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**Parental Involvement of Chinese International Students in Regards to Their
Children's School Selection and Communication with Teachers**

By

Wai Ying Ho

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2018

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**Parental Involvement of Chinese International Students in Regards to Their
Children's School Selection and Communication with Teachers**

by

Wai Ying Ho

APPROVED BY:

Y. Wang
Department of Economics

C. Greig
Faculty of Education

G. Zhou, Advisor
Faculty of Education

January 17, 2018

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ABSTRACT

This research explores two broad areas in relation to the experiences of international students located in Ontario. The first area explores how international students, who are also parents, selected schools for their children. The second area explores how they communicated with their child's teacher. Six participants were recruited to participate in this study. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. This small-scale study reveals that participants considered five key factors when selecting schools for their children, including peers' family background, school ranking, language of instruction, impression of the teachers and school staff, and parents' religious background. These factors are shaped by the Chinese culture, the participants' class identity, and their anxiety towards their children's future. In relation to the second area explored in this study, participants communicated with teachers in different ways with a preference of written form. More parent-teacher communication took place among participants who had younger children or children with behavioural issues. Participants viewed attending parent-teacher meeting as their responsibility. Their expectations of parent-teacher communication were to obtain information about their children's school performance and to share their parental concerns and care. The major challenges in parent-teacher communication included unfamiliarity of the schooling system and cultural differences. Suggestions were given to the universities so that they will fully address the needs of such a unique group of graduate students.

DEDICATION

To my grandma

To my husband and my son

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank the Almighty Father Jesus Christ. I would also like to thank my grandma, Lichan Pan (deceased), who dedicated her whole life to her family and raised me up. Her teaching is always lightening my way. There were many times I got discouraged, the thought of my grandma and her spirit of never giving up allowed me to continue. I also want to thank my parents, Chengshui He and Jingmei Du, and my son Chi Hei Kwan, for providing all their supports in their own special way to me. To my husband, Chun Ho Kwan, who was always there to support me in sadness and joy, without you, I would never reach to this high.

Next, I would like to express sincere thanks to my advisor, Dr. Guoqiang Zhou, for leading me into the research world, understanding my family struggles and giving me all the prompt feedbacks and demonstrating his genuine care. To my other committee member, Dr. Christopher Greig, who provided his time and effort in enlightening me and assisting me in the completion of my dissertation, thank you!

Last but not least, thanks to all the parents, your participation and support made this accomplishment possible.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research explores the parental experiences that a unique group of international students have in regards to their children's education in Canada. These Chinese international students, who are also parents, came to Canada to pursue a postgraduate degree. While they were studying, they brought their children with them and enrolled them in the local schools. Being new to Canada, these parents faced different cultural barriers when they get involved in their children's education. This research tries to investigate the experiences particularly related to school selection and communication with teachers. The factors that these student-parents considered and the involvement forms that they chose are explored. This data may be used to induce policy adjustment so that international student-parents and their children will receive better support.

Background and Context

According to the Canadian Bureau for International Education ([CBIE], 2016), there were 336,497 international students in Canada in 2014, and Ontario became the most popular destination among all provinces and territories with 143,428 international students. China has become the top source country of international students, and students from China made up 33% of Canada's international student population in 2014 ([CBIE], 2016). Statistics show that there was a rapid increase of Chinese international students between 2005 and 2014, and the number grew from 48,074 to 128,750 (Government of Canada, 2014, p. 34). In 2014/15, over 10% of postsecondary students in Canada were

from other countries and 30.4% of international students were Chinese (Statistics Canada, 2016).

The reasons why international students travel to Canada to study are complex. Some international students, for example, come for the sole purpose to study in Canadian institutions, while others become international students with the intention to possibly immigrate to Canada. In fact, the possibility of immigration is one of the key reasons that international students choose to study in Canada (Li, DiPetta & Woloshyn, 2012; Li & Tierney, 2013). Immigration is fueled by provincial government policies that provide incentives. For example, Ontario's family friendly policy benefits international students who have children. According to the Ontario Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2 [Government of Ontario, 2017, 49 (7)], "a board shall not charge a fee to a person whose parent under a temporary resident permit issued under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada)." In other words, international students studying full-time with a valid study permit at a publicly assisted Ontario University or College can send their school age children to Ontario schools for free (Ontario Immigration, 2016).

For international student-parents, the opportunity to bring their children to Canada and enroll them in schools is an appealing policy. A further inducement for international students is the eligibility to stay in Canada permanently upon graduation (IRCC, 2017). Statistics show that 51% of the international students plan to apply for permanent residency in Canada (CBIE, 2016). In other words, international students are encouraged by the Canadian government to stay in the country, and their accompanied families can also be included in the application of permanent residency.

The existing research only covered the immigrant parents' involvement experiences and a number of the studies focused on parents who were from China. The findings revealed that although Chinese immigrant parents have high expectations and interests in their children's education, they actually demonstrate limited actions in parental involvement (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Li, 2006; Wang, 2008; Zhong & Zhou, 2011). Some major reasons that influence less engagement include: linguistic barriers, unfamiliarity with the local schooling system and culture, and lack of time and energy due to long working hours (Dyson, 2001; Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Zhong & Zhou, 2011). There is a deficiency in the existing research as it seldom touched upon this special group that share a dual role as international student and parent. The study of international student-parents may reveal new and different experiences in regards to parental involvement in children's education.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of Chinese international student-parents when they selected schools for their children and interacted with the teachers. The challenges they encountered and their ways of coping with the challenges are also explored. This research provides an opportunity for the voices of this specific group of parents to be heard so that the host universities can adjust their policies to respond to these international students' needs. The results of this research will bring implications to universities, settlement organizations, and school boards in order to provide individual assistance to the international students and their families as a whole.

This research addresses the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of Chinese international student-parents in selecting a school for their children and when they engage in parent-teacher communication?
2. What challenges have these parents encountered in regards to school selection and parent-teacher communication?
3. How did the Chinese international student-parents cope with these challenges?

Importance of This Study

The above issues are worth exploring because these international student-parents are temporarily residing in Canada, and their children are enrolled in Canadian's schools. Since the statistics for this group are missing, settlement service providers and universities may have overlooked their unique needs. Although these parents and students are not permanent residents yet, they have already become a part of the Canadian society. Under such circumstances, it is essential to conduct this research because the findings can benefit universities, school boards and the international students and their children. Getting to know about these student-parents' perspectives, the universities can consider an adjustment of their services to meet these students' needs and to provide them with better supports. In the long run, these changes and services are worthy as it may help recruit more student-parents. To the school boards, the findings of this research can assist teachers in understanding this group of parents' perspectives and become aware of their concerns. This understanding may foster better parent-teacher mutual understanding. To settlement service providers, the results of this research may help them to provide services for this particular group of parents. For instance, to provide a channel for these student-parents to understand the local schools and Canadian

cultures, through which these parents can help their children adapt to the Canadian society.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section includes three theoretical frameworks. The first theory covers immigrant's attitude of acculturation. The second theory is a psychological model related to the reasons parents get involved in their children's education and the involvement forms that they choose. The third switches to a theory which was developed based on the educators' perspectives, this theory explores the partnerships between school, family and community.

Berry's Framework of Acculturation

This research will adopt a theoretical framework to explain the Chinese international student-parents' attitude of acculturation towards their children. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) defined acculturation as "to comprehend those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149). Berry (1984) extended the original definition of acculturation by raising two questions: "whether one's cultural identity and customs are of value to be retained and whether positive relationships with the larger society are of value to be sought" (p. 11). These two questions can be viewed as two important issues that individuals and groups must confront in plural societies. Based on the answers to these two questions, Berry proposed a model which elaborates immigrants' four attitudes in their process of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization (Fig. 1).

According to Berry et al. (1989), when both questions are answered with *yes*, immigrants take the attitude of integration, which allows them to retain their ethnic and cultural identity, and collaborating with other ethnic groups in order to become an essential part of the larger social system (p. 188). When the first question is answered with *no* and the second question is answered with *yes*, assimilation occurs, which refers to the abandoning of one's own ethnic identity and characteristics, and instead, absorbs the host society's culture and adapts to the larger social system (p. 187). When the first question is answered with *yes* and the second question is answered with *no*, separation occurs. This implies that the immigrants' disengagement in the larger society caused by a desire of maintaining their own ethnic culture and traditions (p. 188). Finally, when the two questions are both answered with *no*, marginalization occurs when the immigrants choose neither have contact with their own ethnic culture and traditions nor connect to the host society (p. 188).

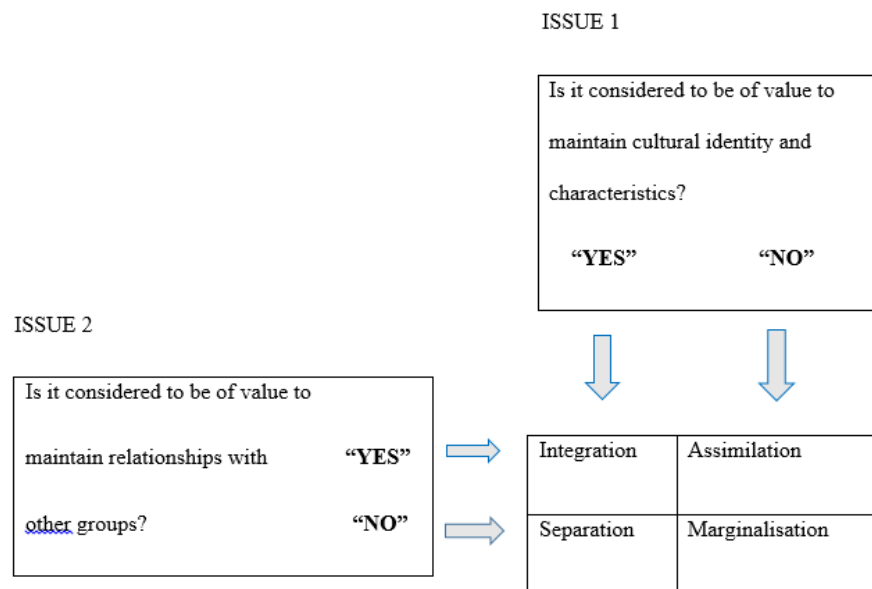


Figure 1- Model of Acculturation Attitudes (Berry, 1984)

In speaking of the applications of the four alternative attitudes, Berry (2005) indicated that this conceptual model can be put into use in two areas: domain of family life and the immigration and settlement policies. To apply this framework into immigrant parents and children acculturation, Aycan and Kanungo (1998) studied the Indo-Canadian immigrant families, and they found that parents' acculturation attitudes correlate to their adolescent children's behavioral and discipline problems. They also discovered that children's and parents' acculturation attitudes have a consistency due to role model effect. (p. 463). In addition, Nesteruk and Marks (2011) indicated that "the type of acculturation strategy that immigrant parents adopt will influence their childrearing decisions and parenting strategies in a host country" (p. 811). They found that the parents from Eastern Europe, appreciated the advantage of the United States culture in giving their children the opportunities to build self-esteem and confidence, but they questioned that such child-centered parenting style gives children too much power and declines parental power (p. 816 -817). Parents aware of the need to find a balance between their own and the host country's cultures. They tend to be selective and try to balance the differences in two particular issues: decision making versus discipline and motivation versus praise (p. 819). This is similar to Guo's (2011) finding where Chinese immigrant parents are selective and instilled the best values of both Canadian and Chinese in their offsprings (p. 117).

Some ethnic groups use a collective strategy in acculturation. According to Lalonde and Cameron (1993), a collective strategy refers to establishing contacts with the in-group community, and working within the ethnic community. They compared acculturation patterns of different immigrant groups in Canada, and they found that non-

white immigrants (such as blacks from the Caribbean and Chinese) felt themselves to be more disadvantaged than white immigrants (Greeks and Italians) in Canadian society (p. 69). This results in the non-white (socially disadvantaged) groups supporting collective acculturation orientation more than the white groups (socially advantaged). The other possible explanation of why some immigrant groups tend to be more collectively orientated than the others is the cultural differences. Concretely saying, those who came from a country of origin that values collectivism prefer collective acculturation orientation (Lalonde & Cameron, 1993, p. 70).

Walker's Psychological Model of Parental Involvement

This model explains why parents get involved in their children's education, what forms they choose to take, and how their involvement influences their children. These important questions were initially addressed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997). They then approached these questions from a psychological perspective and proposed a psychological model of parental involvement. In this model, they described factors that influence parents' decisions to be involved and the forms of involvement they choose, which include parents' role construction, parents' sense of efficacy for helping the child, general and specific invitations from school and the child, parents' skills and knowledge, and other demands on parents' time and energy. Walker et al. (2005) revised and modified this model by focusing on psychological and contextual factors. They defined parents' involvement forms as school-based behaviours and home-based behaviours. They also reorganised the aforementioned psychological factors into three sections that contribute to the parent involvement forms, namely parents' motivational

beliefs, parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others, and parents' perceived life context (Fig. 2).

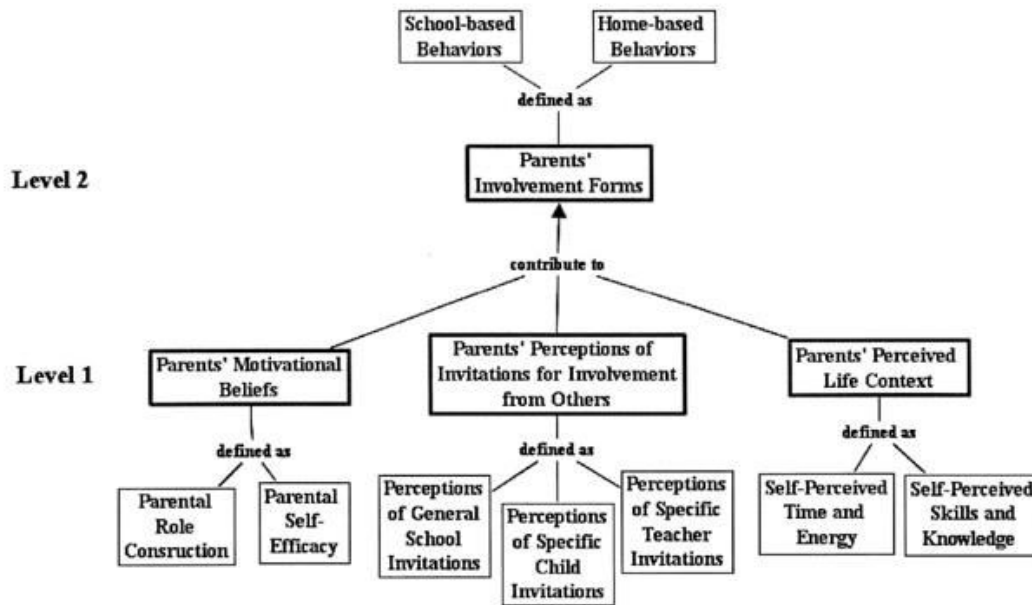


Fig. 2. A Theoretical Model of the Parental Involvement Process (Walker et al., 2005, p. 88).

Parents' Motivational Beliefs

Walker et al. (2005) combined the parental role construction and parental self-efficacy into an umbrella construction of parents' motivational beliefs. Parents' personal construction plays a role as a motivator in deciding what parents should do in relation to their children's education. These motivators come from parents' imagination and anticipation of what actions they can take to foster their children's educational success. If parents recognise and understand that they have the responsibility to be involved in school-related activities, they will be willing to participate. Self-efficacy refers to the parents' confidence in their capabilities of taking actions to foster their children's positive

school outcomes. It is a psychological explanation of how one's ability shapes his/her behaviours. In other words, understanding parents' beliefs that support and guide their actions helps understand parents' behaviours. Positive self-efficacy can actively influence a parent's involvement behaviour which will contribute to the child's learning.

