

An Exploration of the Motivation of Chinese Students for Studying
in a Master of Education Degree in Canada

Shimeng Wang, B.Sc., M.Ed.

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate
Studies in Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

©Shimeng Wang 2017

Abstract

China has become the largest source of international students moving to western countries including the USA, the UK, Australia, and Canada (OECD, 2016). Research on international students' motivation to study abroad provided insights into the benefits of overseas study and categorized potential factors under the "push and pull" model which divided these motivators into aspects of both the home and host countries. However, few studies focused on Chinese international postgraduates' decision-making process. Using a basic interpretative qualitative research method, this study explored the motivations of Chinese students pursuing a Master degree in an Ontario university. Data was collected by open-ended in-depth interviews. Participants were eight Chinese international students from a Master program specialized for international students. The narratives provided information as to why they chose to study in Canada, with the themes summarizing this information under the push and pull factors. The findings indicate that of the various reasons cited for deciding to study abroad among the students surveyed, immigration was the primary motivation. The reasons given by the students for wanting to emigrate from China can be explained by a number of push and pull factors, as can their decision to study abroad.

Acknowledgements

I wish my words could express my thankfulness to all those people who have assisted me in this arduous academic journey.

Much appreciation to my professor, Dr. Michael O'Sullivan, for his warm response to my application which is actually challenging myself to do this research, for his diligent and professional review, suggestions, and polishing of my work, and for his continuous encouragement. Deepest thanks to Dr. Vera Woloshyn for her invaluable assistance, for her ongoing guidance, and for her enthusiasm to international students.

Special thanks to my professor Dr. Hong Zhu, without whose continuous concern on my academic performance, there would not be this research: your words guided more than my work.

To my wonderful husband Liang Tang, who sacrificed his career to satisfy my dream of studying in Canada, for his love, support, and distraction throughout the whole journey: if I had worked hard as you, I should have done it faster. Thank you to my parents, grandmother, and all my family members for their unconditional back up.

To my dear friend Zhuo Pang and Kuang Feng who were always there for me; to all my friends whose concern pushed me to complete this project.

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
My Story.....	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Research Questions	4
Rationale.....	5
Scope and Limitations.....	5
Outline of the Paper.....	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
Globalization	8
Internationalization of Higher Education.....	10
Students' Motivation for Study Abroad.....	13
International Students in Canada.....	17
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	21
Research Design.....	21
Data Analysis	26
Trustworthiness of Data	27
Ethical Considerations.....	28
Limitations	29
CHAPTER FOUR: INTERVIEW FINDINGS	31
Narrative.....	31
Themes	57
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS	72
Initial Perception and New Understanding.....	72
Discussion	73
Recommendation.....	78
Future Research.....	79
Final Thoughts.....	80
References.....	82

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Participant Demographics	23
2. Countries Identified in Interview	69

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1. The Numbers of Applicants and Enrollment	62
2. Number of Chinese Students Studying Abroad	64

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Many factors drive Chinese students to study abroad. These include the political environment in China, the conception that developed countries have a higher quality of education, difficulties in getting an offer from Chinese universities, improving their English, the wish to gain Western experience and international exposure, family's financial background, desire for travelling and broadening perspective on life, and becoming better prepared for future career (Bodycott, 2009; Chen, 2006; Mazzarol, Soutar, Smart, & Choo, 2001; Yang, 2007). In order to choose a destination, students will consider a variety of factors including safety, geographical proximity to China, recommendations from friends and alumni, the university's reputation and ranking, scholarship, higher quality of education, future opportunity of immigration, ability to meet the entrance requirement, the possibility of getting a working visa (Bodycott, 2009; Chen, 2006; Lu, Mavondo, & Qiu, 2010; Liu, Elston, & Zhou, 2013; Yang, 2007).

My Story

I am the only child of my family, growing up in a middle-sized city located in northeast part of China. My best friend ignited my dream of studying abroad, for she went to study in South Africa when she was in secondary school. I was fascinated with her description of the foreign life – living with a white senior lady so that she could reduce or even eliminate her Chinese accented English, registering in first aid training course, and learning Scuba dive. In 1999, when I was in Grade 7, one of my classmates moved to Fiji, an independent state located in the south Pacific, because her father had to work there. As a result, she was admired by the whole class including our home teacher. In 2003, when I was in Grade 11, another close friend of mine was sent to New Zealand

by her parents who hoped their daughter could study in a good university. When I completed my secondary education at my Chinese public school, my national college entrance exam – Gaokao – score failed in sending me to my dream university but helped me obtain a scholarship from a private international secondary school in Dalian, where I spent one more year in preparing for my second Gaokao. My classmates in that school were from rich families and some had lower performance in these important examinations and were thus not able to attend the more prestigious universities in China. Thus, their parents arranged them to pursue higher education abroad. Because study abroad is an expensive option, it is not available to most Chinese students who find that their entrance examination scores are not very good.

When I enrolled in the university, my father told me the story of one of his colleagues who had given up a government job in order to immigrate to Australia in order to give his kindergarten son a higher quality of education. If there had been a similar opportunity 15 years ago, my father would also have chosen to leave. During my sophomore year in 2008, my cousin went to study in Japan. This brought honour to our family. In my case, western countries were more appealing to me. My mother consulted with an overseas education agent about masters programs in the USA and I will never forget the price: 600,000 renminbi (equivalent to \$120,000 USD). It was an astronomical figure. Needless to say, study in the US was out of the question.

After attending the national postgraduate entrance examination, I was admitted to the M.Ed. of Elementary Education in Northeast Normal University (NENU). It was there that I met professor Dr. Hong Zhu, who got her Ph.D. at the University of Toronto. She would become a mentor to me. Her story of pursuing an overseas degree encouraged

me. She was also in charge of NENU's first full English instruction graduate degree program, which was authorized and funded by China's Ministry of Education. Most students of this program were from developing countries, such as Nigeria, Tanzania, Cambodia, and Colombia. As a teaching assistant of this international student program, I had opportunities to attend their classes, seminars, and help them deal with many kinds of problems. Their experience of pursuing education touched and inspired me, which reminded me my dream of studying abroad.

As grandmother lived with us, her stories had accompanied me since I was five years old. The frequent repeated stories were about how five of her brothers and herself pursued higher education. It was very hard for a family to support even one child to go to university. Education was highly valued by my great grandfather who was a landlord in the early twentieth century. He had sold the land to pay for the tuition fees of his children who became experts in their field. Nor were these children the only ones of the earlier generations to study abroad. For example, my grandma was very proud of her cousin who had studied in Japan with the support of my great grandfather in 1940s. I felt responsible to honour my family with a higher overseas degree.

Purpose of the Study

According to the BK university website, 10 percent of the students are international students (Brock University, 2015), which consist 30 percent of graduate students (Brock University, 2017). There are some degree programs and non-degree programs are designed for international student, such as M.Ed. International Student Program and the Professional Masters Preparation Certificate (PMPC) program which is a bridge program to graduate school which mainly focused on improving students'

English level. From my observations and from talking to former students, it is clear that over 90 percent of students in these programs are from China.

As a Chinese international student studying in a Canadian university, I experienced the similar challenges and difficulties as my fellow classmates. Group work was one of those challenges because it was easy to find some individuals who did not contribute their required work. I was shocked by their slackness in dealing with their schoolwork, which caused me to question their real purpose in applying for this Master degree. However, it seemed that everyone took their assignments' score to heart. They would be unhappy with lower marks and some of them even hired English tutors to revise their essays. Some courses had the reputation of being taught by professors who would give failing grades. My fellow students commented that they were less worried about the money that these tactics cost than they were of prolonging their program and thus delaying their ability to begin the immigration process which requires that they successfully complete the program. Every time that I was frustrated with academic assignments and trivial matters, there was a voice inside me questioning my decision to study in Canada. It seemed easier to surrender to the temptation to give up than it was to resist. In order to fight against this inner defeatist voice, I had to keep in mind what prompted me to come to study in Canada. This research will add more voices from Chinese international students thus contributing to the gap in the academic literature with respect to Chinese international student motivations to study abroad.

Research Questions

My research questions are:

1. Why did the participants elect to study abroad at a Canadian university?

2. Why did participants choose to enroll in the M.Ed. program at this University?
3. What were the participants' hopes and expectations for their lives after graduation?
4. Do participants want to remain in Canada after graduation? Why or why not?

Rationale

The alignment between international students' perceptions of an international program and reality of that program is an important factor for student satisfaction (Drăgan, Ivana, & Arba, 2014). After graduating from the M.Ed. (ISP) program at this Ontario University, students have the choice of staying in Canada or returning to China. In addition to investigating student motivation for choosing Canadian and this university's ISP program, this study examined motivation of those ISP graduates who want to remain in Canada and those who chose to return to China. This research study also aimed to elicit international students' perceptions about the value of the M.Ed. degree in finding desirable work, from those who are currently looking for part time work in Canada while studying. The research findings will contribute to knowledge of the M. Ed.(ISP) program and international students' motivations to study abroad.

Scope and Limitations

This research is limited to a master program of an Ontario university. Given the small size of the research sample, the research findings cannot be generalized. Also, as all of the participants were chosen from one international student program in one faculty of one university, they cannot be considered as representing for the other Chinese students from other Master program in this or in other universities.

The translation from Chinese to English might influence the accuracy of quotes. In this study, interviews were conducted in Mandarin (Chinese) and I did the translation

to English. There is an inevitable risk that translations do not give an account of the nuance of what was told in the original language. As both my participants and I come from China, however, communicating with our native language rather than English reduced many obstacles that can arise when speaking in a second language and increased mutual understanding. Therefore, I am confident that quotes reflect the essential meanings of my participants.

Outline of the Paper

In Chapter Two, I review the literature on globalization, internationalization of higher education, and their influence on the trend of overseas study in China. Recent studies on motivations of international student mobility were summarized and push and pull model was chosen to explain the research findings. I also examined the research on international students in Canada to find why it was more attractive as a destination country.

Chapter Three details the qualitative research method I used in this study. I also explain the rationale and procedures to apply the Basic Interpretive Qualitative research method, how participants were recruited and screened, and how data was collected and analyzed. The trustworthiness of the data, ethical consideration and limitation form the rest of this chapter.

In Chapter Four, the first section is comprised of the stories of the seven participants which briefly tell of their education background, family status, reasons they chose to study abroad, how they chose Canada and this university as their destination, what kind of volunteer or part time work they experienced while they studied, whether they would choose to stay in Canada after graduation and why they made that decision.

The themes that emerged from the interview data, my field notes and my flexible research journal constitute the second section of this chapter.

In Chapter Five, I comment on the themes and discussed the implication of these findings. Recommendations to the program and future research were also included. At last, I wrote my final thoughts to this research journey.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand Chinese students' motivations to study in Canada, it is essential to understand the globalization and the internationalization of higher education. This leads us to consider the development and influence of globalization on Chinese higher education. The motivation of international students' decision to study abroad will then be discussed within the framework of the "push and pull" model of population movements. International students in Canada will be focused on to find the reasons why Canada becomes competitive as a destination country.

Globalization

Knight and de Wit (1997) defined globalization as "the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas...across borders" (p.6). It influences each country in a variety of ways owing to the nation's distinctive history, traditions, culture and priorities. Globalization is also a continuously world-changing process, which is influenced by different political, cultural, and economic trends (Scheuerman, 2014).

The concept of globalization has come into general usage beginning in the 1970s, however, scholars such as Scheuerman (2014) and Harvey (1996) noted that certain observers in the early to mid-nineteenth century were commenting on how technology was reducing distance dramatically. In the early days this referred to trains and telegraph.

Despite these nineteenth-century developments that so amazed the observers of the day, globalization is a much more modern term. Even Marshall McLuhan who coined the concept *global village* in the mid-1960s did not use the term globalization although he recognized that this global village was a product of technology which makes possible an "acceleration at all levels of human organization" (McLuhan, 1964, p.103). However, it

was a German philosopher Martin Heidegger who very clearly foresaw the modern world. Heidegger depicted the “abolition of distance” as the characteristics of contemporary circumstance: “All distances in time and space are shrinking. Man now reaches overnight, by plane, places which formerly took weeks and months of travel” (Heidegger, 1950, p. 164). Heidegger further foretold the cataclysm would happen with innovative communication and information technologies: “The peak of this abolition of every possibility of remoteness is reached by television, which will soon pervade and dominate the whole machinery of communication” (Heidegger, 1950, p. 164).

With respect to contemporary conceptualizations of globalization, Scheuerman argues that it is characterized by “deterritorialization,” by the increment of “social interconnectedness,” the “speed or velocity of social activity,” and is conceived as a “multi-pronged process” in political, economic and cultural activities (Scheuerman, 2014, p. 4-6). Deterritorialization means more and more activities go on without the limitation of participants’ geographical location. For example, students who study abroad are better equipped to work in a global economy where their work might involve dealing with clients all over the world; high school students and their parents from China can communicate with their friends who study and live in Canada through Internet to know about the first-hand information of Canadian universities; commercial activities take on business people from different parts of the world through electronic commerce. Therefore, globalization challenges the traditional boundary of nations and changes people’s social life and education at all levels and especially student global movements are informed by most of Scheuerman’s (2014) characteristics of globalization.

Internationalization of Higher Education

The research on internationalization in higher education covers a variety of themes and topics. As Kehm and Teicher (2007) observe, the internationalization of higher education is characterized by the following seven aspects:

- Mobility of students and academic staff;
- Mutual influences of higher education systems on each other;
- Internationalization of the substance of teaching, learning and research;
- Institutional strategies of internationalization;
- Knowledge transfer;
- Cooperation and competition;
- National and supranational policies. (Kehm & Teichler, 2007, p. 264)

According to Kehm and Teichler (2007), mobility of students and academic staff is a remarkable characteristic that can remind people that higher education is in the process of internationalization. That is to say more and more students choose to attend overseas academic programs. The latest data from International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) (2016) showed that there were roughly five million tertiary students worldwide. The overall number increased 67 percent since 2005. ICEF predicted that approximately 8 million students will be studying abroad by 2025.

