

**THE CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF CHINESE STUDENTS TO CANADA:  
A STUDY OF CHINESE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores regularities in adjustment sequences and predictable correlates of phases in cultural adaptation for graduate students from the People's Republic of China. Eight factors were selected for examination: interaction with Canadians, friendship with Canadians, English language proficiency, length of stay, discrimination experienced and perceived, financial aid, prior knowledge of Western culture and age. Specifically, this study focuses on eight hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: Successful adaptation is positively related to the amount of participation in activities with Canadians.
- Hypothesis 2: Successful adaptation is positively related to friendship with Canadians.
- Hypothesis 3: Successful adaptation is positively related to the level of English proficiency.
- Hypothesis 4: Successful adaptation is positively related to the length of stay in Canada.
- Hypothesis 5: Successful adaptation is inversely related to the degree of discrimination perceived and experienced.
- Hypothesis 6: Successful adaptation is positively related to the amount of financial aid received.
- Hypothesis 7: Successful adaptation is positively associated with previous exposure to Western culture.
- Hypothesis 8: Successful adaptation is inversely related to age.


A sample of 95 Chinese graduate students at the University of Victoria was selected, which was close to the total graduate student population from mainland China in the university. A close-ended questionnaire with 61 questions was used to collect the data. Two indices - adjustment index and assimilation index - were constructed to measure two dimensions of cultural adaptation. Other indices for measuring eight independent variables were used to test specific hypotheses.


The findings of this study indicate that command of English is the most important determinant of difficulties in adjustment. The length of stay in Canada and the amount of financial aid from Canadian sources are positively related to adjustment and assimilation. However, none of the other hypothesized variables is an effective predictor of adjustment and assimilation.


The results show that these Chinese students did not have broad and frequent contact with their Canadian counterparts. Their relationship with Canadians was characterized by being friendly but business-like. Contrary to the findings of many previous researchers, this study found that there is no positive relationship between the amount of participation in activities with Canadians and cultural adaptation. The fact that there is a strong Chinese community within and outside the university and that help can be obtained easily from the people of the same origin may explain that successful adaptation does not necessarily relate positively to the degree of social interaction with the host community when individuals have recourse to their own support networks.


Recommendations are made in an attempt to assist both Canadian institutions of higher education and Chinese students to ease the adaptation process in a new environment.

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DEDICATION

TO MY SISTER

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### Research Problem

In the early 1980s, there was an influx of students from the People's Republic of China (the P.R.C.) to institutions of higher education in Canada. Between 1983 and 1989, the number of Chinese students in Canadian universities and colleges increased from 501 to 7,181, including 1,725 in Master's degree programs and 1,612 in Doctoral programs (Association of Universities and Colleges, 1985:14). The others were enrolled in various secondary and post-secondary programs ranging from trade and technical courses to undergraduate studies (from personal contact with Employment and Immigration Canada).

According to the University of Victoria's (UVic) Department of Institutional Analysis, only two undergraduate students from the the P.R.C. were registered at UVic in 1980-81; no graduate students were enrolled. In 1985-86, 27 Chinese graduate students attended, comprising 22.5% of visa graduate students; and by 1990-91, Chinese students accounted for 67 (41.6%) of UVic's 161 visa graduate students.

In spite of similar increases in the number of Chinese students across North America, surprisingly few of the many studies of cultural adaptation, acculturation, cultural shock, intercultural adjustment and accommodation document their experience here. Moreover, the few studies which do include Chinese students deal almost exclusively with those from Hong Kong, to the virtual exclusion of those from the the P.R.C. (Chan, 1981; Perry, 83; Mickle, 1985; Campbell, 1987; Wong & Cochrane, 1989). Although these two groups have a similar cultural background, their physical and socio-political separation may have a strong impact on ways of thinking and acting,

to the point that students from Mainland China may comprise a unique category in themselves. Lumping them together with students from Hong Kong or "foreign students" in general overlooks--and, by implication, negates--their particular circumstances and experiences. Through direct study, their own patterns of acculturation and adaptation can be observed and documented.

When students move to a new culture for a period of intensive education, they must adapt to many complex changes in their environment in order to function effectively. Cultural changes tend to cause confusion, psychological disorientation, and uncertainty with respect to values and accepted social standards. If people are unable to adjust simultaneously to rapid change, uncertainty, loss of identity, anxiety and frustration may result. A review of research on the problems of foreign students indicates that those from traditional cultures in developing countries experience greater and different adaptation difficulties than those from developed countries (Dunnett, 1981).

A survey conducted in 1977 by the Canadian Bureau of International Education found that students from Hong Kong appear to experience more problems in adjusting to Canadian universities than students from other countries (cited in Mickle: 1985:3). For example, over half of the Hong Kong students surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with their stay, compared to only 30% of the students from the United States and other developed countries. In a recent study of student experiences at the University of Toronto (Perry, 1983), 56% of visa students, many of whom were from Hong Kong, reported feelings of alienation (cited in Mickle: 1985:3). American studies have found that the vast majority of Chinese students, while strongly tied to a Chinese subculture, were nevertheless isolated from Americans (Yeh et al., 1979; Alexander et al., 1976; Klein et al., 1971; White and White, 1981).

In discussing family expectation and pressure to be academically successful, Chan (1981:9) describes the life of Chinese students:

The sojourn in the West for these Chinese students is a period of servitude to be endured, a time that is not really part of life, a postponement of the moment when life can be enjoyed. Not infrequently they live in semi-poverty and constant anxiety about studies. Academic failures are unthinkable, and most waking hours are devoted to study. Their social life is, thus, limited in time and scope. To get to know Western friends seems a luxury (cited in Mickle, 1985).

Anecdotal evidence gathered at UVic through interviews with graduate students from the P. R. C. corroborates Chan's conclusions concerning the pressure to perform well at school. A computer science graduate student recalled: "For my first two years at UVic, I could never find time for recreation and entertainment. Every day I had to wake up at seven and stay up till midnight in order to meet academic requirements. Life was so tough that a lot of times I felt I was going to collapse." A Ph.D. student in electrical engineering said: "I got a high-paying government job. All my Chinese friends admire me, but no one knows that life in [North American] society is so frustrating that several times I was desperate and wanted to commit suicide."

Despite evidence of Chinese students experiencing problems with acculturation in Canada, little attention has been paid to this process among students from the P.R.C. This study investigates the factors which affect the adaptation of Chinese students to Canadian culture. In particular, it identifies the adjustment problems encountered by Chinese students in their adaptation to Canadian academic and social life. As possible influences on cultural adaptation, the author is interested in subjects' social contact with Canadians, friendship with Canadians, English proficiency, length of stay, exposure to racial discrimination, financial support, prior knowledge of Canadian culture, and age.

### Significance of the Study

International students studying at Canadian colleges and universities have become an established part of the Canadian educational system. Every institution of higher education which admits foreign students to an academic program and brings them to Canada should assume some responsibility for the problems those individuals encounter with the Canadian education system and the process of adaptation.

Research indicates that where foreign students are able to make a successful adaptation to life and study in their host country, their chances of attaining their academic goals are maximized; and when foreign students are able to complete the academic training they come for, their attitudes towards their host country tend to be much more favourable. Conversely, failure in an academic program results in the development of unfriendly attitudes not only toward the foreign sojourn, but toward the whole host country (Dunnett, 1981:81).

The students in this study came to Canada originally to study at a Canadian higher educational institution; and thereby to improve their socio-economic status upon returning home to China; therefore, their initial intention fits into the sojourn category. However, the events which took place on June 4, 1989 at Tiananmen Square left many Chinese students in Canada concerned about their future. The Canadian government's response was to allow the students to apply for landed immigrant status from within Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. (This policy is outlined in a June 16, 1989 announcement by Canadian Minister of Immigration Barbara McDougall.) According to information obtained from Employment and Immigration Canada, during the period between June 4, 1989 and June 4, 1990, 8,935 citizens of the P.R.C. made application for permanent residence. Of these, 7,929 have been accepted (from personal contact, November 1990). Thus, living in Canada permanently has become a reality for most Chinese students, and

many have become immigrants. Consequently, the target population of this study possesses characteristics both of sojourners and of immigrants.

A study of the factors which facilitate or hinder successful adaptation can provide insight into our understanding of this area of growing concern. From a humanitarian standpoint, international education promotes mutual contact and understanding; from an educational standpoint, a positive adaptive experience can facilitate learning; and from an economic standpoint, the successful adaptation of these Chinese students, many of whom will now reside permanently in Canada, will enhance their contribution to the Canadian economy.

It is hoped that the results of this study may yield evidence concerning regularities in adjustment sequences and predictable correlates of phases in adjustment for students from the P. R. C. It is also hoped that this study will assist international agencies and institutions of higher education to serve foreign students studying in Canada, and aid immigration officials in the policy making process. Specifically, it may provide some practical applications for orientation and counselling programs designed to facilitate coping strategies and social adaptation of Chinese students to the Canadian environment.

## Chapter Two

### Theoretical Overview

#### **Literature Related to Adaptation**

The topic of cultural adaptation (e.g., acculturation, intercultural adjustment and assimilation) has attracted wide attention since the end of the Second World War and the post-war influx of foreign students and immigrants into the United States. Early in the 1950s, several researchers studied social behaviour of foreign students in their host cultures (DuBois, 1956; Sewell and Davidsen, 1956; Smith, 1956; Coelho, 1958). It was suggested that several factors affect students' adjustment patterns.

Based on a study of forty Scandinavian students studying in the U. S. Sewell and Davidsen (1956) describe four types of behaviour patterns closely related to factors of sojourn motivations, role perceptions, and return expectations. The first category, "detached observers," refers to students who have a secure position in the home country and have well-defined academic purposes in coming to North America. These students have few adjustment problems, largely because, except for professional contact, they desire little involvement with the host culture. The second, "promoters," have a strong sense of patriotism and are loyal to the home country. They view "selling" the home culture as a contribution to cross-cultural exchange of information, and are reluctant "buyers" of the host country. These students have some adjustment problems. The third category is "enthusiastic participants." Their purpose in coming, instead of academic achievement, is to get to know the host country by actively participating in its life. These students experience little difficulty in adjusting to the new situation. On their return, they are most likely of any type to advocate American ideas, and find it difficult to readjust to their home countries. The last group, the "settlers," are not well established in their home society and view the visit as an opportunity for settling permanently in the host country. Their adjustment to foreign life is characterized as steady, genuine and thorough.

Other early studies focus on changes in attitudes towards the host country (Lysgaard, 1955; DuBois, 1956; Sewell and Davidsen, 1956; Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1956; Smith, 1956; Coelho, 1958). They suggest that foreign students' attitudinal changes toward their host cultures reflect stages in the process of adjustment. They also suggest that the more satisfactory the adaptation of foreign students to the receiving country, the more likely those students are to express positive attitudes toward their educational experience and toward the host country in general.

DuBois (1956:23), one of the first researchers to undertake a comprehensive examination of the social and psychological factors related to foreign student adjustment, found that foreign students in the United States go through four adjustment stages during their sojourn:

- (1). The Spectator Phase, characterized by psychological detachment from the new experience.
- (2). The Adaptive Phase, characterized by active involvement in adjustment, when the student must master the skills required to cope successfully in the host culture. This is the period of most strain, when the stress of unresolved conflict and culture shock may be most acute.
- (3). The Coming-to-Terms Phase. This is when equilibrium is reached in the struggle for adjustment.
- (4). The Pre-Departure Phase--conclusion of sojourn. This phase ends with positive attitudes toward the host country.

Alternatively, Lysgaard (1955) describes the attitudinal changes experienced by foreign students as following a U-curve pattern. Lysgaard's original hypothesis proposed a sequence of periods and types of experiences common to the foreign student. The first period, commencing upon arrival, is marked by positive expectations, warm and friendly reception, and the pleasures of discovery, but is soon

followed by a period of increasing difficulties, during which the student must cope with a great number of emerging problems. As departure for home approaches, this trough point in the curve ultimately yields to a third period (the second peak of the U curve), in which the student has learned to function in the host country and thus exhibits a more positive attitude toward the society and environment. The U-curve proposition was first presented as a tentative conclusion of a study of Scandinavian students in the United States. Subsequently, the notion was examined and tested by a number of other researchers (Becker, 1968:432).

Similar patterns were reported in other studies of Scandinavian students in the United States (Sewell et al., 1956; Scott, 1956). The U-curve hypothesis was also confirmed in studies of students from India studying in the U.S. (Coelho, 1958), and of students of various nationalities (Morris, 1960; Deutsch and Won, 1963). Equally, it has been noted by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1956) that American students in France also seem subject to such a cycle. Their conclusion is well stated in a subsequent article (1963:34):

Initially the sojourners report feelings of elation and optimism associated with positive expectations regarding interaction with their hosts. As they actually become involved in role relationships and encounter frustrations in trying to achieve certain goals when the proper means are unclear and unacceptable, they become confused and depressed and express negative attitudes regarding the host culture. If they are able to resolve the difficulties encountered during this crucial phase of the acculturation process they then achieve a *modus vivendi* enabling them to work effectively and to interact positively with their hosts.

A more recent study found that the U-curve hypothesis generally applied to 110 graduate and undergraduate foreign students residing in the Berkeley International House (Heath, 1970). Furthermore, a University of Michigan study shows that the U-curve progression operates not only in changes in attitudes towards the host

country, but also in friendship patterns (Tanner, 1968). At first, foreign students make friends with other nationalities, then contact and associate with compatriots, and, toward the end of their stay, begin again to form friendships with other nationalities.

In addition to the proposition of the U-curve pattern shown by foreign students, an extension was proposed to describe the re-adjustment period experienced by visitors returning home--a period somewhat like the initial involvement and coming-to-terms phases of their sojourns. This total cross-cultural experience is known as the W-curve (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963).

