada and how long have you been in Canada?
3. Could you please tell me something about your family and your family members?
4. What stands out most in your experience of making transition to Canada?
5. How would you like to compare your culture to Canadian culture?
6. What challenges and barriers do you personally face or have faced settling into Greater Victoria?
7. What coping strategies do you use to deal with challenges?
8. Based on your understanding, what is a settlement service-providing agency?
9. What are the kinds of settlement services that you know about?
10. What are the kinds of settlement services that you received?
11. How long for settlement service X?
12. How long for settlement service Y?
(The same question for the list of settlement services that youth mentioned)
13. Do you find any settlement services available to you helpful?
14. If yes, what services are helpful to you?
15. In what way is settlement service X helpful?
16. In what way is settlement service Y helpful?
(The same question for the services that youth mentioned)
17. If you find the services that are available to you are not helpful, could you explain why settlement service X is not helpful?
18. What could be improved for service X?
19. Why settlement service Y is not helpful?
20. What could be improved for service Y?
(The same question for the services that youth mentioned)
21. From your perspective, what challenges and barriers does your family face or have faced settling into Greater Victoria?
22. What coping strategies does your family use to deal with challenges?
23. Have your family members accessed any settlement services?
24. If so, what are those services?
25. Based on your understanding, do you think settlement service X is helpful for your family member?
26. Why settlement service X is helpful or not?
27. If it is helpful, what has changed most in your family dynamic after your family member receiving service X?
28. Based on your understanding, do you think settlement service Y is helpful for your family member?
29. Why settlement service Y is helpful or not?
30. If it is helpful, what has changed most in your family dynamic after your family member receiving service Y?

(The same question for the services that youth mentioned)

31. What are the settlement services you would like to have access to?
32. How would you like those services to be delivered in the future?
33. What would you like to say to settlement service-providers about the services that they have provided to you?
34. What would you like to say to settlement service-providers about the services that they have provided to your family member?
35. What would you like to suggest to settlement service providers in terms of working with immigrant youth?
36. What would you like to say to in-coming or recently arrived newcomer youth about youth settlement services?
37. What services should they use and why?

Appendix F. Participant Consent Form



**University
of Victoria**

Participant Consent Form

An Exploratory Study on Asian Immigrant Youth’s Experiences of Settling into Canada with the Assistance of Youth Settlement Services

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “An Exploratory Study on Asian Immigrant Youth’s Experiences of Settling into Canada with the Assistance of Youth Settlement Services” that is being conducted by Yupei Xia.

Yupei Xia is a graduate student in the Faculty of Human and Social Development’s School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. You may contact her if you have further questions by yupeixia@uvic.ca.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Ball. You may contact my supervisor at jball@uvic.ca or 250-472-4128.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of Asian immigrant youth who settled into Canada with the assistance of settlement services for youth. Specifically, this research focuses on Asian immigrant youth in the context of one settlement-providing agency—Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) in Greater Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. This research aims to answer four research questions. 1. What are the challenges or barriers that Asian immigrant youth have encountered while settling into Greater Victoria and how do they cope with those challenges? 2. What role do settlement service providers play in immigrant youth’s process of transitioning to Canada? 3. What do Asian immigrant youth find helpful about the settlement services and in what ways do they find them helpful? 4. What kinds of services do Asian immigrant youth wish to have available to them?

Importance of this Research

First, this research contributes to a broader knowledge base of the challenges and barriers that Asian immigrant youth experienced making adjustments to live in Greater Victoria. Second, it examines the impact of youth settlement services in Asian immigrant youth’s acculturative transition. Third, it may generate new conceptual understandings that are relevant to the design of settlement services. Moreover, this research is of great benefit to VIRCS. On the one hand, it bridges the gap between the theoretical frameworks that inform the design of settlement services and the delivery of programs in practice. On the other hand, this research

can be seen as part of an evaluative process, which could be used by VIRCS to improve their services.

Participant Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are an immigrant youth from Asia, between the ages of 15-24 and have no more than years of residence in Canada. Your perspective is invaluable and I would like to learn from your experience. Participants will be accepted into the study on a “first come” basis. A waitlist will be created once 10 participants have been recruited, reaching the maximum number for participants recruitment. These waitlisted individuals will be contacted to participate if someone withdraws from the study.