Mutual influences of higher education systems on each other mainly represent the academic culture and tend to be integrated into a new pattern with characteristics of bilateral higher education systems. Internationalization of substance of teaching, learning and research refers to how education institutions deal with the practical issues faced by teachers and students, such as internationalization of curricula, joint degree, and teaching

and learning in a foreign language. Knowledge transfer includes three perspectives: “employability of internationally experienced students”, “the contribution of higher education research to international innovation system”, and “the export of programmes” (Kehm & Teichler, 2007, p. 265).

Cooperation and competition signals the relationship among countries gradually shifting from cooperation to competition with the influence of marketization of higher education. Chinese-foreign cooperation education programs, for example, satisfied many Chinese students’ demands on learning foreign curriculum without going abroad. Usually the cooperative university will assign teachers to China to teach relative courses and the students can obtain degrees or certificates verified by both Chinese and the cooperative university when complete the program. Competition in attracting more international students is fierce among Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, which hosted 90 percent of international students (OECD, 2016). National and supranational policies represent that the national policy on internationalization of higher education is still important and supranational organizations, such as European Union (EU), OECD, and UNESCO, can impact the higher education system. The Erasmus program, for instance, encourages international students’ mobility within the EU.

China

China has entered the global world since the economic reforms that were initiated with Deng Xiaoping’s Open Door Policy in 1978 (Logan, 2002). This policy was fully implemented country-wide and affected almost every aspect of national life, including agriculture, industry, technology, education, and entertainment. The market economy

came to dominate the whole nation, which advocated economic liberalization, privatization, and industrialization. The process of the global integration of the Chinese society was deepened with China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 (Huang, 2008). Subsequently, China has experienced a "massive, protracted and unexpected economic upsurge" (Brandt & Rawski, 2008, p.1). A study conducted by the consulting firm McKinsey & Company predicted that China's middle class, defined by annual household income between 60,000 to 229,000 renminbi (\$9,000 to \$34,000 USD), will constitute 76 percent of its urban consumers by 2022, despite the fact that only 4 percent of Chinese urban population was considered middle class in 2000 (Barton, Chen, & Jin, 2013).

The development of China's higher education did not keep pace with its worldwide economic position (Wei & Yuan, 2012). According to Wei and Yuan (2012), the education resources and quality of Chinese post-secondary institutions were not able to satisfy its citizens' demands for quality higher education. Under the influence of globalization and marketization, social injustice and inequity arouse many education problems (Guo, Guo, Beckett, Li, & Guo, 2013). Faced with this situation and aided by the rapid economic development, a growing number of Chinese families could now afford to send their children to study abroad. The overall number of self-funding Chinese students studying internationally increased from 120,700 in 2006 to 481,800 in 2015 (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2016a). According to the government data, there were approximate 4,042,100 Chinese students studying abroad accumulatively since Deng Xiaoping's Open Door Policy was implemented in 1978 (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2016b). As more Chinese students pursue study abroad, there is an increasing amount of

research on different facets of Chinese international students' experiences. Hansen and Thøgersen (2015) argued three themes that constitute the context of Chinese students' experiences studying abroad:

- The first was that their preferences and decisions about the country to study were largely depended on “their perceptions of global education hierarchy, a ‘moral geography’ that defines where the most valuable knowledge and qualifications can be found” (p.1).
- Second, the Chinese government has strategies and policies by which it attempts to encourage students' personal study-abroad preferences to match the needs of national development.
- Third, studying abroad is a profoundly individual experience with a deep influence on the biography and philosophy of the particular Chinese student.

Students' Motivation for Study Abroad

With the trends of globalization, internationalization of higher education, a great many of students choose to study abroad. Student mobility has been regarded as the key aspect of the process of internationalizing higher education (Guruz, 2011; Knight, 2012).

Study abroad is considered to benefit students' home country and their host country. For the students, overseas learning experiences enable them to grasp first hand essential information about, and conditions in, the host country while enhancing their academic knowledge and skills (Kehm, 2005; Marcotte, Desroches, & Poupart, 2007). In addition, it is believed that student mobility will help students gain greater opportunities for working in an international environment after their graduation (Kehm, 2005; Li & Bray, 2007; Marcotte et al., 2007; Teichler & Janson, 2007). The overseas study

experience is considered to make the students more attractive candidates in a highly competitive job market. According to Sison and Brennan (2012), students benefit from international exchange program. By participating in these programs, they will learn about different cultures, establish their social networks, and become competitive for future careers.

International students have the opportunity to improve the reputation of the home country and host country (Czinkota, 2005; Kehm, 2005; Marginson & vanderWende, 2007) through students' returning and increased performance either in the classroom or in the job market. Yet, the reputation is a double sword because it depends on whether students have exhibited positive and improved performance. Secondly, from the long-term perspective, students' mobility has generated more international commercial cooperation opportunities, and social networking and relationship between the home and host country (Goodman, Jones, & Macias, 2007; Larsen, Martin, & Morris, 2002; Larsen, Momii, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2004). Students have built lasting friendship with people in host country. They also have developed deep and all-round understanding of the foreign culture that helps them to adapt to the environment of host country and accommodate to foreign cultures. Thirdly, it is believed that student mobility will bring special knowledge back to their home country (Baruch, Budhwar, & Khatri, 2007; Bourke, 2000; Tremblay, 2005). In developing countries, this is an essential purpose for sending students to learn abroad. Fourthly, student mobility advocates home country's advantages so that attract people in the host countries to work in the students' home country (Kehm, 2005; Tremblay, 2005).

All the studies above, in effect, present the idealized discourse of the benefits of international education. The question is, in practice, do all these presumed benefits prove to be as positive as they say. For example, much of what these benefits offer presume that the students will return home with a new way of thinking and make a welcome contribution to their home country. The Chinese government data showed that 79.87 percent of Chinese students who have completed their degree have chosen to return to China to seek their career opportunities (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2016b). Therefore, those presumed benefits may explain their motivation to study abroad but may not explain the motivation of the remaining 20.13 percent of Chinese students who did not go back to China. Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009) suggested that immigration is one reason why overseas study programs attract international students. For the vast majority, immigration is not a reason for study abroad but for 20 percent of them it probably is, despite that fact that we don't know how many of those 20 percent left China with the intention of staying and how many decided to stay during their studies.

“Push and Pull” Model

Many factors influence international students' decision to study abroad. Based on the research about determinants of Erasmus students' mobility, significant determinants, such as country size, distance, and climate, can be classified under the “push and pull” model (Gonzalez, Mesanza, & Mariel, 2011). According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), the push and pull model categorizes these factors into two groups: “push” factors function within the home country and lead students' decisions to engage into international study; “pull” factors function within the host country and make it comparatively attractive to international students. Through the surveys of 2,485 students

from Indonesia, India, and China, they found that economic and social factors of students' home country served the push forces that drove students' studying abroad. These push factors included: students' perceptions that international study was higher than local study, the desires to understand western culture, and the intentions to migrate after graduation. It is probably that the first two factors affect 80 percent Chinese students and the last one affects the 20 percent who decide not to return to China. Pull forces would eventually help students decide which country would be their host country among many potential ones, including the fame and quality of the university, the quality of the professors, the introduction of friends who have graduated from the university, and the geographic proximity.

Using push and pull model, Eder, Smith and Pitts' (2010) found that learning languages and pursuing further personal and professional development were also reasons to motivate international students to study abroad. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) might be right to suggest that the "push and pull" model can be applied to the decision to study abroad but that decision to go abroad for a year or more is a different kind of decision than deciding to study abroad in order to immigrate. For example, if Chinese students cannot enter a good Chinese university that is a push and if they can get into a good Canadian university that is a pull but obviously, if they go back to China (and 80 percent do) the environment is not an important issue for these students.

Based on his study, Altbach (1998) summarized the push and pull factors which play important roles for students in developing countries in the decision-making process on studying abroad. The push factors in the home countries contain:

receipt of scholarships for studies abroad, low quality of education, insufficiency of research facilities, lack of corresponding teaching capabilities, failure to pass examinations for school admission, advantages of foreign degrees, discrimination against ethnic minorities, poor political atmosphere. (Altbach, 1998, p. 240)

The pull factors in host countries contain:

scholarships for students from abroad, high standard of education, advanced educational facilities, presence of corresponding educational capabilities, financial assistance, experience of life abroad, suitable social, political and economic environment, suitable political atmosphere. (Altbach, 1998, p. 240)

“Push and pull” model has also been applied for analyzing Chinese students’ motivation to study abroad in some studies (Bodycot, 2009; Chen, 2006; Liu, Elston, & Zhou, 2013; Mazzarol, et al., 2001; Yang, 2007). Findings from these researches were generally in line with the studies above. The exception is that getting a visa or immigrating upon graduation has been proposed as a pull factor in Chen’s study (Chen, 2006).

International Students in Canada

In a recent study the top three reasons that international students choose Canada were identified as the quality of its education system, the reputation of a highly tolerant and non-discriminatory society, and the safety of the country (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2016). Compared to the United States, Canada is considered much safer for, and more tolerant of, international students. Yet the USA hosted 26 percent of total of the international students studying globally, a fact which secured its position at the top of destination countries in 2014 (OECD, 2016). The United Kingdom (13 percent) and Australia (8 percent) are the second and third choices among destination

counties. Immigrant policies and post-study work permit were two options provided by some OECD counties, which can make them more attractive to potential international students. For example, Australia allows international students to apply for up to four years' work permit after graduation; Canadian international students can apply for a Post-graduate Work Permit. This is an open work permit good for the same amount of time as it took to complete their studies up to a maximum of three years. As a result, international students who have completed a degree can work for any company in any industry.

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (2016) found that 51 percent of international students plan to stay in Canada by applying for permanent residence after their graduation. Immigration is one of the reasons why some of international students prefer overseas study (Altbach et al., 2009). Actually, 49 percent of international student cohort who enrolled in graduate programs in the early 2000s obtained permanent residence in the following 10 years (Lu & Hou, 2015). This study also stated that higher GDP per capita of international students' home country usually accompanied with students' lower transition rate into permanent residence. In other words, one country's economic strength and level can influence its international students' willingness to immigrate to Canada. For example, the transition rate of Chinese international students is around 50 percent, while only 6 percent of Japanese students became Canadian permanent residents (Lu & Hou, 2015). This meant nearly half of Chinese international students succeeded in immigrating to Canada upon their graduation. This figure manifest that Chinese students who studied in Canada are not typical of the 80/20 statistic which shows that nearly 80 percent of Chinese students have returned China after graduation. Realizing that international students are constitutive to the growth of Canada, Citizenship

and Immigration Canada has transformed Canada's immigration system into one that is faster, adaptable, and suitable for students' need. Applicants with Canadian study experience can earn additional points, which make them more competitive in the Express Entry system designed for selecting qualified applicants to be Canadian permanent resident (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2016a). Generally, this point system preferred applicants with high language skill and a Labor Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) job-offer. It is easier for post-graduate international students, who during or upon completion of their master's degree or doctoral degree, to apply for permanent resident in Canada through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) (Gopal, 2014). Ontario expanded its PNP to Master's students in September 2010, which is now called International Master's graduate stream. This program required no job offer so that it provided a fast and relatively reliable immigrant approach for international students with an Ontario Master degree.

Canada has attracted an increasing number of Chinese students from different levels, increasing from 39,954 in 2006 to 118,385 in 2015 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2016b). One of the key reasons for Chinese students selecting Canada was the perceived quality of higher education (Ji, 2011). They also considered Canada as a safe country (Bond, Areepattamannil, Brathwaite-Sturgeon, Hayle, & Malekan, 2007). Li (2016) did a survey with the sample of all Chinese students who attended the same M.Ed. (ISP) program of the university which is the focus of this study. The study showed 75 percent of these students expressed interest in becoming a permanent resident, however, only 14 percent of them said that they had this in mind at the beginning of their studies. One possible explanation for this paradoxical data might be that these students changed

their minds when they experienced Canadian life. Such a conclusion, however, does not take into account that immigration is a sensitive question. How open should students be about their wish to stay in the host country upon graduation? Will expressing such a wish compromise their chances of getting a student visa? Is it not possible that Chinese students, even once they are in Canada, will be cautious dealing with this topic with researchers? Furthermore, in Chinese culture, people are used to mildly and indirectly expressing their meaning (Chen, 2002). I will explore this further in my discussion of the data collected for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This is a basic interpretive qualitative study designed to explore the motivations of Chinese students' choices to study abroad at a Canadian university. In this chapter, I described the research design, research questions, the process of recruiting participants, the demographics of participants, the process of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations and the limitations.

Research Design

Basic interpretive qualitative study typifies the three characteristics of qualitative research (Clark & Creswell, 2015; Merriam, 2002):

1. Researchers concentrate on comprehending how people make sense of their world and experience.
2. The researchers are the main research instrument which is used to collect and analyze data.
3. The research paper or report is ample with descriptive contents.

The literature presents multiple qualitative research designs for different circumstances. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest that there are 8 designs, while Clark and Creswell (2015) argue for 11 and Hatch (2002) argues that there are 17 designs. Despite these differences, there are key commonalities. The general procedures for a basic qualitative research approach comprises proposing general research questions, carrying on interviews and observations to collect data, and analyzing the data to develop themes (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In the context of this study, I used a basic interpretive qualitative approach (Merriam, 2002). I sought to discover the reasons that Chinese students gave for choosing

Canada as their destination of overseas study. I conducted the interviews and collected the data that I subsequently coded and sought to identify themes that emerged from the data. The study presented themes drawing from multiple perspectives in a richly descriptive approach.

Research Questions

The overall guiding research questions are:

1. Why did the participants elect to study abroad at a Canadian university?
2. Why did participants choose to enroll in the M.Ed. program at BK University?
3. What were participants' hopes and expectations for their lives after graduation?
4. Do participants want to remain in Canada after graduation? Why or why not?