However, not all reported evidence has conclusively supported the U-curve proposition. Two semi-structured interviews administered to a group of 18 non-European foreign students discovered that those students exhibited, instead of the up-down-up U-curve adjustment configuration, an angular V-curve pattern: their morale dropped sharply during the early months and rose more gradually in the later months of their one-year stay (Selby and Woods, 1966). In other cases the curve was found to run in the opposite direction (Becker, 1968). Becker (1968:432) provides an explanation of these differing results:

the writers differ widely in their estimation of some crucial parameters of the model, especially the duration of each of the phases of adjustment and favourableness to the United States.

Becker further observes that some research (e.g., Lysgaard, 1954) estimates that the period of greatest difficulty and least favourableness to the U.S. occurs between the sixth and eighteenth months of the students' stay; but no unanimous conclusion exists regarding the onset time or duration of each stage. Another study suggests that this trough is to be found between the tenth and nineteenth months of the stay (Morris,

1960); and yet another indicates that it is to be expected between the three-month and three-year points (Coelho, 1958). Thus, one researcher gives evidence of shifts in attitudes in a direction critical of the U. S. (the host country) at a point when the model would suggest an increase in favourableness. In addition, as observed by Becker (1968:432), "...much, if not all, of the supporting evidence of the timing of the shift in attitudes was not statistically significant but only 'tended' in that direction."

In a comparative study of 78 Indians, Israelis, and Europeans at UCLA, Becker (1968) reports that the U-curve pattern is a valid characteristic of European students, but operates in reverse for students from semi- or underdeveloped countries. Students from developing countries tend to arrive with more anxieties, exhibit more hostilities early and late in their sojourn, and experience more favourable attitudes in the middle period of their stay. In explaining this cultural deviation of the U-curve pattern and questioning its applicability to students from developing countries, Becker (1968:433) argues:

A priori, we see little reason to expect a western European or Scandinavian student--who characteristically has travelled widely outside his country prior to coming to the United States, and whose racial, religious and cultural background is relatively akin to that of Americans--to have an initial reaction to this country similar to that of an African or Asian student. As a rule, the latter has not travelled outside his country prior to his journey to the United States, and his trip is likely to be his first venture not only outside his homeland but also outside his ethnic and racial group. And, of course, his cultural background is far more distant from that of the Americans than is the European student's background.

Accordingly, Becker (1968) proposes a theory of "anticipatory adjustment" to explain the differences in adjustment of foreign students from developed and developing countries. She contends that a process exists whereby attitudes are adopted on the basis of their utility in easing the individual's adjustment to anticipated imminent and drastic changes in environment. From this general proposition, she has developed a reversed U-curve hypothesis for the adjustment and attitudinal patterns of students from developing countries.

Further variation in the U-curve is suggested by Pool (1965). According to Pool the adjustment problems of students visiting from countries more similar to the United States differ considerably from those of students from countries which are less similar. Gultung (1965) shows evidence to support the hypothesis that the fewer or smaller the differences between the home culture and the host culture, the easier the student's adjustment. Margaret T. Cussler's Review of Selected Studies Affecting International Educational and Cultural Affairs (1962) indicates that cultural distance and contradictory cross-cultural expectations are factors predictive of difficulties in adjustment (cited in Spaulding, 1976:10).

### **Major Independent Variables Explaining Adaptation**

U-curve-oriented studies show no consistent direction in the relationship between foreign students' attitudinal changes toward their host country and their adjustment patterns; rather they demonstrate considerable variation among foreign students' attitudes and adjustment. Several major influencing factors undoubtedly contribute to such variations, the most important of which, as revealed in the research literature, are social interaction with native people, English language proficiency, and length of stay.

In a study of transcultural adaptation of foreign students at Cornell University,

Shattuck (1964) found a positive relationship between adaptation and interaction with American professors and graduate students. In a Michigan State University case study of 15 graduate students from South and Southeast Asia and the Middle East, Ford (1969) reports that foreign students' interaction patterns with members of the University faculty and American graduate students is one of the major determinants of adaptation. The same positive relationship was found to hold true for a group of Indian and Arab students at the University of North Carolina (Jarrahi-Zadeh and Eichman, 1970). In studies of the adaptation of African students to life at State University of New York at Buffalo and at ten other universities throughout the United States, Pruitt (1977) found that the least adapted African students were those with the least interaction with Americans.

Social relations with people of the host country are likely not only to facilitate adaptation but also to generate more favourable feelings about the host culture in general. Basu and Ames (1970), Ibrahim (1970), Chang (1973) and Selltiz et. al. (1961) all show that the development of favorable cross-cultural attitudes is a function of interaction among members of the relevant cultures. Basu and Ames (1970) present what has been termed the "Association Hypothesis," where "association" refers to exposure to another culture through interpersonal and secondary encounters. It is hypothesized that the more interaction occurs between members of different cultures, the more mutually favorable attitudes will develop. These contacts are measured according to regularity of meetings, types of activities, and numbers of friends. Chang (1973) confirms that the attitudes of students from Hong Kong toward the United States are positively related to the degree of their contact with Americans. In accordance with the "Association Hypothesis," Lindgren and Yu (1975) also show that cultural understanding is likely to be enhanced by increased exposure to a host culture. Hull (1978: 188) agrees with these findings:

It seems valid that foreign students comfortable with their interaction

contact

with Americans and with some involvement with Americans during their sojourn not only report broader and more frequent contact with Americans but also are more likely to indicate more general satisfaction with their sojourn and about Americans generally. It is not just a matter of hospitality. It is a part of education with the potential to permeate widely throughout the experience and attitudes expressed by the sojourner.

Later, Hull et. al. (1981:19) proposed a "modified cultural contact hypothesis":

This hypothesis argued that those foreign students satisfied and comfortable with their interactions with local people and the local culture during their sojourn will report not only broader and more frequent contact in general, as could be expected, but will also indicate more general satisfaction with their total sojourn experience, academically and non-academically.

As a measure of social relations, Selltiz and Cook (1962) used students' reports of whether or not they had made at least one close American friend. They found that foreign students who reported having made one or more such friends described both friendship and family relations in the U.S. as closer than did those who reported having formed no such relationships; the same students expressed greater liking for American friendship and family patterns, along with greater approval of the traits they saw as characteristic of Americans. Similarly, they scored higher on a summary measure based on their evaluation of several aspects of American life, and were likely to describe their feelings toward the U.S. more favourably. Their interviewers also rated them as having more favourable attitudes in general than those who had no close American friends. However, although Selltiz and Cook found a positive relationship between interaction and favourableness of evaluation of the host country, they also noted that this relationship was neither clear-cut nor consistent.

A more recent study among 187 undergraduate students from Hong Kong at the University of Toronto and York University confirms that adaptation is positively related to the number of Canadian (host culture) friends and to the amount of participation in activities with Canadians (Mickle, 1985).

There is little doubt that social interaction with people of the host country has a critical influence upon foreign student adaptation. Aside from this factor, many researchers have also found that students' accumulated background characteristics are an important basis for differences in adaptation patterns. First of all, students enter their host country not with a blank mind, but carrying a set of preconceptions and expectations, along with a variety of motivations. In addition, their proficiency in English, age, length of stay, financial support, field of study, and prior travel experience also may have very important effects on their adaptation.

Lysgaard (1954), Scott (1956) and Sewell and Davidsen (1956) suggest that the students' sojourn motivations and role perceptions may influence the extent to which experiences in their host country lead to changes in their beliefs and feelings about that country and may account for variations in their adjustment problems. They observe that established scholars who go to the U.S. for specific research purposes are likely to be less sensitive to other aspects of the life of the country--and therefore less likely to make observations or undergo adjustment problems--than are students whose goals include gaining familiarity with a different way of life in addition to

training.

From the early days of cross-cultural education, foreign student advisors, teachers and investigators have noted that where language deficiencies in English exist, adjustment problems are also present and learning is impaired. In a study of the relationship between the acculturation process and English language proficiency among 247 foreign students from 38 universities and colleges in southern U. S., Shepard (1970) found that 74% of a large sample of foreign students reporting difficulty in adjustment considered their language skills inadequate, compared with only 55% of those experiencing an easy adjustment. Shepard (1970: 128) suggests:

English proficiency is a basic factor in the acculturation process. Both academic progress in the classroom and social adjustment outside the classroom are dependent on skills in the use of the English language. Anxiety, timidity, and the confrontation known as "culture shock" are all heightened by weaknesses in language skills.

Ursua (1969) shows more evidence for the relationship between language skills and adjustment. The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) and the Michigan International Student Problem Inventory (MISPI) were administered to a sample of 201 foreign students grouped according to national origin. Results revealed low but significant correlations between English proficiency and MISPI scores. Since these correlations differed rather strikingly as a function of the nationality groups, the author concluded that both language and cultural background are important to the adjustment of foreign students. However, there is an important limitation in using the MISPI test, because it focuses on a rather narrow set of personal-social-emotional "problems" rather than on socio-cultural adjustment and contact broadly defined. As a result, it is conceivable that "well-adjusted" foreign

language  
skill

students might have spent virtually all of their time outside the classroom in the company of students from their own country. Since such students would probably be learning little about the culture in which they were living, it is unlikely that they should be regarded as acculturated.

More recently, White and White (1981) studied 46 foreign graduate students from eight countries. The majority of these students were from Hong Kong (22) or India (15). To assess the students' English proficiency, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was used, since it was considered more objective than the MTELP. A modified form of a questionnaire developed by Shepard to measure acculturation was also administered. Results showed that the relationship between TOEFL and acculturation was positive for Indians but negative for Chinese. The finding for Indian students suggests that English language proficiency may play a more important role in acculturation during the beginning of a foreign student's sojourn; but this finding is not consistent for Chinese students, which is somewhat puzzling. The authors offered two alternative explanations. One is that TOEFL failed to assess spoken or conversational English proficiency because it is a measure of written English ability. The other is that the strong influence of a co-national subgroup (students from Hong Kong tend to be tied to a Chinese subpopulation) overshadowed any effects of language. However, in response to the open-ended question, "What would you suggest as the most significant problem in your adjustment?", 45% of the Chinese judged their English usage to be the chief problem in adjustment, compared with none of the Indian students. White and White concluded that English proficiency may be related to acculturation. In turn, the fact that acculturation of an individual foreign student is likely to be strongly influenced by his or her cultural background indicates that nationality is an important factor related to skill in the use of the English language.

One implication White and White highlight is the need to be aware of how extensively a foreign student's lifestyle is shaped by his or her cultural background. For example, in a study of 236 Chinese-American students, Sue and Kirk (1972) found that Chinese-American students exhibited greater quantitative than verbal skills. They also expressed more interest and chose majors predominantly in the physical science and engineering fields, suggesting that their interests are more technical and applied than theoretical. One explanation for this phenomenon is that social sciences require a strong understanding of Western culture, while the physical sciences minimize this requirement. Therefore, many Chinese-American students enter the physical sciences and avoid occupations demanding communication in verbal-linguistic form.

White  
White  
Sue & Kirk  
1972

Another factor related to adaptation is overseas travel experience and prior knowledge of the host country. Selltitz and Cook (1963) report that students who had travelled extensively before coming to the United States had fewer adjustment problems. In a study of trans-cultural adaptation of foreign students at Cornell University, Shattuck (1964) found a positive relationship between adaptation and what he called "correctness of role perception." He found evidence to support his hypothesis that the visitor who understands what is expected of him or her by members of the host system will be better adapted than those who are ignorant of these expectations. Pruitt's study of African students (1981) also suggests that prior knowledge of the customs of the host society contributes to good adjustment.

Shattuck  
1964  
Pruitt  
1981

Some researchers suggest that another factor of adaptation is age, since age normally correlates with openness and flexibility (Smith, 1956; Jammaz, 1972; Hull, 1981; Richmond, 1984). A likely hypothesis is that younger students adapt more readily to change than older ones. Smith (1956) states that the age of the student may be significant in the matter of discriminating judgment and responses to the new

Smith  
1956

environment. He explains that a mature student whose sojourn abroad may mean separation from wife and children, a shift in occupational status, and serious feelings of relative deprivation, may have different responses to the foreign environment than a youngster coming eager and wide-eyed to the "brave new world." Jammaz (1972) also shows a high degree of association between adaptation and age; and Hull (1981) states:

Students of various ages seem to have distinctly differing types of motivations, skills, and hopes, as well as experiences in the United States. Men and women, young and old, seem to differ in their adaptation. Some of this may really be related to that elusive variable, maturity, that no one has yet adequately measured internationally.

In a study of social-cultural adaptation of immigrants, Richmond (1984) indicates that age on arrival in the new country is an important factor in the immigrant adaptation process. Immigration involves some degree of desocialization from previously learned attitudes, norms, values and behavioural patterns. Because young people have less to unlearn, they are able to adapt more quickly to new conditions. However, because age is confounded with a whole range of other variables, research found in the literature is far from conclusive. In the three-by-three nation study of cross-cultural contact by Gultung (1965), the influence of age is neither as strong as was expected nor consistent across the three groups of nationals from Iran, Egypt and India.

To the author's knowledge, foreign students' area of study, experience of discrimination, and financial support are not well documented as factors influencing adaptation. However, in the literature, several researchers do mention that these variables may also have bearing. Melendez-Craig (1970), for example, cites financial problems as the greatest obstacle to Latin American students' academic achievement.

Hull (1981: 18) offers an explanation for this phenomenon:

It is one thing to come well financed to see the world and study in America at the same time. It is quite another to come on a thin budget provided by strained family resources and live under pressure

to attain a specific degree for the financial and social future of not only the student, but also sometimes, the whole family.

With regard to discrimination, Perry's study (1983) on student experience at the University of Toronto detects a tone of anti-Chinese racism throughout the University of Toronto student body. In a study of adaptation of Hong Kong students in Canada, Mickle (1985) indicates that the feeling of victimization and discrimination as a minority group is a major problem faced by Chinese students abroad. There, 55% (103) of the students surveyed said they had experienced discrimination. Mickle also found that adaptation is negatively correlated with discrimination. In examining American attitudes toward foreign students, Ebbers and Peterson (1981) note that American hostility can be an important factor affecting overall foreign student adjustment to American academic culture and society.