What is Involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include doing a 1 to 2 hour individual interview with the researcher. Interview will be audiotaped and transcribed.

Inconvenience

If you choose to participate in this study, the time required for working through the consent forms, the interviews and transportation to and from interview locations may cause you some inconvenience. The requested time commitment is a total of approximately 4 hours.

Risks

If you choose to participate in this study, you may experience some emotional discomfort, stress, embarrassment or fatigue sharing personal information. In order to minimize this, I will try to create a safe and supportive environment. There will be no pressure to continue in the research, you can decide to withdraw at any time. You will also be invited to take a break at any time during the interview if you feel you need to do so. If you desire further support, I will make referrals to assist you to access support.

Benefits

There are potential benefits to your participation in this study. These include: making a contribution to a gap in existing literature by sharing your personal experiences, which has the potential to impact settlement services providers’ knowledge and understanding of your experiences. Your participation may help the society better understand Asian immigrant youth and provide more services that are tailored to the needs of this target population. Your involvement will also contribute to foster a broader knowledge base of settlement services for immigrant youth.

Compensation

As a way to compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation, you will be reimbursed with 5 dollars or two bus tickets for transportation costs from and to the interview. Light snacks and drinks will be provided to you during the interview.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to

participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used for this study. If you withdraw before the completion of the interview, during the interview or after the completion of the interview at the interview location, you will still be reimbursed with five dollars or two bus tickets. Snacks and drinks will be provided to you during the interview even if you withdraw before the completion of the interview.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

It is possible that I, the researcher could have a power over relationship with potential participants because of my past practicum at Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS). To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken: participant recruitment will not commence until my practicum at VIRCS has terminated. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your ability to access any future services at VIRCS, nor on your relationship with the researcher or youth workers at VIRCS.

On-going Consent

I will check with you that you give your permission to take part throughout the entire study. I will also remind you that your participation is voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw at any time. If you ever choose to withdraw, it will not affect how I think about you or behave towards you.

Anonymity

Your anonymity will be protected before, during, and after your participation in this study. This will be done by removing all identity information (demographic factors, culturally sensitive information, and identifying direct words) from the interview transcripts, and referring to participants by participant 1, 2, 3 and etc. when analyzing transcripts, and reporting findings. This will help minimize the risk that anyone will be able to associate your data (interview transcripts) with you. If you choose to not participate at any time, your anonymity will still be protected.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by not using any identifying information in the data. All electronic data (field notes, audiotapes, and coded data) will be kept on the researcher's password-protected laptop. Hard copies of the transcripts, field notes, paper records will be stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home office. Only the researcher (Yupei Xia) will have access to the locked cabinet and the password protected laptop. However, there are limits to confidentiality due to legal requirements. Confidentiality may be breached if there is a disclosure of child abuse or a disclosure of plans to commit suicide or murder. As the researcher, I am legally obligated to report the case to Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD).

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

Thesis/class presentation, presentations at scholarly meetings, published article or chapter, “UvicSpace” and a hard copy of my thesis directly to participants if they desire so.

Disposal of Data

Data from this research will be disposed of once the criteria of Masters completion have been met, anticipated to be no later than May, 2016. Files on computer will be permanently deleted. Paper records will be shredded and audiotapes will be erased.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include myself, Yupei Xia at yupeixia@uvic.ca and my supervisors, Dr. Jessica Ball at 250-472-4128 and Dr. Sandrina de Finney at 2507216372.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers. Your signature below also indicates your consent to having your interview audio-taped.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