Parents' Perceptions of Invitations for Involvement from Others

In Walker et al.'s (2005) revised model, parents' perceptions of invitations include general invitations from school, and specific invitations from the child and teacher. In speaking of specific invitations from school, an inviting school climate carries out a message to parents that they are "being needed and wanted in the educational process" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 30). Specific invitations from the child means that the children have existing needs and they are willing to accept parental help. Parents often offer involvement in response to their children's needs (Walker et al., 2005, p. 94). Specific invitations from teacher refers to teachers' encouraging attitude. When parents are invited to assist their children's education, they tend to engage more, for instance, in homework involvement or parent-teacher communication (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p. 319). These motivators influence parents' decisions to become involved in their children's education. The invitations are culturally important for Chinese immigrant parents, because they believe that it is rude to go to their children's school without teachers' invitations (Zhong & Zhou, 2011, p. 17).

Parents' Perceived Life Context

According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) hypothesis, the involvement forms that the parents choose are influenced by the total requirements of their time and

energy, and the special skills and knowledge that they have (P. 317). Walker et al. (2005) reorganised these two factors under the construct of parents' perceived life context. In fact, parents reported that lack of time and energy was the common obstacle influencing parental involvement. Such obstacles include inflexible working schedule and long working hours (Gettinger & Guetschow, 1998; Zhong & Zhou, 2011). Other possible obstacles that affect involvement are parents' skills and knowledge. According to Guo (2006), many teachers shared that "It was difficult to get English-as-a-second-language (ESL) parents involved in K-12 education" (p. 81). Guo's findings revealed five major reasons that obstruct ESL parents' communication with teachers: their low English language proficiency, lack of knowledge of the school system, teachers' misunderstanding and school districts' racism, different views of education between teachers and parents, and cultural differences in parent-teacher communication (p. 83). Immigrant parents who perceive themselves as having insufficient language skills may tend not to participate in their children's school activities (Zhong & Zhou, 2011, p. 17).

Epstein's Theory about School/Family/Community Partnerships

This is a traditional framework developed based on educators' perspectives with the core concept of caring. In this framework, Epstein (1995) suggested that students are the most important stakeholder in the educational system, and they are placed in the center of the whole picture. This is an ecological framework with six types of parental involvement aim to promote parents' involvement levels because the successful partnerships between school, family and community creates "better communications, interactions and exchanges with caring as a core concept" (p. 701). Epstein (2010) further indicated that the six types of involvement can produce both short-term and long-

term effects. Students' immediate success is seen in the improvement of test scores and long-term success is attributed to an ability to plan for their future. The six types of involvements include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. The involvement types and sample practices are summarized as below (Epstein, 2010, p. 85).

Parenting

The model defines parenting as helping families establish a supportive home environments for children to learn as students. This type of involvement is assisted by teachers. Sample practices include suggestions to parents to provide appropriate conditions at home, parent education courses or training, other family support programs for parents, home visit as assistance in transition point, and neighbourhood meetings that help families and schools to develop mutual understanding.

Communicating

Communicating means to design a clear and smooth two-way communication channel between home and school. This is an effective way of knowing children's learning progress and understanding school programs. Sample practices include regular parent-teacher meeting, student work folders and student report cards to send home, regular distribution of notices and newsletters, clear information on school selection, courses and programs choosing, and understanding school policies, programs and transitions.

Volunteering

It refers to recruit parents to help and support school voluntarily. Parents are recruited school wide and the recruiting process ensures every parent has an equal chance. Sample practices of volunteering include school and classroom volunteer program, annual survey to identify parents' availabilities and talents, different ways to provide needed information to all families, and parent patrols to ensure student safety.

Learning at Home

This type of involvement means parents to help children with homework, activities related to curriculum, and decisions and planning at home with information and ideas provided by teachers. Sample practices include information on skill requirements in all subjects, homework policies, school work, skills improvement, regular discussions with parents about children's learning, learning activities of all subjects, learning goals setting and summer learning activities.

Decision Making

Such type of parental involvement includes involving parents in schools' decision making processes, developing parents' leadership skills, and enabling parents to serve as representatives of families from different cultural, ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Sample practices include actively participate in parent organizations or committees, work for school reform in independent advocacy groups, involve in district level councils and committees, and build networks to link all families and parent representatives.

Collaborating with Community

Such collaboration means the identification and integration of community resources and services in order to enhance school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. Sample practices include the community programs and services related to health, cultural, recreational and social support which benefits students and their families, skill learning community activities, service integration by different partner organizations, services to the community provided by students, families and schools, and alumni participation in school programs.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature related to parents' involvement in their children's education. Current research reveals that parental involvement has an important impact on students' education. There are a number of influential factors that shape the experience of parents' involvement in a child's education, including immigrant parents' socioeconomic background, language, and ethnic diversity. To better understand the various influential factors, this chapter highlights four key themes: (1) The importance of parental involvement, (2) Bourdieu's framework of social practice (3) Chinese parents' involvement, and (4) barriers in parental involvement.

The Importance of Parental Involvement

The section covers research findings related to parental involvement and its impacts on immigrant students in terms of the school adaptation and educational outcomes. As pointed out by Aydemir, Chen, and Corak's (2013), the education of immigrant children often signals an important outcome related to the adaptation to the mainstream values and the capabilities to succeed in the labour market (p. 1). However, according to Suarez-Orozco, Onaga and De Lardemelle (2010), immigrant students are less prepared to participate in mainstream classrooms because they are English-language-learners (ELLs). Parental involvement can be a remedy to this problem, because according to Blair (2014), parental involvement "as the interaction and assistance which parents provide to their children and to their children's schools in order to somehow enhance or benefit their children's success in the classroom" (p. 352). Schools hold a positive perspective, Loucks (1992) reported that, many parent/family involvement programs in the South Illinois schools are a significant "happiness quotient" and the

“school-family partnership can make a difference in students’ attitude and overall school climates” (p. 21).

Some studies have been established that the relationship between parental involvement and students’ educational achievements, are positively associated, for both white and minority students (Allen, 2011; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Hong & Ho, 2005; Kim, 2002; Kim & Hill, 2015). Fan and Chen (2001) studied American students with different ethnicities and found that parental involvement positively influence children’s academic outcomes (p. 11). They further indicated that there is a stronger relationship between parents’ aspiration or expectation and students’ educational achievement than parents supervise their children’s homework and their educational attainment (p. 13). According to Kim (2002), Korean families have unique forms of parental involvement which positively contribute to their children’s education. Korean parents demonstrate an extremely high level of home-based involvement and their high expectations and strict home supervision often lead Korean children to educational success (p. 537). Hong and Ho (2005) also found that parental involvement has a significant and direct effect on Chinese students’ academic achievement. The cognitive-intellectual type of parental involvement appears to be an important influence which lead young Chinese American children to academic success (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009). Allen (2011) conducted a study to investigate parents’ perspectives and found that being an ethnic minority (such as Hispanic Native or Asian American) and a new immigrant is not an obstacle for parents getting involved in their children’s education. Instead, this identity motivated some parents to become actively involved in their children’s education (p. 83). Zhong and Zhou (2011) have similar findings for Chinese immigrants. Chinese

parents believe that parental school involvement is important, and leads them to keep up to date with their children's school performance, understand the teachers' requirements and encourages them to review their parenting strategies (p. 16).

Bourdieu's Framework of Social Practice

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu developed a theory of social practice that, in part, analysed how relations of power were produced and reproduced in schools. Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) framework include three key concepts: habitus, field and capital. Habitus is "understood as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions*" (p. 83). According to Huppertz (2015), family and school experiences were shaped by the Habitus, and there is a mutual connection between the family structures and the habitus, and school experiences. On one hand, the family structures and the habitus shape school experiences, but on the other hand, school experiences impact the habitus (p.167). Furthermore, Bourdieu's (1991) concept of "field" is constituted in the "multi-dimensional" form of the social world (p. 229), in areas such as "education, law, health, the arts, media and popular culture" (Ferfolja, Diaz, & Ullman, 2015, p. 12). According to Bourdieu, "those who construct the field have the greatest power within that field," because they understand the "rules of the game" ensure that they will take advantageous positions in the field (Ferfolja, Diaz, & Ullman, 2015, p. 12).

Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital consists of three unique forms: economic, cultural, and social. Economic capital can be directly changed into an objectified form, such as money or property. Cultural capital can occur in three states: the embodied state,

which may include “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body”; the objectified state, which includes the transmissible cultural goods such as “books, pictures, or instruments”; and the institutionalized form, which includes “educational qualifications” (p. 47). Nash (1990) suggested that social capital is an integration of resources “within a network of social connections” that can be organized for special purposes (p. 432). According to Bourdieu (1986), all three kinds of capital can be converted from one kind to another, and the convertibility of the three forms serve as “the basis of the strategies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of capital” (p. 54).

Ho (2007) explains how educational inequality is produced among parents who are from two different socioeconomic groups, and how parents from the socially advantaged group exchange their cultural resources to power and privilege in an example: upper-middle-class parents, who are more likely to be familiar with the language and customary codes of polite behaviour that are used in their child’s school, have a comparatively favorable position in regards to helping their children obtain achievement in school, compared to parents from a lower socioeconomic status (p. 104). This example also helps educators and parents understand “that the scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 48). In addition, Bourdieu’s framework provides an opportunity for educators to understand “the family orientations to parenting and schooling that are implicated in reoccurring education divisions” (Huppertz, 2015, p.167). The reproduction of privilege in education is exemplified by instances where parents convert their economic capital to cultural capital by ‘purchasing schooling,’ which may include sending children to private schools.

Chinese Parents' Involvement

This section covers studies in respect to the involvement types that Chinese immigrant parents adopted. Chinese parents do recognize that parent-teacher communication is beneficial, and they were aware of their responsibility to maintain such regular communication (Jiang, Zhou, Zhang, Beckford, & Zhong, 2012, p. 77). These parents mostly preferred face-to-face communication, followed by writing (p. 74). Such communication includes issues related to study, behaviour, and social relationships (p.76). According to Zhong and Zhou (2011), Chinese immigrant parents believe that school-based involvement is beneficial to their children's education, but they were only involved in school activities with teachers' invitations. Such activities included parent-teacher meetings, events for fundraising, school concerts, sport competitions, and school fieldtrips (p. 18). Ji and Koblinsky (2009) studied low income Chinese families and found that the parents perceived themselves with a limited ability to support their children's learning, resulting in low parent-teacher meeting attendance, though they expected their children to achieve academic success (p. 701). Huntsinger and Jose (2009) discovered that influential factors for children's academic success is a cognitive and intellectual type of parental involvement, although Chinese parents provide more home-based teaching than involvement in school activities (p. 407). Guo (2011) explained this similar phenomenon from another perspective. He found that Chinese parents are "important constructors" of their children's education. Although without providing traditional ways of parental involvement expected by schools which are constructed from white middle-class privilege, the Chinese immigrants engage in their children's education at home "in the form of passing on cultural and linguistic value" (p. 117).

Barriers in Parental Involvement

For non-English speaking immigrant parents, there may be existing obstacles when they get involved in their children's schools. According to Turney and Kao (2009), these parents face several challenges: the inconvenience of meeting times, not feeling welcomed by their child's school, and linguistic difficulties as meetings were only in English (p. 264). Compared to the native-born parents, the minority parents experienced greater difficulties in school involvement (p. 267). Immigrant parents' socioeconomic status, language barriers, long working hours, and lack of child care or issues around the lack of transportation created obstacles for parents wishing to engage in their child's education (Suarez-Orozco & Sarez-Orozco, 2001). The Latino parents faced similar problems, as suggested by Alexander, Cox, Behnke and Larzelere (2017) as limited resources caused barriers in their parental involvement (p. 171). For the low-income African-American and Caucasian families, Manz, Fantuzzo, and Power (2004) discovered that the number of children living in a home also influences parents' involvement. The study found that five or more children resulted in less home-based involvement and home-school communication (p. 472). Plata-Potter and De Guzman (2012) explored the challenges of Mexican immigrant parents as they navigated their children's education. These researchers found that the major challenges Mexican families encountered were unfamiliarity with local school rules, teachers' expectations, and language barriers. According to Zhong and Zhou (2011), Chinese immigrants faced barriers which included: parents not going to their children's school without invitation from teachers, low language proficiency, long working hours resulting in a lack of energy, and their unfamiliarity of the host country's school culture (p. 18). Ji and

Koblinsk (2009) also found that Chinese parents neither participated in the school's decision making nor in community and school collaborations (p. 700). Guo (2011) reported additional barriers, which include teachers' attitude toward parents and their efforts to involve them in school activities, teachers and parents' different views about education, and cultural difference. Nonetheless, what does become clear through the research is that the major barriers centered around limited English skills and demanding work schedules.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used in this study. The following sections include: research design, participant recruitment, demographic data, data collection, instrumentation, data analysis, and the limitations of this study.

Research Design

The purpose of this research was to investigate how a small group of Chinese student- parents selected schools for their children. This research also explored parent-teacher communication experiences that Chinese international students had when they got involved in their children's education, the challenges that they have encountered and the ways that they coped with these challenges. A qualitative research design with a focus on a multiple case study was utilized in this research. The aim of the case study is to explain a phenomenon through gathered information. (Bouma, Ling, & Wilkinson, 2012, p. 118). The multiple case study design enables researchers to see "processes and outcomes" among all of the cases and allowed researchers to "gain a deeper understanding through powerful descriptions and explanations" (Creswell, 2015, p. 44). In appliance to this research, each participant was interviewed individually and each case was analyzed separately and then a cross-case analysis was conducted to help researchers gain a deeper understanding about common issues and differences across all cases. In other words, the multiple case study enables researchers to effectively explore further explanations based on several cases.

Participant Recruitment

The research was conducted in Southwestern, Ontario. The target participants

were those Chinese international student-parents who had one or more child enrolled in elementary and secondary schools while they studied at a University in Southwestern Ontario.

Snowball sampling technique was used to recruit participants for this research. According to Creswell (2015), the researcher asks individuals to identify potential participants and recommend them to be sampled. The researcher may deliver this request in a formal or informal situation (p. 208). In appliance with the snowball sampling technique in this research, the researcher first approached a potential participant who she met in 2015 in the English Language Improvement Program (ELIP). The recruitment letter (Appendix B) was provided to this potential participant, and the researcher requested her participation. Once the first participant said yes, the researcher requested her to identify further potential participant(s) in her social network, and asked her for a referral by sending out the recruitment letter. Then, the chain referral process was continued from one to another potential participant. The interested individuals replied by email or by phone, and they were contacted by the researcher. The researcher established their willingness to participate in this research through the direct contacts and in total, six participants were recruited for this research.

Demographic Data

Participants were asked to provide personal background information regarding their education level, former occupation, and their length of time in Southwestern, Ontario. This information was important as it provided the background data of the participants which would be utilized in analysis. Six Chinese international female

students participated in one-to-one interviews. They all had children enrolled in elementary or high schools located in a city in Southwestern, Ontario. Four mothers obtained a bachelor degree in China, and they were either working on or had finished their master's degree while they were participating in this research. Two mothers had possessed a master's degree before they came to Canada, and they had completed a second master's degree at a University in Southwestern Ontario. One participant used to work for the Chinese government, one owns a private business, and the rest all had stable professional careers in China but they resigned from their jobs before moving to Canada. The participants' career background related to Computer Science, Accounting, Education, and Medical Laboratory Technology. Among the six mothers, one came to Southwestern, Ontario in 2012, four of them came to the city in 2015, and the last one came in 2016. The longest time of living in this city was 4.5 years, and the shortest time was nearly 1 year. Four of the participants reported being here for approximately 2 years. Participants' demographics are illustrated in Table 1.