Finally, length of residence in the receiving country is specified by Goldlust and Richmond (1974) as "the single most important determinant of the degree and pattern of socio-cultural adaptation." In their multivariate model of immigrant adaptation, length of residence in the receiving society is considered an independent variable interacting with both pre-migration and situational determinants to modify the objective and subjective modes of adaptation. Richmond (1984:530) offers the rationale that "learning a new language, modifying attitudes, values and behaviour patterns, acquiring a knowledge of the new society's institutions and developing new social networks, all take time."

This concludes the sociological and psychological literature review. Before proceeding to the summary, it is instructive to evaluate the methodology employed in these studies. Walton's 1967 review, summarising two decades of research on foreign students, notes the plenitude of studies on foreign students' problems -- cultural shock, U-curve, etc. -- and the scarcity of studies on empirical conditions

under which such problems occur. In A Review and Evaluation of Research on Foreign Students, which examines 160 empirical and 44 non-empirical studies, most of which were published after 1967, Spaulding et. al. (1976) discovered that these studies vary enormously in intent, content, and methodology. They suggest three major problems responsible for this wide variation. First, there has been little effort to achieve a standardized or replicable methodology; hence a questionnaire designed for one study is never used again, and findings based on it cannot be compared to results achieved in another study. Second, definitions of concepts (e.g., "foreign students" and "academic success") and the measurement of these definitions are problematic. Third, most empirical research has been conducted at a given point in time: few investigators have been able to follow students through their sojourns to see how general adjustment changes over time as a result of the foreign study experience. Consequently, Cormack is not alone in citing a need to:

formulate several master research plans that would permit the use of at least partially standardized methods and terms, thus yielding coordinated, comparable, and cumulative results, and contributing to a development of theory (cited in Spaulding, 1976:14).

### **Summary of the Research Literature**

As the above literature demonstrates, the process of adaptation is multidimensional. For foreign students in Canada, acculturation interacts with pre-migration characteristics and conditions such as age, proficiency in English, and prior knowledge of Canadian culture, along with situational determinants in Canadian society, including social interaction with Canadians, number of Canadian friends, experience of discrimination, financial aid, and length of stay in Canada. Although these variables are interrelated, each may have a distinct positive or negative impact on adaptation.

△ First, social contact is considered by many researchers to be the most crucial variable

influencing foreign students' adaptation. The more frequent the students' contact with local people, the fewer the reports of adjustment problems, and the more satisfying the overall sojourn experience (Seltiz and Cook, 1962; Shattuck, 1964; Ford, 1966; Jarrahi-Zadeh and Eichman, 1970; Pruitt, 1977; Besu and Ames, 1970; Ibrahim, 1970; Chang, 1973; Hull, 1978 & 1981; Mickle, 1985).

△ Second, English proficiency is identified as a basic factor in the acculturation process.

The ability to master the English language is essentially the gateway to all walks of life in Canada. The better the student's command of English (comprehension, speaking, reading and writing), the easier his or her adjustment will be to academic and social life (Cowan, 1968; Ursua, 1969; Uehara, 1969; Shepard, 1970; Melendez-Craig, 1970; White and White, 1981; Wong and Cochrane, 1989).

△ Third, prior overseas experience also has some bearing on foreign students' adjustment to their new environment. The more knowledge the student has of the host country through previous travel experience or other exposure to the culture, the more complete his or her adaptation (Seltiz and Cook, 1963; Shattuck 1964, Pruitt, 1981).

△ Fourth, age has also been identified as related to attitude toward the host country (Barry, Jean S. J., 1966). Although the relationship is not consistent, some researchers suggest that the younger the student, the easier his or her adjustment experience (Smith, 1956; Richmond, 1984).

△ In line with the existing literature, each of the variables mentioned above was investigated in this study to determine whether the relationships cited hold true for students from the P.R.C. Moreover, although some factors, such as length of stay, perceived and experienced discrimination and prejudice, and source of financial

support have not been widely examined, they were also included in this study. For example, it is anticipated that longer residence in Canada contributes to adaptational success, but that increased discrimination has the opposite effect (Mickle, 1985; Perry, 1983). Also, from the author's personal experience and broad contact with Chinese students, the source and security of financial aid can constitute a major problem. Students who are well funded, especially by Canadian sources, are more likely to cope well when faced with problems in a new environment, whereas those who are supported by family or relatives in China likely experience more stress.

Finally, as mentioned above, the students in this study possess characteristics of both foreign students and immigrants. Their initial intention was to obtain a foreign degree and improve their socio-economic status upon returning home. However, following the events at Tienanmen Square in 1989, many chose Canada as a permanent living place, and consequently differ from typical sojourners or foreign students, who would return home upon completing their academic tasks.

By the same token, the Chinese students in this study also differ from other immigrants in a number of important ways. Unlike many immigrant groups, these Chinese have a high level of education. Immediately upon their arrival, they began their post-graduate education, a commitment of several years duration. However, immigrants usually try to participate in the labor force in the receiving country soon after arriving. This places them in a situation of competition with local people for scarce material and social resources in society. Also, unlike most immigrants, these students were born and raised in a strict Marxist-Maoist political environment. This may have a considerable effect on the cultural background, language and values they hold in common. In short, these Chinese students possess different pre-migration characteristics and conditions from those of typical immigrants. Consequently, their unique immigration status in Canada should also be considered in explaining their

adaptation.

In summary, given the limitations of previous studies on adjustment and the particular situation for the students from the P.R.C., this study explores regularities in adjustment and predictable correlates of phases in cultural adaptation for this population. The following section reviews the definition of cultural adaptation and its components.

### **Definition of Cultural Adaptation**

The key dependent variable examined in this study is cultural adaptation. In the sociological and psychological literature, "adaptation" has been used interchangeably with such terms as "adjustment," "assimilation," "integration" and "acculturation." Based on Dunnett's (1981) and Pruitt's (1981) definitions, this study refers to adaptation as the process of learning to use means to solve problems in attaining goals in a new environment. To measure adaptation, two components are identified: adjustment and assimilation.

**Adjustment** relates to behavioral and extrinsic cultural traits. It refers to the process of coping with problems encountered in modifying, adapting, or altering one's patterns of behavior so as to bring them into conformity with those provided by a new cultural environment. Adjustment is reflected in the extent to which individuals are comfortable in new social and academic settings, and deals with areas of daily life in which individuals act differently from, similarly to, or indistinguishably from, the way the majority of people in society act. Poorly-adjusted individuals are those who do not know, do not understand, or fail to use the "correct" and "appropriate" means to cope with the new culture's demands (Dunnett, 1981:84). Ten items measuring various aspects of coping with Canadian life were used to determine the extent of respondents' problems of adjustment to Canadian society. These items are

discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

**Assimilation** deals with intrinsic cultural traits and measures the extent to which individuals absorb Canadian culture and adopt attitudes, values, beliefs and ways of doing things that are distinctly Canadian. Assimilation involves a set of values and norms in the dominant society which individuals either reject or accept. Individuals with low levels of assimilation tend to insist that their ethnic cultural heritage is superior to that of the host country, and to reject any form of cultural absorption. To measure levels of assimilation, 16 questions were constructed reflecting attitudes toward family relations, sex education, consumption patterns, social and political issues, life style, and future prospects in Canada (for details, see the questionnaire discussion in Chapter Three).

## Hypotheses

From the review of the literature on the adaptation of foreign students and particularly on that of students from the P.R.C., the following hypotheses are set forth for investigation:

- Hypothesis 1: Successful adaptation is positively related to the amount of participation in activities with Canadians. *social involvement contact*
- Hypothesis 2: Successful adaptation is positively related to friendship with Canadians. *personal contact*
- Hypothesis 3: Successful adaptation is positively related to the level of English proficiency. *English proficiency*
- Hypothesis 4: Successful adaptation is positively related to the length of stay in Canada. *length of stay*
- Hypothesis 5: Successful adaptation is inversely related to the degree of discrimination perceived and experienced.
- Hypothesis 6: Successful adaptation is positively related to the amount of financial aid received.
- Hypothesis 7: Successful adaptation is positively associated with previous exposure to Western culture. *pre-immigration knowledge*
- Hypothesis 8: Successful adaptation is inversely related to age.

Each of these hypotheses is tested with respect to the two components of adjustment outlined in the previous section. For a tabular presentation of these eight hypotheses, please refer to Table 1.

## Chapter Three

### Methods

#### Sample Frame

For the purpose of this study, the term, "Chinese students" refers to those from the People's Republic of China (P. R. C.) who initially came to Canada for the purpose of studying at a Canadian educational institution. Since the majority of Chinese students at UVic are in graduate programs, the target population for this study is Chinese graduate students from the the P.R.C. who are, or have recently been enrolled in programs at the University of Victoria.

In order to compare the differences in adjustment and assimilation between students from the the P. R. C. and those from Hong Kong, students from Hong Kong were originally included in the study. However, the number of graduate student respondents from Hong Kong was very small (only five students); consequently, they were eliminated from the analysis. Thus, this study deals exclusively with students from the the P.R.C.

Initially, a list of 106 P. R. C. students and scholars was obtained from the Chinese Students and Scholars Association at UVic. However, this list contained some foreign elements (i.e., non-target students) and missing elements. Some undergraduate students or students of other institutions who were not target respondents had been included, while the names of some UVic graduate students had been omitted. The missing students were identified through the author's personal search in each faculty and added to the sampling frame; the foreign elements were

removed.

Although the number of Chinese students given by the Department of Institutional Analysis at UVic was 67, the population was larger. Some students had recently finished their programs; others had graduated within the past year; and some remained in their programs, but were not currently registered. Based on these factors, it was the author's estimate that the total number of the target population would be approximately 110.

These two imperfect sources were used to try for a complete enumeration of the population. All of the prospective respondents listed for the study were included if the researcher could contact them. In turn, these respondents were asked to provide names and addresses of other Chinese graduate students they knew. In this way, the author managed to deliver questionnaires to 98 students, of which 96 were returned--a response rate of 98%. Because one questionnaire was incomplete, it was removed from the analysis. The total number of cases for final analysis was 95. Thus, it is extremely likely that most of the target population has been included in this study. Also, information gathered from respondents suggests that the students missing from the study do not differ systematically from the participants; moreover, non-participants were evenly distributed in different departments and their reasons for being absent varied (e.g., some were out of town on holiday, whereas others were working in other cities).

### **Questionnaire**

A structured questionnaire with 61 close-ended questions in English (see Appendix A) was designed and administered in Victoria. It consisted of 4 main parts:

#### **1). Dependent variables**

As previously noted, cultural adaptation was divided into two distinct components,

adjustment and assimilation. Based upon the ideas of the Michigan Student Problem Inventory (Porter, 1962) and other problem checklists developed by Sharma (1971), Hill (1966) and Win (1971) and the author's personal cross cultural experiences, a series of 10 questions (Question 1-10) were constructed to measure adjustment. They identify problems in various aspects of daily life (e.g., using public transportation, going to the doctor and using the Yellow Pages). To identify differences between the time when the respondents first arrived in Canada and when they answered the questionnaire, two response categories--one for the present and one for the period immediately following arrival--were used. A Likert scale with five numerical values ranging from "0" to "4" was used to determine the degree of adjustment. A score of "0" indicates the maximum degree of successful adjustment for a particular item, while a score of "4" indicates the minimum (note: these values were logically recoded later in the analysis).

The second component of cultural adaptation, assimilation, partially adopts Wong and Cochrane's (1989) model which derives from Gordon's (1964) theory of assimilation. It also relies on the author's direct observation of differences in values and norms between the two cultures. Specifically, assimilation was measured using sixteen items (Questions 15-30) designed to reflect students' attitudes toward family relations, sex education, consumption patterns, social and political issues, lifestyle, future prospects in Canada, Canadian values, and Canadian people. All but one of these questions employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from "0" to "5." The exception, Question 25, which dealt with views of Canadian values and Canadian people, referred to a list of 24 adjectives, half of which were positive and half of which were negative. For example, "altruistic" was used as positive and "egotistic" as negative (for further detail, see the questionnaire in the Appendix). This question was devised from Pruitt's (1981) study of the adaptation process of African students in the U. S.

## **2). Independent variables**

Twenty four questions were designed to measure the eight hypothesized predictor variables. Specifically, Questions 11-14 inquired about proficiency in English (reading, writing, speaking and comprehension); Questions 32-34 dealt with social participation and interaction; Questions 35-38 asked about friendship with Canadians\*; Questions 39-42 measured the degree of discrimination experienced and perceived; Questions 43-45 dealt with amount of non-parental financial aid received; Questions 46-48 inquired about prior travel experience and knowledge of Canadian culture; Questions 49-50 dealt with length of stay in North America; and Question 53 measured age.

## **3). Background data**

Nine items (Question 52 and Questions 54-61) were used to obtain additional information about students' personal background to better understand key issues of the study. They included questions on gender, marital status, place of origin, place of spouse's residence, number of children, place of children's residence, area of study, degree program currently registered in, and level of education. In order to avoid arousing students' sensitivity to some political issues, which could decrease their willingness to answer all the questions and lower the return rate, these nine questions were deliberately placed at the end of the questionnaire (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982).

## **4) Validity**

Lastly, an additional question was included. Question 31, was designed to assess the validity of the items used to measure cultural adaptation. It asked students to

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\* For the purpose of this research, the definitions of "Chinese" and "Canadian" were interpreted by the individual respondent with respect to the questionnaire.

identify the most significant problems affecting their adjustment to Canadian society. The following ten alternatives were offered (respondents could choose more than one item): 1. Language difficulties; 2. Homesickness; 3. Lack of guidance or counselling; 4. Strange foods and cultural patterns; 5. Lack of friends; 6. Lack of acceptance; 7. Financial problems; 8. Unfamiliar teaching practices; 9. Unfamiliar education systems; and 10. Racial discrimination. This question addresses the issue of the questionnaire's validity by helping to detect any discrepancy between the results of the author's analysis of the data and the respondents' direct identification of the problems in question.