A list of Available Support and Counselling Service

Medical

Victoria Cool Aid Society Health Centre

250-383-1977

www.coolaid.org

Victoria Youth Clinic

James Bay: 250-388-7841

Downtown: 250-383-3552

www.victoriayouthclinic.ca

Health Link BC

8-1-1

Counselling and Support

Sooke Family Resource Society Youth Outreach and Navigator Service

250-642-5152

www.sfrs.ca/counselling-services/youth/navigator

Women's Sexual Assault Centre

Youth counselling

250-383-3232

vwsac.com

Mary Manning Centre

Child abuse prevention and counselling

250-385-6111

www.marymanning.com

Mental Health

Child & Youth Mental Health Westshore

250-391-2223

Go to www.inyourgrasp.bc.ca and search database

Saanich Child and Youth Mental Health

250-952-5073

www.healthlinkbc.ca

BC Mental Health Information Line

310-6789

Umbrella Society
250-380-0595
www.umbrellasociety.ca

Emergency/Crisis

Kids Help phone
1-800-668-6868

Youth Space
youthspace.ca

Representative for Children and Youth Kids helpline
250-310-1234

Vancouver Island Crisis Line
1-888-494-3888

Appendix G. Information Letter for Parents

Information letter

To whom it may concern,

My name is Yupei Xia and I am currently completing my Master of Arts in Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. The thesis title for my MA degree is: An Exploratory Study on Asian Immigrant Youth's Experiences of Settling into Canada with the Assistance of Youth Settlement Services.

My curiosity and interest in this topic arise from my personal experience of settling into Canada as an international student from China, which resonates with those of immigrant youth from Asia. Through my practicums of working with immigrant children and youth, I become more interested in knowing about their experiences of settling into Canada and how they feel about the settlement services they received.

Through a semi-structured one-on-one interview with youth, I hope to explore how youth have settled into Canada and how do they think about the settlement services for youth. The interview will be audio-taped with the permission of the youth. Your child will be reimbursed with 5 dollars or two bus tickets for transportation costs from and to the interview. Light snacks and drinks will be provided to your child during the interview.

Upon completion of the interviews, I will be transcribing, analyzing and synthesizing the stories shared. Participants will be given copies of my final thesis.

Your child's participation in this study has the potential to contribute to a gap in existing literature by sharing his or her personal experience of settling into Canada. Moreover, your child's participation may help the society better understand Asian immigrant youth and provide more services that are tailored to the needs of this target population. Your child's involvement will also contribute to foster a broader knowledge base of settlement services for immigrant youth.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this research or any concerns about your child's participation in this research. I can be reached at @ yupeixia@uvic.ca. This research is carried out under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Ball. You may also contact him with questions or concerns about the research at jball@uvic.ca or 250-472-4128.

Sincerely,

Yupei Xia

Appendix H: Consent Form for Parents



Consent Form for Parents

An Exploratory Study on Asian Immigrant Youth’s Experiences of Settling into Canada with the Assistance of Youth Settlement Services

Your child is being invited to participate in a study entitled “An Exploratory Study on Asian Immigrant Youth’s Experiences of Settling into Canada with the Assistance of Youth Settlement Services” that is being conducted by Yupei Xia.

Yupei Xia is a graduate student in the Faculty of Human and Social Development’s School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. You may contact her if you have further questions by yupeixia@uvic.ca.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Ball. You may contact my supervisor at jball@uvic.ca or 250-472-4128.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of Asian immigrant youth who settled into Canada with the assistance of settlement services for youth. Specifically, this research focuses on Asian immigrant youth in the context of one settlement-providing agency—Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) in Greater Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. This research aims to answer four research questions. 1. What are the challenges or barriers that Asian immigrant youth have encountered while settling into Greater Victoria and how do they cope with those challenges? 2. What role do settlement service providers play in immigrant youth’s process of transitioning to Canada? 3. What do Asian immigrant youth find helpful about the settlement services and in what ways do they find them helpful? 4. What kinds of services do Asian immigrant youth wish to have available to them?

Importance of this Research

First, this research contributes to a broader knowledge base of the challenges and barriers that Asian immigrant youth experienced making adjustments to live in Greater Victoria. Second, it examines the impact of youth settlement services in Asian immigrant youth’s acculturative transition. Third, it may generate new conceptual understandings that are relevant to the design of settlement services. Moreover, this research is of great benefit to VIRCS. On the one hand, it bridges the gap between the theoretical frameworks that inform the design of settlement services and the delivery of programs in practice. On the other hand, this research

can be seen as part of an evaluative process, which could be used by VIRCS to improve their services.

Participant Selection

Your child is being asked to participate in this study because he/she is an immigrant youth from Asia, between the ages of 15-24 and have no more than years of residence in Canada.