Participants

Participant Recruitment. I requested the administrator of the M.Ed. (ISP) to send a letter of invitation to the current ISP students, who were divided into three pre-determined cohorts. Those who wish to participate indicated their willingness by replying the email within three days. I've received more applicants than the research needed so that I purposely choose the participants and expressed thankfulness to the others for their willingness to participate. Purposeful sampling means researchers select the participants who are appropriate to provide answers to research questions (Clark & Creswell, 2015). The standard to choose participants is that they are "information rich" (Patton, 2002, p. 230). During the selecting process, in order to get ample information and represent the whole picture of the ISP M.Ed. program, I considered participants' age, gender, undergraduate major, hometown, and whether they had enrolled in PMPC program. The

participants I chose were emailed a copy of the interview guide at least one week before the interview.

Participant Demographics

Table 1

Participant Demographics

	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Major	PMPC	Working Experience	Hometown
1	Aaron	M	30s	English& IPE*	Yes	~7 years	Central
2	Ashley	F	24	English Interpretation	No	None	Northeast
3	Gloria	F	30s	English	Yes	~10 years	Northeast
4	Hayley	F	25	English & Leadership	Yes	None	Central
5	Jocelyn	F	25	English	Yes	~1 year	Western
6	Leonard	M	24	English	No	None	Northeast
7	Megan	F	29	Physics	Yes	~6 years	East

Note. IPE is short for Ideological and Political Education

There were 7 participants in this study. Five of the participants were women and two were men. All the participants were born in China and had finished their undergraduate education in domestic universities. Participants ranged in age from 24 to 38 years of age. Five participants had studied in the PMPC prior to enrolling in the M.Ed. (ISP) program. Six participants graduated from English language learning programs as part of their undergraduate degrees from China. Three participants had more than one year of work experience. Half of the participants went to Canada upon their graduation from Chinese university and did not seek employment or work in China. Each participant

was provided with a pseudonym, and the Canadian university was also given a pseudonym as BK University.

Data Collection

Interviews

The primary data were collected through one-on-one audio recording, semi-structured interviews. According to Fontana and Frey (2000), interviewing is a powerful method for us to better understand our fellows. As part of the interview, I explored participants' perceptions and experiences of studying in the M.Ed. (ISP) program. They were also asked to discuss their expectations after graduation.

I made an appointment with each participant and scheduled a time and place at the participant's convenience. Most of participants chose to conduct the interviews in the group study rooms of the library. Some of the participants asked whether they needed to answer the questions in English. However, in order to be able to fully express their opinions, I invited them to use Chinese (Mandarin). Therefore, all of the interviews were conducted in Mandarin. The interviews were audio recorded on my phone for subsequent analysis.

Interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length. Participants were informed that I would transcribe the interviews verbatim. I also told my participants that I would take notes during the interview that usually were about every beginning time of our topic changing so that their talk wouldn't be disturbed. I placed a copy of the interview guide so that the student participant being interviewed could see it. This helped my participants grasp the main topics of our interview. Some of the participants were a bit of nervous, but when they confirmed the topic of conversation with me by skimming through the copy of

interview guidelines, they became more confident. Furthermore, this document provided the interview protocol that determined the process of interviews (Clark & Creswell, 2015). After the interview, each participant received the Feedback Letter and the Letter of Appreciation. They were also provided with a transcript of their interviews for their review, with the opportunity to provide clarifications, edits, or deletions.

FieldNotes and Research Journal

As part of secondary data, fieldnotes were recorded before, in, and after each interview. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2001) state that “some field researchers consider field notes to be writing that record *both* what they learn and observe about the activities of others *and* their own actions, questions and reflections” (p. 354). Before each interview, I walked through the questions, simulated answers my participant might provide based on his or her background, and recorded the meaningful or interesting ones. By doing this, it was relatively easy for me to grasp the pace and direction of the interview and find the answers to my questions. In the interview, I recorded the beginning time of each main topic in order to easily locate the contents in the later transcription stage. After the first interview, I reflected on the whole interview processes and then make recommendations to improve my interview skills in the field notes.

I also wrote a reflective journal during the research process that included my thoughts, questions, and interpretations about the data I collected, the method I used, and the whole research life. A personal diary was also integrated into the reflective research journal, which I found it was useful to solve the questions I met in the research.

Official Documents

Some government documents pertaining to immigrant policies were also included in the analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a continuous process in this study. I roughly divided it into five steps, including transcription, obtaining a sense of the whole, exploring and coding data, creating narrative, and building themes.

Transcription

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim on computer. As I recorded all the interviews with my phone instead of professional sound recording tools, the volume of sound was not high enough and the noise reduction was not effective when I used an earphone. As a result, I had to find a private place (usually my home) and play the recording through the speaker of my computer. This allowed me to hear the interviews clearly. When I did the first transcription, I merely typed in any question I asked with a new paragraph. However, I gave up this strategy because not all the questions signal a brand new topic and sometimes they were just reconfirmation of what the participant had already said. Thus, I reminded myself that the time to begin a new paragraph with a question was generally the-time-point of a topic changing.

On average, I spent 4 hours on each transcription. The number of Chinese characters in each transcription varied from 5000 to 7000 characters. I printed these 8 transcripts and marked them with the interview date and participants' Chinese pseudonym.

Obtain a Sense of the Whole

As I was the person who did all the transcriptions, I was familiar with the contents. However, in order to get a general sense of the entire interview, I read each transcription, repeated it in my mind, and read it again.

Data Coding

I began to write memos on the margin of the transcriptions. The first round of data exploration focused on summarizing the meanings of each paragraph. The second round placed extra emphasis on searching for new contents that were left out. The third round emphasized on my thoughts and ideas. With the help of memos, I coded the data with short combinations of Chinese characters.

Create Narratives & Themes

At the same time, I created a narrative for all the participants. In the narrative, I introduced their education and family background, working experience, the experience of making a decision to study abroad, the considerations on choosing a destination, and their future plan upon graduation.

When completing data analysis, I continuously looked for common themes across participants' answers. The tentative themes emerged during the coding steps and became distinct when I completed writing the narratives.

Trustworthiness of Data

In this study, member checking, peer review, and researcher's reflexivity (Merriam, 2002) are the main measures used to build trustworthiness of data. Interview transcriptions were given back to participants with the purpose of member checking. I also provide participants with a summary of my findings. This process provided

participants the chance to double check whether the descriptions were plausible. In addition, I discussed with my professors about “the congruency of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations” so that they can examine the rationality and validity (Merriam, 2002, p. 31). Furthermore, my positions are consisted with being a researcher, an insider, and a Chinese student who chose to study in Canada. During the study period, I kept questioning my preliminary data interpretation and maintained a critical attitude towards my self-reflection.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to my research, I filled in the forms and wrote the relevant documents required by the Brock University Research Ethics Board (REB) and submitted those. Sometime later, I received a request for certain modifications from the REB. I made the requested modifications soon thereafter I obtained the certificate (File number: 15-211-O’SULLIVAN) that permitted me to conduct the study. As no particular sensitive issue existed, my participants were not placed at any psychological, social, or physical risks. However, as all participants were in my academic cohort, there was a potential that they felt obligated as my friends to assist my research. In order to manage this risk, I explained to all the participants orally that their decision to whether or not participate my research would not influence our friendship.

Each participant was not only emailed the Consent Form and Interview Guides but also was given the paper version of consent form at the beginning of our interview. When they signed the form, I also reminded them their right to stop the interview whenever they wanted to, to refuse to answer any question they did not like, and to withdraw after the interview.

To ensure confidentiality, I named the interview recordings on my phone with the date and a letter of the alphabet, and marked them down in my fieldnotes. After the interviews, I transferred the recordings from my phone to my computer. The same code was also used on the corresponding transcript document. When I wrote the narratives, each participant was assigned an English pseudonym. The list of correspondence between interview transcriptions and pseudonym was saved in fieldnotes that were separated from narratives. In addition, research data was secured in my personal files in my computer and I was the only personal who can assess the data.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study. First, the sample size is very small so that the findings cannot be generalized. Only eight Chinese students from one program in one faculty at one university participated in my study and told the stories about their motivation for studying abroad. Because all my participants are drawn from a particular Master program in a single Ontario university they cannot be seen as representing other Chinese students enrolled in other masters programs or in other universities. Therefore, the findings of this study provide specific insight within the scope of this research and cannot be generalized.

Secondly, the accuracy of quotes can be influenced by the translation from Chinese (Mandarin) to English. As all the interviews were conducted in Mandarin, the transcriptions were also in Mandarin. Though it lowered the level of difficulties both in understanding and coding the data, it increased the risk of inaccuracy in expressing it in written English. There is always a danger that translation does not reflect the nuance of

what was said in the original language, however, I am convinced that the essential message of my informants is reflected in these pages.

Thirdly, as I am a member of the same cohort as the people I interviewed and have shared many of their experiences, my positionality might impact this study to some extent (Merriam, 2002). During the study, I kept on reminding myself to stay in the position of a researcher. However, it was, sometimes, very difficult to be an outsider, especially, as I have just noted, as I have experienced many of the same decisions and dislocations described by my informants.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This chapter presents the interview findings from longitudinal and horizontal directions, which are narratives and themes respectively. In the Narrative part, I depict seven different personal stories based on the interviews. Each story tells about the participant's background, including education and working experience, the reasons why he/she choose to study abroad and decided Canada as his/her destination, and what the plan is upon his/her graduation. In the theme part, I summarize those reasons motivating these participants into seven themes, which are immigration, career development, trend of studying abroad, education for next generation, issues affecting air quality and food safety, unhealthy society values against women and girls, and personal reasons. In addition, country selection is categorized as one theme, explaining how participants evaluate alternative countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia.

Narrative

Gloria's Story

Gloria is in her 30s and has two sons who attend elementary school. The sons live with her in Canada while her husband continues to live in China. He works for a company that sells medical equipment. Gloria's undergraduate major was English language studies. As she graduated over a decade ago, study abroad was not as popular as it is today so few of her classmates chose to study abroad. She focused on finding a job upon graduation and it did not occur to her to considering studying abroad. She held an administrative position in human resources for a transnational corporation for several years.

About four years ago, influenced by the growing popular enthusiasm for studying abroad, she began to consider this option. She knew people who had taken the decision to send their children abroad. Gloria told me:

Many of my friends have sent their children to study abroad, because of the frenzy of going abroad nowadays. There are so many parents sending their children for overseas study. A great many undergraduates choose to study abroad after their graduation. This seems like a tendency. (Interview, May 3, 2016)

As a mother of two elementary school aged sons, she was also eager to send her children abroad to study so that they would be well prepared for a competitive global job market. This wish greatly influenced her decision to study abroad herself. If she studied abroad, her sons could come with her and go to the elementary school in Canada. She partly ascribed her own decision to study abroad to her children's education:

For example, the earliest group, they send their children, who might be at the high school age, abroad for undergraduate study. So when they get there, it will not be too difficult for them to accommodate themselves to a new culture. However, it will be too difficult for those college graduates to find their feet abroad. So what if we went abroad first and our children were not too old, it would be easy for them to completely, or practically, fall and integrate into new life abroad when they arrive there. (Gloria, Interview, May 3, 2016)

With respect to her choice of Canada, prior to her decision to study in Canada, Gloria and her husband visited the United States. They enjoyed the visit and believed that the quality of education was good in the United States. Yet they felt the U.S. "Business Migration Programme was not reliable" (Gloria, Interview, May 3, 2016). Despite their positive

impression of the United States, Gloria chose to study in Canada. She explained this choice as follows:

The reason we choose Canada is because we prefer North America. We visited the United States and that country made us feel good. We felt that Canada was part of North America and was near to USA. We liked that Canada was beautiful and that we could visit many places in Canada. We also knew that Canada had a high quality of education and few people. (Gloria, Interview, May 3, 2016)

They also considered immigrating to Australia or New Zealand but thought those countries were too isolated, “We considered Australia and New Zealand to be the edge of the earth” (Gloria, Interview, May 3, 2016). She explained their choice of country:

The USA was our Number One choice. Then, Canada. It has a good relationship with the USA, and has extensive territory, lakes and ocean. The country is rich in resources. Australia and New Zealand feels like they are marginalized by the world. They seem like a piece [of land] which is surrounded by the ocean and it feels like, if some natural disasters occurred ... it would be hard to escape from there. Hahahaha (laughed), it is very dangerous... Furthermore, we live in northern part (of China) and the climate here (Canada) is the same as ours – spring, summer, autumn, and winter, four distinctive seasons. It will be too hot over there (Australia and New Zealand) to stand for us northern people. (Gloria, Interview, May 3, 2016)

At the same time, Gloria recognized that it would be difficult to advance in her career in China, so she intended to follow the trend of studying abroad. However, making the decision to move abroad was not easy. First she would have to give up her position and her career. She had held this job for a number of years and had been successful.

Furthermore, her decision was also not anticipated by many of her friends and colleagues. Nonetheless, with the support of her family, she consulted an agent who recommended that she apply to a college in Canada and assisted her in completing the application. With the agent's help, she chose a Toronto-based community college.

Unfortunately, the agent didn't know about the Canadian, or the Ontario, immigration policies. She felt the College program was related to her previous work experience and that she could easily get a visa upon completion of the program. She started an 8-month program at the college. At that time she left her children and husband in China. However, after learning that the program would not qualify her for immigration status, she dropped out of the program during the first term.

Her decision to leave the college also was based on finding flyers in her local grocery store that advertised the PMPC and M.Ed. (ISP) programs at BK University. She did some research and discovered that she would earn a Master's degree through the M.Ed. (ISP) program and that holding a Master's degree would qualify her for the Ontario PNP (Provincial Nominee Program) that would allow her to apply for immigration/PR. She also found out that completing a degree was a relatively quick, safe, and guaranteed method for qualifying the PNP and PR.

Since Gloria missed the deadline for the M.Ed. (ISP) program she made a decision to apply to the PMPC. She began the program in the Fall of 2014. At that time she brought her two sons and mother-in-law to live with her in Canada while she completed the PMPC program. Her husband continues to work in China. She was surprised by the progress her two sons made during their 8 months in a local elementary school. Gloria also bought a house while in the PMPC program with the intention of

renting rooms to other international students. She also made a decision to apply to the M.Ed. (ISP) program and was admitted to the program.