The questionnaire was nine pages long. A carefully-worded cover letter (see Appendix) was added to increase participation and cooperation. Special attention was paid to cultural sensitivity. Before the questionnaires were used in the field, three pre-tests were done with prospective respondents from different departments with different levels of competence in English. Revisions were made to minimize the sensitivity of political issues and eliminate redundancy and sociological jargon. Each revised draft was submitted to the supervisor for comments and advice. After the final version was accepted, the cosmetic work was repeated until it appeared as it is in the appendix.

### **Procedure of Data Collection**

The data collection was conducted solely by the author during May and June of 1991. In order to increase the overall return rate of the questionnaire, prospective respondents were first contacted by telephone. A prepared letter was read explaining that little was known about the adjustment problems of Chinese students and saying that the purpose of the survey was to identify problems and provide information so that agencies and professionals concerned could better serve students' interests. Respondents were ensured that the questionnaire would take about 20 minutes.

Anonymity and confidentiality were fully guaranteed.

Once consent was obtained, the author visited the respondents at their academic departments, dwellings or workplaces. The respondents were given a copy of the questionnaire, with a covering letter containing instructions and an explanation of the nature of the study. To minimize potential differences in interpretation due to English deficiency, the respondents were made aware that the author would return for the completed questionnaire in a week and would be ready to help clarify questions either by phone or through a personal visit. Appreciation was expressed to the respondents for being willing to participate in the survey.

One week after the questionnaires were distributed, each respondent was contacted again by telephone. If he or she had finished the questionnaire, the author picked it up in person or the respondent sent it through campus mail to the Sociology Department. If the questionnaire had not been completed, three more days were given and further contacts were made until it was returned.

Questionnaires were assigned numbers at the top of the first page according to the sequence in which they were returned. The questionnaire was coded and entered into SPSS/PC. In order to ensure that subsequent analyses were correct, frequencies for all the variables were run, and coding errors were identified and corrected. Special attention was given to checking whether any patterns were consistently missing to any specific question. The data were then logically recoded and made ready for analysis.

### **Creation of Indices**

Multiple items were used to measure a number of the variables central to this analysis. Multiple items are preferable as they reduce the amount of measurement

error associated with each variable, thereby improving the validity of the measure (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982). In order to assess the compatibility of items, correlation coefficients for individual items were visually examined. Items with low correlations were dropped from the analysis and those that remained were used to construct indices which reflected the concepts of interest. The adequacy of the indices themselves was determined with tests for reliability.

Reliability tests establish firmly the relationship among the intended items and provide a reliability score, the Cronbach's Alpha, to measure the strength of this association. A reliability score of .60 is usually considered on acceptable level (Cronbach, 1951). To construct the most reliable indices, individual items were removed; eliminating items which have low correlations with the remaining items increases the internal consistency of the scale.

For the dependent variable adjustment (ADJ), the 10 original items were reduced to 7 (see Table 2): TRANSP (using public transportation); DOCTORP (visiting a doctor); YELLOWP (using the yellow pages); IMMIGP (dealing with immigration); LIBRAP (using the library system); PROFP (talking to professors); and LIVINGP (overall daily living). The Cronbach's Alpha for the final index of adjustment (using the responses related to the "present" situation as opposed to that when the respondents "first arrived") is .70. The three remaining items, LIVEP (looking for a place to live), EMPLOYP (looking for employment), and BANKP (using the banking system), were excluded because they reduced the reliability coefficient below .6.

Although the ten responses relating to the experience of "first arrival" yielded a higher reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha = .88), they were not used to construct a scale to measure the dependent variable of adjustment, because responses

to the present situation tend to have less systematic measurement error than those to past experience (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982).

Similarly, for the dependent variable of assimilation (ASS), four items (see Table 3) were selected from the original 16 items to construct a more highly intercorrelated index (Cronbach's Alpha .63). These items deal with students' view of extended family, adult children's responsibility for their elderly parents, cohabitation and divorce. According to Wong and Cochrane's study (1989) on levels of assimilation among first and second generations of Chinese immigrants in England, these items reveal the most contrasting values between the cultures of China and Western world. The other items were eliminated because they were not highly related to the common index.

In contrast, most of the multiple items measuring the independent variables were included in indices, as they yielded fairly high reliability coefficients (see TABLE 4): INT (interaction with Canadians) at .69; FRI (friendship with Canadians) at .62; ENG (proficiency in English) at .84; LEN (length of stay in Canada) at .95; DIS (discrimination perceived and experience) at .86; FIN (financial aid) at .65. The only exception was KNO (prior travel experience and knowledge of Canadian culture) which has a Cronbach Alpha of .49. The question regarding previous travel experience was not strongly related to the question regarding prior knowledge of Canadian culture. Given the present availability of telecommunications technology and Western books in China, it is highly possible for students to become quite knowledgeable about the culture of another country without necessarily setting foot outside China. Thus, prior travel experience was excluded and the single item on knowledge of Canadian culture was used as an independent variable.

After the indices for all the variables were constructed, a correlation matrix was run

for the eight independent variables. Table 5 provides information on the occurrence of large intercorrelations between the independent variables. Such correlations (multicollinearity) can substantially affect the results of multiple regression analysis (Agresti & Agresti, 1979: 340). Multicollinearity is not a concern since all but two of the correlations are below .350. The exceptions are the correlations between AGE and LEN at .406 and those between INT and FRI at .589. It is understandable that the two sets of variables are highly correlated: age increases with the length of stay, and increased interaction with Canadians usually results in an increased friendship with Canadians.

### **Methods of Analysis**

Regression analysis was used in this study because the indices were constructed from interval level measures, thus allowing for considerably precise measurement of the distance between the points on an interval scale. Scatter diagrams of association were plotted to detect curvilinearity because regression analysis is useful only if the relationships of interest are linear with consistently positive or negative patterns. If this pattern of directional reversal does not form, it is reasonably assumed that the relationship between variables is linear, such that an increase in one will show a corresponding increase or decrease in the other.

Bivariate regression analyses were used as an essential first step in studying the association between each of the two dependent and eight independent variables. In regression, the strength of an association is measured by beta ( $\beta$ ); however, in bivariate regression, beta is equal to the Pearson correlation coefficient, denoted by  $r$ . For the sake of differentiating between bivariate regression and multiple regression,  $r$  instead of beta was used. The value of  $r$  is constrained to fall between -1 and +1, and is not dependent on the units in which the variables are measured (Agresti & Agresti, 1979:297). When the variables are positively related,  $r > 0$ ; when

the variables are negatively related,  $r < 0$ ; and when there is no linear relationship between the variables,  $r = 0$ . The larger the absolute value of  $r$ , the stronger the degree of linear association (Agresti & Agresti, 1979:296-298).

For the sake of parsimony in the model, multiple regression analyses were also employed. Multiple regression estimates the relationship between the adaptation variables and each of the hypothesized predictor variables while controlling for the effects of all other independent variables entered in the model. The advantage of the multiple regression technique is threefold. First, by modelling the relationship between a dependent variable and a collection of independent variables, multiple regression enables us to explain more of the total variance in a dependent variable than can be accomplished by sequential analyses of only one independent variable on a dependent variable. Second, multiple regression permits the assignment of relative importance to each independent variable in the equation. Third, it yields partial correlations between two variables, controlling for other variables. Therefore, by using multiple regression, a parsimonious good-fit model can be obtained (Norusis, 1990:B-93 - 102; Agresti & Agresti, 1979:332-340).

For the sake of consistency throughout the analysis, the criteria of confirmation in the hypothesis-testing process were pre-established in this study. In this way, the test's credibility could be enhanced because criteria could not be swayed by the actual study findings. The confirmation criteria were based upon the attained (or observed) significance level AND the absolute value of correlation coefficients ( $r$  value) in the bivariate analysis or the absolute value of the standardized coefficient ( $\beta$  value) in the multiple analysis.

The conventional .05  $\alpha$ -level was used as one of the two criteria for confirming each hypothesis (Agresti & Agresti, 1979: 127). To illustrate, if the attained significance

level ( $P$ ) is less than or equal to .05 ( $P \leq .05$ ), the hypothesis has met one of the criteria for confirmation. Conversely, if the value of  $P$  is greater than .05 ( $P > .05$ ), the hypothesis is rejected. In every case, the value of all significance levels has been reported so that the reader may judge the evidence independently.

There is a good reason to use the significance level as a criterion of confirmation. As a result of snowball sampling techniques, the number of respondents included in the analysis was very close to the total target population of Chinese graduate students at UVic (i.e., 95 of an estimated 110, or 86% of the population). Also, because the University of Victoria is generally considered typical of Canadian higher educational institutions (for detailed discussion, see Chapter 5), the author has good reason to believe that the characteristics of subjects in this study represent those of the entire population of Chinese graduate students in Canada. Therefore, evidence gathered in this sample will be used as a basis for inferences regarding the larger population of Chinese graduate students in Canada.

Concerning the minimum value of the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ), no accepted standard criterion appears in the sociological literature or statistical references. However, it would be reasonable (though arbitrary) to use .2 as the criterion for the analysis in this study. To illustrate, if the absolute value of  $r$  is .2 or above with the same sign (+ or -) as proposed, and if  $P \leq .05$ , the hypothesized relationship between the variables in question is supported. Otherwise, it is rejected. Furthermore, if  $r \geq .5$ , the hypothesis is strongly supported. In summary, only if  $P \leq .05$  AND  $r \geq .2$  was a hypothesis considered acceptable; otherwise, it was rejected.

## Chapter Four

### Results

#### Background of Subjects

Of the 95 students in the final analysis, the mean age of respondents to the question on age was 32 (all scores are recorded to the nearest whole number); the youngest was 23 and the oldest was 52. Forty-six percent of the students were between 23 and 30 years old; 49% were between 31 and 40 years old (see Table 6); and only 5% of students were 41 or older. However, 8% did not give their age. In Chinese culture, asking someone's age is as socially acceptable as asking his or her name. However, people who are used to Canadian culture appear to be more likely to refuse to tell their age. This situation suggests that some students may have changed their personal views regarding cultural norms.

Of the 95 respondents, 34% were female and 66% male. Eighty-seven percent of the students were married and 13% had never been married. To the author's knowledge, instances of widowhood, divorce and cohabitation among Chinese students are extremely rare. Therefore, only three categories of marital status were included: "married," "never married" and "other." Seventy-three percent of married students lived with their spouses in Canada; the other 27% were separated from their spouses. Of the 82 married students, 53% had children, with an overwhelming majority (91%) having single children. This trend is most likely a result of the Chinese government's forced "one-child" policy. Again, 91% of the parents with children were living in Canada with their children.

Almost 70% of the students were studying natural sciences (i.e., electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science, physics, chemistry, biochemistry and mathematics). The remainder (30%) were studying education, sociology, psychology, economics, geography, linguistics and public administration.

These data are consistent with other findings that Chinese students' preferred areas of study are technical and applied, i.e., that they tend to make career or professional plans predominantly in the fields of physical science and engineering (Sue and Kirk 1972; Sue & Frank, 1973; Mickle, 1985).

In terms of level of education obtained prior to their current program, 12% of the students had completed doctoral degrees, 54% masters' degrees and 33% bachelors' degrees. For the degree program presently registered in, 83% were in graduate programs, of whom half were in Masters' programs and half in doctorate programs. More than 13% were either not registered for the summer session or were registered in non-degree programs, such as those offered for visiting scholars, academic or technical exchanges, or researchers.

#### **Analysis of the Two Components of Adaptation**

As noted in the discussion of operational definitions, two components of adjustment and assimilation were constructed to measure the concept of cultural adaptation. The adjustment index consists of seven items dealing with aspects of daily life which differ between the two cultures (see Table 7). For example, business telephone directories (i.e., the yellow pages) are one of the most popular advertising media in Canada, however, they do not exist in China.

As shown in Table 7, students' adjustment had improved considerably from the time of their arrival in Canada to the time the research was conducted. For example, nearly half of the respondents had at least moderate difficulty talking with their professors when they first arrived, while less than 5% reported the same level of difficulty "now." Their original trouble may have resulted from a combination of nervousness, a lack of confidence in English, and uncertainty about professors' expectations of students. Similarly, although almost two-thirds of the students had

some difficulty using the yellow pages upon their arrival, this situation persisted at the time of the survey for less than one quarter of the sample. It is logical that with time and practice this difficulty diminished.

As mentioned earlier, seven items which measure the current situation were used to construct an index for the students' adjustment. According to the results in Table 7, all seven items are highly skewed, with the majority of responses clustered around the "easy" end of the adjustment scales. For instance, more than 80% reported no current difficulty in using public transportation or the yellow pages, and none felt that performing these tasks was "seriously difficult." These findings suggest that the Chinese students have become quite well-adjusted.

The second component of cultural adaptation, assimilation, involves a set of values and norms which contrast sharply between Western and Chinese culture (see Wong and Cochrane, 1989). Table 8 shows that, unlike those on adjustment, the responses to the four questions on assimilation are distributed more or less on a normal bell-shaped curve. As shown in Table 8, the responses to the item pertaining to putting elderly parents in nursing homes reveals the strongest attachment to Chinese culture. More than 44% of the students agreed strongly or moderately that adult children should not put their elderly parents in nursing homes, while only 23% disagreed strongly or moderately. In China, children are the source of emotional and economic support for old age (Wong and Cochrane, 1989). Thus, in Chinese culture it is considered cruel or even inhuman to put parents in an institution away from close relatives. In contrast, responses to the item concerning divorce showed that the students had become most detached from this aspect of traditional Chinese cultural heritage. In almost all circumstances in China, couples who want to part are encouraged to remain married for the sake of their children. Fewer than 18% of the respondents agreed strongly or moderately that "even if a couple cannot get along, they should remain married to each other for the benefit of their children," while more than 52% disagreed moderately or strongly.