What is Involved

You have agreed to your child's voluntary participation in this study. Your child's participation will involve one interview of approximately 1 to 2 hours in length. Your child is welcome to shorten or lengthen that time frame if he or she desires. The interview is semi-structured, giving your child the freedom to say and not say what he or she wishes. With the permission of your child and yourself, the interviews will be audio-taped. The location for the interviews is a study room located in the library at UVic or my supervisor, Jessica Ball's office at Uvic or any other places that your child feels comfortable being there. Interview location will ensure confidentiality of the interview as your child will be in a location which provides privacy.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you and your family, including time. I am willing to be flexible in terms of scheduling the interview in such a fashion that it provides minimal disruption of your family.

Risks

There is a potential risk of emotional discomfort, stress, embarrassment or fatigue to your child by participating in this research. To prevent or deal with this potential risk, the following steps will be taken. I will try to create a safe and supportive environment. Your child will also be invited to take a break at any time during the interview if you feel you need to do so. If your child desires further support, I will make referrals to assist you to access support. Your child will be under no pressure to continue in the research and he/she can decide to withdraw at any time. In addition, the researcher will place a call to you and your child one day and one week following the interview for the purpose of checking in with your child.

Benefits

In addition to the potential risk, there are also potential benefits to your child's participation in this research. Your child's participation in this study has the potential to contribute to a gap in existing literature by sharing his or her personal experience of settling into Canada. Moreover, your child's participation may help the society better understand Asian immigrant youth and provide more services that are tailored to the needs of this target population. Your child's involvement will also contribute to foster a broader knowledge base of settlement services for immigrant youth.

Compensation

As a way to compensate you and your child for any inconvenience related to participation,

your child will be reimbursed with 5 dollars or two bus tickets for transportation costs from and to the interview. Light snacks and drinks will be provided to your child during the interview.

Voluntary Participation

Your child's participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to give consent for your child to participate, please understand that your child has the right to withdraw from the study at any time and without any consequences or need for explanation. If your child does decide to withdraw, the data collected from your child will not be used for this study. If your child withdraws before the completion of the interview, during the interview or after the completion of the interview at the interview location, he/she will still be reimbursed with five dollars or two bus tickets. Snacks and drinks will be provided to your child during the interview even if he/she withdraws before the completion of the interview.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

It is possible that I, the researcher could have a power over relationship with your child because of my past practicum at Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS). To help prevent this relationship from influencing your child's decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken: participant recruitment will not commence until my practicum at VIRCS has terminated. Your child's participation or non-participation will not affect his/her ability to access any future services at VIRCS, nor on his/her relationship with the researcher or youth workers at VIRCS.

On-going Consent

I will check with you and your child that your child gives his/her permission to take part throughout the entire study. I will also remind your child that his/her participation is voluntary and that he/she has the right to withdraw at any time. If your child ever chooses to withdraw, it will not affect how I think about him/her or behave towards him/her.

Anonymity

Your child's anonymity will be protected before, during, and after his/her participation in this study. This will be done by removing all identity information (demographic factors, culturally sensitive information, and identifying direct words) from the interview transcripts, and referring to participants by participant 1, 2, 3 and etc. when analyzing transcripts, and reporting findings. This will help minimize the risk that anyone will be able to associate your child's data (interview transcripts) with him/her. In order to protect the confidentiality of your child, specific information about the child's interviews will not be shared with you unless risk of harm to your child is revealed. If your child chooses to not participate at any time, his/her anonymity will still be protected.

Confidentiality

Your child's confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by not using any identifying information in the data. All electronic data (field notes, audiotapes, and coded data) will be kept on the researcher's password-protected laptop. Hard copies of the

transcripts, field notes, paper records will be stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home office. Only the researcher (Yupei Xia) will have access to the locked cabinet and the password protected laptop. However, there are limits to confidentiality due to legal requirements. Confidentiality may be breached if there is a disclosure of child abuse or a disclosure of plans to commit suicide or murder. As the researcher, I am legally obligated to report the case to Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD).

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: Thesis/class presentation, presentations at scholarly meetings, published article or chapter, "UvicSpace" and a hard copy of my thesis directly to participants if they desire so.

Disposal of Data

Data from this research will be disposed of once the criteria of Masters completion have been met, anticipated to be no later than May, 2016. Files on computer will be permanently deleted. Paper records will be shredded and audiotapes will be erased.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include myself, Yupei Xia at yupeixia@uvic.ca and my supervisors, Dr. Jessica Ball at 250-472-4128 and Dr. Sandrina de Finney at 2507216372.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of your child's participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers. Your signature below also indicates your consent to having your child's interview audio-taped.