All six participants were mothers. They came to study in Southwestern, Ontario, and their children also came here to study in the local public schools. Most of the fathers remained in China in order to provide financial support for the family. No father participated in the research, since they were not physically present. There was one father who came to Canada because of her wife's insistence, but he does not fall in the participant pool as he was not a university or college student. Although these fathers did not participate in this research, according to the mothers, some fathers were involved in the school selection and the parent-teacher communication when they came to visit their

wives and children. During their stay, they did voluntary work in their child's school, attended parent-teacher meetings and interacted with teachers.

Table 1: Mothers' Educational and Professional Background

Participant ID	Gender of the Parent	The Length of Time in Southwestern, Ontario	Educational Background in China	Former Occupation in China	Degree and Major in the University in Southwestern, Ontario
A	Female	Nearly 1 year	Bachelor's Degree	A Kindergarten Owner	Master of Education
B	Female	4.5 years	Master's Degree	Medical Laboratory Professional	Master of Medical Biotechnology
C	Female	1 year and 8 months	Bachelor's Degree	Senior Software Engineer	Master of Applied Computing
D	Female	2 years	Bachelor's Degree	Secondary School Teacher	Master of Education
E	Female	1 year and 8 months	Bachelor's Degree	Accountant	Master of Management
F	Female	1 year and 9 months	Master's Degree	Government Employee	Master of Education

Data Collection

One-to-one interviews were the primary method of collecting data. Creswell (2015) describes that “One-to-one interview is a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time” (p. 217). Bouma, Ling, and Wilkinson (2012) state that, in-depth interviews provide the best chance to explore a participant’s thoughts and feelings, and their points of view. It can also be a channel in helping the researcher to identify the important issues of the interviewee (p. 237). During the interviews, the researcher took an active role, but avoided pushing and being judgemental. The researcher encouraged the participants to describe their thoughts and feelings and share their personal experiences. In order to protect participants’ privacy, one-to-one interviews were conducted between the researcher and one interviewee at a time. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Each interview lasted one and a half hours on average and the location was chosen with considerations towards quietness, coziness, accessibility and privacy protection, such as the participant’s or the researcher’s home. The interview time and location was set according to mutual convenience.

The interview time ranged from 32 to 147 minutes. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher gave informed notices to the participants, and had each of them sign the consent form. The researcher also explained to all participants the voluntary nature of the research, and the participants were made aware of their rights to skip or refuse to answer any questions. Then, detailed narratives of every interviewee were audio-recorded. To ensure authenticity, the researcher not only audio-recorded all interviews, but also took field notes about interviewees’ body language and their

inflections as additional data. The interview language was in Mandarin as it was all the participants' native language. The use of a familiar language helped the researcher and the participants build a trusting relationship. This positive relationship most likely led to productive contributions. Once each interview was completed, the researcher did verbatim transcribing of the recordings and field notes. When there was a need for further clarification over an unclear issue, the researcher contacted the interviewee for follow-up.

Instrumentation

The instrument was an interview guide (see Appendix A) which consists of a small list of questions that must be investigated. The questions were designed to explore two major areas: school selection and parent-teacher communication. According to Bouma, Ling, and Wilkinson (2012), semi-structured interview is "a type of qualitative research design that consists of a semi-directed conversation between the interviewer and participants' (p. 298). This interview guide helped the interviewees stay focused on the covered topics. The first part of the interview guide for this study contained several background questions, aimed at collecting basic information from participants, such as how long they have been in Canada, the grade level of their children, the participants' former occupation and their own educational level. Icebreaker questions were asked at the beginning of each interview in order to build rapport with interviewees. The second part of the guide consisted of mainly open-ended questions, which were carefully developed to explore interviewees' thoughts and to avoid causing any discomfort and offence.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings, and analyzed text data based on audiotaped and transcribed verbatim passages. According to Bouma, Ling, and Wilkinson (2012), researchers should organize and summarize the “vast amount of information” before analysis (p. 245). They should interpret information provided by each participant of the research during or immediately after data collection. (Creswell, 2015, p. 10). The data was transcribed in Chinese and then the researcher did the preliminary data analysis.

Notes were jotted while reading through the data the first time and multiple ideas, codes and themes were recorded in the margins. For example, the idea of “integration” when the participants repeatedly raised a concern whether their children were accepted by teachers and peers was recorded. The translation was done by the researcher, and if there were any problems in translation, the researcher’s supervisor was consulted. Using a native language to transcribe the information helped the researcher to gain an accurate and cultural understanding of the whole picture. Creswell (2015) indicates that the researcher needs to make sense of all collected information, and then form answers to the research questions when analyzing qualitative data (p. 10). This is the required process in analyzing qualitative data as the researcher repeatedly reads all transcripts and field notes. Tables were drawn, notes taken, and thoughts summarized while reading. The research questions were centered during the process of reading, thinking, and summarizing, and answers to the research questions were generated through these ways.

Limitations of this Study

This small scale research has two limitations. Firstly, the researcher has a background similar to the participants in that she is from China, is a student in Canada as well as a parent to a young student in Canada, has a similar educational and social background, and holds similar cultural values. This has the potential to affect the objectiveness in data analysis and discussion. However, the researcher is consciously aware of this potential issue and had made concerted effort to maintain an objective perspective and limit any personal biases. Secondly, the raw data collected for analysis depends on the participants' individual sharing. Thus, the accuracy of the data may be affected by participants' incomplete or inaccurate memories. It is also important to mention that all of the participants were women. This is not necessarily a limitation of the study, but future research is needed to explore the experiences of fathers and students as well. To enhance the understanding of this issue, the study could be expanded to a longitudinal study in the future to follow-up with the participants to investigate whether there are any changes in their attitude towards acculturation.

CHAPTER 5: STUDY RESULTS

Background information asked at the beginning of the interview served two purposes. The first was to build initial rapport with the participants, and the second was to help the researcher develop an initial impression of the participants and their children. The gathered information included reasons that prompted the participants to move to Canada, why they chose Southwestern, Ontario, their children's grade level and the type of school that they chose for their children.

Reasons for Coming to Southwestern, Ontario, Canada

All the participants came to Canada to pursue a graduate degree. When participants were asked why they chose this city in Southwestern, Ontario, a common response was that it had overall good weather conditions. Coming from China, a relatively warm country, participants preferred to find a warm place to reside in and this reason was especially important for those with young children. Besides the weather conditions, participants shared some additional considerations for choosing Canada as their study destination. These reasons included easier immigration access, a sense that Canada could offer better education opportunities for their children, the overall positive impression of society in Canada and a desire to avoid China's air pollution.

First, five participants either directly responded or implied that immigration was one of the reasons that they chose to come to Canada with the incentive of Ontario's international student friendly immigration policies. According to Ontario Immigration (2018), the "international masters graduates are eligible to apply for permanent residency through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) - International Masters

Graduate Stream”. Studying at a University in Southwestern Ontario affirmed the international student-parents’ decision to reside in this warm city. According to their responses, all participants were eligible to apply for permanent residency through the OINP upon finishing their master’s programs. Participant C had indicated her purpose clearly: “my primary reason of studying here is to immigrate to Canada.” D shared similar thoughts with C, and hoped to stay in this country permanently. She did not choose another country because of the higher acceptance level of immigrants in Canada. She indicated that Canada makes it relatively easy for international graduates to stay: “The immigration policies are better here; I can apply for provincial nomination when I complete my master’s program.” The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program: International Students – Masters Graduate Stream (Ontario Immigration, 2018) is a popular pathway for international students and their families to immigrate to Canada and to reside in Ontario. Participant D shared that she felt this policy is attractive to educated, mature students and encourages them to stay and contribute to society.

Secondly, four participants reported that they came to Canada for their children. These four participants had confidence that their children would have a chance at a better education in Canada than in China. Participants enrolled their children in local elementary and high schools while they were studying at the University in Southwestern Ontario. In this case, participants did not need to separate from their children and they could receive free education in a better environment. As an experienced educator, D has a deep understanding about the enormous pressures that both Chinese teachers, students and parents have to face. She indicated a current phenomenon existing in China: “Teachers’ weariness in teaching, and students’ tiredness of studying.” D’s teenage

daughter was a victim of the high pressures from her school, and she had suffered from this problematic education for many years. As a mother and a high school teacher, this was beyond D's control and she felt helpless. She elaborated that: "I felt very painful and I knew there were no alternatives in China, I really did not want my child to suffer any more, and this is the major reason that I came to Canada."

F had a similar feeling in regards to her son's education although he was just four years old when they were in China. F witnessed a little boy from her extended family that was forced to do homework every holiday. F feared that her son would have to face the same pressure at his young age. F explained:

We felt pressures in school selection as we had to buy a flat in a top school zone in order to land a seat at a coveted public school. Alternatively, my son had to pass an admissions test in order to be placed in a private school and the tuition fees in those types of schools are high. Both choices created burdens for us.

Participant F realised that this educational pressure was unavoidable in China, and this realisation triggered her anxiety. Hence, she brought her son to Canada in response to her fears.

The third factor that attracted the participants to Canada was the nature of society. Most of the participants intended to stay in this country upon completing their master's program due to the socially relaxed atmosphere and immigrant friendly policies. Some of the participants mentioned that they had compared Canada with other countries, but they eventually chose Canada because it is a well-developed and friendly country. Participant D reported, "Safety is my concern. I chose Canada because the people are nice and

peaceful. Unlike the other countries, Canadians are less aggressive and less racist.” To Participant F, the nature of society in Canada, especially the cultural diversity attracted her to make the move. She indicated that Canada is a nation of immigrants, and Canadians are open and friendly to immigrants. She brought her son to this country as she believed that he would not likely face the same kind of discriminatory practices he would in other regions of the world. She shared her thoughts on how race and racial discrimination played an important role in deciding to come to Canada, “I do not want to encounter any racial disputes, ethnic conflicts, or to face discrimination.”

The fourth reason for coming to Canada was to avoid the air pollution in China. Three participants were from a heavily polluted city in China. They worried that the smog may influence their children’s health. To these participants, moving to Canada would end the environmental harm to their whole family. Participant E elaborated on how the air pollution found in that city motivated her to move her family to Canada: “I came here for a better living environment for my family. The weather in the city that I lived in is really bad during autumn and winter every year, and I desperately desired emigration from China to other countries.”

Children’s School Type, Grade Level, and Time of Being in Local School(s)

Table 2 outlines what types of schools the children attended, the grade levels, and duration of time they had spent in the city located in Southwestern, Ontario. Six participants brought seven children to the city, and the children were placed in public or Catholic schools. Participant C had two children (males) and each of the rest of the participants had only one child (five males and two females in total). The children’s

grade level ranged from Grade 1 to Grade 10. There was one student in a public English high school (Grade 10) and one child was in a Catholic English elementary school (Grade 7). The remaining five children were all in a French Immersion public school. Four of them were in Grade 1, and one was in Grade 2. All but participant E's came to Canada after their mothers. The length of time in the local schools ranged from 8 months to 4 years.

Table 2: Children's School Type, Grade Level and Time of Being in Local School(s)

Participant ID	Number of Children	The Length of Time in Local School(s)	School Type	Grade Level
A	1 Daughter	8 months	Public French Immersion Elementary School	Grade 1
B	1 Son	4 years	Public French Immersion Elementary School	Grade 2
C	2 Sons	1.5 years	Catholic Elementary School (Full English)	Grade 7
		1.5 years	Public French Immersion Elementary School	Grade 1
D	1 Daughter	1 year and 8 months	Public High School (Full English)	Grade 10
E	1 Son	1 year and 4 months	Public French Immersion Elementary School	Grade 1
F	1 Son	8 months	Public French Immersion Elementary School	Grade 1

School Selection Experiences

As mentioned above, one of the common reasons for participants moving to Canada was for their children to receive better education than in China. The participants revealed in their responses, that they felt high ranking schools signified academic excellence. In addition, they also expressed thoughts related to peers' background, school's language of instruction, impression of the teachers and school staff, and parents' religious background. School selection was an important task for these parents and every school decision was made based on their multiple considerations. The initial step for them was to collect necessary information and identify potential schools.

They started by collecting detailed information about the city and schools. Participants engaged in a thorough school selection process, and gathering information about prospective schools was a critical first step. Some of the parents reported that they started researching schools before they left China. Internet access was the most common way that they gathered information and they researched information including weather, transportation, city maps, schools' availabilities, school boundaries, and housing prices. Participants mainly visited Chinese websites because many Western websites are blocked in China, and those who were more proficient in English visited websites that were not blocked in China. Consulting educational agents was another way the parents collected specific school information as the agents understood the middle class Chinese parents' common needs and expectations. For example, participant D consulted some educational agents in China, "I was given a list of high schools and their rankings, from which I discovered a top-ranked school that I planned to apply to."

After settling down in Canada, the participants consulted more people and created a shortlist of potential schools for their children. People who they consulted included local Canadians, Chinese immigrant parents, and settlement workers. For example, participant F consulted experienced Chinese immigrant parents, local Canadians that she met in church and university, and a settlement worker too. She shared her experiences: “The Chinese settlement worker shared a similar story with me in response to my concerns. The Chinese immigrant parents gave me direct suggestions according to the school’s rank. Whilst the local Canadians suggestions were euphemistic and positive.” To participant D, she was new to the city and “lacked opportunities to get to know local Canadians”. She only consulted Chinese immigrant parents as “they have similar values and beliefs as me”. After collecting and analyzing information, participants filtered what they felt was useful information and then identified a suitable school. During this process, participants tried to balance different perspectives. Participant C provided another example in school selection. She accessed English websites in China and searched for information related to free education eligibility, education system, admission requirements, and school rankings. She made comparisons and chose two potential elementary schools. She bought a house after she settled down and her children came to join her, although their house address did not place her children in C’s preferred school districts. When participant C later realized this, she began the process of transferring her sons to preferred schools. C consulted her neighbours, (one was a local Canadian and the other one was a Chinese immigrant) and after carefully balancing and comparing both opinions she selected a Catholic school (with acceptable rank) for her older son and a French Immersion School (with the highest rank) for her

younger son. To participant D, she used the information that was given by a Chinese agent as a reference, and accessed an Ontario Chinese website to do further research. Finally, she selected a high school with the highest rank. She acted quickly to rent a house within the school's district before she came to Canada because she wanted to ensure her daughter's admission in this school.

The multiple resources that these participants used in school selection demonstrated that they were intelligent and capable parents with flexible mindsets. They knew how to make practical choices for their children according to the situation that they were in. Participants had a clear goal in mind and were determined to find schools that would fulfill their expectations. They made school selection a systematic and a strategical process.

Factors for School Selection

When participants were asked about what factors they considered to choose a school for their children, participants mentioned a number of factors that influenced their decision making. These factors can be summarised as follows: peers' family background, school ranking, the language of instruction, impression of the teachers and school staff, and parents' religious background. No single participant was influenced by all the factors and the level of influence depended on their children's grade levels and the parents' level of expectation.

Peers' Family Background

This was the most frequently mentioned influential factor arising from five out of the six participants' responses. They believed that parent's attitudes toward education

influences their children's academic performance and school behaviours. From this point of view, participants emphasised the importance of parents' backgrounds because it refers to social classification. Participants believed that children with good backgrounds are innately different from others, hence, they viewed parents' educational and professional background as an important indicator of a child's academic success. Take participant C's representative answer as an example:

School district is very important, because there is a correlation between parents' intelligence levels and students' intelligence levels, and children inherit their parents' ability. By being with intelligent peers, my children may be influenced and they will become polite, self-disciplined, and will never interfere with others.