In short, the analyses of the responses to these four items indicate that Chinese students are somewhat assimilated into Canadian society. However, the degree of assimilation is not as high as that of adjustment.

### **Descriptive Analyses of Independent Variables**

The following describes the analyses of seven of the major independent variables employed in this study ("age" is excluded, since it has been discussed in the previous section).

The first independent variable, interaction (INT), is constructed from the three items measuring interaction with Canadians. Responses to these questions demonstrated that most Chinese students' contact with Canadians is neither broad nor frequent (see Table 9). The first item asked, "How often do you participate in social activities with Canadians?" to which more than 50% of the sample responded "seldom" or "never." The second question was, "Regarding your social contact with Canadians outside the university, which description best fits your experience?" Again, almost half of these students reported seldom or never visiting the homes of Canadians. The third question was, "With whom do you associate most frequently during your time outside school or work?" More than 54% of respondents reported associating mostly with Chinese, and only 4% indicated interacting mostly with Canadians. Thus, the majority of students reported only infrequent contact with Canadians, moreover, their social networks appear to be composed predominantly of people from China.

The second independent variable, friendship (FRI) explored three aspects of companionship: best friends, friends who help, and friendships with Canadians. Despite their minimal contact with Canadians, more than half of the students in this sample described their relationships with Canadians as "good" or "very good," and more than half indicated relying on both Chinese and Canadian friends when

undergoing difficulties; but fewer than 5% reported a Canadian best friend. These responses, like those reported by Mickle (1985), suggest that Chinese students' relationships with Canadians are generally friendly but rarely intimate (see Table 9). Four items dealing with self-rated ability to speak, understand, read and write English were used to measure the third variable, English proficiency (ENG). On a five-point Likert scale, "1" denotes the least proficiency and "5" the most proficiency. In rating their ability to speak English, more than a quarter of the students chose "no difficulty" while another 63% reported "slight difficulty." Only 4% indicated "great difficulty" or "serious difficulty," and the mean response was 4.17 with a standard deviation of .72. The respondents gave similar assessments of their ability to understand English. The mean response ( $x$ ) was 4.27, and the standard deviation ( $sd$ ) .61. Scores were even higher for reading ability ( $x=4.33$ ;  $sd=.71$ ). Responses on ability to write in English yielded a somewhat lower mean score ( $x=3.95$ ;  $sd=.77$ ), yet fewer than 25% of the respondents reported moderate to serious problems with writing. A comparison of responses regarding present English abilities and those upon first arrival indicated a significant improvement in perceived English proficiency. For example, the mean for comprehension increased from 3.1 to 4.1. Similar improvements are noted in the other items. Thus, according to the data collected, most of the respondents perceived themselves as competent in the English language and believed that their English proficiency had improved since their arrival (see Table 10).

This non-normal distribution for all the language items might simply reflect the fact that, for the most part, the respondents have met the university admission criteria for English proficiency. Students in social sciences are required to have a score of 550 or better in the standard Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), while students in physical sciences must score at least 500. Although TOEFL scores may not reveal the full range of foreign students' English language skills, they are

generally perceived as more objective than any other known indicator.

The fourth independent variable, length of stay (LEN), measured the length of the time the respondents have lived in Canada. Responses revealed considerable variation: 21% had been in Canada for more than four years; 34% between 2 and 4 years; 22% between 1 and 2 years; and 22% one year or less.

Four questions were used to construct an index to measure the fifth independent variable, discrimination (DIS). Responses indicate that although students believe discrimination against Chinese people exists in both academic and social settings, it is considerably more pronounced in the latter. With respect to "self," 24% of the respondents reported that they "Occasionally" experienced discrimination at university; however, 38% stated that they "Occasionally" encountered it in society in general. The use of "self" and "other" as referents appeared to affect reports of discrimination. Approximately 30% of the students stated that they had "never" personally experienced discrimination in school, while fewer than 10% perceived that their Chinese friends had had no problems. Moreover, thirty-six percent of respondents reported that their Chinese friends had "Occasionally" experienced discrimination at school and 49% indicated that their friends had been the victims of discrimination in the larger society. Apparently, then, both context and the particular referent used are important factors in the measurement of perceived discrimination. In a nutshell, the students felt that their friends experienced more racial discrimination than they did, and that discrimination in society generally is worse than in university.

The sixth variable, financial aid (FIN), was measured with the question, "Have you ever experienced economic pressure in terms of meeting basic living expenses?." Eight percent of respondents indicated "Constantly" or "Often"; 33% "Sometimes";

22% "Rarely" and 37% "Never." Thus, only a small minority of respondents saw themselves as being in dire straits.

The seventh independent variable deals with the exposure to and knowledge of Western culture (KNO). Respondents were asked, "How would you rate your knowledge of Canadian or North American culture when you first came to Canada.?" Twenty two percent indicated "Quite well"; 57% "Some"; and 22% "Very little." No one chose "Very well" or "Nothing." Thus, only a small proportion of respondents had little prior contact with North American or Canadian culture.

### **Analysis of the Hypotheses**

Bivariate regression analyses were first used to assess the data in relation to the eight hypotheses previously outlined. The results of these analyses provide information on the bivariate association between the dependent variables and independent variables.

Hypothesis 1: Successful adaptation is positively related to the amount of participation in activities with Canadians.

The bivariate regression coefficients for interaction and adjustment (ADJ) and assimilation (ASS) are .048 ( $p=.67$ ) and  $-.095$  ( $p=.36$ ) respectively (see Table 11). These statistics reveal that the amount of students' interaction with Canadians is not highly correlated with either component of cultural adaptation. Therefore, the bivariate results do not support the hypothesis that successful adaptation by students from the P.R.C. is positively related to the amount of participation in activities with Canadians. In turn, it does not substantiate the earlier finding of a positive relationship between cultural adaptation and interaction with members of the host society (Shattuck, 1964; Ford, 1968; Jarrahi-Zadeh and Eichman, 1970; Pruitt, 1977; and Mickle, 1985).

**Hypothesis 2:** Successful adaptation is positively related to friendship with Canadians.

The bivariate regression coefficient ( $r$ ) for ADJ and friendship with Canadians (FRI) ADJ is .109 ( $p = .33$ ); for ASS and FRI,  $r = -.083$  ( $p = .43$ ). Thus, the hypothesis is not supported. However, the index measuring number of friends (FRI) is moderately correlated with the index measuring interaction ( $r = .589$ ). It is not surprising, then, that the test for Hypothesis 2 has a result similar to that of Hypothesis 1.

**Hypothesis 3:** Successful adaptation is positively related to the level of English proficiency.

The index of English proficiency (ENG) has the strongest relationship with adjustment ( $r = .604$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ); however, English ability has little association with assimilation ( $r = .08$ ,  $p = .44$ ). Because of their inconsistency, these results provide only partial support for the hypothesis and the findings of many researchers that English language ability is an important factor in the acculturation process (Ursua, 1969; Shepard, 1970; White & White, 1981).

**Hypothesis 4:** Successful adaptation is positively related to the length of stay in Canada.

In contrast to the tests of the preceding hypotheses, the data strongly support the fourth hypothesis. There is a significant positive relationship between the length of stay in Canada and adjustment ( $r = .293$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) and also between the length of stay and assimilation ( $r = .232$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). These results are consistent with Mickle's (1985) findings that students with more time in the host country adapt more successfully.

Hypothesis 5: Successful adaptation is inversely related to the degree of discrimination perceived and experienced.

Regressing the index of discrimination (DIS) on adjustment reveals that the two factors are virtually unrelated ( $r=.014, p=.91$ ). This finding does not support the hypothesis, nor does it substantiate other researchers' findings that the more discrimination a student perceives and experiences, the less successful adaptation he or she will make (Perry, 1983; Mickle, 1985). Contrary to the stated hypothesis, there is a positive and significant association between discrimination and assimilation ( $r=.202, p=.05$ ). This somewhat puzzling result suggests that the experience of being discriminated against may strengthen the incentive to assimilate quickly into mainstream society.

Hypothesis 6: Successful adaptation is positively related to the amount of financial aid received.

As hypothesized, a significant positive association exists between financial aid and adaptation. The association between financial aid and adjustment ( $r=.411, p\leq.001$ ) shows that students with an adequate level of financial aid have fewer adjustment problems than those whose aid is doubtful or barely adequate. The association between financial aid and assimilation is also strong and significant ( $r=.342, p\leq.001$ ), indicating that better-funded students assimilate more readily into the mainstream society than poorly-funded students. These findings strongly support the hypothesis and Melendez-Craig's (1970) finding that those who experience funding difficulties are also likely to experience the greatest adjustment problems and to assimilate least into Canadian society.

Hypothesis 7: Successful adaptation is positively associated with previous exposure to Western culture.

According to the information set forth in Table 11 bivariate association between adjustment and exposure to and knowledge of Western culture (KNO) is positive, but too weak to confirm the hypothesis ( $r=.159, p=.15$ ). Also, assimilation appears to be unrelated to exposure to Western culture ( $r=.029, p=.78$ ). These results suggest that prior knowledge of Western culture does not significantly contribute to better adjustment, nor is it linked to easy assimilation.

Hypothesis 8: Successful adaptation is inversely related to age.

The last hypothesis of this study proposes that younger students adapt more readily than older ones. However, no relationship is evident either between age and adjustment ( $r=.114, p=.32$ ) or between age and assimilation ( $-.111, p=.31$ ): results do not support hypothesis 8. Neither are these results consistent with the results of studies conducted by Smith (1956), Hull (1981) and Richmond (1984); however, other research has also failed to demonstrate a strong effect of age on adaptation (e.g., Gultung, 1965).

In summary, both adjustment and assimilation are positively associated with the length of stay in Canada and financial aid (see Table 11). Additionally, English ability is strongly associated with adjustment but not with assimilation. In contrast, the relationships between adjustment and the other five predictor variables--interaction, friendship with Canadians, discrimination, prior knowledge of Canadian culture and age--are inconsistent with the study's hypotheses.

### **Multiple Regression Analysis of the Model**

Multiple regression analyses were also performed to determine the best combination of variables to predict both adjustment and assimilation and to test for suppression effects. For clarity, an analysis of adjustment is presented first; this is followed by

a similar analysis of assimilation.

The multiple regression of adjustment and the independent variables yielded results similar to those reported for the bivariate regression analyses. As indicated in Table 12, English proficiency retains its strong positive effect on adjustment when the other seven independent variables are held constant ( $\beta = .46, p \leq .001$ ). Length of stay is also strongly related to adjustment ( $\beta = .32, p \leq .01$ ), as is financial aid ( $\beta = .25, p \leq .01$ ). Contrary to the stated hypothesis and the findings of many researchers, multiple regression analysis shows a negative and significant relationship between interaction and adjustment ( $\beta = -.23, p \leq .05$ ). The three other predictor variables do not exert any substantive independent effect on adjustment in the regression model.

To summarize, the multiple regression analysis indicates that Chinese students' adjustment is positively related to their English proficiency and their financial assistance. These findings are consistent with the result of students' self-identification of the most significant problems affecting their adjustment to Canadian society (see the discussion of validity in the Questionnaire section in Chapter 3). Sixty percent chose "language difficulties" and thirty-two percent "financial problems". The other eight factors (homesickness, lack of guidance or counselling, strange foods and cultural patterns, lack of friends, lack of acceptance, unfamiliar teaching practices, unfamiliar education systems and racial discrimination) are not generally considered "the most significant problems" since less than 15 percent chose any of them. Thus, two sets of independent indicators strongly support the contention that proficiency in English and financial matters constitute the most important factors in these students' adjustment.

In addition, the results from the multiple regression analysis indicate that Chinese students' adjustment is positively related to their length of stay in Canada. However,

no close relationship exists for the other hypothesized factors (friendship with Canadians, racial discrimination experienced and perceived, prior knowledge of Canadian culture, and age). The equation's coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = .56$ ) indicates that 56% of the variance in Chinese students' adjustment can be explained by this model.

Turning to assimilation, Table 13 presents the multiple regression analysis of assimilation on these same eight independent variables. The analysis reveals that financial aid has the strongest relationship with assimilation ( $\beta = .34, p \leq .01$ ). The second most important contributor to assimilation is length of stay ( $\beta = .23, p \leq .05$ ). Both of these results mirror those reported at the bivariate level ( $\beta = r$ , and  $p$  values are identical). In contrast to the bivariate results, discrimination loses its effect on assimilation when the other variables are added to the model, suggesting that the relationship between discrimination and assimilation is spurious. Consistent with the results of the bivariate analysis, no other independent variables used here are highly correlated with assimilation. Thus, of the eight hypothesized independent variables, only amount of financial assistance and length of residence in Canada are found to be good predictors of assimilation and contribute positively to a high level of assimilation. Moreover, the eight independent variables explain only 21% of the variance in the respondents' assimilation ( $R^2 = .21$ ).

In summary, both bivariate and multiple regression analyses support the two hypotheses that length of stay in Canada and financial aid are positively related to two components of cultural adaptation--adjustment and assimilation. These findings are consistent with those of studies reviewed in Chapter Two (Mickle, 1985; Melendez-Craig, 1970). The hypothesis that proficiency in English contributes to cultural adaptation is only partially supported: English ability is found to be positively linked to adjustment but not to assimilation. Interaction, originally hypothesized to

be positively related to adaptation, shows a significant negative association. All other hypotheses are unconfirmed (see Table 14).