She believed that completing both the PMPC and M.Ed. (ISP) program enhanced her English skills and provided her with knowledge about administration and leadership. She stated that her husband was proud of her ability to live in Canada independently and manage her rental house, the children, and her studies.

My husband felt that my ability was improved. At first, I have got used to the life in Canada. Then, my [English] language improved. My ability to communicate with others improved....My husband had used to do so many kinds of things to look after the house. But now, as I live here by myself, I need to take charge as chief. I might be more dependent on my husband, now, I might have stronger ability to live independently. Ah, he said “improving by leaps and bounds”...One day he had read an article about foreign students who worked very hard. However, he thought the changes of those people were great, which causes every head to turn in admiration...We might not feel it as participants in it, but actually the outsiders might tell those large differences between you and other group of people.(Gloria, Interview, May 3, 2016).

She wants to use the information that she learned about leadership to create her own agency that would bring Chinese students to Canada to study. She believed that being an agent who works and lives in Canada would enhance her ability to be a good agent and provide Chinese students with specific information about the Canadian education system

and help them complete the application process. Eventually she wishes to be a Canadian citizen and have her sons study in Canada as citizens.

After immigration, as I've learnt leadership and education administration, I want to build up an immigrant agent institution. I've already done some research...Immigrant consultants should have a certificate, but it seems like the identity of a permanent resident was the premise...If I could be an immigrant consultant, I would grasp more knowledge and information, because I was here in Canada...It seems like Chinese students make up the largest part of Canada's international students. More and more parents choose to send their children to Canada, with a hope that these children could immigrate after graduation....There are many kinds of reliable agent institutions in Toronto [to model my own on]. If I got the certificate and worked hard, [I am convinced that] my institution would be successful. (Gloria, Interview, May 3, 2016)

Ashley's Story

Ashley is a 24 year-old single female. Her intention to study abroad was influenced by her family, undergraduate major, and the atmosphere of her university. Her parents had planned to send her abroad to study medical science in Russia after her graduation from senior high school. However, her parent changed their mind about Russia when they became nervous about the security situation there based on stories in the Chinese press. Nonetheless, they still hoped Ashley could study abroad like their nephew (who Ashley calls elder brother) and niece (who she calls elder sister), and many of the children of their parents' friends and acquaintances.

Most children of my dad and mom's colleagues went abroad. Some have already got the Australian Identity (Card) and others are studying in the U.S. It seems like all of them go abroad. (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016)

Despite her parents' intention of sending her abroad for undergraduate education, Ashley never thought about this option while she attended senior high school. It never occurred to her not to complete her undergraduate education in China.

When I was in senior high school, I didn't have any thought of going abroad. My brother didn't go abroad at that time. It just felt like I must receive a domestic university education...All the people around me studied abroad after completing their undergraduate studies, no one goes upon senior high school graduation. My elder sister went abroad too. (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016).

When Ashley was studying English interpreting in a Foreign Language university, her older male cousin (i.e., the man who she refers to as her elder brother) was studying in the USA and her older female cousin (i.e., the woman who she refers to as her elder sister) was studying in Australia. As she disliked her elder sister, she decided against Australia undoubtedly thinking that it would be expected that she would attend the same university as her elder sister. Despite the fact that she preferred not to join her elder sister in Australia, she was influenced by the fact that she had been able to get permanent resident status there. That, plus the fact that her elder brother was considering his options with respect to staying in the United States, she too began to think seriously about studying abroad. Her first preference was the United States.

To prepare herself for study in the U.S., she did language preparation programs which included "attending a TOEFL auxiliary class, doing TOEFL exercises, and taking

the TOEFL examination” (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016). However, subsequently she decided against going to the U.S because her elder brother was robbed and that put the U.S. on her “unsafe country” list. Furthermore, she subsequently learned from her brother how difficult it was to get PR in the U.S. without completing a PhD.

When my brother studied there [in the U.S], he wanted to immigrate to the U.S because he felt good to stay there. But he said it seemed like only a PhD can has the chance to attend the ballot, so he might apply for a PhD program in the U.S.

(Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016)

In spite of deleting her initial first choice, Ashley’s intention of studying abroad didn’t vanish but was turned to another direction – the UK. As she majored in English Interpreting, she wanted to continue her major in UK, which she considered to be the country with the highest quality of such programs. Unfortunately for Ashley, she found the option of going to the UK to be too expensive and, furthermore, she felt that she would have trouble getting accepted into and successfully completing the program she wanted:

The UK pound is too expensive. Then it is said that you could not graduate within one year, anyway, it is a rumor...it is not easy to be admitted into the English Interpreting program. Even if you got the offer, it is a very challenging program to successfully complete. (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016)

During this period, she began to consult with agents in Beijing, Dalian, and Shenyang to gather more information. From them, she learned that an oversea degree would not guarantee a good job back in China and furthermore it was not easy to stay abroad following graduation, especially in the UK and the US.

When you went to the overseas education agencies, you discovered that those agents, hehehe (laughed), all graduated from overseas education. Then, you discovered that those agents were all saying “I studied in the U.S., and I came back”, or “I studied in the U.K., and I came back”. Few of them said that “I studied in Canada, and I came back”. So you just felt that it was easy to stay in Canada, really, easy to immigrate. (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016).

Given her elder brother’s and sister’s experiences and her own research, Ashley finally decided to go to Canada. Instead of signing a contract with an agent, she sought for help from an informal agent, who advertised her services online. She had personal experience studying in Canada and had developed expertise in applying to Canadian universities. Based on Ashley’s major, this agent recommended majors at several Canadian universities, excluding those online programs that might not assist her get the visa. In addition, Ashley was told by the agent that it would be relatively easy for her to immigrate if she chose to apply for an Ontario university. As a result, Ashley chose programs at BK University, University of Ottawa, and Western Ontario University and did not consider options in other provinces. Despite applying to multiple universities, she only got one offer, that from the M.Ed. (ISP) program. She attributed her failure to get additional offers to her language score. She told me “the other programs didn’t give me an offer ... [they] required a writing score of 6.5 or 7. My writing score was 6 (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016).

When looking back on her decision to study abroad, Ashley mentioned that an overseas experience could improve her English, give her a chance to experience living abroad. Another important consideration was what she called “employment pressure” in

China. Only well qualified and very senior people (like her professors in English translation) got high paying opportunities to work as translators. She could expect to start at a very low pay level and have little opportunity for promotion, a situation which she recently discovered that her former fellow students were finding themselves in. Study abroad and seeking work abroad is a much more appealing situation.

During her one year in the ISP, Ashley learnt much in academic writing and has increased her writing speed. In addition to volunteer for some activities both in campus and off campus, such as education conference, local festival, and sports competition, she found a part-time job in a restaurant. Based on her own and her friends' job hunting experience, it is very difficult to find an office job in Canada, but may be relatively easier for a PR. Therefore, she will apply for a work permit and then PNP upon graduation. She hopes her investment in a BK degree will result in her being able to settle in Canada and make a living. She recognizes that if, for whatever reason, that doesn't work out to her satisfaction, she can return to China.

Megan's Story

Megan is a 31 year-old single woman, who has a B.A. from a Normal University in Shandong province. Upon graduation, she found the full-time job as a physics teacher in a senior high school in Jinan, the capital city of Shandong province. She held this position for six years before deciding to study abroad. Senior high school is a three-year program and because in China, teachers usually follow a cohort of students from the beginning to the end of their studies, she taught two cohorts during her time at the school.

You know, senior high school teachers don't just teach one class. At the first round, you might teach three classes. Then, you teach another three classes at the second

round. So you've actually given the same lectures many times. You go over the course material in the 12th grade again and again. So I feel that Chinese teachers entered the period of job boredom early. (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016)

Despite starting her career with enthusiasm, Megan found that her commitment to teaching faded over the years and she began to consider a graduate degree that would give her "a chance to go back to school" (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016). She narrowed her choices down to two programs. The first was to apply for a major in psychology in China, the second was to study abroad with the intention of leaving China. She didn't want to apply for a graduate degree in her original major, physics, because she was afraid that she would not be successful in the compulsory entrance examination. She explained that she believed that she had forgotten much of the professional knowledge that she had acquired when she graduated including the necessary mathematical knowledge. As a result, she made an initial decision to apply for psychology because she thought a graduate degree in psychology would give her a bright future. Then, she considered applying to her alma mater, which ranked among the top programs in psychology. However, when she searched the entry requirement for psychology at that university, she found that there was no chance for her to get the offer. She explained:

I wanted to take a graduate exam in psychology at my Normal University, which is ranked the highest of all of the domestic universities. Then...I searched their admission requirement, hehe (laughed), I found that I definitely could not pass the [entrance] exam. (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016)

Despite this initial decision to study psychology in China and make her career there, another consideration came to her mind that caused her to consider studying abroad and

leaving China permanently. This factor was the state of the environmental pollution in China's major cities including, and especially, Shandong province where she lived. Shandong province, she told me, is ranked as having a high risk of cancer for the local population. She described her thinking about this as follows:

It probably began in 2012, I can't remember the exact year. Anyhow, during the winter that year, since the beginning of autumn, there were few days with sunshine... Since that year, the environmental problems have been very, very serious. Every day was hazy, really, no kidding... At rush hour, you could see ... the clouds of haze. (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016)

She also talked about her concerns, shared by many Chinese, of the quality of the food sold in China. She gave a specific example of artificial tainted shredded jelly fish as well as other stories in the press about adulterated milk and other products that unscrupulous businessmen put on the market with no regard for the consequences. These kinds of considerations came to be determining factors in her decision making process about studying abroad.

When she decided that she would study, and, indeed, move abroad she had a number of obstacles to overcome. The first of these was the opposition of her parents to this decision. Her mother argued that getting a teaching position like the one she had was hard to get and she argued that she should not give up this position. Her father told her that she was not allowed to do so. However, she had already made the decision and began to prepare for it. When she got everything done, her family had been persuaded to accept her decision.

Megan now had to decide in which country she would study and move to. She narrowed her choice of countries to the USA and Canada. She did this partly because some of her friends and former students were studying and living in these two countries. She told me that, “the more choices you provide yourself with, the more hesitation you will have; the more hesitation you have, the more time you will waste” (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016). With respect to the two choices, she felt that the USA was “not very safe” and that the country seemed to be “quite a mess” (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016). Thus, she decided to apply for a university in Canada and consulted an agent. Given her educational background and her work experience, the agent provided her some choices after he did some research. She chose to apply the PMPC program in BK, because her TOEFL score did not achieve the basic requirement of the M.Ed. program. She successfully completed the PMPC program, improved her language score and was subsequently admitted to the ISP M.Ed. program.

Megan is a very practical person as her thoughtful way of coming to a life-changing decision demonstrates. This practicality led her to consider how she would support herself in Canada and she decided that she could teach Chinese. To prepare herself for this, she studied for, and received an International certificate in teaching Chinese before she came to Canada:

After completing the program, I’ve been thought about it, I could continue my career as a teacher, who teaches Chinese here. Before I came out, I’ve got the certificate in teaching Chinese to foreigners. (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016)

She told me that after she finishes her M.Ed. program, she plans to take a vacation in China and then she will return to Canada to apply for a work permit:

I will go back and have some fun for couple of days. Then, I will be back. Then, apply for a work permit...and then look for a job. And then, I'll see how that job is, and if it was not good, I will go back. (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016)

Aaron's Story

Aaron is in his 30s, married, and has a son. His wife and son joined him in Canada shortly after his arrival and have lived with him in Canada since then. By studying abroad, he hoped to leave China, where he had difficulty in advancing his career, provide his child with a good education, all him to pursue a career and enjoy a comfortable life.

Aaron has a B.A. major in English language at a university located in Shanxi province, the central region of China. Upon graduation he moved to Beijing to pursue a Master degree in Ideological and Political Education, a common major in China. After he completed his graduate program, he found a job at an academic institution, which mainly focused on education problems in Beijing. He held an administrative position for seven years. Despite the fact that it was a so-called iron rice bowl (lifelong job), nonetheless, he felt dissatisfied because the administrative staff enjoyed less status than teachers in the job hierarchy. His wife worked in administration in a public university as well and, before that, she was a Japanese teacher in a private college. Both of them had job security but neither position satisfied their dream of being post-secondary teachers.

When the time came to choose a school for their kindergarten-aged son, Aaron and his wife were facing the challenge of finding a high quality elementary school for him. Because of the contacts provided by his job, Aaron had access to many education experts and he knew about there were no easy answers to the education problems of

Beijing. Although he could arrange for his son to go to a good elementary school, he didn't want his son growing up in the kind of educational environment that he knew to exist in Beijing.

It's like selecting an apple in a basket of rotten apples... There was no real difference [in their pedagogy, concept, or philosophy]. The reason why the best school is the best is that it possesses more strong teachers and advanced facilities. If those resources were given to other schools, other schools would be the best.

(Aaron, Interview, May 9, 2016)

In addition, he thought the life in Beijing was uncomfortable because of the air pollution and food safety risk.

It is well-known that the pollution is heavy. In each year, there is a long time when Beijing is has polluting fog, which causes public health problem... Also, in China, there is food safety problem. (Aaron, Interview, May 9, 2016)

The experience of trying to find a good elementary school for his son, led Aaron to begin planning for emigration by applying to study abroad. He evaluated potential destinations mainly based on the possibility of emigration, quality education, and environment.

European countries, like the U.K., Germany, and France, were not considered as the difficulty of emigration and, in the case of the latter two countries, having to learn a new language. Even with a possibility of immigrating, Australia was not considered, as he had no close friends living or studying there. Since he had visited the U.S. and Canada, he knew a bit about what these two places were like. Although he gave several reasons for eliminating the U.S., the critical reason was that it was hard to stay there. Eventually, he chose Canada as his destination. In addition to its immigration policy, Canada

attracted him with its multicultural, immigrant friendly, safe, order, and well-being. Furthermore, he had friends who attended the BK ISP program.