Participant B shared her son's school experiences to explain why she believed that students' family background is important. Her son went to a school located downtown where she later found that the environment was chaotic and students were new immigrants with low socioeconomic backgrounds. Participant B, while understanding towards the new immigrant families' situation, as she was one of them, felt that the immigrant students were not well disciplined as they were not familiar with the new school's environment. B was not aware of this influence until her son complained that he was bullied by his peers. Another incident that shocked B was that some students carried head lice. B has a medical background and she could not imagine that this could happen in a developed country such as Canada. She believed that the health and hygiene issues and other students' disturbing behaviours could influence her son's development. B shared her concerns with her husband as she worried about her son's peers' negative influences: "If my son is around peers who are from a chaotic environment, when will he

become a disciplined child?” To avoid such influences, she and her husband visited many schools in this city and they finally made a decision to transfer their son to a school located in a suburban area. In order to fulfill the admission conditions, B paid higher rental for a “nice and quiet” house within the school district.

Due to similar concerns about students’ social class background, Participant E spent four months choosing a suitable school for her son. Although E’s husband did not mind to place their son in a school near the University, E was reluctant towards that school. She collected as much information as she could, and made a careful decision to move to a high socioeconomic district. She preferred that district because there were other Chinese immigrants reside there, and the residents in this district seemed like they were “motivated to work”. E explained why she had such a concern:

We rented a place near the university, and I immediately became aware that it was not an ideal environment for my son. Adults in this area were not motivated and they didn’t look like they were in the working mode. I believe that peers’ family backgrounds are very important. I would be very worried if parents did not attach great importance to their children’s education. I don’t want to put my son in an elementary school within a district where parents do not share the same values as me.

For other participants, they made every effort to settle down in a suburb where good schools are located. Participant D acted particularly early and rented a place before leaving China where her daughter could attend a targeted high school. When she arrived in the city where her university was located in, she promptly bought a house within that

district. She was satisfied with the living area as she was surrounded by “high class neighbours”. F took further action, she paid a higher price to buy a house where her son could have two good school options. She explained why she moved to this suburb:

I used to live near downtown. There was a school there but I heard that students were aggressive, and I was afraid that parents might not care education much. I was afraid that my son would have had negative influence in that area because there were baggers and drug addicts.

Similarly, five participants bought houses and B rented a house in the same district, because the investment can lead to not only safe environment, but also gentle and disciplined schoolmates and educated and professional neighbours.

School Ranking

School ranking was the second most frequently mentioned factor that influenced participants’ school selection. This means that when participants selected a school for their children, they considered the rank of the school as one of the top priorities. There was a common response from the participants that a school with a high rank suggests its teaching quality is good. They believed that if their children were in these schools, they most likely could learn more and perform well academically. F originally preferred a bigger city because she thought the bigger the city the more educational resources will be allocated. But she failed to get an offer there so she came to this city. She explained how she chose a school, and why she selected a French Immersion School for her son:

I asked the local people which schools they believed were the best. The best schools refer to those schools with top of ranking. Simply, we just looked at the

school ranking list and picked the one at the very top... I chose this school because that, its ranking is much higher than the others. I think this school is superior in its teaching.”

Participant F preferred an English school but the outstanding rank of that French Immersion School changed her mind. Participant C’s and D’s answers also revealed that a school’s rank really mattered in their decision-making process. C indicated, “We Chinese love to see school ranking.” Because of this, she transferred her sons to the better ranking school although she was satisfied with her sons’ previous schools. Participant D was an educator in China and is a mother of a girl who was entering the 9th grade at that time. According to D, ranking was also important for her daughter as a high school student, so D put the quality of education as her top consideration when she was making a decision. She explained that ranking helped her assess a school’s quality of teaching. Once she found a potential school from the Internet, she identified where the school was in the Ontario High School Ranking. This helped her make the final decision.

Language of Instruction

Three of the participants that enrolled their children in a French Immersion School considered instructional language as an influential factor. According to these participants, enrolling their children in a bilingual school meant that their children would learn both French and English. Their major concern was if they should let their children study French, as the participants did not understand this language and would not be able to assist their children. As a result, they were struggling between two thoughts. On one hand, they believed that knowing French, in addition to English, would help their

children in their future career. On the other hand, they were afraid that extra work might lead to a failure in both of the two languages. Participant F had several discussions with her husband about their child in French immersion. From the discussion they both came to the conclusion that mastering French could enhance their son's future career opportunities. But it was hard for F to make a decision as her son demonstrated some difficulties in learning English when he was in China. F recalled a conversation that she had with her then 6-year-old son, which illustrated that she was trying to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of studying a new language:

I have to tell you that learning two languages is very difficult, but if you succeed in mastering them, it will be easier for you to find a good job, and earn higher income in the future. You may also have connections with people from the higher socioeconomic class.

Participant F's comments, in some ways, revealed her thinking on the purposes of school. Although not exclusively, most likely given the evidence, schooling becomes primarily about securing a good job in the labour market, along with the acquisition and accumulation of social capital.

B enrolled her son in a French Immersion School only because she lacked better options under her situation as a full-time student and a mother of a young child. She wanted to choose a school that could meet her family needs. B did not prefer the French Immersion School as her son struggled to learn English in his first elementary school. B had no intention to burden her son, "I brought him here for easier education, not to study harder ... He struggled learning English, I don't want him to learn a new language:

French.” She had considered several English schools but the French Immersion School was relatively the best option for her to balance her study and her family duty, although her son was reluctant to learn French. B shared that this was a lucky choice for her son as “his Grade one teacher was very helpful. She helped my son catch up with his peers in French in just one year.”

Participant A and C did not relate French to their children’s future career choice. A selected the French Immersion School based on the convenience of the school bus and her confidence in her daughter’s language ability. A believed that learning French would be an easy task for her daughter. Participant C transferred her son to the same French Immersion School due to its high ranking as an elementary school in the city. She also had confidence in her younger son’s ability to learn French. She held a positive and flexible mindset towards his education. She indicated that, “If my son cannot manage French, I will transfer him to an English-speaking school. Just like his older brother who came here in Grade 6, and his English is caught up to his peers now.”

Impression of the Teachers and School Staff

Three out of six participants shared that the teachers and principals’ attitudes were the most important factor in school selection. They were eager to gain information regarding how teachers and principals treated newcomer students, and how they taught these students. However, participants indicated that, as full-time students, they lacked time and energy to learn about the teachers’ attitude and their teaching, and as newcomers, they also lacked the pathways to obtain this information before school

enrollment. They acquired this information after enrolling their children in schools.

Here is C explaining:

We all know that teachers are the strongest factor that influence students.

Students directly learn from teachers. Although I did not have the time and energy to learn about them before registering my children in a school, I will try to get information from other parents in this school.

Participant C's answers revealed that her actual concern was the quality of education in her sons' schools. Participant E was also concerned with the teacher's experience. She was not satisfied with her son's first school because she wanted to know "who the new teacher was and how much teaching experience she or he has." E expected to receive "an introduction or even a picture of that new teacher" from her son's previous school, but the school failed to provide this information. E admitted that she had "limited ability to obtain it." Thus, E considered switching schools. Before transferring her son, E decided to visit the school that was recommended by her friends as she worried that there might be hidden issues in that school. In this school tour, E sensed a "positive atmosphere": "The teachers dressed appropriately, and they were gentle with smiles on their faces. I also met the principal and she showed me around the school. It was pretty good."

In addition to teachers, other school staff's general attitude and appearance influenced their school choice. All of them visited potential schools before registering their children because the school visits helped them form an initial impression of the teachers and other staff. Participant B visited many schools in the city when she was choosing a third school for her son. She had to be very cautious to avoid making another

mistake. B expected that principals and teachers were professional and patient with English as Second Language (ESL) learners. The principal and teachers in a French Immersion School impressed B, and she described how this satisfaction helped her make her final decision:

The principal used five minutes to show me the school. Her introduction was brief and clear. I could sense that she is professional, experienced, and respectful. We also met a teacher in the school tour who seemed intelligent, capable, and respectful. I felt good about them, and I wanted to register my son in this school.

Participant D went to the high school she chose for her daughter. She chose this school due to its top academic standing in the region. Although a decision had been made, D went to visit the school two times before official enrollment. The first time she took a look at the school environment and the second time she brought her daughter to meet the staff. D shared that: “The janitor showed me around the school. We met a male guidance counsellor who was also very enthusiastic.” She gained a satisfied general impression towards not only the educational professionals but also the supporting staff in the school.

Parents’ Religious Background

Two participants indicated that religion was a factor that they had considered during school selection. B and E are both Christian, and they had a preference towards a Christian-based school. However, they both said that they could not afford the private or independent school’s high tuition fees, so they eventually chose a public school that offered free education. Although public schooling was not their first preference, it was a

practical and affordable choice. According to B and E, Christian faith was their spiritual support during the process of school selection. They both strongly believed that God would make a proper arrangement for their children. Participant B shared, “I prayed to God and we did not have to follow our own feeling that a Christian-based school must be the best choice. I let God lead our road.” The following day, B found a house in her preferred district, and the Chinese house owner was a Christian too. This made B feel that God opened a door for her. To participant E, she verified that the school she eventually chose was good for her son as she encountered a trustworthy class teacher. She was satisfied with the teacher because “she was a Christian and this was a relief for me.”

Satisfaction with Selected Schools and the Reasons for Changing Schools

When participants were asked whether the school their child was attending was their best choice, participants A, D and F answered that their children’s school was their best choice. The rest answered that they did not like their children’s previous schools but were satisfied with their current school choice. Participants B, C and E reported that their children switched schools. For participant C, she had no issues with the teachers but switched her sons’ schools simply due to the low ranking. C believed that the school she later selected for her younger son was for his greatest benefit, but the school that she chose for her older son was just acceptable. The reason that she was not a hundred percent satisfied with her older son’s school was because C’s home address did not lead to a high ranking English school. She had “no other choice” but to accept it under the situation that her family was in.

Participants B and E were not satisfied with their children's first elementary school. They did not agree with the teachers' ways of handling their children's behavioural problems and the teachers' ignorance showed up in parent-teacher communication. B and E had not been in Canada for a very long time when they put their children in their first schools. They expected teachers to pay enough attention to their children as well as understand their difficulties in adapting to a new environment. Participant B and E both showed a cooperative attitude and they acted quickly to handle their children's behavioural issues. B received a telephone notice from the school and she and her husband contacted the teacher and principal without hesitation because they wanted to understand the whole situation and handle the problem immediately. For participant E, she noticed that her son had stationaries which did not belong to him. E immediately handled this by taking her son to school and explaining this to the principal. By promptly handling the issues, both participant B and E demonstrated their caring attitude and their intention to reduce potential harm to their children. They also tried their best to communicate with the teachers by writing letters, making phone calls or talking to the teachers and principals face-to-face. However, they felt that there was a lack of response to their concerns. Participant B was disappointed because her son's class teacher did not reply to a letter that she spent a lot of time writing. B's husband later came to Canada and tried to communicate with the teacher but also formed the same impression. B concluded that this teacher "did not talk to us and as a result, I felt that she ignored us". Participant E had a similar experience in her son's first school. E was concerned about her son's ability to adapt to school as a newcomer to Canada. She expected the teacher to pay attention to her son and tell her about her son's social

interactions with others, but she did not receive any information. E shared that her son's first teacher, "did not tell me about my son's social adaptation, instead, she only talked about his academic performance." She noticed that the teacher seemed not to understand that her son was experiencing difficulties in getting along with others. When E's son had conflicts with his peers and they pushed each other, "the teacher did not get to the bottom of why this happened, and instead, she simply complained to me and asked me to teach him at home." E believed that similar problems repeatedly happened due to the teacher's unawareness of the nature of the behavioural issues.

B and E both experienced dissatisfaction with their selected school and this prompted them to make a school change. After making the decision to switch schools, B and her husband started their journey by visiting different types of schools in the city, including public, Catholic, private and independent schools. B and her husband decided to make a cautious selection this time. Her favourite school was a Christian-based school; however, she had to pay tuition fees and her husband was not satisfied with the Grade 12 graduates' post-secondary institution offers of this school. Their school selection journey eventually led them to living in a suburban area where the house rent is higher than where they used to live. They accepted the increased expenses and put their son in a French Immersion School located in this area. Participant E and her husband bought a house in the same residential area as B. E's husband first enrolled their son in a school right next their house. During the time the boy was in this school, E and her husband participated in almost all the school activities. A year later, they decided to switch schools due to the teacher's consistent complaints about their son's behavioural issues, and E's dissatisfaction with the teacher's way of handling those issues. E and her

husband followed their friends' recommendation of a high ranking French Immersion School. They paid a school visit and E found that the "teachers and the principal were professional". She then made the switch for her son as she believed he would receive better attention in this school.

The participants who believed that their children's school was their best choice, (participants A, D and F) did not change schools for their children. They are or were enrolled in the Master of Education (M.Ed) program at a University in Southwestern Ontario, and they indicated that the M.Ed program provided them with an opportunity to understand the local schooling system. They learned about schools and curriculum when they were studying with Ontario teachers. They also gained deeper understandings from class discussions. Moreover, the internship arrangement of the education program also gave them a chance to meet with educational professionals who worked in the field. The three participants' learning experiences proved that the more the parents understood a school, the less chance that their children would have to change the school.

Challenges in School Selection and Assistance Obtained

Participants recalled that the whole process of school selection and changing schools was very smooth. Participants were capable of handling inquiries, school visits and registrations. They admitted that their English ability was insufficient, but they did not encounter any communication difficulties. In fact, most of the participants responded that they managed the required processes independently and there were no significant challenges. Besides this, participants admitted that the school staff handled their inquiries and the administrative work professionally. B was satisfied with the

administrative staff's work as "the staff acted according to the rules and made the school transferring process convenient." Participant C and D respectively shared their experiences and the assistance they obtained to reflect how helpful the administrative staff was.

Participant C encountered a challenge due to her unfamiliarity with a particular Catholic school board policy. C originally put her sons in two different public schools. She then decided to transfer them to a Catholic elementary school. At first, both registrations were smoothly handled but C later changed her mind. She decided to transfer her younger son back to a French Immersion School in the public school board. However, C was informed by the Catholic school's principal that she could not put siblings in two separate school boards. At this point, C found that she was in an either-or position. It was hard for her to make another decision shortly before the school year started. C was worried that this could affect her son's schooling. She "did not know how to handle this situation" and had to seek help from the secretary from the French Immersion School, and the secretary helped her settle this issue. C appreciated her assistance, and she concluded that this help was important to her family.

Participant D obtained help from the public school board prior to her departure. When she was in China, she contacted a staff member from the school board, and this person assisted her with school registration. By getting the individual guidance, D completed the school selection and school registration before she came to Canada. D appreciated the assistance because she was not familiar with the registration process at that time. D stated, "The clerk in the public school board helped me a lot in school enrollment. I am very satisfied with her work." D indicated that there was no problem in

communicating with the staff as she was fluent in speaking English. The only problem that she faced was the time difference between China and Canada.

Participant F obtained assistance from a new comer settlement worker and a lady who worked in the international student center (ISC) in her university. F consulted the new comer settlement worker two times and talked to the ISC clerk one time during the process of school selection. These two forms of assistance settled her worries and helped her make a final decision. Her major concern was that she was afraid that her son could not manage in a school where French was the medium of instruction, and he would be discriminated against due to his low French proficiency. The settlement worker and the ISC staff both comforted her: “the school will treat your son nicely, and they will help him adapt to the new environment”. F trusted these two experienced ladies’ opinions, and she gained the confidence to put her son in the French Immersion School.

School Communication Experiences

This section summarizes participants’ school communication experiences. It includes two types of communication: the parent-teacher meetings and communication outside of parent-teacher meetings. Information related to parent-teacher meetings includes: attending situations, participants’ perspectives about these meetings, their major concerns in these meetings. Information related to communication beyond these meetings includes forms of communication and why participants chose these forms. The last part of this section is participants’ expectations, attitudes and satisfactions towards communication, challenges that they have faced and assistance that they obtained.

Attendance and Perspectives on Parent-teacher Meeting

When participants were asked if they attended the parent-teacher meetings and why they did or did not attend, they gave various answers. Five out of six answered that they did attend the meetings. One participant gave a negative answer. Participant A explained why she did not attend: “I have no time on PA day as I have classes. Or, I have to look after my daughter at home.” Her explanation showed her confusion regarding the PA day and the parent-teacher meeting day, and the purposes of these two types of meetings.