## Chapter Five

### Summary and Discussion

This study was conducted to discover the influence of certain factors on the cultural adaptation of graduate students from mainland China at the University of Victoria. In particular, it focused on the effects of interaction with Canadians, friendship with Canadians, English language proficiency, length of stay, discrimination experienced and perceived, financial aid, prior knowledge of Canadian culture, and age. Cultural adaptation was determined via the students' responses to questions dealing with adjustment (the process of learning to function on a day-to-day basis in their new environment) and assimilation (the acquisition of their host culture's values). The data were analyzed using bivariate and multiple regression techniques.

Results of the various analyses indicate that Chinese students have achieved a high level of adjustment and are somewhat assimilated into Canadian society, though to a lesser degree. The assimilation process appears to take more time than adjustment. However, it is also possible that people who move into new societies do not assimilate any more than they consider necessary. Perhaps, then, what affects the students' adaptation is not whether or not they are assimilating into the host society, but whether they are assimilating to the degree which they desire. In this sense, complete assimilation may not be regarded as essential, but as only one facet of cultural adaptation.

As predicted, both bivariate and multiple regression analyses yield evidence that the effect of the respondents' command of English is a most powerful determinant of adjustment to Canadian society. This outcome substantiates the findings of previous researchers (Ursua, 1969; Shepard, 1970; White & White, 1981). As this study and many other studies show, one's ability to communicate in English can either facilitate or hinder adjustment. Those who possess a good command of English are more able

to understand and appreciate the host culture and values, and so are more able to adjust to Canadian life than those who do not. However, command of English does not appear to be a good predictor of assimilation. Language competence facilitates managing in a strange culture; it does not necessarily lead to the acquisition of that culture's values.

Both the bivariate and multiple regression analyses reveal that financial support is positively related to adjustment and assimilation. This result is consistent with that of an earlier study by Meledez-Craig (1970). Due to the relatively low standard of living in China, the financial support from parents or relatives from China is often of little help in coping with the high cost of living in Canada. Academic awards therefore become a major source of financial support, placing considerable pressure on Chinese students to achieve high grades. This study shows that people under financial stress in a new environment tend to encounter more adjustment problems and to have greater difficulty assimilating into the receiving society than people whose funding is more adequate.

*economic*

In accordance with Goldlust and Richmond (1974), this study's results show that increased length of stay in Canada facilitates cultural adaptation in terms both of adjustment and assimilation. In that cultural assimilation involves absorbing aspects of daily life taken for granted by people in the host society, it is a socialization process. In that it involves modifying or relinquishing previously learned attitudes, norms, values, beliefs and behaviour patterns, though, it is also a desocialization process. Similarly, adjustment is a learning process which involves obtaining new life skills and coping with problems which were not present in the home country. All these processes take time. It is understandable that the longer students live in Canada, the fewer adjustment problems they tend to encounter and the higher level of assimilation they reach. However, because this research has only analyzed the

*length*

*dele*

time-adaptation relationship at a single point in time, it cannot test the U or W patterns mentioned in the literature review. To yield evidence suitable for testing these patterns, it is necessary to conduct a panel study comparing changes in the same subjects over an extended period.

In contrast to the findings of many researchers, this study does not substantiate the hypothesis that cultural adaptation is enhanced by increased participation with Canadians or friendship with Canadians. On the contrary, it reflects a negative and significant relationship between interaction and adjustment. One possible explanation for such a relationship revolves around the notion of institutional completeness developed by Breton (1964). At the extreme, institutional completeness means that an ethnic community, suggests Breton, ~~the community~~ can provide all the services required by its members, thereby obviating the need to use native institutions. Although the Chinese community is not entirely institutionally complete, it does have its formal own organizations and informal networks including newspapers, educational, health and recreational facilities. When people are transplanted from one country to another, they must establish an interpersonal network for the satisfaction of immediate needs. The formal and informal services provided by the Chinese community on and off campus may be quite sufficient to meet the needs of its members. Thus, it may be unnecessary for Chinese students to participate as fully in mainstream culture as students from other countries who do not have institutionally complete communities.

Network  
vs.  
Personal  
contact

Consequently, social interaction with the host community, previously thought of as crucial to cultural adaptation, may not be necessary for Chinese students. This study's findings suggest that institutional completeness of an ethnic community is an important factor in directing the social integration of its members. It also suggests that students may cope quite well and do not necessarily undergo the acculturation

process, if they are surrounded by and feel comfortable with people of their own origin in a new society. Moreover, it is interesting to speculate that the greater the degree of interaction with members of the host society, the less these students are integrated into the fairly complete Chinese cultural community. Therefore, they must rely exclusively on the mainstream society for assistance in adjustment. On the other hand, the lower their degree of interaction with Canadians, the more students become part of the Chinese community, and therefore the more able they become to take advantage of its social network in their adjustment. While this would explain the negative and significant relationships between interaction and adjustment, further study is needed to confirm this speculation.

In addition, the results of this study also show that most of the students believe racial discrimination is worse in society in general than at university. As found by other researchers (Perry, 1983; Mickle 1985), students report experiences and feelings of being discriminated against; however, statistical analysis reveals that experience and perception of racial discrimination are not an effective predictor of adjustment.

Lastly, these results indicate a positive relationship between adjustment and prior knowledge of Canadian culture, but the relationship is weaker than previously shown. Further, no relationship is evident between such prior knowledge and the degree of assimilation. Since most subjects have resided in Canada for several years, the effect of prior knowledge may be overshadowed by the effect of the length of their stay. Similarly, differences in age, which some researchers consider important, do not explain differences in adjustment difficulties or degrees of assimilation.

Although the results were drawn from the responses of 95 Chinese graduate students at the University of Victoria, the author has no reason to believe that the characteristics of this study's respondents differ substantially from those of the entire

population of Chinese graduate students in Canada. UVic uses standard admission criteria to select applicants for graduate programs (e.g., the TOEFL score, GPA for the last two years in the bachelor degree, and two or three references). Thus, academic abilities of respondents should be similar to those of the larger population. Further, at UVic the selection of social and physical science disciplines taught is similar to that of other Canadian universities and colleges. Therefore, Chinese students at UVic should reflect the entire Chinese student population accurately in terms of enrollment in graduate programs. Finally, to the best of the author's knowledge, Chinese students usually select Canadian universities without knowledge of the institutions to which they are applying or apply without preference before coming to Canada. Thus, it is highly unlikely that Chinese students at UVic differ significantly from the rest of Chinese students in Canada in any respect. Given these reasons, the author feels quite confident in generalizing the above findings to the adaptation situation of the entire population of Chinese students in Canada.

However, some limitations should be kept in mind in interpreting the findings. First, because this study, like one of childhood or aging, attends to relatively crucial phases in the sequence of individual adjustment processes--processes which occur in changing social contexts--conclusions drawn from variables studied at one point in time may not reflect the entire acculturation process. Also because Chinese students are progressively becoming removed from their culture and exposed to Western influences, the norms and values of Canadian society begin to guide and modify their orientations. Since further adaptation is likely, care should be taken in interpreting the results. Further research is needed to determine whether the revealed correlations will hold for the same population over time.

Furthermore, these Chinese students' unique situation in Canada should be considered in comparing this study's findings with those of studies on foreign students

or immigrants in general. As mentioned in the Introduction, the subjects possess characteristics both of foreign graduate students from developing countries and of immigrants. The abrupt change in their immigration status may have some bearing on their patterns of adaptation.

Lastly, it is important to note that the results obtained are based not on the researcher's direct observation but on subjects' self-report. The possibility of self-presentation bias limits the extrapolation of these findings to actual adaptation situations.

Based upon results of the present study, the following recommendations are suggested to assist Chinese students in the process of cultural adaptation, and to aid official agencies to ease this population's adjustment and assimilation.

1. Since this study has revealed that English language proficiency is crucial to adjustment to Canadian society, Canadian institutions of higher education admitting Chinese students should provide short term intensive English language training and orientation programs for new arrivals.
2. Since Chinese students identify command of English as the most significant problem affecting their adjustment to Canadian society, they should devote considerable time and energy to participating in short term intensive English language training and orientation programs before entering their degree programs.
3. The results of this study indicate that one's financial situation is closely related to adjustment and assimilation. Canadian institutions of higher education should ensure that adequate financial aid is available to foreign students. Students should not be admitted without any form of economic assistance, as it is likely that problems in

adaptation will interfere with their academic progress.

4. It has been found that Chinese students experience a difficult period of adjustment during the initial months of their stay. Therefore, universities and colleges should provide ongoing cultural orientation programs for newcomers. Such programs should concentrate on Canadian life skills and the general norms of behaviour in Canada to help students cope with day-to-day life in a new environment. In British Columbia, foreign students should be given the *Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services in British Columbia*, which is organized to help new arrivals find the information necessary to get settled.

5. All university personnel dealing with foreign students should have some training in awareness and sensitivity of cross-cultural differences. In particular, foreign student advisors and counselors should have extensive cross-cultural experience and also be culturally and linguistically sensitive to individuals of diverse backgrounds. It is a mistake to assume that Chinese students can be effectively served by counselors trained to deal with Canadian students.

6. Although the Chinese community at UVic shows a high degree of institutional completeness, and experienced students can help new arrivals, the Chinese Students' and Scholars' Association should still maintain close contact with the Graduate Student Society at UVic. In this way, it may assist Chinese students to adapt more quickly to Canadian society.

In concluding, we have learned a lot about the process of adjustment and what contributes to it. It is a relatively concrete process. However, the process of assimilation is more abstract, and the results of this study indicate that we do not know very much about what is involved. For example, is a high level of assimilation

necessarily desirable, if foreign students are well adjusted? Should assimilation be considered as essential to their cultural adaptation? Or is assimilation a good predictor of cultural adaptation?

The task for the next phase in testing the model of this study remains in several facets. Given the obvious weakness of the measures employed in this study (e.g., only four items were used from the original sixteen items to construct an index of assimilation), the concept of cultural adaptation should be more precisely defined and better measures developed. Moreover, of eight hypothesized independent variables used in this study, only two are substantiated to be related to one component of adaptation and three to the other. Thus, some unknown variables should be explored. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, because the process of cultural adaptation is dynamic and further acculturation is irresistible, a longitudinal research is necessary to examine whether the relationships confirmed in this study hold true to further acculturation experiences and to determine if use of the proposed coping strategies leads to successful cultural adaptation.

## Tables

TABLE 1 SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES		
Independent Variables	Relation	Dependent Variables
Amount of Social Participation/ Interaction with Canadians	+	Cultural Adaptation (Two components) 1. Adjustment 2. Assimilation
Friendship with Canadians	+	
English Proficiency	+	
Length of Stay	+	
Discrimination Perceived and Experienced	-	
Financial Aid	+	
Prior Knowledge of Canadian Culture	+	
Age	-	

**TABLE 2**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF DEPENDENT VARIABLE:**  
**PRESENT ADJUSTMENT**

Full sample (N=95)

Scale Name	Variable Abbreviation	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation ( $sd$ )
<b>Y: adjustment (7 items)*</b>	ADJ	32.55	2.46
1. using public transportation	TRANSP	4.80	.50
2. visiting a doctor	DOCTORP	4.43	.74
3. using the yellow pages	YELLOWP	4.73	.63
4. dealing with immigration	IMMIGP	4.60	.67
5. using the library system	LIBRAP	4.72	.50
6. talking to professors	PROFP	4.56	.58
7. overall daily living	LIVINGP	4.59	.63

\*7 items coded:(1) serious difficulty; (2) great difficulty; (3) moderate difficulty;  
(4) slight difficulty; (5) no difficulty

Cronbach's alpha=.70

**TABLE 3**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF DEPENDENT VARIABLE: ASSIMILATION**  
 Full Sample (N=95)

Scale Name	Variable Abbreviation	Mean ( <i>x</i> )	Standard Deviation( <i>sd</i> )
<b>Y: Assimilation (4 items)*</b>	ASS	13.12	3.07
1. 'Adult children should not put their elderly parents in nursing homes'	NURSING	2.68	1.16
2. 'It is better for married children to live with parents than to live by themselves'	LIVETO	3.56	1.14
3. 'Even if a couple cannot get along, they should remain married to each other for the benefit of their children'	REMAINM	3.58	1.07
4. 'Couple should not live together unless they are married.'	LTOGE	3.30	.10

\* 4 items coded: (1) strongly agree; (2) moderately agree; (3) unsure;  
 (4) moderately disagree; (5) strongly disagree

Cronbach's alpha = .63

**TABLE 4**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE EIGHT INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**  
**Full Sample (N=95)**

Scale Name	Variable Abbreviation	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>X1: Interaction (3 items)</b>	INT	6.95	1.95
1. 'How often do you participate in social activities with Canadians' <i>a</i>	SACTI	2.51	.67
2. 'Regarding your social contact with Canadians outside the university, which description best fits your experience?' <i>b</i>	SCONT	2.53	.71
3. 'With whom do you associate most frequently during your time outside school or work?' <i>c</i>	ASSO	1.92	1.05
<b>X2: Number of Friends (3 items)</b>	FRI	6.46	2.08
1. 'Aside from family members, which types of friends do you seek <u>most</u> often for help or advice when under stress or when experiencing difficulties' <i>d</i>	SHELP	2.20	1.01
2. 'My best friend(s) is (are):' <i>e</i>	BFRIEND	1.76	1.00
3. 'In general, my relationship with Canadians is:' <i>f</i>	RELWC	2.50	.74
<b>X3: English Proficiency (4 items)<i>g</i></b>	ENG	16.67	2.32
1. 'Speaking English'	SENGP	4.17	.72
2. 'Understanding English'	UENGP	4.27	.61
3. 'Reading English'	RENGP	4.33	.71
4. 'Writing English'	WENGP	3.95	.77

X1: Cronback's alpha = .69

*a* Coded: (1) never (2) seldom (3) occasionally (4) often

*b* Coded: (1) never visit the homes of Canadians; (2) seldom visit the homes of Canadians; (3) occasionally visit the homes of Canadians; (4) often visit the homes of Canadians