With respect to his major, he said that he had no choice but education because he worked in educational institution for many years. It seemed like the natural choice. Following the advice of friends who had taken the ISP M.Ed. at BK University he applied for the PMPC with the help of an agent. He completed the program and was subsequently accepted into the ISP program and hoped to find solutions to Beijing's education problem. Followed his friends' recommendation, he applied for PMPC and M.Ed. (ISP) program with an agent's help. During these two years, he did some volunteer work and part-time job, like tutoring, delivering newspapers and food, working in the kitchen at a restaurant, and so on. He is confident that he will find a proper job in the future. He plans to apply for the work permit upon graduation and then PNP when he gets the graduation certificate.

Jocelyn's Story

Jocelyn is a 25 year-old single female who is in a stable relationship with her boyfriend, who is also a Chinese international student in Canada. She got her B.A. with a major in English language at a university located in Jiangsu province, in an east-central coastal region of China. Upon graduation, she found a job with an overseas education agency in Beijing and worked there for one year. Her intention to study abroad was motivated by her personal interest, the trend of studying abroad, the idea pursuing a graduate degree, and the possibility of emigration.

Jocelyn described herself as independent and strongly adaptable, which made it easy for her to accommodate to life abroad. However, her parents didn't want her to go

far away because they thought it was better for her to live near her family. Despite her parents' opposition, she insisted on her dream of studying abroad and consulted with an agent during her junior year. Destinations were evaluated in terms of quality education, language environment, financial burden, time investment, and immigration policy. Despite the fact that the U.S. was her first choice, she decided against applying there because of its high tuition fee and the cost of living.

The U.S. [graduate program] was too expensive. That's why I didn't go to the US. The graduate program usually lasts two years and it will cost more than 600 thousand RMB (about \$120,000 CAD). The U.S dollar is relatively expensive, as well as living cost. (Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Germany, too, was not chosen because she would have to learn another foreign language.

She decided to apply for graduate programs in the U.K. This decision was taken because she could complete a Masters degree in one year. This led to her parents agreeing to her plan. They considered British universities to be famous and their daughter would be back after only one year. In spite of the fact that she got two conditional offers, Jocelyn decided against going to the UK. These conditions involved improving her language score in a short time. Because she was busy completing her undergraduate degree and had a part-time job, she didn't think this would be possible.

At that time, I was working and had little time for IELTS preparation. I felt it was difficult for me to obtain that score—average on 7, and writing on 6.5. I really didn't want to attend IELTS again....(Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Following her graduation and while she was working in an agent institution, she was surrounded by the enthusiasm for, and the business of, studying abroad. Her job was to

help other students find and apply for a foreign university. This made her eager to go abroad as soon as possible. Through her work at the agency, she learned about the PMPC program and that it required a lower language score than most other university programs. Furthermore, the PMPC program served as a preparation to the M.Ed. (ISP) program. Her decision to choose Canada and BK University was reinforced by a friend, who wanted to study at BK.

Consequently, Jocelyn chose Canada as her destination and applied for the PMPC program. Compared to life in China, Jocelyn thought that in Canada, one's well-being was better, the employment pressure was less, and the education environment was not a competitive one for her future children. She also told me that a movie, which exhibited Canadian life, culture, nature, and a meaning of finding oneself, played an important role in this decision.

It's called *The Last Week*. That movie told a story that a man, who got cancer, rode a motorcycle from the eastern coast to the western coast ...I felt [this movie] gave me the opportunity to know about a kind of different Canada. I just felt...Wow, Canada is so beautiful! I have to go there and have a look. (Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Jocelyn entered the PMPC program and was subsequently accepted into the M.Ed. (ISP) program the following year. During her two-year study, she came to know about Canadian culture and came to the conclusions that most Canadians were very nice. Speaking about her landlords, she said

They really cared about me and helped me a lot...The way they live has enlighten me that I should love life. They treat each other with respect, which is different from that of traditional Chinese couples. (Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Jocelyn plans to apply for a work permit upon graduation.

Leonard's Story

Leonard is a 24 year-old single male, who has entered M.Ed. (ISP) program upon his graduation from a Normal University, which located in Guangdong Province, in southern China. He began to consider study abroad with his personal interest in English, the frenzy of studying abroad in his school, the idea pursuing a foreign graduate degree for future career, and the possibility of emigration. In spite of having a good learning experience at this university and his initial interest in emigrating, he has now decided to go back to China upon graduation. He is uncertain about career development in Canada and furthermore he is having difficulty adapting to life in Canada.

When Leonard completed the Gaokao, his father helped him choose English as his major because he thought it would be easier for his son to find a job after graduation. Despite the fact that Leonard didn't choose to study English, English gradually attracted him especially after being taught by some foreign teachers who came from the U.K. He found that he "loves English, the language itself", even "loves listening to English" (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016). At the same time, he was influenced by the upsurge in interest in studying abroad and felt that it was an honourable option:

Many students in our school chose to study abroad, particularly more in my major, English. At that time, it felt like a kind of glory to study abroad. Some graduates,

who had study abroad experiences, would attend lectures talking about their experiences. (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016)

With respect to destination, he considered several options: the U.K., Australia, and Canada. The first two were very popular destinations in his school and Canada was recommended by his friend. Then, he evaluated these countries in terms of education quality, financial burden, environmental adaptability, working opportunity, and the possibility of emigration.

Australia was eliminated mainly because of financial considerations and environmental adaptability. He told me that the tuition fee was “very expensive, probably 40 thousand Australian dollars for one year” and “the living expenses was relatively high” (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016). Furthermore, he knew a lot about that country from one of his classmates, who was studying at the University of Melbourne, located in Australia. His classmate told him that Australian climate was similar to that of southern part of China. He feared that it might not be easy for him to adapt because he grew up in the northern part of China. In addition, he was told there were many ethnic Chinese there, which made him worried about not having an English-speaking environment.

Like many of his schoolmates, the U.K. was his preferred place to study in and he applied a graduate program there. Even though he got an offer, he decided not to go for three reasons. First, the tuition fees was “actually too expensive, probably 15 thousand pounds” (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016). Second, he could not stay there after graduation. Third, he suspected the quality of its one-year graduate programs might not have a high standing. He described these programs as follows:

You have to leave after one year. [The government] only gives [you] one year's study permit. Then, let you pack your bags...In that case, it's like buying a degree, kind of like the fast food, not like studying abroad. (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016)

By coincidence, when he consulted with an agent who suggested that he study in Hong Kong with low tuition fees, Leonard met a friend who was studying in a college in Canada. His friend recommended that he choose Canada for the possibility of emigration, so he asked the agent about information. Eventually, Leonard chose Canada as his destination mainly because of the possibility of emigration, relatively low tuition fees, and high quality education.

Our tuition fee is relatively "cheap"...At that time, actually, I came with an illusion of emigration...If not, I wouldn't choose here [Canada]. (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016)

As his interest was English, he let the agent choose a major, any major he could study with his education background, except business and so the agent helped him choose two majors, linguistics and education administration. At last, he applied to six universities through the agent. Nonetheless, his application was rejected by four universities due to his low language score. The remaining two, BK University and the University of Windsor, gave him an offer. His decision to choose BK was based on what he perceived as its vitality:

Windsor is near Detroit, which is a decayed city, really. Since its auto industry is fallen, Detroit is a bankrupt city. In fact, Windsor lives on Detroit, so it is not a

dynamic city. Well, everyone says BK is relatively new and dynamic, for it only has 50 years' [history]. (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016)

Leonard began his study at ISP M.Ed. program in July, 2015. He enjoyed the learning process and has a very positive impression of the ISP. He includes the professors in this positive evaluation

Our professors are real experts. You can learn with them as deep as you can, only if you want to explore. They are very flexible. So this program is very good. (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016)

During this year, he has built a good relationship with his neighbors and enhanced his English by frequently communicating with them. He also found a part-time job in a restaurant. His job experience made him realize that the university was the place where he could best improve his English, not the work place. The combination of using English at BK and with his neighbors contributed the most to his improvement in spoken English.

With respect to future plan, unlike most of his classmates, Leonard plans to return to China without even applying for a work permit. This was not his original plan but a decision taken after six months' deliberation. He believes that it will be best for him to be an English teacher in China and, he believes, the enthusiasm for studying abroad will last for years, a fact that will certainly provide him with employment in China, as the learning of English will always be in demand. If he worked in Canada, it would be possible for him to support himself with an unskilled labor job at first. Despite his readiness to deal with hardship, he cannot endure the thought of what he considers to be an uncertain future. In addition, Leonard does not own a car and he finds that the public transportation here is not convenient.

Hayley's Story

Hayley is a 26 years-old single female, who grew up in Henan province, in central part of China. She studied in a dual degree (English and Leadership) Sino-US cooperation program in a university located in the capital city of the province. The leadership specialization courses were delivered by foreign teachers who came from an American public university. The English courses were taught by local teachers. Despite the truth that she had never studied in the U.S., half of her undergraduate courses, beginning from her sophomore year, were American courses. She told me that made the decision to study abroad for multiple reasons: career development, family's hope, a post-graduate overseas degree, English improvement, self-challenging, and the possibility of immigrant after graduation.

When it came to the senior year of campus life, Hayley felt a Bachelor degree was not enough for her to find a good job, so she wanted to have a Master degree either in China or abroad. She abandoned the choice of pursuing a domestic graduate degree because it was too late for her to prepare for the entrance examinations and many of her classmates chose to apply for an overseas master degree. Therefore, she went to an overseas education agent and decided that once she had finished her undergraduate degree that she would study abroad:

It was not very easy to find a job with a bachelor degree...At that time, I just did not want to enter the job hunting status with the illusion of escaping from work by applying for a higher degree. And I thought there might not be too much difference between domestic and overseas Master program. What's more, the overseas program might provide the chance of immigration after graduation. It was kind of

bigger development space and kind of challenging myself. (Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Actually, the idea of studying abroad derived from her father. He treasured the opportunity of allowing her studying in a Sino-US program and encouraged her to pursue an overseas master degree that he hoped that his daughter could not only obtain professional development but also experience life abroad and travel widely.

My father suggested me to consider about studying abroad when I was only freshman in campus. He said anyway you had already enrolled in a cooperation program, it would be better if you could study abroad and improve your English...If I returned upon graduation, the title of overseas education is certainly competitive...And the employer would prefer working experience rather than educational background.(Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Her mother wavered on the decision of sending her abroad but finally supported her father's opinion. At the first, she stood by the idea. When it came to the preparation period, however, she felt like it was not a good idea for her daughter. In her mind, the most important thing for daughter was getting married rather than studying too much. In addition, she was worried about her daughter who had never left home far away might not adapt to life abroad. Hayley knew about her mother's hesitation indirectly from her uncle. Afterwards, her mother expressed the similar opinion with her father that "it is a good opportunity to broaden your vision when you are young and it is always better to go out than merely staying at home" (Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016).

During the time she consulted with the agent, Hayley began to select a destination and communicated with her friends. She evaluated possible destinations in terms of the

level of education, the environment and geographic position, the program's starting time, the easiness of immigration and the financial issue. The U.K. was deleted due to the financial issue and program quality. One of her friend who studied in the U.K. told her the tuition fees and daily consumption was very expensive, the quality of U.K.'s one year masters programs was questionable as well. Australia was taken off the list because of the program's delayed starting date, as well as the isolated geographic position. She also mentioned Australia and the U.K. were chosen by most Chinese students who wanted to apply for a degree in business, which was not her field of study:

I also applied for programs in Australia and got the offer from which was similar with our PMPC program. But they told me this Australia PMPC would begin in April next year, which meant I would wait for 9 months at home. I didn't want to waste that time in waiting. (Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

The U.S. was eliminated from consideration for safety and immigration reasons. She told me:

Since I studied in the Sino-US cooperation program, many of my classmates applied for the U.S. masters programs. Only one of them applied for MBA and the rest of them applied for education-related programs. But my parents thought it was not safe to study in the U.S. Moreover, it was more difficult for them to immigrate with those degrees so most of them would go back to China upon graduation.

(Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Eventually, Hayley chose to study in Canada, which has a high quality of education, a nice and friendly environment, a shorter distance to the U.S., and the possibility of working or even immigrating after graduation. After eight months' study in the PMPC

program of the university, she successfully applied the M.Ed. ISP of this university and enrolled in this program in July, 2015.

During the two years in Canada, she had worked part-time in restaurant and volunteered to teach Chinese in a local Chinese school. It was a relatively easy job for her to communicate with those children either in English or in Chinese:

I was kind of a teacher assistant. Most of these kids were Chinese Canadians, only a few of them were not...When they had questions, they would ask you in English or sometimes with a few Chinese words. Since they were learning Chinese, you can communicate with them in Chinese. It was more convenient and easier than that in fully English environment. I felt very good [in doing this]. (Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

The personal problem was the biggest issue she met in Canada, which became the number one reason to pull her back to China upon graduation. She told me that it was very difficult for her to find a boyfriend here in Canada so that she felt lonely and not belonged to this place. Though she had tried to communicate with Canadian boys, the topics were always superficial and limited to those as food and weather because of the lack of common language, background, and values. Furthermore, her parents did not want her find a foreign boyfriend for fear of her not returning to China.

She planned to have an after-graduation trip in the U.S. and then went back to China without applying for the work permit after the graduation ceremony in October. Her dream job was an administrator position in a university not far away from her home. However, she changed her mind after the graduation ceremony and applied for post-

graduate work permit to stay in Canada for a while to accumulate more working experience.

Themes

After I transcribed and read all the transcripts, I felt it was quite simple to code these data. For Gloria, she made the choice of applying to a Canadian program to a large extent for her children. Both she and her husband thought Canadian environment and education were better than that of China so that immigrating to Canada was their purpose. Aaron and his wife had the similar thought. The only difference was that Gloria's husband did not give up his job in China. As for Megan, it was clear that she was pulled to Canada by a Master's degree and pushed out by polluted air and food safety risk in China. Ashley, Lenard, Jocelyn, and Hayley, all of them majored in English, were in their senior year when they made the decision of studying abroad so that they were strongly influenced by a frenzy trend of overseas study on campus. Through pursuing a Canadian degree, not only can they get a Master degree, enhancing English, accumulating credential for their future career, but also they are eligible for immigrating Canada.