Among the five participants who did attend the parent-teacher meetings, four responded that they tried to attend as many meetings as possible. Participant E came to Canada together with her husband, and they shared the duty and attended every parent-teacher meeting in their son’s two schools. For the other four participants, their occasional absence from the parent-teacher meetings was due to either the participants’ busy class schedules or confusion of the meetings’ purposes. Participants attended parent-teacher meetings often because they wanted to know their children’s academic performance and social development in school. They also wanted to build mutual understandings with the teachers. Participant C shared several reasons regarding why she attended parent-teacher meetings:

I want to know my children’s performance so I communicate with teachers actively. I want to show the teachers that I care about my children. Attending parent-teacher meetings can help the teacher and I understand each other. Also the teachers will remember me if I attend meetings every time and they will be more caring towards my children. If I was not going to the meetings, teachers

might feel that I did not care about my children and they would not care them either. I don't want them to have this misunderstanding.

Participant D described that participating in parent-teacher meetings is a parent's duty, which suggests that she believes every parent should attend. To participant B, she cherished the only opportunity in each term to meet with her son's teacher, although the meeting time was short, she stated that she "must attend every meeting."

Major Concerns in Parent-teacher Meetings

Participants viewed parent-teacher meetings as a regular way to communicate with teachers. During interviews, participants shared concerns about their children's language development, school adaptation, academic performance, and teachers' attitudes towards their children. The participants who had younger children, all happened to enroll their children in the same French Immersion School. As a result, their Chinese speaking children had to learn a third language, as French was the language of instruction in this school. Because of the lack of environmental support, participants all worried that their children's French ability would become a barrier to their learning and adaptation in school. Take Participant E's answer as an example. She wanted her son to be happy in school and she explained why it was so important:

He will feel happy only if he is being accepted in school. Being accepted means that he is competent in all aspects. I am concerned if he is able to adapt to the environment, be accepted by others, and finish his assignments smoothly. If that's all good then he is happy.

Participant D had an older child in high school. She did not mention anything related to school adaptation like the other participants did. Her only concern was her daughter's academic performance. D wanted to know the class average and if her daughter was "above or below it". She wanted to know where her daughter was and if she was willing to hear the teacher's comments. This was the reason she attended parent-teacher meetings and "meet every subject teacher".

Participant C had one older child in the seventh grade and another child in the first grade during the time of interview. C had mixed concerns about their academic performance and school adaptation. She described that she would like to know: "If they listen to the teachers, if they get good grades, and if they get along well with their peers?"

Communication beyond Parent-teacher Meetings

Besides the regular meetings, five participants out of six had tried other ways to communicate with teachers. Participant D was the only parent who did not communicate with teachers outside of parent-teacher meetings. She believed that she had obtained enough information through the conversations with every teacher. The other five participants adopted different ways of communicating with teachers besides parent-teacher meetings. The most frequent way, used by three participants, was a communication book. The other ways that were being used, include attending additional meetings with teachers or principals, writing letters to teachers, engaging school online platforms, and chatting with teachers during drop-off and pick-up time.

Participant B and E had to deal with their children's behavioural issues, so they wrote letters to the teachers as well as physically met with teachers and principals. The

other participants' did not report their children having behavioural problems. Among these participants, C and F indicated that they used the Seesaw platform to receive notices, download pictures and exchange messages with teachers. This school online platform is a window, which allows parents to get to know what their children are doing in school. Participants A and E sometimes chat with teachers during drop-off and pick-up time. Participant A particularly liked this way because it allowed her to obtain “direct and useful” information from the teacher. The less popular communication ways include writing notes and writing cards. Each way was reported as used by one participant. After analysing and summarising all participants’ sharing, some communication patterns were found as follows:

More communication was involved when children had behavioural issues. In order to solve problems, Participant B and E had to spend extra time communicating with the teachers or principals. B and E both received phone calls by schools, notifying that their child was in trouble. They then had to cooperate with the school to handle the issue, which means that back and forth communications were required. At home, they had to talk to their children and find out what happened, help them understand their wrongdoings, and teach them the proper ways of handling similar issues. After talking with their children, B and E both chose to write a letter to the teachers to explain how they followed the issues. B suspected that her son was falsely accused and had to take all blame. She tried to explain this in her letter:

I wrote a letter to state my point of view regarding my son’s behavioural issue. I told his teacher that obedience is necessary. No matter what happened, he needs to be obedient and show respect to the teacher. If he was being accused falsely,

he should find a proper chance to explain to the teacher. I told the teacher that this is an opportunity provided by God, for us to learn a lesson.

Participant E shared her experiences of communicating with the school when she noticed that her son took others' belongings. She realised that it was a severe issue and she should handle it as quickly as possible. She took her son to school and tried to explain it to the teacher. However, the class teacher was not there at that time, so she met the principal. Participant E explained why she acted so quickly:

I had to deal with this matter immediately because I believe that the earlier that I handle the issue, the less harm will come to him. He will not do it again. I can't wait until the teacher finds out that students' belongings have disappeared and then asks him to take them back. That will create a big impact on him.

Besides meeting the principal, participant E also talked to the teacher over the phone as well as wrote a letter to the teachers as follow up. E summarized that she had to frequently communicate with the class teacher, or the principal when her son was in trouble. Participant B had similar communication experiences as E. In sum, B and E both became more involved in communication with schools than those parents whose children did not have behavioural issues.

Parents of elementary school children had additional communication with teachers outside parent-teacher meetings. Participant D who has a high school child said that she had no communication with the school besides regular parent-teacher meetings. She only attended parent-teacher meetings and met all her daughter's teachers. The other five participants had children in elementary school. These parents had good

intentions to communicate with the teachers as they cared about their young children's performance and how they were treated in school. They worked to build constructive relationships with teachers through effective communication. Their communication styles were demonstrated in different ways. Participant E's son was in Senior Kindergarten (SK) when he entered his first school. E and her husband were actively involved in school communication, including attending the parents' committee meetings, frequently chatting with teachers, meeting with teachers in person, writing to teachers, and volunteering in school activities.

Participant A's daughter was in Grade one when she entered a local school. She shared that she and the teacher wrote to each other every day and she sometimes had brief conversations with the teacher during pick-up or drop-off time. Through these communications, she tried to ask two questions: How well was her daughter doing and did she adapt well in school? These are two representative questions that the other participants who have young aged children also desired to ask. These participants viewed communication as an effective channel to help them obtain answers that they needed. They valued this channel and also used other possible ways to get feedback from teachers.

Parents have higher confidence in written communication than in verbal communication. According to the six participants' sharing, five of them reported that they used writing to communicate with teachers and schools. They preferred this way as it helped them to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively. Written communication gave parents higher confidence than verbal communication. This is particularly helpful for those parents whose children were in trouble. Parents wrote

letters to teachers to explain their stance and how they dealt with the issue. Participant B admitted that her spoken English was not very good as she had not been in Canada for very long. Letter writing helped her to overcome this shortage and “avoid ambiguities and making grammatical mistakes”. B has confidence in written communication as she can “understand 90-100% of the content”.

For those participants whose children did not have any behavioural problems, written communication helped them to keep regular contact with the teachers. Some participants shared that they exchanged messages with teachers in the communication book and they found that it was prompt and effective. Participant F recalled that she once wrote to the teacher and requested help and the teacher gave her a reply “without delay”. Participant C and F wrote questions and texted the teachers through the school online platform. They both indicated that teachers replied to them quickly. In addition to this, two participants indicated that they wrote notes or a card to the teachers as a way to keep mutual contact.

Communication styles need to be adjusted. Some participants shared that they had positive parent-teacher communication experiences in China, where Chinese teachers took over control. They discussed problems openly, picked topics to share, and generally led the conversations. Participants were comfortable with this style and they projected the same expectation onto the Ontario teachers. However, this does not fit into the local teachers’ communicating style. In China, teachers and principals are in a powerful position, and they require students’ obedience and parents’ respect. Whilst in Canada, parents are encouraged to make decisions for school, attend meetings and express their opinions, and volunteer in different school activities. In other words, parents are

empowered by the school to take active role in communicating with teachers. This is a cultural difference between Chinese and Ontario teachers. Participants' expectations and communication styles were shaped by their Chinese experiences. It took time for them to learn and adjust themselves to the new environment.

Expectations in Communication

Participants shared different expectations when they were asked about the major concerns in communicating with teachers. The following issues were constantly being mentioned: to share concerns with the teachers; to show an attitude of caring to the teachers; and to get to know their children's school performance. As new comers, these parents hoped that teachers would not only pay attention to their children, but also understand them from a culturally different perspective.

To Share Concerns with the Teachers

Participants' concerns varied according to their children's age. For participants who had children in elementary school, they were concerned about their children's language development and their relationships with peers. Besides this, they were also concerned about what they learned in school. During the one-to-one meetings, participants asked teachers more questions related to study, and some participants, such as B and E, expected teachers to take an active role in telling them information that they wanted to know. The younger children's parents mentioned school adaptation multiple times, which means that, being accepted by peers and teachers was an important issue to their children. Participants believed that teachers' attention towards their children and understanding of parents' needs was important. Participant E indicated

My son's teacher told me that my son did not follow the rules. I want to know if the teacher can understand my son as he is a new comer... I noticed that my son was the only child that did not wear his clothes properly when I picked him up after school. I was wondering if his teacher did not notice him, or even worse, if she ignored him.

From participant E's sharing, she actually expected that the teacher would pay more attention to her son as he was a new comer and a minority. E was scared that her son was ignored in school. Other participants A, B, and D had concerns towards their children's language ability, they worried that it would influence their social adaptation in school. Participant B's major concern was "If my son understand French and if he could get along well with his peers and teachers. He was not an obedient boy, if he did not follow French instructions, he would have problems."

Participants with older children, such as C and D, focused more on their children's academic performance. As the only high school child's parent, participant D was mostly concerned for her daughter's academic performance. She shared her concern to the teacher: "I really want to know how she performed in school... I talked to her science teacher and was told that my daughter opened the revision checklist and asked the teacher if her answers were correct?" The teacher's response affirmed her daughter's attitude in learning science. C's older son was in Grade seven when she was being interviewed and she attended every parent-teacher meeting: "Because I want to know how my sons are doing in school, and find out what they actually learned in school." Participants like C and D, wanted to know what their children learned in school, and

where they were in comparison to the class average. They wanted to know teachers' comments, and how to help their children at home.

To Show an Attitude of Caring to the Teachers

Participants demonstrated an attitude of caring to the teachers in communications. They delivered a message to the teachers that they cared about their children's learning very much. In sharing so, they hoped that teachers would pay extra attention to their children as they were newcomers. Through different communication opportunities, participants not only showed their caring attitude to the teachers, but also tried to build mutual understanding with teachers. Participant C's children went to four local schools and she was experienced in communicating with teachers. She insisted on attending almost every parent-teacher meeting. She shared that the reason was to show teachers her caring attitude:

I want to give the teachers an impression that I care, so that the teachers also care about my sons. I think the more I attend the parent-teacher meetings, the more that the teachers will care about my sons. If I don't go, I am afraid the teachers will have a misinterpretation that I don't care about my son's education, and that they don't need to be concerned about my sons either.

Participant B realized that the arrangement of the parent-teacher meeting, and she knew that she "must attend the five-minute meeting." Even just in the short period of meeting, B showed the teacher that how much she cares about her son in regards to his study and social adaptation. When participant A dropped off or picked up time her daughter, "I certainly talked to the teacher". Although it was just a several-minutes

conversation, A showed her caring attitude towards her daughter which cannot be ignored by her teacher. Similarly, participant F attended every parent-teacher meeting as she tried to let the teacher know that how much she cares about her son. By showing the caring attitude to the teacher, participants delivered a message that they expected the teachers to notice their children's needs, respond to their needs and give them enough attention.

To Get to Know Their Children's School Performance

Good education in the Chinese context includes two parts, one is for social adaptation and the other is for academic performance. In other words, participants wanted to know how well their children got along with peers and teachers and what they learned in schools.

Five participants put their young children in a school where French was the instructional language. These parents were concerned about their language capability because it would influence their school adaptation and academic learning. All of the young children went to the same French Immersion School since Grade one, and they had to learn two new languages. This means that they all started to learn French two years after their local peers, and as new comers to Canada, these young children were not able to speak English fluently either. This is not an ideal situation as the children would experience language barriers in a new environment. Participants worried that their children's low language ability may increase marginalization in school. Participant A believed that with sufficient language ability, no matter English or French, her daughter could play with peers, and the ability to play with other kids could lead to successful

school adaptation. A shared that, “She will not have problems if she can communicate with others, even though she speaks in English.”

Participant B also wondered how her son would get along with peers. B noticed that the boy was a bit self-centered, and weak in social adaptation. B’s hope was to help him adapt in the school community. Participant C, E and F also wondered if peers and teachers accepted their children. C shared that she wanted to know her sons’ French learning and his relationship with their peers. E clearly stated that, “I concerned about how my son gets along with others with low French ability... he would feel safe and happy in school if he was accepted by others.” Participant F wanted to know whether “my son can speak French and whether he can adapt to his peers and integrate in school.” These three participants shared a common understanding, which was that French was the pre-condition of social adaptation and French ability influences learning performance. As a result, they all hired a French tutor to help their children in grade one. These parents equally stressed their children’s French development, school adaptation and their academic learning in school. In order to obtain information about their children’s school performance and French development, participants communicated with school teachers as well as the French tutor. In doing so, they hoped their children would improve both socially and academically.

Satisfaction with Communication

When participants were asked if they were satisfied with the parent-teacher meetings, they gave different answers. Participant A said that she did not attend any of those meetings due to her pregnancy. Participant D and F responded that they were

satisfied with the parent-teacher meetings. Participant E was only satisfied with the meetings that she attended in her son's second school. When the participants were asked if they were satisfied with the quality of communication, five out of six gave positive responses. The participants were mainly satisfied with the teachers' attitude, but they were not satisfied with the information that was provided by the teachers. The reason that caused the dissatisfaction was the content of the information was not as sufficient as they expected.

Teachers' Attitude

When participants were asked if they thought the teachers encouraged them to communicate and if they thought the teachers were interested in the topics they talked about, they responded that most of the teachers were encouraging and they showed interests in the parents' concerns. Participants also indicated that many teachers were aware of their needs, and they provided them with adequate help. Participant F's sharing gave a clear example that showed the teacher's understanding and responsiveness:

I think the teacher encouraged me to communicate with her. First, she understood my concerns. She gave me careful and detailed responses to both my online messages and the notes that I wrote in the communication book ... She also showed interests in the topics that I talked about. Like last time, when I mentioned that my son having difficulties in French learning, she prepared a book and lent it to me.

Participant B and E were not that lucky at the beginning, they respectively shared unpleasant experiences in their child's first elementary school. According to them,

teachers in that school did not pay much attention to their children. Although B and E were eager to know their children's performance, teachers in the two schools did not actively respond to their concerns. They felt that the teachers' neglect either caused their children's behavioural problems or worsened the situations they were in. E's son received complaints for misbehaviour in school, but E believed this was caused by his low English ability. She guessed that her son was not able to follow all teacher's instructions, and could not fully understand his peers and get along well with them. Participant B's son experienced similar complaints and B was not satisfied with how the case was handled. As participant B and E were both new to Canada at that time, they found no other solutions but to transfer their children to another school. Luckily, they both responded that they selected a proper school for their sons because "the teachers were responsible and experienced". They were both satisfied with the teachers as they received less stress from this new school. E particularly liked the teacher because she was willing to address the boy's problems, and requested parental help. E spoke of how understanding and how responsive the teacher was:

The teacher addressed where my son was struggling, and she told me to be careful. My son should use his valuable time to work on improving. If not, he may fall behind, and that he would take more time to make up for the mistakes. I prefer the teacher to tell me what problems he is facing before they happen, for example in his language learning. He has to work hard on that. I feel that she is a good teacher because of her honesty.