Name of Participant

Parent's Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

A list of Available Support and Counselling Service

Medical

Victoria Cool Aid Society Health Centre

250-383-1977

www.coolaid.org

Victoria Youth Clinic

James Bay: 250-388-7841

Downtown: 250-383-3552

www.victoriayouthclinic.ca

Health Link BC

8-1-1

Counselling and Support

Sooke Family Resource Society Youth Outreach and Navigator Service

250-642-5152

www.sfrs.ca/counselling-services/youth/navigator

Women's Sexual Assault Centre

Youth counselling

250-383-3232

vwsac.com

Mary Manning Centre

Child abuse prevention and counselling

250-385-6111

www.marymanning.com

Mental Health

Child & Youth Mental Health Westshore

250-391-2223

Go to www.inyourgrasp.bc.ca and search database

Saanich Child and Youth Mental Health

250-952-5073

www.healthlinkbc.ca

BC Mental Health Information Line

310-6789

Umbrella Society
250-380-0595
www.umbrellasociety.ca

Emergency/Crisis

Kids Help phone
1-800-668-6868

Youth Space
youthspace.ca

Representative for Children and Youth Kids helpline
250-310-1234

Vancouver Island Crisis Line
1-888-494-3888

Appendix I: Support letter from VIRCS



Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

Our mission is to assist in the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees into Canadian society.

Main Office
3rd Floor, 637 Bay St.
Victoria BC V8T 5L2
info@vircs.bc.ca
tel 250-361-9433
fax 250-361-1914

Executive Director
executivedirector@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 215

Employment Transitions & Coaching Program
employment@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 206

Skills Connect (Employment Program for Professionals)
skillsconnect@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 222

Mentoring Program
Skills Connect for Immigrants
mentor@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 211

English as a Second Language (ESL)
esl@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 210

Enable Program (Children & Youth)
enable@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 203

I Plan It for Young Adults
iplanit@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 243

Settlement Program
settlement@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 223/240/241

Volunteer Program
volunteer@vircs.bc.ca
ext. 212

ATTENTION: Human Research Ethics Board, University of Victoria:

This letter is written in support of Yupei Xia, Master of Child and Youth Care student at the University of Victoria. Yupei has proposed to conduct research to meet part of the requirements of her thesis at the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS). As the Director of Settlement Programs and Yupei's on-site supervisor, I am familiar with her project and am responsible for her conduct while at the centre, both with clients and with regards to her research.

I have no hesitations in supporting Yupei Xia's research, which encompasses *an exploratory study on Asian immigrant youth's experiences of settling into Canada with the assistance of youth settlement services*. I have read through Yupei's research proposal and will help her recruit 6 to 10 Asian immigrant youth aged from 15 to 24 who have accessed settlement services at VIRCS. I have assigned two frontline staff, the youth program manager and a youth case manager, to ensure that her interactions with our young clients are ethical, supportive, positive, and in accordance with the VIRCS mission: *to assist in the settlement and adjustment of immigrants and refugees in Canada and to provide services designed to increase newcomers' participation in Canadian society by assisting the newcomer to overcome barriers*. I will conduct weekly supervision session with Yupei to monitor the progress of her research and her ability to be responsive to research and agency ethics and mandates.

Participant recruitment will not commence until receiving ethical clearance from University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board. For participants under 18 years of age, parents will be provided with informed consent. For those over 18, informed consent will be gathered from each individual. Youth workers at VIRCS will assist Yupei's recruitment of participants by distributing flyers. Prospective participants will be encouraged to contact Yupei directly, and it will be clear to all youth that participation in Yupei's research will not influence their ability to participate in VIRCS programs, and research will be conducted separately from the standard youth program times and spaces. Yupei's research is of great benefit to VIRCS since it serves as a bridge between the theoretical frameworks that inform the design of settlement programs and the delivery of programs in practice, and will contribute to future program evaluation and grant writing activities. For more information, I can be reached at Leanne@vircs.bc.ca or 250-361-9433 x 223.

Sincerely,

Leanne Gislason MSW, RSW
Director of Settlement Programs
Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society
3rd Floor, 637 Bay St., Victoria, BC, V8T 5L2
leanne@vircs.bc.ca
(250) 361-9433 x 223