Immigration

Six of the seven participants expressed that the possibility of immigration was a motivator for their decision to study abroad. However, the participants differed in their willingness to acknowledge immigration as a reason. For instance, Jocelyn and Hayley mentioned immigration immediately and spoke openly about considering immigration opportunities for various countries. Specifically, Jocelyn believed that her possibility of gaining permanent resident status after completing a graduate degree was greater in Canada than in other countries like Australia:

My friend and I had searched the immigrant policies of different countries. It seemed like Canadian immigrant policy was the best for International students.

(Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Hayley also believed that immigration would be a desirable outcome of studying abroad and wished to study in a country where this was a possibility:

It would be better to have an overseas degree... [because] I thought, at the beginning, it would be very good if there were a chance to immigrate (after graduation). It would give me a better and bigger development space. Well, it is also kind of challenging myself (Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016).

Gloria, Aaron, and Ashley commented that they elected not to study in specific countries such as the United States, Australia, Germany, and England as their immigration policies were very stringent even with the completion of a Master degree. They said that it was hard to immigrate to the United States. Both Gloria and Ashley mentioned that success with respect to immigrating to the United States was decided by lottery, which was out of their control and without guaranty. The lottery system they mentioned is the Specialty Occupations/Temporary Worker Visas (H-1B) program. When international students graduate and find a job, which must meet the complicated requirements for H-1B, during their Optional Practice Training period, they could apply for H-1B visa in order to stay in the America as a short term contract workers. This is a pathway for [a temporary] visa holder to obtain permanent residency (Gavrilovic, 2015). According to USCIS, the applications of H-1B visa would be subjected to random process after some sorting processes, for there are more eligible applicants than the quota. For these participants, the possibility of immigration was an important consideration in selecting their destination

for study abroad, a motivational factor identified by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) and Altbach et al. (2009).

Career Development

Career development or career advancement was a common motivator for study abroad that was cited by six of the seven participants. For Gloria and Aaron, the decision to engage in a study abroad program was motivated, at least in part, by the belief that there was no opportunity for advancement in their current positions of employment in China. Aaron said he and his wife had the similar feelings about their domestic administrative job:

The life-long job has promised us young people a safe environment but it has constrained our developmental chance and space. In that case, you have no opportunity to do what you want to do because there is no space for creativity... We are only in our 30s and we don't want to waste our youth and time. We were not satisfied with the fact that you can foresee the life of 30 years later are the same with that you've lived in your 30s. (Aaron, Interview, May 9, 2016)

The decision to leave their current positions also was one that was supported by their spouses. Gloria's husband supported her decision to quit her job in order to study abroad. Unlike Aaron and his wife, who quit their jobs one after another, Gloria's husband kept working in China. They considered that it was optimal to maintain their economic foundation by keeping one of their domestic jobs:

It is very important that my husband supported me. We communicated [and found that] if both of us came here without enough financial foundation and finding a job or going back to school, there would be contradictions emerging among our family.

However, if we had proper financial foundation, there would no such troubles back at home. We could gradually adapt to foreign life. For example, by sending me abroad first, I can get used to the local life and find a job. When everything settled down, the rest of the family is gradually transferred here seamlessly and smoothly.

(Gloria, Interview, May 3, 2016)

Megan on the other hand expressed that she became dissatisfied with her career as a high school teacher. She told me that the repetitive nature of the work had burnt out her passion and there was no new knowledge needed to learn and teach. While Megan's family was initially reluctant for her to leave a permanent position as a teacher, they ultimately supported her decision once she told them that her study application was successful:

My mother strongly disagreed with my decision to quit my secure teaching position. She hoped that I could settle down rather than starting over again...My father didn't allow me to make that decision at the beginning ...But after one year's endeavour, I persuaded them. (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016)

Other participants had no formal employment experiences prior to their decision to study abroad. Instead, these participants (Ashley, Hayley, and Jocelyn) believed that completing a graduate degree in a foreign country would make them more competitive than their peers and provide them with greater employment opportunities whether in China or abroad. For instance, Hayley noted:

If you are going to find a job, the quality of your degree will be taken in account by employees. So I want to have a higher degree, a quality degree. (Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

In addition, Ashley stated that:

When I was a sophomore, I just wanted to study abroad because I thought people with overseas degree would be competitive [in the job market]. (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016)

Collectively, participants' motivation to study abroad for career development or advancement is consistent with the findings of other researchers. For instance, Yang (2007) and Chen (2007) found that the consideration of preparing well for future career was one of the push factors for Chinese students to study abroad.

Master Degree

Five of seven participants wanted to pursue a Master degree and to study in those countries which have quality higher education. Leonard and Jocelyn pointed out that it was the master degree that motivated them to study abroad. For instance, Leonard noted:

I would like to go abroad because I personally want to pursue a Master degree....A Master degree is the second reason that motivated me to study abroad. (Leonard, Interview, May 27 2016)

Likewise, Jocelyn noted:

A higher degree is one reason that my father has sent me abroad. And then, it is kind of fulfilling my aspiration, which is getting a Master degree. (Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Though Hayley and Megan had considered applying for a domestic Master program, they abandoned that idea because it was harder to get into a Chinese Master program. For Hayley, it was the time pressure to prepare for the examination. She told me that it was too late for her to get ready for the examination, which left her no choice but to pursue an

overseas Master degree. For Hayley, the reason was the difficulty to pass the examination required by her dream domestic Master program:

[At the start] I didn't want to study abroad. However, it was too late to prepare for the entrance examination of domestic Master degree programs. So I had no choice but to apply for foreign program. A higher degree was one reason that motivated me to go abroad at that time. (Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Megan discussed her situation:

It was a chance that I gave to myself to go back to school. I had considered to apply for a psychology Master program in my dream school since that program was strong among domestic universities. But I found that it was too hard for me to achieve the requirement. So I had to reorient my plan to a foreign Master program. (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016)

Year	Applicant (Ten thousand)	Enrollment (Ten thousand)	Admission Rate
2014	172	57	3: 1
2013	176	53.9	3.3:1
2012	165.6	51.7	3.2:1
2011	151.1	49.5	3:1
2010	140.6	47.4	2.8:1
2009	124.6	44.9	2.9:1
2008	120	38.6	3.0:1
2007	128.2	36.1	3.5:1
2006	127.12	34.2	3.2:1
2005	117.2	31	3.6:1
2004	94.5	27.3	2.9:1

Figure 1. Numbers of Applicants and Enrolment for Masters Programs of Chinese Universities from 2004 to 2014.

Source: the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (www.moe.gov.cn)

The entrance requirement for a Master program in China is more rigorous than it is in Canada but having a foreign degree seems more prestigious. I would say that it is harder to get into Chinese masters programs, as they implied. According to the numbers of Minister of Education of China (2014), the enrolment rate of masters programs is about 30 percent, which manifests fierce competition among applicants (see Figure 1 in page 62).

In addition, the process of pursuing a Master degree was considered by Ashley and Hayley as shirking and delaying real life employment pressure. Hayley said that she also wanted to pursue a higher degree to avoid having to look for a job upon graduation from her undergraduate program. Similarly, Ashley expressed her unwillingness of stepping into society and taking a job:

When it came to the period of graduation, it was not easy to find a job. It felt like that I didn't study hard in the past four years. Also, it indeed was not easy for a person with merely undergraduate degree to seek for any kind of job. Then, I felt I'd like to have a higher degree so that I can ease the pressure from job hunting.

(Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Trend of Studying Abroad

Five participants pointed out that it was the trend of studying abroad that influenced them to pursue an overseas degree. Ashley, Leonard, Jocelyn and Hayley had majored in English so that they lived in an environment filled with the dream of studying abroad:

The studies in the university [that I attended] specialized in foreign language programs and many of our graduates went abroad for further study. That was one reason why I wanted to study abroad. (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016)

For Leonard,

In my university, there were a great many graduates choosing to study abroad, especially those who majored in English. As I learned English, the atmosphere of going abroad within my program was more pronounced... Our school also invited some graduates who had succeeded in applying for foreign programs to give us lectures, which encouraged us to consider and prepare for overseas study. (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016)

This fierce of studying abroad among Chinese students and their parents was also reflected in the number of Chinese students' studying abroad which reported in the Chinese government data.

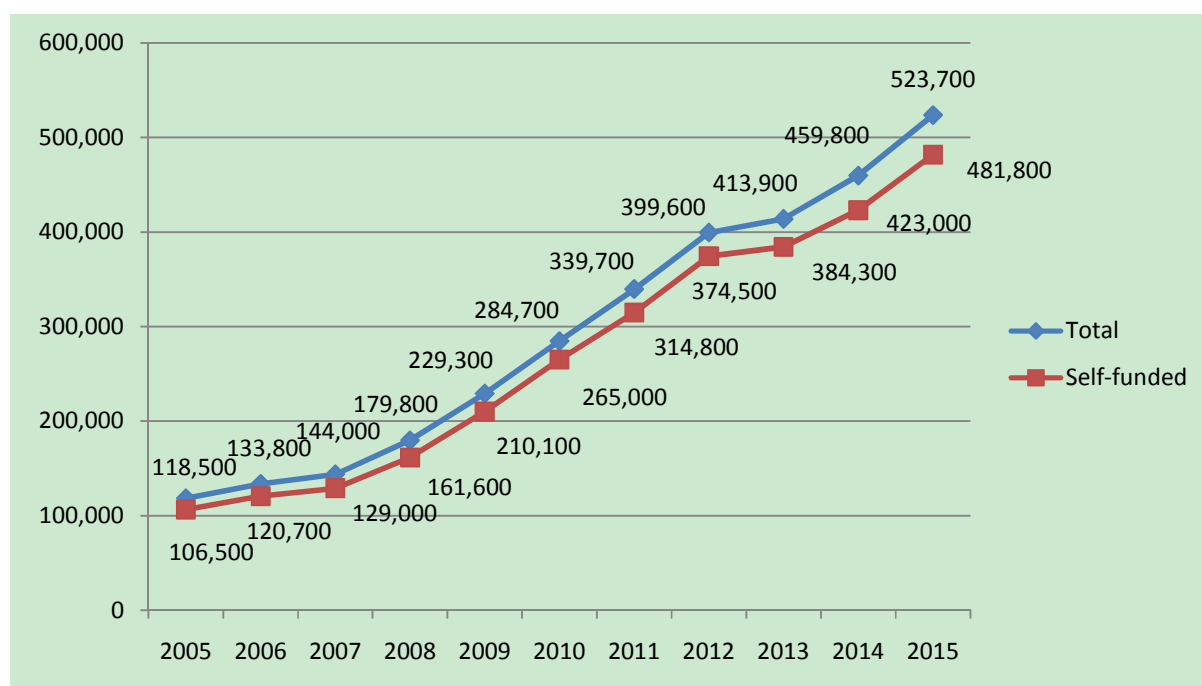


Figure 2. Number of Chinese Students Studying Abroad.

Source: the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (www.moe.gov.cn)

Three of them, Ashley, Leonard and Hayley, also mentioned that they wanted to improve English by studying in an English-speaking country. For instance, Hayley noted that,

As I majored in English, studying abroad would provide a chance for me to improve my English... Even though my domestic program invited some American professors to teach us, I still felt that was not enough. Also my father encouraged me to horn my English within an English-speaking environment. (Hayley, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Likewise, Leonard expressed that,

My undergraduate major was English and I wanted to improve my English. This was the primary reason for me to study abroad... So I needed an English-speaking environment. (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016)

This finding echoes the study of Yang (2007), which pointed out that improving English was one of the push factors of Chinese students' studying abroad. Boycott (2009) stated that English-speaking environment was one of the pull factors of students' studying abroad.

Furthermore, Leonard and Jocelyn referred that studying abroad symbolized a higher status, which was considered an honour for the family:

When I was a freshman, many excellent graduates chose to study abroad and gave us lectures about the application progress. I felt like it was an honour for you and your family if you could go abroad to pursue a degree. (Leonard, Interview, May 27, 2016)

As Jocelyn expressed,

I think that social value greatly influences the trend of studying abroad. Nowadays, more and more Chinese parents send their kids to study abroad, hoping that their kids could have a quality foreign degree and even immigrate to that country.... They thought the environment and the living quality of some foreign countries were better than that of China. They felt it was an honour to successfully send their children abroad. (Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Education for Next Generation

Gloria, Aaron and Jocelyn expressed that education and environment for their children motivated them to study abroad. Gloria thought it would be better to let her children study abroad early, because it would be faster and easier for them to integrate into the local life. That was the reason why she chose to study abroad first rather than waiting for her children grow up and then send them abroad. For Aaron, he disliked [the idea of] his child studying in Beijing. There were various unsolved questions about inequitably distributed educational resources in that city. They perceived the western elementary education as being better than that of China. Children, they assumed, would have less pressure placed on them in Canadian schools and enjoy the learning process.

Issues Affecting Air Quality and Food Safety

Three out of seven participants stated that they were pushed by the pollution, food safety risk and fierce pressure of China. Aaron and Megan told me they could not endure the polluted environment and the severe risk of purchasing and consuming contaminated food, an issue that was frequently reported by the media:

I can't remember the exact year. It was just one day I took a plane from Jinan (a city of Shandong province). When the plane took off, you could see the whole city

was cloaked of yellow haze. It was definitely not cloud and there was a clear boundary, above which was a particular blue sky. (Megan, Interview, May 17, 2016)

Unhealthy Social Values against Women and Girls

Jocelyn expressed she was also pushed by the unhealthy social value against females:

In China, the whole society put a great deal of pressure on women. A girl is expected to get married at a proper age or she would be called a leftover. I just feel stressed out by my family, really... They will intrude on almost each aspect of my life, like my job-hunting, and my looking for a marriage partner. (Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Personal Reasons

Three participants gave personal reason for studying abroad. Jocelyn attributed one of her motivations to study abroad to her strong ability to accommodate a new environment. She said,

I can easily get used to a new environment, and I am not so fussy about my food. Also, I'm not fussy about the weather. It might because I have a strong ability to adapt a new life since I've spent a long time living and learning by myself far from family. (Jocelyn, Interview, May 10, 2016)

Because she had two cousins who studied abroad, Ashley had long been exposed to the concept of studying abroad. When I asked her why she came up with the idea of studying abroad, she told me:

My cousins, my mother's nephews, were both studying abroad...I've never thought about going abroad for undergraduate education since both of them went abroad for

graduate degree...At the beginning, I wanted to go to the U.S because my elder brother (elder male cousin) was studying in the U.S. ...My elder sister was studying in Australia (Ashley, Interview, May 4, 2016).