Insufficient Information

During the interviews, five out of six participants shared that they wanted to know what their children learned in school. The information they expected to receive should include how their children did in school, what they were learning in school, and where they were at compared to their classmates. However, the participants indicated that they did not obtain sufficient information although the teachers were nice and approachable.

Participant C liked the teachers because they were responsive, but she was not satisfied with the information that was given to her. For instance, the teacher told her that her younger son “had been progressing well in his language development”. She suspected that the teacher only told her good news. Her suspicion came from her observations in her son’s private French lessons. She noticed that he was not cooperative and he did not perform well with the French tutor. This was contradictory to his classroom teacher’s comments. C shared her own perspectives over the obvious difference:

All the information that I obtained were positive, but I did not know how reliable they were... To be honest, I was quite happy when I was told that my child performed well in school. But now I am dissatisfied because it seemed like the teacher failed to address my sons’ problems, or perhaps because she did not pay much attention to my son.

Participant B was eager to know what her son learned in school, but she did not understand the educational system and could not find other ways besides parent-teacher meetings to interact with the teachers. She found a lack of communication channels, and felt that the parent-teacher meeting was the only channel available in getting to know her

son's school performance. Although B received more messages from her son's new teacher compared to his previous school, she still wondered: "Every teacher implements the curriculum differently... How can a school ensure the teachers' teaching quality?" B indicated that she obtained information from the five-minute meetings and she was also given some monthly flyers which include learning goals and teaching contents, but she was not satisfied with the limited information that was covered in those flyers as "The outline was too brief and the contents were too simple. No details were provided." B admitted that she received her son's worksheets and assignments at the end of the school year, however, "It was too late. I hoped that I could've received updated information on what subjects he studied, and the contents of what he was taught at school." Because B wanted to help her son review what he learned simultaneously.

Different from B, participant E was happy with the information that she obtained from her son's new teacher. She was only dissatisfied with her son's previous school. She expected the teacher to share some observations about her son with her, but she did not get the information that she wanted during the multiple contacts she had with the teacher. Instead, she got it during an occasional chance. She shared a story in supporting her claims:

The teacher and I once went to a school board meeting, and she mentioned that my son could talk to classmates in English. I then discovered that he could speak in English. I was not aware of that before, and I was worried that he had no friends and did not understand what people were saying. She should have told me about my son's progress earlier so that I was aware. She should have also let me know what we could do to support him at home.

These participants' sharing showed that they have a strong desire to know how their children were taught and what they learned in school. The more information that was provided to them, the better understanding that would be developed.

Challenges and Assistance in Communication

This section discusses the challenges that participants faced in parent-teacher communication. These challenges include being unfamiliar with the schooling system and cultural barriers. Participants obtained different assistance which helped them to cope with those challenges.

The Unfamiliarity of the Schooling System

During the interviews, participants recalled that they were not quite familiar with the local schooling system as they were new to Canada. The unfamiliarity manifested in different ways. Participants did not know about the parent-teacher meeting arrangement as it was very different from China. Ontario schools welcome the parents' engagement, such as volunteering in school activities and attending different meetings. Participant E gained a brief understanding from her husband's involvement experiences: "My husband often did volunteer work in school, and he was invited by a school administrative staff to attend parent committee meetings." At the beginning, E and her husband were confused about the purpose of such meetings, but they later realized that local schools encouraged parents to involve in school affairs and engage in decision making. Coming from a completely different educational system, some participants took longer to understand how the local schooling system runs, and others took a shorter time.

In the early stage, the unfamiliarity led to confusion which resulted in parents missing meetings. For example, Participant A did not attend any parent-teacher meetings partly because of her misunderstanding that children were not supposed to be brought to school. Although she noticed that parents had the opportunity to make appointments for the meeting, she confused the parent-teaching meeting day with the PA day. It is not surprising that her confusion led to not attending any other meetings. Participant A shared, “I actually don’t understand. I have no time on PA day as I have class, or else I have to stay at home and look after my daughter.”

Participant B was another parent who missed the parent-teacher meetings for an entire year. She did not understand why an appointment was needed in schools because in China, it is mandatory for parents to attend every parent-teacher meeting and no prior appointment needs to be made. Ontario schools are very different in that the meeting is needs-based and parents have a choice to attend. That is why prior appointments are required. When B’s son was in his first elementary school, she reported that she did receive a note from school, notifying parents to make appointments for the parent-teacher meeting if there is a need. B was confused by the notion that parents only needed to attend a parent-teacher meeting if there was a need. Thus, she was not sure if she should reply to that note to make an appointment. Consequently, B missed all of her son’s Grade one parent-teacher meetings. She regretfully said that, “If I understood that means parent-teacher meeting, I must have attended it.”

Cultural Barriers

With respect to cultural barriers, the data suggests that there were three common issues: school culture, parent-teacher interaction, and parents' expectation.

School culture. Participants' sharing highlighted the differences in school culture between Canadian and Chinese schools. In Ontario schools, teachers expect parents to help schools to make decisions and actively engage in different school activities. Participants felt that this differed from the teacher-centered school culture in China. Participants also encountered with cultural difference in respect to the ways of dealing with students' misbehaviours.

Principals and teachers are in authority in Chinese schools and parents are not allowed to share their powers and make decisions for schools. For participant B, she shared a Chinese parents' common belief: "It is a must to obey and respect teachers. No matter what, disobedience is incorrect." Holding such a mindset, participants E and F found it hard to adapt to the local school culture which encourage them to voice out their opinions and make decisions for schools. They reported that they had attended the parent committee meetings but were confused about the purpose of such meetings. E shared that she and her husband were invited by a teacher to attend these meetings two to three times. She was surprised that she was the only parent representative in those the meetings. E did not understand why she had to attend and make decisions for "school administrative issues". As the only parent attendee, E has "no opinions" to give over school related issues, she suggested that "other parents should attend those meetings and make decisions". Similarly, it was hard for participant F to participate in the decision making process as she had "no idea what people were talking about in these meetings." She was not satisfied with herself for a lack of understanding of the school's cultural

background, and she hoped to attend more such meetings to gain a deeper understanding. For other participants, they did not attend the parent committee meetings due to various reasons. A reported that she “did not attend any meeting” due to her physical condition. She also mixed up the meeting types and as a result, she was unaware that parents can make decisions for school. Participant B once submitted a form to join the parent committee, however, she did not receive any feedback. So she missed the chance to become a parent representative.

In addition to engage in decision making, participants confronted with cultural difference over participating in school activities. In Chinese schools, parents do not frequently involve in their children’s school. Participant C pointed out that schools are “less open” in China than in Ontario: “Parents are only allowed to attend large-scale school activities, such as field trip or sports competition. Volunteers are recruited only when teachers need extra pairs of hands or someone with professional skill”. It is different in local schools, parents are needed and voluntary opportunities are always available. Participants reported that they had many chances to be recruited as volunteers. Some parents involved more in school activities than others. For those participants who seldom volunteered to help, such as participants A, B and D, time issue was their reason of absence. For the parents who attended voluntary work, such as participant C, F, E and E’s husband, they chose to attend because they viewed these opportunities as another channel to get to know their children’s school performance. C volunteered in her younger son’s school every week in her first year of study as she had more time at that time. She attended because “I can see how he communicates with other children, but I can’t see how he studied in school.” C’s response revealed that her purposes of

volunteering was not fully achieved. According to E, she attended some and her husband attended many of the school activities. She believed that her husband's involvement was more important as a father "can be their son's role model and can foster the son's social development". Participant F chose to attend some of those activities. She shared her purpose: "I wanted to involve in my son's life in the greatest extent without disturbing others, and I also wanted to get to know how he interacts with his peers." To summarize the voluntary participants' thoughts, they perceived volunteering was an additional channel, beside the formal parent-teacher communication, allows them to know how their children performed in school. Attended such activities was beneficial to both parents and their children as parents can involve in the children's life as well as get an idea of the children's social development.

There is another culture difference in handling students' behavioural issues. Participant B experienced a culture shock in respect of how her son was treated. She shared that her son was sent to the principal's office one day. B thought that he must have done something seriously wrong, because in China, if a student is sent to see the principal it can be viewed as a punishment to the student "who made a huge mistake". Hence, B and her husband went to see the principal without any delay. But they later found out that her son was sent to the principal only because the class teacher was too busy to handle his case. It was not as severe as she imagined. The principal also taught participant B a simple and effective way which she had never thought about in handling her son's behavioural issues. This was the first time B realized: "There is a difference between western and eastern education and it was the first lesson" that she learned in Canada. Participant E's story is another case to explain cultural differences. The teacher

in her son's first school complained about the boy's misbehaving sometimes. E believed that her son's behaviour issues were caused by his low language proficiency which results in his misunderstanding of others. However, the teachers did not find out the causes of his behaviours, instead, she only asked E to educate him at home. Participant E was unsatisfied with the teacher's way of handling her son. E shared her view: "Peer conflicts are part of a child's development because in China, students are taught to be competitive." Whilst in local schools, such behaviours are not tolerated. This is why cultural difference arose because E and the teachers viewed students' misbehaviours from two separated perspectives.

Parent-teacher interaction. In addition, some cultural differences arose during parent-teacher interactions. Participants hoped that teachers could clearly indicate children's problems instead of just praising them because they wanted to know their weaknesses in order to help them improve. In their cultural perspectives, Ontario teachers should indicate students' problems as Chinese teachers do. Participants did not fully trust the teachers when they were only given positive comments. Though they felt happy when their children were praised, they were concerned that their children's weaknesses had gone unnoticed. Participant E revealed this concern:

My son must have had weaknesses... Chinese parents tend to know children's weaknesses because Chinese teachers tend to bring up the students' problems. To my understanding, teachers should have given me both positive and negative comments.

Participants C also expressed her attitudes towards teachers' comments. She suspected the reliability of all those positive comments from her sons' teachers. C hoped the teachers can dig deep and discover her sons' potential problems so that she can assist them to handle the problems. Apart from this, participant B expressed her feeling towards the teachers' attitude. B was told that her son had a behavioural issue with his peers, and B took this complain seriously. She wrote a letter to the teacher and she used the word "obedience" to emphasize that it is important for a student to deliver obedience and respect towards teachers. B learned this attitude from China and she tried to instill this Chinese culture to her son. She explained that "obedience" is a virtue in China and it is valued by parents and teachers. In Chinese schools, students are encouraged and praised by always obeying their teachers. B indicated this typical point in her sharing:

I announce a statement in the letter that no matter what, obedience is a must to a student. My son should respect the teacher and submit himself to discipline. He was falsely accused in an incident, but he should listen to the teacher first and then find another chance to explain to the teacher. It is not right to disobey the teacher.

As a Chinese parent, B also held this attitude of obedience and respect to the teacher as teachers are revered in her country of origin. Hence, B spent a lot of time in writing a letter cautiously because she wanted to avoid "any form of disrespect and ignorance". B believed that both parents and students should revere the teachers under whatever circumstances. However, this carefully written letter did not lead to any response from the teacher. B was very disappointed as this result did not fulfill her anticipation. There is also a disadvantage in her culturally different communication style. B regretted that

she missed the chance to protect her son when he was wrongly accused because of her avoidance of speaking up.

Parents' expectation. Most participants reported that they really care about their children's academic performance, but they had no idea what they learned in schools. Being new to Canada, these participants were still holding their Chinese mindset and they expected to obtain as much information as they were given in Chinese schools. However, the local teachers did not provide such detailed information. Participant B shared her dissatisfaction:

I am not satisfied as I do not know what my son has learned in school. His second school gave me a flyer; it was a monthly teaching plan. However, it was excessively brief as there is only one sentence. From the flyer, I do not see where my child probably is. It just indicated the learning goals, without including detailed information to help parents to understand how teachers implement the curriculum.

Referring to her past experience in China, participant B suggested the teacher follow a textbook, so that parents can use that book to “help children to review their learning”. She also expected the teachers to send the students' worksheets and assignments home, so that she can assist her son to review what he learned in school.

Participant C also had a similar concern towards her sons' learning as she noticed that her sons “have no daily homework”. She expected detailed information about her sons' learning in school. C wanted to know “everything they learned in school, including the content of every subject, general education, cultural and arts education.” She was

eager to know these because, unlike in China, C had no idea what her sons were doing in schools. She expected teachers to respond her questions: “what my sons learned and how they performed in school?” However, she was disappointed by the limited information obtained in the parent-teacher meetings, which did not help to dispel her doubts.

Assistance

Participants received assistance from the language tutor, other Chinese parents from the same school, and the settlement workers. E was the only participant who received internal assistance from her son’s class teacher. In a meeting that she requested at the beginning of a school year, the teacher responded to her concerns about her son’s studying in French. The teacher also helped to find a private French tutor for her son. This tutor was also a teacher in her son’s school, and she played an important role in fostering better communication between E and her son’s class teacher. Moreover, the tutor also helped E’s family to bridge the cultural gap with the school. E appreciated this tutor’s assistance as it was beneficial for her and the class teacher to build mutual understanding. In addition, the private tutoring promoted her son’s French ability. This language ability was important as it helped the boy understand his peers and teachers, and more importantly, it prevented him from having behavioural issues again in his new school. Participant E indicated that, “My son’s French is getting better and he made some friends in school. I feel relieved after having this tutor. She helped me to understand the class teacher’s perspectives and she also reflected my thoughts to the class teacher.”

Participant F shared an assistance that she obtained which benefited parent-teacher communication. She received other Chinese parents' help from the social media. F joined a WeChat group and form connections with the Chinese parents from her son's school. She indicated that when she had problems, she sought help in this group. Other parents' sharing and suggestions were useful and helpful, so F understood teachers and the schooling system more. F felt that the help from social media was especially important when her son was new to the school. This online platform allowed parents to obtain information through "informal" communication. F appreciated parents' help within this WeChat group as she received direct answers "without disturbing the teachers".

Participant B shared the professional assistance provided by the new comer settlement workers. The services were easy to access and the settlement workers were always available. Participant B consulted them two times when she encountered with problems. The first time, when her son was sent to the principal, B and her husband worried that the boy would get expelled, so they consulted a settlement worker before meeting the principal. The settlement worker comforted them: "the school will not easily expel a student". After hearing the settlement worker's explanation, B gained confidence in meeting the principal as she understood that her son has a right to stay in the school. The second time she consulted the settlement worker was due to her fear that her son, who was unwilling to learn French, would be forced to leave the French Immersion School. Again, she was told that her son has the right to stay. Participant B valued these two consultations as she learned that her son has a legal right to stay in the schools that she chose, and this understanding empowered her to become a confident communicator.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

By examining the school selection and parent-teacher communication experiences of the Chinese international student-parents, this study aimed to explore the factors that influenced their school selection process, the forms that they used and the nature of parent-teacher communication. The challenges that they faced during the involvement process and their coping strategies were also investigated. The qualitative findings from the interviews provided sufficient evidences to explain the parents' thoughts and actions in the two involvement areas. This chapter first provides discussion about the research questions:

1. What are the experiences that Chinese international student-parents have when they get involved in their children's school selection and parent-teacher communication?
2. What challenges have these parents encountered in regards to school selection and parent-teacher communication?
3. How did the Chinese international student-parents cope with these challenges?

Discussion

This section focus on several aspects of school selection and parent-teacher communication. Huntsinger and Jose (2009) indicated that there is a common belief in Chinese families, that education is not just the child's, but also the parent's responsibility. This clearly was the case when it came to the participants in this small-scale study. Participants deeply engaged in the school selection, and the actions that they took was shaped by their Chinese culture, the parents' anxiety towards their child' future, the

participants' class identity, and their attitude towards school adaptation. Participants' narratives also revealed their concerns regarding parent-teacher communication. The types and the level in parent-teacher communication are also discussed in this section, and the analysis focuses on the cultural influence and psychological factors.