*c* Coded: (1) Chinese; (2) other; (3) Chinese and Canadians; (4) Canadians

X2: Cronback's alpha = .62

*d* Coded: (1) Chinese friends; (2) other; (3) Chinese and Canadians; (4) Canadians

*e* Coded: (1) Chinese; (2) other; (3) Canadians and Chinese; (4) Canadians

*f* Coded: (1) poor or very poor; (2) business-like; (3) good; (4) very good

X3: Cronback's alpha = .84

*g* 4 items Coded: (1) serious difficulty; (2) great difficulty; (3) moderate difficulty; (4) slight difficulty; (5) no difficulty

**TABLE 4 (continued)**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE EIGHT INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**  
**Full Sample (N=95)**

Scale Name	Variable Abbreviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>X4: Length of Stay (2 items)<sup>h</sup></b>	LEN	6.90	2.50
1. 'Approximately how long have you been living in Canada?'	LCAN	3.41	1.27
2. 'Approximately how long have you been living in North America?'	LNOA	3.47	1.31
<b>X5: Discrimination Experienced (4 items)<sup>i</sup></b>	DIS	14.43	2.86
1. 'To what extent have your Chinese friends experienced racial discrimination in academic settings?'	FDISA	3.60	.75
2. 'To what extent have your Chinese friends experienced racial discrimination in social settings?'	FDISS	3.29	.77
3. 'To what extent have you experienced racial discrimination in academic settings?'	YDISA	3.88	.98
4. 'To what extent have you experienced racial discrimination in social settings?'	YDISS	3.64	.87
<b>X6: Financial Assistance (3 items)</b>	FIN	11.41	2.36
1. 'What is the total amount of financial aid that you have received per year since you have attended Canadian universities?' <sup>j</sup>	FAID	4.32	1.19
2. 'How do you rate your financial support compared to other Chinese students on campus?' <sup>k</sup>	RFIN	3.20	.84
3. 'Have you ever experienced economic pressure in terms of meeting basic living expenses?' <sup>l</sup>	EPRESS	3.86	1.05
<b>X7: Knowledge of Canadian Culture</b>	KNO	2.05	.69
Knowledge of Canadian or North American culture <sup>n</sup>			
<b>X8: Age of the Respondent</b>	AGE	31.58	5.20

X4: Cronback's alpha = .95

<sup>h</sup>Coded: (1) less than 6 months; (2) more than 6 months but less than 12 months; (3) between 1 and 2 years; (4) more than 2 years but less than 4 years; (5) longer than 4 years

X5: Cronback's alpha = .86

<sup>i</sup>Coded: (1) constantly; (2) often (3) occasionally; (4) rarely; (5) never

X6: Cronback's alpha = .65

<sup>j</sup>Coded: (1) less than \$1,000; (2) \$1,001 to \$3,000; (3) \$3,001 to \$6,000; (4) \$6,001 to \$10,000; (5) more than \$10,001

<sup>k</sup>Coded: (1) very poor; (2) below average; (3) average; (4) better than average; (5) very good

<sup>l</sup>Coded: (1) constantly; (2) often; (3) sometimes; (4) rarely; (5) never

<sup>n</sup>Coded: (1) very little; (2) some; (3) quite well

TABLE 5  
CORRELATION MATRIX OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES  
Full Sample (N=95)

	INT	FRI	ENG	LEN	DIS	FIN	KNO	AGE
INT	1.000							
FRI	.589***	1.000						
ENG	.065	.230*	1.000					
LEN	.319*	.328***	.193	1.000				
DIS	-.090	.090	-.101	.009	1.000			
FIN	-.030	.002	.211*	.118	.267**	1.000		
KNO	.085	.138	.201*	.127	.075	-.185	1.000	
AGE	.174	.307**	-.060	.406***	-.030	.012	-.080	1.00

\*P≤.05

\*\*P≤.01

\*\*\*P≤.001

**TABLE 6**  
**BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS**  
 Full Sample (N=95)

<b>Age</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
23 - 30	46.0
31 - 40	49.4
41 - 52	4.6
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	66.0
Female	34.0
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Married	87.2
Never married	12.8
<b>Spouse Living in Canada</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	73.2
No	26.8
<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
None	43.3
One	48.8
Two	4.9
<b>Children Living in Canada</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	90.9
No	9.1
<b>Area of Study</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Social Sciences	29.8
Physical Sciences	70.2
<b>Degree Completed</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bachelor	32.6
Master	53.7
Ph.D	11.6
Other *	2.1
<b>Degree Currently Registered</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Master	42.4
Ph. D	43.5
Other **	14.1

\* Other refers to other post-secondary education.

\*\* Other refers to those who either graduated recently or registered in non-degree programs, such as visiting scholars or exchange students.

**TABLE 7**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF ADJUSTMENT**

Full Sample (N=95)

**1. Using public transportation**

First Arrived	Presently
31.9% No difficulty	84.8% No difficulty
44.7% Slight difficulty	10.9% Slight difficulty
18.1% Moderate difficulty	4.3% Moderate difficulty
3.2% Great difficulty	0% Great difficulty
2.1% Serious difficulty	0% Serious difficulty

**2. Visiting the doctor**

First Arrived	Presently
36.0% No difficulty	58.0% No difficulty
19.8% Slight difficulty	27.3% Slight difficulty
32.6% Moderate difficulty	14.8% Moderate difficulty
9.3% Great difficulty	.0% Great difficulty
2.3% Serious difficulty	0% Serious difficulty

**3. Using the yellow pages**

First Arrived	Presently
34.8% No difficulty	80.4% No difficulty
30.4% Slight difficulty	14.1% Slight difficulty
19.6% Moderate difficulty	3.3% Moderate difficulty
13.0% Great difficulty	2.2% Great difficulty
2.2% Serious difficulty	0% Serious difficulty

**4. Dealing with the Department of Immigration**

First Arrived	Presently
41.6% No difficulty	69.3% No difficulty
30.3% Slight difficulty	22.7% Slight difficulty
18.0% Moderate difficulty	6.8% Moderate difficulty
7.9% Great difficulty	1.1% Great difficulty
2.2% Serious difficulty	0% Serious difficulty

TABLE 7 (continued)  
DISTRIBUTION OF ADJUSTMENT

Full Sample (N=95)

**5. Using the library system**

First Arrived	Presently
35.1% No difficulty	74.5% No difficulty
28.7% Slight difficulty	23.4% Slight difficulty
25.5% Moderate difficulty	2.1% Moderate difficulty
10.6% Great difficulty	0% Great difficulty
0% Serious difficulty	0% Serious difficulty

**6. Talking to professors**

First Arrived	Presently
21.7% No difficulty	60.4 % No difficulty
31.5% Slight difficulty	35.2% Slight difficulty
34.8% Moderate difficulty	4.4% Moderate difficulty
7.6% Great difficulty	0% Great difficulty
4.3% Serious difficulty	0% Serious difficulty

**7. Overall daily living**

First Arrived	Presently
22.6% No difficulty	66.0% No difficulty
45.2% Slight difficulty	26.6% Slight difficulty
24.7% Moderate difficulty	7.4% Moderate difficulty
7.5% Great difficulty	0% Great difficulty
0% Serious difficulty	0% Serious difficulty

**TABLE 8**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF ASSIMILATION**

Full Sample (N=95)

**1. Adult children should not put their elderly parents in nursing homes.**

17.9% Strongly agree  
26.3% Moderately agree  
32.6% Unsure  
15.8% Moderately disagree  
7.4% Strongly disagree

**2. It is better for married children to live with parents than to live by themselves.**

4.2% Strongly agree  
16.8% Moderately agree  
20.0% Unsure  
36.8% Moderately disagree  
22.1% Strongly disagree

**3. Even if a couple cannot get along, they should remain married to each other for the benefit of their children.**

1.1% Strongly agree  
16.8% Moderately agree  
29.5% Unsure  
28.4% Moderately disagree  
24.2% Strongly disagree

**4. Couples should not live together unless they are married.**

7.4% Strongly agree  
14.7% Moderately agree  
31.6% Unsure  
33.7% Moderately disagree  
12.6% Strongly disagree

**TABLE 9**  
**SUMMARY DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

<b>X1: INT - Interaction with Canadians</b>					
<b>SACTI</b>	Never 3.2%	Seldom 49.5%	Occasionally 41.1%	Often 6.3%	
<b>SCONT</b>	Never 6.3%	Seldom 41.1%	Occasionally 46.3%	Often 6.3%	
<b>ASSO</b>	Chinese 54.7%	Other 3.2%	Chinese & Canadians 37.9%	Canadians 54.7%	
<b>X2: FRI - Number of Canadian Friend</b>					
<b>SHELP</b>	Chinese friends 39.4%	Other 4.3%	Chinese & Canadians 53.2%	Canadians 3.2%	
<b>BFRIEND</b>	Chinese 61.1%	Other 5.3%	Chinese & Canadians 30.5%	Canadians 3.2%	
<b>RELWC</b>	Very poor 1.1%	Poor 7.4%	Business- like 36.8%	Good 48.4%	Very good 6.3%
<b>X3: ENG - Current English Proficiency</b>					
<b>UENGP</b>	Serious 0%	Great 1.1%	Moderate 5.3%	Slight 59.6%	No 34.0%
<b>SENGP</b>	Serious 1.1%	Great 2.1%	Moderate 7.4%	Slight 62.8%	No 26.6%
<b>RENGP</b>	Serious 0%	Great 2.1%	Moderate 7.4%	Slight 45.7%	No 44.7%
<b>WENGP</b>	Serious 0%	Great 4.3%	Moderate 19.1%	Slight 54.3%	No 22.3%
<b>X4: LEN - Length of Stay in Canada</b>					
<b>LCAN</b>	Less than 6 months 11.6%	6 - 12 months 11.6%	1 - 2 years 22.1%	2 - 4 years 33.7%	More than 4 years 21.1%
<b>LNOA</b>	Less than 6 months 10.6%	6 - 12 months 13.8%	1 - 2 years 20.2%	2 - 4 years 28.7%	More than 4 years 26.6%

TABLE 9 (Continued)

X5: DIS - Discrimination Experienced					
FDISA	Constantly 0%	Often 6.7%	Occasionally 36.0%	Rarely 48.3%	Never 9.0%
FDISS	Constantly 0%	Often 13.5%	Occasionally 49.4%	Rarely 31.5%	Never 5.6%
YDISA	Constantly 1.1%	Often 7.8%	Occasionally 24.4%	Rarely 35.6%	Never 31.1%
YDISS	Constantly 0%	Often 7.8	Occasionally 38.2%	Rarely 36.0%	Never 18.0%
X6: FIN - Financial Assistance					
FAID	Less than \$1000 6.7%	\$1,001 to \$3,000 4.5%	\$3,001 to \$6,000 5.6%	\$6,001 to \$10,000 16.9%	More than \$10,000 66.3%
RFIN	Very poor 4.4%	Below average 7.8%	Average 55.6%	Better than average 26.7%	Very good 5.6%
EPRESS	Constantly 2.2%	Often 5.4%	Sometimes 33.3%	Rarely 22.6%	Never 36.6%
X7: KNO - Knowledge of Canadian Culture					
KNO	Nothing 0%	Very little 18.9%	Some 56.8%	Quite well 24.2%	Very well 0%

SACTI: frequency of participating in social activities with Canadians

SCONT: frequency of visiting the homes of Canadians

ASSO: types of people associated most frequently in spare time

SHELP: types of friends to seek most often for help

BFRIEND: best friends

RELWC: relationship with Canadians

UENGP: ability to understand English

SENGP: ability to speak English

RENGP: ability to read English

WENGP: ability to write English

LCAN: length of stay in Canada

LNOA: length of stay in North America

FDISA: frequency of Chinese friends' experiencing discrimination in school

FDISS: frequency of Chinese friends' experiencing discrimination in society

YDISA: frequency of the respondent's experiencing discrimination in school

YDISS: frequency of the respondent's experiencing discrimination in society

FAID: total amount of financial aid received

RFIN: situation of financial support

EPRESS: experience of financial pressure to meet basic living expenses

KNO: knowledge of Canadian or North American culture

**TABLE 10**  
**PERCEIVED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY UPON FIRST ARRIVAL AND CURRENTLY**  
 Full Sample (N=95)

**1. Ability to understand English**

*First Arrived*

7.4% No difficulty  
 24.2% Slight difficulty  
 50.5% Moderate difficulty  
 14.7% Great difficulty  
 3.2% Serious difficulty

*Presently*

34.0% No difficulty  
 59.6% Slight difficulty  
 5.3% Moderate difficulty  
 1.1% Great difficulty  
 0% Serious difficulty

**2. Ability to speak English**

*First Arrived*

8.4% No difficulty  
 24.2% Slight difficulty  
 44.2% Moderate difficulty  
 17.9% Great difficulty  
 5.3% Serious difficulty

*Presently*

26.6% No difficulty  
 62.8% Slight difficulty  
 7.4% Moderate difficulty  
 2.1% Great difficulty  
 1.1% Serious difficulty

**3. Ability to read English**

*First Arrived*

24.2% No difficulty  
 28.4% Slight difficulty  
 33.7% Moderate difficulty  
 11.6% Great difficulty  
 2.1% Serious difficulty

*Presently*

44.7% No difficulty  
 45.7% Slight difficulty  
 7.4% Moderate difficulty  
 2.1% Great difficulty  
 0% Serious difficulty

**4. Ability to write English**

*First Arrived*

11.6% No difficulty  
 24.2% Slight difficulty  
 37.9% Moderate difficulty  
 18.9% Great difficulty  
 7.4% Serious difficulty

*Presently*

22.3% No difficulty  
 54.3% Slight difficulty  
 19.1% Moderate difficulty  
 4.3% Great difficulty  
 0% Serious difficulty

**TABLE 11**  
**SUMMARY OF BIVARIATE CORRELATION OF DEPENDENT VARIABLES**  
**WITH INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

Full Sample (N=95)

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficients	
	Adjustment	Assimilation
INT	.048	-.095
FRI	.109	-.083
ENG	.604***	.080
LEN	.293**	.232*
DIS	.014	.202*
FIN	.411***	.342***
KNO	.159	.029
AGE	.114	-.111

\*P≤.05

\*\*P≤.01

\*\*\*P≤.001

\*\*\*\* The result of this hypothesis is in the opposite direction to what was predicted.