Aaron thought his life in the capital city of China was not comfortable and desirable so that he would like to embrace a new life abroad. He dissatisfied his life in Beijing since the quality of social management service, including traffic management and government service, was far from his expectation.

For the three participants, their personal reasons greatly motivate them to study abroad. This finding also aligned with the study of Hansen and Thøgersen (2015), which argued that personal bibliography and philosophy had strong influence on Chinese students' decision in studying abroad.

Country Selection

All the participants explained the processes of selecting their destination when they decided to study abroad. Six countries and areas were mentioned, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and European countries. These countries and areas were evaluated using seven aspects, shown in Table 2 (see page 69).

These countries and areas were considered because they had quality higher education and were most popular areas for Chinese students' overseas studying. In addition, they could provide an English-speaking environment for Chinese students (except some European counties). However, they did not succeed in attracting our participants for different reasons.

The United States was excluded from the list for three reasons. The first was the difficulty for Chinese students who had a Master degree to immigrate. The second was safety issue. Most participants expressed their willingness to go to the U.S., but they gave up at last because it was not safe. The third was the high tuition fees. As most masters programs in the U.S. universities were two years long, students would spend more time and have heavier financial burden in completing a Master program.

Table 2

Countries Identified in Interviews.

		US	UK	Australia	Canada	European Country (France/Germany)	New Zealand
1	Immigrant policy	PHD& hard	Cannot immigrate	Hard	More Liberal	Cannot immigrate	More Liberal
2	Environment/Safety	Not safe	--	Far/Southern Hemisphere/ Isolated	Multi-culture, Wellbeing, Natural view, Safe	--	Far/ Isolated
3	Quality education	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	--
4	Tuition fees	High (2 years)	High (1 year)	High (2 years)	Not quite high (1year)	--	--
5	English speaking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
6	Post graduate Work permit	---	No	--	Yes	--	--
7	Friends' opinion	--	--	--	Yes	--	--

The United Kingdom was rejected for two reasons. The first reason was that an international graduate could not get a postgraduate work permit so that they could not stay after their graduation. This meant that Chinese students must leave the U.K. upon graduation, which made the period of foreign experience too short to satisfy the expectations of students and their parents. The second reason was the high tuition fees

and living expenses. The high exchange rate between Chinese RMB and English pound made the financial burden all the more serious.

Australia was not chosen for three reasons. Firstly, it was hard for Chinese students to meet the immigration requirements even having achieved a local Master degree. Secondly, Australia was considered too far away from China. The weather was also mentioned as one of the reasons, because it located in the Southern Hemisphere so the seasons were opposite to that of China, which might be hard to adapt. Thirdly, most Australian masters programs were two years in length, which meant a longer time commitment for students and a greater financial burden for their families.

European countries like France and Germany were excluded with two reasons. One was that Chinese graduates cannot get permanent residence status upon graduation. The other reason was that they did not provide an English-speaking environment. It would be more difficult for Chinese students to graduate if they had to learn an additional foreign language. Finally, even though New Zealand had comparatively liberal immigrant policy and offers an English-speaking environment, it was not chosen as participants' destination because it was seen as being too far from China and other global destinations.

Canada succeeded in being the destination for all of the participants for five primary reasons. Firstly, it has a relatively liberal immigrant policy for International students. Secondly, it not only has a safer environment than the USA, but also is a country with multi-culture background, a high level of well-being, and good natural landscape/scenery. Thirdly, the one-year master program would not be such a financial burden as longer programs. The second and third reasons are also in line with the study conducted by Li, DiPetta and Woloshyn (2012). Furthermore, graduates could apply for a

postgraduate work permit, which provided International students with a choice of staying in Canada for longer time to accumulate working experience and enjoy Canadian life. Fifthly, friends' recommendations were important for our participants' decision. They were told by their friends the advantages of choosing Canada and grasped more information about Canadian programs and life through their friends.

This chapter firstly draws a picture of participants' experiences with the central question of what motivates their studying abroad. Each story has its uniqueness but more common characteristics from a broad view. The second part of this chapter summarizes the common characteristics into eight themes. Seven of them are reasons why Chinese students choose to apply an overseas masters program. The last theme states participants' considerations when they selected a destination country. The next chapter will analyze these findings and make recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I write about my initial perception and new understanding of the data. Then I comment on the issues affecting the decision of Chinese students to study abroad and specifically why they choose to come to Canada. In addition, I make some recommendations for the International Student Program to consider and offer suggestions for future research.

Initial Perception and New Understanding

Surrounded by many Chinese international students in my daily life, I communicated with them frequently and sometimes deeply. I liked asking them about their experiences in studying here in Canada and why they chose this country. Some of them told me they intended to get a Master degree; some of them followed the trend of studying abroad and wanted to experience a foreign life; some of them just listened to their parents' opinion or accepted the arrangements that their parents made on their behalf; and some of them were motivated by the possibility of immigration to Canada through the path of studying here. In fact, I was able to anticipate many of these reasons and my study, in fact, confirmed some of my beliefs about the motivations that led my fellow students to make the decisions that they did. Consequently, I wrote in my research journal some of the motivations I expected to hear from my informants and was not surprised to find that I had anticipated many of their answers. As a Chinese International student studying in the same program as my participants, I had similar experiences on the road to the ISP program. It was thus easier for me to understand their conditions and background. When I completed all the narratives, ten potential themes emerged and the whole picture became clear.

As I was near the end of this study journey, the answers to my research study became more distinct. There is an old saying in China: man struggles upwards; water flows downwards (人往高处走, 水往低处流). If I was asked to abstract all the answers in one sentence, it would be: The vast majority of Chinese students who study in the ISP program of my university believed that the conditions in China are not conducive to a successful personal or professional life and see in Canada a much better opportunity for themselves and their families. For these seven Chinese international students, Canadian university is a gate to a new world with a legend of better life; the M.Ed. (ISP) program is a relatively shorter path to that end. All the themes connect with each other to support the endeavor to a better life.

Discussion

Immigration was mentioned directly by six participants as one reason that motivated them to choose Canada as an overseas study destination. There was only one participant (Megan) who expressed it indirectly. She attributed her decision in studying abroad to severe air pollution problem, which would not be solved in a long time from her perspective. Even though she did not say one word about immigration, her strong intention of escaping air pollution manifested that she was seeking for a chance of living in a place without environmental problem. Furthermore, taken with other hints and looking back on it, the action of studying and receiving an International certificate in teaching Chinese to foreigners had already told the undoubted motivation - living a life abroad.

Despite the data that nearly 80 percent of international Chinese students returned after completing their study accumulatively in 2015 (Chinese Ministry of Education,

2016b), only a few of those had studied in Canada. Among all the students who returned to China with a Master degree, merely 1.19 percent of them studied in Canada (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2016b). Among those who returned with an overseas Bachelor degree, 8.54 percent of them studied in Canada. While this reflects the fact that relatively few Chinese study in Canada as compared to elsewhere, it does speak to the different immigrant and post-study policies of host countries and students' motivation to pursue overseas study.

As mentioned before in Chapter Two, a study showed that 79 percent of Chinese students in the international student program expressed interest in becoming permanent residents of Canada. However, only 14 percent of them stated the possibility of immigration as a reason for selecting Canada as their host country (Li, 2016). Based on what I've experienced and understood, the discrepancy between 14 percent and 75 percent reflected the sensitivity of immigration as a topic of discussion. When an international student applied for a student visa to come to Canada, he or she is told by the Chinese overseas education agents that they must avoid admitting to their intention to immigrate. Most documents for student visa applications were prepared for the purpose of convincing a Canadian student visa officer that the student's intention is simply to pursue a degree. It is probably because, by investigating the Study Visa application document, the government wants to screen out those students who take studying in Canada as a shortcut of immigration so that might not concentrate on their study, which will lower the quality of graduates from Canadian education. According to Canada Citizenship and Immigration website (2015), applicants will not be refused because of their intent of becoming a permanent citizen (dual intent), but they must convince the

officer that they will leave Canada by the end of authorized period for their stay. However, how will a student express their intent to immigrate and at the same time provide evidence that they will leave Canada on time in the application document? Thus, the simplest way is to avoid expressing that intent in the visa application. Therefore, compared my participants' answers with Li's (2006) conclusion, it seems logical to assume that the 75 percent figure is closer to the truth than the 14 percent figure, although it is entirely possible that some students who had not considered immigration prior to arriving in Canada, decided to stay once they were here.

Since most of the Chinese students in the M.Ed. (ISP) program that I interviewed are motivated by immigrating to Canada, it created opportunities for Canada to adjust immigrant policies in order to attract more Chinese students. Ontario universities had benefited from the masters' stream in OINP because more international students can immigrate to Canada fast by completing an Ontario Master program.

The theme education for next generation was imprinted a traditional Chinese characteristic, which was attaching importance to education. Everyone in China was familiar with the story of the mother of Mencius (a Chinese Confucian philosopher). About 2300 years ago, Mencius' mother moved her home three times in order to give her son a better education. This story told us education environment was very important to children and parents should pay attention to it if they hope their children succeed in the future, just like Mencius. Nowadays, with the background of globalization, this story is repeated by thousands of Chinese international students and immigrants. The only difference is that they have to migrate to a brand new environment that is thousands of kilometers from their home. The stressful childhoods because of school pressure push

many parents away from China, on the other side, the perception that schools are less stressful in Canada pull them to this country. For example, Aaron and Gloria stated that it was the hope giving their children a better education that motivated them to apply for Canadian degrees. They also realized their dream by taking their children to Canada and enrolling them in local primary schools. Although Jocelyn and Megan had not married yet, they expressed the same willingness because both of them did not want their future children to go through painful and stressful childhood in Chinese schools, like they experienced.

Issues Affecting Air Quality and Food Safety was a relatively new theme motivating Chinese students to consider emigration, which is rarely discussed by researchers. It was probably because this was a new situation in China. Or it can be understood as a push factor of the home country. Air pollution problem became a hot spot of society lately. Food safety risk was the second to worry about. These two issues attracted more public attentions, for they influenced public health. Even though some privileged persons can have specialized food, it was very difficult for them to refuse the polluted air. After all, everyone needs to breathe and there is no current technique could be implemented to clean up the air extensively. Megan, Aaron, Gloria, and Hayley expressed this concern to different extent. Despite the fact that not all participants ascribed to this reason, it is probably already a common sense in their minds as that was in mine. Escaping these problems may not be the case for those Chinese studying abroad for a year or two, however, it is one of the determinants for this group of Chinese to immigrate and study abroad is how they plan to immigrate.

Career development was considered to be a push factor by six participants. Half of them had more than five years' working experiences but found it very difficult for them to advance in their professional lives. That was why they decided to change their career path. The other half had little or no working experience and hoped that by studying abroad they could increase their career prospects. Many studies pointed out that overseas study would help students become competitive after their graduation (Kehm, 2005; Li & Bray, 2007; Marcotte, et al., 2007; Teichler & Janson, 2007) and contribute their new knowledge to their home country (Baruch, Budhwar, & Khatri, 2007; Bourke, 2000; Tremblay, 2005). Making a contribution to the home country implies that they return there after they receive their degrees and, as we know, 80 percent of Chinese students who study abroad, do return home. In this study, six out of seven participants decided to stay in Canada after graduation despite the fact that it is very difficult for Chinese graduates to find a job in Canada that corresponds to their level of education. Ashley was told by graduates from the same program that it was hard to find an office job, and many participants were working as part-time sales person, or servers earning the minimum wage. Recent graduates of ISP and new immigrants find that getting a "good" job (i.e., professional and high paying) doesn't happen right away and it's probably because they have only been here a short time. Yet it is discouraging to find that underemployment and even unemployment is common among many Chinese immigrants with rich working experiences and graduate education degrees. This opinion was in line with studies on Chinese immigrants' economic performance and career dilemma (Chen & Hong, 2016; Wang & Lo, 2005). Therefore, those presumed benefits mentioned above of international education were not reflected on this group of international students. The M.Ed. (ISP)

program can shorten the road to be a Canadian citizen but it does not represent any guarantee about what kind of job they may get in this country.

Obtaining a Master degree and following the trend of studying abroad, to some extent, represented the mainstream intention for Chinese students and their parents. Low enrolment rate of domestic masters programs (MOE, 2014) discouraged a great many undergraduate students who hope to pursue a higher degree. Furthermore, the comparative easiness of being admitted by overseas master programs pulled students to foreign universities (Wu, Shu, & Xie, 2010). Both Megan and Hayley expressed the difficulty in preparing and eventually passing the entrance examinations of domestic Master degree programs. The trend of studying abroad especially for a Master degree contributes to a frenzied atmosphere in Chinese universities. In order to meet the language requirements of overseas programs, a great many students attend English training classes and prepare for English language test, such as IELTS, TOEFL, and GRE. A final factor, a family member's success in studying abroad represents a higher social status so that it was considered an honour for the whole family (Griner & Sobol, 2014).

Recommendation

Quality Assurance of ISP Master Degree

Quality of higher education is one of important pull factors that draw Chinese students to Canada. However, some students in this ISP Master program have seen immigration more than that. When a degree is seen as a shortcut to immigration rather than a way to obtain more knowledge, it is understandable that many such students will not pay due attention to their academic assignments. Some students may even be inclined to buy papers from essay selling companies or individuals. Accordingly, it is necessary

that universities implement multiple methods, such as increasing the rate of failing grades, detecting plagiarism, and strengthening supervision on the quality of students' academic assignments, to insure the degree quality.

Career Guidance

As high percentage of students in this program have planned to stay in Canada in the long run, it is necessary to provide more specialized career guidance for international students to help them grasp more information and technique in job hunting. It is also important to make Chinese international students realize that it is the professional program, either at a university or a community college that can help them get a more attractive job.