The Influence of Chinese Culture

All participants were originally from China, and data suggests that their perspectives towards education were deeply influenced by the Chinese culture. Chinese stressed the importance of education because for the past thousand years, education was the only pathway for upward mobility. Confucius is one of the most famous philosophers in ancient China, and his thoughts have deeply influenced Chinese people's conception of education. For example, a Confucian Analects (论语) states that "He who excels in study can follow an official career" (xue er you ze shi; 学而优则仕). This passage advocates for the advantages of academic excellence and is consequently a view held by many Chinese parents. Wang Zhu is another famous Chinese scholar whose poetry has shaped people's conceptions of education. At five years of age, he wrote that "To be a scholar is to be the top of society" (wan ban jie xia pin wei you du shu gao; 万般皆下品, 惟有读书高). This passage places scholars at the top of China's social hierarchy and is a view that Chinese people continue to adopt as becoming a scholar is the ultimate goal a student can reach. In reaching this goal, students have to diligently study in order to pass the imperial examination system and become the qualified candidates. For thousands of years, education has been the traditional means through which people can achieve upward social mobility in China.

Since education is the only pathway of upward mobility, Chinese parents believe that it is important to create an environment which can help their children's education. The Mother's Wise Home Moving (meng mu san qian; 孟母三迁) is a famous Chinese story about Mencius, a famous philosopher who lived in Ancient China, and his mother moved three times in order to create a conducive environment for him. At first, Mencius and his mother were living close to a cemetery where Mencius often staged the rites which he saw in funeral processions or burial services for amusement. Then they moved to a house next to a marketplace, and Mencius took pleasure in imitating the peddler's hawking. His mother did not like these two places. In the end, they settled down near a school where Mencius started to imitate the courtesy behaviour and study the students' habits. Mencius' mother was satisfied as that was the right place for her son. On one hand, this story delivers a Chinese belief that social environment heavily influences a student's development, on the other hand, it reveals social stratification division and class superiority. This study's participants' reluctance towards enrolling their children in schools located in low socioeconomic areas, and their preference to reside in affluent neighbourhoods, both stem from this perspective. With an endorsement of the class superiority, participants concerned about the peers' family background, because the participants believed an innately different theory, and they viewed parents' educational and professional background as an important indicator of a child's academic success. Participants made their decisions carefully, because they believed that their children could become successful in society by attending academically higher ranked schools.

Parent's Anxiety and the School Selection Process

Besides cultural influence, data suggests that parent's anxiousness towards their children's future is another factor which urges them to investigate deeply into their school choices. The situation in China is, according to Wang (2008), one in which educational resources are scarce, where children compete for limited seats beginning in kindergarten all the way into university (Wang, 2008, p. 143). This means that it is highly comparative to access to good quality of education in China. Participants' narratives revealed that they were facing enormous stress when dealing with their children's education and this fostered them to emigrate from China. Furthermore, Yang et al. (2014) studied education inequality in China and found that most educational opportunities and resources stem from family background and social power. This inequality not only influences a Chinese student's academic achievement but also has a long-term impact on his/her work and income (Yang et al, 2014, p. 7). This explains why participants focused on peers' family background in Canada, as they understood how social stratification played a critical role in China's education inequality from their experiences.

The highly competitive nature of the participants' prior experiences shaped their school choice in Canada. To manage their anxiety, participants spent a great deal of time and adopted different strategies in school selection. Relocating homes and consulting experienced people were two strategies that they learned in China and that they used in Canada. Relocation ensured enrollment in an academically higher-ranking school which allowed their children to connect with people from the higher socioeconomic class. Consulting experienced people was another way for parents to obtain useful information. Participants made good use of the social resources that they had accumulated in the new

land. They consulted people who share similar cultural and religious values with them and obtained information about local school norms, culture, curriculum and teachers. Visiting schools is a new and effective method that they learned in Canada. It allows parents to obtain the first-hand information about schools and teachers. The direct and indirect information provided participants with a general understanding of the local school system and the particular schools before making a final decision. These three useful strategies helped parents to control risks and prevent making further mistakes. The strategies that the participants adopted and the resources that they invested show that they made use of all their powers to ensure that their children received the best education possible. This is consistent with Yang et al.'s (2014) finding that parents with social stratification advantages translate their social power and economic resources into better education opportunities for their children (Yang et al., 2014).

Social Class Reproduction

Bourdieu's (1977) framework of social practice is also applied to explain participants' actions and thoughts regarding school choice. From the participants' narratives, a certain orientation in school selection is shown. They all happened to choose to live in the same district where the high-ranked schools were located, and they all used a similar standard when choosing their child's school, and as a result, most of them chose the same school. This is what Bourdieu (1977) described as "homology" (p. 86), where participants' identification with social class determined their high level of involvement in school selection. The participants, being mature and educated mothers who belonged to an advantaged group in China, found that their habitus did not fit with the dominant culture in the city's downtown. Hence, they chose to live outside of the

downtown area, avoiding having to enroll their children in schools located there. This was essential to the participants because they felt secure connecting with people who had a similar habitus as them. Participants' satisfaction with their selected school, stemmed from the neighbourhood environment and the social class of their child's peers. The participants' school choices demonstrated a process of capital conversion and power reproduction. They invested their financial resources to exchange an opportunity for (what they viewed as) better education. The costs of owning property (in order to secure a seat in a high-ranked school), as an alternative form to the cost of schooling, is perceived as a "scholastic investment" by the participants (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 48). In other words, participants tried to reproduce their middle-class identity through selecting a school for their children. During this process, participants translated their social and economic powers into their children's educational privileges, but at the same time, they reproduced the social class inequality and education divisions. Transferring schools and relocating homes were the actions that participants took in order to create a geographical distance between their children and the students that were not in their social class. Bourdieu (1977) implied that social distance is a key aspect of stratification: "so many reminders of this distance and of the conduct required in order to 'keep one's distance' or to manipulate it strategically (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82). Participants' school choice clearly demonstrates this class stratification division.

An Emphasis on Integration

As new comers, participants understood the limitations that their children faced in the Canadian school system. They were trying their best to assist their children break through this limitation, and more importantly, to better adapt to the main stream society.

The participants were concerned with their children's school adaptation because they wanted to know if their children could fit in the dominant culture. Data suggests that the participants with young children continually demonstrated an integration attitude through the school selection process. The Framework of Acculturation (Berry 1984) is applied to explain parents' considerations in school selection. Berry explored immigrants' process of acculturation according to their attitude towards two questions: the value of maintaining cultural identity and characteristics and maintaining relationships with other groups. This process generated four attitudes: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation. The participants were from China, and they insisted their children maintain their Chinese cultural identity and characteristics, requiring one to be obedient, respectful, and well-disciplined. Data shows that the participants also hoped their children would build smooth relationship with other people in schools. The participants consistently mentioned the importance of social acceptance in schools. The reason behind this thought is that participants had hoped their children would maintain good relationships with children and teachers from other ethnic groups, as they now lived in a city in Southwestern Ontario with great cultural diversity.

As Chinese speakers, participants were particularly concerned about their children's language development because they viewed the ability to speak English or French as a contributor to school adaptation. Suarez-Orozco, Onaga and De Lardemelle (2010) indicated that without mastering English, immigrant students would not be able to understand the cultural and linguistic interactions experienced by their native-born peers. Participants believed that the success or failure to use English or French to communicate with peers and teachers heavily influenced the quality of school adaption. This explained

why the participants were concerned about their children's language development as they did not want their children to experience linguistic difficulty, especially when it came to French, a language that these parents did not understand and could not provide their children assistance with. Participants believed that understanding the taught language, whether it was English or French, enabled children with the ability to communicate with their peers and follow teachers' instructions.

Data also shows that all the young children were enrolled in the same French Immersion School. This has something to do with the school's excellent academic outcomes, and more importantly, it reflects parents' expectation that mastering two official languages and understanding Canadian's bilingual culture and values, could benefit their children's future. Aydemir, Chen, and Corak's (2013) found that the education of immigrant children often signals an important outcome related to the mainstream value and the capabilities to succeed in the labour market. In accordance with this research, participants expected their children, through bilingual education, to integrate into the Canadian mainstream society and have a successful career.

Parent-teacher Communication and the Cultural Influence

Regarding communication experiences, participants used a variety of ways to interact with teachers. Data suggests that after experiencing some confusions, most of the participants took every opportunity to participate in parent-teacher meetings, some of them worked voluntarily and attended activities arranged by schools. During these interactions, most of the participants were flexible communicators, and one parent took an active role initiating meetings with teachers. All of them became aware of the

importance of communicating with teachers as they knew that it was beneficial to their children's education. Their view is consistent with the previous findings (Jiang, Zhou, Zhang, Beckford, & Zhong, 2012) that, Chinese parents are aware that they have the responsibility to foster communication with teachers because they recognise that this is beneficial to their children. However, the findings of this research is partly inconsistent with Zhong and Zhou's (2011) finding that Chinese immigrant parents show high interest but demonstrate very limited level of school involvement. In this research, many of the participants showed a relatively high level of involvement in communication. The inconsistency produced in this research is due to the participants' educational and social backgrounds. The participants' confidence of their linguistic ability and their high intention of adaptation to the mainstream culture are the major contributors to this difference.

Participants were relatively new to the country when they were participating in this research. Their Chinese viewpoints still influenced their concerns and expectations in parent-teacher communication, and how they approached and interacted with the teachers. Participants were expected to receive information about their child's learning because they wanted to help their children to review at home, so that they can achieve excellent academic attainments. According to Huntsinger and Jose (2009), the cognitive-intellectual type of parental involvement influences young Chinese American children's academic success. The participants' belief of providing home-based supervision is apparently driven by this Chinese mindset. Participants understood the importance of communication, but the ways of communication were shaped by their Chinese experiences and the culture characteristics. In Chinese schools, teachers have authority

and power and they normally take the lead in the parent-teacher conversations. One participant of this research got used to the Chinese ways and she took a passive role while communicating with teachers. She waited for the teachers to start the conversation and pick a topic. Although she sensed that the communication mode was different in Canada, but she did not know how to adjust herself. The other participants became aware of this cultural difference, and they adjusted by allowing themselves to integrate into the new environment where parents are expected to be an active communicator and a volunteer contributor to school activities. Because of this adjustment, many of the participants actively engaged in school activities and parent-teacher interactions. This result was different from Zhong and Zhou's (2011) finding that Chinese immigrant parents demonstrated limited involvement in parent-teacher communication. Again, the participants' high learning ability, their ability to understand English, and their intention of integration are contributing factors to this.

Multiple Types of Involvement

Involvement activities that participants shared in their interviews indicate that three types of parental involvement were adopted in their interactions with schools. It did not fully match Epstein's (1995) theory which reflects a cooperative relationship between school, family and community. In this theory, six types of involvement were developed based on educators' perspectives and aiming to help students become successful in school and in their later life. According to interviews, all participants collectively used three types of involvement, include communicating, volunteering and learning at home, but they did not utilize the other three types, which are parenting, decision making, and collaborating with community.

In regards to the forms of parental involvement that they selected, participants hold expectations based on their own experiences in China. Evidence shows that a majority of participants got involved in a two-way communication with teachers and this is the communication way that they were most familiar with in China. Such effective communications include student work folders and student report cards to be sent home, and school notices and newsletters to be distributed regularly. Data also suggests that some parents did voluntary work in schools. To them, volunteering is a chance for them to understand their children's school performance. They chose to attend based on their own needs, and it was for their own and the children's benefits. However, the results that generated in this research were partly inconsistent with what was expected in Epstein's (1995) school, family and community partnership model, in where, volunteering should produce results which benefits both students, parents and teachers (p. 706). Participants wanted to obtain more information from the teachers and it showed that they have an eagerness in assisting their children to learn at home, this matches Zhong and Zhou's (2011) finding, although they complained that the information that provided by teachers were insufficient.

Data suggests that participants were not clear about the purpose of attending the parent committee meetings. Although some of them attended such meetings to discuss school issues, participants did not get involved in making decisions for school. This is due to the participants being new to this country, and they were not aware of the role that Canadian teachers expect them to play. According to Guo (2011), Asian parents believe that parents should not interfere with school management as they view teachers as authority over their children's education. Participants were still holding their Chinese

cultural assumption, they may see parents' decision making as a challenge to teachers' authority and an interference to school. Also, data did not show any involvement that parents collaborate with community. This is consistent with Ji and Koblinsk's (2009) finding that Chinese parents neither participated in the school's decision making nor in community and school collaborations (p. 700). The possible explanation is that Chinese parents may not be aware of any community activities that can benefit their children's education. Also, participants learned from their prior experiences that Chinese schools are highly competitive and students are very busy with their daily homework, students hardly have time to participate in community activities.

Participants did not fully utilize the six types of involvement because those involvement types were constructed in the Western cultural context and based on white middle-class teachers' expectations. As new comers to Canada, participants need time to educate themselves with Canadian culture, especially, to understand that they have the rights to make decisions and they are expected to do so. Participants also need to understand that the community resources are always available and can contribute to their children's education. Upon understanding so, they can provide multi-dimensional supports to their children.

Psychological Factors that Influenced Parent-Teacher Communication

In terms of parents' communication experiences with teachers, it is essential to understand why parents communicate with teachers, what forms they chose to take, and why they believed that their communications influence their children. This research tries to adapt Walker et al.'s (2005) psychological model to explain the international student-

parents' communication patterns. The model includes three psychological factors: parents' motivational beliefs, parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others, and parents' perceived life context.

Parents' motivational beliefs. This was defined as parental role construction and parental self-efficacy. The six participants all understood that they had the responsibility to communicate with teachers. They were also willing to participate in parent-teacher meetings, or use other forms to interact with teachers. Many of the participants demonstrated that they were active communicators. They highly valued the opportunities as they knew that communication would be beneficial to their children. Thus, they made good use of every chance to share their concerns, show their attitudes, and address their children's problems. Most of the participants had confidence in their own abilities, and their confidence motivated them to be actively involved in communication with teachers. Also, participants were clear about their own strengths and weaknesses, and every participant chose a workable form to communicate with teachers. These effective communications fueled them with confidence and led to further active engagements.

Parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others. In explaining participants' communication patterns, invitations from others should be taken into account. Participants did not mention too much about specific invitations from children as they viewed communication as a responsibility, whether children invite them or not does not influence their participation. Instead, teachers' attitude is their major concern, because they wanted to develop constructive relationships with the teachers. Parents perceived general invitations from schools as an important signal, and it determined their

levels of communication. In this research, participants sensed the schools' welcoming climates and teachers welcomed their cooperation, they made every effort to communicate with teachers. The communication was productive, and it also significantly helped their children's education and school adaptation. In other words, teachers' invitations not only stimulated participating parents' interactions, but also fostered quality parent-teacher communication.

Parents' perceived life context. This is defined as parents' self-perceived time and energy, and self-perceived skills and knowledge. Participants of this research communicated with teachers in different ways, including parent-teacher meetings, communication books, letters and notes, school online platforms, and chatting with teachers during drop-off or pick-up time. Participants strategically chose these various ways according to their individual situations. They had the required time and energy as they were full-time students and they can allocate their time. Their university education also helped them accumulate required skills and knowledge that could benefit the parent-teacher communication. Therefore, participants could freely choose different forms to interact with teachers.