TABLE 12  
REGRESSION OF ADJUSTMENT ON INDEPENDENT VARIABLES  
Full Sample (N=95)

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficient( $\beta$ )	Unstandardized Coefficient ( $b$ )	Standard Error
INT	-.23*	-.30	.14
FRI	.32	.33	.11
ENG	.46***	.53	.11
LEN	.32**	.33	.11
DIS	-.04	-.03	.08
FIN	.25**	.28	.11
KNO	.10	.35	.33
AGE	.07	.03	.05

$R^2 = .56$

Adjusted  $R^2 = .50$

\* $P \leq .05$

\*\* $P \leq .01$

\*\*\* $P \leq .001$

TABLE 13  
REGRESSION OF ASSIMILATION ON INDEPENDENT VARIABLES  
Full Sample (N=95)

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficient( $\beta$ )	Unstandardized Coefficient ( <i>b</i> )	Standard Error
INT	-.10	-.16	.23
FRI	-.01	-.02	.22
ENG	-.04	-.05	.17
LEN	.23*	.29	.16
DIS	.08	.07	.13
FIN	.34**	.46	.16
KNO	.07	.31	.53
AGE	-.18	-.11	.07

$R^2 = .21$

Adjusted  $R^2 = .11$

\* $P \leq .05$

\*\* $P \leq .01$

**TABLE 14**  
**SUMMARY OF STATUS OF HYPOTHESES**

Independent Variables	Hypothesized relationship	Actual relationship		Status of Hypotheses
		Adjustment	Assimilation	
Interaction with Canadians	+	-	no	Rejected
Friendship with Canadians	+	no	no	Rejected
English Proficiency	+	+	no	Partially Supported
Length of Stay	+	+	+	Supported
Discrimination	-	no	no	Rejected
Financial Aid	+	+	+	Supported
Prior Knowledgey of Canadian Culture	+	no	no	Rejected
Age	-	no	no	Rejected

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**Appendix**

**Wei Tu  
403-1471 Fort St.  
Victoria B.C.  
V8S 1Z4**

May, 1991

Dear Chinese student:

I am a Chinese graduate student in the Sociology Department at the University of Victoria. Since I came to Canada in 1988, I have experienced various kinds of difficulties and problems while adjusting to the different ways of doing things here. I've also seen many of my fellow citizens undergo the same problems. In order to identify the precise concerns faced by Chinese students in social and academic life, I am doing research as a part of my MA program on the cultural adaptation of Chinese students. It is hoped that the results of this study will assist international agencies and professionals in institutions of higher education to better serve and assist Chinese students in adapting to life in Canada.

Please take about 15 minutes to answer the enclosed questionnaire and return it via campus mail. If you have any questions, please call me at 598-1650 any time at your convenience. If necessary, I will be glad to come over to your place to assist you.

Confidentiality of your answers is fully guaranteed. The results will not be identified individually; they will be reported collectively in terms of various groups of students. Nowhere on the questionnaire are you required to identify yourself.

Your participation and cooperation are very important and highly appreciated. Hopefully the results will help all of us. Thank you very much!

Sincerely yours,

Wei Tu

## ADAPTATION SURVEY

*To begin, I would like to ask you a few questions about your adjustment to life in Canada. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability by using the rating scales below to indicate the level of difficulty that you experienced when you first came to Canada compared to the present. A zero (0) represents no difficulty experienced, a one (1) represents slight difficulty experienced, a two (2) represents moderate difficulty, a three (3) represents great difficulty experienced, and a four (4) represents serious difficulty experienced.*

	No Difficulty (0)	Slight Difficulty (1)	Moderate Difficulty (2)	Great Difficulty (3)	Serious Difficulty (4)
	<i>First Arrived</i>		<i>Presently</i>		
[1]. Using public transportation	_____			_____	
[2]. Looking for a place to live	_____			_____	
[3]. Looking for employment	_____			_____	
[4]. Visiting the doctor	_____			_____	
[5]. Using the yellow pages	_____			_____	
[6]. Using the banking system	_____			_____	
[7]. Dealing with the Department of Immigration	_____			_____	
[8]. Using the library	_____			_____	
[9]. Talking to your professors	_____			_____	
[10]. Overall daily living	_____			_____	
[11]. Speaking English	_____			_____	
[12]. Understanding English	_____			_____	
[13]. Reading English	_____			_____	
[14]. Writing English	_____			_____	

Now, I would like to know **your opinion about various issues**. Please indicate the level that you agree or disagree with the following statements by marking an (X) in the appropriate box opposite each of the statements. A one (1) represents strong agreement with the issue, two (2) represents moderate agreement, three (3) is unsure, four (4) represents moderate disagreement, and five (5) represents strong disagreement.

	Strongly Agree 1	Moderately Agree 2	Unsure 3	Moderately Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
[15]. Parents should have absolute control over the behavior of their children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[16]. Adult children should not put their elderly parents in nursing homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[17]. It is better for married children to live with their parents than to live by themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[18]. Even if a couple cannot get along, they should remain married to each other for the benefit of their children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[19]. Couple should not live together unless they are married	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[20]. Parents should not avoid discussing sex-related topics with their children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[21]. It is reasonable for one to make purchases on <u>credit</u> (rather than paying cash)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[22]. Based on my experience, I would say there is little that I can do about important social and political issues facing Canada today (e.g. the environment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[23]. Most Canadians can best be described as warm and friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[24]. Racial discrimination against Chinese is common in Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[25]. In this question I am interested in knowing some of **your views regarding Canadian Society in general**. Please circle any words that you think best describe Canadian values, way of life and interpersonal relationships:

1. energetic 2. materialistic 3. sociable 4. lazy 5. sophisticated  
 6. insensitive 7. hardworking 8. prejudiced 9. free and open  
 10. trustworthy 11. hostile 12. helpful 13. indifferent 14. friendly  
 15. superficial 16. hypocritical 17. sincere 18. open-minded  
 19. hygienic 20. untrustworthy 21. egotistic 22. empathetic 23. altruistic  
 24. narrow-minded

Use the blank spaces to fill in any other words that I may have missed:

25. \_\_\_\_\_ 26. \_\_\_\_\_ 27. \_\_\_\_\_ 28. \_\_\_\_\_

*In the next few questions I am interested in your experiences here in Canada compared to your homeland. Please circle the choice that best describes your experience.*

[26]. Regarding food choices:

1. I eat only Chinese food
2. I eat mostly Chinese food and very little Western food
3. I eat both Chinese food and Western food
4. I eat mostly Western food
5. I eat only Western food

[27]. Regarding general lifestyle (use of time, clothing style, household chores, outdoor activities, childrearing practices, etc.):

1. I dislike the Canadian lifestyle
2. I like Chinese lifestyle better than Canadian
3. I like aspects of both the Canadian and Chinese lifestyle
4. I like the Canadian lifestyle better than Chinese lifestyle
5. I dislike Chinese lifestyle

[28]. Regarding whether to ultimately live in Canada:

1. Compared with China/Hong Kong nationals, I am lucky to be able to come to Canada
2. Canada will provide me with a better chance of success than China/Hong Kong
3. I am not sure which country will provide me with a better chance of success
4. China/Hong Kong will provide me with a better chance of success than Canada
5. It was a wrong decision to come to Canada

[29]. How many students from your homeland would return home if the political and economic situation become stable in China/Hong Kong?

1. None
2. Only a few
3. About half
4. Most
5. Nearly all

[30]. Have you ever experienced feelings of loneliness, isolation or homesickness?

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Occasionally
4. Frequently
5. Almost continuously

[31]. According to your own experience, what are the most significant problems affecting Chinese students' adjustment to Canadian society? (You may circle more than one item).

1. Language difficulties
2. Homesickness
3. Lack of guidance or counselling
4. Strange foods and cultural patterns
5. Lack of friendships
6. Lack of acceptance
7. Financial problems
8. Unfamiliar teaching practices
9. Unfamiliar education system
10. Racial discrimination
11. Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

*This part focuses more on your social interaction and experience with Canadians. Again answer the question by circling one statement that best fits your experience.*

[32]. How often do you participate in social activities with Canadians? For example, dinner gagements, parties, religious ceremonies, camping, community activities, etc.

1. Often (at least once a week)
2. Occasionally (1-2 times per month)
3. Seldom (once a month)
4. Never

[33]. Regarding your social contact with Canadians outside the university, which description best fits your experience?

1. I never visit the homes of Canadians
2. I seldom visit the homes of Canadians
3. I occasionally visit the homes of Canadians
4. I often visit the homes of Canadians

[34]. For the time that you have been in Canada, circle the choice that describes the most common type of residence that facilitates your interaction:

1. With Canadians
2. With Canadians and Chinese
3. With Chinese
4. With other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

[35]. With Whom do you associate most frequently during your time outside school or work (excluding your family members)?

1. Chinese
2. Chinese and Canadians
3. Canadians
4. Other\_\_\_\_\_

[36]. Aside from family members, which types of friends do you seek most often for help or advice when under stress or when experiencing difficulties?

1. Canadian friends
2. Canadian and Chinese friends
3. Chinese friends
4. Other\_\_\_\_\_

[37]. My best friend(s) is (are):

1. Canadians
2. Canadians and Chinese
3. Chinese
4. Other\_\_\_\_\_

[38]. In general, my relationship with Canadians is:

1. Very poor
2. Poor
3. Business-like
4. Good
5. Very good

Please mark an (X) in the appropriate box opposite each of the statements.

	Constantly	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
[39]. To what extent have <u>your Chinese friends</u> experienced racial discrimination in <u>academic settings</u> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[40]. To what extent have <u>your Chinese friends</u> experienced racial discrimination in <u>social settings</u> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[41]. To what extent have <u>you</u> experienced racial discrimination in <u>academic settings</u> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[42]. To what extent have <u>you</u> experienced racial discrimination in <u>social settings</u> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following section deals with *financial matters and background questions*. Please circle the choice that best fits your situation.

[43]. On average, what is the total amount of financial aid that you have received year since you have attended Canadian universities? Please include: fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, etc. (Note: If your tuition was waived, please add this to the total amount of your financial aid).

1. Less than \$1000.00
2. \$1001.00 to \$3000.00
3. \$3001.00 to \$6000.00
4. \$6001.00 to 10,000.00
5. More than \$10,001.00

[44]. How do you rate your financial support compared to other Chinese students on campus?

1. Very good
2. Better than average
3. Average
4. Below average
5. Very poor

[45]. Have you ever experienced economic pressure in terms of meeting basic living expenses?

1. Constantly
2. Often
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never

[46]. Before you came to Canada, had you ever travelled in any English-speaking country for at least one month?

1. No
2. Yes, once
3. Yes, twice
4. Yes, more than twice

[47]. Before you came to Canada, had you ever worked more than one year in an environment where you have some interaction with people from English-speaking countries?

1. No
2. Yes

[48]. How would you rate your knowledge of Canadian or North American culture when you first came to Canada?

1. Very well
2. Quite well
3. Some
4. Very little
5. Nothing

[49]. Approximately how long have you been living in Canada?

1. Less than 6 months
2. More than 6 months but less than 12 months
3. Between 1 and 2 years
4. More than 2 years but less than 4 years
5. Longer than 4 years

[50]. Approximately how long have you been living in North America?

1. Less than 6 months
2. More than 6 months but less than 12 months
3. Between 1 and 2 years
4. More than 2 years but less than 4 years
5. Longer than 4 years

[51]. What do you think are the main reason(s) that influence Chinese students in their decision to remain in Canada on a permanent basis? (You may choose more than one item).

1. For the benefit of their children
2. To avoid an unstable political or economic situation in their homeland
3. To retain greater economic mobility
4. To retain greater freedom and choice
5. All of the above
6. None of the above
7. Other\_\_\_\_\_

[52]. Are you from

1. Mainland China
2. Hong Kong
3. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

[53]. How old were you on your last birthday?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

[54]. Your gender is

1. Female
2. Male

[55]. Presently what is your marital status

1. Never married
2. Married
3. Other\_\_\_\_\_

(If your marital status is "never married" skip to question 59).

[56]. Does your spouse live in Canada?

1. Yes
2. No

[57]. How many children do you have?

1. None
2. One
3. Two
4. More than two

[58]. If you have children do they live in Canada?

1. Yes
2. No

[59]. What is (was) your area of study?

1. Social sciences
2. Physical sciences
3. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

[60]. What degree program are you presently registered in?

1. Undergraduate
2. Masters
3. Doctorate
4. Non degree (e.g. visiting scholar, exchange program, researcher, etc.)
5. Not registered

[61]. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

1. High school
2. Other post secondary (including 2 or 3-year university education)
3. Undergraduate degree (e.g. BA or BSc. etc.)
4. Masters
5. Doctorate
6. Post-Doctorate

*Thank you very much for your cooperation.*

## VITAE

Surname: Tu Given Name: Wei

Place of Birth: Nanjing, Jiangsu China

Date of Birth: April 3, 1956

Educational Institutions Attended with dates of entering and leaving:

Nanjing Normal University      Feb. 1978 to Feb. 1982

University of Chicago      July 1986 to Dec. 1987

University de Les Andes      Jan. 1987 to June 1987

University of Victoria      Sept.1988 to Sept.1992

Degrees Awarded with Dates and Names of Institutions:

B. A. 1982      Nanjing Normal University

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The Cultural Adaptation of Chinese Students to Canada:  
A study of Chinese Graduate Students in the University of Victoria

Author Wei Tu



September, 1992