Language Support

The M.Ed. International student program provides each student with a Language Support Assistant (LSA). Writing an English paper is a major challenge for Chinese students, even if they majored in English. Therefore, language support plays an important role in students' academic life, which not only helps editing grammar mistakes but also provided the chance of communicating with domestic students. It would be better that students can have more time with their LSA rather than sharing one LSA's limited time with more than five classmates.

Future Research

The enthusiasm of studying abroad in China creates a demand for the global international student market especially in western countries. Apparently, this booming trend interweaves with Chinese government's support. Yet Chinese President Xi Jinping has articulated his concerns about western-influence in Chinese universities and

elsewhere (Siqi, 2016). In 2015, Chinese education minister Yuan Guiren even declared that no textbooks spreading western values should be used in Chinese classrooms, except for Marxism (Chen, 2016). Chinese Educational Supervision Information Concerning Foreign Affairs (CESICFA) website has posted 308 suspended Chinese-Foreign cooperation programs which varied from elementary to higher education, and non-academic credential oriented training to academic degree education all over China (CESICFA, 2016). If the President is so determined to weaken the influence of Western ideas, it is questionable that the government will continue to encourage students to study abroad. If education is perceived as detriment and government policies hold back their employment, will China keep the position as the number source country of international students? What impact would such a situation have on popular hosting countries?

The Chinese international students in the ISP were told that this Master program was the easiest way to immigrate to Canada compared to other degree programs. You only need to finish your paper on time, regardless of the quality, and you would pass the courses and eventually get the degree. It is doubtful that this international student degree program can cultivate qualified graduates as those of domestic degree program. It is necessary to find effective ways to guarantee the quality of international student program in order to protect the academic standards and education prestige.

Final Thoughts

I don't know when I learned the story of *A Shepherd's Dream*. The story is very simple: A long time ago, a shepherd lived in the mountains. His dream was to get married, to have a son, and to live a life of pasturing sheep. Many years later, his dream came true.

Someone asked his son about his dream. His son also dreamed to get married, to have a son, and to live a life of pasturing sheep...over and over again, this is a shepherd's dream.

Certainly, no one has a right to laugh at other peoples' dreams. However, this story about this dream illustrates more than the words imply. Few people live a shepherd's life in contemporary China. But many people actually are unconsciously repeating this shepherd's story with the rural background replaced by modern cities. I believe most of my cohort and their parents do not belong to those people who accept daily life without actually thinking about it. Like many rural migrant workers in China who come to the cities looking for job, they are looking for chances in urban area to earn more money and live a better life, which is totally different from their parents' and grandparents' generation. My life was changed because my grandfather had decided to leave his hometown, a little fishing village in middle part of China, and seek for a better life in Fushun in the Chinese northeast. I didn't know how much effort and courage he had to make for this long distance family migration in the 1960s. But what I can confirm is that it would have been a hard decision. My father has only taken me to this village once. Thanks to my grandfather's decision, I am not one of those rural girls studying in a village school.

Studying abroad is not an easy decision, let alone immigration. Every time I felt discouraged or wronged, I reminded myself of my original intention and the efforts that supported me from the very beginning. I recognize that, compared to the challenges facing Chinese migrant workers, I faced fewer difficulties which gives me the strength to overcome my complaints and work hard.

References

- Altbach, P. G. (1998). *Comparative higher education: Knowledge, the university, and development*. Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong.
- Altbach, P., Reisberg, L., & Rumbley, L. (2009). *Trends in global higher education: Tracking an academic revolution*. Boston, MA: Center for International Higher Education, Boston College.
- Barton, D., Chen, Y., & Jin, A. (2013). Mapping China's middle class. *McKinsey Quarterly*, 3, 54-60.
- Baruch, Y., Budhwar, P. S., & Khatri, N. (2007). Brain drain: Inclination to stay abroad after studies. *Journal of World Business*, 42(1), 99-112.
- Bodycott, P.B. (2009). Choosing a higher education study abroad destination: What mainland Chinese parents and students rate as important. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 8(3), 349-73.
- Bond, S., Areepattamannil, S., Brathwaite-Sturgeon, G., Hayle, E., & Malekan, M. (2007). *Northern lights: International graduates of Canadian institutions and the national workforce*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Bureau of International Education.
- Bourke, A. (2000). A model of the determinants of international trade in higher education. *Service Industries Journal*, 20(1), 110-138.
- Brandt, L., & T. Rawski. (2008). China's great economic transformation. In L. Brandt & T. Rawski (Eds.), *China's great economic transformation* (pp. 1-26). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Brock University. (2015). *All about Brock 2014-2015*. Retrieved from https://brocku.ca/webfm_send/34950.

- Brock University. (2017). *International students*. Retrieved from <https://brocku.ca/nextstep/international-students/>
- Canadian Bureau for International Education. (2016). *Canada's performance and potential in international education 2016*. Retrieved from <http://cbie.ca/media/facts-and-figures/>
- Chen, C. P., & Hong, J. W. L. (2016). Career development of Chinese Canadian professional immigrants. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 64(3), 272-286.
- Chen, G. M. (2002). The impact of harmony on Chinese conflict management. In G.M. Chen and R. Ma (eds.), *Chinese Conflict Management and Resolution*, (pp. 3-17). Westport, CONN: Ablex.
- Chen, L. (2006). Attracting East-Asian students to Canadian graduate schools. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 36(2), 77-105.
- Chen, T. (2016). Chinese official: No western values in the classroom ... Except for Marxism. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2016/03/10/chinese-official-no-western-values-in-the-classroom-except-for-marxism/>
- Chinese Educational Supervision Information Concerning Foreign Affairs. (2016). *Chinese foreign cooperation in running schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.crs.jsj.edu.cn/index.php/default/news/index/85>
- Chinese Ministry of Education. (2006). 教育部 2006 年度各类留学人员情况统计结果 [Statistics on Chinese people who studied abroad in 2006]. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A20/moe_851/200702/t20070214_78191.html

- Chinese Ministry of Education. (2016a). 2015 年度我国出国留学人员情况 [Statistics on Chinese people who studied abroad in 2015]. Retrieved from http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/s5987/201603/t20160316_233837.htm
- 1
- Chinese Ministry of Education. (2016b). 《中国留学回国就业蓝皮书 2015》情况介绍 [Introduction of Blue Book on returned Chinese international students' employment status] Retrieved from http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb_xwfb/xw_fbh/moe_2069/xwfbh_2016n/xwfb_160325_01/160325_sfcl01/201603/t20160325_235214.html
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2015). *Student who want to immigrant*. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/institutions/intent.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2016a). *How express entry works*. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/express-entry/>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2016b). *International students with a valid permit on December 31st by country of citizenship (2015 ranking), 2006 – 2015*. Retrieved from <http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/b813dcb6-cc08-4e06-97d4-85b7e4daa822>
- Clark, V. L. P., & Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Understanding research: A consumer's guide* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Higher Ed.
- Czinkota, M.R. (2005). *Loosening the shackles: The future of global higher education*, Paper presented at the Symposium on Cross-Border Supply of Services. Geneva, Switzerland: World Trade Organization.

- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.)(pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Drăgan, M., Ivana, D., & Arba, R. (2014). Business process modeling in higher education institutions. Developing a framework for total quality management at institutional level. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 16, 95-103.
- Eder, J., Smith, W. W., & Pitts, R. P. (2010). Exploring factors influencing student study abroad destination choice. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 10(3), 232-250. doi:10.1080/15313220.2010.503534
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2001). Participant observation and fieldnotes. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland, & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 352-368). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage,
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2(6), 645-672.
- Gavrilović, J. (2015). H1-B visa program reform: Analysis of a problem facing policy decision makers on foreign labor practices. *Megatrend Revija*, 12(3), 277-290.
- Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Gonzalez, C. R., Mesanza, R. B., & Mariel, P. (2011). The determinants of international student mobility flows: An empirical study on the Erasmus programme. *Higher Education*, 62(5), 413-430.

- Goodman, B., Jones, R., & Macias, M.S. (2007). An exploratory survey of Spanish and English nursing students' views on studying or working abroad. *Nurse Education Today*, 28(3), 378 – 384.
- Gopal, A. (2014). Canada's immigration policies to attract international students. *International Higher Education*, (75), 19-21.
- Griner, J., & Sobol, A. (2014). Chinese students' motivations for studying abroad. *Global Studies Journal*, 7(1), 2-14.
- Guo, S., Guo, Y., Beckett, G., Li, Q., & Guo, L. (2013). Changes in Chinese education under globalisation and market economy: Emerging issues and debates. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(2), 244-264.
doi :10.1080/03057925.2012.721524.
- Guruz, K. (2011). *Higher education and international student mobility in the global knowledge economy: Revised and updated second edition*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.
- Hammer, M.R. (1992). Research, mission statements, and international student advising offices. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 16(2), 217-236.
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(92\)90019-Q](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(92)90019-Q)
- Hansen, A. S., & Thøgersen, S. (2015). Introduction: Chinese transnational students and the global education hierarchy. *Learning and Teaching*, 8(3), 1-12.
- Harvey, D. (1996). *Justice, nature, & the geography of difference*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in educational settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Heidegger, M. (1950). The thing. In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Retrieved from http://townsendgroups.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/heidegger_the_thing.pdf
- Huang, Y. (2008). *Capitalism with Chinese characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- International Consultants for Education and Fairs. (2016). *Four megatrends that are changing the competitive landscape of international education*. Retrieved from <http://monitor.icef.com/2016/11/four-megatrends-changing-competitive-landscape-international-education/>
- Ji, R. (2011). An analysis of mainland Chinese students' decision to choose Canada as their study destination. (Unpublished Master's thesis). Concordia University, Quebec.
- Kehm, B.M. (2005). The contribution of international student mobility to human development and global understanding. *US-China Review*, 2(1), 18-24.
- Kehm, B.M., & Teichler, U. (2007) Research on internationalisation in higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3-4), 260-273.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303534>
- Knight, J. (2012). Student mobility and internationalization: Trends and tribulations. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 7(1), 20-33.
- Knight, J., & de Wit, H. (Eds.). (1997). *Internationalisation of higher education in Asia Pacific countries*. European Association for International Education.
- Larsen, K., Martin, J.P., & Morris, R. (2002). Trade in educational services: Trends and emerging issues. *The World Economy*, 25(6), 849-868.

- Larsen, K., Momii, K., & Vincent-Lancrin, S. (2004). *Cross-border higher education: An analysis of current trends, policy strategies and future scenarios*. London: The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education.
- Li, M., & Bray, M. (2007). Cross-border flows of students for higher education: Push-pull factors and motivations of mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong and Macau. *Higher Education*, 53(6), 791-818.
- Li, X., DiPetta, T., & Woloshyn, V. (2012). Why do Chinese study for a Master of education degree in Canada? What are their experiences? *Canadian Journal of Education*, 35(3), 149-16.
- Li, X. (2016, March 7). *Internationalization in Canadian higher education: Experiences and thoughts of Chinese students in an Ontario master of education program*. Paper presented at 2016 Comparative and International Education Society Conference in Vancouver, BC.
- Liu, X., Elston, F., & Zhou, P. (2013, November). Comparing research on Chinese students study abroad decision-making: China-based versus overseas-based perspectives. In *Proceedings of the 23rd International Business Research Conference* (pp. 1-13). World Business Institute.
- Logan, J. (Ed.). (2002). *The new Chinese city: globalization and market reform*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Lu, Y., Mavondo, F. T., & Qiu, L. L. (2009). Factors influencing the choice of overseas study by undergraduate and postgraduate Chinese students. In *Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference, Crown Promenade, Melbourne*,

Australia. Available at:

<http://www.duplication.net.au/ANZMAC09/papers/ANZMAC2009-740.pdf>

Lu, Y., & Hou, F. (2015). International students who become permanent residents in Canada. Insights on Canadian Society. *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2015001/article/14299-eng.pdf>

Marcotte, C., Desroches, J., & Poupart, I. (2007). Preparing internationally minded business graduates: The role of international mobility programs. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31, 655-668.

Marginson, S., & van der Wende, M. (2007). *Globalisation and higher education*. Paris: OECD Directorate for Education.

Mazzarol, T., & Soutar, G. N. (2002). "Push-pull" factors influencing international student destination choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 16(2), 82-90. doi:10.1108/09513540210418403

Mazzarol, T., Soutar, G.N., Smart, D., & Choo, S. (2001). *Perceptions, information and choice: Understanding how Chinese students select a country for overseas study*. Canberra: Australian Education International.

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: the extensions of man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook for new methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2016). *Education at a Glance 2016*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2016_eag-2016-en
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Scheuerman, W. (2014). Globalization. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/globalization/>
- Siqi, C. (2016). Xi warns against spreading western values. *Global Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/981038.shtml>
- Sison, M., & Brennan, L. (2012). Students as global citizens: Strategies for mobilizing studies abroad. *Journal of Marketing Higher Education*, 22(2), 167-181.
- Teichler, U., & Janson, K. (2007). The professional value of temporary study in another European Country: Employment and work of former ERASMUS students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3/4), 486-495.
- Thøgersen, S. (2012). Chinese students' great expectations: prospective pre-schoolteachers on the move. *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences*, 5(3), 75–93.
- Thøgersen, S. (2015). "I will change things in my own small way": Chinese overseas students, "Western" values, and institutional reform. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 44(3), 103–124.
- Tremblay, K. (2005). Academic mobility and immigration. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9(3), 196-228.

- Wang, S., & Lo, L. (2005). Chinese immigrants in Canada: Their changing composition and economic performance. *International Migration*, 43(3), 35-71.
- Wei, S., & Yuan, Y. (2012). 电大高等教育招生规模与学生构成变化研究 [A study of the change in the number and composition of radio and TV university students]. *Distance Education in China*, 2. Retrieved from <http://www1.open.edu.cn/ycjy/fengmian.php?id=523>
- Wu, Z., Shu, L., & Xie, W. (2010). Analysis of the situation and reason of Chinese students studying abroad. *Economic and Trade Update*, 24, 282.
- Yang, M. (2007). What attracts mainland Chinese students to Australian higher education. *Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation & Development*, 4(2), 1