Participants were selected from a group of international students. They had been using English as their medium of communication since they enrolled in university. The frequent usage of the language helped them advance their English ability, and they became more confident in using English in their studies as well as in their daily life. This explained that although participants admitted that their spoken English was not fluent but they did not view English as a barrier in communication with teachers. This is inconsistent with Ji and Koblinsky's findings (2009) that one of the major communicative

barriers for urban Chinese immigrant parents was their limited English skills. In sum, these international student-parents' university education increased their language abilities, helped them understand the local school system, and gave them opportunities to get to know local Canadians. These opportunities strengthened their confidence in communication with teachers, and the more they got involved in these interactions the better experiences they would have.

Implications

This research was conducted to deepen every stakeholder's understanding towards this unique group of international students. Findings of this research have several implications for the universities, settlement organizations, and school boards.

Results of this research indicated that the Chinese international student-parents were challenged by cultural differences and a lack of knowledge of the Canadian education system. Some service adjustments are suggested to tackle these challenges. The university should adjust recruitment policies in meeting the international student-parents' needs, the message on the recruitment package should be updated and include information about elementary and high school in the city that the university is located in. The universities can provide trainings to the staff who assist the international students, so that they can handle inquiries related to elementary and high schools. The university student advisors should also equip themselves with relevant knowledge, include schools information and settlement services availabilities in order to handle international student-parents' further inquiries. Alternatively, the university can provide a pathway for international student-parents to gain necessary information for their children. For

example, school board's link to be posted on the international student center's website, or the print copies of the elementary and high school list and the contact information should be available in the international student center.

In addition, the university can make itself a better platform to assist this group of international student access to education and settlement services. For instance, they can invite settlement workers and school board professionals to conduct joint workshops, the workshop topics should include understanding local schools and the school culture; school selection and school registration; teachers and school community; children's rights in education; the placement for ESL learners. The workshop facilitators can also invite volunteer parents to provide guidance as they will be able to answer questions from the parents' perspectives. These useful workshops do not occupy too much of the university's resources and are beneficial to the international students and their children. In attending these workshops, parents can gain a better understanding of the Canadian culture, educational system and school community. It is believed that through the joint efforts that every stakeholder makes, the international student parents' needs can be met, and barriers can be coped with.

Conclusion

What are the experiences of Chinese international student-parents in selecting a school for their children and when they engage in parent-teacher communication?

The participants, although only had limited school information when were new to Canada, still made a satisfied school choice. During the school selection process, participants' perceptions on school and the actions that they took were influenced by their

Chinese culture, class identity and the anxiety of their children's future. They carefully selected the high-ranked schools, with the expectation of their child's excellent academic attainments, and through that they become a member of the social class that their peers and teachers were from. In addition, they emphasized adaptation in school, and this thought led by their desire of integration into the host society.

When they communicated with teachers, participants were first influenced by Chinese culture where they required teachers to pay more attention to their children and actively respond to their concerns. Many of them made a prompt adjustment and learned to use different ways to form effective communication. Participants understood their own strengths and weaknesses and chose the best way to communicate with the teachers. They made good use of the opportunities to obtain information that they needed, and at the same time, delivered their attitude and concerns. The frequency of interaction depended on their children's age level and their needs. In sum, participants learned to understand Canadian culture, and they became effective communicators.

What challenges have these parents encountered in regards to school selection and parent-teacher communication?

The unfamiliarity of the school system and the cultural barriers are the challenges that arose in the participants' involvement. They did not create obstacles in school selection but in parent-teacher communication. The most significant influence that appeared was the different views that parents and teachers hold in regards to students' behavioural issues. Parents attributed the disagreements to cultural differences. Another cultural barrier was that Canadian parents are encouraged to play an active role in making

decisions for school and engaging in many school activities. Participants with their own cultural characteristics found it hard to follow. They needed time to adjust themselves to adapt into the Canadian culture.

Besides, participants admitted that their verbal English was not fluent but it did not create obstacles in school selection and parent-teacher communication. Participants were confident that they understood all necessary information, if not, they utilized alternative ways in communication which covered their linguistic shortage. Written form communication was their choice which helped them expressed their minds clearly and effectively.

How did the Chinese international student-parents cope with the challenges?

Participants of this research held an open-minded attitude, and they used problem-solving skills to overcome challenges that arose in school selection and parent-teacher communication. Participants actively collected information that they anticipated is useful before selecting schools, in both China and Canada. They were strategical in collecting information, selecting resources and making good use of their social and economic powers. Whenever there were problems, they promptly sought help from the school board, the university and the community. These are ways that they managed the difficulties in the school selection process. In speaking of communication with teachers, participants realized the cultural differences. They were flexible in handling problems, and they wisely chose a comfortable way to interact with the teachers, and in the meantime, they can effectively deliver their own messages. Through the prompt and

effective communication with teachers, participants became a contributor to their children's education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Background Questions: (Part I)

1. Please briefly introduce your educational and working background in China.
2. When did you come to Canada? Why did you choose to come to Canada/Southwestern, Ontario?
3. What level of education do you currently enroll in, or have completed at this Southwestern University? What is or was your major?
4. How many of your children are currently enrolled in local school(s)? What grade is he/she in now? How long has he/she been in his/her school?

Open-ended Questions: (Part II)

School Selection

5. When you chose the school for your child, what factors did you consider?
6. Is the school your child is attending your best choice?
 - a. If not, please describe the decision making process?
7. Did your child change schools?

a. If yes, why? Please describe the decision making process?

8. What were the major challenges you experienced in this process? From your point of view, why did these challenges took place?

a. Did you get any assistance in school selection? If yes, please elaborate on the assistance you got (what, how, and why)?

Communication with teachers

9. Did you attend the parent-teacher meetings?

a. Why did you or didn't you attend?

10. What were your major concerns during these meetings?

11. Are you satisfied with these meetings?

12. What were the challenges you experienced during these meetings?

13. Have you communicated with the teachers outside of the parent-teacher meetings?

a. If yes, in which way(s) (e.g. in person, make phone call) did you communicate with your children's teachers?

14. What were you major concerns in these communications with the teachers?

15. Do you think the teachers encouraged you to communicate with them? Please explain.

16. Do you think the teachers are interested in the topics you talked about with them?

Please elaborate.

17. What challenges have you experienced in communicating with the teachers? Please explain.

18. Did you get any assistance in the communication?

a. If yes, please elaborate on the assistance you get (what, how, and why)?

19. In general, are you satisfied with the quality of the communications with the teachers?

Please explain.

20. How could the communication with the teachers be improved?

21. Any further comments.

Parent Interview Guide (Chinese Translation)

第一部分:

1. 请简单介绍一下你在中国的教育和工作背景。
2. 你何时来加拿大? 为什么选择来加拿大或者来这个位于安省西南部的城市?
3. 你在这所大学学习/毕业的程度是什么? 你的主修是什么?
4. 你有几个孩子进了这边的学校? 他/她现在读几年级? 来这边学校多久了?

第二部分:

- 学校选择的问题:

5. 你为孩子选择学校, 考虑过什么因素?
6. 你孩子目前的学校是最好的选择吗?
 - a. 如果不是, 请描述一下做决定的过程。
7. 你孩子有转过学校吗?
 - a. 如果有, 为什么? 请描述一下做决定的过程。
8. 在择校的过程中, 你遇到的主要挑战是什么? 你觉得为什么会产生这些困难呢?
 - a. 在择校的过程中, 你有没有得到任何帮助? 如果有, 请描述你得到的帮助 (是什

么样的帮助？怎样帮？为什么？）

- 和老师沟通的问题：

9. 你有没有参加家长会？

a. 为什么有/没有参加？

10. 参加家长会你最主要关心的是什么？

11. 这些家长会你满意吗？

12. 有没有遇到过什么挑战？

13. 你有没有和老师在家长会之外进行沟通？

a. 如果有，你用什么方法进行沟通？（例如：去找老师，打电话）

14. 在这些沟通中，你最主要关心的是什么？

15. 你觉得老师鼓励你跟他们沟通吗？请解释。

16. 你认为老师对你谈论的话题感兴趣吗？请描述。

17. 跟老师沟通有没有遇到什么挑战？请解释。

18. 在沟通时，你有没有得到帮助？

a. 如果有，请描述你得到的帮助（是什么样的帮助？怎样帮？为什么？）

19. 总体来说，你对和老师的沟通质量感到满意吗？请解释。

20. 你认为和老师的沟通如何能改善？

21. 有没有进一步的评论。

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter

Dear Chinese International Students,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Wai Ying Ho, a Master candidate from Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. I am now doing a research under supervision of Dr. George Zhou. This research focuses on Chinese international students or graduates from the University of Windsor who at least have one child in school while they are or were a student of the university.

I am requesting your participation in my research titled: “Chinese international students’ parental involvement in regards to their children’s education”.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the experiences that Chinese international students have when they get involved in their children’s education, the challenges that they may have encountered, and the ways that they have used to coping with these challenges.

Participation is voluntary basis, and you will be required to attend a one-to-one interview at your convenient time and location. All information you provide will be confidential.

The research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. If you are interested to my research, feel free to email me at: ho11p@uwindsor.ca.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact: Research Ethics Board, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca.

Warm regards,

Wai Ying Ho



**LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN
RESEARCH**

Title of Research: *Parental Involvement of Chinese International Students in Regards to Their Children's School Selection and Communication with Teachers*

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Wai Ying Ho, a Master candidate from Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Now, I am doing my master thesis under the supervision of Dr. George Zhou. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact me at ho11p@uwindsor.ca or my research supervisor Dr. George Zhou at gzhou@uwindsor.ca.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences that the Chinese international student parents have and the challenges that they may have faced when they get involved in their children's education. Their ways of coping with those challenges are also worth to explore.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this research, you will engage in a one-to-one interview. Each interview will be guided by two parts of questions, and will take about one hour. The first part of the instrument contains several background questions, aiming to collect basic information of participants. The second part of the instrument is mainly open-ended

questions, which are carefully developed to explore interviewees' thoughts, and those questions should avoid causing any discomfort and offence.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The way of collecting data in this research is mainly focus on one-to-one interview, participants may experience uncomfortable or upset feelings while they narrate their own stories. To minimize these potential risks, the researcher will allow them to skip or refuse the question that may trigger such feelings. Also, participants will probably worry about leaking out privacy or influencing their reputations. In order to manage these risks, the researcher will ensure the participants that she will not tell others about their personal stories, and she will keep everything that they have shared confidential.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This research is an opportunity to hear voices from the specific group of parents, to increase awareness of these parents' needs so that adequate helps can be provided to enhance their children's education eventually. The results of this research will bring implications to the university student advisors, settlement workers, and school board professionals in providing not only individual assistance to the international students themselves but also to their families as a whole. Participants of this research will not receive any direct benefits, but will benefit with a better understanding of parental involvement, and this will contribute to their children's education in an indirect way.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

A \$25 Tim Hortons' gift card will be given to each of the participant as incentive.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this research will remain confidential, and will be disclosed only with your permission. Pseudonym will be used to protect all participants' privacy. All participants' personal information, audio recordings, raw data, and transcripts will be securely handled and stored in separated password-protected files in the researcher's laptop. The laptop is only accessed by the researcher. When there is a need, access will be provided to the researcher's supervisor. Once the report is finished, all raw data which can lead to an identification of the participants will be obliterated.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

The interview is voluntary basis. You can choose whether or not to participate. The interview is guided by a list of questions, however, you have your rights to skip or refuse to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable with. You can choose to withdraw at any time until the data is aggregated. However, once the data has been aggregated and interpreted, you will have no more right for withdrawal.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

A summary of research findings will be posted on the CAGW website and the University of Windsor REB website. A print copy will be displayed at the CAGW center.

Web address: www.cagw.net, www.uwindsor.ca/reb, <http://cagw.net>

Date when results are available: December, 2017

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Research: *Parental Involvement of Chinese International Students in Regards to Their Children's School Selection and Communication with Teachers*

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Wai Ying Ho, a Master candidate from Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Now, I am doing my master thesis under the supervision of Dr. George Zhou. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact me at ho11p@uwindsor.ca or my research supervisor Dr. George Zhou at gzhou@uwindsor.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences that the Chinese international student parents have and the challenges that they may have faced when they get involved in their children's education. Their ways of coping with those challenges are also worth to explore.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this research, you will engage in a one-to-one interview. Each interview will be guided by two parts of questions, and will take about one hour. The first part of the instrument contains several background questions, aiming to collect basic information of participants. The second part of the instrument is mainly open-ended questions, which are carefully developed to explore interviewees' thoughts, and those questions should avoid causing any discomfort and offence.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The way of collecting data in this research is one-to-one interview. Participants may experience uncomfortable or upset feelings while they narrate their own stories. To minimize these potential risks, the researcher will allow them to skip or refuse the question that may trigger such feelings. Also, participants will probably worry about leaking out privacy or influencing their reputations. In order to manage these risks, the researcher will ensure the participants that she will not tell others about their personal stories, and she will keep everything that they have shared confidential.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This research is an opportunity to hear voices from the specific group of parents, to increase awareness of these parents' needs so that adequate helps can be provided to enhance their children's education eventually. The results of this research will bring implications to the university student advisors, settlement workers, and school board professionals in providing not only individual assistance to the international students themselves but also to their families as a whole. Participants of this research will not receive any direct benefits, but will benefit with a better understanding of parental involvement, and this will contribute to their children's education in an indirect way.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

A \$25 Tim Hortons' gift card will be given to each of the participant as incentive.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this research will remain confidential, and will be disclosed only with your permission. Pseudonym will be used to protect all participants' privacy. All participants' personal information, audio recordings, raw data, and transcripts will be securely handled and stored in separated password-protected files in the researcher's laptop. The laptop is only accessed by the researcher. When there is a need, access will be provided to the researcher's supervisor. Once the report is finished, all raw data which can lead to an identification of the participants will be obliterated.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

The interview is voluntary basis. You can choose whether or not to participate. The

interview is guided by a list of questions, however, you have your rights to skip or refuse to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable with. You can choose to withdraw at any time until the data is aggregated. However, once the data has been aggregated and interpreted, you will have no more right for withdrawal.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

A summary of research findings will be posted on the CAGW website and the University of Windsor REB website. A print copy will be displayed at the CAGW center.

Web address: www.cagw.net, www.uwindsor.ca/reb, <http://cagw.net>

Date when results are available: December, 2017

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study [Parental Involvement of Chinese International Students in Regards to their Children's School Selection and Communication with Teachers] as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this research. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date



CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Title of the Research: *Parental Involvement of Chinese International Students in Regards to Their Children’s School Selection and Communication with Teachers*

I consent to the audio-recording of interview.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the recording be stopped. I also understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that the recordings will be kept confidential. Recordings are stored in different password-protected files in the researcher’s personal laptop.

The audio recordings will be obliterated after the report is done.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and that the audio recordings will be for professional use only.

Research Participant

Date

VITA AUCTORIS

Wai Ying Ho was born and grew up in Guangzhou, China. She had her initial teacher training in Guangzhou University and became a kindergarten and primary school English teacher. She then moved to Hong Kong and became a Mandarin teacher in international schools. She worked with excellent teachers from many different countries, and these colleagues opened up her visions. She became aware of the cultural differences between Chinese students and students from other countries. In addition, she was also very curious about the developmental differences among individuals, especially gifted learners. She decided to upgrade her knowledge to fulfill her interest, so she returned to schools and earned her bachelor degree in early childhood education from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and her master degree in guidance and counselling from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

After completing the master degree in 2014, Wai Ying worked for several months in a non-profit organization as a volunteer counsellor. She used her knowledge and educational experiences to assist parents, especially those who have special needs children, to cope with their children's behavioural issues and navigate them in education.

In the summer of 2015, she was enrolled in the Master of Education program in the University of Windsor. With the help of her teachers, she learned how to develop a research project, how to design research questions, and how to conduct a research. She has also carried on some research work, from where she further accumulated research experiences.

Wai Ying Ho is creative and responsible both in her learning and work. She is a

positive, well-organized person and is easy to cooperate with. She has ambitious in gifted education and is exploring her ways in assisting students of this kind and their parents.